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UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

NADIA BOULANGER AND *LA VILLE MORTE* : EN‘GENDERING’ A
WOMAN’S ROLE IN THE MAKING OF AN OPERA

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ARTS IN CANDIDACY FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER’S OF ARTS (MUSICOLOGY) WITH
SPECIALIZATION IN WOMEN’S STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

BY

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395 Wellington Street
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Your file Votre référence

ISBN: 0-494-14906-X

Our file Notre référence

ISBN: 0-494-14906-X

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To Christine and Brian

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the help of many patient and talented people. I regret that there is not enough space in this document to give you all the thanks you deserve.

I am especially indebted to the enthusiasm and guidance of Dr. Paul A. Merkley, my supervisor for this thesis. His zeal caused me to imagine what I thought was impossible, and to achieve what I felt was beyond reach. I would like to thank him for asking: “Would you like to go to Paris?”

I would like to thank Alexandra Laederich of the *Fondation Nadia et Lili Boulanger* and the staff at the *Bibliothèque Nationale* – France, for all their help this past summer. Accessing the *fonds Boulanger* had an enormous impact on this thesis and I am very grateful for the opportunity I had to explore these documents.

In particular I would like to thank Christine O’Connor. No amount of hyperbole could encompass the thanks I owe her for helping to make this thesis into what it is today. Her work and unflagging enthusiasm have meant so much to me while completing this thesis. These words will live on forever, and because of what she has done, I am proud of what they say.

I am thankful for the many friends who aided me in all things which required translation. I truly appreciate all the effort and patience, sensitivity and guidance of Danny Goodall, Julie Hacquard, Victor Herbiet-Amiot, and Megan Snow. Their love of the French language has been contagious.

I would also like to thank my family, especially my mother Pamela Francis and my father Thomas Francis. They have known me my whole life, and never once have they asked me to stop dreaming. For their support through everything, especially the hard times, I thank them.

Finally I thank Brian J. Lefresne. His love and faith in me have been nothing short of miraculous. For not only surviving the madness with me, but for enthusiastically awaiting more, I cannot thank him enough.

Abstract

The life of twentieth-century French theorist, conductor, composer, performer and pedagogue Nadia Boulanger has affected North American music substantially, yet there are many questions surrounding her legacy which remain difficult to answer conclusively. Especially convoluted and contentious is the role she played in the making of an opera, based on a libretto by Gabrielle d'Annunzio, entitled *La Ville Morte*; a project she undertook with her then mentor -- pianist and composer Raoul Pugno. This thesis re-writes the genesis of the opera *La Ville Morte*, drawing from autograph scores, the working libretto, and personal documents housed at the *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris, France. It presents a revisionist image of Nadia Boulanger, with special considerations of the gender discourses which influenced and were manifested in the relations which she had with those around her, including Pugno, and d'Annunzio. This thesis also proposes theories of Boulanger's and Pugno's personal relationship and addresses why Boulanger eventually abandoned composition. Through examination of this evidence, this thesis presents a new, more variegated image of Nadia Boulanger and her role as a composer during the beginning of the twentieth century.

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INTRODUCTION

(Juliette) Nadia Boulanger (1887-1979) was one of the most important musical personalities of the twentieth century. Over the course of her life, she taught composition to many students including Aaron Copland, Thea Musgrave, Louise Talma, Elliot Carter, and Philip Glass. She was friends with Igor Stravinsky, Leonard Bernstein, Walter Damrosch, the Princesse de Polignac, and many other important musical personas. In addition, Boulanger served as the first female conductor for several of the world's major orchestras and produced the first recording exemplars of the music of Claudio Monteverdi, Gabriel Fauré, and her own sister Lili Boulanger. Yet, despite Nadia Boulanger's extensive impact on the field of classical music, the first three decades of her life are sparsely documented and largely dismissed as being of little consequence to the rest of her life.

Nadia Boulanger was born on September 16, 1887 to Raïssa (née Mychestsy) and Ernest Boulanger. Nadia's mother was a Russian princess who left her homeland early in life to come to Paris and study voice at the *Conservatoire de Paris*.¹ It was while studying in at the school that she married Ernest Boulanger, her voice teacher, in 1877.² Ernest Boulanger was also a composer and had won the *Grand Prix de Rome* in 1836.³ Ten years following the marriage of these two musicians, Nadia Boulanger was born.

Shortly before her fourth birthday, Boulanger began an avid study of music that lasted until the day she died. In 1896, at the age of nine, Boulanger was enrolled at the

¹ For a thorough discussion of Raïssa Boulanger's heritage please see: Don Campbell, *Master Teacher* (Washington D.C.: Pastoral Press, 1984), 17. This information remains un-cited and more research into exactly who Raïssa Boulanger was would certainly be beneficial to an understanding of her daughter, Nadia.

² Jérôme Spycket, *Nadia Boulanger* (Stuyvesant, New York : Pendragon Press, 1992), 11.

³ For a detailed account of Ernest Boulanger's life please see: Léonie Rosenstiel, *Nadia Boulanger, A Life in Music* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982), 7-13.

Conservatoire de Paris where she excelled in all subjects and, in 1904, won first prizes in all of her classes, allowing her to graduate.⁴ That same year, the then sixteen year old Nadia Boulanger met the illustrious pianist and composer Raoul Pugno (1852-1914).⁵ Pugno initially served as a mentor for Boulanger, guiding her in her choice of classes and encouraging her as a performer; he soon became a family friend. In 1908, with the support of Pugno, Boulanger became the first woman to win the *Second Grand Prix de Rome* in musical composition⁶ and soon found herself the unwilling champion of the burgeoning feminist movement. The following year, after failing to win the *Grand Prix de Rome*, Boulanger decided to collaborate on some compositional projects with Pugno. They first completed *Les Heures Claires*, a multi-movement piece for solo voice and piano, and later chose to compose *La Ville Morte*, an opera to the text of Gabrielle d'Annunzio's play *La Città Mort*. This opera would become the most ambitious and final project which Boulanger ever undertook.

This thesis will focus on the biographical area from 1909-1923, more specifically, on reconstructing and interpreting the historiography of the opera *La Ville Morte*. In particular, because of the lack of literature addressing the reasons for Boulanger's exceptionality as a woman practicing composition at this time in Paris, care will be taken in this thesis to emphasize gender discourses which aided in shaping events surrounding the making of the opera, the music of the work itself, and the formation of Boulanger's own legacy. By more thoroughly examining the period from 1909-1923, this thesis will consider how this opera and the materials related to its creation offer a rare glimpse of

⁴ Rosenstiel, 46; Spycket, 16.

⁵ For descriptions of the early part of Pugno and Boulanger's relationship please see: Rosenstiel, 48-69.

⁶ For more information on Boulanger's involvement in the *Prix de Rome* Competition, please see: Annegret Fauser, "La Guerre en dentelles": Women and the *Prix de Rome* in French Cultural Politics," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 51 (1998): 83-129.

Nadia Boulanger's own opinions about women, femininity, and power relations at this period of her life.

By incorporating the use of feminist, gender studies, and feminist musicological theories and methodologies, this thesis will produce a more variegated understanding of who Boulanger was in the years 1909-1923. Three specific goals govern this thesis which include: elucidating more clearly what Boulanger's role was in the making of *La Ville Morte*; exploring further what the relationship between she and her collaborator, Raoul Pugno, actually was; and presenting reasons for why she eventually chose to abandon composition. By highlighting gender discourses in *fin-de-siècle* Paris and thereby allowing Boulanger's actions to be measured as a function of them, the understanding of both her involvement with *La Ville Morte*, and who she was at this formative period in her life, will be expanded far beyond what it is already.

CHAPTER ONE

METHODOLOGY

The methodological requirements of this thesis fall into two categories: first, a methodology is needed to aid in the development of a music-historical reconstruction of Nadia Boulanger's role in the making of *La Ville Morte* from a feminist perspective, and second, a methodology is needed which will allow for a comprehensive analysis of the gendered implications of the music within the opera *La Ville Morte*. Models for the first category will be borrowed from the work of several feminist musicologists and theorists including Suzanne G. Cusick, Nancy B. Reich, and Judith Tick. The requirements of the second category will be satisfied by my own synthesis of current work in the field of feminist opera analysis.

Beyond *The Tender Tyrant* – Revising the Historiography of Nadia Boulanger

In order to revise the chronology attributed to Nadia Boulanger and her involvement in the creation of *La Ville Morte* I have chosen to use a methodology similar to that of Suzanne G. Cusick in her article "Thinking from Women's Lives: Francesca Caccini after 1627."¹ Cusick's own scepticism towards the legacy of Francesca Caccini parallels my own inquiry into the biographical tradition created for Nadia Boulanger. In a manner similar to Cusick I will present materials from various sources, including archival ones, to present answers to previously unquestioned aspects of Boulanger's life. Special

¹ Suzanne G. Cusick, "'Thinking from Women's Lives': Francesca Caccini after 1621," *The Musical Quarterly* 3 (1993): 484-507.

efforts will be made to pause at specific points in the chronology and underscore matters which would have been mediated by gender discourse.

Also related to Cusick's methodology is that used in the article "Charles Ives and Gender Ideology" by Judith Tick.² In this article Tick explores the many misogynist writings of Charles Ives by contextualizing them "historically...discussing [them alongside] the literature of American women and music from the period."³ My own evaluation of Boulanger's involvement with *La Ville Morte* will engage the same process. Simultaneous with my chronological reconstruction of events that lead to the opera's composition will be the inclusion of contemporaneous writings on women and music. In so doing, I will engender an improved context, through which actions taken and choices made by Boulanger garner a greater gravity than they currently hold.

Likewise, Nancy B. Reich's article "Women as Musicians: A Question of Class,"⁴ which documents the success of female composers as a function of their economic standing, will serve as a model of how to use primary sources to dismantle pre-existing historical generalities. Also, just as Reich incorporates primary sources to show the distinct significance of economics on the women in her particular source group, it will be important to include considerations of Boulanger's own economic standing in the discussion of her mobility as a composer.

By modelling my historiographical approach after the work of these women I will be able to produce a thorough reconstruction of the making of *La Ville Morte* and will

² Judith Tick, "Charles Ives and Gender Ideology," in *Musicology and Difference; Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship*, ed. Ruth Solie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 83-106.

³ Ibid., 83; For other examples of feminist methodologies concerned with primary source analysis please see: Shulamit Reinharz, *Feminist Issues in Social Research*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 145-163.

⁴ Nancy B. Reich, "Women as Musicians, A Question of Class," in *Musicology and Difference; Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship*, ed. Ruth Solie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 125-146.

adequately be able to discuss the implications of Boulanger's involvement with its creation. A similarly comprehensive methodology for analyzing the music of the opera from a feminist perspective requires consideration of four techniques currently used by feminist musicologists.

Beyond Dissonance and Resolution: Feminist Operatic Analysis and Methodology

Because the music of Nadia Boulanger from *La Ville Morte* has never before been discussed from a feminist point of inquiry, I felt it essential to ensure that I ground myself with previously existing methodologies to ensure my own thoroughness. After some exploratory research on the topic of feminist opera criticism, it became apparent to me that there is no one specific model or methodology for analyzing opera from a feminist angle. What do exist are several different approaches to the task, each of which falls into one of four categories. Authors have chosen to either analyze the melodic, harmonic, orchestral, or bodily representations of gender within a particular operatic excerpt or work. In order to engender as comprehensive an analysis possible for this thesis I have chosen to combine these analytical approaches. Therefore, in the following section I will identify, define, and tie together these modes of feminist operatic analysis and in so doing will arrive at the desired methodology for the final portion of this thesis.

Melodic Affectation as Involving Gender Discourse

The first major analytical approach, and perhaps the one most commonly used to consider the gendered aspects of an operatic moment, involves the dissection of melody. This analysis considers perhaps the most obvious element of an operatic performance: the

primary melodic line being sung on stage. Melody is also one of the few historical constants that exist within the operatic repertoire.⁵ While orchestration, staging, and harmonic syntax are all drastically affected and/or altered by the historical milieu in which they are designed, melody has always been an intrinsic part of opera, and so it is also an intrinsic part of how gender is displayed in this musical tradition. It is because of this immediate accessibility and the omnipresent historical nature of melody that feminist musicologists predominantly tackle the gender implications of its composition. This methodological technique assays everything from the contour, inversion, transposition, motivic development, intervallic relations, and/or modal affectations contained within a certain melodic gesture.

Exemplars of this method include essays by Suzanne G. Cusick on Monteverdi's opera *L'Arianna*, Susan McClary on Monteverdi's opera *Orfeo*,⁶ Roger Parker and his analysis of the part of Elizabeth from Verdi's opera *Don Carlos*,⁷ and in subsequent articles of Cusick's on the work of Francesca Caccini.⁸ In their articles, these authors display the veracity of the argument that certain melodies were composed to reinforce specific gendered behaviours; they demonstrate that there is indeed a gendered meaning to the individual notes within the melody itself. These are but a few examples of the work done by musicologists in which an operatic character's melodic material is analyzed

⁵ For a discussion of melody please see: Alexandre L. Ringer, "Melody," *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed [3,12,2004]), <http://proxy.bib.uottawa.ca:2152>.

⁶ Suzanne G. Cusick, "'There Was Not One Lady Who Failed to Shed a Tear': Arianna's Lament and the Construction of Womanhood," *Early Music* 22 (1994): 21-43; Susan McClary, "Constructions of Gender in Monteverdi's Dramatic Music," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 1 (1989): 203-223.

⁷ Roger Parker, "Elisabeth's Last Act," in *Siren Songs*, ed. Mary Ann Smart (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 93-117.

⁸ Suzanne G. Cusick, "Re-voicing Arianna (and laments): two women respond," *Early Music* 27 (1999): 436-449; idem, "Of Women, Music, and Power: A Model from Seicento Florence," in *Musicology and Difference*, ed. Ruth Solie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 281-304.

as being gendered. I would argue that this analytical process is of primary importance when considering any music-dramatic work and have found it essential in grounding my own analysis of *La Ville Morte*. This method does however leave some important components of opera unacknowledged; to stop one's analysis of an aria after only considering its melodic content would leave the analysis incomplete. That is why I choose now to turn to examples of other, possibly less obvious, areas of critique which I would advocate are no less elucidating, and therefore should become equally as pervasive, when examining opera.

Harmonic Language as a Signifier of Dramatic Association

The second category of dramatic analysis involves the association of harmonic or modal language with a specific gendered affect. This includes exploitation of specific modal associations for one gender or another and is a characteristic found throughout the operatic literature.

Cusick and McClary both comment on these modal associations when discussing Monteverdi's music. Cusick writes that in *Orfeo* Monteverdi exploits the "manipulation of mode and system to create what we would call tonal antitheses that match the conflicts he perceives in Arianna's character."⁹ In her discussion of Francesca Caccini's own depiction of this woman, Cusick also refers to the importance of modal relation to the characterization of Arianna.¹⁰

McClary argues that the dominance of the Ionian mode came about because of the ease with which it could be exploited to control an audience's emotional response. She writes:

⁹ Cusick, "There was Not One Lady," 22.

¹⁰ Cusick, "Re-Voicing Arianna," 447.

the new public arts all develop techniques for arousing and manipulating desire, for 'hooking' the spectator. Witness, for example, the brand of tonality that emerges [in the late Renaissance]: a surefire method for inciting and channelling expectations which easily supplants the less coercive procedures of modality.¹¹

Beginning earlier than Monteverdi and certainly evolving with the operatic form, tonal centers became a way to ascribe grand gestures with meaning, simply by the mode or tonality in which they were placed.

Gretchen Wheelock explores this by analyzing the key centers of women in opera's by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.¹² By cross referencing all of the Mozart operas and the arias sung by women, Wheelock asserts a co-relation between the minor mode and women in Mozart's music.¹³ Through her analysis Wheelock successfully shows that it was a convention for Mozart to associate women with the unstable and yet powerful, best represented in musical terms by the likewise turbulent minor mode.

Elliot Antokoletz makes arguments about the nature of Debussy's music which, when examined closely, also connect gendered discourse with musical syntax.¹⁴

Antokoletz's work is predominantly concerned with displaying that, for Debussy,

the intrusion of fate into the human realm is symbolized in [*Pelléas et Mélisande*] by special pitch-set intrusions of the whole-tone set (fate) into the pentatonic/diatonic (folklike/human) sphere.¹⁵

He shows how Debussy controls his musical language to dichotomize the mundane with the fatalistic. Antokoletz's text suggests that the dichotomy of tonality/modality could also be mapped onto male/female in Debussy's operatic compositions; that harmonic

¹¹ Susan McClary "Constructions of Gender in Monteverdi's Dramatic Music," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 1 (1989): 204.

¹² Gretchen Wheelock, "Schwarze Gredel and the Engendered Minor Mode in Mozart's Operas," in *Musicology and Difference*, ed. Ruth Solie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 201-224.

¹³ Wheelock, "Schwarze Gredel," 205.

¹⁴ Elliot Antokoletz, *Musical Symbolism in the Operas of Debussy and Bartók: Trauma, Gender, and the Unfolding of the Subconscious*, Juana Canabal Antokoletz coll. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2004.)

¹⁵ Antokoletz, 27.

language was a way for Debussy to also depict gender relations in a similar way to Mozart, Monteverdi, and Caccini as recognized by the preceding authors. This particular argument will be expanded later in chapter seven of this thesis as this exploration of tonality and tonal center becomes especially expedient when discussing the music of *La Ville Morte*.

Orchestration as Representation

The third critical area for analyzing the gendered aspects of opera requires the autonomous consideration of orchestral effects. This mode of analysis relegates the action of characters to a secondary role and foregrounds a composer's orchestration. This method can also encompass the discussion of orchestral interludes, preludes, *enteractes* or any other moment when the musical development is carried out by the orchestra alone. It is also important to note that while no examples as of yet have been found in the literature on opera it would be possible to consider this mode of analysis when dealing with any form of musical support (for example, solo piano) as will be necessitated in a discussion of the music of *La Ville Morte*. This is to say, it is not necessary to strictly limit this angle of analysis to fully 'orchestrated' music; rather, to fit this definition, one must be considering a musical source which is not actually vocally produced.

Perhaps the first person to emphasize the importance of the orchestra alone in establishing characterization was Carolyn Abbate. In her widely cited essay "Opera or the Envoicing of Women"¹⁶ Abbate's analysis, based solely on high B-flats performed at the end of Richard Strauss's opera *Salome* by a double bass player, shows that even the most

¹⁶ Carolyn Abbate "Opera; or, the Envoicing of Women," In *Musicology and Difference*, ed. Ruth Solie (Berkley, University of California Press, 1993), 225-258.

innocuous of musical statements can still have gendered understandings to an audience.¹⁷ Abbate argues that the ‘castrato’ voice of the double bass semiotically occupies the space of a reified body.¹⁸ Furthermore, Abbate argues that the orchestra “might be seen as an analogue for the ‘male gaze’ or the camera lens” and that it is capable “of entrapping a heroine, and by extension of limiting music’s meanings.”¹⁹ Abbate’s analysis is perhaps the first to show that the musical background for an opera could be perceived of as more than simply “background noise,” that incidental music can indeed enhance the gendered meanings of a performance. This form of analysis will serve particularly useful for the final portion of this thesis, in order to consider fully the large instrumental prelude from Act III, Scene 5 from *La Ville Morte*.

The Body in Opera

Carolyn Abbate was also one of the first scholars to argue that the physical body of a performer must be taken into consideration when exploring the meaning of opera. She writes: “because music is not a novel or a poem...the unique phenomenal realities of musical performance demand their own tribute.”²⁰ It is out of this argument that the final category of gendered operatic criticism may be constructed: the interaction of music and the body. This fourth category is concerned with analysing the relationship between a specific musical moment and a physical body on-stage. It deals with questions concerning how music reinforces, accentuates, or opposes, physical action taken by a performer.

¹⁷ Abbate, 252.

¹⁸ Ibid., 248-252.

¹⁹ Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991) as paraphrased by Mary Ann Smart in “Ulterior Motives; Verdi’s Recurring Themes Revisited,” in *Siren Songs*, ed. Mary Ann Smart (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 139.

²⁰ Abbate, “Opera; or,” 235.

Mary Ann Smart develops Abbate's ideas further, suggesting four possible functions for orchestration.²¹ She argues that music can either support on-stage action or coloration, that it can serve as a subversive voice on the part of the silenced female, that it can be a reinforcer of the 'male gaze,' or that it can be an authorial source of hidden meanings, meanings extending beyond that of what is obvious on stage.²² Smart illustrates these tenets by also investigating Verdi's music, choosing to focus on his opera *Aida* and the supportive material that he writes to accompany the action of the character Lucrezia. Smart writes that

the orchestral motive that "mimes" Lucrezia's entrances and draws attention to her body is also marked as the site of her power, suggesting that doublings of stage action and music can just as easily signify an *excess* of power or voice as they can a silencing or restriction of meaning.²³

Smart is able to show how the orchestration present in *Aida* is culpable in ascribing attributes to Lucrezia, just as any sung melody would be.

Examples of this type of analysis are abundant in the operatic literature and engage material extending from Mozart to Richard Strauss; from Debussy to Melodrama. Peter Brooks discusses how music supports ideas of "the hysterical body in music," drawing as an example on the aria *O Don Fatale* from Schiller's melodrama *Don Carlo*.²⁴ Katherine Bergeron discusses the structural and physical importance of props, movement,

²¹ Mary Ann Smart, "Ulterior Motives; Verdi's Recurring Themes Revisited," in *Siren Songs*, ed. Mary Ann Smart (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 135 -159.

²² Smart, 146.

²³ Ibid., 145.

²⁴ Peter Brooks, "Body and Voice in Melodrama and Opera," in *Siren Songs*, ed. Mary Ann Smart (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 118-134.

and repeated gestures in Debussy's opera *Pelléas et Mélisande*.²⁵ She focuses on how physical gestures are given special significance in the subtle motivic orchestrations of Debussy's score,²⁶ highlighting how the music itself hints at the significance of Mélisande's hair.²⁷

More overt considerations of the body and music in opera are undertaken by Linda and Michael Hutcheon in their essay on *Salome*.²⁸ They write of how, mediated by the person performing Salome, "late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century concepts of social transgression, medical neurosis, and gender empowerment" were enacted on stage.²⁹ They discuss how

As a staged work, *Salome* does not allow its audience to remain passive or distanced: our gaze, like Herod's, does not objectify but instead empowers this woman. In fact, it may be the reversal of the power of the gaze that contributes to the anxiety that Salome manages to inspire...In the politics of the gaze, Salome is like Medusa: to look upon her is to feel her power.³⁰

They then proceed to discuss how Strauss's music for the dance of the seven veils reinforces and accentuates that which is happening on stage, arguing that it is essential to remain aware of the simultaneous dramatic significance music maintains when analysing music within the operatic literature.

