



**A COMPREHENSIVE PRACTICE GUIDE FOR
DEBUSSY'S SONATA FOR CELLO AND PIANO**

**BY
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Abstract

This study aims to provide effective strategies for overcoming technical challenges while incorporating the researcher's interpretative insights. Focusing on the technical aspects of the sonata, specifically bowings, fingerings, special effects, dynamics, expression, tempo, and ensemble with the piano, this research offers a detailed analysis and discussion. Additionally, a practice guide is provided to assist performers in mastering challenging passages and techniques. The findings, derived through artistic research, allow for modifications to Debussy's original manuscript while maintaining fidelity to his artistic intentions. These modifications include adjustments to bowings, fingerings, dynamics, special effects, and *pizzicato*.

The findings of this research emphasize the critical role of bowings and fingerings, with modifications made to better align with Debussy's artistic intentions regarding phrasing, dynamics, and special effects. *Pizzicato* is particularly significant in the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*, and through an analysis of its various forms, the researcher has developed distinct execution methods for each. Additionally, techniques such as *spiccato*, *sautillé*, and *ricochet* have been assigned to specific passages to enhance interpretative precision. Both artificial and natural harmonics appear in the sonata, with the researcher presenting multiple execution options. The *Sonata for Cello and Piano* also presents technical challenges, including string crossings, dynamic contrasts, fast passages, and leaping intervals. To address these, the researcher proposes a corrective bow exercise and four left-hand practice methods designed to improve ease and muscle memory.

(Total 88 pages)

Keywords: Debussy, Sonata, Cello, Performance, Practice Guide

Student's Signature..... Thesis Advisor's Signature.....

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background and Significance of the Research

Claude Debussy, born Achille-Claude Debussy, was born on the 22nd of August 1862, into a humble family of modest means (Vallas, 1933, p. 1). Debussy became one of France's most prominent composers, recognized for his aesthetic and "impressionistic" style (Austin, 1966, p. 24). He was one of the composers who found themselves between the romantic period and the twentieth-century, two contrasting periods in music. Often trying to escape the bounds of traditional music and its conventional techniques in composition, he would time and again find himself in contradiction with his own beliefs (Lockspeiser, 1962, p. 230). Undoubtedly, he was one of the precursors who bridged the gap between the late romantic period and the early twentieth century, establishing new techniques and reintroducing ancient ones (Lockspeiser, 1962, p. 187).

Renowned for his orchestral compositions and solo piano works, a few of his notable compositions included *Prelude a l'apres-midi d'un faune* (1894), *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1902), *Nocturnes* (1899), *La mer* (1905), *Images* (1907), *Preludes for Piano* (1913), and *Jeux* (1913) (Thompson, 2010, p. 187). In 1915, Debussy conceived the idea of composing a collection of six sonatas "in the ancient, flexible mould with none of the grandiloquence of the modern sonatas" (Debussy, 1987, p. 303). This would come to be known as the *Six Sonatas for Various Instruments*. The first of these sonatas was the *Sonata for Cello and Piano* (1915), followed by the *Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp* (1915), and the *Sonata for Violin and Piano* (1917). Unfortunately, Debussy's declining health led to his passing in 1918, resulting in the completion of only three sonatas out of the six projected sonatas.

Debussy composed the *Sonata for Cello and Piano* after spending nearly a year being unable to compose any music. As a result, it was as if he had to relearn it, so much so that Debussy expressed that “It was like a rediscovery and it’s seemed to be more beautiful than ever!” (as cited in Lesure & Nichols, 1987, p. 303). This is very much apparent as Debussy wrote in another account that “I’ve actually written nothing except ‘pure’ music: twelve *Etudes* for piano; two sonatas for various instruments, in the old French style” (as cited in Lesure & Nichols, 1987, p. 309). His late works embody a deliberate effort to return to the old compositional ways of the seventeenth and eighteenth-century (Vallas, 1933, pp. 261-262). As a result, Debussy’s compositional techniques developed over the course of his career were presented in a different and more refined way (Hong, 2002, p. 9).

The sonata represents a departure from the traditional sonata form prevalent in the classical and romantic periods, showing Debussy’s inclination towards innovative structures and harmonies (Cantrell, 1988, p. 24). However, Debussy’s exploration of impressionistic techniques, such as fluid tonalities and ambiguous harmonies paired with unpredictable tempo and rhythm, may present challenges for the performer (Hong, 2002, p. 3). At the same time this also presents the opportunity for the performer to experiment with their technical and interpretive skills. Apart from this, the sonata holds significance both within Debussy’s oeuvre and the cellist’s collective body of works, as it is one of his few chamber works that includes stringed instruments (Cantrell, 1988, p. 1). Debussy’s style is remarkably unique in its character, and without a proper understanding of his compositions and artistic approach, the performer may struggle to navigate the technical complexities and interpretive nuances in his music (Hong, 2002, p. 28).

The *Sonata for Cello and Piano* consists of three movements: *Prologue*, *Sérénade*, and the *Finale*. Each movement presents its own unique character, exploring new sonorities and color. Moreover, the sonata exhibits ingenuity, expressive depth and musical innovation, exhibiting the versatility and continuous evolution of Debussy as a composer (Vallas, 1933, p. 262).

1.2 Research Objectives

Taking into account that this research is “A Comprehensive Practice Guide for Debussy’s *Sonata for Cello and Piano*”, the main objective of this thesis is to provide a practice guide for cellists who wish to perform Debussy’s *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. Below is a detailed list of this thesis’ objectives.

1.2.1 The researcher will examine the technical challenges inherent in Debussy’s *Sonata for Cello and Piano*.

1.2.2 The researcher will document effective strategies for overcoming technical difficulties encountered within the sonata, whilst also providing interpretative input regarding expressiveness.

1.3 Benefits of Study

This research aims to provide cellists with solutions and strategies to navigate and overcome the technical challenges inherent in Debussy’s *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. Given the relative scarcity of research focusing on the performance and technical aspects of this sonata, the researcher aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by offering a detailed exploration of its interpretative and technical demands. By doing so, the researcher aspires to not only enhance pedagogical resources for cellists but also to deepen the broader understanding of Debussy’s *Sonata for Cello and Piano*.

1.4 Scope

Although explicitly written for “Cello and Piano”, the researcher will be focusing solely on the performance aspect of the cellist, while also taking the piano part into consideration where necessary for the interaction and connection between the two instruments. For the purpose of this study, the score edition used will be from Editions Durand (1915), the publishing company that Debussy himself was closely acquainted with.

Debussy's *Sonata for Cello and Piano* may present intricate technical difficulties for the performer. Challenges may encompass establishing bowings and fingerings and determining interpretations for special effects, dynamics, expressions, and tempo throughout the sonata. Focusing on these issues, the researcher acknowledges the complexity of making these decisions, recognizing that there might be more than one way to approach the technical challenges inherent in the sonata. Furthermore, the piano part will be taken into consideration where it is crucial and necessary for the cello to adapt seamlessly in context with ensemble playing.

Findings within this thesis are gathered through the researcher's own practice conducted over a length of time, supported by historical and theoretical background regarding the composer and piece, consulting books by Alexanian Diran (1922), Paul Tortelier (1993), Louis Feuillard (1919), and masterclasses conducted on the performative aspect of the sonata conducted by Paul Tortelier (1987), including performances and recordings of the sonata.

1.5 Definition of Terms

An article written by Gingborg (2014), presents the different types of research in the performative context with clear definitions of each type. She writes, "Practice-based research—otherwise known as 'practice-as' or 'practice-led' research, and particularly in Europe, 'artistic' research—is research undertaken by a practitioner such as a performer, composer and/or teacher on his or her own practice." (pp. 77-78).

This research should not be confused with the term 'performance practice', derived from the German word *Aufführungspraxis*. Performance practice delves into the intricate study of the methods employed to interpret and execute music in its most authentic form (Ginsborg, 2014, p. 78). Conversely, the researcher initiated this research with the term artistic research in mind which mainly involves a person reflecting on what they do during the act of practice. This type of research entails creatively exploring and investigating musical concepts, techniques, and expressions, integrating practice as a central element to generate new knowledge and contribute to the evolving musical

landscape (Ginsborg, 2014, p, 82). Therefore, for this thesis, assumptions and conclusions will be always made with the term artistic research in mind, as to not confuse it with the term performance practice.

1.6 Symbols

In this research, certain symbols in the *Sonata for Cello and Piano* have been added or modified to address technical challenges and enhance musical clarity during performance. These adjustments, which include alterations to bowings and fingerings, aim to preserve the composer's original intentions while offering practical solutions for execution. Below is a list of symbols used in this research.

	Debussy's original phrasing for the <i>Sonata for Cello and Piano</i> .
	Phrasing and slurs modified by the researcher.
	Down bow instruction indicated by the researcher.
	Up bow instruction indicated by the researcher.
	Chord pizzicato starting from the lowest string indicated by the researcher.
	Chord pizzicato starting from the highest string indicated by the researcher.
	Left hand pizzicato

- I** A string
- II** D string
- III** G string
- IV** C string



Chapter 2

Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to help performers have a deeper understanding of Debussy's *Sonata for Cello and Piano* in a more comprehensive manner. This chapter will be divided into four sections: historical background, musical context, performance and technical issues, and related research. Provided that this is a practical approach to the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*, materials reviewed in this chapter have been selected with the intent to properly inform the performer for the best outcome of the performance.

2.1 Historical Background

Examining the historical circumstances under which the *Sonata for Cello and Piano* was created—such as the composer's life, societal norms, or cultural movements—can reveal Debussy's intentions embedded in the work. This understanding enhances the interpretation of the work, allowing the researcher to fully grasp both the aesthetic qualities of the piece and the artistic vision of the composer.

2.1.1 The Life of Debussy

Achille Claude Debussy was born on August 22, 1862. The future composer who would years later dub himself as “*musicien français*” was born in the region of Ile-de-France in the communes of Saint-Germain-en-Laye. Debussy was the oldest of five children born to parents Manuel-Achille Debussy and Victorine Manoury. His parents were modest shopkeepers living on a bourgeois lifestyle and could only afford him a simple and incomplete education. Despite his parent's lack of wealth and resources, this did not stop them from having artistic interests. Although none of his immediate family showed any talent for music, Debussy's father had an affinity towards music and would sometimes even take young Debussy to the theater. Some claim that at a young age

Debussy had taken a liking to the arts and even wanted to be a painter himself (Vallas, 1933, p. 3). This is only seemingly appropriate as later in life he will be described by others as a painter of sorts by his own means. As a child Debussy was described as socially awkward and often found by oneself. One of his sisters even said that he was “uncommunicative and closed in upon himself, liking neither his lessons nor his games...He would spend whole days sitting on a chair thinking, no one knew of what” (Lockspeiser, 1972, p. 6). Having had an incomplete education and living apart from his siblings left the young Debussy little to no opportunity to practice his social skills.

Debussy had his first piano lessons at the age of nine with an old Italian teacher named Cerutti (Lockspeiser, 1972, p. 7). However, it was Madame Mauté de Fleurville who found true talent in Debussy and cultivated it over a short period of time (Vallas, 1933, p. 3). This joint endeavor soon yielded results, resulting in Debussy’s acceptance into the Paris Conservatory in 1872 (Clevenger, 2001, p. 299). As previously mentioned, the only music lessons Debussy was known to have taken prior to his admission to the conservatory were private piano lessons. So, any formal lessons in other areas of music were presumably nonexistent. Debussy spent a total of twelve years at the conservatory from the year 1872 all the way to his graduation in the year 1884 (Lockspeiser, 1972, p. 9). This long period of academia was filled with lessons with different professors. An article written by Clevenger (2001) conveniently catalogs all the courses and professors that Debussy was thought to have learned with. He learned the piano with Antoine Marmontel, *solfège* with Albert Lavignac, harmony and accompaniment with Emile Durand, instrumental ensemble with René Baillot, music history with Bourgault-Ducoudray, piano accompaniment with Auguste Bazille, the organ with César Franck, and composition with Ernest Guiraud (pp. 301-302).

It is worth mentioning that at that time, Debussy was one of the youngest students in Marmontel’s class. He, however, was not one of the best or promising students in the class. As a matter of fact, during his twelve years in the conservatory, he had a reputation for poor attendance and when he did manage to go to classes he would arrive late (Nichols, 1992, p. 13). Regardless of this, his time at the conservatory was not entirely futile, as Debussy often participated in competitions—sometimes

winning—in piano, *solfège*, harmony and accompaniment, harmony, accompaniment at the piano, fugue, and the prestigious Prix de Rome (Clevenger, 2001, p. 342).

Towards the end of his time at the conservatory, Debussy had surprisingly decided he wanted to be a composer. Gone were his father's hopes and dreams of his son becoming a concert pianist. However, before Debussy could even enroll into a composition class, he was required to earn at least one first prize in the area of music theory. In 1879, Debussy joined Auguste Bazille's classes in practical keyboard harmony and score-reading, and within several months, he earned the prize he needed to enroll in the composition class. By the end of 1880, he enrolled in Ernest Guiraud's composition class (Nichols, 1998, p. 14).

One of Debussy's first significant work of considerable length was the *Piano in Trio in G*. The piano trio was composed between September and October 1880, before he was even enrolled in Guiraud's composition class. His lack of experience in composition was quite evident in the piano trio, which was loose in its form and showed his distinct style as still very undeveloped (Vallas, 1933, p. 11). Perhaps lacking the proper skills to compose, it seemed like a young composer trying to find their footing, struggling with their personal identity. Him joining Guiraud's composition class may have possibly helped him learn and understand composition in a more traditional and conventional manner. But even then, his early compositions already showed indications of his ingenuity.

2.1.2 Sonata for Cello and Piano

Claude Debussy endured the hardships of a world torn apart by the First World War. The global upheaval of the war, which took place from 1914 to 1918, had far-reaching consequences, and Debussy's life and work were inevitably affected. During the war, Debussy went through a series of personal challenges and health issues (Lockspeiser, 1972, p. 102). Consequently, his compositions during the war reflect the somber mood of that period and as well as his struggle with his health (Kwon, 1997, p. 36).

With Germany declaring war against France in 1914, Debussy, a well-known nationalist, harbored sentiments of resistance and disdain towards Germany and their influence in music. Struggling with his opinions on German supremacy and their influence over music, the war and its atrocities gave Debussy the opportunity to protest “against the German tyranny to which his musical fellow countrymen had so long submitted” (Vallas, 1933, p. 251). German composers played a huge part in the Romantic period with vast contributions that have had significant impact for music to come. However, with Germany waging war against France this only intensified his dislike towards them. In a letter to one of his students, Debussy expresses his thoughts on the effects of the war and how the French were to pay dearly for conforming to the German standard in music.

I won't get on to the subject of German barbarity. It's exceeded all expectations. They've even found it convenient not to distinguish between brutishness and intellectualism—a charming combination! I think we're going to pay dearly for the right to dislike the music of Richard Strauss and Schoenberg. As for Beethoven, someone's just made the fortunate discovery he was a Fleming! When it comes to Wagner, they're bound to exaggerate! His glory will always be to have summed up centuries of music in a formula. Our mistake was to keep trying for too long to follow in his footsteps ... our generation won't ever be able to change its tastes and more that its forms! What could be interesting and surprising is what those who have fought in this war – who have been 'on the march' in all senses—will do and think? French art needs to take revenge quite as seriously as the French army does! (as cited in Lesure & Nichols, 1987, pp. 292-293).

The composer went through a rough patch of unproductivity, and it was hard not to blame the ongoing war for the lack of Debussy's inspiration—“he wrote nothing for the first nine months of the war—a sufficient indication of the numbing effect it had on him” (Nichols, 1998, p. 151). Eventually, the *Sonata for Cello and Piano* came into fruition in the year 1915. In a letter to Bernardo Molinari, Debussy writes that he

intended to write six sonatas hence the name of the project—*Six sonatas pour divers instruments*.

