TEACHING THE SET WORKS

Students are studying Debussy's *Estampes* and the other set works in preparation for a summer Edexcel exam paper either at AS or A Level. A previous *Music Teacher* resource (January 2017) has already given an overview of the appraising paper, including which questions will be asked in the exam papers; details of what students need to learn in terms of musical elements, context and language; and advice on how to break down the areas of study. Some specific sample questions are also suggested at the end of this article.

A suggested strategy for approaching each set work is also set out in this article, and it covers not only how to plan the study of works such as Debussy's *Estampes*, but also how to incorporate wider listening into the scheme of work. In section B of both the AS and A level papers there will be a question that requires students to be able to draw links from their set works to a piece of unfamiliar music, so it is essential to include practice at picking out features from music less familiar to them as part of the set work study.

BACKGROUND: IMPRESSIONISM

Mid 19th-century France was a country often at war, and one desperately trying to hang on to traditional ideals in the force of a hurricane of change and artistic revolution. In the visual arts, a group of young painters met regularly in the 1860s to discuss their taste for depicting contemporary landscapes and scenes in their work, rather than the traditional historical or legendary subject matter.

Against them was the Académie des Beaux-Arts, a society formed in 1816 and still in existence, based at the government-established Institut de France in Paris. The Académie felt duty-bound to preserve tradition in French visual art, music, architecture and literature, and actively discouraged and blocked these young painters from exhibiting, condemning the portrayal of contemporary subjects for what were often tenuous reasons.

However, the Académie's position backfired when public interest in these young artists grew, and it was dealt a blow when the Emperor, Napoleon III, agreed that these artists' new works could be presented to the public in an alternative exhibition called the *Salon des Refusés* (or 'Salon of the Refused'). This attracted more public interest than the Académie's own exhibition in 1863, and though it took a great number of years for these new artists to earn public and critical acceptance completely, it heralded the start of a very new style of painting.

The artists in question included Édouard Manet, Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Alfred Sisley, Camille Pissarro, Paul Cézanne and Edgar Degas, and after more rejection from the establishment they secured another exhibition in 1874. The critic Louis Leroy attended this exhibition and famously criticised Monet's style, picking out a painting called *Impression, Sunrise* and, in a review jokingly entitled 'The Exhibition of the Impressionists', stated: 'Wallpaper in its embryonic state is more finished than that seascape.' The term 'impressionists' stuck, slightly grudgingly accepted by the artists, and the public slowly but surely began to champion their style as modern and relevant.

It's not clear whether impressionism in art had much influence over what happened to the French musical style at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th. However, the term began to be applied to the music of Claude Debussy in particular at around the turn of the century, despite the composer himself disliking the term, referring to those who used it to describe his music as 'imbeciles'.

In painting, impressionism meant the blurring of lines and blending of colours, thin, visible brushstrokes and a focus on light and its changing nature. Musical works described as impressionist had similar qualities,
focusing on evoking atmospheres by blending colours in both instrumentation and harmony. Instrumental colours and timbres were diverse, with composers such as Debussy often using large orchestras but rarely all the instruments together at loud dynamics. Texture was full and rich, and harmony was colourful; the traditional ‘pull’ of tonality was weakened in favour of chains of parallel chords, often extended with 6ths, 7ths and 9ths.

Wider listening: Debussy’s Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune

Before we explore his Estampes, let’s start with a look at one of Debussy’s earliest orchestral works to be described as impressionist, and begin to build a picture of the musical features of this style.

Written in 1894, Debussy’s Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune was inspired by a symbolist poem (see below) by Stéphane Mallarmé, and in many respects is considered as the first musical impressionist work, even as the start of a stylistic revolution in music that permeated the early part of the 20th century.

Debussy described the work as an ‘illustration’ of Mallarmé’s poem, in which a faun (a mythological creature, half-human, half-goat) daydreams next to a lake in the heat of the afternoon sun. Despite being initially cynical about having his poem used as the inspiration for music, Mallarmé attended the first performance and wrote to Debussy afterwards, expressing his delight.