Wye Jamison Allanbrook, Mary Hunter, and Gretchen A. Wheelock also consider the staged body, but do so by suggesting ways that the body can subvert music and

²⁵ Katherine Bergeron, "Mélisande's Hair, or the Trouble in Allemonde :A Postmodern Allegory at the Opéra-Comique," in *Siren Songs*, ed. Mary Ann Smart (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 160-185.

²⁶ Bergeron, 175.

²⁷ Ibid., 182-184.

²⁸ Linda and Michael Hutcheon, "Staging the Female Body: Richard Strauss's *Salome*," in *Siren Songs*, ed. Mary Ann Smart (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 204-221.

²⁹ Hutcheon, 204.

³⁰ Ibid., 221.

text.³¹ They ask: “How does the act of performance endorse, undercut, or relate in any way to the dramatic and social content of the work?”³² Like the Hutcheons in their article, these scholars argue that “[dramatic blocking] reminds us of the ways staging decisions draw one into (and thus endorse the values of) the fictional world of the opera.”³³ They assert that the body is capable of addressing the inequities created by the entire musical form, that is, melody and orchestra combined. They suggest the concept of “female performative power,”³⁴ arguing that the complicity or subversion of certain gendered traits can lend an entirely new dimension to an operatic performance. They assert through their work that elements such as the performance of the body in a specific role must be considered alongside with musical interpretations in order for an analysis of an operatic moment to be complete.

While *La Ville Morte* has never been performed, questions of the embodiment of the characters on stage will be addressed by discussing the abundant stage directions provided in the score, and other aspects suggested by annotations taken from the autograph libretto. This thesis will also suggest possible stagings which would enhance the meaning derived from an analysis of the music and text.

Summary

Using methodological models borrowed from feminist musicologists such as Suzanne G. Cusick, Nancy B. Reich, Judith Tick, and Carolyn Abbate, this thesis will engage inquiries on two main levels: first, reconstructing the historiography of Nadia

³¹ Wye Jamison Allanbrook, Mary Hunter, and Gretchen A. Wheelock, “Staging Mozart’s Women,” in *Siren Songs*, ed. Mary Ann Smart (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 47-66.

³² Allanbrook, Hunter, and Wheelock, 47.

³³ *Ibid.*, 60.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 61.

Boulanger and the making of *La Ville Morte* and second, analyzing the music of this opera from a feminist perspective. Before implementing this methodology however, it is important to consider the specific theoretical constructs which will be informing this work and to review the currently existing literature on Nadia Boulanger which will serve as a reference point from which this examination may begin.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORIZING GENDER AND MUSICOLOGY

To appreciate better the motivations and accomplishments of Nadia Boulanger one must remain aware of how her gender¹ influenced the way in which she navigated her role as a composer in *fin-de-siècle* Paris.² Through study and investigation it has been shown that, for humans, gender is an intrinsic and universally applicable factor tied to identity and behaviour. As Kay Deaux and Brenda Major explain,

it is inarguable... that gender is one the earliest and most central components of the self concept and serves as an organizing principle through which many experiences and perceptions of self and other are filtered.³

This thesis will show that this constant influence of gender would have been especially accentuated for Boulanger because of the exceptional role she performed as a woman composer in France at the turn of the century.

With this caveat in mind one cannot help but notice, when considering the extant bibliographic information concerned with Nadia Boulanger, that her gender is rarely fully addressed; her sex-roles are often either reduced to culturally comfortable images such as

¹ The Oxford English Dictionary defines "gender" as "the state of being male or female (with reference to social or cultural differences." *Oxford Paperback Dictionary, Thesaurus, and Wordpower Guide* (2001), s.v. "gender;" The definition which this thesis will use is: "'gender' [as] referring to cultural definitions of masculinity and femininity -- the meanings of maleness and femaleness," Michael Kimmel, "Introduction," in *The Gendered Society Reader*, ed. Michael S. Kimmel (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 2; For an interesting discussion of the possible meanings of gender please see: Christine Delphy, "Rethinking Sex and Gender," in *The Feminist Theory Reader*, ed. Carole R. McCann and Seung-Kyung Kim (New York: Routledge, 2003), 57-67.

² For a brief description of the history of women's rights in France please see Marina Calloni, "Women's Human Rights, Equal Opportunities and Biopolitics in Europe," in *Thinking Differently*, eds. Gabrielle Griffin and Rosi Braidotti (London: Zed Books, 2002), 64-65; Brian Jenkins, "Religion and Nationalism in Late Nineteenth-century France," in *Problems in French History*, eds. Martyn Cornick and Ceri Crossley (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 104-124; and Judith A. DeGroat, "The Public Nature of Women's Work: Definitions and Debates During the Revolution of 1848," *French Historical Studies* 20 (1997): 31-47. For an interesting discussion of the French language and its effects on sociological and gender development please see: Robin Adamson, "Sexism in French: A Case Study," in *Determined Women*, eds. Jennifer Birkett and Elizabeth Harvey (Savage, Maryland: Barnes & Noble, 1990), 173-194.

³ Kay Deaux and Brenda Major, "A Social-Psychological Model of Gender," in *The Gendered Society Reader*, ed. Michael S. Kimmel (Toronto: Oxford Press, 2000), 75.

“mother figure” or “religious disciple” or not discussed at all. In this way most biographers fail to treat Boulanger’s gender as an essential, dynamic component of her self. Therefore one of the main themes running throughout this thesis will be the identification and discussion of the gendered discourse which Boulanger would have encountered while in the process of composing *La Ville Morte* and how she in turn interacted with this discourse in order to function as a professional composer.

In order to pursue this analytical tack it is essential to ground this thesis theoretically, thereby precluding the opportunity for Boulanger’s life experience to be treated as one of exception or isolation. To accomplish this I have chosen to connect the discussion of gender presented in this thesis to three main areas of gender inquiry: feminist theory, sociological/gender studies models, and feminist musicological theory.

Feminist Theory

Because this thesis will not only revise the music-historical components of the creation of *La Ville Morte* but will also consider the political affect of gender discourse upon Nadia Boulanger during its creation, it is expedient to incorporate applicable feminist theoretical models into the body of this text. The breadth of factors intrinsic to an inquiry of Boulanger’s biography requires a theory sensitive to multiple issues and influences (including class, economics, sexuality, religion). For this reason, the two main bodies of theory considered in this thesis are Standpoint Theory and Post –Structural Feminist Theory.

Standpoint Theory

The first theoretical school of thought to be considered here, often held in opposition to post-structuralist theory, is Standpoint theory.⁵ Standpoint theory states that those in a position of subordination possess a superior understanding of systems of oppression and therefore are best qualified to interpret them. This is based upon the belief that “subordinated groups not only see the world from their location, which the dominant culture ignores, but they also have to know the dominant culture in order to survive.”⁶ As a result, according to this model, women have the best vantage point from which to critique gender discrimination.⁷ Therefore, by establishing Boulanger’s own standpoint, and from that standpoint subsequently examining the gender relations evident in her life, one can better critique the inequalities which she faced.

This theory is problematic, especially when examining the life of Nadia Boulanger, firstly because it becomes reductionary and secondly because it excludes those located in the category of oppressor from involvement in any part of the analysis. In the case of Boulanger, the social systems to which she belonged were diverse and certainly her positioning within them altered depending on her age, economic standing, and professional success, to name but a few factors. To claim a specific standpoint for her would require the elimination of much information.

It is to this first objection that Amie Macdonald speaks when writing:

⁵ Eds. Carole R. McCann and Seung-Kyung Kim, “Theorizing Feminist Agency and Politics: Introduction,” in *Feminist Theory Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 278- 280.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 280.

⁷ *Ibid.*

Claims for epistemic privilege...are merely normative, compelling only for those who are theoretically persuaded by them, usually members of the socially marginalized group, who find them empowering.⁸

In the case of Boulanger it is very difficult to place her in one marginalized group; her social positioning falls on too many differing planes. While on the one hand she was a woman, and therefore in a position of contextual subjugation; at the same time, because of her economic standing and her aristocratic upbringing, she would have been, and behaved as if she were, in a position of relative economic superiority. While her religious beliefs were of the dominant Roman Catholic tradition and she therefore would have held a feeling of cultural dominance, her unorthodox way of flaunting her independence as a female musician would have, to an extent, isolated her from this majority.

In order then to make this theory operative for the efforts of this thesis, the question becomes: to which of these categories, or another not mentioned here, should Boulanger be reduced in order to create her standpoint? While revising this musician's involvement with the opera, it is only by considering her milieu in its totality (or as close to it as one can get) that her lifestyle and choices gain validity. To condense Boulanger's identity to a particular framework or standpoint would, in essence, recreate the reductionism already present within Boulanger's legacy.

The second problematic component of this model is its failure to allow satisfactorily for the incorporation of the behaviour of the oppressor. To examine how *La Ville Morte* was constructed and fail to consider, or even discount, the contribution of Raoul Pugno, Gabrielle d'Annunzio, and Henri Heugel (to name but a few) would eliminate a rich historical resource. It is this second point which MacDonald comments

⁸ Amie A. Macdonald, "Feminist Pedagogy and the Appeal to Epistemic Privilege," in *Feminism and the Classroom Teacher: Research, Praxis and Pedagogy*, eds. Amanda Coffey and Sara Delamont (London: Routledge/Falmer, 2000), 122.

on when she says: “[Standpoint theory] brings with it a curious outcome: [those] who cannot be experiential knowers are made utterly unaccountable for the creation and consideration of...knowledge.”⁹ In order to produce a more complete understanding of how the opera was created it is imperative to not only include all factors, not simply those which some would consider ‘female’ or ‘male.’ Based upon these objections and the subsequent unsuitability of this theory to the efforts of this thesis, Standpoint theory must be discarded as a possible theoretical model and others must be considered.

Post-Structural Feminist Theory

Instead of offering rigid, formulaic, meta-narratives, post-structural feminist theory offers a mode of analysis concerned with contextualizing subjects and identifying the pervasive political nature of language. The model of post-structural feminism presented in this thesis has been constructed from the collection of tenets espoused by theorists such as Joan W. Scott, Donna Haraway, Judith Butler, Beatrice Hanssen and Chris Weedon.¹⁰

Poststructural feminist theory can be loosely defined as feminist inquiry which has appropriated the tools of poststructural literary theory in order to politically address issues of societal gender imbalance. As Hanssen describes it, post-structural feminism is

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ In particular this thesis draws from such articles as: Joan W. Scott, “Deconstructing Equality-Versus-Difference: Or, the Uses of Poststructuralist Theory for Feminism,” in *The Feminist Theory Reader*, ed. Carole R. McCann and Seung-Kyung Kim (New York: Routledge, 2003), 378-390; Donna Haraway, “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective,” in *The Feminist Theory Reader*, eds. Carole R. McCann and Seung-Kyung Kim (New York: Routledge, 2003), 391-403; Judith Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory,” in *The Feminist Theory Reader*, eds. Carole R. McCann and Seung-Kyung Kim (New York: Routledge, 2003), 415-427; Beatrice Hanssen, “Whatever Happened to Feminist Theory,” in *Feminist Consequences: Theory for the New Century*, eds. Elisabeth Banfen and Misha Kavka (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 58-98; Chris Weedon, *Feminist Practice and Poststructural Theory*, (New York: Blackwell, 1987).

historicist, nonuniversalist, comparativist, pragmatic and fallibistic. It [tailors] its methods and categories when appropriate...[and] looks more like a tapestry composed of threads of many different hues, than one woven in a single colour.¹¹

When cataloguing the many discursive influences Nadia Boulanger experienced -- Russian, French, male, female, bourgeoisie, Catholic, Protestant -- one begins to recognize the need for a theory which embraces complexity and non-uniformity. Post-structural feminist theory provides just this. This theory is especially useful because it allows for many different factors to be synthesized into one analysis while remaining sensitive to the fluidity and shifting importance each of these factors may have held for a subject at different points in time.

Specific methods borrowed by feminists from post-structuralism include Jacques Derrida's process of deconstruction, and Michel Foucault's discourse theory.¹² Of special assistance to a discussion of the making of *La Ville Morte* is discourse theory.

Michel Foucault and Discourse Theory

Michel Foucault's research was centered in the social sciences and grew out of his desire to understand constructions of knowledge. Through his work Foucault emphasized "the culturally produced (as opposed to the natural) character of thought and

¹¹ Hanssen, 76.

¹² I have chosen at this time to not include the tools provided by feminist psychoanalytic theory simply because of space constraints. For more information on this vast field please see: ed. Toril Moi, *The Kristeva Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986); Hélène Cixous, "Sorties: Out and Out: Attacks/Ways Out/Forays," in *The Feminist Reader – Essays in Gender and the Politics of Literary Criticism*, 2d ed., eds. Catherine Belsey and Jane Moore (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1997), 91-103; Julia Kristeva, "Women's Time," in *The Feminist Reader – Essays in Gender and the Politics of Literary Criticism*, 2d ed., eds. Catherine Belsey and Jane Moore (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1997), 201-216; Luce Irigaray, "The Looking Glass, from the Other Side," in *The Feminist Reader – Essays in Gender and the Politics of Literary Criticism*, 2d ed., eds. Catherine Belsey and Jane Moore (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1997,); ed. Toril Moi, *French Feminist Thought* (New York, NY: Basil Blackwell, 1987); ed. Kelly Oliver, *French Feminism Reader* (Oxford: Rowman and Littleman, 2000); eds. Carolyn Burke, Naomi Schor, and Margaret Whitford, *Engaging with Irigaray* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.)

perception.”¹³ His writings delineate how certain forms of knowledge become dominant while other ways of thinking are dismissed or relegated to the marginal. The study of these processes lead Foucault to define the linguistic model of *discourse theory*, where discourse is “the dominant set of terms which a social group uses for communication about a given subject.”¹⁴ Similarly, Joan W Scott defines discourse as: “A historically, socially, and institutionally specific structure of statements, terms, categories, and beliefs.”¹⁵

For example, when a group of classical music critics discusses a musical performance, they use a very specific discourse. This set of terms which they use is different from that used by writers for *Rolling Stone Magazine* when describing musical attributes and also differs from that used by sports analysts when discussing a football game. The linguistic precepts used in these discourses are socially determined; arbitrary regulations exist to moderate which words are acceptable and which are not. Also, those familiar with a specific discourse are capable of interacting and participating in a social event, while those who remain ignorant or are excluded from this knowledge are relegated to the marginal.

Foucault questioned the origins of power which sanction these knowledge patterns and explored how these power relations become historically constructed.

Foucault himself describes his method, writing:

Once knowledge can be analyzed in terms of region, domain, implantation, displacement, transposition, one is able to capture the

¹³ Madan Sarup, *An Introductory Guide to Post-structuralism and Postmodernism*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993.)

¹⁴ Weedon, 35.

¹⁵ Scott, 379.

process by which knowledge functions as a form of power and disseminates the effects of power¹⁶

By theorizing about the power relations inherent in language, he offered “a way of understanding the importance of subjective motivation and the illusion of full subjectivity necessary for individuals to act in the world.”¹⁷ Through his work, Foucault exposed the political aspects of knowledge and language, and through this connection offered feminist theorists a powerful tool by which to question the relations of gender and language.

Intrinsic to the efficacy of this thesis therefore, will be critiquing the current paucity of information on the gender discourses of *fin-de-siècle* Paris present in the biographical information on Nadia Boulanger. In order to discuss these discourses and the impact they had on Boulanger’s career, this thesis will use theoretical constructs designed by feminist scholars who have appropriated discourse theory.

The one area in which post-structural feminist theorists fall short, however, is that they remain critical of a single, unified force – that of ‘patriarchy.’¹⁸ While post-structural theory enables theorists to focus on the differences among women, these theorists still fail to extend this diversity to the sociological forces of which they are critical. This limitation becomes particularly apparent when one engages in a reconstruction of the making of *La Ville Morte*. Because Boulanger interacted with many different males while creating the opera, each with their own unique degree of affect depending on which time and how they were interacting with her, to reduce them all to

¹⁶ M. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, C. Gordon, ed. (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980), 68-70.

¹⁷ Weedon, 41.

¹⁸ “Patriarchy” is defined by Nancy Mandell as “societies which are male-dominated; that is, societies in which men tend to occupy the positions of power and authority and rewards and privileges tend to accrue to men.” Ed. Nancy Mandell, *Feminist Issues: Race, Class, and Sexuality*, 4 ed. (Toronto: Prentice Hall, 2005); The Oxford English Dictionary defines “patriarchy” as: “(1) a form of social organization in which the father or eldest male is head of the family (2) A society in which men hold most or all of the power.” *Oxford Dictionary* (2001) s.v. “patriarchy.”

one homogenized entity entitled “patriarchy” yields far less meaningful information than if they were all examined on an individual basis.

What is required to ameliorate this difficulty with post-structural feminist theory is “an analysis of gender relations [which]... involves examination of the dynamic, *reciprocal*, and *interdependent* interactions between and among women and men”¹⁹ (emphasis mine). The solution to this final missing component rests with incorporating into this thesis the models provided by gender theory.

Social Constructivist Gender Theory

Sympathetic to the goals of, and closely related in structure to, post-structural feminist theory is social constructivist gender theory. This sociological construct treats gender as “a system of classification by which biological males and... females are sorted, separated, and socialized into... sex roles... [gender also expresses systems of] hierarchy, power, and inequality.”²⁰ This theory is, for the most part, quite similar to post-structural feminism in that it focuses on analyzing socialization and development, as opposed to essential traits, as the factors which create gender.²¹ Both contextualize gender through several categories: culture, culture over historical time, age of the individual, as well as

¹⁹ Judith M. Gerson and Kathy Peiss, “Boundaries, Negotiation, Consciousness: Reconceptualizing Gender Relations,” in *The Gendered Society Reader*, ed. Michael S. Kimmel (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 114. For further discussion of this critique of feminism please see: Judith Lorber, “Believing is Seeing: Biology as Ideology,” in *The Gendered Society Reader*, ed. Michael S. Kimmel (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 15.

²⁰ Michael S. Kimmel, *The Gendered Society* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2000), 1. For a full history and discussion of the development and evolution of the term “gender” with special emphasis on providing a Canadian context please see: Barbara L. Marshall, *Constructing Gender Explorations in Theory and Politics* (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2000).

²¹ For further discussions of the behavioural-development component in feminist theory please see: Simone de Beauvoir, “Introduction to *The Second Sex*,” in *The French Feminism Reader*, ed. Kelly Oliver (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), 6-19; Monique Wittig, “One is Not Born a Woman,” in *The French Feminism Reader*, ed. Kelly Oliver (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), 122-128; Judith Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory,” in *Feminist Theory Reader*, eds. Carole R. McCann and Seung-Kyung Kim (New York: Routledge, 2003), 415-428; and eds. Patricia Miller and Ellin Kofsky Scholnick, *Toward a Feminist Developmental Psychology* (New York: Routledge, 2000.)

race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, education, and region of the country.²² Like post-structural feminist theory, social constructivist theory is also plural, relational, and situational, similar to post-structural feminist theory.²³

Social constructionist gender theory differs, however, in that it considers the social system which affects gender development as something which includes all individuals – male and female. In so doing, it includes males in the variegated process of socialization rather than assigning them to a predisposed behavioural pattern as dictated by the expectations of patriarchy. This theory is ideal for discussing the life of Nadia Boulanger and the development of *La Ville Morte* because it supports an inquiry based on historical contextualization, while at the same time allowing for optimal plurality by providing for the incorporation of many diverse influences and behaviours on the part of both men and women.

Before leaving the subject of social constructivist gender theory, there is one final debate that should be addressed. Some feminists have argued that to reduce the issue of gender inequality to the level of the individual will destroy the political efficacy of the feminist project. Others also critique that this way of destroying the binary oppositions of ‘male’ and ‘female’ is equal to advocating for androgyny - a disappearance of gender representations as they currently exist.²⁴

To the first concern, I would like to state that the success or failure of the women’s movement lies in the ability of feminists to make their goals as pertinent to, and inclusive of, as many people as possible. Reducing a theory down to the point of the

²² Kimmel, 87-88.

²³ Ibid., 90.

²⁴ These debates are ubiquitous within the literature on feminist and gender theory. For examples please see: Hanssen; Kimmel; and McCann and Kim.

individual, while it may seem apolitical in its bifurcation, actually serves as a tool of unification; the one thing that every person has in common with everyone else is that they are all unique individuals. It is the obstruction of the development of this individuality that creates discrimination, and it is this individuality which will best be allowed to flourish when discrimination is eliminated. Therefore, it is only in allowing these theories of gender to be applicable to everyone that will galvanize the movement into its most powerful and productive form.

In the final portion of this thesis I will address how this individualistic concern was a central component to how Boulanger lived her own life and especially lead to her efficacy as a pedagogue. Using her own ideas about gender relations as a litmus test for Boulanger's pedagogical practice exposes how important the act of reducing methods past meta-formulas to the point of individual effectiveness was to her own extraordinary accomplishments as a teacher.

Michael Kimmel addresses the second objection - that deconstruction of the categories of male and female will lead to a genderless society - when he states:

What will remain, I believe, [after gender inequality is eliminated] is not some non-gendered androgynous gruel, in which differences between women and men are blended and everyone acts and thinks in exactly the same way. Quite the contrary. I believe that as gender inequality decreases, the differences among people- differences grounded in race, class, ethnicity, age, sexuality *as well as* gender – will emerge in a context in which each of us can be appreciated for our individual uniqueness as well as our commonality.²⁵

It is essential, if possible, to create a theory “without lines,”²⁶ especially in the case of Nadia Boulanger. It is because of her own ability to shift beyond what was culturally

²⁵ Kimmel, 4.

²⁶ Karin Aguilar-San Juan “ Going Home: Enacting Justice In Queer Asian America,” in *The Feminist Reader*, eds. Carole R. McCann and Seung-Kyung Kim (New York: Routledge, 2003), 272.

expected of her that she held such a lasting influence on Western music in the twentieth-century. The theories selected for this thesis not only allow for the acknowledgement that gendered expectations did and do exist (often implemented and reinforced discursively), but also that it is typical for the individual to deviate from these norms. It is often, and in the case of Boulanger exactly, this deviation which proves most problematic to quantify, causing it to be so often discarded from biographical tradition. However, it is also this deviation which is the most interesting and most important element for creating prodigious events, much like those which entailed Boulanger's own involvement in the making of *La Ville Morte*.

The final theoretical influence upon this thesis which must be delineated before continuing is that of the field of feminist musicology. A discussion of the discipline and specific tenets which prove useful to an analysis of *La Ville Morte* must be considered to complete the theoretical grounding of this thesis.