I haven't written much orchestral music, but I have finished: *Douze Etudes* for piano, a Cello Sonata, and another sonata for flute, viola and harp, in the ancient, flexible mould with none of the grandiloquence of modern sonatas. There are going to be six of them for different groups of instruments and the last one will combine all those used in the previous five. (as cited in Lesure & Nichols, 1987, p. 303)

According to Debussy's publisher, Jacques Durand, after watching a performance of Camille Saint-Saëns' Septet in Concerts Durand in 1913, the idea of composing a series of six sonatas came into Debussy's mind (Hong, 2002, p. 6). Similarly, Saint-Saëns was also being published by Durand. Saint-Saëns' *Septet in E-flat Major, Op. 65* which is scored for trumpet, two violins, viola, cello, double bass, and piano was completed in 1880 and published by Durand in 1881 (Ratner, 2002, p. 174). The title page of Debussy's *Sonata for Cello and Piano* published by Durand signed as "*musicien français*", was in a sense a nod to his predecessors from the 18th century and a clear indication of Debussy's efforts to gain independence from German domination in music (Lockspeiser, 1962, p. 206). It was clear that Debussy was quite pleased with the *Sonata for Cello and Piano* as he, in a letter to Jacques Durand, wrote "The sonata for cello and piano will reach you, perhaps, before this letter. It's not for me to judge its excellence but I like its proportions and its almost classical form, in the good sense of the word" (as cited in Lesure & Nichols, 1987, p. 299).

Despite Debussy's grand plans of composing six sonatas for various instruments, his poor health got the better of him and eventually the composer died on the 25th of March 1918 (Vallas, 1933, p. 270). Before his death he left behind three out of the six prospected sonatas. First of which is the *Sonata for Cello and Piano* (1915), followed by the *Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp* (1915), and the *Sonata for Violin and Piano* (1917). Had Debussy had the chance to complete this series of works he would have composed the fourth sonata for oboe, horn and harpsichord and the fifth sonata for

trumpet, clarinet, bassoon and piano with the sixth sonata combining all the instruments with the addition of a double bass (Lockspeiser, 1962, p. 214).

Despite the last few years of his life being regrettably unpleasant, Debussy's music continued to embody his characteristic impressionistic style, characterized by his fluid melodies and innovative use of harmony. Even in the face of personal and global adversity, Debussy's ability to convey subtle and nuanced emotions remained a hallmark of his musical expression.

2.2 Musical Context

Debussy wrote the *Sonata for Cello and Piano* with influences beyond the traditional scope of the cello, resulting in a richly multifaceted piece (Nichols, 1972, p. 177). Stephen Sensbach captures the essence of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano* in his book of *French Cello Sonatas*.

The sonata creates a many-faceted world of expression and color within its three short movements. The "almost classical form" to which Debussy referred is the ternary shape of each movement, but the modal and whole-tone harmonies are an inseparable part of his musical language. Few composers have used the potential of harmonies, pizzicato, and other "effects" in such an imaginative way, and in a way so integral to the music. For the performers, the difficulty lies in how best to give the impression of spontaneity when the composer has dictated dynamics, tempo changes, and character (ironique, fantastique) in nearly every bar. Each performance can reveal new dimensions to listener and player. (Sensbach, 2001, p. 53)

Although the *Sonata for Cello and Piano* is comparatively short compared to other standard pieces of cello repertoire, it certainly does not lack in complexity (Sensbach, 2001, p. 53). Debussy often finds himself in an inner struggle, striving to break free from the traditional expectations and forms of music. Yet, elements of these traditions remain subtly woven, often hidden, within his works (Kwon, 1997, p. 4). Any

attempt to analyze Debussy's music always seems daunting even to the most seasoned of experts (Cantrell, 1988, p. 6). In Lockspeiser's book, *Debussy: His Life and Mind*, he prompts a logical course of action on how to approach the analysis of Debussy's music.

In any view of Debussy's style and the elements of his musical language the main problem is to define his attitude to tonality. The vagueness of Debussy's sense of tonality, compared to that of Brahms, or even of Wagner, was long a commonplace in essays on musical analysis, and indeed in so far as this vagueness was held to be a characteristic of Impressionism from which, after Debussy's death, there was a sharp reaction, it was held, too, to be a reprehensible aspect of his work, suggesting in his approach a certain tentativeness or a timidity. Today this seems to us superficial...with our knowledge of some of the underlying origins of the great revolutionary movements at the end of the nineteenth century, we are compelled, in an assessment of Debussy's style, to view values of precision and imprecision in artistic expression in a different light. Precision is not entirely virtuous; imprecision is not wholly to be condemned. The aesthetic proclaimed by Debussy required their fusion. (Lockspeiser, 1962, pp. 229-230)

It is important to understand the foundations of music laid before Debussy's time that govern our choices in musical composition. Tonality, without its complexities and reduced to its purest of form, is functional harmony within the constraints of formal structures. It is a collection of musical arguments arranged in a dialogue that are meant to be resolved, put simply, dissonance followed, one way or another, by resolution. And for the longest of time, these established set of procedures have been what is accepted and expected of composers. At some point, these set of procedures have somewhat become the standard constituents of musical composition (Lockspeiser, 1962, p. 230). Throughout the Romantic period, particularly towards the end, there was a slow revolution against tonality. In spite of that, Debussy was still somehow bound to tonality considering that many of his works still have tonal principles. However, over time, he would increasingly use tonal harmony in a non-functional sense and vice versa, non-traditional harmony in a functional sense (Cantrell, 1988, p. 87).

Debussy is recognized as one of the most prominent and influential Impressionist composers of his time. A majority of Debussy's works could be easily distinguished amongst other composers as a result of several key indicators. In a brief analysis of Debussy's *Syrinx* (1913), Austin highlights the basic features of Debussy's technical innovations and stylistic development—"melodic arabesques, ... languid but nervously fluctuating rhythms, ... discreet whole-tone scales, pentatonic scales, free chromaticism, and vague modality" (Austin, 1966, p. 15) and chords in parallel motion (Austin, 1966, p. 18).

Debussy's music often evoked "fleeting moods and misty atmospheres", both similar attributes to Impressionist paintings and symbolist poetry—closely related art forms to musical Impressionism (Kamien, 2008, p. 307). This feeling of vagueness can be attributed to his use of harmony. For example, extended harmonies, a technique that delivers a sense of vagueness and an added feeling of suspense. In the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*'s case, Debussy uses seventh and ninth chords, giving a sense of instability. These kinds of chords, the diminished seventh in particular, function as a "pivot, modulating chord which may branch out into one of eight tonalities ... If, however, this chord is not used to modulate into another key but is linked to other seventh chords in the form of a succession a continuous feeling of suspense is created" (Lockspeiser, 1962, p. 240). In many instances, Debussy uses these extended harmonies successively in a parallel motion which is apparent in the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. Hong writes "Debussy sought new colors and fresh sonorities. There are not only seventh, but also ninth, eleventh and thirteenth chords ... These complex chords often move in parallel motion, giving his music a mysterious and fresh sound" (Hong, 2002, p. 62). This adds more depth and quiet intensity to the melody. Austin explains the principle behind the technique in the following passage:

The principle behind Debussy's use of chords shows up with extreme clarity in passages where a series of similar chords accompany a melody in a parallel motion, one chord for each note of the melody, like a thickening of the melodic line. This procedure may be heard in *Pelléas* ... Debussy's parallel chords, especially parallel ninth chords, invite parody, like his whole-tone scale.

Teachers at the Paris Conservatory around 1880 were already joking about Debussy's parallels ... But parodists usually overlook the fact that Debussy's chord-streams always parallel a bit of significant melody, to enhance some quality inherent in that melody. The chords are free from polyphony in order to serve the melody. (Austin, 1966, p. 18)

Modes, scales that were widely used in European music during the middle-ages, have appeared every so often during the Romantic period. However, there was a tremendous reoccurrence at the turn of the 20th century (Kennedy, M. & Kennedy, J., 2007, p. 499). Debussy's musical language, despite coming across as progressive, surprisingly comprises of ideas that come from the distant past, used in a more radical manner (Kwon, 1997, p. 4). Modes can evoke a sense of ambiguity, considering that some modes share similar pitch contents, this can make analysis, in the traditional sense, difficult (Cantrell, 1988, p. 87).

Whole-tone scales, which to some extent, have become a hallmark of Debussy's musical language (Austin, 1966, p. 11), can be found throughout all the three movements (Cantrell, 1988, p. 114). Found in both the cello and piano part of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano* (Hong, 2002, p. 62), the whole-tone scale gives a feeling of ambiguity, a quality achieved due to the absence of a leading-tone and equal distance between the notes (Kamien, 2008, p. 308). Austin describes how Debussy uses the whole-tone scale in one of Debussy's compositions, *Syrinx*, and the reason why it evokes a sense of ambiguity.

The whole-tone scale, the series of whole steps that fill the space of an octave with smooth continuity and symmetry, while avoiding the clearest, strongest intervals of the ordinary diatonic scale, the fourths and fifths. This unnatural scale is so characteristic a device of Debussy's style that whenever we think of it, we think of him. No other composer has used it so often or so skillfully, though the Russians from Glinka to Tchaikovsky all used it deliberately and effectively on special occasions. (Austin, 1966, pp. 11-12)

The chromatic scale was not in any means new during Debussy's time. However, he implemented it with more freedom as opposed to the traditional sense of composition. Austin (1966) writes that Debussy used the chromatic scale "more freely than it was used in the common practice of the past. He follows the lead of Chopin, Liszt, Wagner, and Franck, all of whom occasionally accumulated so many chromatic deviations from the diatonic norm that their norm disappeared" (p. 13). In regard to the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*, Kwon (1997) writes "Many melodies are constructed in fragments that are based on chromatic or whole-tone materials, or on a combination of these two" (p. 186).

The pentatonic scale, another scale that Debussy used frequently, can be found in several places throughout the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*, often combined with modes (Hong, 2002, p. 62). Similar to the *Syrinx*, the *Sonata for Cello and Piano* features the pentatonic scale in "quick sweeping passages ... It enables us to hear many notes as if at once ... This extraordinary way of using the pentatonic scales is once again more characteristic of Debussy than the mere fact that he uses it" (Austin, 1966, p. 12). Debussy's approach to harmony serves as the core foundation of his music. Through his innovative use of chords as tonal color, Debussy crafted a unique harmonic language that distinguished his compositions from those of his contemporaries (Kamien, 2008, p. 307).

Another characteristic of Debussy's music, that is often overlooked, is the execution of his rhythm. Kamien (2008) writes, "The pulse in Debussy's music is sometimes as vague as the tonality. This rhythmic flexibility reflects the fluid, unaccented quality of the French language, and in fact he set French to music very sensitively" (p. 308). In a stylistic analysis by Hong, she suggests that these are the effects of the French recitative and the rhythmic pattern of the French language.

French recitative [*récitatif*], however, is constructed precisely on the nuances of the French language's pronunciation, with its long and short syllables. The rhythm of Debussy's *Sonata* seems to reflect their language and approach to recitative. The ties, syncopations, and various dotted rhythms provide the intervals of short or long. These rhythms, along with chromatic and whole-step

motion, third leaps, the prominent intervals of the 4th or 5th, and repeated notes are all potential echoes of French language and recitative. The melodies are singable and flow naturally without specific emphasis on meter in the sonata. In fact, freedom and lack of emphasis are characteristics of Debussy's melody. These instrumental melodies are accurately described as "vocal melody without words". (Hong, 2002, pp. 39-40)

So far, several of Debussy's compositional techniques have been reviewed—extended harmonies, ambiguous use of modes, parallel motion of harmonies, chromatic scales, whole tone scales, pentatonic scales, and erratic and fluctuating rhythm. Given that this study is a practical approach to the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*, the theoretical aspects of this study will be utilized from a practical performance standpoint. Reviewing the harmony will provide a better perception of the harmonic outline and may perhaps assist the researcher in the conceptualization and planning of the fingerings.

Structure, an essential element of any piece of work, reveals how components are organized within a piece. In this study, it provides a framework that guides both the researcher and reader through the process of studying and understanding the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. Not only does studying the structure facilitate a deeper understanding of the piece, but also enables the researcher to interpret the piece more effectively.

Hong suggests that Debussy did not write the *Sonata for Cello and Piano* in the "German Romantic style", but rather in the ways of his French predecessors (Hong, 2002, p. 42). Similarly, Austin (1966) suggests that Debussy perhaps did indeed "seem to have rediscovered French forms of long ago ... The work is not at all on the Beethoven plan. It bears a resemblance to the French sonatas of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries" (pp. 261-262). Hong (2002) contends that "each of the Cello Sonata's three movements is in ABA' form, with elements of rondo, particularly in the *Sérénade* and the *Finale* ... To a certain extent Debussy's three-part form recalls the late French Baroque [bi-thematic] song form" (p. 42).

Cantrell contends that Debussy's approach to form in the *Sonata for Cello and Piano* defies analysis in the traditional sense—"Debussy's unique approach to form in the Cello Sonata has also defied analysis in traditional terms. The movements do not relate to any expected outline. These characteristics of Debussy's music thwart successful analysis using only traditional tools" (Cantrell, 1988, p. 7). However, for the purpose of this study, the author will use Cantrell's formal analysis of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano* in order to properly outline and easily convey the structure in each of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*'s movements. Cantrell notes that, despite its initial appearance, the Prologue is not in sonata form, although it shares some characteristics with a few other traditional forms. However, the Prologue does not comfortably align with any of these conventional forms (Cantrell, 1988, p. 12). Despite this, Cantrell still manages to carry out a formal analysis of the Prologue, outlining it as an A-B-A' structure, with section A starting at mm. 1-15, section B at mm. 16-28, and section A' at mm. 29-51. The first theme appears during mm. 1-7, 16-20, 29-34, and 45-51, whilst the second theme appears during mm. 8-15 and 39-44. In addition to this, Cantrell observes a few instances where Debussy freely introduces new material that is not directly related to the already existing themes (Cantrell, 1988, p. 13).

Similar to the Prologue, the Sérénade thematically resembles conventional forms, where both themes in the movement exhibit similarities to a rondo form: A-B-A-C-A. Section A starts at mm. 3-10, followed by section B at mm. 11-18, with section A returning at mm. 19-30, preceded by section C at mm. 31-53, with section A returning once again at mm. 54-64 (Cantrell, 1988, p. 18). This rondo form analysis adeptly delineates the sections of the Sérénade thematically. In the same vein as the Sérénade, the Finale "both has the character and recurring thematic structure of a rondo" (Cantrell, 1988, p. 20). However, the Finale's analysis is somewhat less conventional than the two previous movements. Cantrell's (1988, p. 23) analysis reveals an axis in the middle of the Finale, imparting upon it a symmetrical character. However, Cantrell (1988) also contends that the Finale "has both the character and recurring thematic structure of a rondo" (p. 20). Part one includes theme one at mm. 3-14, theme two at mm. 15-22, new material at mm. 23-37, and theme one at mm. 37-56. This is followed by an axis at mm. 57-68, preceded by part two. Part two is comprised of new material

at mm. 69-84, theme one at mm. 85-95, theme two at mm. 96-103, and theme one with a variation at mm. 104-123. Despite Cantrell going through the meticulous process of dissecting the entire *Sonata for Cello and Piano*, Cantrell argues that:

Rather than viewing the Cello Sonata as a classical three-movement sonata with distinct movements in conventional order, the work is best regarded as a single formal entity with three sections. Considering the work as a single unit shows a higher order of unity among the seemingly diverse materials used. (1988, p. 24)

The researcher, however, finds that the Finale can be simply perceived as a two-part structure with a link or bridge in between. Nonetheless, mapping the structural outline of each movement and the whole sonata will provide the basis on how to navigate the piece and the proper understanding of how each movement relates to each other and how the themes in each movement appear throughout the movements. By doing so, this will help unify and solidify the performance of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*.

2.3 Performance and Technical Issues

Upon the researcher's initial study of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*, several potential technical issues were identified—*vibrato*, natural and artificial harmonics, *pizzicato*, special effects namely *sur la touche* and *sur la chevalet*, as well as bowing techniques like *spiccato* and *sautillé*. The researcher intends to examine these technical issues in depth in order to properly prepare for the performance of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*.

2.3.1 Technique

Debussy had a distinct ability that allowed his compositions to showcase the unique characteristics of a musical instrument, underscoring the importance of careful and deliberate understanding of the technical terms in the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. Some technical terms such as *vibrato* are unusual for composers to write as it was

considered as “generally added at the whim of the performer and not notated” (Walden, 1998, p. 213). Hong claims that *vibrato* should be considered as an important factor when performing French music, especially when performing the *Sonata for Cello and Piano* (2002, p. 102). Hong also contends that “the varieties of the *vibrati* he includes are as important as his dynamics and any other musical indication” (2002, p. 99), therefore the “performer should experiment with varied types of *vibrati* not only in relation to the fluctuating tempos and dynamics, but also in conjunction with other techniques such as *pizzicato*, *sur le chevalet (sul ponticello)*, *sul la touche (sul tasto)*, and *flautando*” (p. 99). In a similar manner, Eisenberg points out the application of *vibrato* in the *pizzicato* passages in mm. 5-6 and mm. 21-22 of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*’s Sérénade.