Published in 1876, the beginning of Mallarmé’s poem translates as follows:

These nymphs I would perpetuate.

So clear

Their light carnation, that it floats in the air

Heavy with tufted slumbers.

Was it a dream I loved?

Listen to the Prélude with your students here, in a performance accompanied by selected artworks of the time. Get them to discuss what stands out stylistically and compositionally in this piece, and start to build a picture of what this style called impressionism sounds like.

The most notable feature is probably the orchestration. Debussy’s textures are transparent and ever-changing, and he uses the orchestra like a palette of colours, where different timbres are never obscured. The focus is particularly on woodwind instruments, and the harp is used often.

DEBUSSY’S PRÉLUDE À L’APRÈS-MIDI D’UN FAUNE: STRUCTURE

The famous opening, where a solo flute plays the principal theme, is a key moment in the beginnings of a 20th-century musical style. The flute’s melody covers the interval of a tritone, between C sharp and G, which instantly makes the key ambiguous and allows chromaticism to dominate. Yet the music constantly sounds like it is going to settle in a variety of keys, giving it an unpredictable but essentially tonal and unified structure.

The opening three minutes or so consist of four presentations of this flute theme, each time heard in a different transformation. After the first there is a bar of silence (at 0.35), as if to allow it to sink in. The second (0.58) is accompanied by sonorous strings, and the third (1.59) and fourth (2.37) presentations are extended and rhythmically altered, ending with a cadence in B major at 3.09.

The development of this thematic material is fragmentary and spawns new thematic ideas. After a passage where the whole-tone scale is prominent on the clarinet and flute, we hear an oboe theme at 3.46, still based around the note C sharp and clearly related to the opening flute theme. The music moves to a tonality centred
around D flat (the enharmonic equivalent of C sharp), and we hear another theme on woodwind at 5.10, repeated on strings at 5.47, underpinned by another tritone, this time from D flat to G in the basses.

After a passage featuring clarinet and solo violin where the key feels more clearly like D flat major, we move to a second-inversion chord of E major (7.05) and the flute theme returns, altered in pitch and augmented in rhythm with the interval no longer a tritone but a perfect 4th. This is interrupted by a livelier passage featuring oboe, which goes on to repeat the opening theme (this time over an inverted E flat major chord) before being interrupted again, this time by cor anglais. The third repeat of the theme is back on flute at 8.20, returning to its original starting note of C sharp but with the tritone still missing. The symbolism here is strong, the faun having abandoned its daydreams, perhaps, and succumbed to sleep.

The theme returns once more at 9.04, and through more fluid shifts of tonality we move towards the pull of a very beautiful and satisfying E major cadence at 9.56 – though Debussy still cannot resist colouring it with chromaticism from harp and horns.

MUSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF IMPRESSIONISM

From this brief investigation, it might be possible to settle on a number of musical characteristics that we are going to see in other ‘impressionist’ works of Debussy:

- Melodies that are developed fragmentally and altered in pitch and rhythm, often based on whole-tone scales or infused with chromaticism.
- Harmony that is rich, with chains of parallel added-note chords such as 7ths and 9ths.
- An absence of functional harmonic and tonal projections, but not an abandonment of tonality, which simply becomes unpredictable.
- Colourful chords and abrupt modulations into unrelated keys.
- Rich and ever-changing but transparent textures.
- A full and rich palette of instrumental timbres and colours.
- Ambiguous and fluid musical forms that are often based on the transformation of an initial theme.
- Influence from other art forms and cultures.
- Atmospheric pieces with evocative and descriptive titles.