Feminist Musicology

This thesis will draw on literature from the discipline of feminist musicology from 1990 to the present day, the authors of which have defined this relatively new discipline. The main focus of this field, as Judith Tick describes it, is to "use gender as an analytic prism through which other ideas and values [about music] are refracted."²⁷ For the most part feminist musicology shares influences presented by post-structural feminists, espousing an ideology such as is described by Claire Detels when she writes:

The paradigm I am proposing is that of *soft boundaries and relatedness*, wherein the covert valuation of "hard" (i.e. clearly distinct) boundaries in traditional aesthetic definitions and judgments about music is superseded by the recognition of the need to consider relatedness of music and

²⁷ Judith Tick, "Charles Ives and Gender Ideology," in *Musicology and Difference; Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship*, ed. Ruth Solie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 83.

musical entities across “soft” (i.e. permeable) boundaries, including relatedness to social context and function.²⁸

This relative shift from distinct, defined criteria to flexible, webbed relations is reminiscent of the work of Donna Haraway with post-structural feminist theory.²⁹ Detels’s more fluid theoretical structure is directly suitable to a discussion of Boulanger’s plurality and also applicable to considerations of the music of *La Ville Morte* itself. For example, because of feminist musicologists the music of *La Ville Morte* is no longer distinctly separated from the cultural milieu in which it was designed. Instead it becomes directly related to influences such as the gender, ethnicity, religion, and class of its composers.

Susan McClary advocates a similar theoretical design, which she describes as a cultural studies approach. She writes:

Under a cultural studies umbrella, it ought to be possible both to investigate the syntactical conventions that grant coherence to our repertoires and also to examine the ways music participates in the social construction of subjectivity, gender, desire, ethnicity, the body, and so on.³⁰

McClary attributes her cultural methodologies to the work of Raymond Williams in the 1950s and appropriates his ideas and techniques, using them to examine music. McClary’s theoretical formulation, similar to that of Detels, again opens up the possibility to analyze music as a discourse, as a language with political and personal

²⁸ Claire Detels, “Soft Boundaries and Relatedness: Paradigm for a Postmodern Feminist Musical Aesthetics,” *Boundary* 19 (1992): 185.

²⁹ Donna Haraway, “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective,” *Feminist Theory Reader*, eds. Carole R. McCann and Seung-Kyung Kim (New York: Routledge, 2003), 391-403.

³⁰ Susan McClary, “Paradigm Dissonances: Music Theory, Cultural Studies, Feminist Criticism,” *Perspectives of New Music* 32 (1994): 69.

implications. This polemical potential held by music will be highlighted during the discussion of *La Ville Morte* within this thesis.

To quote Susan McClary again, the focus of much feminist musicological work is to decipher “why in certain repertoires some images and constructions dominate, [and] why others are prohibited.”³¹ This same desire for clarity is echoed by Joseph Margolis when he says: “A large part of the contribution of feminist aesthetics is to inform us of just how such interests affect the production and interpretation of artworks and texts.”³² This thesis shares the same goals as these two authors: searching for the connection between history and artistic production -- more specifically, the cultural influences which affected the creation of *La Ville Morte* and especially those which were reflections of gender discourses. This being said, it should also be noted that there will be no attempt in this work to utilize the tools of *gynocritics*³³ to show that the opera contains elements of ‘women’s music’ because of my own discomfort with the particular essentialist and reductionist tendencies of such an approach.³⁴

Summary

As will be shown in the following literature review, Nadia Boulanger’s exceptional role as a highly successful and influential *female* musician has not been

³¹ Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender and Sexuality*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 28.

³² Joseph Margolis, “Reconciling Analytic and Feminist Philosophy and Aesthetics,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 48 (1990): 333.

³³ For an in depth explication of gynocritics please see Elaine Showalter ed., “Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness,” in *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on women, Literature and Theory*, (New York: Pantheon, 1985), 243-270.

³⁴ While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to debate the different properties of *gynocritics*, for more information on issues of *gynocritics* as a critical tool for feminist musicologists please see: Marcia Citron, “Feminist Approaches to Musicology,” in *Cecilia Reclaimed: Feminist Perspectives on Gender and Music*, eds. Susan C. Cook and Judy S. Tsou (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 15-34; Susan C. Cook and Judy S. Tsou, eds. “Introduction to ‘Bright Cecilia,’” in *Cecilia Reclaimed: Feminist Perspectives on Gender and Music*, 1-14. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994. Jane Bowers, “Feminist Scholarship and the Field of Musicology,” *College Music Symposium* 29 (1989): 81-92; Sally Macarthur, *Feminist Aesthetics in Music*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing, 2001.

adequately addressed by her biographers. Rather, the images connected to Boulanger's gender have been reduced to those more palatable to the writers who designed her legacy – usually illustrations connected with motherhood or asexuality/religious devotion. This thesis, informed by theories from feminist, sociological, and musicological disciplines, will explore the nuances of Boulanger's life, in particular the period in which she composed the opera *La Ville Morte* and the music thereof. In so doing, this work will not only revise the current tradition surrounding Boulanger's largest composition, but will also highlight the importance which gender had for: a) the creation of the opera in question; b) for the professional choices which Boulanger made; and, ultimately c) the importance gender had on formulating the legendary teaching career for which Boulanger is remembered today.

SECTION II

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

When historians begin to solidify the legacy of an individual, points of contention most often occur during the process of deciphering anecdotal embellishment from truth - hyperbole from reality. This is particularly true of the issues that arise when investigating the work published on the life of Nadia Boulanger. While much has been written about the extraordinary life Boulanger lived, some of it quite thorough, there are questions which remain unanswered throughout. Of special interest to this thesis is the conflicting evidence which exists concerning Nadia Boulanger and Raoul Pugno's opera *La Ville Morte*. What follows is a discussion of these points of contention drawn out from the secondary source material.

Biographies¹ -

The first biography ever written about Nadia Boulanger is by Alan Kendall entitled *The Tender Tyrant: Nadia Boulanger*.² This text is of vast important because it was the first to suggest certain ideologies about the life of Boulanger. It is Kendall's selection of biographical materials (whom and what to quote, for example) that has served somewhat as a template for other biographers. For this reason, while the comprehensiveness of this biography is somewhat lacking, the issues which pervade Kendall's text will be examined at length in this thesis.

¹ For the sake of comprehensiveness, this thesis includes a discussion of all the extant biographies on Nadia Boulanger. They are organized in this chapter in chronological order.

² Alan Kendall, *The Tender Tyrant, Nadia Boulanger* (London: Macdonald and Jane's, 1976.) While Kendall does write in the Preface to his text that "this book is intended as a portrait of Nadia Boulanger and her world, not as a biography," for all intents and purposes this literature review will treat the text as a biography. Kendall, "Preface," 1976, xi.

In Kendall's biography the opera *La Ville Morte* merits a mere two sentences out of 155 pages, hardly seeming to live up to the intention of the author which he states was "to convey [Boulanger's] significance as a composer, pianist, conductor and music critic, but above all as a teacher of music."³ The first sentence that Kendall devotes to the opera reads: "written in collaboration with Raoul Pugno...[is] the unpublished work, inspired by D'Annunzio, called *La Ville Morte*."⁴ Kendall's willingness to dismiss the writing of the opera with a summary sentence reveals that he did not feel Boulanger's compositional output held much relevance in a discussion of her overall life. In total, he devotes not even half a paragraph to a cataloguing of Boulanger's entire compositional output. This compared to the five paragraphs devoted solely to the discussion of Pugno's role in Boulanger's life.⁵ This initial attitude towards the pre-teaching period of Boulanger's existence is not unique to Kendall and was encouraged by Boulanger herself. However, it is possible to gain the impression that if Boulanger had been a man, many aspects of Kendall's biography would have been handled differently.

This leads to the second sentence on the opera in which Kendall connects *La Ville Morte* with the rest of Boulanger's compositional output, appraising it as Boulanger herself said: "*pas mauvaise, mais inutile*."⁶ This self-appraisal by Boulanger of her music is one of her most widely cited quotes and it is usually presented as the final word on the quality of her work. However, a closer examination of the evidence from 1909-1916 will show that Boulanger did indeed take pride in her music while she was actively

³ Ibid., xii.

⁴ Kendall, 10-11.

⁵ Ibid., 10-12.

⁶ Kendall, 10. For further examples of Boulanger's own aversion of speaking about her music please see: Teresa Walters, "Nadia Boulanger, Musician and Teacher: Her Life, Concepts, and Influences," (D.M.A. Diss., Peabody Institute of the John Hopkins University, 1981), 22, 28, 39. These ideas were later reproduced in the edition of *La Revue Musicale* dedicated to the sisters Boulanger. Please see: Florence Abondance, « Nadia Boulanger. » *Revue Musicale* 353-354 (1982) : 68-90.

composing. I believe that this summary remark of Boulanger's became more of a way for her to dismiss an uncomfortable or perhaps even painful topic, rather than an assessment which she actively endorsed. Kendall's choice to include this quote is more because of its efficacy in aiding in the dismissal of the topic of Boulanger's compositional output rather than for its veracity.

The most distinct characteristic of Kendall's biography that is so because of Boulanger's gender is that of its tone. The author consistently makes a point of underlining the gender stereotypes which are usually associated with Boulanger, stating:

It was the experience of teaching Lili that made Nadia decide to leave composing to others... She has of course written pieces, some of which are published, and is reported to have said that if she were to relive her time she would not give up composing so soon – not because she feels she would have produced any good work, but because she feels it is good for a musician to practice composition.⁷

The relationship between the two sisters is the most commonly cited factor for Boulanger's abandonment of composition in the early biographies. Later inquiry into the matter has shown that Boulanger's decision to quit composing was a much more complicated issue than is mentioned here by Kendall. In this particular instance, Kendall again seems to dismiss the topic of composition in a cursory fashion and so includes this information as if to underline that the true calling of this woman lay in her devotion to a life of service to others.

In quoting Virgil Thompson, Kendall makes a point of describing Boulanger in her early teaching days as, "A tall, soft-haired brunette still luscious to the eye, [though] she had already resigned womanly fulfillment and vowed her life to the memory of her

⁷ Kendall, 9.

⁹ Ibid.

sister,”⁹ and emphasizes that her “maternal instincts”¹⁰ were directly connected to her teaching ability. Throughout his biography, one is left with the impression that Kendall relates to Boulanger more as a mother figure than a revered teacher, or perhaps that the prose is of a softer quality because he is writing about a woman. While this is not to say that Boulanger did not in some way aid in the creation and propagation of these stereotypes, these statements are presented to further question whether there were aspects of her personality which were ignored or deleted from biographical custom rather than disrupt the idyllic representation of Boulanger as tradition would have it. While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to re-write Nadia Boulanger’s biography completely, concerns such as those found when reading Kendall will be thematically addressed when re-examining the history of the opera *La Ville Morte*. In this way, the opera serves as a focal point to address issues of gender stereotyping in the legacy of Nadia Boulanger.

Perhaps the most important account of the life of Nadia Boulanger is the biography *Nadia Boulanger* by American scholar Léonie Rosenstiel.¹¹ Rosenstiel’s biography is by far the most exhaustive of any of the accounts of Boulanger’s life, possessing many details otherwise unknown to Boulanger scholars.¹² Citations used by North American scholars working on the subject of Nadia Boulanger most consistently

¹⁰ Ibid., 60.

¹¹ Léonie Rosenstiel, *Nadia Boulanger* (London: W.W. Norton, 1982).

¹² Jacques Depaulis, *Lettres à Nadia Boulanger/ Roger Ducasse* (Sprimont, Belgium : Mardaga, 1999), 5.

draw from this source; therefore it must be considered in depth when reviewing anything pertaining to the French musician, including the creation of the opera *La Ville Morte*.

This being said, despite the meticulous, in-depth interpretation provided by Rosenstiel of Boulanger's life, she fails to include any bibliographic information to corroborate her insights. Although Rosenstiel includes acknowledgements at the beginning of her book which cite many contributors and allude that Rosenstiel made her conclusions based on unprecedented access to Boulanger's personal documents, throughout the bulk of the work there are absolutely no individual references tracing statements back to primary sources.

The suspect nature of the book becomes even more apparent when one considers recent work, namely by Annagret Fauser and Jeanice Brooks,¹⁴ which calls some of Rosenstiel's interpretation of facts into question -- especially those which involve

¹⁴ Annagret Fauser comments in great detail on the gender expectations of *fin-de-siècle* Paris and the *Prix de Rome* competition, in particular, challenging certain conclusions drawn by Rosenstiel about Boulanger's physical appearance and behaviour in her article: "La guerre en dentelles: Women and the Prix De Rome in French Cultural Politics," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 51 (1998): 83-129. For other discussions and further elaborations of Boulanger's professional career after she gave up composing and the influence of gender and gender discourse thereon please see: Jeanice Brooks, "Noble et grande servante de la musique: Telling the story of Nadia Boulanger's Conducting Career," *The Journal of Musicology* 1 (1996): 92-116; idem, "Nadia Boulanger and the Salon of the Princesses de Polignac," *The Journal of the American Musicological Society* 3 (1993): 415-68. It should be noted that it has not been until the last decade, as the dates of these articles show, that the topic of Boulanger's gender has slowly been integrated into the literature.

representations of gender.¹⁵ When one considers that Rosenstiel's strongest contributions might be faulty, those which involve the unique inclusion of psychological interpretation and sociological contextualization, it becomes necessary to reconsider or further evaluate her conclusions.¹⁶

Another curious aspect about this book is that it has never been translated into French.¹⁷ While English speakers have been able to access Rosenstiel's insights, there has been a distinct lack of interest on behalf of the French speaking world to consider this account of Boulanger's life. It is possible that this is because of a dislike of Rosenstiel's interpretation of the facts about Boulanger - perhaps it deviates too far from the previous tradition or perhaps French scholars do not believe Rosenstiel's book to be an accurate portrayal of the facts, and therefore unnecessary for consideration. Whichever the case, it remains that to refer to this text as the sole factual foundation for an inquiry about the creation of *La Ville Morte* is problematic and unsatisfactory. Extricating fact from Rosenstiel's personal interpretation, and in many cases one has no way of knowing which is which, dictates a return to primary sources.

For these reasons, the facts presented by Rosenstiel's biography about Boulanger's involvement in the creation of the opera *La Ville Morte* will be treated in this thesis as chronological fact only when corroborated by another -- and preferably primary -- source. The previously stated reservations about the use of the Rosenstiel text as

¹⁵ Another important work that contradicts the conclusions made by Rosenstiel about Boulanger's physical appearance is Mary Louise Roberts, *Civilization Without Sexes, Reconstructing Gender in Postwar France 1917-1927* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

¹⁶ Jacques Depaulis, who offers a historiography of Boulanger biographies has this to say of the Rosenstiel "Par touches discrètes mais pertinentes, l'auteur nous donne une passionnante approche psychologique du personnage " Depaulis, 6. For specific examples of this type of psychological interpretation, please see Rosenstiel's description of Boulanger's relationship with her family pp. 76-77, her early teaching conduct pp. 89-90, and the depiction of the relationship between Lili and Nadia pp. 93-95.

¹⁷ Depaulis, 6.

irrefutable fact will mediate both its use in this thesis and assessments of its use by other scholars. It is in an effort to corroborate or refute evidence stated in the Rosenstiel, not only about the genesis of the opera but also about Boulanger's gender and representations thereof, that this thesis will incorporate much information from primary sources and other previously uncited secondary sources when developing the genesis of the opera *La Ville Morte*.

Jérôme Spycket's biography *Nadia Boulanger*¹⁸ was the first French biography to be published on the musician¹⁹ and offers many insights which are helpful to a reconstruction of the opera's genesis. Spycket's biography is problematic for two reasons: first, like Rosenstiel he fails to include a bibliography and, second, Spycket work contains no index.²⁰ Much shorter than the Rosenstiel, it contains markedly less information derived from interpretation; instead it is more an exposition of facts. However, this biography will be treated with equal scepticism as the Rosenstiel. While dates which can be corroborated will be treated with relative certainty, embellishment will be met with speculation, especially since gender stereotypes and other factors may have coloured the writing.

Facts distinctive to the Spycket which will be considered further in the music-historical analysis of chapter six include: additional documentation and commentary on the relationship between Pugno and Boulanger, including letters exchanged between

¹⁸ Jérôme Spycket, *Nadia Boulanger* (Stuyvesant, New York: Pendragon Press, 1992).

¹⁹ Depaulis, 6.

²⁰ Depaulis also comments on this in his book stating, « Pour l'anniversaire de la naissance de Nadia Boulanger, en 1987, apparaît la première biographie en langue française, écrite par Jérôme Spycket. Magnifiquement illustré, ce livre se lit d'un trait, et l'auteur, bien qu'il se défende d'écrire une biographie, reconstitue admirablement la vie et le destin de celle qui a joui d'une réputation mondiale. Le chercheur regrettera peut-être que, de propos délibéré, il n'y ait ni références ni index pour faciliter son travail. » Depaulis, 6.

Ravel and Boulanger on the topic of Pugno;²¹ preliminary advertisements for the production of the opera;²² and the interesting comment, quoted from an unknown source, that shortly following Pugno's death:

Nadia herself would write [to d'Annunzio] and would repeat often that from then on "the memory of my great friend who has left us is the focal point of my life."

But this would not be for so long. Very soon there would be no more mention of Raoul Pugno. Certainly Nadia Boulanger could not erase their artistic collaboration of ten years, but she stopped talking about it...

It is significant that Nadia Boulanger, who was obsessed with commemorating anniversary dates, never included those of Pugno, a curious "lapse of memory."²³

Spycket is the first author to comment on the odd distancing and eventual disassociation with Pugno that Boulanger exhibited, a person so devoutly dedicated to the remembrance of those she loved who had died. Commenting on this fact would have been unthinkable while Boulanger was alive and it is interesting that the first French biography published on Boulanger would have been so bold as to write out these suggestions. This combination of reluctance to speak of her compositional past and those that were involved in it will be considered in further detail later on in this thesis in an effort to postulate why Boulanger behaved the way she did.

Also distinctive to his account is the relationship Spycket asserts existed between Boulanger and the librettist d'Annunzio. Spycket writes that the pair were quite amicable, despite the fact that Boulanger would have taken issue with d'Annunzio's "sulphurous

²¹ Spycket, 31 and 34.

²² Ibid., 42.

²³ Ibid.

reputation.”²⁴ Spycket goes so far as to comment that “this openness on Nadia’s part was in striking contrast to the severe, even puritanical stance that would later become an essential characteristic of her personality.”²⁵ As noted previously, this thesis will examine in great detail the relationship between the notorious playwright and Boulanger. It will show that Boulanger had fewer reservations than was thought about interacting with d’Annunzio and that the traditional way of representing Boulanger’s relationship with him is more a product of what would have been expected from someone of her gender at the time, than what really took place.

Also worth noting in Spyckett’s work, although not unique to it, is the assertion that Boulanger was responsible for the composition of the female roles of *La Ville Morte* and Pugno for the males.²⁶ Correcting this portion of the myth which surrounds the opera will be a large part of Chapter 6 of this thesis. This traditional split was probably more a by-product of the gendered expectations of the *fin-de-siècle* bourgeoisie, but in reality, the compositional process was actually quite different.

In Bruno Monsaingeon’s text *Mademoiselle, Conversations with Nadia Boulanger*²⁷ the topic of her involvement with *La Ville Morte* is broached while he and Boulanger are conversing about the pianist Raoul Pugno’s performing abilities. In the process of this interview, Boulanger does agree to having collaborated on the opera with Pugno and even states that “Because of [this collaboration] her sister and she were put in touch with... Gabriele d’Annunzio.”²⁸ Throughout this segment of the text, Boulanger

²⁴ Spycket, 26.

²⁵ Ibid., 28.

²⁶ Spycket, 27.

²⁷ Bruno Monsaingeon, *Mademoiselle, Conversations with Nadia Boulanger*, (London: Carcanet Press, 1985).

²⁸ Monsaingeon, 100.

continuously refers to the compositional activity of her sister rather than to that of her own.

It is interesting that during the course of the entire book, Monsaingeon does not choose to include any further discussion about the music of Nadia Boulanger.

Monsaingeon does include a caveat at the beginning of his text, writing:

Nadia Boulanger did not care to confide things, either about herself or about others... This accounts for the absence of... many subjects... which she would probably have been willing to explore some thirty years earlier and which she does not even touch upon in this book. Hence its limitations, which I willingly abstained from overstepping, in a manner which would necessarily have been arbitrary.²⁹

The question remains whether her compositional output was one of these particularly sensitive topics of conversation. If so, why did Boulanger claim to have abandoned it so freely only for it to become a topic about which she felt emotionally vulnerable later in life? Answers to these questions will be proposed later on in this thesis as the genesis of one of the last of Boulanger's compositions is considered in greater detail.

Differing Stories – Sources Which Go Against Biographical Tradition

One account which conflicts with what biographers attest was Boulanger's role in the making of *La Ville Morte* stems from an article written by Aaron Copland in *Harper's Magazine* entitled "Nadia Boulanger an Affectionate Portrait."³⁰ While recounting fond memories of his time spent with Boulanger, Copland writes

To what extent Mademoiselle Boulanger had serious ambitions as [a] composer has never been entirely established... [she] once told me that

²⁹ Bruno Monsaingeon, "Author's Note," from *Mademoiselle, Conversations with Nadia Boulanger*, trans. Robyn Marsack (Manchester, Carcanet, 1985,) n.p..

³⁰ Aaron Copland, "Nadia Boulanger: An Affectionate Portrait," *Harper's Magazine* (1960): 49-51.

she had aided the pianist and composer Raoul Pugno in the orchestration of an opera of his.³¹

Although it is made clear in other accounts that will later be discussed in detail that Boulanger's participation in the making of *La Ville Morte* went well beyond that of simply aiding in orchestration, this particular statement by Copland is often reproduced without comment on his over-simplification. Adding to the interest of this erroneous account is that it was published in 1960, nineteen years prior to Boulanger's death. Perhaps Boulanger was unaware that this article existed; if she did know of its existence it is odd that she failed to correct its inaccuracies.

Further complicating Copland's comments is the footnote which was appended to its reprinting in Carol Neuls-Bates Anthology *Women in Music*. In this anthology, Neuls-Bates adds that "more correctly, Boulanger finished Pugno's incidental music to Gabriele D'Annunzio's *La Città Morta*."³² While this correction by Neuls-Bates does indeed come closer to what Boulanger's actual role was in the creation of the work, this thesis will show that neither Neuls-Bates's nor Copland's statement is accurate.

Copland's rather derogatory opinions about female composers are widely known³³ and it is entirely possible that he didn't retain the correct version of Boulanger's involvement with the making of the opera, dismissing it as being insignificant. It is also possible that Boulanger was sensitive to his indifferent attitude towards female musicians and therefore decided not to tell Copland the entire story. For whatever reason, this thesis will show that Copland's description of Boulanger's role in the opera is erroneous and

³¹ Carol Neuls-Bates, *Women in Music* (Boston: Northeastern Press, 1996), 242.

³² Ibid.

³³ For an example of this see: Howard Pollack, *Aaron Copland: the life and work of an uncommon man*, (New York: Henry Holt, 1999,) p 47.212-213.

will instead, unequivocally relate the truth of the opera's genesis and Boulanger's role in it.