The use of vibrato to intensify the tone does not solely concern bowed notes. Its influence is equally evident when the right hand is plucking the strings, in *pizzicato* passages ... there are many occasions when it is necessary to make crescendos in the vibrato after the right hand has left the string following a *pizzicato*. Twentieth-century composers frequently demand this in their quest for new and diverse instrumental effects. For example, the following passage from the “Serenata” movement of the Debussy Sonata brings the necessity for playing two or more notes melodically on the same *pizzicato* “twang”. To accomplish this, use strong, rapid articulation and make certain that the hand and fingers are extremely vibrant when passing from one note to another. (1957, pp. 114-115)

Alexanian offers suggestions on how to achieve the appropriate *vibrato* for the desired outcome. “For weak sounds the vibrato should be spaced and supple. For full sounds the vibrato should ... be rapid and nervous ... In a “piano” a rapid tremor would not fail to give an impression of feverishness. A “forte” ... would appear weak and nerveless if played with a slow undulation.” (1922, p. 96).

Furthermore, Hong suggests that “in the low register, requiring a deep tone quality, use a slow and broad *vibrato*; for the high register with a piano dynamic, use

weak and sometimes no *vibrato* at all; for intensive passages in *forte*, use a narrow and fast *vibrato*. If the passage is *piano* during a very expressive moment, then the *vibrato* can be faster” (2002, p. 101). To build mastery over the *vibrato*, Toterlier suggests practicing starting with the third finger, the easiest finger to vibrate, and gradually tightening the *vibrato* (1993, p. 77). Moreover, Tortelier also offers a few general points about the *vibrato*; “A natural vibrato can only be achieved if the hand is well placed. A masterly vibrato is distinguished by controlling its speed and width from slow and small to fast and broad. However, it can be fast and small in certain passages of great intensity.” (1993, p. 76).

In addition to this, Hong suggests that the performer should consider several points in order to develop a “fine and faster” vibrato; “1) relax thumb, 2) release tension of both shoulders, 3) do not let both elbows drop too low, for too heavy arms’ weight makes a fast *vibrato* more difficult ... This will give more strength to the left fingers and make possible to generate solid and fast *vibrato*” (2002, pp. 102-103).

Alexanian suggests that harmonics have a certain unique character about them prompting composers to use them in compositions.

The harmonics sounds have the coloring of the flute ... Certain harmonics have even, in the full intensity of sound of the upper register, the strident quality of the fife. For certain special effects, some composers have called, in their works, for the use of the harmonics exclusively for entire musical phrases, of fairly long duration. (1922, p. 103)

Although, there are only two passages where natural harmonics and artificial harmonics are used, Hong compels the performer to experiment with various fingerings and bow placement.

For these *harmonics* the performer needs to experiment with bow-placement on the strings and less pressure on the bow to create a clear but thin sonority and better reverberation of the strings. Moreover, the natural *harmonics* in the

Prologue can be produced in a high or low position. The performer can choose either position by determining which feels most comfortable and makes a better sound. The *harmonics* of the *Sérénade* are artificial *harmonics*; however, for this part, there is not enough time to position the thumb and third finger as we normally do for generating artificial *harmonics*. The same pitch can be produced by lightly touching the E in the fourth position on the A string like a natural *harmonic*. Being able to generate *harmonics* that match the required pitch with ease is a most valuable technique. (2002, p. 121).

In early solo music for cello, *pizzicato* was rarely used, and when it was used it was applied as a form of accompaniment in chamber music ensemble or orchestral settings. Walden writes an informative sub-chapter on the development of the *pizzicato*, from being just a form of accompaniment to its development to a more soloistic technique.

Although it was overlooked by most eighteenth-century violoncello tutors, *pizzicato* occurred as a type of accompaniment device throughout this period ... The integration of *pizzicato* into solo literature becomes evident towards the end of the eighteenth century ... *pizzicato* created a good effect on the violoncello and was frequently used by “modern” composers. (1998, pp. 202-203)

Nichols highlights that Debussy envisioned the cello as a “giant guitar” (1998, p. 155). He provides a detailed analysis of the use of *pizzicato* throughout the entirety of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*, offering valuable insight into Debussy’s approach to timbre. “He uses timbre as a structural agent ... specifically in his apportioning of *pizzicato*: after a first movement in which the cello plays arco throughout, in the second movement ... some 42 per cent of its bars include *pizzicato*; the last movement ... represents a rapprochement between them” (Nichols, 1998, pp. 154-155).

Vallas suggests that Debussy may have acquired the *pizzicato* technique from the guitar strumming technique as he states, “in the at times pathetic banter of the ‘*Sérénade*’, with its almost continuous *pizzicato* during which the violoncello seems to

strike the tambourine, to pluck the guitar, to play the flute” (1933, p. 262). This could be attributed to the Spanish influence in French music, which would become apparent towards the end of the Romantic period. In fact, Debussy wrote several pieces with not only unmistakably noticeable Spanish influence, but some with Spanish titles as well. Mostly written for piano, Debussy composed *Lindaraja* (1901), *La Soirée dans Granade* (1903), *Iberia* (1908), *Sérénade Interrompue* (1910), and *La Puerta del Vino* (1913), all of which were composed within the last eighteen years of his life. In Lockspeier’s book, *Debussy: His Life and Mind*, he unravels the relationship between French and Spanish music.

The most conspicuous of the non-French aspects of Debussy’s work are those of Spanish origin. This is not surprising; the same is true of other composers, among them Bizet, Chabrier, and Ravel ... This came about partly because in France, unlike Spain, there were traditions of symphonic music, but also because the attraction of the romantic Spanish scene for French artists had a long history. The Spanish works of Debussy, who admired both *Carmen* and the folk-song collections of Pedrell, are the most powerfully inspired of all twentieth-century works using features of Spanish folk-music ... Claude Debussy wrote Spanish music without knowing Spain, that is to say without knowing the land of Spain, which is a different matter. Debussy knew Spain from his readings, from pictures, from songs, and from dances with songs danced by true Spanish dancers. (1962, pp. 255-256)

Alexanian writes, “There are several kinds of pizzicati, the “detached” pizzicato, the “bound” pizzicato, the “arpeggiated” pizzicato, and the pizzicato of “struck chords” (1922, p. 98). With this in mind, it is imperative to experiment with fingerings and pizzicato in order to relay the desired aesthetic. In terms of playing pizzicato in a more melodic manner, Tortelier suggests practicing sliding pizzicato with the first finger of the right hand imitating a legato bow, sliding smoothly across the strings (1993, p. 79).

Sur la touche and *sur le chevalet*, are a few of the special effects that Debussy would repeatedly use throughout the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. These two techniques,

also known as their Italian equivalents, *sul tasto* and *sul ponticello*, were not always considered as soloistic techniques. *Sur la touche* is an effect that produces a flutelike sound by placing the bow near or on the fingerboard (Kennedy, M. & Kennedy, J., 2007, p. 735). On the other hand, *sur le chevalet* is a “technique whereby the bow is drawn as close as possible to the bridge in order to achieve a whistling, dry sound, created by an overabundance of harmonics.” (Walden, 1998, p. 208). These two bow techniques are on two contrasting spectrums ultimately offering more diversity of sound and special effects in the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. Another technical term that Debussy uses is *flautendo*, which requires the cellist to play a passage by either bowing near the fingerboard with the point of the bow, or by the use of harmonics in order to produce a flute-like sound (Kennedy, M. & Kennedy, J., 2007, p. 263). Hong’s stylistic analysis on Debussy’s *Sonata for Cello and Piano*, suggests that it is the performer’s duty to explore and experiment on ways of how to play the right sound for Debussy’s music.

For the performer it is important to know how to produce the color of Debussy’s evocative sounds, not the “real” sound that we expect in Brahms’ sonatas...Debussy’s use of these coloristic devices hints at the fact that Debussy’s interest was not in a fundamental tone that is obviously heard, but in the overtones above the fundamental. Debussy was highly sensitive to sonority. (2002, pp. 114-115)

Not to be overlooked, bowing technique is another crucial factor of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. Hong contends that Debussy writes a lengthy *spiccato* passage in the Finale of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. For this, Hong suggests that the performer “has to be cautious about color changes and place the bow correctly on the string for the right sound” (2002, p. 122). According to Stephen De’ak “the *spiccato* is the rapid springing of the bow close to the string in a continuous regularity, down bow, and up” (1957, p. 45). Additionally, De’ak also delineates the process of how to achieve the *spiccato*.

The bow is held very lightly with thumb and fingers, while the action is done by a partly circular and partly horizontal motion of the forearm and wrist. The arm

is held higher and further from the body than usual. The bow is turned so that a wider surface of the hair is used, and there is a tendency for the tip of the bow to point upward, and by no means, downward. In preparation for the spiccato bowing, it is very useful to practice détaché bowing on the string with an extremely short surface of the hair. The student should experiment, about the middle of the bow, to find the most flexible spot, where the bow bounces the best. (1957, p. 45)

Although Hong clearly states that m. 69-85 of the Finale is a “*spiccato* section”, Hong also refers to Alexanian’s discussion about the difference between *spiccato* and *sautillé* (2002, pp. 121-122). Sautillé, also described as a bowing technique played off the string (Walden, 2004, p. 174), is a “fluttering of the bow, light, rapid and dainty. Its effect on the eye and the ear are equally delicate” (Alexanian, 1922, p. 203). Tortelier offers a few exercises that aid in the development of the *sautillé*.

Place the middle of the bow on the string, holding it with only the first three fingers and the thumb—then tap the point of the bow swiftly with the left hand in order to start the bow bouncing like a ball...Obtain the same result by quickly pressing the 1st and 2nd fingers on the stick on the first note. The little finger here, should be back in its place ... Make the bow bounce silently on the string in the middle of the bow with a totally vertical movement. Maintain this movement for half a minute, then gradually start to move the wrist from left to right. In order to keep the bow bouncing it is imperative to maintain a perfectly straight bow. (1993, pp. 42-43)

With all these techniques, it is crucial to prioritize a comprehensive understanding of technical terms and their contextual significance. By examining these techniques and methods, the researcher aims to establish a solid foundation upon which to develop an understanding and the technical ability for Debussy’s *Sonata for Cello and Piano*.

2.3.2 Dynamics, Rhythm, and Tempo

Expression is arguably subjective to the performer or listener. There is no one correct way to execute a performance or to interpret one. It is however, well known that Debussy was particular in how his works should be perceived, so it would make sense to assume that he would also be particular with how his works should be performed. Such assumptions can be made especially after reading two letters written by Debussy himself after an ill-fated performance by the cellist, Louis Roosor.

Yesterday I had a visit from Mr. L. Roosor ... For a moment he made me feel sorry I'd composed a sonata and I began to wonder whether my writing was at fault! There's no escaping the fact, bad musicians are everywhere! This episode has worried me considerably, the ramifications are many and I'm not surprised any more that my poor music is so often not understood. Without dramatizing things unduly, it was terrifying ... M. Louis Roosor the cellist comes not from Bordeaux but from Lille and won a first prize at the Paris Conservatoire. That doesn't stop him having his own individual understanding of my music. (as cited in Lesure & Nichols, 1987, p. 319)

Where some pieces may need more artistic input to enhance the piece, it would seem that Debussy already had a vision in mind. Austin suggests that this might be the case for most of Debussy's music.

Surely Debussy is asking for very special sounds, not merely carrying out for the score-reader's amusement some literary theory. The special sounds are typical of his adventurous imagination, and such unusual demands on the players are especially typical of his later music. (1970, p. 90)

“Rhythm and tempo in Debussy's music attract less attention than harmony and orchestral sound, but in spite of this it can be argued that Debussy's greatest, most forward-looking achievement was in the realm of rhythm” (Austin, 1970, p. 91). It is important for the performer to not only look into details but also look at the sonata as a whole as “For Debussy the word “rhythm” denoted no mere durational parameter of

tones or groups of tones. It meant quality of movement” (Austin, 1970, p. 94). And so, it may seem that Debussy did put a great effort into the rhythm and tempo, including all instructional text, into all of his pieces, which is evident in this account of Debussy from the French soprano, Ninon Vallin.

It was difficult to satisfy him, he was very demanding. ‘Slowly’ had to be executed slowly; he didn’t want ‘with life’ and ‘cheerfully’ turned into ‘quickly’. The numerous expression marks which he introduced into his text had to be observed with complete punctiliousness. Nuances, accents, pauses, changes of tempo, sudden ‘pianos’, all the things which are so characteristic of Debussy’s writing, none of them could be glossed over. His keen, sensitive ear suffered, and at the slightest mistake he would jump up from his chair. He used to say to me: ‘Before putting in an accent or a nuance, I sometimes brood over it for several days, thinking about the precious words which form the texts of my songs.’ The duplets and triplets which so often feature in the melodic line of Debussy’s songs, and which are nearly always opposed to the rhythmical movement of the accompaniment, had to be perfectly balanced. He hardly ever made any remarks, he only insisted that the performer should look closely at what he had written. (Nichols, 1992, p. 182)

Debussy’s compositions exhibit a sense of spontaneity, reflected in its dramatic fluctuation. His music reveals a “sensation of motion from moment to moment as the music halts suddenly, bursts ahead, veers off in some unexpected direction, stumbling here, gliding there” (Parks, 1999, p. 193). Throughout the three movements of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*, Debussy takes the performer and the listener on a journey of rhythmic combinations and various tempo as observed by Hong.

Rhythm in the Cello Sonata is generally composed of triplets, dotted figures linked by ties, syncopations, and hemiolas...The melodies usually begin off the beat, rather on it, which obscures regular metric accents and the pulse. Rhythmic freedom is also reinforced by frequent time fluctuation in the Cello Sonata through the indications of *accel. poco a poco*, *animando*, *appassionato ed*

animando, animando poco a poco agitato, animé, modérément animé, au mouvt (in tempo), *1er mouvt* (tempo 1), *cédez* (slow down), *en serrant* (becoming faster), *la moitié plus lent* (half tempo), *largo, lent, presque lent* (almost slowly), *poco stretto, retenu* (holding back, with restraint), *sonstenuato, molto sostenuto, rit., molto rit., rubato, molto rubato* and *vivace*... Furthermore his rhythmic language, including dotted rhythms, syncopations, triplets, and *tenutos* come from the French culture and language. (2002, pp. 87-88)

Another contributing factor to the fluctuation of rhythm and tempo is *rubato* which is indicated throughout the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*—once in both the Prologue and the Sérénade and four times in the Finale (Hong, 2002, p. 92). Hong suggests that in order to perform these seamlessly in a natural manner as opposed to suddenly changing the tempo, the performer has to have a “secure sense of where the music has come from and where it is going” (Hong, 2002, p. 92). This inconsistency in rhythm often leaves a piece sounding fragmented. In a masterclass held by the BBC, Tortelier highlights a common tendency among performers to “chop” the *Sonata for Cello and Piano* into fragments, resulting in a disjointed sound.

You chopped this piece, this movement into pieces. It is perhaps the tendency of Debussy's music to be impressionist ... the mood changed from bar to bar ... change very quickly, but there is an architectural line that must stay. So, if you go with Debussy's tendency, it's not good. (Critchley, 2002)

Parks suggests that performers should dedicate time for preparation regarding the rhythmic anomalies of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. However, “It will not always be necessary to dissect entire pieces; usually it will suffice to identify the main categories of musical materials and concentrate on representative passages from each, until there emerges a sense of Debussy's compositional voice in these subtle, exquisite jewels that he crafted during last troubled years” (Parks, 1999, p. 224).

2.4 Related Research

Debussy's *Sonata for Cello and Piano* has attracted the attention of numerous researchers who have dedicated their time to the meticulous and demanding task of studying the piece. Their work involves in-depth analysis of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano* and its historical context. A few researchers have even gone so far as to studying Debussy's artistic influences and aesthetics. Through their scholarly inquiries, these researchers have shed light on the complexities of Debussy's creative process, offering insights into the significance of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. Their efforts have contributed into a deeper understanding and appreciation of Debussy's *Sonata for Cello and Piano*, enriching the scholarly discourse surrounding the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. A few notable studies have stood out, providing invaluable insight for this research—Hong's (2002) *A Stylistic Analysis and Technical Consideration of Debussy's Sonata for Cello and Piano* and Cantrell's (1988) *Analysis of Debussy's Sonata for Cello and Piano*.