Influences on Debussy

Although Debussy wasn’t keen on the term ‘impressionism’ as a description of his music, there are clear links to be drawn between the art of Monet, Renoir and others and Debussy’s compositions of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

For example, both the visuals artists and Debussy were proud of their French nationality, and keen to ‘be French’ in as many ways as possible through their art. In Debussy’s time, the influence of German Romanticism, led by luminaries such as Wagner, was strong. Debussy acknowledged Wagner’s influence, but set out to break away from his pull. Both Debussy and Wagner were interested in removing the ‘functionality’ of harmony and tonality, making their structures less dependent on keys, and their keys more ambiguous in themselves, but while Wagner used harmony to create unresolved tension through complex chromaticism, Debussy preferred to explore the colour and sound of chords, adding notes to standard major or minor triads to make 6ths, 7ths, 9ths and so on, and making chains of parallel chords that removed the pull of tonality. Debussy’s keys were present but ambiguous, and his harmonic language was fluid.

Another way in which French artists and musicians pulled away from German Romanticism was through their fascination with music from other cultures far removed from it. In 1889, to mark the centenary of the storming of the Bastille, a great fair was held in Paris called the Exposition Universelle. It ran for about six months, and had at its entrance a new tower especially constructed for the event by the engineer Gustave Eiffel. It covered a large area, across which visitors could travel on a specially built railway, and featured a number of attractions including a village of some 400 indigenous African people, a specially composed new opera by Massenet, and Buffalo Bill’s ‘Wild West Show’ which featured Annie Oakley.
Debussy visited the fair, as did many other notable figures including the Prince of Wales (who became Edward VII), inventors Thomas Edison and Nikolas Tesla, and artists Gaugin, Munch, van Gogh and Whistler. Whilst at the fair, Debussy saw a musical ensemble from Java, in what is now Indonesia, and was fascinated by their gamelan music. He resolved to look at how he could incorporate characteristics from the styles of other countries into his music – not only from the Far East, but also, as we will see, from closer to home.

It was not only impressionism in painting that had an influential effect on Debussy. Far stronger was the concept of symbolism, a movement found particularly in much French late 19th-century poetry such as that by Baudelaire, Mallarmé and Verlaine in the 1860s and 1870s. It became a strong force in Debussy’s artistic direction, attractive to him in that it represented a reaction against realism and a preoccupation with imagination and spirituality. This fitted in neatly with Debussy’s interest in evocative timbres and hints of other cultures within his music. A quote about symbolism from Mallarmé sums this up neatly: symbolism strives ‘to depict not the thing but the effect it produces’.

To summarise Debussy’s key influences and ideals, we might land on the following main intentions:

- To avoid too much reliance on Germanic late-Romantic tendencies such as those found in Wagner.
- To incorporate the sounds of other cultures and styles into his music.
- To use less traditional scales and timbres.
- To focus on the symbolist concepts of imagination and effect, and avoid realism.
- To remove the traditional ‘functionality’ from harmony and concentrate on its colour and sound rather than its ‘pull’.

With these and the features discussed in relation to the Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune in mind, let’s look now at the set work itself – ‘Pagodes’ and ‘La soirée dans Grenade’ from Estampes.
DEBUSSY’S ESTAMPES

Debussy wrote his three Estampes in 1903, and they are considered by many as the composer's first piano works to explore the new sound worlds and ideas discussed above. Prior to the Estampes, Debussy's piano music consisted of two hugely popular and much-loved works: Children’s Corner, a collection of six pieces written for the enjoyment of his daughter (not to play, but to listen to); and Deux Arabesques, the first of which is one of his most performed piano pieces. It is likely that he also wrote part of the Suite Bergamasque in the 1890s as well – a collection of four pieces including the hugely famous Clair de lune – but this was not published until 1907.

The Estampes heralded a style of piano writing from Debussy that in turn led to his two collections of Images and two books of Préludes, and are known perhaps most for being the first significant works by Debussy to be influenced by foreign cultures – in 'Pagodes', the sounds of Java and other areas of the Far East; and in 'La soirée dans Grenade', the music of Spain. The third piece in Estampes is 'Jardins sous la pluie', which is not prescribed to be studied.

You can listen to a performance of Estampes and follow the score [here].