Odds and Ends – Pieces of the Puzzle from New Secondary Sources

An interesting addition to the confusion surrounding the genesis of the opera *La Ville Morte* is the assertion by Jacques Depaulis that a letter sent by Boulanger to Madame Cruppi states that the music for *La Ville Morte* was being written as early as August 1909.³⁴ Rather than the more commonly circulated date for the opera's inception of 1910, the implications of this earlier date will be discussed further in chapter 6 of this thesis.

Some of the most helpful and least disputable pieces of evidence in print concerning Boulanger's own participation in the making of *La Ville Morte* are the letters which were exchanged between Nadia Boulanger and Gabrielle d'Annunzio published in *Grandeur et Mystère D'Un Mythe, Souvenirs de quarante-quatre ans d'amitié avec Nadia Boulanger* by Doda Conrad³⁵. These letters manifest many of the gender relations which may have complicated the development, publication, production and performance of *La Ville Morte* in such a male dominated field as music theatre in *fin-de-siècle* Paris. While these letters have been cited by both Caroline Potter and indirectly Léonie Rosenstiel, they have never been translated into English, nor specifically addressed chronologically. Because they aid in elucidating further information not only with regards to Boulanger's role in composition of the opera, but also sociological considerations of

³⁴ Depaulis, 33.

³⁵ Doda Conrad, *Grandeur et Mystère D'Un Mythe – Souvenirs de Quarante-Quatre Ans d'Amitié avec Nadia Boulanger* (Paris:Éditions Buchet/Chastel, 1995), 27-51.

her relationship with the librettist and the production team, this thesis will return to these documents, to inspect them in greater detail.

Articles – The Newest Look at Nadia Boulanger

Perhaps the most prolific writer on Nadia Boulanger and her compositions is Caroline Potter, who is responsible for three major publications on the musician. The first is the current article on Boulanger in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*³⁶, the second, an article on both Nadia and Lili Boulanger's compositional process entitled: "Nadia and Lili Boulanger: Sister Composers"³⁷ and the third, the most thorough account of the genesis of the opera in question, the article "Nadia Boulanger's and Raoul Pugno's *La Ville Morte*."³⁸

There are several themes present throughout the articles by Potter with regards Nadia Boulanger's compositional process. The first is that: "it is likely that [Nadia's] lack of confidence in her own ability as a creative artist and her self-critical attitude...led her to concentrate on teaching."³⁹ In her article written on the Boulanger sisters, Potter furthers elaborates on her theory as to why Nadia Boulanger gave up composition by citing three factors which contributed to Boulanger's decision to stop composing. These three factors include, first, "the distinctly lukewarm critical reception" of Boulanger's

³⁶ Caroline Potter, "Boulanger, (Juliette) Nadia," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 3 (2000): 96-98.

³⁷ Caroline Potter, "Nadia and Lili Boulanger: Sister Composers," *Musical Quarterly* 83 (1999): 536-56.

³⁸ Caroline Potter "Nadia Boulanger's and Raoul Pugno's *La Ville Morte*," *Opera Quarterly* 16 (2000): pp. 397-406.

³⁹ Potter, "Boulanger (Juliette) Nadia," 97. This opinion was first introduced by Annette Dieudonné in an interview with Teresa Walters: Walters, 39.

compositions; second, Pugno's untimely death; and third, the hyper-critical attitude which Boulanger held towards herself.⁴⁰ She continues on to state that

It is of course likely that the time and energy Nadia Boulanger devoted to her teaching career left her with little space to pursue composition, but it is also true that she did not, or was not prepared to, push herself forward as a composer in the same way.⁴¹

In her article concerned with the actual opera itself, Potter emphasizes the point once again that "[Boulanger's] self-critical attitude towards her music [is what] she believes to be the main factor that lead [Boulanger] to abandon creative work."⁴²

While the question of why Nadia Boulanger did indeed cease to compose music may never be conclusively answered, a discussion of her involvement with the creation of *La Ville Morte*, one of her final works, does lead one to consider this issue. Though the points raised by Potter are valid, this thesis will offer its own idea as to why Boulanger did indeed decide to devote her life to teaching.

The next statement of Potter's which this thesis will consider is one which she makes in relation to Boulanger's selection of text. In her article "Nadia and Lili Boulanger: Sister Composers" Potter states:

Most of Nadia's songs, whether written on her own, or in collaboration with Raoul Pugno, also reveal a taste for uncomplicated poetry... it seems that she was not too concerned about the literary merit of the texts she chose.⁴³

An analysis of the opera, in particular the working libretto for *La Ville Morte* housed at the *Bibliothèque Nationale* will show that Boulanger was intensely devoted to the text of the opera, especially with its meaning and relation to characterization and social

⁴⁰ Potter, "Nadia and Lili Boulanger: Sister Composers," 546-547.

⁴¹ Ibid. 548.

⁴² Potter, "Nadia Boulanger's and Raoul Pugno's," 404.

⁴³ Potter, "Nadia and Lili Boulanger: Sister Composers," 543.

commentary. Following a discussion of the libretto this thesis will return to this claim made by Potter and will consider it further.

Other statements made by Caroline Potter important to this thesis come from her final article “Nadia Boulanger’s and Raoul Pugno’s *La Ville Morte*.” The subject matter of this article is quite large in its breadth, offering not only chronological information about the opera’s composition but also a brief plot synopsis, stylistic interpretations, and theoretical considerations. Difficulties do arise, however, from Potter’s tendency to draw conclusions based on Léonie Rosenstiel’s book *Nadia Boulanger*; the difficulties with which have been discussed in detail previously in this chapter. Of the seven different sources Potter cites to corroborate her analysis of the opera’s creation, the Rosenstiel is cited five times in twelve citations. This is not to say that the article itself is flawed and therefore unusable. What it does mean is that, while much of this thesis has been influenced by Potter’s article, it is possible to move beyond her work and provide further evidence gathered from a number of sources to bolster or refute certain contentious statements and this thesis will do so.

The particular conclusions drawn by Potter which this thesis will consider in detail fall into four categories which include: first, certain chronological points; second, the compositional techniques of Raoul Pugno and Nadia Boulanger; third, the personal relationship between the musicians beyond that of collaborators and mentor/muse; and fourth a more detailed account of the plot and characterizations in *La Ville Morte*.

The chronological information presented by Potter is a compilation of dates from Rosenstiel, Spycket, These dates will be fleshed out with additional information in chapter six of this thesis; special emphasis will be given to when Pugno and Boulanger

actually began writing the opera, the production process of the Opéra Comique, the interaction between librettist and composers, and the final progression of proof corrections for the piano/vocal score, much of which was not mentioned by Potter in her article.⁴⁴ Special attention will be paid to points within the chronology which display unorthodox gender roles enacted by Boulanger, and to what happened at the conclusion of the opera's composition that lead Boulanger towards abandoning a career in composition.

Once the chronology has been examined, this thesis will turn to discussing the working libretto that sheds much light on the compositional process of the pair, as well as discussing the manuscripts housed at the *Bibliothèque Nationale*. In this way, this thesis will build upon the information already provided by Potter, but will be better able to flesh out "the question of [Pugno and Boulanger's] respective roles in composing *La Ville Morte*" which is, according to Potter, "the most intriguing [question] of all."⁴⁵

This thesis will also compile the extant evidence along with new information found in the *fonds Boulanger* at the *Bibliothèque Nationale* to suggest what the relationship between Raoul Pugno and Nadia Boulanger actually was. Potter discusses this relationship briefly stating:

Although Pugno had a reputation as a womanizer, there is no evidence that [he and Boulanger] were more than close friends and collaborators. It is not hard to imagine Boulanger's reaction to allegations that they were having an affair, for, in the bourgeois circles in which the composer lived, a woman's moral uprightness was of paramount importance.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ While it may have been beyond the intended scope of her article, Potter does not actually focus on the chronological information for the opera's development. Her dates are simply those reproduced from the Rosenstiel and a letter taken from Doda Conrad, 34.

⁴⁵ Caroline Potter, "Nadia Boulanger's and Raoul Pugno's," 400.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 398.

This coupling of the implications of Boulanger's behaviour and the cultural expectations which she faced will parallel the analysis presented in this thesis. Although I can in no way provide conclusive evidence as to the relationship between Pugno and Boulanger, I will offer further substantiation to suggest that the pair were more than simply colleagues. This section of the thesis will consider what would have been the contemporary gender discourse for Boulanger and what her relationship with Pugno reveals about her own mediation of gender expectations.

The final section of this thesis to address issues with Potter's work will involve a revised description of the actual plot and characterizations present in the opera. Fleshing out the descriptions of Héb  , Anne, L  onard and Alexandre beyond that provided by Potter will help to show the overall intentions of Pugno and Boulanger. Special attention will be drawn to Act III, Scene 5 of the opera and the political elements of the characterizations therein.

Dissertations

While there have been many dissertations written concerning Nadia Boulanger, the majority of them focus on the way in which she influenced her students or her abilities as a teacher.⁴⁷ In fact, only two dissertations actually consider the compositions of Nadia Boulanger, though neither of them addresses *La Ville Morte* directly.

⁴⁷ For dissertations dealing with the topic of Nadia Boulanger and her impact on Western music as a pedagogue please see: Janet S. Schneider, "Basic Pedagogical Principles of Nadia Boulanger" (M.A. thesis, Eastern Michigan University, 1998); Diane Lynn deVries, "the Pedagogical Influence of Nadia Boulanger on the Works of Her Female Students: An Analysis of Selected Compositions" (MMus thesis, Michigan State University, 1998); Marsha Elaine Covington, "Great Teachers on Teaching Adults: Comparison of Philosophy and Practice from Antiquity to the Present" (Doctor of Education diss., Montana State University, 1997); and Carole Jean Harris, "The French Connection: The Neoclassical Influence of Stravinsky, through Boulanger, on the Music of Copland, Talma, and Piston" (Ph. D. diss., University of New York at Buffalo, 2002).

The first dissertation which will serve valuable to this thesis is that by Teresa Walters entitled “Nadia Boulanger, Musician and Teacher: Her Life, Influences, and Concepts.”⁴⁸ This dissertation was one of the first English works published on Nadia Boulanger and is wide in breadth in an effort to comprehensively convey the attributes of Boulanger. Interestingly enough, Boulanger is again devoid of gender in this discussion of her life; her life, accomplishments, and behaviours are treated as if she herself were androgynous. This being said, this dissertation is also a resource rich in valuable information for formulating theories about why Boulanger refused to talk about her own compositions⁴⁹ and the relationship between Boulanger and Pugno.⁵⁰

The second dissertation related to the efforts of this thesis is by Stephanie Van der Wel entitled “Nadia Boulanger as Composer.”⁵¹ Her thesis deals directly with a critique and re-evaluation of the interpretation of Boulanger as a composer present within the extant biographical tradition. Raising parallel arguments to those presented in this work, Van der Wel voices her own concerns about the biased discourse on Nadia Boulanger. However, Van der Wel’s work does not deal with *La Ville Morte* beyond a few short sentences. Also, because Van der Wel’s argument is conducted by “presenting a different narrative that focuses on Boulanger’s career in composition [by] relying primarily on the facts in Rosenstiel’s book.”⁵² While her interpretation of ideas presented by Rosenstiel is compelling to a degree, an argument bolstered by further external sources beyond that of

⁴⁸ Teresa Walters, “Nadia Boulanger, Musician and Teacher: Her Life, Concepts, and Influences” (D.M.A. diss., Peabody Institute of the John Hopkins University, 1981).

⁴⁹ For information regarding the relationship between Fauré’s and Nadia Boulanger, as well as the former’s influence on the latter’s teaching practice please see: Walters, 22; Don Campbell, *Master Teacher*. (Washington D.C.: Pastoral Press, 1984) especially the transcribed ‘Rice Lectures;’ and Carlo Caballero, “Fauré and French Musical Aesthetics” (Ph. D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1996).

⁵⁰ Walters, 27.

⁵¹ Stephanie Lea Van der Wel, “Nadia Boulanger as Composer/Teacher” (M.A. thesis, University of Virginia, 1997).

⁵² Van der Wel, 13.

Rosenstiel proves to be less problematic and more comprehensive. Van der Wel's thesis, while an excellent resource concerning the songs of Boulanger, is less helpful when exploring the nature of *La Ville Morte*.

There are several quotations within the work which will prove useful to this thesis, namely one from the Ménéstrel which cites that "the poet and composers intended to create a 'superb' work in two years."⁵³ Also interesting is the information provided by Van der Wel which speaks to the success of Boulanger's performing career, a success which would have been concurrent with the development of *La Ville Morte*. This information lends credence to the argument that Boulanger at the time of the opera's composition, was envisioning herself as a professional musician, not a pedagogue.

Summary

An inquiry into the genesis, characterizations, and relationships between those involved in the making of the opera *La Ville Morte* unveils new information about the French musician Nadia Boulanger, much of which deviates from her biographical discourse. This thesis will show that by compiling all of the extant information on the opera, including contemporary sources regarding gender, societal and cultural expectations, scholars will learn vast amounts about the highly influential woman who was Nadia Boulanger. Following an appraisal of the current sources available it becomes apparent that there are questions with concerning the opera which must be returned to, questions which when answered not only reveal information about a small locus of time within Boulanger's compositional career, but also hold lasting ramifications for her life in its entirety. As will become apparent in the ensuing discussion of the opera's composition

⁵³Van der Wel, 48.

Boulanger's role, minimized though it has been in secondary literature, was the primary one for this opera.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE STATE OF THE *FONDS NADIA BOULANGER* AT THE *BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE - FRANCE*

The primary source material to be considered in the following chapters of this thesis was all reviewed at the *Fonds Nadia Boulanger* housed at *La Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris, France. This collection was donated to the library by Annette Dieudonnée shortly following the death of Boulanger in the hopes that the information could benefit scholars long after Boulanger's death. Thankfully, as of the time when the author was at the *bibliothèque* most, if not all, of the donated material had been catalogued and could either be found listed in the card catalogue or online using the computer system. Unfortunately, the information stored in the card catalogue -- and this includes most manuscripts and letters in the Boulanger collection -- has yet to be entered into the library's database. This makes the search for these items from remote locations impossible.¹

The materials referred to in this thesis fall into four categories: music manuscripts; personal documents, such as agendas and accounting ledgers; letters to Boulanger from various correspondents; and original libretto material. The call numbers for each of these documents in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* will be included in an appendix at the end of this thesis.

The musical manuscripts in question are all related to *La Ville Morte* and can be found by searching the card catalogue either under Raoul Pugno or Nadia Boulanger. From this point onwards, manuscripts will be cited by the bracketed information

¹ For more information on the complete *fonds Boulanger* at the *Bibliothèque Nationale - France* please see: Jeanice Brooks, "The Fonds Boulanger at the Bibliothèque Nationale," in *Notes*, (June 1995,) pp. 1227-1237.

following their description here. These include: sketches of Act I (*La Ville Morte Manuscript, Sketches*, Act 1); completed scores for both an Overture (*La Ville Morte Overture*) and Act III (*La Ville Morte, Sketches*, Act III); the complete autographed piano/vocal score (*La Ville Morte, Autograph P/V*); and several proofs of the fair copy or final Piano/vocal score for engraving (*La Ville Morte, P/V Proofs*, a, b, and c.)²

The personal documents are all catalogued online and are neatly organized in two large, cardboard boxes. Of special interest to this thesis are two daily agendas dating from the first and second trimesters of 1910, (*Personal Agenda – A*, January-March, 1910 or *Personal Agenda – B*, April-June, 1910) an accounting ledger from 1914 (*Accounting Ledger*, 1914) and two letter diaries from 1915-1916 (*Letter Diary*, 1915-1916) and 1916). Unfortunately for this study there are no further extant documents of this nature dating from the time of the opera. What information is available, however, was exceptionally helpful.

All letters donated to *La Bibliothèque Nationale* which are available to the public have been documented and may be located by leafing through the library's card catalogue. Of the letters which will be discussed in this thesis, all will be cited as suggested by Kate Turabian, in *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*.³ For example, a letter from Audre Lorde to Nadia Boulanger on 9 March 1913 would appear as: Lorde, Audre, Paris to Nadia Boulanger, Paris, 9 March 1913. *Letter. Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris, France. An appendix will be included at the end of this thesis listing each of the letters and their Bn-F numbers as well.

² For a list of the library codes and call numbers please refer to Appendix A.

³ Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 153-154.

The final documents which will be discussed in this thesis are the libretto materials, two large books and one smaller one in total, all of which are easily accessible by searching in the library's card catalogue under Nadia Boulanger or Raoul Pugno. The books will be referred to in chronological order as (*La Ville Morte*, *Autograph Libretto*, Book a, b and/or c.)

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CREATION OF *La Ville Morte*

In order to comment on the roles, intentions, or motivations of either Nadia Boulanger or Raoul Pugno in the creation of *La Ville Morte*, it is essential that the genesis of the opera be established and the contribution of each musician carefully delineated. A review of the secondary source material makes it difficult to state a specific point at which Boulanger and Pugno began composing the opera *La Ville Morte*. A vague starting point is provided by Rosenstiel when she first mentions the work in her biography of Boulanger. Included in the portion of text concerned with events which took place during the year 1910, Rosenstiel writes that, “already, [Boulanger] and Pugno were hard at work on a second collaboration, *La Ville Morte*, an opera based on a d’Annunzio novel.”¹ This statement loosely places the beginning of the opera’s composition somewhere during the year 1910 or earlier. However, it fails to provide further information regarding the inspiration or initial processes involved surrounding the opera’s inception.

Spyckett is no more elucidating in his writings. The only portion of his text concerned with mentioning a date of commencement states:

But if the year 1910 ended on a note of disappointment and wounded [Boulanger’s] self-esteem, which apparently healed quickly, it was also a year rich in positive events.

First of all was her decision to collaborate with Pugno on the music for Gabriele d’Annunzio’s drama, *La Ville Morte*.²

This account adds weight to the claim that the two composers began work on *La Ville Morte* sometime in the year 1910. However, neither of these authors provides evidence for these statements, nor any further specificity regarding when composition commenced.

¹ Léonie Rosenstiel, *Nadia Boulanger, A Life in Music* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982), 91.

² Jérôme Spycket, *Nadia Boulanger* (Stuyvesant, New York : Pendragon Press, 1992), 26.

Adding some confusion to these two accounts is the original date provided by Potter of c. 1909³. This information is presented in the appendix to Potter's article "Nadia and Lili Boulanger: Sister Composers" and is not commented on during the article proper. It is difficult to say if Potter even stands by this c. 1909 date, as there is no mention of it, or any other date of commencement, in her subsequent article specifically concerned with *La Ville Morte*, written a year later.⁴ In addition to this, Potter's entry on Boulanger for *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, also written in 2000, lists the commencement date for the opera as 1910; once again there is no further explanation for this date provided in the text proper⁵. Without knowing why Potter chose to change the inception date from 1909 to 1910, it is difficult to determine from the secondary literature which date is correct. However, the matter can be clarified by consulting primary sources.

The Beginning – 1909-1910

The most helpful sources of information regarding the early stages of *La Ville Morte* are two daily agendas written by Boulanger dating from the first and second trimesters of 1910 currently housed in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*. It should be noted early on that of all the information contained in these agendas, very little of it has to do with the music lessons Boulanger would have been conducting at the time. These organizers were used by Boulanger to record information of a different nature. I would

³ Caroline Potter, "Nadia and Lili Boulanger: Sister Composers," *Musical Quarterly* 83 (1999): 553.

⁴ Caroline Potter, "Nadia Boulanger's and Raoul Pugno's *La Ville Morte*," *Opera Quarterly* 16 (2000): 397-406.

⁵ Caroline Potter, "Boulanger, (Juliette) Nadia," *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 3 (2000): 97.

suggest that Boulanger considered these journals reserved for matters of business, the category which she reserved for her compositions including *La Ville Morte*.⁶

The first entry made by Boulanger pertaining to the opera can be found on 8 January 1910. Boulanger writes: « 1h ½ Vais chez Pugno qui me donne le mot pour le comte de Jau Martino qui je vois à 2h, chez la Buffette, pour lui demander la Ville Morte. »⁷ Because of the short-hand nature of the text, it is difficult to tell exactly what the proposed rendez-vous pertained to, but most likely Pugno was providing Boulanger with a letter of introduction to use when meeting the Count. Possibly this man was being solicited as a potential financial backer for the opera project. In any case, that Pugno trusted Boulanger -- a woman and the more junior partner -- enough that he sent her on her own to handle this encounter is exceptional.

The second point highlighted by this entry, and one which will resonate throughout this entire thesis, is that Nadia Boulanger operated repeatedly in public independently and un-chaperoned. Boulanger was meticulous about recording in her diary when and where she was escorted, usually noting whether it was Pugno, her mother, or her sister who accompanied her somewhere. On 8 January 1910 there is no such detail, leading one to believe that Boulanger went on her own to meet with Count Martino. This fact would have been of the utmost damaging significance to Boulanger's reputation, both professional and personal, placing her virtue in question amongst the *bourgeoisie* class of which she was a member.

⁶ It should be noted that the sheer volume of space required to keep track of Boulanger's students may have exceeded the space allowed by these small agendas, resulting in the separation of the two activities. This does not, however, change the intriguing fact that Boulanger constructed her records so that her teaching activities and her compositional activities remained segregated rather than simply acquire a larger size of agenda which would fit both.

⁷ Nadia Boulanger, *Personal Agenda – A*, 8 January, 1910, *Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris, France. "Went to Pugno's, advised me of what to say to the Count Jan Martino, who I will see at 2 o'clock, at la Buffette, to ask him about *La Ville Morte*."

Rosenstiel makes a special point of emphasizing the necessity of a chaperone's presence in order to satisfy societal expectations of propriety. Over the course of her text she catalogues each time Boulanger was or was not chaperoned.⁸ Spycket also emphasizes this fact, discussing the conspicuous presence caused by Boulanger's mother while Nadia was competing in the *Prix de Rome*. Both authors show that even if it served as an inconvenience, or awkwardly emphasized a gendered inequality, Boulanger's mother's priority rested in ensuring that Nadia was escorted and therefore that her virtue would not be questioned.⁹

Other authors concerned with *fin-de-siècle* Parisian social practices also mention the presence of an acute paranoia towards women which necessitated that they be escorted everywhere. Annagret Fauser comments on the bourgeoisie social code when discussing the history of women's involvement in the *Prix de Rome* competition writing:

The social and cultural framework of bourgeois femininity provided a powerful and complex semiotic system of imaginary and legislative structures that created horizons of expectation regarding women's appearance in public. Strict rules of decorum governed the behaviour of a woman of good reputation, especially a virtuous young lady of the *bourgeoisie*.¹⁰

These rules would have been directly applicable to Boulanger; yet there are many examples, including the one on 8 January 1910, where Boulanger deliberately ignored them.

⁸ For Rosenstiel's description of the bourgeoisie social code and discussion of such topics as escorts, warnings from Raïssa Boulanger, Nadia Boulanger's own original forays into public unattended, and who was suitable as an escort for Lili Boulanger, please see Rosenstiel, 4-7, 20, 34, 40, and 62 respectively.

⁹ Spycket, 23.