Hong's *A Stylistic Analysis and Technical Consideration of Debussy's Sonata for Cello and Piano* focuses on addressing challenges related to the performance of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*, providing traditional analysis of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano* and its stylistic influences. Hong contends that composers who were also cellists had a profound impact in the development of cello techniques and the induction of the cello sonata in France (2002, p. 3). By examining the techniques inherent in other composer's work, Hong delves into the potential influences that have molded Debussy's palette of coloristic devices and techniques. However, Hong's study primarily centers itself only on a few select performance issues inherent in the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. Hong concludes that the performer needs to have a comprehensive understanding of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano* in order to properly convey his sudden changes in mood, rhythm, and tempo. Furthermore, Hong suggests that the performer should experiment with different techniques (2002, p. 124). Despite only presenting a few technical issues, Hong's *A Stylistic Analysis and Technical Consideration of Debussy's Sonata for Cello and Piano* is a highly informative study that has become of great value to the author's research. In addition to offering valuable historical context on the *Sonata for Cello and*

Piano, Hong also serves as a key resource for addressing its technical issues in the researcher's study.

Cantrell's *Analysis of Debussy's Sonata for Cello and Piano* addresses the theoretical aspect of Debussy's *Sonata for Cello and Piano*, focusing on uncovering the cohesive logic within the three unique movements of Debussy's *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. Cantrell's research set itself apart from the former study (Hong) because of its unique approach to the study of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*, employing methods of harmonic reduction, motivic analysis, scalar analysis, and most compelling of all, pitch-class set analysis. In addition to this, Cantrell also provides formal and harmonic analysis. Cantrell's study treats Debussy's *Sonata for Cello and Piano* as a single format piece consisting of three sections each corresponding to the movements in Debussy's *Sonata for Cello and Piano*—presentation, contrast, and synthesis. All five of the analytical methods supported the format of presentation, contrast, and synthesis. However, only the pitch-class set analysis provided definitive results about the overall unity of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*, particularly when combined with findings from other analytical approaches (Cantrell, 1988, p. 124). Although much of Cantrell's research may not directly address the performative aspects of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*, it has nonetheless provided invaluable insights into the work's structure and harmony, forming the backbone of the researcher's study.

A common attribute amongst the two studies is the study of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*'s historical and theoretical background. However, each study offers different perspectives, employing varying approaches of analysis of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. Furthermore, each study adopts different theoretical frameworks, using varying analytical tools. For instance, Hong's study prioritizes the facilitation of the performance of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano* whilst Cantrell focuses more on the theoretical aspect of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. Ultimately, the combination of diverse perspectives and analytical approaches enhances the understanding the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. By studying the findings from these research, one can develop a more nuanced understanding of Debussy's *Sonata for Cello and Piano*.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

The initiation of the research was first established with the selection of the piece. Debussy's music is characterized for its distinct style. Without proper understanding of the sonata's proportions, it may come across as difficult for the performer to understand (Hong, 2002, p. 87). The sonata is not commonly acknowledged as a standard piece of repertoire, which consequently leads to a scarcity of literature addressing its performative aspects.

3.1 Research Approach

"A Comprehensive Practice Guide for Debussy's *Sonata for Cello and Piano*" is a thesis based on artistic research. It is important to understand the nature of this type of research in order to design a methodology that is well suited for the research. Ginsborg's (2014) article suggests that "Music performance is particularly amenable to practice-based methods since musicians typically engage in regular, daily practice that can be recorded easily so as to provide an objective behavioral record of their activity during practice" (p. 82).

Before engaging in the iterative process of practice, studying certain aspects that are not necessarily printed on the music should be held to the utmost importance in order to fully understand and make well informed decisions regarding the technical and interpretative aspects of the piece. At the very least, one must know the historical background of the composer and the piece and also be able to analyze the music to an extent. Having a good understanding of the piece as a whole will lay the groundwork in taking the correct approach to practicing the piece. This will also help in making well-informed decisions regarding the piece. In addition to this, listening to recordings and

watching masterclasses can also be valuable tools in establishing the criteria for the expected outcome.

3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

In anticipation of the research's initiation, the researcher will examine a varied array of literature relevant to Debussy's *Sonata for Cello and Piano* and its performative aspects. Thus, preparing the researcher with the valid foundation regarding the sonata, thereby facilitating the systematic establishment of the groundwork for the impending research. Information from relevant books, articles from peer-reviewed journals, theses and dissertations collected from ProQuest, audio recordings, and videos of masterclasses will be conscientiously selected with the intent to collect information pertinent to the sonata. After collecting the data, the researcher will then engage in the following steps:

3.2.1 Study the relevance of the data in the context of the research, ensuring that all information directly supports the objectives and focus of the study.

3.2.2 Engage in an in-depth study of the historical and theoretical background relevant to the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. This will provide a deeper understanding of the work's context and significance.

3.2.3 Observe recordings, performances, and masterclasses by renowned cellists to gain insights into their interpretative choices and technical approaches.

3.2.4 Explore the context and origins of the techniques employed in the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*.

3.2.5 Consult books, articles from peer-reviewed journals, and theses and dissertations collected from ProQuest that address the technical aspects inherent in the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*.

3.3 Research Procedure and Analysis

Data collected in the preliminary phase do not hold conclusive results. Therefore, substantial findings will be derived from the process of artistic research drawn from the researcher's own experience during the preparation for the performance of the sonata which will be outlined below:

3.3.1 The researcher will establish the objectives of the research.

3.3.2 Drawing from the data previously collected, the researcher will undertake the process of artistic research, actively involving themselves in the creative process of experimenting with techniques and interpretation during practice.

3.3.3 Simultaneously, the researcher will reflect on the results of the creative process and document them in detail.

3.3.4 Being that artistic research is an iterative process, this will require the researcher to revisit and refine their own work. By embracing this approach, not only will this foster continuous improvement but also enable a more profound exploration of the artistic possibilities.

3.4 Presentation of Research Data

The dissemination of research data will be presented in three phases—performance, documentation, and dissemination.

3.4.1 The researcher will perform Debussy's *Sonata for Cello and Piano* during the researcher's Master's Recital. This involves the practical application and presentation of the research findings through a live and recorded performance.

3.4.2 The researcher will undertake the comprehensive documentation of the research findings, elucidating the intricate process involved in practicing and performing Debussy's *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. This involves organizing the research information, technical strategies, and interpretative decisions in a structured format.

3.4.3 Finally, the researcher will disseminate the research findings through journal publication, ensuring that the findings are shared with a wider audience.

3.5 Practice Guide

This study will be dedicated to the artistic research of Debussy's *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. This chapter will be titled as "Practice Guide", where detailed descriptions of problems that may arise during practice will be presented with a few possible solutions. Input from the author's own experience during practice will be shared along with a few exercise and practice methods that may support the outcome. The author's own interpretation regarding the music will also be shared to the reader as a guide of how to interpret special effects, dynamics, expressions, and tempo. Concepts and notions from masterclasses and performances of Debussy's *Sonata for Cello and Piano* may also be used to support the author's ideas. These will come mainly from a masterclass conducted by Paul Tortelier in 1987, where some of the technical difficulties found in the sonata can be supported by his book *How I Play, How I Teach* (Tortelier, Tortelier, & Baumberger, 1993). This will also be supported by Feuillard's (1919) book of *Daily Exercises* and Alexanian Diran's (1922) *Theoretical and Practical Treatise of the Violoncello*.

3.6 Organization of the Study

This thesis will be divided into five chapters, each serving a specific purpose in presenting and analyzing the research. The chapters will systematically guide the reader through the study.

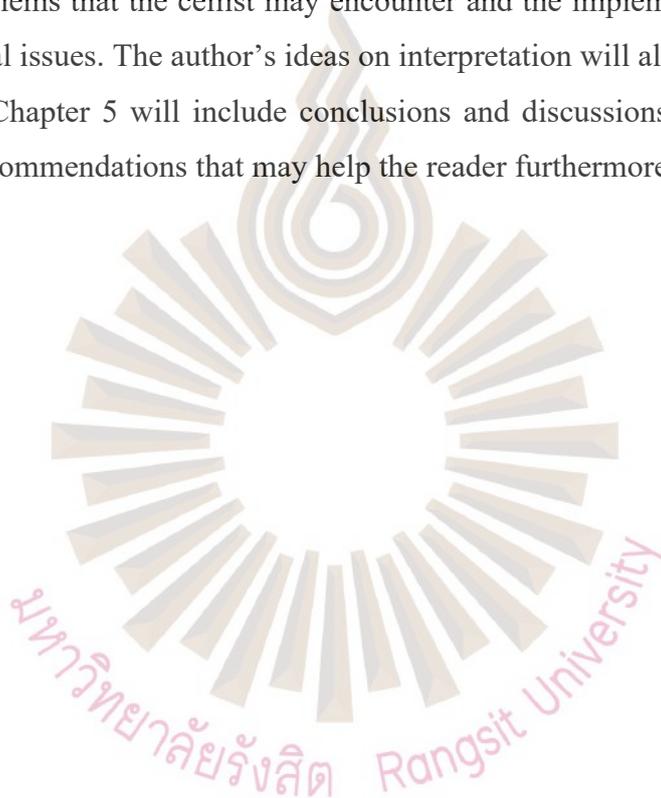
3.6.1 Chapter 1 is an introductory chapter, where a brief background on the sonata will be shared along with the significance of the research. The research objectives, benefits of the study, and study boundaries will also be stated in this chapter.

3.6.2 Chapter 2 provides a collection of organized background information regarding the composer's and sonata's historical background, musical context, performance and technical issues, and lastly related research that are relevant to this study.

3.6.3 Chapter 3 describes the methodology, or the specific procedures, that the author experienced in order to establish the creation of the practice guide.

3.6.4 Chapter 4, the practice guide, will be centered on the evaluation of the technical problems that the cellist may encounter and the implementation of solutions to the technical issues. The author's ideas on interpretation will also be shared.

3.6.5 Chapter 5 will include conclusions and discussions regarding the study with a few recommendations that may help the reader furthermore.



Chapter 4

Practice Guide

This chapter will be laid out mainly into two parts. The first part will address the researcher's interpretation of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. In the second part, efficient strategies and methods of practice for addressing technical challenges inherent in the *Sonata for Cello and Piano* will be discussed.

4.1 Interpretation

The *Sonata for Cello and Piano* consists of three movements—Prologue, Sérénade, and Finale. This subchapter will be divided into three parts, each corresponding to the movements of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*, in which the researcher will refer to Cantrell's (1988) formal analysis of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. Bowings, fingerings, special effects, dynamics, expressions, tempo, and the ensemble between the cello and piano will be addressed simultaneously throughout the subchapter.

4.1.1 Prologue

Cantrell (1988, p. 13) contends that the Prologue is in the form of A-B-A', with section A starting at mm. 1-15, B at mm. 16-28, and A' at mm. 29-51. The first theme appears throughout the Prologue during mm. 1-7, 16-20, 29-34, and 45-51. The second theme appears during mm. 8-15 and 39-44. However, the researcher contends that, although Cantrell claims that the first theme returns at m. 16 of section B, it can be interpreted as a development of material from Section A.

A few reoccurring issues within the Prologue are phrasing and a considerable amount of string crossing. As for the most part of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*,

Debussy may have written slurs with the presentation of the phrase in mind. Often, we find that, if observed diligently, these slurs may present technical problems. For that reason, the researcher has taken the liberty of designing bowings that not only cater to the technical difficulties of the phrase, but also preserve the phrasing intended by Debussy. Additionally, bow technique and dynamics also contribute greatly to the execution of the phrase. String crossing, which can be found in mm. 4-7 and mm. 35-37, can often be remedied by designing fingerings that minimize the need to cross strings, however, this can only be followed to a certain extent. These issues are interdependent, as a result, the researcher suggests that the cellist focus on these issues simultaneously. Regardless of what bowing or phrasing, the researcher makes sure that finger and bowing changes are as undetectable as possible, by moving both right and left hand mindfully and as gracefully as possible.

Section A

The cello part opens with a declamatory passage at m. 4 after a stately introduction of the first theme by the piano. This requires the cello to play with a crisp and precise bow stroke in order for the cello sound to break through the dense texture of the piano part. In m. 4, the researcher uses one full down-bow for the D2, G2, D3, G4 in order to land on an up-bow on the D4. This ascent of notes should be played with open strings where possible in order to have the full effect of this grand opening passage. For this opening four notes, the researcher uses finger 1, open G string, open D string, and finger 1 on the G3. To continue the effect of the preceding group of notes, the D4 should be played with finger 1 at the third position. With a gradual build-up of vibrato, the sound should be sustained with the right hand with a slight crescendo leading to the following note. While finger 3 and 4 are conveniently placed to play the following notes, E4 and F4, the researcher shifts in order to use finger 2 on the E4, instead of the weaker finger 3, for the continuation of the phrase (Example 4.1).

Example 4.1 Prologue, m. 4; Bowings and Fingerings

Measure 5 may be interpreted in a few different ways. In this passage, the researcher uses fingerings that minimize the need for string crossings, whilst making sure that each shift and finger change is as subtle and unnoticeable as possible. During this passage, the researcher avoids abrupt and sharp bow changes in order to maintain fluidity of the phrasing. From the third beat of m. 6, the researcher chooses to descend down the A string, after which the researcher swiftly shifts back to the B \flat , sustaining with a slight vibrato. At the third beat of m. 7, the researcher uses fingers 3, 1, 3 on the fifth position of the A string, followed by 1, 2, 2, and 3 on the D string. Measure 6 and 7 are similar in notes, however, the researcher plays m. 6 slightly louder than m. 7, where the researcher chooses to play in a vague manner, using a very light and gentle bow to end the phrase in a *diminuendo* (Example 4.2).

Example 4.2 Prologue, mm. 5-7; Bowings and Fingerings

The second theme is introduced in m. 8 with a *poco animando*. For the second theme, the researcher plays the A4 with finger 3 as a natural harmonic, making the shift between the harmonic to the ordinary F4 as unnoticeable as possible. At m. 8, use finger 3 to play D4 as a natural harmonic on the D string. Measure 10-11 should be played all on the G string, starting with finger 2 on the B \flat 2, shifting to D3 with finger 2, and back again to B \flat 2 with finger 2. At measure 13, the researcher plays the D4 differently from the first time, using finger 3 on the second position of the A string (Example 4.3). The second theme appears twice sequentially in m. 8 and m. 12, however, m. 8 is written as *dolce sostenuto* whereas m. 12 is written with a *piu piano*. This presents an opportunity for the cellist to play these two passages differently, adding more nuance to the reappearing theme. For this instance, the researcher plays m. 8 with a more sustained sound, whilst m. 12 is played with a more restrained sound with a softer dynamic. Throughout mm. 8-15, the researcher applies only a slight amount of weight to the bow whilst using a fast speed of bow. This should have a similar effect as the lightness of French speech. At m. 8 place the bow in between the fingerboard and bridge, eventually moving closer to the fingerboard at m. 12 to have a restrained sound.

Example 4.3 Prologue, mm. 8-11; Bowings and Fingerings

Poco animando

8
dolce sostenuto
II
III
piu dolce

Section B

Cantrell argues that theme one appears in mm. 16-28 in section B. This can also be perceived as purely section B with the use of fragments of material from section A. At mm. 16-18, Debussy presents a repetitive pattern of sixteenth notes grouped into fours in which each group starts with a *piano* followed by a *crescendo*. For the first group use fingers 1, 1, 2, and 4, followed by 1, 2, 2, and 4 for the second group. By shifting during semitones, this grants the cellist more agility in movement. Use a down-

bow for the first group of sixteenth notes, changing bows after each group (Example 4.4). This passage should give the impression of swelling, with each stroke increasing not only in volume but also in intensity. Bow distribution during these slurred sixteenth notes should also be closely observed. The researcher starts with a small amount of bow and gradually increasing the amount of bow for each note of the group in order to achieve the crescendo. The researcher also slightly accelerates towards the last note of each group to add to the swelling effect, gradually building up the vibrato with each note of the group, where the last note of the group should be the most audible. Each note is marked with a *tenuto* therefore, the cellist should enunciate each note, making sure to prioritize clarity.