Pagodes

A pagoda is a tiered tower found in many East Asian countries such as China, Japan and Vietnam, and a particular characteristic is its sloping roof. It is not entirely clear why Debussy picked the word as the title for this piece, but there is much in the piano writing to resemble a pagoda, such as the gentle, sloping, ‘up-and-down’ nature of the figure at the very beginning:

Debussy spent a lot of time at the gamelan in the Java exhibit at the Paris Exposition. In particular, he wrote later that he was taken by the way in which gamelan music is learnt naturally as part of everyday life in Javanese villages, and that playing the gamelan is as much a normal part of the villagers' routine as working in the fields.

The instruments, seen by the villagers as sacred, are mostly metallic and range from gongs of various sizes (such as the gong ageng and bonang) to metallophones with metal bars played with wooden hammers. The most common of these metallophones are the saron and the gender. There is often also a wooden xylophone (gambang), bamboo flute (suling) and bowed string instrument (rebab) and a range of drums called kendang which give signals to the other players. Sometimes there would be singing and often dancing as well.

The music played by the gamelan is complex, and all parts are considered equal, which means that the texture is frequently busy and multi-layered. However, there is structure to this layering so that all the instruments complement each other by playing various lines intended to decorate a common core melody.

Generally, there is a division of the gamelan into three groups of instruments. The larger gongs punctuate the important parts of the phrases by playing single notes, and the metallophones tend to play the core melody, called the balungan. This balungan is the melody from which all other melodic parts derive. Smaller instruments such as the suling and rebab play a faster, decorative part that is an elaboration of the balungan, and gives the gamelan its characteristic sound.

An example of Javanese gamelan where all these parts are present can be heard [here].

One of the things that struck Debussy as he listened to the gamelan at the Paris Exposition was the way in which the music seemed free in form. He was keen to move away from the traditional expectation to develop melodies through variation and contrast, to move through a set structure with key points, and to build a
harmonic and tonal plan that moves towards these key points. In gamelan, he observed the concept of cycles, which maybe reflects the Eastern idea that everything goes round again and again in perpetuity. Gamelan music is highly dependent on devices that perpetuate a sense of stillness and tends to favour textural and timbral contrasts rather than the development of melody or harmonic changes.

In ‘Pagodes’, Debussy too focused his attention on textural contrast, and spent a lot of time repeating ideas over slow-moving harmonies. We can see many of his gamelan-influenced devices in the piece’s first section. In the key of B major, he begins with left-hand open 5ths (to avoid overstating the Western major tonality) and places added-6th chords on off beats, setting up a gentle repetitive rhythmic ostinato that continues through the first section.

These chords go some way towards replicating the larger gongs of the gamelan. An open 5th pedal point (almost a drone) is repetitively struck at the bottom of the texture, and the added-6th chords continue, changed subtly in bar 5 with the addition of the flattened 7th note (A), which suggests the next chord might be a subdominant E major chord.

Meanwhile, the more rhythmic and melodic texture of the metallophones is heard in bar 3 with this figure:

This is repeated as an ostinato, either in its full form or as a reduced three-note cell marked x in the example above.

In bar 7, the harmony does indeed visit the subdominant, but the open 5th pedal note ‘gong’ remains at the bottom of the texture. To further blur the harmony, another part enters in the middle texture, like one of the larger metallophones, with a quaver countermelody that emphasises the 7th and the sharpened 4th of the E major chord, as seen below:

The texture has become more and more layered, and even contrapuntal.

So in the first 10 bars of ‘Pagodes’, Debussy has established the mood and sound of the gamelan through a layered approach, pedal points, ostinatos and sonorous, slow-changing added-note chords made more resonant by liberal use of the piano’s damper pedal. Further more, if we look horizontally at the pitches Debussy uses in these opening bars, we see that apart from the tonic and subdominant root notes he restricts himself to the five black notes of the piano, thus making the music pentatonic in a way similar to the Javanese five-note slendro scale.