¹⁰ Annagret Fauser, "La Guerre en dentelles": Women and the *Prix de Rome* in French Cultural Politics," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 51 (1998): 93. Of particular interest is the example provided by Fauser of Marie-Juliette Toutain and the strictures arranged by her father with regards to her supervision while participating in the *Prix de Rome* competition of 1903. For further elaboration concerning the behaviour of women in Paris, Pre-World War I, please see: Mary Louise Roberts, *Civilization Without Sexes: Reconstructing Gender in PostWar France, 1917-1927*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 26. Included in the author's accounts of pre-war ideals is a list of "traditional female values -- purity, morality, discipline and self-denial," 38.

There are several questions which this information brings to the surface. If Boulanger's mother was so insistent that her daughter's honour be upheld, why was Boulanger allowed to spend so much time with a known womanizer such as Raoul Pugno¹¹, unattended? Was her mother aware of the nature of Boulanger's visits with Pugno? Is it because Boulanger's mother asserted that she was of Russian nobility¹² that Nadia herself believed she was above the rules of the bourgeoisie?¹³ Or is it because Boulanger was used to being publicly unescorted when procuring the family income, that she no longer felt obliged to acknowledge these social practices? Perhaps Boulanger's own professional ambitions outweighed the demands of propriety in her own mind and it was a mixture of these preceding reasonings which satisfied her rationale. However these questions are answered, it must be emphasized that Boulanger's behaviour was particularly unconventional.

Returning to the significance of the 8 January, it can be concluded that Boulanger and Pugno had already decided to consider some form of creative project regarding *La Ville Morte* prior to the writing of this entry. Considering the meticulous care with which Boulanger maintained her books,¹⁴ it is highly unlikely that she would have neglected to

¹¹ For a description of Pugno's reputation please see: Rosenstiel, 48-49; Spycket, 24-25; Potter, "*Ville Morte*," 398; Alan Kendall conspicuously omits any mention of Pugno's reputation from his own biography of *The Tender Tyrant – Nadia Boulanger A Life Devoted to Music*, (London: Macdonald and Jane's), 1976.

¹² For information on Boulanger's mother's background please see Don Campbell, *Master Teacher*, Washington D.C.: Pastoral Press, 1984), 17; Rosenstiel, 14-16; Spycket, 9-10; and Bruno Monsaingeon, *Mademoiselle, Conversations with Nadia Boulanger*, trans. Robyn Marsack (London: Carcanet Press Ltd, 1985), 17-18. Teresa Walters explains that, for the most part, Boulanger's early life was constructed by information supplied by Boulanger's secretary and devotee, Annette Dieudonné, Teresa Walters, "Nadia Boulanger, Musician and Teacher: Her Life, Concepts, and Influences" (D.M.A diss., Peabody Institute of the John Hopkins University, 1981), 6.

¹³ I would like to thank Dr. Paul A. Merkley for bringing this to my attention. Boulanger's connection with, and possible resentment of the bourgeoisie social class is also discussed by Rosenstiel, 53.

¹⁴ Boulanger often notated time to the minute i.e. 5:17, instead of the more general quarter-past five. Examples of entries which display this tendency of Boulanger's include: Nadia Boulanger, *Personal Agenda – B*, May 19,20,22 and 28, *Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris, France.

input any preceding information regarding her and Pugno's project. Since no other entry mentioning *La Ville Morte* is made in the diary before 8 January, it can therefore be concluded that Pugno and Boulanger conceived of the project in 1909.

Further evidence to support a commencement date of 1909 comes from Jacques Depaulis, who writes that d'Annunzio had already begun working with Pugno and Boulanger on *La Ville Morte* before August of 1909.¹⁵ While this comment is offered in order to explicate a reference to a letter written by Roger Ducasse, a letter which will be considered in further detail later in this chapter, the date is no less elucidating. This citation proves that Pugno, Boulanger, and d'Annunzio had agreed to begin work on *La Ville Morte* prior to August 1909. Therefore Potter's date of c.1909 is a better date for the conception of *La Ville Morte*.

This new date has vast implications for the tradition of Boulanger's composing career. Placing the opera project before August 1909 means that Pugno and Boulanger had conceived of *La Ville Morte* even before they had finished their first collaboration, *Les Heures Claires*. Included in Boulanger's list of projects for this prolific year were her *Soir d'Été*, *Roussalka*, *Les Heures Claires*, and *Douze Mélodies*,¹⁶ and now, to this extensive list, she also added *La Ville Morte*.¹⁷ This was not the act of an amateur woman merely dabbling in composition, nor of someone who was discouraged following a third defeat in the *Prix de Rome*; this was the behaviour of a confident, ambitious, and determined young composer building a compositional portfolio, and future, for herself.

¹⁵ Jacques Depaulis, *Lettres à Nadia Boulanger/Roger Ducasse*, (Sprimont, Belgium: Mardaga, 1999), 33.

¹⁶ The date of completion for *Les Heures Claires* is listed by Caroline Potter as being 13 August 1909. For a time-line displaying all the compositional projects undertaken by Boulanger while she was also writing the opera please see appendices B and C. These compositions are all listed by Caroline Potter in the appendix to her article "Nadia and Lili Boulanger: Sister Composers," *Musical Quarterly* 83 (1999): 552-553. These publications are also noted in Rosenstiel, 91-92.

¹⁷ Please see Potter, "Sister Composers," 547.

Returning to the chronology of the opera, the next agenda entry concerned with the opera comes a week later on 15 January 1910. This entry is the first made by Boulanger mentioning a meeting with one of her publishers, Heugel.¹⁸ The note made intimates that Boulanger travelled, again unescorted, to Heugel's home, an action not as scandalous since Heugel appears to have been a friend of the family and did not possess such a dishonourable reputation as Pugno.¹⁹

The remainder of the first diary contains no further information regarding the opera. It is possible that during the months of February and March both Pugno and Boulanger were too busy preparing for performances or teaching to meet and discuss the opera, or that they were waiting to hear if it would be financially feasible to continue with the project. It is also possible, though unlikely, that Boulanger was simply too busy to maintain her records during this point in time and any activity which did take place was not recorded. Perhaps this time was spent waiting to meet and discuss concrete ideas about the opera's libretto with Gabrielle d'Annunzio, since this is the largest factor which would have halted any progress on the part of Boulanger and Pugno. For whatever reason, the next entry made with reference to the project comes in the subsequent diary pertaining to the second trimester of 1910.

¹⁸ Nadia Boulanger, *Personal Agenda – A*, 15 January, 1910, *Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris, France. « Je vais chez Heugel et chez Hamelle. »

¹⁹ The relationship between Boulanger and Heugel is complex. While Rosenstiel limits their interaction to activities which extended from Heugel's interactions with Pugno as his publisher (Rosenstiel, 113), investigation of the primary sources shows that Boulanger and Heugel kept in personal contact to the same extent as that of Boulanger and Mme. Pugno. The letter diaries from 1915-1916 show that Boulanger often sent and received letters from both Heugel and his wife. (Nadia Boulanger, *Letter Diary*, 1915-1916, *Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris, France.) Also, throughout Boulanger's daily agendas Heugel is often cited as a guest to family outings outside of those relating to business. (Nadia Boulanger, *Personal Agenda – A and B*, 1910, *Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris, France.) While the reason for the introduction of Boulanger and Heugel may have been his connection with Pugno, their continued interaction suggests a mutually friendly relationship.

On 30 April 1910 the next significant milestone in the genesis of the opera is recorded. Boulanger writes: “2h^{1/2}, 1^{er} Rendez-vous d’Annunzio pour la Ville Morte.”²⁰ While it does not say in the diary entry whether or not it was solely Boulanger that went to meet with d’Annunzio, the text is not in the first person as is usually the case when Boulanger describes her solo outings. I read this entry as meaning both Pugno and Boulanger went to meet with d’Annunzio, since I think Boulanger would have notated it differently had it been otherwise.

This entry coincides with the meetings which Rosenstiel and Spycket also describe in their biographies. Rosenstiel writes:

At [Pugno’s] urging, the poet had personally adapted the libretto for [*La Ville Morte* for] them. Pugno had taken Nadia to meet D’Annunzio to discuss the idea, and the latter had chosen his hotel bedroom for their discussion. The enormous Pugno, with a reluctant Nadia in tow, as she was uncomfortable at the thought of being in a strange man’s bedroom, had found the poet receptive to their project.²¹

This account of Boulanger and d’Annunzio’s first encounter and Boulanger’s subsequent discomfort is somewhat contradicted by what Jérôme Spycket writes in his own biography. He states:

Nadia Boulanger had met [d’Annunzio] at Pugno’s and seems not to have been intimidated by his sulphurous reputation. She even formed a friendship with La Duse, one of the most famous of his mistresses, the one in fact who had talked him into writing for the stage. This openness on Nadia’s part was striking in contrast to the severe, even puritanical stance that would later become an essential characteristic of her personality. For the moment she had nothing but enthusiasm for this three-way collaboration which gave her the opportunity to spend a great deal of time with Pugno.²²

²⁰ Nadia Boulanger, *Personal Agenda – B*, 30 April, 1910, *Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris, France.

²¹ Rosenstiel, 91. Rosenstiel contradicts herself here, citing the hotel encounter as Boulanger and d’Annunzio’s first meeting. However, thirty-five pages before this entry, Rosenstiel writes that d’Annunzio was a regular guest of Pugno’s at Gargenville when the Boulanger’s would have also been present. Rosenstiel, 56.

²² Spycket, 28.

While in Rosenstiel's account Boulanger was very apprehensive about meeting the illustrious poet d'Annunzio, in Spycket's version she seems to lack this nervousness. As Spycket writes, it would seem that Boulanger had met D'Annunzio not in his hotel room as Rosenstiel seems to believe, but at Pugno's home – a much more appropriate location for such an introduction to take place. Perhaps the explanation to this discrepancy rests in Spycket's rendition. If Boulanger's stand on moral issues was to change as she got older, and since Rosenstiel collected her own information about Boulanger's first encounter with d'Annunzio through an interview with Boulanger in her later years, perhaps Boulanger's recollection of events had been coloured by this change in attitude. I am more inclined to think that whether the initial discussion about the libretto took place in a hotel room, or at Pugno's house, Boulanger was more intrigued than frightened of Gabrielle D'Annunzio and that her ambitious side lead her to act in the interest of what she saw as a chance to make an important professional connection.

Another interesting connection between d'Annunzio's entourage and Boulanger comes from another quotation from Spycket. He writes that the first production of *La Città Mort* took place in 1898 at the *Théâtre de la Renaissance* and starred Sarah Bernhardt (1844-1923).²³ At the time of the play's premiere, this would have made Bernhardt 54 years of age. More than likely she would have played Anne in the production, being too old for the role of the young Bianca-Maria (or Hébé as the character is known in the opera version). Spycket goes on to say that Boulanger formed a

²³ Spycket, 26.

friendship with one of d'Annunzio's lovers, Elenora Duse (1859-1924)²⁴ This is interesting since, according to Bonnie S. Anderson and Judith P. Zinsser,

The [rival] actresses -[Bernhardt and Duse] – competed for roles and audiences and captured headlines not only because of their performances on stage but also because of their love affairs... Although [Eleonora Duse] was married to an actor, she founded a theater company with one lover and from 1897 to 1902 would only act in plays written by another lover, the poet Gabriele d'Annunzio.²⁵

Perhaps Duse's own commitment to d'Annunzio resulted in her also playing the part of Anne in his play *La Città Mort*. It may have been after attending one of these performances, in which they watched either Bernhardt or Duse perform the role of Anne, that Boulanger and Pungo were inspired to write their opera.

It is also possible that Boulanger's proposed friendship with Eleonora Duse came about because they both shared the common position of lover to a married artist. It is impossible to say conclusively, but perhaps Boulanger found in Duse a kindred spirit, someone who would sympathize with her own relationship with Pugno. No doubt however, the fame of d'Annunzio through his connections with these two actresses would have appealed to Boulanger's own professional ambitions.

Following the meeting on 30 April 1910 there is a flurry of activity surrounding the opera. On 12 May Boulanger notates a breakfast meeting with d'Annunzio.²⁶ The 14 May she writes, "Je pars pour Gargenville seule."²⁷ An afternoon appointment on the 15 of May is rescheduled for 16 May at the hotel Meurice, perhaps the hotel Rosenstiel was

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Bonnie S. Anderson and Judith P. Zinsser, *A History of Their Own*, vol. II (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 267-268.

²⁶ Boulanger, *Personal Agenda – B*, 12 May 1910, "Déj. Goloubef, d'Annunzio, Enesco. Hotel Meurice."

²⁷ Ibid., 14 May 1910. "I leave for Gargenville alone." It is difficult to tell if this entry is meant to emphasize that Boulanger is leaving without her family, without Pugno, or both.

speaking of in her biography.²⁸ The following day, 17 May, another breakfast appointment is written in, this time scheduled to take place close to Boulanger's home in the district of Clichy. D'Annunzio, Goloubef, Pugno, Mr. and Mrs. Heugel, Nadia, and Raïssa Boulanger were all in attendance. A curious note is added at the end of the entry stating that everyone left the party at 5:17 p.m. except for Boulanger's mother.²⁹ On 20 May Boulanger records that Pugno left for a meeting at 5:17 p.m. but received word from Heugel that d'Annunzio changed the meeting to a different time (Sunday) and a different place (the rue Bois).³⁰ No doubt this change in plans evoked a notable reaction from Pugno, since Boulanger felt it necessary to record the event in her diary. It is also possible that by this point in time, the poet's tendency to change the time and location of predetermined meetings was beginning to irritate the two musicians.

The 21 May entry offers the first conclusive example of Boulanger writing in her journal at two different times in one day. This is significant in that it shows that Boulanger wrote in her journal throughout the day, and that matters of varying importance, not just highlights, made it into her journal. In the first portion of the entry she writes « Vais prendre P. et allons de chez Pleyel, chez Heugel. » The rest of the entry

²⁸ Ibid. 16 May, « Rendez -vous d' Annunzio Pugno et moi Hotel Meurice à 4h. »

²⁹ Ibid., 17 May, « Déjeuner Clichy Goloubef, d' Annunzio, les Heugels et nous – Reprenons tous 5h 17 excepté maman. »

³⁰ Ibid., 20 Mai, « Pugno part à 5h 17 mais ayant reçu [nouvelles] d'Heugel annonçant que d'Annunzio change le rendez-vous de dimanche av. rue Bois. » Five days following this diary entry – May 25, 1910 – marks the day in which Annette Dieudonné, originally a pupil of Boulanger's, and later a life-long friend and confidant, came to first study with Nadia. For further information on the relationship between Boulanger and Dieudonné please see: Rosenstiel, pp.89, 191-92, 328-329, 396-398, 401-414; Spycketch, p. 28, 158-163; Monsaingeon, 56, 117. For detailed information regarding Dieudonné's care for Boulanger's estate following her death please see: Brooks, Jeanice "The Fonds Boulanger at the *Bibliothèque Nationale* " *Notes* (June 1995): 1227-1237. Conspicuously, Kendall makes no significant mention of Annette Dieudonné in his biography.

reads. « Il me reconnaît – je [dit] chez Vidal. »³¹ It is apparent that the first part of the entry was made as Boulanger was leaving to meet with Pugno in order to attend another business outing with the publishers Heugel and Pleyel. The second part of the entry, written later that day, is an amusing note that Boulanger wrote expressing her excitement over having been recognized by Pleyel.

The following entry in Boulanger's diary from 22 May 1910 reveals the date of the next significant occurrence in the opera's chronology. It reads: « Je reprends 9h 25. Pugno rentre à 2h par Mauter – écrivons les 1^{ères} notes de la Ville Morte. »³² Because of this entry it is possible to state conclusively that in the country town of Gargenville, on May 22, 1910, both Nadia Boulanger and Raoul Pugno sat down and began writing the music for *La Ville Morte* a little after two o'clock in the afternoon. A picture, published by Rosenstiel, portrays Pugno and Boulanger working on the opera in the former's Paris studio in 1910. No doubt this photographic image is a visual representation of the process which began shortly following the event Boulanger describes on May 22, 1910.³⁴ It is probable that the music they began writing consisted of thematic material to be used throughout the opera. The progression of musical elements, and Pugno and Boulanger's compositional process will be commented on later in this thesis when both the working libretto and the extant musical scores are considered.

³¹ Boulanger, *Personal Agenda – B*, 21 May 1910 “Going to pick up Pugno; going from Pleyel's to Heugel's.” Second part: “He remembered me – I told [them (Pugno?) at] Vidal's.”

³² Boulanger, *Personal Agenda – B*, 22 May 1910. “I returned at 9:25. Pugno was brought home by Mauter at 2:00 – We wrote the first notes of *La Ville Morte*.”

³⁴ Rosenstiel, 92.

The choice of Gargenville as a location for compositional activity was significant beyond the two composers' preference to write there during the summer.³⁵ Liana Borghi comments on the importance, especially for female writers, to escape a conventional atmosphere. She writes:

Although exile is not just a metaphor for a condition of the soul, or a logistic preference, but most often a disabling, enforced experience of loss and dislocation, women more often than men needed to get away from places where their creativity was kept in check by issues of propriety and social stability, or just by an uncongenial environment.³⁶

The restrictions of which Borghi speaks in this passage would have been equally true for Boulanger. While Borghi continues to show how Paris was a mecca for those artistic women wishing to free themselves from strictures placed upon them in their homeland,³⁷ what she fails to note is that this modicum of freedom was extended to those working on all subjects except for music. The gender biases which continued to exist in field of musical composition must have felt particularly stifling to Boulanger as she saw women in other artistic fields allotted increasingly more opportunities and freedoms not accessible to her. Undoubtedly traveling to Gargenville released this pressure and aided in freeing her energy for more creative endeavours.

³⁵ For a detailed description of the summer living arrangement for Boulanger and Pugno please see: Spycket, 18; and Rosenstiel, 56-57.

³⁶ Liana Borghi, "Space and Women's Culture," in *Thinking Differently*, eds. Gabrielle Griffin and Rosi Braidotti (London: Zed Books, 2002), 90.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 90-92. Borghi also mentions that Paris acquiesced female musicians artistic freedom and approval in salon environments, but that "modernists disapproved of salons as old-fashioned," 90. Therefore, in order for Boulanger to acquire approval from the burgeoning artistic community, she would have had to make a bolder statement of independence than what she was apparently comfortable with making. In her book *Gender and the Musical Canon* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 78, Marcia Citron also emphasizes the importance of networking and support for female musicians during this period in time. Perhaps this original oversight of Boulanger's contributed to her enthusiastic participation in the salon of the Princess de Polignac later on in life. For more information on Boulanger and Winnaretta Singer please see: Sylvia Kahan, *Music's Modern Muse: A Life of Winnaretta Singer Princesse de Polignac* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2003); Jeanice Brooks, "Noble et Grande servante de la musique: Telling the Story of Nadia Boulanger's Conducting Career," *The Journal of Musicology* 24 (1996): 92-116; and Jeanice Brooks, "Nadia Boulanger and the Salon of the Princesse de Polignac," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 46 (1993): 415-68.

The following day, 23 May 1910, Boulanger records another breakfast meeting with Heugel, d'Annunzio, Goloubef, Pugno, the Boulangers and, this time, her organ teacher Louis Vierne in attendance.³⁸ No doubt an announcement was made at this gathering that the composition of *La Ville Morte* had commenced. A few days later, on May 26, an additional entry is made into the agenda that is quite noteworthy.³⁹ In this account, Boulanger describes being called to a meeting at Pugno's home. There she finds Reni Blum, most likely a legal official, who is finding d'Annunzio uncooperative in establishing a contract. This entry serves as additional proof of the possibly strained relationship which Boulanger and Pugno were experiencing with the librettist.

The compositional process could not have been all-encompassing to the duo at this time as there is an entry on 28 May, 1910 that describes a day which Pugno and Boulanger spent running errands and visiting with a friend.⁴⁰ Beyond the entry of May 28 there is no further mention of the opera within this journal. Boulanger does write about Pugno returning from a trip on 9 June 1910, probably a concert tour, the preparation for and performance of which would have made it difficult for the pair to devote a significant amount of time to composition.⁴¹

The entry of June 9, in addition to revealing a possible reason for the abeyance in Pugno and Boulanger's compositional activity, is also noteworthy for what it reveals of the relationship between Pugno and Boulanger. Firstly, it seems strange that Boulanger

³⁸ Boulanger, *Personal Agenda – B*, 23 May, « Déjeuner Heugel, d'Annunzio, Goloubef, Pugno, Vierne, et nous. »

³⁹ Ibid. 26 May, « À midi ½ vais rue de Clichy appelée par Pugno – nous trouvons avec Reni Blum qui s'occuper pour d'Annunzio du côté « traité » difficultés!! Rendez-vous Heugel avec Blum. »

⁴⁰ Ibid., 28 May, « Partons P. et moi à midi 28 Gargenville... Pugno va chez le dentiste – nous retrouvons chez Mme de Meau pour où il gorge quelques morceaux – elle chante – et moi aussi – les heures claires. Reprenons 6h 28. »

⁴¹ Ibid., 9 June, « J'y vais à 4h retrouve P. très fatigué de son voyage – très préoccupé mais très gentil. »

would be the one to meet Pugno upon his return. It is also interesting to note the way in which Boulanger describes Pugno in her journal - *très préoccupé mais très gentil* – certainly implying a level of unexpected, unprecedented affection on the part of the pupil towards her teacher. Further on that day she writes that Pugno was quite upset with her for deciding to leave him in order to attend the performance of a work by Schmitt.⁴² This agitation on the part of Pugno is also quite conspicuous, implying once again an unexpected level of intimacy on the part of the two musicians. This entry is possibly further evidence to support the claim that Pugno and Boulanger were indeed lovers. This topic will be returned to further on in this chapter following the presentation of more evidence.⁴³

There are no subsequent entries of interest in relation to the opera contained in this journal from 1910. It is possible that the other diaries from this time period compose a portion of the sealed information held by the *Bibliothèque Nationale* not available for public use until 2009. It is also possible that Boulanger simply did not retain the daily agendas from the remainder of this decade. The extant personal documents from this part of her life are quite sparse. For whatever reason, the discovery of more documentation such as this would be tremendously helpful in clarifying the compositional process of the opera. In order to continue with a reconstruction of the genesis of the remainder of the opera, correspondence, biographical writings, and other personal materials of Nadia Boulanger's will be used.

⁴² Ibid. « Je part à 10h pour aller aux Indépendants entendre le Psaume de Schmitt. Pugno n'est pas très content mais j'ai entendu une magnifique œuvre! »

⁴³ It should also be mentioned that several days following the entry in question, shortly after 25 June, was the day that Boulanger first met Igor Stravinsky who would prove to be of pivotal importance to her life from then on. For an account of this event please see: Rosenstiel, 90-91; Spycket, 28; and Kendall, 22-23. For more information on the influence of Stravinsky on Boulanger's teaching practice please see: Carole Jean Harris, "The French Connection: The Neoclassical Influence of Stravinsky, Through Boulanger, on the Music of Copland, Talma, and Piston" (Ph. D. diss., University of New York at Buffalo, 2002.)