Example 4.4 Prologue, m. 16; Bowings and Fingerings

Measure 20 presents a sequence of repeating notes, C, A, and G at a *diminuendo*, each repeating three times. For this instance, the researcher uses three sets of different fingerings for each of the group. For the first set, the researcher uses fingers 4, 1, and open G3 all on the G string. The next set is to be played on both the G and the C string, using fingers 1, 4, and 2. The last set is to be played all on the C string, using a finger 3 on the C harmonic followed by fingers 4 and 2. By incorporating three distinct sets of fingerings for each recurring sequence, we introduce a more refined and subtle interpretation to what might initially appear as a straightforward set of notes. Additionally, the gradual shifting of positions and the transition to the C string provide a smoother, more seamless entry into the new musical segment in m. 21, enriching the overall phrasing and fluidity of the performance (Example 4.5).

Example 4.5 Prologue, m. 20; Fingerings

Debussy writes *sur la touche* at m. 21, however, placing the bow very close to or on the bridge may lack clarity in sound and sometimes may even produce inaudible pitches. Debussy may have wanted the effect of sheerness and lightness in order for the piano part lead through the passage. The researcher places the bow a few inches away from the fingerboard to maintain clarity, however keeping the bow weight on the lighter end. The piano part is particularly dense throughout this passage, so it will do the cellist good to be flexible with the bow placement and dynamics throughout the passage. Measure 28 suggests a transition and rapid escalation to the return of section A' at m. 29.

Section A'

The cellist should make a point to cut through the dense piano part in m. 29 in order to reemerge as the leading part. This may perhaps be the loudest and grandest point of the movement, so proper distribution of the bow should be observed. As indicated in the score, at m. 29, Debussy writes a glissando between A4 and C5, in which the researcher uses finger 2 and 3 respectively. The researcher uses a slow bow speed at the A4 and a rapid change of speed both in the right and left hand during the glissando whilst simultaneously changing from finger 2 and 3. Once the cellist arrives at C5 with finger 3, adjust into a slower bow speed. This will give an illusion of a dramatic glissando in between the notes. Take a full up-bow on the A3 of m. 30 to intensify the effect of the crescendo (Example 4.6). Measure 29-32 should be played with a more unrestrained sound, liberally using more bow and vibrato. The researcher opts to delay the *crescendo* in m. 30, dropping to a *mezzo forte* before beginning the *crescendo* on the second beat of m. 30. For the cellist, it is important to refrain from doing an early *diminuendo* rather saving it for m. 33 as intended by Debussy.

Example 4.6 Prologue, mm. 29-30; Bowings and Fingerings

2 **au Mouvt** (largement déclamé)

V □ V □ V □ V □
 1 2 3 2 3 2 1 4 4 2 1 1 0

29

f molto sostenuto

In measure 34, the *cédez* should be a gradual broadening of each note, gradually easing into the new section at measure 35. The *caesura* between the G3 and the C2 should be taken as a subtle break between the two measures. The *rubato* section should give the impression of a swelling sound or the image of surging waves. Take note that this should be played with the expression *lusigando*, to play in a coaxing, intimate manner. To achieve this aesthetic, the researcher applies only a light weight on the bow, making sure to make the crossing between strings discreet as possible. Starting at the C3 at m. 36, the researcher opts to play most of the notes as natural harmonics, except for E4. By using harmonics, this enables the cellist to play in a more light and delicate manner. Furthermore, using this sequence of fingers (Example 4.7) will facilitate in the transition to m. 37, where most of the notes will be played in thumb position.

At the *quasi cadenza* section of m. 37, the researcher attempts to conveniently keep all the fingerings all in the thumb position by placing the thumb on the A4. Towards the end of m. 37, the researcher descends down the A string by using finger 4 on the G4, this way m. 38 can be played comfortably and audibly at the fourth position. This *quasi cadenza* section should be divided into two bows, starting with an up-bow at the B \flat 4 followed by a down bow at the third beat of the measure. Once again, m. 37 should be played with a swelling and surging effect, which can be achieved by varying bow speeds. This section is *quasi cadenza*, granting the cellist the liberty to navigate through this passage with creative freedom in speed and timing. At m. 38, the researcher plays at the fourth position, using fingers 4, 2, 1, and 4. At the second beat's up-beat, the researcher uses finger 3 on the natural A harmonic, swiftly returning to the G4 using finger 4. Measure 38 will be mainly divided into two bows, starting with at up-bow, followed by a down-bow at the third beat. The last up-beat of m. 38 will be played with

a down-bow, followed by a hooked up-bow, then lastly a down-bow (Example 4.7). The first half of m. 38 should rapidly increase in speed with a gradual deceleration of speed after the second half of the measure in order to ease back into the recurring second theme at m. 39.

Example 4.7 Prologue, mm. 36-38; Bowings and Fingerings

36

(quasi cadenza)

3

p

p

3 3 3 3 1 3 1 3 1 3 4 1 4

V □ V □ □

I - - - II - - - I - - - II - - - I - - -

En serrant - - - // **Retenu** - - - //

2 1 4 2 1 4 2 3 4 2 1 □ V V □

38

molto dim.

The return of the second theme at m. 39, should convey a sense of melancholy and nostalgia. The researcher plays this recurring theme with more subdued dynamics and less exaggeration in expression. At m. 43, the researcher plays the F4 and E4 on the D string with a subtle glissando, so as to convey a sense of ambiguity (Example 4.8). Measure 45 prompts the cellist to reduce the amount of vibrato. The researcher takes time to space out the notes, making sure not to rush in between each group of notes, so as to give the impression of a hollow and void sound. Debussy writes *sur la touche* at m. 47, however, the cello's low register makes it difficult for this group of notes to be audible, often even sounding indistinct and murky. On account of this, the researcher places the bow not too close to the fingerboard, but rather places it at a point that the cello part is audible enough to produce clear pitches.

Example 4.8 Prologue, m. 43; Fingerings

Lento

43

più p

II - - - - I - - - -

Starting from A2 at m. 48, the researcher avoids abrupt motions when changing fingers, so as to not disrupt the phrase. Bowings should be divided into two notes per bow, whilst avoiding sharp and evident bow changes. At m. 49, the researcher chooses to play the E5 and A4 as natural harmonics with finger 3 and the thumb. As the note changes to A4, the researcher slowly prepares the outer part of finger 3, eventually gently tapping finger 3 simultaneously both on the D5 and A5 natural harmonic. The cellist could also experiment by playing these two notes at the fourth position with finger 1 tapping at A3 and E4. Fundamentally, this will produce the same pitch, perhaps even at a greater clarity. However, this may cause discontinuity as this will require the cellist to descend the A string at a fast space. Regardless of what fingering the cellist chooses, the bow speed should be fast enough to let the harmonics ring with clarity whilst making sure to reserve enough bow for the entire six beats. Playing on a down-bow, without sustaining the sound, will give the effect of the sound slowly fading away (Example 4.9).

Example 4.9 Prologue, mm. 48-51; Bowings and Fingerings

48

Harm.

pp

ppp

I II

4.1.2 Sérénade

Divided thematically into sections, the Sérénade is in the rondo form of A-B-A-C-A. Section A starts at mm. 3-10, followed by section B at mm. 11-18, with section A returning at mm. 19-30, proceeded by section C at mm. 31-53, with section A returning once again at mm. 54-64.

Debussy's *Sonata for Cello and Piano* stands as a testament to his innovative approach to composition. Fundamentally, Debussy's aesthetic greatly lies in his exploration of timbre. One of the most challenging aspects of interpreting Debussy's *Sonata for Cello and Piano* lies in finding the right approach to timbre. In order to do this, the cellist should understand the inspiration driving these innovations. The Sérénade in particular uses an abundance of *pizzicato*. Supposedly, this use of *pizzicato* was inspired by the guitar strumming technique and Spanish music. Therefore, it is imperative for the cellist to explore various methods in executing the *pizzicato* within the *Sonata for Cello and Piano* so as to properly convey the desired aesthetic.

There are mainly four types of *pizzicati* found within the Sérénade—*pizzicato* marked with *staccato*, *pizzicato* marked with *tenuto*, *pizzicato* of the chord, and slurred *pizzicato*. For each type of *pizzicato* the researcher employs various techniques in order to achieve the ideal sound. For instance, *pizzicati* marked with *staccato* are to be played with the edges of the index finger, quite close to the nail, in order to produce a dry sound. On the contrary, *pizzicati* marked with *tenuto* should be played with the inner part of the finger, where there is more skin. This kind of *pizzicato* can be played with either the index or long finger. Using the inner part of the finger, where there is more skin, allows for a rounder and more sustained sound. The *pizzicato* of the chord, particularly mm. 5-6 and mm. 21-22, should be played by starting from the bottom note in a slanted downward motion, allowing the top note to ring for longer. This should emulate the sound of a guitar being strummed. Lastly, *pizzicati* with slurs should be played by pressing the left-hand fingers firmly on the fingerboard and gliding from one note to the next. In some instances, m. 24 in particular, these slurred *pizzicati* have *glissando* markings as well. A common issue across these four types of *pizzicati* is the cellist's

ability to be heard well enough particularly when both parts are playing at the same time. The lower register of the cello especially is prone to sounding unclear. The cellist should find a focus in the sound, making sure each note can be heard well enough against the piano part. Indeed, it may have been Debussy's intention, considering his aesthetic, to make these sounds as obscure and vague as possible. Nevertheless, a balance must be found between the cello and piano part.

The beginning of the Sérénade is marked as *fantasque et léger*, which roughly translates to “whimsical and light”. Furthermore, the rhythmic patterns within the Sérénade present a dance-like character with sudden bursts of notes and abrupt changes in tempo. Although the movement is filled with sudden changes in mood and tempo, the researcher would like to stress that the cellist should take their time, calmly and unhurriedly, before proceeding to the next passage. Whatever the case, issues on timing and tempo should be discussed thoroughly with the pianist, in order to play in complete synchronization. The whimsical and light character of the Sérénade carries itself all the way to the end of the movement where we find the special effect marking of *flautando*. This light flute-like effect can be achieved by placing the bow near or on the fingerboard. However, the researcher contends that this may present an issue in audibility. For this reason, the researcher chooses to play not too close to the bridge, using a light and fast bow in order to produce an airy flute-like sound whilst maintaining a reasonably soft dynamic. The similar idea applies to the special effect markings of *sur la touche* within the Sérénade.

Due to the Sérénade's rondo form, we often find the same reoccurring material throughout the movement. However, there might be slight variations in dynamics and articulation. This is most apparent during the A sections, particularly in mm. 3-6, 19-22, and 54-55. Although the notes are similar, the dynamic markings are different, therefore, the cellist should play each passage accordingly.

Section A

The first two measures act as an introduction before the start of section A at m. 3. At m. 1 the researcher uses fingers 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, and 3, making sure to sustain the last note of m. 1 with a vibrato. The second measure presents a similar set of notes, this time with slurs. The researcher creates the impression of a slurred *pizzicato* by holding down finger 1 firmly and gliding from one note to the next. Finger 1 will be used until the C#3 (Example 4.10). The *pizzicato* at m. 4 should be enunciated separately using the edge of the right index finger, playing with a *decrescendo* towards the D2.

Example 4.10 Sérénade, mm. 1-2; Fingerings

Modérément animé (72 = ♩) Fantasque et léger

pizz.

1

1 2 3 1 2 3 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 3 0

The chord at m. 5 and 6 should be played, from the bottom note to the top note, with fingers 1, 2, and 1, in which finger 1 will be pressed down across the A, D, and G strings simultaneously (Example 4.11). The chord should be strummed by using the thumb, going in a slanted downward motion, starting from the lowest string. The *pizzicato* at a slanted downward motion will assist in the *crescendo* into the measure. In m. 7, pluck the A4 as a natural harmonic using finger 3, followed by fingers 4, 2, 4, open A string, 4, 2, 4, 4, and open G string. Whilst the left hand is free during the open G string, quickly shift the left hand to the fourth position and use fingers 1, 2, 1, similar to the chords in mm. 5-6. Although there is no tempo marking at m. 7, the researcher plays with a slight *accelerando* with rapid *crescendo* towards the third beat of the measure.

Example 4.11 Sérénade, mm. 5-6; Fingerings

Instead of playing the artificial harmonic in mm. 8-9, the researcher opts to play a natural harmonic with finger 3 placed on the E4. Fundamentally, both types of harmonics produce the same sounding E5, however, by choosing to play the harmonic naturally, the sounding note has a higher likelihood of being played in tune. Additionally, when played, the natural harmonic is clearer and more audible compared to the artificial harmonic. Another advantage of using the natural harmonic, is the ability prepare and play the note with less difficulty. Being that the artificial harmonic requires the two fingers to be played, this sometimes poses as a challenge when preparing to play the note, which in turn may hinder the cellist. Lastly, by using the natural harmonic, the cellist will be able to move on to the *pizzicato* swiftly with more ease. At mm. 8 and 9, the researcher starts with an up-bow at the tip of the bow in order to transition the right hand into a *pizzicato* more conveniently, however, the cellist should observe the dynamics carefully. There is a natural tendency for a *crescendo* during the up-bow, therefore, the cellist should use a light and fast bow without *crescendo* (Example 4.12). At m. 10, use fingers 2, 3, 1, 2, 1, 4, and 3, with a slight *crescendo* towards the B \flat 2 followed by a *decrescendo* towards the E2.

Example 4.12 Sérénade, mm. 8-9; Bowings and Fingerings

Section B

Section B starts with a *pizzicato* G3 with *sforzandissimo*, *vibrato*, and a *marcato* marking. Using finger 1 for the G3, this note should be played aggressively by tugging the string to the right with the index finger and releasing it. *Vibrato* should be played by pressing finger 1 firmly on the string and vibrating widely at a fast pace. Measure 13 is marked with *ironique*, which plainly translates to “ironic”. The researcher interprets this as an instruction to play the passage ironically with humor. In addition to this, the passage is marked with *sur la touche*. Perhaps, Debussy wanted the effect of airiness and lightness. The researcher plays the passage with a fast speed of bow with the bow placed a few centimeters from the fingerboard, refraining from applying too much bow weight as it may make the sound dense and heavy.

The researcher plays the pickup note to m. 13 with an up-bow, sliding finger 1 from the G#3 to the A3. In m. 13, the last two sixteenth notes of the second beat should be played as a hooked up-bow. *Staccatos* within this passage should be played as *detache*, sounding separated from the preceding and following note. The pickup note to m. 14 and the slurred upbeat to the C#4, in m. 14, should be played with an up-bow to exaggerate the *crescendo*. In m. 15, the researcher chooses to play this passage all on the D string, playing expressively with *vibrato*. Playing this passage on the D string also gives a more muted effect that corresponds to the dynamic marking of *piano* in m. 15. *Portando* is marked from the third to fourth beat of m. 16, for that reason, the researcher chooses to stay on the D string for the entirety of m. 16. The last two notes of m. 16 should be perceived as a dramatic *glissando* down the D string, taking time as there is a *cédez* marking, prompting the cellist to slow down. Moreover, the last two notes of m. 16 should be played separately, starting with a full up-bow, followed by a full down-bow on the F#3 (Example 4.13). Measure 16 is marked with a *crescendo*, the researcher interprets this extremely, starting from a *piano* rapidly escalating to a *fortissimo*.

Example 4.13 Sérénade, mm. 12-17; Bowings and Fingerings

12

sur la touche arco

sf vibrato

p ironique

15

p expressif

p

Cédez // Mouvt

II -----

After playing the tied F#3, the cellist should observe the *caesura* before playing the next passage and returning to the original tempo. Measure 17 suddenly goes back into a *piano*, therefore the cellist should take good care to make sure that m.16 and m. 17 are contrasting in dynamic. Measure 18 starts with a down-bow, followed by a hooked up-bow, with the left hand staying in the first position. The last two notes of m. 18 should be played with open strings, fully enjoying the resonance of the C string whilst making sure to observe the pacing between the notes during the *cédez*.

Section A

Section A reappears at m.19 with similar material to the beginning, however the researcher applies a few slight alterations to the fingering. Although written just like m. 5 and 6, the researcher uses a different set of fingerings for the chord at m. 21 and 22. Using the same strumming motion with the thumb, the researcher uses finger 1 on the A string for the B \flat 3, followed by a swift *glissando* to the E4 with the same finger. Although not entirely practical, changing the fingering adds a touch of spontaneity, a quality that resonates with the essence of the Sérénade.