Debussy settles on a pedal G sharp in bar 11, and two clear melodic lines are heard, one at the top and one in the middle, using the new pentatonic pattern of G sharp – B – C sharp – D sharp – F sharp. Then another four-bar phrase starting at bar 15 introduces more complex harmony in the right hand over a D sharp-C sharp triplet ostinato in the left hand.

This ostinato continues at the marking ‘Animez un peu’ in bar 19 (gradual acceleration is also sometimes a feature of gamelan music). The low gong notes are back, outlining a descending pattern of G sharp – E – D sharp – C sharp, while other parts outline B – G sharp – F sharp – G sharp – B, giving this four-bar phrase a sense of having two pentatonic scales in operation at the same time.

Two more four-bar phrases re-establish the B tonal centre with added 6ths, and there is a sparkling texture based on multiple ostinatos like the gamelan in full flow.

The middle section (from the marking ‘Sans lenteur’) is based partly on new ideas and partly on material derived from the first section, and though the texture and harmony become more complex in this section, the principles borrowed from gamelan are still very present – particularly the use of ostinatos, added notes to create metallic resonance, and the layered approach to texture. The first melody heard in this section has
both pentatonic and whole-tone elements. The music builds to a texturally and rhythmically busy climax, after which trills appear at the top, and the tonal centre of B returns. Throughout this section, the chime of the gongs is ever-present, still more often than not on weak beats.

At the marking ‘Tempo 1’ we return to the music of the beginning, devoid of the introductory bars, and this repeat of the A section is very similar until Debussy chooses to develop the D sharp – C sharp oscillating triplet ostinato and build to another, more declamatory climax where the melody is presented as if all the metallophones of the gamelan had joined together.

This is followed by glittering demisemiquavers that cleverly perpetuate the D sharp – C sharp oscillation (look closely at the note changes in the right hand!) and a coda section where the initial pentatonic melody is heard, full of added 2nds and 7ths, and the gong-like bass slowly descends through the tonal centres of B, A, E, C sharp (where it dwells for a moment), and finally B. The right hand shimmers throughout this coda and the sounds of the gamelan slowly fade away.

**La soirée dans Grenade**

We abruptly switch location to Spain, a country that Debussy had only visited once on a day-trip just across the border to San Sebastián before writing ‘La soirée dans Grenade’. Nevertheless, he shows in this piece that he is able to evoke the atmosphere of an evening in Granada with an authenticity that the Spanish composer Manuel de Falla described as ‘admirable’.

Granada is located in Andalusia in southern Spain, at the foot of the Sierra Nevada mountains. It is a busy and cosmopolitan city, situated at the confluence of four rivers and popular with tourists, skiers and settlers from other cultures. It has a rich history and culture, and is particularly known for the Alhambra, a palace and fortress dating back to the ninth century and housing Granada’s emirs and sultans until the Christian Reconquista in the 15th century, when it became a royal palace.

Granada was the last seat in Spain of the Islamic emirs, and still has many reminders of its Moorish past. Debussy cleverly alludes to this by combining Arabic melodic techniques with more obviously Spanish traits such as the habanera dance rhythm and imitations of guitar strumming.

The habanera is actually a Cuban dance (named after Cuba’s capital, Havana) but had become very popular in France at Debussy’s time as an evocation of Spanish culture. It had already inspired music by other French composers, most notably Bizet in his opera Carmen, written in 1875 and set in Seville. Debussy himself used the habanera again in ‘La puerta del vino’ from book two of his Préludes (another Granada-connected piece, inspired by a gateway in the Alhambra).

**SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER WIDER LISTENING**

It would be good for students to listen to some other examples of piano music by Debussy that has been influenced by stylistic aspects of gamelan music. For example:

- ‘Prélude’ from Pour le piano, which employs long, gong-like pedal notes and modal and whole-tone themes.
- ‘Cloches à travers les feuilles’ from the second book of Images, which has a distinctly layered approach to texture.
- ‘Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut’, also from the second book of Images, which uses pedal notes and a balungan-style core melody.
- ‘Poissons d’or’, also from the second book of Images, which sets a melody against a shimmering, oscillating texture.
Debussy openly incorporates the habanera rhythm (along with the instruction ‘Mouvement de Habanera’) at the very start, making a feature of its distinctive rhythm and staccato articulation shown below. This rhythm is continuous until the end of bar 16 and reappears very frequently throughout the piece.

The second flavour of Granada is found in the melody that begins in bar 7, set against the habanera rhythm. This is written in the style of a north African Moorish lament, reflecting the heritage of the Moorish settlers in Granada’s long history. Its sound is characterised by a great many features – first, the deliberately dissonant first note, D, which creates a semitone clash with the repeating C sharp in the habanera rhythm. Secondly, the conjunct and descending nature of the melody makes it sound plaintive, songlike and perhaps melismatic (if words were set to it).

Another distinctive feature is the use of the interval of the augmented 2nd, as shown below. This, along with the use of the acciacatura in bar 12 and the slightly free approach to rhythm, give the melody a sense of flamenco, a musical tradition particularly associated with Andalusia.

The flamenco style is further enhanced with the frequent imitation of guitar playing found in the piece. This is mainly achieved through the frequent use of spread chords and rhythmic chord playing, such as in this example:

Let’s explore the chief features of ‘La soirée dans Grenade’ from the point of view of the elements of music.

**MELODY**

- We have already noted the distinctly Moorish and flamenco features of the lament beginning in bar 7, with its augmented 2nd and stepwise motion.
- The next melodic idea is found at the top of the parallel chords in bar 17, and is based on the Spanish-sounding Phrygian mode, characterised by the interval of a semitone between its first two notes (C sharp and D), as shown in the example above.
- A third melody, beginning in bar 23, is based on the whole-tone scale and arranged, like its predecessor, into two-bar phrases. Pitch is generally higher here.

Debussy introduces a fourth melody in the section marked ‘très rythmé’ at bar 41, again descending and stepwise like the lament in bar 7, but much more tonal than its predecessors and based on the falling scale of A major.

- After a return of the melody from bar 23, this time without its whole-tone flavour but with an added augmented 2nd, we hear another new melody at bar 67 which is more disjunct and syncopated. There are a number of melodic dissonances such as chromatic appoggiaturas and flattened 3rds.
- This and the melody from bar 23 are repeated before we move into the closing section of the piece, at bar 92, where the Phrygian melody from bar 17 returns, followed by the A major theme from bar 43.
A new idea is heard in bar 109, interspersed with hints of the disjunct melody from bar 67, before the piece ends with a return to the Moorish lament in bar 122.

STRUCTURE
The piece is very sectionalised, and it is hard to impose a traditional idea of form on it. It is best to view its structure as determined by the repetition of the various themes and ideas outlined above, and to divide it into four loose sections:
- Bars 1-37: the setting up of the habanera rhythm and the presentation of the Moorish lament and Phrygian and whole-tone ideas.
- Bars 38-60: the section marked ‘très rythmé’, which presents the more declamatory A major theme.
- Bars 61-91: the return of the third theme and the introduction of the disjunct idea.
- Bars 92-end: returns of the Phrygian and A major ideas, appearance of a distant (‘lointain’) new idea, and the return of the Moorish lament.

RHYTHM
- The rhythm of the habanera permeates much of this piece, but there are frequent changes of tempo.
- There is a contrast between the freer rhythmic sections (with instructions such as ‘rubato’ and ‘retenu’) and stricter passages such as ‘tempo giusto’ and ‘très rythmé’.
- The Moorish lament sounds like it is in free time, incorporating triplets and cross rhythms.
- There are examples of syncopation, such as in bars 33 and 67.