According to Spycket, it was at this time, late in the summer of 1910, that d'Annunzio told Boulanger that his next play would be set to music by Roger Ducasse. Spycket writes:

At the end of the summer of 1910, when the music of the first act was well under way, d'Annunzio confided to Nadia that it was his intention to ask Roger Ducasse to provide 'the music for the songs, choruses, and dances for the *Martyre de Saint-Sébastien*. ' But when the production had its premiere the following year the music was by Debussy, who had composed it in only three months (one of the conditions of a commission from the Ballets Russes that must have scared off Ducasse.)"⁴⁴

This arrangement between d'Annunzio and Ducasse was probably a compromise on the part of the playwright and composer because of an error which had occurred earlier between the two. According to a letter Jacques Depaulis found written by Roger Ducasse to a Mme Cruppi, Ducasse had begun composing his own music for *La Ville Morte* in 1909, at which time, Depaulis affirms that d'Annunzio had just engaged himself to do the project with Pugno and Boulanger instead.⁴⁵ Perhaps *Saint Sébastien* was d'Annunzio's way of apologizing to Ducasse for taking the opportunity of composing *La Ville Morte* away from him. It is interesting to note that this second project which the two attempted also never reached completion. It would be interesting to see if any evidence exists that would prove that Pugno and Boulanger had known about d'Annunzio's mistake. Perhaps the two never found out; there is no extant evidence to show that they did. It is conspicuous however that, for whatever reason, d'Annunzio felt it important to let Boulanger know that Ducasse was working on this subsequent project.

⁴⁴ Spycket, 28.

⁴⁵ Jacques Depaulis, *Lettres à Nadia Boulanger/Roger Ducasse*, (Sprimont, Belgium: Mardaga, 1999), 33. « Dans une lettre à Madame Cruppi, que l'on peut dater d'août 1909, il raconte qu'il commence à mettre en musique *La Ville Morte* de Gabriele d'Annunzio. Il ignore donc à cette époque que le célèbre poète italien vient de s'entendre avec Raoul Pugno et Nadia Boulanger [sic] pour qu'ils écrivent cette partition. »

The last remaining evidence of the compositional activity of Boulanger and Pugno from 1910 comes from two dispatches sent by Boulanger on September 6, 1910 in the form of a telegram and a letter.⁴⁶

The most intriguing aspect of the telegram is the urgent nature of Boulanger's message. She describes the critical need for a meeting of the three artists, stating that 'definitive details' are not being satisfactorily communicated via correspondence. The lack of efficacy Boulanger and Pugno encountered in their attempt to discuss nuances with d'Annunzio through letters probably precipitated this meeting. The reason for Boulanger and Pugno's impatience likely stems from the fact that they had already released an interview with the press stating that they intended to complete their opera in two years.⁴⁷

The second piece of correspondence,⁴⁸ also written by Boulanger to d'Annunzio, speaks of the passionate intensity with which she and Pugno approached the composition of *La Ville Morte*. In it, Boulanger thanks d'Annunzio for letting she and Pugno put his words to music and extensively flatters the poet for his libretto. This letter reveals Boulanger's nascent passion for what she appears to consider an enormous compositional responsibility. Both the sobriety and the ardour with which Boulanger writes reveal the significance she attributed to the composition of *La Ville Morte*.

In the fifth paragraph of this relatively long letter, Boulanger mentions the telegram that she sent d'Annunzio that morning. She hints that the note may have annoyed d'Annunzio and begs him not to summarily dismiss it. Further on in the letter

⁴⁶ Doda Conrad, *Grandeur et Mystère d'Un Mythe: Souvenirs de quarante-quatre ans d'amitié avec Nadia Boulanger*, (Paris : Buchet/Chastel, 1995), 33. Please see appendix D for a complete translation.

⁴⁷ 28 May, *Le Ménestrel*, p. 174 as cited by Van der Wel, 48. When reading articles about Boulanger published in *Le Ménestrel* it is important to keep in mind that the journal was actually owned by Heugel and therefore it would have been in his best interest to produce good press regarding his composers. The connection between Heugel and *Le Ménestrel* was found in: Jann Pasler, "'Pelléas' and Power: Forces behind the Reception of Debussy's Opera" *19th-Century Music* 3 (1987): 256.

⁴⁸ Conrad, 34. Also cited by Potter, "Ville Morte," 400. For a complete translation please see appendix E.

she also criticizes her own writing ability in deference to the person who would be reading her words. Are these efforts on the part of Boulanger done out of fear that she might have offended the egotistical poet with her messages? Was she trying to flatter d'Annunzio in order to get him to work faster? Or was d'Annunzio being so difficult in providing that which the musicians needed that Boulanger felt obliged to mollify the poet in order to motivate him to work faster⁴⁹?

This correspondence also provokes other questions about the behaviour of these three artists. It is very significant that Boulanger was the principal contact with d'Annunzio instead of Pugno. While it is not difficult to postulate reasons as to why Boulanger sent these messages -- perhaps she had easier access to the telegram office, or perhaps Pugno was too busy -- it would still have been more appropriate for the male Pugno, a friend of the playwright and more senior composer, to be the one sending urgent information to d'Annunzio⁵⁰. However, all extant letters and correspondence attributable to the creation of *La Ville Morte* were written by Boulanger.

Perhaps Pugno felt that involving Boulanger in correspondence was a way of incorporating her further into the opera's production, or perhaps the reason that Boulanger was the only person to write to d'Annunzio was because these two artists had a preferred rapport to that of Pugno and the playwright. The letter of 6 September hints at the possibility that dealing with d'Annunzio was a delicate matter, perhaps something which Boulanger was better suited to than Pugno. Further evidence will be presented later

⁴⁹ In an interview later on in life with Bruno Monsaïgeon, Boulanger describes d'Annunzio as "this audacious, reckless man" Monsaïgeon, 100. Perhaps this is further evidence of d'Annunzio's multifaceted demeanor.

⁵⁰ Potter, "Ville Morte," 400-401.

in this chapter to support the suggestion that the relationship of Pugno and d'Annunzio was strained, and perhaps this was why Boulanger was the one writing to the poet.

One further factor which may have contributed to this state of events is that Pugno felt it unnecessary to correspond with the librettist as much as Boulanger. *La Ville Morte* was a much more important project for Boulanger's career than for Pugno's, and there is a sense that Pugno considered this opera a much more trivial matter than the younger musician. Perhaps Boulanger took it upon herself to maintain contact with the artist. This action would highlight her ambitious desires as a composer. It is possible that she wanted to maintain a relationship with d'Annunzio independent of Pugno so that she would be able to pursue future projects without relying on Pugno's accompaniment to make that possible. For whatever reason, the extant correspondence concerning *La Ville Morte* was only written between Boulanger and d'Annunzio, making Pugno's absence rather conspicuous.

Beyond these two letters, there is no further evidence of compositional activity for the year 1910. With the beginning of the school year, Boulanger would have been forced to depart from Gargenville and the possibility of constant contact with Pugno that made the opera's composition possible there. Since it is generally accepted that the majority of the opera's composition took place during the summer months in Gargenville,⁵¹ Autumn would have marked the beginning of a sizable hiatus for the pair until the following May,

⁵¹ Potter, "Sister Composers," 553; idem "Nadia Boulanger's and Raoul Pugno's *La Ville Morte*," 400. For Rosenstiel's account of the compositional activity which occurred at Gargenville please see Rosenstiel, 56-60, 98-100 and 160-164.

although efforts would have continued to occur throughout the year towards the opera's development, as the initial diary from 1910 shows.⁵²

1911

The evidence of compositional activity from 1911 is much less extensive than that of the previous year. Without the existence of any further daily agendas by Boulanger, there are far fewer pieces of the puzzle that can be put together. Extant for this year are two letters written to d'Annunzio from Boulanger, and an interview from 1912, cited by Rosenstiel, which actually reveals information about 1911. While the extent of the information is much smaller, it is still possible to piece together significant events from the year 1911.

In an interview written by Ward Stephens for a Boston magazine entitled *The Musician* "When asked about recent activities, Pugno replied, 'This summer I am unusually busy writing an opera...I am now working on the second act, the first act I finished last summer.'"⁵³ This interview reveals that 1911 was indeed the point in time that the first act was completed. It is interesting that Boulanger and Pugno chose to work in chronological order, beginning with Act 1. The compositional process will be discussed further in chapter 5 of this thesis.

Returning again to the interview, it is suspect that in the process of the entire discussion Pugno mentions many musicians, including Chopin, Richard Strauss, and Emil Sauer, yet at no time mentions Boulanger and her role in the creation of *La Ville Morte*.⁵⁴ Rosenstiel comments on this suggesting that Pugno may have wanted to keep

⁵² Boulanger, *Personal Agenda – A*, 1910. This diary, as discussed earlier, shows extensively that the compositional activity of *La Ville Morte* was not at all limited to the summer months of May - October.

⁵³ Rosenstiel, 99.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 100.

all the credit for the opera for himself, or he may not have wanted to entertain a long explanation of his relationship with Boulanger to the American reporter.⁵⁵ It is more than likely that this is a further instance of Boulanger's role being ignored by her male counterpart who viewed it as trivial, and disposable. There ended up being no mention of Boulanger in the American's publication and no credit was given to her for any involvement in the opera's creation.

Rosenstiel believes that Boulanger never found out about the existence of the interview and that was the reason for her continued work with Pugno.⁵⁶ I am more inclined to think that if Boulanger did know of this interview and Pugno's oversight, she could have done nothing about it anyway. She needed Pugno's endorsement, at least in order to complete this opera; there would have been no way for her to break out and have a career of her own at this point in time. As was discussed earlier, without a back-up support network, Boulanger was helpless to pursue her goal as a professional composer without the aid of Pugno. The Stephens interview is further evidence that Pugno may not have viewed Boulanger's role in the opera's composition as anything more than novel and certainly didn't think her as intrinsic to the process as she would prove to be.

Further information about the development of the opera comes from two letters written from Boulanger to d'Annunzio. The first letter is undated, however, based on the third sentence, it can be placed as being written before May 1911.⁵⁸ Once again, it is evident that Boulanger is conducting correspondence on behalf of both musicians, which, as mentioned previously, is conspicuous. Also, in this letter Boulanger mentions that she

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Conrad, 34. For a complete translation please see appendix F.

and Pugno had met to discuss the premiere of *Saint Sebastien*. For this reason, it is likely that they were continuing to discuss parts of *La Ville Morte* during the year. There is no mention of their specific compositional activity in this letter which is perhaps a sign that nothing of significance had occurred since the last correspondence between d'Annunzio and the musicians.

The next letter from Boulanger to the poet is from 2 July 1911.⁵⁹ It is in the fourth to last paragraph of this letter that Boulanger reveals that the first and second acts of the opera are 'virtually finished' and that the pair has begun work on sketching Act III. This letter stands in direct conflict with Pugno's account that in 1911 only the first act was finished and that he and Boulanger did not begin work on the second act until the summer of 1912. Adding weight to Boulanger's account is that parts of the autograph libretto for Act IV contain dates from July 1912. Because the pair was working through the opera in numerical order, it would seem nearly impossible that Pugno and Boulanger would get through both Acts II and III during the summer of 1912 prior to July.

A more plausible account is that during the interview of 1912, Pugno was more interested in presenting the interviewer with a particular image of himself than with providing accurate details regarding the opera. Once again it is questionable whether Pugno took the creation of *La Ville Morte* as seriously as Boulanger. While for Boulanger this opera was a pivotal project for her career, and therefore details and milestones would mean a great deal to her, for Pugno this was an additional task which would have little consequence for his livelihood, and no doubt did not interest him nearly as much as the younger musician.

⁵⁹ Conrad, 35. Caroline Potter also provides a date for this letter in her article "*La Ville Morte*," 400. For a complete translation please see appendix G.

Also of interest in this 2 July letter is the seeming intimacy with which Boulanger addresses d'Annunzio. While she does put to rest questions of whether she and d'Annunzio may have been lovers by writing: 'you do not know me well, dear Sir,' the personal nature of the letter is still conspicuous. Boulanger herself acknowledges this fact writing: 'you do not know me well, dear Sir, and thus will maybe find it strange, this long useless letter – but to excuse myself, perhaps you will allow me to explain my actions.' Doda Conrad comments on this, attributing Boulanger's actions to her precocious nature;⁶⁰ however, this writing reveals more than just that.

Boulanger confides in d'Annunzio a great deal about her frustrations as a female and as an artist. Most poignant is the moment in the letter when Boulanger states her past experience with expressing ambition and passion, and the condescending, dissatisfying response she receives from men. Here is explicit evidence, for the first time, that Boulanger was frustrated by the gap which rested between her wanting to express who she really was, and being forced to comply with what she was expected to be. Here also is evidence that Boulanger learned early in her professional career that in order to be successful, she needed to moderate her own behaviour to satisfy expectations of femininity, only rarely divulging her true self. It is noteworthy that she would decide to express these feelings to d'Annunzio. Why she felt comfortable conveying them to him, while beyond the scope of this particular work, would be an interesting study in and of itself.

This letter is the last of the extant evidence for the year 1911. While not divulging many details about the actual compositional process of Boulanger and Pugno it is

⁶⁰ Conrad, 35.

possible to state that during this year the pair was quite active, finishing two acts and beginning work on a third.

1912

As previously stated, there are two points in Act IV of the working libretto at which Boulanger wrote the date 18 July 1912.⁶¹ Because of the editorial nature of the surrounding markings in the libretto, the 18 July date suggests the point at which the edits to this part of the text were started. This would mean that Boulanger and Pugno had moved on to the final act by 1912.

A letter written by Boulanger to d'Annunzio, dated 28 July 1912, clarifies what was happening at this time in the opera's creation.⁶² At the beginning of the letter Boulanger implores d'Annunzio to hurry with the corrections he is to provide for the third act, the part which she refers to as, "the corner stone of *La Ville Morte*."⁶³ Doda Conrad comments that Boulanger's frustration is evident in the many uncharacteristic erasures and corrections present in this letter. Her script emphasizes the impatience of the two composers and speaks to the ardour of their compositional activity.⁶⁴ Boulanger writes, "now the fever to write, which we possess so entirely, has the need to know no interruptions."⁶⁵ It would appear, according to this letter, that the piece was holding first priority for both composers at this point in time and the necessary cajoling required to hasten d'Annunzio along must have been an added aggravation for Pugno and Boulanger.

⁶¹ Nadia Boulanger and Raoul Pugno, *La Ville Morte Autograph Libretto*, Book C, ca. 1909 (?) *Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris, France, 215-216.

⁶² Conrad, 36. For a complete translation please see appendix H.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, first paragraph, appendix H.

⁶⁴ Conrad, 38.

⁶⁵ Conrad, 36, First paragraph, appendix H.

A subsequent letter written by Pugno in the same year encourages Henri Cain to “come to Gargenville and hear this newly-composed music, preferably at a time when the Heugels and D’Annunzio could also be present.”⁶⁶ In this reference it would appear that Pugno was quite proud of *La Ville Morte* and was willing to brag about it to others. Further in the letter Pugno writes, “Nadia and I are going back to work at the task without a rest...without a single hour lost - and that pace continues until 15 October.”⁶⁷ This reference is the first in which Pugno actually acknowledges Boulanger’s involvement with the opera. It is interesting to note that when he does finally mention her contribution, his gesture lacks condescension or reductionary treatment, perhaps because, as Rosenstiel writes, this letter was written to a friend, not a member of the press.⁶⁸ Another reason for Pugno’s honesty could have been because he was in the process of convincing Cain to let him use one of his works for their next project.⁶⁹ Pugno’s honesty was also a means by which to prolong both his and Boulanger’s careers.

There is one final piece of correspondence for the year of 1912 -- a short letter dating from 7 December.⁷⁰ In this note Boulanger lets d’Annunzio know that she is “starting out alone...since Pugno cannot be closer.”⁷¹ She does not clarify where she is going, or why she is leaving unattended at such an early hour, but it would seem that she was used to being accompanied on her outings by Pugno. Why she feels it necessary to inform d’Annunzio of this information is unclear. Once again, this letter serves as an

⁶⁶ Rosenstiel, 98-99.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Rosenstiel, 99.

⁷⁰ Conrad, 40. For a complete translation please see appendix I.

⁷¹ Ibid.

example of how unconventional the relationships between Pugno, Boulanger, and d'Annunzio were.

1913

It can be assumed that the summer of 1912 marked the completion of *La Ville Morte* for in January of 1913 the Paris periodical announced

that the Pugno-Boulanger composition team, having finished their opera, *La Ville Morte*, had already decided on their next venture for the lyric stage, an adaptation of *La Rédemption de Colin Muset*, with a libretto by two of the most famous librettists of the day, Maurice Léon and Henri Cain.⁷²

This announcement is significant. Not only had Boulanger and Pugno just finished producing an opera, but they had decided to complete another one. This publication confirms that in 1913 Boulanger was pursuing a career as a composer, particularly of dramatic music.

Further press was also given to Boulanger that winter, although not all of it flattering. In an article written by Pugno in January of that year for a magazine entitled *Excelsior* he expresses his own opinion on the issues surrounding Boulanger's success and gender. He writes:

Three times, the drum was banged by the same student: Nadia Boulanger. I'm not sure that we men of the jury were very proud to see a *gamine* who was clearly first in everything, at the expense of her comrades of the masculine sex... without arrogance, without weakness, with great simplicity, but also with real authority. But what then is left for the poor men? The triangle or the kettledrum?⁷³

I disagree with Rosenstiel that this article represents Pugno's endorsement of Boulanger's ambitions as conductor and professional musician. This quote from Pugno shows both his pride in Boulanger, but also his own uneasiness with her behaviour. He too remains

⁷² Rosenstiel, 103.

⁷³ Rosenstiel, 102.

uncertain as to whether Boulanger should be commended for her actions, or considered a threat to her male colleagues. Instead of supporting Boulanger in this publication, Pugno makes a noncommittal statement on the subject, submitting the issue to someone else's judgement. As Anderson and Zinsser write, "the entry of women into a trade was a signal that the trade was being downgraded."⁷⁴ For Pugno to have completely endorsed Boulanger would have been for him to admit that the field of composition was indeed depreciating in quality.

Marcia Citron comments further about the fear men had of women's success as composers citing Christine Battersby's words: "Men would not have insisted that creativity was a male prerogative unless women created -- and unless men were afraid that women's creations would be taken seriously."⁷⁵ Citron elaborates on this saying:

Masculizing the arts, which includes the obvious strategy of keeping women out, can lessen the threat of [the association with effeminacy]. It has been suggested, for example, that modernism arose as a means of countering the feminization of literature and music... One outcome of this male dilemma was the formation of an aesthetic intended to exclude women, namely modernism.⁷⁶

Pugno would have been caught in the middle of trying to satisfy two different aesthetic ideologies by writing this article. On the one hand, this article offered him the opportunity to endorse Boulanger's talent and on the other, it obligated him to reinforce the traditional musical conventions built around gender. Rather than make a conclusive statement either way he side-steps the issue and avoids pronouncing judgement. It is impossible to say if Boulanger was aware of this publication or what her own reaction to it was, but it is possible to say that as the opera neared production, the press -- whether

⁷⁴ Anderson and Zinsser, 249.

⁷⁵ Citron, 50.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

good or bad -- Boulanger received would have only helped to promote her burgeoning career.

The next piece of evidence regarding the opera's development comes from a letter written 31 January 1913 to Boulanger from the publisher Heugel.⁷⁷ This letter is a complete description of a meeting between Heugel and the Directors of the *Opéra Comique*. This letter describes that, as of his meeting, the Directors of the opera house were quite pleased with the work of Pugno and Boulanger, auditions were being held at 42 avenue Lubeau, and the musicians Muratore and Marcoux had been engaged to perform roles. Also discernable from this letter is that the opera is completed and that those involved in its production are very enthusiastic about its pending performance.

Once again it should be noted that it is odd that this correspondence would have been sent to Boulanger and not to Pugno. Perhaps this letter was a way of consoling Boulanger about the events of the meeting since she was not permitted to attend. This is the first insight offered as to the actual production process and it would appear that the *Opéra Comique* was only too happy to see the project to completion.

In the summer of 1913, Raoul Pugno discovered that his health was failing and he and Boulanger went on a tour of European spas to try and soothe his ailing kidneys.⁷⁸ Once again this behaviour would have been exceptionally scandalous, considering that Boulanger went with him unescorted.⁷⁹ Rosenstiel does not mention whether Pugno's wife was with the pair, but there is mention that Lili Boulanger remained in Paris,

⁷⁷ Maurice Heugel, Paris to Nadia Boulanger, Paris, 31 January 1913, *Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris France. At this time the transcription and subsequent translation of this document is not possible in its entirety.

⁷⁸ Rosenstiel, 113.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

accompanied by Raïssa Boulanger⁸⁰ and therefore Nadia would have been without an escort. Perhaps Boulanger's recognition of Pugno's failing health is what prompted her to engage in the search for another publisher, activity revealed by the next correspondence discovered contemporaneous to the production of the opera.

On 3 September, 1913 another letter can be found in the *fond Boulanger* at the *Bibliothèque Nationale* with regards to Boulanger's compositional career.⁸¹ This is a letter from Audre Lorde asking Boulanger to telephone him as he has news for her which he feels would interest her immensely. This letter is especially interesting when paired with a second letter, also from Audre Lorde, which is undated but most likely contemporaneous to the previous letter and probably the first of the two to have been sent.⁸² This piece of paper would appear to be the latter part of a note to Boulanger. In it Lourde states that he is very interested in Boulanger's project but unfortunately it is only his editor, M. Ricadi, who is able to make any decisions. Could this be evidence that Boulanger was searching for another publisher for her future works? Is this also evidence to show that she was attempting to move beyond the protection of Pugno? These two letters in combination not only suggest that she was looking, but, judging by the excited nature of the 3 September document, she was successful, at least in part, of securing support for a further project.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Audre Lorde, Paris to Nadia Boulanger, Paris, 9 March 1913, *Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris, France. See appendix J for full translation.

⁸² Audre Lorde, Paris to Nadia Boulanger, Undated, *Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris, France. This letter was given no date from the *Bibliothèque Nationale*. However, because there is no further correspondence in the *fond* from Audre Lorde, I am suggesting a contemporaneous date and connection between the letters based upon subject material. See appendix K for full translation.

These actions suggest that Boulanger was taking the final step towards professionalism. Marcia Citron speaks to the importance of this in a musician's career writing:

Professionalism has generally been considered a goal of a nurtured and practicing creativity in music. It has functioned as a powerful sign of success... To be a professional composer is to be taken seriously in one's own time and possibly in the future. It involves reputation, authority, and the circulation of a name within a culture.⁸³

Following the successful creation, publication, and production of *La Ville Morte*, Boulanger was probably envisioning herself as a professional. She had created for herself a reputation, Pugno himself had said she possessed authority as a musician, and, as the opera's production grew closer and closer to completion, her name was being circulated by the media. It is possible to suggest that in Boulanger's eyes she had successfully launched her career as a professional musician and the evidence showing she was searching for an additional publisher adds to this image.