At m. 23, the researcher uses fingers 4, 4, 3, 2, 2, 3, 4, 2, 4, 3, 2. For the last two notes of m. 23, after playing the B \flat 4, make sure to drag finger 2 all the way to the F4 for the *glissando* effect. At m. 24, use fingers 3, 3, 2, 1, 1, 2, 1, 1, 2, 3, 3. Similar to m.

bow, followed by a down-bow, taking another down-bow, followed by an up-bow (Example 4.15). Make sure that the swell in dynamic is audible.

Example 4.15 Sérénade, mm. 27-28; Bowings and Fingerings

At m. 29, start with a tempo slower than the original tempo, gradually increasing in speed. By m. 30, the tempo should already be set. Starting at a slower tempo than the original tempo will make for a more evident *accelerando*. The first three beats of m. 30 should be divided into two bows, starting with a down-bow (Example 4.16). At the last beat of m. 30, the cellist should do a progressive *ritardando*, slowing down by increments, unhurriedly getting to the last note of the measure. The last note of m. 30 can be prolonged for longer than its rhythmic value.

Example 4.16 Sérénade, mm. 30-32; Bowings

Section C

This section has a sudden change in tempo, marked as *vivace* also marked with *leggierissimo*. Measure 31-32 should be played with a light and fast bow a few inches from the fingerboard, producing a wispy sound. Measure 33-34 should be played starting with a slow bow, rapidly escalating in speed and volume towards the G#4,

making sure to immediately return to a *mezzo forte* in order to repeat the sequence of notes with the same direction of dynamics.

With a down bow, the researcher slurs the last beat of m. 35 to the first beat of m. 36 followed by an up-bow, slurring the second beat to last beat in m. 36. Although there are no tempo markings before m. 37, the researcher slows down during the last two beats of m. 36 in order to ease into the slower tempo in m. 37. Measure 37 should be played with separate bowing, starting with an up-bow, using a light *spiccato* at the balance point of the bow. This bowing should be followed until the last beat of m. 38, in which the last beat should be slurred, followed by two separate bows and another slur. Measures 39-40 should look similar in bowing; however, the cellist should take great care to use an adequate amount of bow as using too much bow may hinder their performance. At m. 41, the researcher slurs the first two notes with an up-bow in order to use a full down-bow on the G \flat . The researcher divides m. 42 into two bows, starting with an up-bow, and taking a down-bow at the up-beat to the third beat. The researcher slurs the first two beats of m. 43, taking a down-bow at the last beat, making sure to gradually slow down towards the end of the measure (Example 4.17).

Example 4.17 *Sérénade*, mm. 31-44; Bowings and Fingerings

5

(8) *Vivace* (la ♩ = ♩ du M^e précéd^e)

31 *pp leggierissimo* *mf* *mf* *mf* *mf* 3

36 *Meno mosso poco* *pp subito* *p*

40 *p* *mf* *dim.* *Cédez* // *Rubato* *p sur la touche*

Measure 44-47 is marked as *rubato*. Start with an up-bow at m. 44. Using one bow per bar, start with a slow bow speed, gradually rushing towards the end of m. 44. At the next measure, start with a faster bow speed and gradually slow down towards the end of the measure. By doing this, the cellist should create the illusion of a swelling sound. The same applies to mm. 46-47. At mm. 45, use finger 2 on the F4 and ascend the C string using finger 1, 2, 4. Measure 47 will be played all on the G string, using finger 1, thumb, 1, and 2. By using this fingering at mm. 47, the cellist will be able to transition with more ease to m. 48.

Presque lent at m. 48 roughly translates to “almost slow”. This passage is also marked with *flautendo*, which could be interpreted to producing “flute-like” sounds by placing the bow near the fingerboard. The overall idea is to produce a light and airy sound by using a fast and light bow near the fingerboard. The fingering used in m. 48-49 is 3, 2, 1, 2, 1, with the *pizzicati* all played with open strings. Starting with an up-bow, the triplet in m. 48 should be slurred in one bow, whereafter the second and third beat should be slurred with a down-bow. Starting m. 49 with an up-bow will allow the cellist to change into *pizzicato* easily, however, the cellist should observe the *decrescendo*, making sure to refrain from doing an unintentional *crescendo*. The researcher plays the *pizzicati* with a slanted downward motion, making sure to make each note audible with a slight *crescendo* towards the C2. Using the same set of fingerings and bowings as mm. 48-49, the cellist should allow the C2 to completely resonate before moving calmly in an unhurried manner to mm. 50-51. The last two measures of section C end with a C2 played by *pizzicato*. However, these two measures should be played in a contrasting manner. Measure 52 is marked with a *sforzando*, *marcato*, and *vibrato*. Although this is played with an open string, the cellist can mimic a *vibrato* by placing finger 2 firmly on C3 of the G string and vibrating simultaneously as they pluck the C string. The *pizzicato* at m. 52 should be more aggressive and assertive. Once the sound of the C string has completely faded away, take time before moving any part of the body. Then, calmly raise the right hand towards the C string and gently pluck the string, allowing the string to vibrate freely, leaving the sound to fade away on its own (Example 4.18).

Example 4.18 Sérénade, mm. 44-53; Bowings, Fingerings, and Special Effects

Section A

Section A returns for the last time at m. 54. At m. 56, the researcher uses finger 1, 2, 1 on the D string for the first three notes, after which the researcher moves to the G string placing finger 3 on the G3 harmonic sliding audibly down to the C#3 on the same string. At m. 57 the researcher uses finger 1, 2, 1 on the G string for the first three notes, followed by finger 3 on the D3 of the C string. Once again, using finger 3, the cellist should audibly slide down to the C#2 (Example 4.19).

Example 4.19 Sérénade, mm. 56-57; Bowings and Fingerings

The following passage starting at the end of m. 57 is marked with *stretto e cresc. molto*. This should be played with an immediate escalation of speed and rapid increase of intensity and volume. Make sure to start the passage with a true *pianissimo* in order to build suspense. The researcher plays the A4 in m. 59 and 61 with a down-bow, using finger 1, refraining from using any *vibrato* during the first half, gradually adding *vibrato*

towards the end of the sustained A4. Measure 59 should be played with only a slight accent in *piano*, avoiding anything too sharp and intense. Before the change of notes, the cellist should take an up-bow, reserving plenty of bow for the *crescendo* during the sequence of chromatic notes. Measure 61 should be played similarly, however, without the accent on the A4 in m. 61. The last two measures should be played without *vibrato*, seamlessly moving between the A4 to the A3 played on the D string using finger 2. Make sure to reserve an adequate amount of bow for the last two measures, allowing the sound to fade away as the bow reaches the tip.

4.1.3 Finale

According to Cantrell's (1988) research, the Finale is divided into two parts with an axis in between, wherein each part is also divided thematically. Alternatively, this axis can also be perceived as a development of existing material or as a link between the two parts. Part one begins at m. 1-56, followed by the axis at mm. 57-68, proceeded by part two at mm. 69-123. Part one is comprised of theme one at mm. 3-14, theme two at mm. 15-22, new material at mm. 23-37, and theme one at mm. at 37-56. Part two starts with new material at mm. 69-84, followed by theme one at mm. 85-95, theme two at mm. 96-103, and a variation of theme one at mm. 104-123.

The Finale presents a lively and exuberant character featuring dynamic contrasts, energetic rhythms, and sudden changes in tempo. Compared to the *Sérénade*, the Finale has fewer *pizzicati* passages. In the *Sérénade*, four types of *pizzicati* were prevalent—*pizzicato* marked with *staccato*, *pizzicato* marked with *tenuto*, *pizzicato* of the chord, and slurred *pizzicato*. Likewise, the Finale also contains these four types of *pizzicati* however with a few added elements. At the introduction of the Finale, Debussy writes *arraché*, specifically instructing the cellist to play the *pizzicato* in an extreme tearing manner. The cellist should pull the string to the right more than usual before releasing it to produce a rather strong sound whilst making sure to vibrate each note in order to achieve maximum volume. The researcher also employs the use of the left-hand *pizzicato* within the Finale at mm. 85-86. This requires the cellist to use the left hand's little finger instead of the right hand. By using the left hand, this allows the cellist to

play the passage with more convenience, eliminating the need for the right hand to switch between *arco* and *pizzicato*, ultimately enabling a smoother performance with fewer interruptions.

Due to the Finale's dynamic character, the cellist should note whenever there is a sudden change in tempo. The most apparent of these tempo changes can be found in the transition from the axis to the second part of the Finale. The axis, m. 57, is marked as *Lento Molto*, whereas in the second part, m. 69, the cellist is instructed to return to the initial tempo of the Finale. These sudden changes in tempo should be discussed with the pianist at length to ensure proper coordination between the cello and piano part.

Dynamic swelling has been discussed throughout the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*; however, it is perhaps in the Finale that Debussy prominently features this fluctuating type of rhythm. To illustrate, mm. 49, 51, and 104 present a similar group of notes with similar dynamic markings. In such cases, the cellist should start with a slow bow speed rapidly speeding up towards the last note of the group, making sure to increase in dynamic. This will give the effect of a swelling sound.

Another interesting issue is the use of *sur la chevalet* within the final movement. *Sur la chevalet* first appears in the Finale in mm. 39-41 and once again in mm. 77-78. In contrast to *sur la touche*, *sur la chevalet* is to be played by placing the bow as close to the bridge as possible. This will give the effect of a thin, dry, metallic sound, creating a sense of tension and intensity to the movement. The written dynamic at mm. 39-41 is *pianissimo*, however, despite the written dynamics, the cellist should maintain a consistent bow weight as using too little or too much could affect the quality of sound. Conversely, at mm. 77-78 the researcher opts to play the *sur la chevalet* with a more extreme approach by applying more weight than usual, leaning into a more metallic sound.

Part one

The Finale opens with a rumbling sequence from the piano and three introductory notes from the cello. These three notes are to be played by *pizzicato* in a very aggressive and forceful manner, escalating in dynamics and vigorously using vibrato. Not only does this coincide with what Debussy may have envisioned, but by playing these two bars actively, it helps the cello part counter the thick texture of the piano part (Example 4.20).

Example 4.20 Finale, mm. 1-2; *Pizzicato*

1 Animé (92 = ♩) Léger et nerveux.
pizz.
p
arraché

Starting with an up-bow at m. 3, use the full length of bow with a fast bow speed during the sustained A2's between mm. 3-6. Although not written, the researcher applies a slight *crescendo* starting from the E2 in m. 6 until the E4 in m. 7 followed by a sudden drop in dynamics at the third beat of m. 7. Starting from the third beat of m. 7, the researcher starts with a down-bow, slurring the A4 all the way to D5 in m. 8, followed by an up-bow in m. 9. In mm. 9-14, being that the sustained note is E5, the researcher opts to use the dominant finger 2 in order to comfortably play the E5 with a generous amount of vibrato. The researcher changes bow liberally during mm. 7-14, however, the bow changes should be as subtle as possible in order to align with Debussy's written expression of *expressif et soutenu*, which translates to play "expressively in a sustained manner". For the last three notes of m. 14, the researcher uses fingers 3, 2, and 1. Additionally, the researcher applies a slight *glissando*. Towards the end of theme one, at m. 14, the cellist should lead the *molto ritardando*, changing bows for each of the last three notes of m. 14. Each of the last three notes should be played vigorously with vibrato and with a significant increase in dynamics. Although written only with a *forte*, the researcher plays the last few notes of m. 14 with a *fortissimo*, creating a striking contrast between the dynamics in m. 14 and m. 15 which starts with a *piano*.

Measures 15-18 present a stream of running notes which may present a technical difficulty for the cellist. The researcher chooses fingerings that provide agility and ease in mobility (Example 4.21). This passage should feel and sound like a continuous flow of notes, therefore bow technique should also be taken into consideration. Where it is written with a *staccato*, the cellist should use a small amount of bow around the area of the bow's balance point. However, where it is written with a slur, the cellist should prepare an ample amount of bow in order to fit in all the notes within the slur. Furthermore, the long slurs in m. 17 and m. 18 should start with an up-bow, with the first few notes starting with a slow bow speed gradually speeding up the bow speed towards the last notes of the slur, driving the direction of the music towards the note at the end of the slur. Although Debussy writes m. 17 with a *decrescendo*, the researcher opts to do a slight *crescendo* instead. However, at the end of this passage, at m. 18, the researcher follows the *decrescendo* to end the phrase. Ending the passage at m. 18 with an up-bow guarantees an easy smoother transition into the *pizzicato* at m. 19.

Example 4.21 Finale, mm. 15-18; Bowings and Fingerings

The image shows a musical score for measures 15-18. Measure 15 begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 2/4 time signature. The music consists of a continuous stream of eighth notes. Above the notes, fingerings are indicated: '3 1 9' for the first note, '2 1 3 2 1' for the next four notes, '9 1 2 9' for the next four notes, '1 1 2' for the next three notes, '3 2 1 9 2 1 9 2 1 9' for the next ten notes, and '3 1 4 1 0 3 1' for the final three notes. Bowings are marked with 'V' above the notes. A slur covers measures 17 and 18. The dynamic is 'P' and the marking is 'volubile'. The score ends at measure 18 with a 'V' marking.

Towards the end of theme two, at mm. 19-22, the *pizzicati* are to be played with a guitar strum-like effect. At mm. 19-20, the chords on the downbeat should be played with an upward stroke starting from the bottom note of the chord using the thumb, whereas the single notes on the upbeat should be played with a downward like stroke using the index finger. In mm. 21-22, Debussy switches the position of the chord to the upbeat. Here, similar to mm. 19-20, we will play the single notes on the downbeat with a downward like stroke using the index finger and the chords on the upbeat with an upward stroke using the thumb, also starting from the bottom note. This back-and-forth motion *pizzicato* of the left hand not only imitates the strumming technique of the guitar, but also facilitates a more seamless movement between the single note and the chord.

At mm. 22, the researcher applies a *ritardando*, gradually slowing down for a smooth transition into the *rubato* section starting at m. 23 (Example. 4.22).

At mm. 23-36, Debussy introduces new material where all the notes are played with *pizzicato*. For the sake of simplicity, this section will be divided into two types of *pizzicati*—*pizzicato* with slurred *staccato* and *pizzicato* of the chord. The *pizzicati* in mm. 23, 25, 29, and 31 are marked with a slurred *staccato* for which the researcher uses the right-hand thumb. For these four measures, the researcher uses fingers 1, 1, 3 and 2. When played, connect each note as if it were a bowed slur, making sure that after each note is played, the left-hand fingers remain pressed on the same note to sustain the sound of the note for longer. The last notes of mm. 23, 25, 29, and 31 are marked with a *tenuto*, the researcher plays this with a generous amount of vibrato. Doing this helps sustain the note and amplifies the effect of the crescendo towards the last note within mm. 23, 25, 29, and 31 (Example 4.22).

Example 4.22 Finale, mm. 19-24; *Pizzicato*

The *pizzicato* of the chord in mm. 24, 26, 27, 28, 30, and 32 should be played with a slanted upward motion using the thumb. Starting from the bottom-most note of the chord, after each note, gradually push the direction of the right-hand thumb closer and closer to the end of the fingerboard. For these six measures, the researcher uses fingers 2, 2, 3, 2, where finger 2 is must be splayed across all the four strings of the cello, ensuring that after each note is played the sound of the note is sustained. Even though mm. 24, 26, 27, 28, 30, and 32 are written as chords, the execution of these chords should be more spread out or arpeggiated, making sure that each note is audible (Example 4.22). At mm. 33-34, the researcher uses fingers 3, 2, and 1 during the first beat. At the second beat of mm. 33-34, the researcher uses fingers 1, 1, 2, and 1 for the

chord, where finger 1 must be splayed across all the four strings of the cello. The chords in mm. 33-34 are marked with a *sforzando*, for this reason, the researcher uses a downward motion starting from the top-most note of the chord for the *pizzicato*. The execution of the chord has to be done in an assertive manner, making sure to strike the chord with much force as possible (Example 4.23). Measure 35 starts with an up-bow followed by one bow for each note after. From mm. 35-36, the researcher uses fingers 1, 2, 1, 2, 3, 1, 4, 3, 1. The use of the dominant finger 2 on the F4 in mm. 35-35 warrants the use plenty of vibrato. Use plenty of bow for each note and slow down towards the end of m. 36, playing each successive note broader than the last.