HARMONY
- Debussy uses chords for colour and effect rather than for the functional indication of keys, and chains of added-note parallel chords such as the 7ths from bar 17 are common. Cadences are far less common.
- As well as chords with added notes, intervals of 4ths and 5ths are seen a lot (for example in the ‘très rythmé’ section).
- Pedal notes, usually in the habanera rhythm, can be heard throughout much of the piece, and establish tonal centres. Often they are inverted, such as during the Moorish lament.

TONALITY
- Most of the piece is tonal but keys are sometimes not clear, with Debussy often preferring to use tonal centres (single-note ‘anchors’ often acting as pedal notes) rather than clear major or minor keys.
- The tonal centre in the first part of the piece is clearly C sharp, despite a key signature that suggests A major or F sharp minor – the music certainly does not sound like it is in either of these keys.
- The use of the whole-tone scale (eg in bars 24-25) further clouds the tonality.
- In bar 29 the tonal centre shifts to F sharp.
- In bar 38 the tonal centre moves to A, and this section feels much more like A major.
- In bar 61 the tonal centre moves back to C sharp, and then F sharp at bar 67, where the key signature changes to F sharp major, though there is a lot of dissonance in this section.
- We are back in A major in the final section (from bar 92) with some dominant pedal notes.

USE OF THE PIANO
- The full pitch range of the piano is used – for example at the beginning of the piece.
- The full range of tone and dynamics is also exploited by the music, and the sustain pedal plays an important part. Markings like ‘lointain’ (‘distant’) are good examples of the importance of tone and touch in the performance.
- The pianist is also expected to cross hands at bar 122.
- The use of spread chords is another example of exploitation of the abilities of the piano.
EXAMPLES OF EXAM QUESTIONS

To finish, here are some examples of the kinds of questions students could be asked at AS and A Level on this set work.

**AS Level**

Section A questions tend to be ‘short answer’ ones, and a skeleton excerpt from the score will be provided.

**DEBUSSY: ‘PAGODES’ FROM ESTAMPES**

Listen to Pagodes from the beginning up to 1:19.

1. What is the English translation of ‘Modérément animé’? (1)
2. What harmonic device is used in the left hand from bars 1 to 10? (1)
3. Identify the key at bar 1. (1)
4. Name the interval between the first two notes played in the left hand of bar 1. (1)
5. Indicate the kind of scale on which the melodies in this excerpt are based.
   ___ Major
   ___ Minor
   ___ Chromatic
   ___ Pentatonic

   (1)

6. Give a bar number where each of the following can be found: (3)
   ■ syncopation
   ■ ostinato
   ■ chromatic harmony

7. Describe what happens to the tempo towards the end of the excerpt. (1)

8. Describe the texture of this excerpt. (3)

There will also be questions such as ‘complete the melody’ and ‘correct the errors’, which can be easily constructed – check Edexcel’s sample assessment material (AS) for examples.

Section B of the AS paper will ask two questions. The first will be about a piece of ‘wider listening’ music included on the CD. For example, students could be given an extract from Debussy’s Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune and asked to discuss aspects of its style. This would require a longer answer and would be worth 15 marks.

The second question is worth 20 marks and will ask students to evaluate the use of two elements (for example, melody and harmony) in the set work as a whole. There is a choice of questions on different set works.

**A level**

The A Level paper is similar in construction to the AS paper, though at a more advanced level, and Section A requires short answer questions. There is an example of a Section A question on Debussy’s Estampes in Edexcel’s sample assessment material, available online [here](#).
Section B of the A level paper also contains two questions. The first, worth 20 marks, asks students to discuss some contextual aspect of one of the set works and relate it to other relevant works. So for example, the question could be:

In writing his *Estampes*, Debussy was influenced by music from different parts of the world. Show how these influences are present in the music, and relate your discussion to other relevant works. These may include set works, wider listening or other music.

Finally, the last question is worth 30 marks and asks students to evaluate the use of three elements (such as rhythm, texture and structure) in one of the set works. There is a choice of questions for students to answer.