The happiness and success which Boulanger achieved at the end of the summer of 1913 would stand as the zenith of her compositional career. Her first major composition was completed and had entered production, she had ensured its publication and the publication of several of her songs,⁸⁴ and she was attempting to secure the support of a publisher of her own. She was becoming an accomplished professional at the age of twenty-seven. The subsequent events of the winter of 1914 and WWI would prove to completely undo all of these efforts on her part.

⁸³ Citron, 80.

⁸⁴ Potter, "Sister Composers," 547.

At the end of 1913, probably due to financial difficulties accrued from necessary kidney surgery, Pugno decided to pursue a concert tour with Boulanger to Russia.⁸⁵ Unfortunately, Pugno's weak physical state could not withstand the harshness of the Russian winter and he died after a sustained fever on 3 January 1914.⁸⁶ With the death of Pugno, Boulanger's life was altered completely.

Without Pugno's presence, the part which Boulanger played in the production of the opera was reduced to nothing. Rosenstiel blames this partially on the words of the music critic Mauclair, accusing him of being the first and the most arduous to assert that Boulanger's role in her and Pugno's compositional relationship was minimal.⁸⁷ She quotes him as saying, "Pugno was the primary composer, Boulanger simply a favoured pupil –completely nurtured by Pugno."⁸⁸ Repeatedly he wrote such things as: Boulanger's gifts were merely "formed by Pugno with an infinitely affectionate solicitude,"⁸⁹ and "Alas! She who was his *collaboratrice* can only cry more bitterly hearing the bravos, dreaming of the day of full and proud joy that she might have known in the company of her living master and friend."⁹⁰ Clearly the music critics believed that without the presence of Pugno, Boulanger's compositional career was finished.

This is not to say, however, that plans to produce *La Ville Morte* were completely abandoned. According to Rosenstiel,

By the end of March Nadia had already seen Gheusi, the new director of the *Opéra Comique*. She played the piano reduction of the score for him and sang...all the vocal parts. Claire Croiza (slated to play a principal) and

⁸⁵ For a complete description of Boulanger and Pugno's last concert tour to Russia please see: Rosenstiel, 115-117; Spycket, 34-42; Kendal, 11-12; Potter "La Ville Morte," 401; and Potter, "Sister Composers," 547.

⁸⁶ Rosenstiel, 118.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 119.

Paul Vidal were there. Gheusi promptly scheduled the première of *La Ville Morte* for November 1914.⁹¹

Despite this involvement and effort on the part of Boulanger, however, her participation in the production became less and less welcome. This is evidenced by a telegram sent to d'Annunzio by Boulanger in 1914.⁹²

In this telegram, Boulanger speaks of a letter she received from Gheusi stating that there were not sufficient documents to mount *La Ville Morte* and that d'Annunzio would have to aid in making decisions regarding sets and posters, or else the production could not go on. This telegram is a desperate plea on the part of Boulanger to the poet to help with the project. She writes that seeing the opera mounted means a great deal to her personally and that Gheusi is quite adamant that it be d'Annunzio who approve of all the details. No doubt being denied the possibility to provide her own creative input for a project which she had been such a large part of envisioning was quite frustrating for Boulanger. One can only imagine the desperation she must have felt being forced to remove herself from the creative process to such an extent.

It is probably this exchange that Rosenstiel is commenting on when she writes,

Sets and Posters were ordered [for *La Ville Morte*], the designs approved by D'Annunzio, rather than Nadia. The poet was rather off hand in his treatment of her, even to the point of completely forgetting a dinner engagement. He wrote her afterward, explaining that he had accidentally made a simultaneous date with Debussy... Excitement about the upcoming première of "Pugno's opera" mounted; chorus rehearsals were announced and a new tenor, M. Altchewsky, was engaged to sing a principal role.⁹³

Once again this excerpt shows evidence of the sexism which Boulanger had to face without the protection of Pugno. Again the poet's flippancy is emphasized in the way he

⁹¹ Ibid., 121.

⁹² Conrad, 41. See appendix L for a complete translation.

⁹³ Rosenstiel, 121.

brushes off Boulanger to meet with Debussy instead of her. To Boulanger, a person who so valued etiquette and respect, and who had reached such an emotionally fulfilling high point just shortly before, this must have been a frustrating and saddening time.

Further evidence of Boulanger's activities in 1914 come from an accounting ledger in which she notated her family's daily expenses. According to the ledger, on March 5, 1914 she purchased paper with which to copy out "poème Ville Morte"⁹⁴ The last edits made to the proofs of the Piano/Vocal score are dated May 29, 1914. Perhaps Boulanger bought this paper to write out the final libretto that had been decided upon while she still had access to the proofs.

In the same ledger, on 17 June 1914, Boulanger received the first and only payment documented in the ledger for *La Ville Morte* from Heugel.⁹⁵ The payment amounted to 2000 francs.⁹⁶ It is interesting to note that Boulanger actually received this payment as an advance, a fact which she notes further on in the ledger, for money that she was supposed to have been paid the following month.⁹⁷

The production efforts for *La Ville Morte* continued and Rosenstiel writes that by 1914 "the cast of *La Ville Morte* was complete [and] chorus rehearsals were scheduled to begin again on 17 August."⁹⁸ This schedule soon had to be changed however as in that same month, Gheusi, along with many other musicians, was mobilized to serve in the French army, and the *Opéra Comique* ceased performing anything until the war was over.⁹⁹ The opera house did produce a publication to announce that their 1916-1917

⁹⁴ Nadia Boulanger, *Accounting Ledger*, 5 March 1914, *Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris, France.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, June 17.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ Boulanger, *Ledger*, 1914, final page, verso.

⁹⁸ Rosenstiel, 125.

⁹⁹ Rosenstiel, 126.

season would include performances of *La Ville Morte* -- a publication in which Boulanger even received equal billing -- however, these performances never came to fruition.¹⁰⁰ In 1918 Gheusi left the *Opéra Comique* and the opera was never to be performed.¹⁰¹

According to Caroline Potter, Boulanger re-worked the manuscript for Act I of *La Ville Morte* dating 6 September 1923. She suggests that her motivation for doing so was that, as Rosenstiel writes, "Albert Carré, the director of the *Opéra Comique*, at d'Annunzio's suggestion, had looked up the score for *La Ville Morte*, which had been lying in the back of a file drawer since the war."¹⁰² However, Carré did not "follow through [on] his plan to produce *La Ville Morte* in the 1923-24 season of the *Opéra Comique*."¹⁰³ According to Potter, Leonard Bernstein also took interest in performing the opera and Boulanger sent him a copy of the score.¹⁰⁴ For this reason it is assumed that the orchestral score for the opera is complete, although no copy of it has ever been found. In keeping with the opera's unfortunate legacy, Bernstein never actually performed the *La Ville Morte*.¹⁰⁵

Once Boulanger's hopes for the production of the opera dissolved, her compositional output abruptly diminished. The final compositions she wrote "are a set of four songs to texts by Camille Maucliar, dating from 1922"¹⁰⁶ with little activity taking place in between the opera and it. Oddly enough, Boulanger chose for her text, the words

¹⁰⁰ Spycket, 42. The advertisement is quoted as follows: "The Directors contemplate a very special revival with Mary Garden; the creation of several new, shorter works originating in the trenches... a dazzling production of *La Ville Morte*, the lyric work by Raoul Pugno and Mlle. Nadia Boulanger. The sequence in which they are to be presented is not yet determined. Performances will be given five times a week."

¹⁰¹ Rosenstiel, 142.

¹⁰² Rosenstiel, 168.

¹⁰³ Potter, "La Ville Morte," 405.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 403.

of the writer who had so scorned her directly following Pugno's death. Following this collection of songs, and the last version of Act I for *La Ville Morte*, Boulanger devoted her time and energy almost exclusively to teaching.

SECTION III:

CHAPTER SIX

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE OEPR *LA VILLE MORTE*

Now that the genesis of the opera has been established it is appropriate to turn to a discussion of the opera proper. This section of the thesis will first discuss the role of each composer in the writing of the opera, namely, to discuss who was responsible for which parts of the work; second provide a *dramatis personae* and plot synopsis for the operatic version of *La Ville Morte*; and lastly, consider a detailed analysis of the music from Act III, Scene 5 using the methodology delineated in chapter two of this thesis.

It should be mentioned prior to commencing with the musical analysis of *La Ville Morte* that all commentary on the music of the opera will be in reference to the piano/vocal (P/V) score published by Heugel, predominantly because the extant autograph sketches are incomplete.¹ This being said however, the piano reduction in the Heugel publication is virtually identical in pitch classes to that of the orchestrated parts for which previous sketches exist;² there are minimal discrepancies between the music of the piano/vocal score and that of the orchestrated sketches. For this reason, this thesis will treat the piano/vocal score as the definitive musical representation of *La Ville Morte* as Boulanger and Pugno intended.

¹ Nadia Boulanger and Raoul Pugno, *La Ville Morte*, libretto by Gabrielle d'Annunzio (Paris : Heugel, 1914).

² Please see Nadia Boulanger and Raoul Pugno "La Ville Morte," autograph sketches for Act 1, Undated, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, France; idem, "La Ville Morte," Act 3, full orchestral score, Undated, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, France. It was not possible to consult the 1923 copy of Act 1 completed by Boulanger and owned by Heugel during the time I spent in Paris. Certainly it would be interesting to see if any of the "minor changes" which Potter mentions in her article on the opera pertain to the interpretation of Act III, Scene 5. For Potter's discussion please see: Caroline Potter, "Nadia Boulanger' and Raoul Pugno's *La Ville Morte*," *Opera Quarterly* 16 (2000): 397-406, especially pages 403-404.

Nadia Boulanger and Raoul Pugno and *La Ville Morte*: Who's Notes are Who's?

Before an interpretation can be offered about the characterizations of *La Ville Morte*, it is important to discuss which composer was responsible for what music. As was written previously in chapter five, there is some disagreement as to how Pugno and Boulanger composed *La Ville Morte*. In his biography, Jérôme Spycket repeats d'Annunzio's assertion that Boulanger wrote the female roles for the opera and Pugno the male ones.³ If this assertion is true, it would in effect make Boulanger the more important contributor because the music for the female roles is more substantial and dramatically significant than that for the male roles.⁴

Caroline Potter refutes Spycket's documentation of this point in her own discussion of the work, arguing that there is ample evidence from original manuscripts that the musicians co-composed the entire opera.⁵ In fact, from my own further study of sources in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* I can attest that not only was the music co-composed but that all parts of the oeuvre's creation were a collaborative endeavour. From libretto editing to thematic development to orchestration and preparation of the fair copy (printer's exemplar), there is the mark of both composers' creative input throughout the opera.⁶

Later in the same article, Potter observes that

³ Jérôme Spycket, *Nadia Boulanger* (Stuyvesant, New York: Pendragon Press, 1992), 27.

⁴ Potter, 400-401.

⁵ Potter, 401.

⁶ Please see Nadia Boulanger and Raoul Pugno. *La Ville Morte, Autograph Libretto*, Book A, (ca 1910?); idem, *La Ville Morte, Autograph Libretto*, Book B, (ca 1910-1911?); idem, *La Ville Morte, Autograph Libretto*, Book C, (ca.1910 ?); idem, "La Ville Morte," autograph sketches for Act I, Bibliothèque Nationale; idem, "La Ville Morte," piano proofs, (1913 – 1916), Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, France; idem, "La Ville Morte," complete vocal score/fair copy, (1912?), Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, France.

there are, however, differences in their working methods: Boulanger invariably includes expression markings and other details when composing, whereas for Pugno, the notes themselves were apparently the priority; he is also less likely than Boulanger to write words under the vocal lines.⁷

In actuality, this characterisation is incorrect. Potter's statement may be true of the initial sketches of the opera, but if one examines the first proofs for the piano vocal score, particularly the ones written out by Boulanger⁸, one can see that it is actually Pugno who is more prone to adding in expression markings and correcting errors made by the younger musician rather than the other way around. Furthermore, there is evidence in the working libretto that Pugno sketched out melodies by prosody first, likely making himself more instinctively aware of the text for these melodies, precluding a need to add text to his sketches.⁹

Finally Potter incorrectly asserts that, as was also mentioned in chapter four of this thesis, Boulanger was only minimally concerned with the quality of text she used for her compositions.¹⁰ While this may have been true of Boulanger's earlier songs, evidence from the working libretto of *La Ville Morte* proves distinctly that Boulanger was tremendously concerned about the nature of the text and what kind of images it conveyed. Scattered throughout the libretto, most profusely in the second book of the working libretto, is overwhelming proof that Boulanger was concerned with the representations accrued by the text of *La Ville Morte*.¹¹

⁷ Potter, 401.

⁸ Boulanger and Pugno divided the responsibility of creating the proofs into four -- one book for each Act. Please see: Boulanger, Pugno, "La Ville Morte," complete vocal score/fair copy.

⁹ Boulanger, Pugno, *Autograph Libretto*, Book A, 15 verso and 27 verso.

¹⁰ Caroline Potter, "Nadia and Lili Boulanger: Sister Composers" *Musical Quarterly* 83 (1999): 543.

¹¹ Boulanger, Pugno, *Autograph Libretto*, Book B, particularly pages 4 – 9.

From the foregoing discussion it is clear that Boulanger's artistic contribution to the opera was equal to, if not greater than, that of her collaborator (co-composer). This is not to say, however, that the compositional-professional positions of Boulanger and Pugno were completely equal. There are clear indications, especially in the working libretto, that Pugno possessed the final authority over artistic changes. This disparity of authority is probably attributable to social reasons relating to gender. Indeed, following the discussion put forward in chapter six regarding the situation of a female composer at this time in France, it is not surprising that Pugno believed he had greater authority in the collaboration and that Boulanger was forced to accede to this belief.

Further, there is also ample evidence to suggest that Boulanger was responsible for the primary preparation of each task; it was Boulanger who wrote out the entire copy of the primary working libretto, and in the case of the orchestral sketches it was Boulanger who wrote out all of the initial melodic material and prepared the sheet music for further orchestration.¹² This division of work may simply have been an outgrowth of the role of student and teacher, and it may show that Pugno was too busy to have taken on these tasks himself. It is also possible that these preparatory gestures on the part of Boulanger reveal her impatience or more impassioned desire to commence with the opera's composition. Nevertheless, this assignment of preparatory duties and reservation of the role of revision points out that, although Boulanger's creative work on the opera was greater than that of her colleague, Pugno reserved for himself the privilege of final decision making and, in effect, treated her as a subordinate.

One is compelled to believe that in so doing Pugno blocked Boulanger from carrying out some of her intentions, especially considering objections which the younger

¹² Boulanger, Pugno, "La Ville Morte," autograph sketches Act 1.

musician voiced at various points of the working libretto. Particularly conspicuous are the vast number of requests Boulanger stated about the design of Act II.¹³ The second book is markedly different from the other two in that for the second book Boulanger notates new text (altered text) in red ink in brackets and also, in certain cases, quotes where the new dialogue came from.¹⁴ In addition, as mentioned earlier, while the entire libretto was written out by Boulanger in black ink, in book two of the libretto one finds extensive paragraphs and indeed pages of comments in Boulanger's handwriting written with red ink, most of which are to request changes to the characterization of Héb  . However, none of these objections were ever actually implemented.

One of the most striking examples of Boulanger's own contribution being disregarded is found on page fifteen of the second book. She writes: "It would be nice to lengthen H  b  's retorts a little. Her role in this scene is far too passive, especially after her behaviour in the first act." At this point there is a note, in Pugno's handwriting, simply stating "impossible."¹⁵ Also, throughout the entire book, Pugno reviewed what Boulanger had written and, in black pen, crossed out quite a few of the changes she had made.¹⁶

It is certainly conspicuous that, despite Boulanger's overt hostility to the characterization of H  b  , none of the changes that she requested ever actually came to fruition. Ways in which Boulanger may have subversively dealt with this censure on the

¹³ Boulanger, Pugno, *Autograph Libretto*, Book B, 16, 17, 19, 20.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 15. « Il y aurait int  r  t    allonger un peu les r  pliques d'H  b  . Son r  le dans cette sc  ne est bien exclusivement passif, surtout apr  s son attitude au premier acte. » *In Pugno's hand in the margin* – « impossible. »

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 10, 14, 15. The main reason for connecting these to Pugno and not Boulanger is because of the comments which appear later, written with the same pen as produced the corrections, in Pugno's hand. See pages 15 and 20.

part of Pugno will be returned to when considering the musical components of Act III, Scene 5.

These objections voiced by Boulanger in the autograph libretto are certainly complicated by her endorsement of the final version of the opera. Whichever role Boulanger did fulfill in the composition of *La Ville Morte*, the piece itself and the characterizations therein were marked with her seal of approval when she advocated its production and publication so strongly following Pugno's death. This is especially true because of the rewrite she produced in 1923. Her choice to change very little about the original version of the opera, even though she would have had ample opportunity to do so, suggests that she supported the final product.¹⁷ Therefore this thesis will assume that all characterizations of gender present within the opera *La Ville Morte* were satisfactory to both Boulanger and Pugno. It will do so, however, by presenting evidence that suggests Boulanger employed a gender subversive discourse that may not have been apparent to Pugno, but which would have produced gendered representations more congenial to Boulanger's own desires.

Before an analysis of the gendered discourse present within Act III, scene 5 of *La Ville Morte* can take place, it is important that this dramatic excerpt be contextualized within the overall work. Therefore, the subsequent portion of this chapter will provide descriptions of the four principle characters of *La Ville Morte*, present a brief plot synopsis, and then continue with an analysis of Act 3, Scene 5. The majority of the plot synopsis presented here will be drawn from my own translation of the libretto for Boulanger's and Pugno's opera *La Ville Morte* because there is no other extant English translation at this time. Where necessary, in order to clarify information or emphasize

¹⁷ Potter, "La Ville Morte," 404.

significant details inherent in the editorial process of the pair, an English translation of d'Annunzio's original work will be consulted.¹⁸

***La Ville Morte* – Dramatis Personae**

La Ville Morte centers around the interaction of four main characters: Anne, Alexandre, Léonard and Hébé. The two other recurring characters in this work include Anne's wet-nurse, played by a soprano, and a choir made up of men's and children's voices. Because of the limited importance of the wet-nurse and the choir to this study, the dramatis personae discussed here will focus only on the four principle characters. The entire action of the opera takes place in the Greek city of Mycenae in one of three settings: the house of Anne and Alexandre, inside the unearthed Greek ruins, or by the fountain of Perseia.

All the characters in the opera, with the exception of the wet-nurse, are suffering in some way at the beginning of the piece. Anne is middle-aged and is played by a soprano who has lived in Mycenae all her life. It is her house in which the majority of the play's action takes place. She has been left completely blind and barren by an unnamed ailment and laments the subsequent estrangement she perceives from the rest of the world, most especially from her husband.¹⁹ Throughout the play, she is often referred to simply as "the blind woman." Although it is symbolically important to the play, all traces of the subplot of Anne's mother's suicide and Anne's own desires to take her life were deleted from the opera libretto.²⁰

¹⁸ Gabrielle d'Annunzio, *The Dead City*, The Elanora Duse Series of Plays, trans. G. Mantellini (New York: Brentano's, 1923.)

¹⁹ d'Annunzio, 25.

²⁰ For the sub-plot of Anne's mother dying please see: d'Annunzio, 53-56, 60-61, and 62-65.

Alexandre is Anne's husband and a poet, played by a bass-baritone. It is his character that was truncated the most by Boulanger and Pugno in the transition from play to opera. In *La Ville Morte*, Alexandre is depicted as a man overwhelmed by ennui and despondence, oblivious to his wife's despair, infatuated with Héb  , and deeply concerned about L  onard's deteriorating mental condition. Little else is divulged in the opera about Alexandre's past or his and Anne's life together before the events of the drama without consulting the play. While Alexandre can be counted among the four principle characters of the work, his function within the opera itself is certainly the least of these four.

L  onard is the brother of H  b   and is played by a tenor. H  b   speaks of when "they were left alone in the world,"²¹ implying that they were either orphaned or abandoned. L  onard is an archaeologist who travelled from Syracuse to dig for the ruins of the Atridae, the celebrated royal family from ancient Greek literature. After two years of digging in the desert, L  onard has become obsessed with unveiling the hidden tombs of this Greek royal family and has also developed an extreme sexual attraction for his sister. L  onard's struggle with his desire for that which he cannot have has exacerbated his madness to a fevered pitch by the time the drama unfolds. It is made known that Alexandre and L  onard are fast friends and it is left ambiguous in both texts (play and opera libretto) whether the two have known each other for longer than the two years the latter has spent in Greece.

H  b   is a young girl also played by a soprano. Deeply troubled by her brother's unrest and Alexandre's advances, she states suggestively that she also wishes to leave Mycenae and return to her home where she will once again be able to "eat ripe fruit

²¹ Ibid., 74.

and... [feel] petals fall upon her head like a fragrant snow.”²² The character of Héb   is well-educated -- at the beginning of the play she is reading Sophocles’s *Antigone* to Anne and later on reads some Aeschylus²³ -- and is characterized both by her youth and her sexuality to represent a source of life and vitality in the desiccated land of Mycenae. She is referred to throughout the play as the “young virgin” and it is she and Anne, the two female characters, who are the central figures of the drama.

Together, the interactions of these four characters -- their paranoia, their despair, their loneliness -- make up the interest of the opera. While the plot itself is quite static in this work, the characterizations are intense and offer a vast resource for analysis. It is the action of these four characters over the course of two days that creates the story of *La Ville Morte*.

²² Boulanger, Pugno, *La Ville Morte*, 11.

²³ d’Annunzio, 67-68.

***La Ville Morte* – Plot Synopsis**

Act 1 Anne and Alexandre's home

The drama commences with Héb  reading *Antigone* to Anne inside Anne's house. The two discuss H b 's concern about her brother's condition. Anne reveals her despair and isolation to the wet-nurse who then seeks to soothe the despondent woman. H b  reveals her desires to leave Mycenae and eventually breaks down and weeps in Anne's arms. Alexandre returns from a long journey in the desert and presents Anne with a bird that fell dead at his feet. She accepts and then after some urging, convinces Alexandre to give H b  a bouquet of wild flowers. He flirts briefly with the younger girl but is interrupted by a tumultuous uproar from the excavation site. L onard appears exclaiming that they have uncovered the tombs of the Atriades.

L onard is erratic and hastily shares with the Anne, H b , and Alexandre a description of the riches uncovered by him and his workers. He describes the feverish vision he has just had of Agamemnon and Cassandra lying in the tombs as if only newly placed there that L onard, in his deranged state, believes to have actually happened. Alexandre rushes out to witness this spectacle for himself. L onard makes to go with him but is stopped by H b  who begs him to rest. After some argument L onard relents and is lead to his bed by his caring sister. With everyone gone, Anne once again laments her segregation and loneliness to the wet-nurse and is lead away by the latter to also try to get some rest despite the overwhelming heat of the sun.