Example 4.23 Finale, mm. 33-34; *Pizzicato*

The image shows a musical score for two measures, 33 and 34, in bass clef. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). Measure 33 is marked 'stretto' and contains a chord with fingerings 3, 2, 1, 1 above the notes. Measure 34 contains a chord with fingerings 2, 1, 1, 1 above the notes. Dynamics are indicated as p (piano) and sf (sforzando) with arrows pointing to the notes.

Measure 37 marks the return of the original tempo of the Finale, where the C4 is to be played with finger 2, played with a drastic change in dynamic to *piano*. Theme one briefly returns in m. 39, where this passage is to be played as close as possible to the bridge. In mm. 44-45, the researcher uses one whole up-bow followed by a down-bow in m. 47 and an up-bow in m. 48. Despite changing bows often, the researcher makes it a point to mask the change of bow during performance. In mm. 49 and 51, the researcher uses fingers 3, 2, and 1 for the chromatic sequence of notes. The researcher divides the mm. 49 and 51 respectively into two bows, starting each bow with a slow speed, rapidly speeding up to the last note of the slur. Towards the end of the slur, make it a point to add more weight to the bow. Quickly return to a *piano* right after each sequence. This will give the effect of swelling. Debussy writes a *glissando* in mm. 50 and 51. During the shift between the two notes, the researcher uses a rather slow shift, greatly emphasizing the *glissando* between the two notes. Using a slower bow speed, especially during the slow shift, also helps emphasize the *glissando*.

Starting at mm. 53-56, the researcher uses fingers 1, 3, 1, 2, 3, 2, 2, and 1. Placing finger 2 on the D \flat allows for a quick progression to the C5 by moving in half-steps. The researcher applies a *ritardando* in m. 56 by extending the value of the B \flat .

Axis

Apart from being an axis, a section that supports the symmetry of the Finale, mm. 57-68 can also be viewed as a section that links part one to part two. Being that this is the slowest section in the Finale, the researcher urges the cellist to save an ample amount of bow for each bow change. With some measures such as m. 57 being similar to some previous material, the researcher suggests using the same fingering pattern as before. Adhering to the somber mood of this section, the researcher refrains from using the A string, so as to avoid the bright nature of the A string. For the first half of the section, the researcher urges the cellist to avoid using excessive amounts of vibrato, but rather to express the melancholic disposition of this section through the right hand. For better tone and stability, a controlled bow speed should be maintained, leaning toward a slower speed when required. The last note of this section should be played with a down-bow, gradually disappearing until no longer audible.

Part two

Part two starts with an energetic introduction of new material which goes on until m. 84. After a short break from the axis section, the cellist should initiate the beginning part two. From mm. 69-84, it is important for the cellist to play within the bounds of the bow's balance point to ensure precise and agile bow strokes. This entire passage somewhat requires the cellist to play with a *sautillé* like technique, in which the cellist should highlight the change in notes, whereas where the notes are repeating, the cellist should play passively. In mm. 81-84, the researcher uses the thumb, finger 1,3, and 1. These four bars requires the cellist to extend their whole hand across the A string. Using this fingering avoids unnecessary shifting that may possibly hinder the cellist. During mm. 81-84, the cellist should adjust the bow's contact point according to the pitch of the note. Adjusting bow placement is crucial—higher notes require proximity

to the bridge, while lower tones resonate better with the bow positioned between the bridge and fingerboard. Proper bow placement ensures that cellist avoids any cracking and screeching sounds when playing, achieving a more clear and precise sound.

Although part two is set after part one's tempo, part two gives off an exuberant and lively disposition. Coupled with the fast pace of rhythm, this may become an obstacle when playing mm. 85-86. Instead of doing a normal right-hand *pizzicato*, the researcher uses the left hand's little finger during the *pizzicato*. This helps maintain the pace of music and guarantees less fumbling between the two hands. As for the group of bowed notes before each left-hand *pizzicato*, the researcher chooses to use *ricochet* or *jeté* instead of the usual alternating direction of the bow. To do this, the cellist must throw the bow down the string, allowing the bow to bounce against the string. Be careful to control the frequency of the bouncing, limiting it only to three notes as written. Pertaining to the same issue, the cellist must be careful not to throw the bow at an angle too high as this may cause the bow to bounce too high making it difficult for the cellist to control the bouncing of the bow. This *ricochet* or *jeté* technique allows the cellist to play notes at a fast speed in short bursts (Example 4.24).

Example 4.24 Finale, mm. 85-86; *Pizzicato*

Theme one truly returns in m. 87, where for the most part, it should be performed similarly as in part one. In m. 99, we find a slight alteration to theme two, which leads into a long, sustained trill. Starting at a down bow, the researcher changes bow every measure, landing on a down-bow on the second beat of m. 103 followed by an up-bow for the burst of notes leading into m. 104.

In mm. 105 the researcher uses finger 3 for both G4 and E4 with a dramatic *glissando* in between the notes. Measure 106 starts with finger 1 followed by finger 3

on the B \flat in m. 107. In mm. 108-111, the researcher uses fingers 2, 3, 2, 2, and 1 for both sequences. The chords in mm. 113-115 are marked as *sforzattissimo* with *marcato*. Play these chords forcefully with a downward *pizzicato* motion starting from the top-most note of the chord, using the index finger of the right hand. Taking time with the A4 in m. 114, use a vigorous amount of vibrato, sustaining the note for longer than written before continuing into m. 115 (Example 4.25).

Example 4.25 Finale, mm. 113-115; *Pizzicato*



Measure 115 will be divided into two bows followed by a down-bow in m. 116. After a quick retake, take two down-bows on the G4 and F4 in m. 116. In m. 117, the researcher completely slurs the first beat followed by an up-bow on the second beat. Measure 118 should be played as written, gradually broadening each note one after the other.

The cellist should lead the pianist into the last five measures, signaling each entrance. Using the index finger of the right hand, the chord in m. 120 should be played with a downward motion starting from the top note. Contrary to m. 120, m. 121 will be played using the right-hand thumb with an upward motion, starting from the bottom note. The cello's last note should be played as dryly as possible without sacrificing volume. Play this note as close as possible to the edge of the fingerboard (Example 4.26).

Example 4.26 Finale, mm. 120-124; *Pizzicato*

4.2 Practice Guide

This sub-chapter will focus on effective strategies for overcoming technical difficulties, which will be divided mainly into two parts—bowings and fingerings. However, where needed, other issues concerning special effects, dynamics, expression, and tempo will be addressed.

4.2.1 Bowing

In this part, we will discuss a few important topics related to the execution of the bow in Debussy's *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. We will be discussing practical methods for challenging passages that require namely string crossing, phrasing, and dynamics. Bow techniques such as *spiccato*, *sautillé*, and *ricochet* will also be discussed in this part.

Throughout the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*, there are many passages that require string crossing. Among all the passages, mm. 5-7 (Example 4.27) and mm. 35-56 (Example 4.28) from the Prologue and mm. 69-84 from the Finale stand out the most. Although these passages seem short, they may pose as a challenge for cellists, especially when a passage must be performed at a fast tempo or when a passage needs to be performed seamlessly. More often than not, cellists tend to move their right arm excessively. This excessive movement hinders fluid movement between strings making the phrase fragmented and incoherent.

Example 4.27 Prologue, mm. 5-7; String Crossing

5

V 1 4 2 1 1 □ V 4 2 1 0 1 0 4 □ 1 4 2 1 0 V 0 0 1 4 0 1 4

Cédez

2 1 1 4 2 2 1 3 □ 3 1 3 1 1 1 3 V 3 □ 3 1 3 V 1 2 2 3

6

(dim.) ----- p I II

Example 4.28 Prologue, mm. 35-36; String Crossing

35

Rubato

V 1 2 3 4 2 3 3 3 9 9 1 9 □

più p

Beyond the obvious approach of practicing at a slower, more manageable tempo, begin by closely observing the right arm's movements. Specifically, focus on the bow's angle of placement for each string. This awareness helps the cellist realize that the perceived distance between the strings is narrower than it may seem, allowing for greater precision and efficiency during string crossings. Try a simple corrective exercise to fully grasp and apply this concept. Place the bow at its balance point, starting from the A string, and move it down one string at a time. Instead of moving the bow sideways, keep the bow stationary as close as possible to the balance point and use the right arm to move the bow at an angle between each string. This exercise trains the cellist to transition between strings efficiently, minimizing unnecessary movement and effort (Figure 4.1).

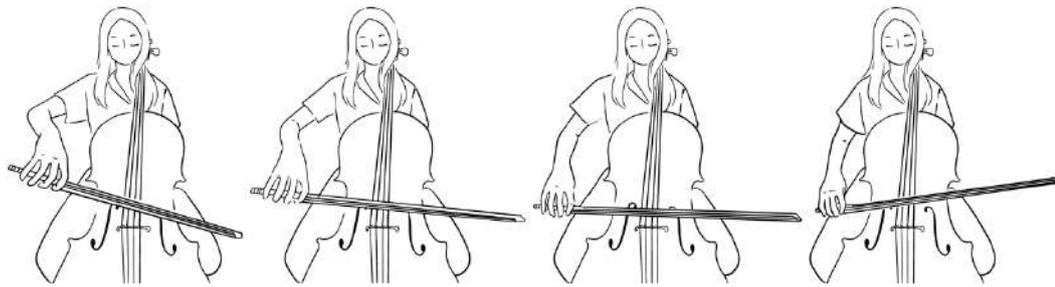


Figure 4.1 String Crossing Exercise

Sourced: Researcher

Once the cellist has fully grasped the concept of crossing strings, select a passage and start practicing it slowly, isolating only the right arm and the bow's movement. This means that the cellist will play the notes as written without actually playing with the left hand. This method of practice will train the right arm to move independently without having to rely on the left hand. Initially, the cellist may find this exercise more difficult than anticipated, as the right arm's movements is often subconsciously guided by the left hand. Without the left hand "navigating" the right arm, the right arm is allowed increased flexibility. This should be practiced until the right arm registers the movements as muscle memory. After the isolated right-arm practice, slowly introduce the left hand into the equation. Practice this to a point where both bowing and fingering technique are incorporated as seamlessly as possible whilst simultaneously increasing the speed up to the desired tempo.

The *Sonata for Cello and Piano* overflows with an abundance of dynamic contrasts and unexpected turns in phrasing. This is evident all throughout the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*, however, a few passages that stand out are m. 16, m. 18, and m. 37 from the Prologue, mm. 23-24 from the Serénade, m. 49, m. 51, mm. 69-84 from the Finale. Compared to other topics in this section, the execution of phrasing and dynamics are generally not considered as technically demanding. However, the researcher finds that mastering the control of the bow allows greater expressiveness. Cellists may even find that attempting to follow the dynamic instructions strictly is not as simple as it seems. The previously mentioned measures are passages that present a distinct feature

of Debussy's music—undulating rhythm and dynamics, requiring the cellist to properly understand the phrase and plan the bow accordingly.

Similar to string crossing, isolate the right arm during practice. Here, rather than following only the written dynamics, the researcher urges the cellist to experiment with other dynamic combinations. Once, the desired effect has been achieved with only the right arm, add the left hand into the combination.

To illustrate, consider mm. 16 and 18 of the Prologue (Example 4.29). These passages are marked with a *crescendo* at every four notes. The left hand presents a repetition of the same notes, therefore, most of the expressiveness must come from the right arm. To create a more expressive dynamic shape within this phrase, use less bow at beginning of each group, gradually increasing in length towards the end of the group of four notes. Once the group of four notes is completed, it is imperative to return to a soft dynamic in order to repeat the same process. The researcher finds that this is best practiced initially without the left hand. Once the right hand is technically secure, incorporate the left hand into the mix. Similarly, this method can also be applied to mm. m. 37 from the Prologue, mm. 23-24 from the Sérénade, m. 49, m. 51, mm. 69-84 from the Finale. However, mm. 69-84 requires more planning as it is a longer phrase devoid of repetitive patterns in dynamics. Unlike the other passages, the cellist should practice mm. 69-84 with both the left and right hand together.

Example 4.29 Prologue, m. 16; Phrasing and Dynamics

1
au Mouvt

16

1 1 2 4 1 2 2 4 1 2 2 4 1 2 2 4

p p p p

Although not written by Debussy himself, the researcher finds that in the *Sonata for Cello and Piano* the performance can be enhanced by incorporating subtle adjustments to bow technique. To achieve this effect, the researcher employs techniques

such as *spiccato*, *sautillé*, and *ricochet*. These techniques can be applied throughout the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. A few notable passages are mm. 37-40 in the Sérénade, mm. 69-84 and mm. 85-86 both in the Finale. Not only are these passages considered technically difficult, but they also require the cellist to have a proper understanding of each passage in order to properly present the composer's intent.

Having the ability to properly execute these techniques is essential for the following reasons. Firstly, Debussy's music often calls for abrupt shifts in articulation to evoke atmosphere and texture. The ability to switch articulations allows the performer to match the desired expressive intent of different phrases, therefore bringing more nuance to the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. Secondly, the passages previously mentioned above demand lightness, agility, and smooth transitions between bow strokes. The cellists should not neglect practicing each individual technique as it is essential for achieving precise articulation. Although widely known amongst all string instrumentalists, the researcher would like to establish an understanding of these three bow techniques by highlighting the differences between the three techniques and how to approach them in practice.

Even though both *spiccato* and *sautillé* are technically played off the string, the difference between *spiccato* and *sautillé* lies primarily in the technique and the execution of the bow stroke. *Spiccato* involves a controlled and deliberate bouncing of the bow, where the cellist lifts the bow off the string after each note. This is usually applicable to pieces that are not too fast in tempo. On the other hand, *sautillé* is faster, more natural, and more continuous in bouncing. The bow's movement during *sautillé* is less deliberate and relies more on the inherent spring-like motion of the bow itself, suitable for pieces that require a faster tempo.

Spiccato can be applied to mm. 37-40 of the Serenade (Example 4.30). The researcher finds that using *spiccato* during this passage highlights the articulation originally written by Debussy. Additionally, this passage requires a more nuanced approach to its articulation as there are moments when the articulation changes suddenly. Using *spiccato* allows the cellist to be able to switch between separate

staccato notes and slurred notes with more ease. Initially, this passage may feel disorienting due to its combination of alternate bowings and slurs, however, the researcher finds that starting slowly, concentrating on lifting the bow deliberately after each note and maintaining a consistent bounce delivers the best results. For sharp and defined bow strokes, use the lower half of the bow. Maintain flexibility in the wrist and fingers, guiding the bow's bounce while keeping the right arm relatively still. Gradually increase the tempo, keeping in mind to keep the accuracy of the articulation with each bow stroke.

Example 4.30 Sérénade, mm. 37-41; *Spiccato*

The musical score for Example 4.30 is in 3/8 time and D major. It consists of two staves. The first staff, starting at measure 37, is marked 'Meno mosso poco' and 'pp subito'. It contains a sequence of eighth notes with various bowing techniques indicated by 'V' (upbow) and '□' (downbow) symbols. Fingerings are shown with numbers 1-4. The second staff, starting at measure 41, is marked 'mf' and contains a few more eighth notes with bowing and fingering indications.

Sautillé can be applied to mm. 69-84 in the Finale (Example 4.31). This passage is comparatively long and straightforward with an unchanging driving tempo, because of this the researcher finds that *sautillé* is the most suitable form of bow technique for this passage. Not only does *sautillé* enable the cellist to play at faster tempos, but it also provides ease in playing this long passage as it is less deliberately carried out compared to *spiccato*. Start practicing this passage slowly, gradually increasing speed, allowing the bow to naturally spring off the string, while keeping the hand relaxed for a more fluid motion. Pay attention to the amount of weight applied and where the bow is placed. To achieve optimal results, apply only an adequate amount of weight to the bow and keep the bow within the bounds of the balance point. As the speed increases, the bow's bouncing motion becomes automatic, and the hand simply guides the direction and length of each stroke. The challenge of *sautillé* is maintaining control and evenness while allowing the bow to bounce freely.

Example 4.31 Finale, mm. 69-84; *Sautillé*

1^{er} Mouvt^t
sur la touche

69 *pp*

72 *sempre pp* 6

75 *p* *cresc.*

78 *mf*

81 *f* *molto dim.* *p* 6 6

84

Out of the three, *ricochet*, also known as *jeté*, is the most distinct in character and execution. The researcher finds that this technique is most suitable for the passage in mm. 85-86 in the Finale (Example 4.32). This passage is particularly difficult because of the abrupt change between *arco* and *pizzicato*. If one is not careful enough, this passage can turn into a tangled mess, with a strong likelihood of getting tangled between the left and right hand. Alternatively, this passage can also be played with normal alternating bowing. However, the researcher finds that doing the same repetitive bow pattern coupled with the *pizzicato* may cause further hindrance. The researcher finds that using *ricochet* in this passage suits the style and articulation more as the sounds produced by *ricochet* are short and highly articulated. Correspondingly, the *ricochet* will coincide with the researcher's fingering, using the left-hand *pizzicato*. In regard to

The researcher's first method of practice involves isolating difficult passages and playing them slowly, focusing on the left hand's hand shape and positioning. If there are any position changes, make sure to make them as smooth and seamless as possible. For longer passages, break down the passage into smaller segments, making sure that each shift or extension is executed correctly. Gradually increase speed as the left-hand becomes more comfortable, while maintaining precise intonation and fluidity throughout the passage.

Another method that the researcher uses often is incorporating rhythmic variations. This can be a very effective strategy for improving fluidity. Start by altering the rhythm of the passage, breaking it into long-short (Example 4.34) or short-long (Example 4.35) patterns. This forces the fingers to adjust to different timings and helps build muscle memory. This technique not only helps solidify the difficult transitions between notes but also allows the cellists to focus on precision and control, gradually refining both speed and intonation.

Example 4.34 Long-short Pattern



Example 4.35 Short-long Pattern



An alternative method to practicing difficult passages is by grouping notes into different combinations. This helps the cellist focus on specific sequences and transitions between fingers. This approach breaks the passage into manageable fragments, making it easier to identify and address technical difficulties. To do this, break the passage into groups of four notes. As a group starts to feel comfortable, gradually expand by adding another group one after the other, keeping in mind that the desired outcome is to be able

to play the whole passage as comfortable as possible without having any mishaps along the way (Example 4.36).

Example 4.36 Grouped-notes Practice Method

Lastly, similar to practicing passages in groups, the researcher practices in varied groupings. The alternating start to the group of notes helps in building muscle memory and gaining full control of the passage. Start by playing the first note of the group and stopping, continuing at the second note of the group, stopping once again after the first note of the next group. Continue until the whole passage is completed, repeating until the first variation feels comfortable. Once the first variation is done, continue to the second variation. Start the passage, stopping after the second note, continuing at the third note, stopping once again after the second note of the next group. Once again, continue until the passage is completed, repeating as many times as needed. This method of practice should yield a total of four variations, with the last variation requiring the cellist to play in normal groups of four with rests in between each group. Because of the irregular beat and varying rhythm, this method challenges finger coordination, thereby strengthening the precision in execution (Example 4.37).

Example 4.37 Varied-grouped-notes Practice Method

① 0 0 0 1 4 0 1 4 2 1 1 4 2 2 1 3

Chapter 5

Summary and Discussion

This research serves as a comprehensive practice guide for the interpretation and technical execution of Debussy's *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. It is systematically divided into two main parts: the first part focuses on the researcher's interpretation of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*, while the second part provides practical strategies for overcoming technical challenges associated with the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*.

In the first part of the research, the interpretation, the researcher delves into each of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*'s three movements—Prologue, Sérénade, and Finale. The researcher gives specific attention to bowings, fingerings, special effects, dynamics, expression, tempo, and the interplay between the cello and the piano part, showcasing how these elements contribute to the overall aesthetic that Debussy sought to achieve.

5.1 Summary and Discussion

To establish a cohesive progression of this research, the researcher refers to Cantrell's (1988) formal analysis of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. For the most part of this research, the researcher agrees with Cantrell's formal analysis of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. Cantrell contends that the Prologue is in a simple A-B-A' form, whereas the Sérénade is divided thematically into sections with a rondo form of A-B-A-C-A. As for the Finale, Cantrell claims that this movement is divided into two parts with an axis in between. However, the researcher would like to argue that instead of viewing the short section between the two parts as an axis, it can be viewed simply as a link or a bridge between the two parts.

An issue that will frequently reappear throughout the *Sonata for Cello and Piano* is phrasing. While the slurs originally written by Debussy aim to shape the phrasing, the researcher finds that they can present technical difficulties. The researcher proposes modified bowings to address these difficulties while preserving Debussy's intended phrasing. String crossing, particularly in mm. 5-7 (Example 5.1) and mm. 35-36 of the Prologue, is another issue that can be mitigated by designing fingerings that help reduce the need to cross strings. However, such solutions are limited when considering other factors such as bowing and phrasing. Ultimately, the goal is to make fingering and bow changes as seamless as possible, with mindful and smooth movements both of the left and the right hand.

Example 5.1 Prologue, mm. 5-7; Fingerings

The musical score for Example 5.1 shows two systems of music. System I (measures 5-6) includes fingerings such as 1 4 2 1 1, 4 2 1 0 1 0 4, and 1 4 2 1 0. System II (measures 6-7) includes fingerings such as 2 1 1 4 2 2 1 3, 3 1 3 1 1 1 3, and 3 1 3 1 2 2 3. Dynamic markings include 'dim.' and 'p'. Bowings are indicated by 'V' and '□'. The score is divided into two systems, I and II.

Often throughout the *Sonata for Cello and Piano* materials are reused repeatedly. This presents the opportunity to play the same material differently according to the context of each passage. In mm. 20 of the Prologue, a similar set of repeating notes is presented. Instead of using the same set of fingering for each recurring set of notes, the researcher opts to use three different kinds of fingerings for each recurring set. By doing so this adds nuance to a simple set of recurring notes.

The *Sérénade* in particular emphasizes timbre, posing interpretative challenges for performers. In the *Sérénade*, *pizzicato* techniques play a central role, likely inspired by guitar strumming techniques (Vallas, 1933, p. 262) and Spanish music (Lockspeiser,

1962, p. 255-256). In the *Sérénade* the researcher identifies four types of *pizzicati* in total—*pizzicato* marked with *staccato*, *pizzicato* marked with *tenuto*, *pizzicato* of the chord, and slurred *pizzicato*. Each type of *pizzicato* requires a specific technique to achieve the desired sound. A common issue within these types of *pizzicati* is ensuring clarity, especially in the cello's lower register. The cellist should make sure to maintain a balanced sound with the piano part.

Marked as *fantasque et léger*, translated as whimsical and light, the *Sérénade* exhibits dance-like rhythms with abrupt shifts in tempo. Coordination with the pianist is essential for maintaining synchronization especially in passages where the cellist must lead the pianist. Special effects like *flautando* and *sur la touche* create airy, flute-like sounds, however, the researcher argues that the cellist must remain audible at all times. In mm. 8-9 of the *Sérénade*, opposed to the E artificial harmonic written by Debussy, the researcher opts to play the E natural harmonic using finger 3 placed on the E4 on the A string. By doing so, the risk of playing the note out of tune is greatly reduced with the addition of having a clearer sounding note with more reverberation.

The Finale is lively with energetic rhythms, sharp tempo changes, and contrasting dynamics. It is perhaps in the Finale that Debussy emphasizes this type of undulating rhythm and dynamic. While the Finale contains fewer *pizzicati* passages compared to the *Sérénade*, the same types of *pizzicati* appear with one added element—*pizzicato* marked with *arraché*. Marked during the first few measures of the Finale, Debussy requires the cellists to play the *pizzicato* in an aggressive, tearing manner. Measures 19-34 is dominantly played with *pizzicato*, however, the researcher has specifically designed patterns and directions to cater to the ease of the performance for the cellist. For instance, in m. 19, the researcher uses a slanted upward *pizzicato* using the thumb for the chord and a downward *pizzicato* using the index finger for the single note. The same idea is implied in m. 20. The upward *pizzicato* direction of the chord ensures that the top note of the chord is audible. However, for the chords in mm. 33-34, the researcher opts to play the chord assertively in a downward motion, using as much force as possible in order to coincide with the written *sforzando*.

Another interesting aspect of this movement is the researcher's decision to employ left-hand *pizzicato* in mm. 85-86. By using left-hand *pizzicato*, the cellist is allowed a smoother performance by reducing unnecessary movement between *arco* and *pizzicato*. Additionally, the researcher also employs the *ricochet* technique during the *arco* parts during this passage, allowing the cellist to perform these notes with as much articulation as possible. Another notable technique within the Finale is the use of *sur le chevalet*, a special effect employed to create dry metallic sounds that may suggest tension in music (Walden, 1988, p. 43). This particular effect can be found in mm. 39-41 and mm. 77-78. Although mm. 39-41 is marked as *pianissimo*, the researcher would like to highlight that consistent bow weight is crucial for maintaining sound quality. At mm. 77-78, the researcher applies a heavier weight to the bow to enhance the metallic effect further, adding intensity to the passage.

The practice guide complements the interpretative analysis by offering practical solutions for addressing the technical challenges identified in the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. It emphasizes the significance of bowing techniques and methodical fingerings. This is particularly highlighted in passages that involve plenty of string crossings, contrasting dynamics, rapid running notes, and leaping intervals.

The *Sonata for Cello and Piano* contains a few challenging passages in regard to string crossing. Most notable of them are mm. 5-7 and mm. 35-56 in the Prologue and mm. 69-84 in the Finale. These sections, although brief, can be difficult, especially when performed at a fast tempo or when the passage requires to be played seamlessly. The root of the problem is excessive right-arm movement, which may disrupt fluidity in string crossing resulting in fragmented phrasing. The researcher finds that this becomes appallingly apparent when one does a simple corrective exercise of shifting the bow from one string to another without moving the bow sideways. By doing so, the cellist will find that they don't need to move their arm excessively in order to move to other strings.

Dynamics and phrasing are crucial elements of the sonata which require nuanced control of the bow. While some passages, such as m. 16, m. 18, and m. 37 of the Prologue and mm. 23-24 of the Sérénade, seem simple, they demand mastery of subtle and abrupt dynamic changes. The passages previously mentioned have a repetitive nature, making it possible to isolate the right hand during practice. Longer phrases, such as mm. 69-89 in the Finale, require additional planning due to their lack of repetitive patterns. For this passage, both the left and right hand should be practiced together to achieve seamless coordination.

The researcher suggests enhancing the performance of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano* by incorporating these bow techniques—*spiccato*, *sautillé*, and *ricochet*. These techniques are essential to convey Debussy's expressive intent and to achieve smooth, agile transitions. Measures 37-40 of the Sérénade require the cellist to play with a more articulated approach. Given that the tempo is not so fast, the researcher finds that *spiccato* is most suitable for this passage, requiring a more deliberate bounce of the bow. Practice involves lifting the bow after each note, maintaining wrist flexibility, and increasing the tempo gradually.

Measures 69-84 of the Finale is a particularly long passage with a continuous driving rhythm. The researcher finds that *sautillé* is most suitable for this passage. Conversely, Hong (2002) claims that this passage is a "large *spiccato* section" (p. 122). However, using a *spiccato* stroke requires a more controlled bounce, possibly leading to tension and discomfort. Instead, the researcher uses *sautillé* as it allows a continuous bounce that relies on the bow's natural springiness, granting the performer more ease. The cellist should focus on relaxing the hand and using a light bow weight for fluid motion during faster tempos. In mm. 85-86, the researcher finds that *ricochet* is best suited for this passage as it produces multiple rapid bounces by throwing the bow against the string in one motion. Considering that this passage requires the cellist to shift quickly between *arco* and *pizzicato*, the researcher finds that this one fluid motion of the bow simplifies the execution of the passage whilst keeping the notes highly articulated. In regard to practicing the right hand, the researcher suggests that the cellist isolate the right hand when they can. Playing the notes without having to rely on the left hand

promotes independence of the right hand. This isolated practice should be continued until the right hand internalizes the movements, creating a strong sense of muscle memory.

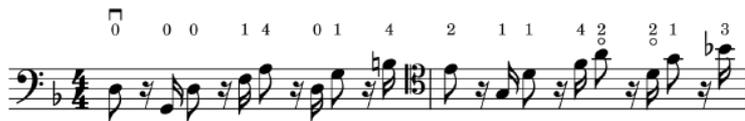
Measures 5-7 and mm. 37-38 in the Prologue, as well as mm. 15-18 and mm. 96-99 in the Finale, require a more systematic approach to fingering. These passages may not feel entirely natural or may prove less than ideal in terms of playability. Challenging fingerings in the *Sonata for Cello and Piano* often require more methodical approach to practice, as they involve not only complex fingerings but also wide leaping intervals and fast tempo.

To tackle these difficulties, the researcher recommends isolating challenging sections and practicing them slowly, emphasizing the left-hand shape and positioning. Any position changes should be smooth and seamless. For longer passages, breaking them into smaller segments allows for better execution of shifts and extensions. Speed can be gradually increased as comfort improves, ensuring precise intonation and fluidity.

Following this discussion, the researcher will provide alternative methods in practicing complex fingerings. These examples will be based on a short excerpt from mm. 5-6 of the Prologue. However, these methods are not limited to this particular passage as these can be applied and adapted to any passage regardless of the rhythm and duration of the notes. Furthermore, the researcher suggests that the cellist use these methods in passages that the cellist may find challenging or technically difficult. Given that these practice methods are made for the development of the left hand, the bowings in the following exercise always start with a down bow followed by simple alternating bows.

Incorporating rhythmic variations is another effective method to enhance fluidity. Altering the rhythm of a passage using long-short (Example 5.2) or short-long (Example 5.3) patterns. This encourages the fingers to adjust to different timings thereby aiding muscle memory. This approach helps refine transitions, precision, and control.

Example 5.2 Long-short Pattern



Example 5.3 Short-long Pattern



Another strategy involves grouping notes into sets of two, three, or four, which helps focus on specific finger transitions. This technique breaks challenging passages into manageable segments, making it easier to identify and address technical issues. As comfort increases, the cellist should gradually add on more groups until they can play the entire passage smoothly (Example 5.4).

Example 5.4 Grouped-notes Practice Method



Lastly, the researcher suggests practicing varied groupings to build muscle memory and control. This method challenges finger coordination and strengthens execution and precision. The researcher has added visual guides that represent the downbeat in order to easily understand the rhythm. This practice method is not limited to this set of rhythms; therefore, the cellist is free to explore other rhythmic combinations as long as it aids in building muscle memory and the accuracy of the left hand (Example 5.5).

Example 5.5 Varied-grouped-notes Practice Method

(a) 0 0 0 1 4 0 1 4 2 1 1 4 2 2 1 3
 22 (b) 0 0 0 1 4 0 1 4 2 1 1 4 2 2 1 3
 26 (c) 0 0 0 1 4 0 1 4 2 1 1 4 2 2 1 3
 30 (d) 0 0 0 1 4 0 1 4 2 1 1 4 2 2 1 3

Ultimately, this research not only provides a thorough exploration of Debussy's *Sonata for Cello and Piano* but also serves as an invaluable resource for performers seeking to enhance their technical abilities and interpretative insight. By combining scholarly analysis and practical guidance, it fosters a deeper understanding of the work's complexities and invites performers to engage with Debussy's music in a meaningful way. The emphasis of the interdependence of technique and expression throughout the research reinforces the idea that successful interpretation is not solely about technical proficiency. It also requires the ability to convey the emotional and aesthetic depth of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*.

In conclusion, this research contributes to the field performance, offering both analytical depth and practical advice that can aid cellists in their journey to mastering Debussy's *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. The insights gleaned from the research presented herein will enrich the interpretative choices made by performers, allowing them to bring their own voice to the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*.

5.2 Researcher's Suggestions

In recent years, practice guide and artistic research have gained widespread recognition and valuable tools for musicians. These iterative processes offer in-depth insight into the researcher's methods, strategies, and approaches to mastering complex repertoire. Although this particular research focuses on Debussy's *Sonata for Cello and Piano*, the techniques and methods in presents are not limited to this *Sonata for Cello and Piano* alone. Instead, they offer a versatile framework that can be adapted across various musical genres and historical periods, encouraging performers to tailor these strategies to suit other styles and composers.

For those interested in the interpretation of impressionistic music, this research serves as a valuable resource, helping reveal the nuanced expressiveness and harmonic characteristic of Debussy's compositions. Furthermore, the insights gained from this guide may also enhance one's understanding and interpretation of other works within the impressionistic genre, opening up new possibilities for expressive depth and stylistic authenticity.



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