Act II The tombs of the Atriades

Act II opens in the excavated tombs with Héb   re-arranging the artefacts, trying some of the smaller jewellery on. Alexandre arrives and delicately attempts to convey his love and desire for her, begging her to run away with him. H     refuses his advances even as he tries to kiss her but not before Anne arrives guided by the wet-nurse.

Alexandre wanders away from the two women and H     helps Anne explore the tomb, unsure if she and Alexandre were overheard or not. L       appears and Alexandre joins him as H     and Anne leave to sit by the Perseia fountain. L       confesses to Alexandre the secret of his incestuous lust that torments him. Alexandre interjects and prevents him from finishing. The act ends abruptly with both men stunned into silence, each staring out over the desert landscape with desperate misery in their hearts.

Act III Anne and Alexandre's home

Act III begins with the terrified Anne and wet-nurse listening to the workers who helped with the archeological dig intimating a prayer to the Egyptian gods Isis, Osiris, and Eli. In their prayer chant, the workers ask for rain, a gift which would end the drought which chokes Mycenae. L       encounters the two women and Anne sends the wet-nurse away. Anne, mistakenly thinking that H     and Alexandre are having an affair and that this is what is causing L      's stress, confronts him. When L       learns of this, he leaves in a heated, jealous, deranged frenzy that Anne believes to be fuelled by his sister's impropriety. Anne calls out for L       to come back but he has already left.

H    , hearing Anne's calls, appears hastily, frightened for Anne's safety. Anne comforts H     and, in a rare moment of compassion, soothes the young girl, cryptically speaking of forgiveness for the sins which Anne mistakenly believes H     to have

committed. The two women are mollified in their communal protection and speak to each other of their mounting fears. After hinting enigmatically of her wish to drown herself in the fountain and revealing to Héb  that she ‘knows’ about her and Alexandre’s love for each other, Anne leaves. H    realizes too late what Anne means by her mysterious words and calls after her to exculpate herself. As she jumps up to run after Anne, L      appears, more feverish and insane than ever before, and stops her from leaving.

H    begs L      to take her away from Mycenae and L      accuses her of lusting for Alexandre. She denies this, but L      is insistent that she remain pure. He orders her to wait for him by the fountain, intimating that from there they will leave Mycenae. H    agrees and as she climbs through the maze of the excavation, she sings a prayer to Antigone and Cassandra for her mythological sisters to come and collect her for death.

Act IV

In the final scene H   ’s lifeless body, carefully guarded by the satiated L     , is found by Alexandre at the fountain. L      tries to describe his reasons for killing H    and Alexandre is overwhelmed with grief. As L      finishes speaking Anne’s footsteps are overheard. Shocked, the two men try to quickly hide H   ’s body but as they do so Anne hears them and, groping in her blindness, brushes against H   ’s foot. Upon coming in contact with the young woman’s dead body, the play comes to its abrupt end as Anne exclaims that she can once again see.

CHAPTER SEVEN

HÉBÉ AND BOULANGER – A COMPOSER AND HER FAVOURITE

Perhaps the most important character in the opera, certainly the most important character to the scene which will be analyzed shortly, is that of the young girl Héb  , or Bianca Maria as she is initially named in d'Annunzio's play. There is evidence to suggest that H    's character was a favourite of Boulanger; as was mentioned earlier, the sole significant comments made by either composer within the working libretto were made by Boulanger and were predominantly in criticism of the way in which H     was depicted. Secondly, an undated letter written by d'Annunzio to Boulanger after Pugno's death, includes a touching remark in which he refers to his own pleasant recollection of "their H    ."²⁴ These indications, coupled with the strong possibility of Boulanger associating herself autobiographically with the character of the younger woman, lend themselves to the argument that Boulanger was particularly concerned with the character of H    .

H     or Bianca Maria – What's in a Name?

In the opera *La Ville Morte*, Boulanger and Pugno chose to change the name of d'Annunzio's Bianca-Maria to H    , an act which holds great significance. The obvious musical difficulties caused by the syllabically cumbersome Bianca-Maria were easily eliminated by choosing the shorter name. However, there is more to the final selection than just concerns about prosody. The name "H    " actually means "the goddess of youthful bloom."²⁵ Appropriately, the name is taken from Greek mythology -- Hebe is

²⁴ J       Spycket, *Nadia Boulanger*, (Stuyvesant, New York : Pendragon Press, 1992), 40. For the original letter please see: Doda Conrad, *Grandeur et Myst     d'Un Mythe: Souvenirs de quarante-quatre ans d'amiti   avec Nadia Boulanger*, (Paris : Buchet/Chastel, 1995), 42.

²⁵ Mark P.O. Morford, *Classical Mythology*, 6 ed. (New York: Longman, 1999), 76.

the daughter of Zeus and becomes the bride of Heracles when he at last achieves immortality.²⁶ While Héb  s main mythological importance rests in her role as Zeus’s original cupbearer and eventually the wife of Heracles, she was worshipped as a goddess in her own right. Ryan Tuccinardi writes,

Hebes is the goddess of youth, and the daughter of Zeus and Hera. She poured the nectar of the gods on Olympus until Ganymede replaced her...the Romans called her Juventas (“youth”).

She was portrayed as a young woman, wearing a sleeveless dress...Famous was the -- now lost -- statue of Hebe, made of ivory and gold ...in the 5th century BCE. This statue was also shown on more recent coins from Argos.²⁷

Clearly this depiction of youth which the Greeks emphasized is mirrored in the character of H  b  , referred to in the stage directions for *La Ville Morte* as “the young virgin.”²⁸ It is this youth which Anne perceives so eloquently in the first act simply by laying her hands on the face of the girl.

One further aspect of the Greek goddess Hebe which carries over to the character in the opera includes the ability to bestow great forgiveness. Morford and Lenardon write that “Hebe was worshipped as a goddess of pardons or forgiveness; freed prisoners would hang their chains in the sacred grove of her sanctuary at Phlius.”²⁹ In a similar way, the character of H  b   from *La Ville Morte* shows that she is capable of the gift of pardon by offering it to her bother at the end of Act III. even when his insanity is at its peak and she is about to die at his hands.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ryan Tuccinardi, “Hebe,” *Encyclop  dia Mythica*, www.pantheon.org/areas/mythology/europe/greek/articles.html, accessed [November 7, 2004]. For a further discussion of the attributes, function, and significance of the character of Hebe see: Jenifer Neils, “Reconfiguring the Gods on the Parthenon Freize,” *The Arts Bulletin* (1999): 6-20.

²⁸ For examples of this see: Boulanger, Pugno, *La Ville Morte*, 53, 56, 57, 131, 246, and 270.

²⁹ Morford and Lenardon, 432.

The goddess Hebe differs from the other female mythological characters emphasized by Pugno and Boulanger in that, unlike Cassandra and Antigone, Hebe is not human, but rather a daughter of Zeus, the greatest god of all. Also unlike Cassandra and Antigone, Hebe's main importance in Greek literature comes from the fact that she is someone's obedient, dutiful wife. This is directly oppositional to both Cassandra, who rejects the love of Appollo after he gives her the gift of prophesy and is doomed to a life where no one believes her visions,³⁰ and Antigone, arguably one of the strongest feminist examples of the Greek tragic characters, who defies the laws of her country for love of her brother and is buried alive. Certainly neither resemble the obedient wife figure of the goddess Hebe. The choice by Pugno and Boulanger of this associative characterization no doubt rests in the fact that both characters -- the goddess and the sister -- are representative of youth and vitality. Interestingly enough, investing this meaning of Hébé's name into the text of Act III, Scene 5 infuses it with another layer of interest and significance.

³⁰ Ibid., 171.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ACT III, SCENE 5 AND THE ARIA “VOUS ME VOYEZ MES SOEURS”

The Making of a Martyr

The importance of the aria *Vous me voyez mes soeurs*, and the gender discourse within it, are most effectively examined in a three tier process involving: first, a comparison of the operatic text in relation to that of the original play, second, consideration of the two different intended locations for the aria within *La Ville Morte*, and finally an examination of the musical gestures with which the aria was crafted using the previously discussed methodology from chapter one. When the points raised by these three points of inquiry are combined, the aria itself becomes a vivid image of gendered ideology and possibly satisfied Boulanger's previous objections about the portrayal of the character Héb  .

The first important point about *Vous me voyez mes soeurs* that must be considered is its change in significance from d'Annunzio's original drama to its use in *La Ville Morte*. This specific aria was chosen because it is unique to the opera; there is no text within d'Annunzio's primary work from which this scene is derived. The general inspiration for the setting of the piece is drawn from the conclusion to the third act of the play,³¹ both of which share the same stage directions. There is, however, no text written in the original drama for this moment -- Pugno and Boulanger wrote the text of the aria themselves (or commissioned it specifically from the librettist) with a precise creative vision in mind.

³¹ d'Annunzio, 70; Boulanger and Pugno, *La Ville Morte*, (stage directions) 247 – 253.

The aria is a lament by Héb  as she mistakenly realizes that the only way to soothe her brother's madness is to leave Mycenae forever.³² In this aria she calls out to Cassandra and Antigone to bear her away to death, giving in to the wishes of L onard and his insanity.³³ The aria text is full of female imagery as H b  invokes the power of her figurative sisters to prepare her crown which she will wear after she dies. Conspicuously, this is an aria depicting female power and female agency. The only mention of a male character is that of Acheron³⁴. It is ambiguous whether H b  is lamenting a symbolic death, meaning her definitive separation from Mycenae, Anne, and Alexandre whom she loves and who loves her, or whether it is literally her resigning herself to L onard's murderous intentions which play out in the next scene; either way, by the end of the aria it is made explicitly clear that H b  has prepared herself for death. She resigns her symbolic youthfulness and vitality to destruction, the inevitable punishment waiting to be meted out to any sign of life present in the desiccated ruins of "The Dead City."

In the original play, the climax is delivered in quite a different fashion than in the opera.³⁵ The audience is made very aware of L onard's murderous intentions at the beginning of Act IV as he paces wildly around Anne's house, debating how best to make

³² For a complete translation of this aria please see Appendix M.

³³ Interestingly enough, the two composers connected the character of Cassandra with Anne and the character of Antigone with H b . Boulanger describes this connection in *Autograph Libretto*, Book B, 5.

³⁴ Archeron was the Greek mythological character responsible for ferrying the newly-dead across the river Styx and into Hades.

³⁵ There were many cuts made to the original version of the libretto for *La Ville Morte*, but to catalogue them entirely is beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead the focus will be on the importance of the location for Act III, Scene 5. For further information on the alterations of the libretto c.f. Boulanger and Pugno *Autograph Libretto*, Book A; Boulanger and Pugno, *Autograph Libretto*, Book C, and Boulanger and Pugno, *La Ville Morte*.

Hébé's death appear as a suicide.³⁶ When Hébé arrives there, she and Léonard share a hurried conference and both leave together to continue their conversation by the fountain. When Hébé exits with Léonard, she is innocent and unaware of what is to happen to her; she is once again simply a help-mate to her ailing brother, wishing desperately for him to reach a place where he will be at peace. Following this departure, it is Alexandre and subsequently Anne who perceive of Hébé's ill fate and eventually chase after the pair to no avail.

In the opera version this is not the case. While it is hinted at that Léonard is murderous, it is not explicitly stated at any point. At the beginning of the scene in question, Hébé is waiting in the darkness for Léonard, who frightens her when he arrives. In fact, in this scene from the opera the first words which Hébé speaks to Léonard are those of resistance – she screams “no, no, I don't want to!”³⁷ It is only after this conspicuous outburst that she realizes who it is at the door and she relaxes, tentatively welcoming him.

The dialogue in this scene is much briefer than the play, pushing towards the climax of the following aria. The text is edited in such a way that the emphasis is placed on Hébé's lack of a will to live and not on her wish to find peace for her brother. At no time does she state that she wishes to ease Léonard's pain. Instead, Hébé pleads with Léonard saying: “Take me with you! I will not resist this torture anymore. I will follow you without complaint. But quickly, quickly, this very night!”³⁸ These words, carefully

³⁶ d'Annunzio, 71-72. For whatever reason, in the initial draft of the libretto this portion of the text is present. However, it is not included in the final product of the opera. Please see Boulanger and Pugno, *Autograph Libretto*, Book A, 42 – to end.

³⁷ Boulanger and Pugno, *La Ville Morte*, 232. c.f. d'Annunzio, 72-76.

³⁸ Boulanger and Pugno, *La Ville Morte*, 235-236. “Hébé, *avec un cri* - Emmène-moi, emmène-moi ! Je ne résiste plus à ce supplice. Je te suivrai partout sans une plainte. Mais vite, vite ! Ce soir même. Je ne peux plus vivre. »

teased from d'Annunzio's original text by Boulanger and Pugno, have a strikingly different effect in the opera than those taken from the same dramatic moment in the play. In the original drama, Héb  is primarily concerned with soothing her brother's torture and subsequently her own. In being complacent, she becomes a casualty of his overwhelming insanity. In Pugno and Boulanger's version, fully aware of the situation in which she finds herself, H    asserts the only power that she possesses -- control over her life -- and in so doing welcomes death. In d'Annunzio's rendering, H    is a victim; in Pugno and Boulanger's version, she becomes a martyr.

The shift from victim to martyr is especially interesting if one considers how this alters the relationships of gender and power in this scene. In the first scenario, d'Annunzio's play, it is L      who is in control and even his madness cannot remove this power from him. H   's good-intentioned, care-giver role causes her to be unaware of what is going on. Her pleading seems to mean nothing to L      and her wishes are in no way realized; H   's words fail to be of any significance to her own fate.

In the second arrangement, H    is in control. Even from L     's entrance, it is H    who has been waiting for him rather than the other way around.³⁹ Her words serve as a catalyst for his decisions and it is her choice of action which serves to bring about the eventual conclusion, not her ignorance. While it is still L      who kills her, his madness makes him incapable of controlling the situation. He cannot force H    to answer his frantic questions, nor can he obscure from her his eventual intent; his insanity

³⁹ While H    is waiting for L      in the first play, she does not see him come because she is asleep and he catches her off guard (see: d'Annunzio, 72.) In the opera version, H    has been waiting for L      and just as she is startled the audience witnesses her cry of resistance. See: Boulanger and Pugno, *La Ville Morte*, 234.

exposes him. In the operatic version, the power structure of Héb  and L onard is inverted and this time it is the woman who controls the action.

It is significant to note this change in roles, especially because of Boulanger's previously mentioned insistence that the characterization of H    display strength rather than weakness. No doubt for Boulanger, this moment in the opera was an opportunity to make a subtle statement about gender relations. While at the end of this musical work H    becomes the typical soprano heroine, dying dramatically at the hands of a man,⁴⁰ in other ways she subverts this relationship because of the context in which her aria is ultimately located. In *La Ville Morte* the soprano submits herself to death. It is she who chooses her demise rather than having it visited upon her in unsuspecting helplessness.

Perhaps this revised depiction of H    ran a parallel to Boulanger's personal situation. Providing evidence of Boulanger's opinions on the autobiographical nature of composition is her comment delivered during a lecture at Rice University in 1925.

Ever since the beginning of the nineteenth century, music has been more or less autobiographical, has dealt with feelings or impression of the individual. Its beauty and power have lain in its expressive qualities, in the intensity and fidelity with which it has reflected the emotional life of the composer, rather than in any objective values of form or structure.⁴¹

It is unlikely that Boulanger meant to include herself in the category of composer she referred to in this excerpt, as by this time she would have officially given up composing and begun the process of disassociating herself from her role as such. However, one could certainly infer that Boulanger connected the personal with the meaning and

⁴⁰ For examples of the stereotypical characteristics of the female soprano in opera please see: Catherine Clement, "Through Voices, History," in *Siren Songs: Representations of Gender and Sexuality in Opera*, Mary Ann Smart ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 22.

⁴¹ Don Campbell, *Master Teacher*, (Washington D.C.: Pastoral Press, 1984), 146. For an historical discussion of the Rice Lectures please see Spycket, 66-67. While there is a complete chapter devoted to Boulanger's "Words on Music," in Rosenstiel's biography, I can find no direct reference to the lectures at Rice included in the book.

“expressive quality” of music. This comment would have been presented only two years after Boulanger had written the last re-vision to *La Ville Morte*. Possibly the sentiment expressed was also in part the internalized sentiment that Boulanger attached to her own compositional behaviour.

With this in mind, it is interesting to consider the character of Héb  and the possible autobiographical meaning she may have had for Boulanger. This character is written in such a way as to display a subversive discourse. When faced with the inevitable destruction of her own self, H b  chooses defiance and assertiveness instead of victimization and helplessness. This similarly parallels Boulanger’s own actions in light of the male-dominated field of music composition. Rather than face the incredible difficulties of becoming a female professional musician in *fin-de-si cle* Paris with a defeatist attitude, Boulanger chose to aggressively pursue her artistic goals. Perhaps the chosen setting of this aria was Boulanger’s way of displaying that submission to male control was potentially inevitable but at least women could oppose this with courage, rather than not at all.

This significant and defiant aria is imbued with even further meaning if one considers that the original location of *Vous me voyez mes soeurs* was not even intended to be the climatic point of the opera. By consulting the working libretto, one learns that Boulanger and Pugno had planned for *Vous me voyez mes soeurs* to be placed at the end of act three, but that was when they were working with a five act template.⁴² This means, that originally Pugno and Boulanger’s inspiration for H b ’s aria was depicting her guilt at betraying a friend, not her fear of being killed at the hands of her brother.

⁴² Boulanger and Pugno, *Autograph Libretto*, Book A, 41.

Viewed in its original context, the aria can be interpreted with a much different meaning. At this earlier point in the play, Héb  s grief filled song is one of despair about ruining her friendship with Anne. She laments the loss of the final thing which she cherishes, Anne’s company. H  b  s despair is selfish; she grieves for loss of the woman-centered support system she shares with Anne, the only stable relationship of any kind available to her at that point in the drama. With the culmination of Anne’s accusations, H  b   successfully becomes the center of everyone’s torment: she is the reason for Alexandre’s lust, she mistakenly thinks that L  onard harbours animosity towards her and, now that Anne believes that H  b   has actively pursued Alexandre’s advances, she is the reason for Anne’s ultimate despair. H  b   stands to lose the only remaining functional bond that she has.

This is one reason for her calling out to both Antigone and Cassandra in the text of the aria -- she is calling out to those mythological characters that symbolize herself and Anne respectively, requesting that through death, the only release of anguish that she can fathom, the relationship of the two women again be repaired and made whole. For H  b  , the only solution she perceives of to remove the oppressive tension which is suffocating everyone she loves is to remove herself from the equation, either by leaving Mycenae or by killing herself. The aria then becomes one of self-pity, rather than one of frustration or injustice. This placement of the aria emphasizes the young naivety of H  b   and portrays her invocation of death as possibly an over-reaction to, rather than a viable solution for, her predicament. It is perhaps this undesirable representation of H  b   and the relative ineffectiveness of the aria in this context which caused Pugno and Boulanger to relocate it elsewhere in the opera.

Viewing the opera in its inchoate form, the form represented by the first draft of the libretto, it is obvious that the initial design for *La Ville Morte* was simply too long and Boulanger and Pugno were obliged to make cuts in order for the work to be performable.⁴³ No doubt this accounts for the difference between the original form of the opera and its published version. This also stands to be the best explanation for why the aria in question was moved. It is interesting however that despite its relocation, the text for *Vous me voyez mes soeurs* remained unchanged, unlike much of the other text from the third to final acts of the libretto following the shift from a five to four-act template.

Vous me voyez mes soeurs must have held certain significance to the composers in order to have survived in its complete form. The versatility of this aria then is also significant, considering that both interpretations provided in this thesis are applicable in its final setting, although certain aspects take secondary roles. *Vous me voyez* then becomes an aria about distress, an aria about martyrdom, an aria about the importance of friendship, of female strength, of struggle and of despair. Turning to an examination of the musical aspects of the aria reveals further meanings given it by the two composers.

The Music of *Vous me voyez mes soeurs*

This section of the thesis will use the methodology outlined in chapter one. To briefly summarize, this will involve examining displays of gender discourse as exhibited in the melody, harmonic language, instrumental accompaniment, and staged body of this particular dramatic excerpt. For ease and flow of argument, these four aspects will be considered as they appear within the aria, rather than in distinct sections, with special

⁴³ As it stands in P/V - form, the work is 300 pages long and quite physically, emotionally, and artistically demanding of the small cast and instrumentalists for which it calls. To have added additional music to the opera would have made the project exceptionally mammoth and possibly difficult to perform.

consideration being given at the end of this chapter to elaborate on the implications of gender discourse within the harmonic language used by Boulanger and Pugno.

The final dramatic moment for the character of Héb  in *La Ville Morte* - Act III, Scene 5 - also serves as the dramatic climax of the entire opera and is one of intense emotional and musical angst. The opening of this scene is marked with complete tonal obfuscation achieved through the saturation of the musical texture with a chain of enharmonically-spelt, non-functional, French augmented-sixth chords. At this point, the music continues to develop thematic fragments underneath a C4 to C5 tremelo before Boulanger and Pugno being exploiting whole tone scales -- some which are complete and others of which are simply fragments.⁴⁴ The ubiquitous hurried rhythmic features, again marking a sense of instability and unrest, are surely musical depictions of H   's own vexation at the choice she is about to make: whether or not to surrender her life into the hands of her insane brother in order to end their shared torturous existence.

Beat one of measure fifteen is the first time at which the aria's eventual sonority of g-sharp minor is hinted at, with a fleeting exposition of its dominant minor chord enharmonically spelt as an E-flat major/minor sonority. Slightly further on, first in measure 19 and then more explicitly in measures 21-26 the composers exploit an A-flat/C augmented chord, using its symmetry to ambiguously propose a possible root of C or A-flat, the latter of course being the enharmonic spelling of the sonority which the aria is driving towards. Also providing a sense of where the music is headed is the final note of the choir which in measure 26 sings as their final sonority an A-flat in octaves. It is after

⁴⁴ Boulanger and Pugno, *La Ville Morte*, pp. 244-245, measures 11-14, and 16. N.B. There are no individual measure numbers assigned to the music in the published piano/vocal score of *La Ville Morte*. Therefore, the measure numbers referred to in this thesis will commence at the beginning of the aria in question.

this bar, in measures 27 – 29 that the texture is stripped down to simple bass octaves sounding out A naturals, the Neapolitan of g-sharp minor. This pre-dominant activity precipitates the dominant preparation which appears in measure 29 with a much lighter and more stagnant accompaniment. This steady foundational sonority is a musical representation of the subtle point at which Héb   has resigned herself to her decision and is ready to invoke the help of her figurative sisters to prepare her for death. Following a set of slowly shifting suspensions in measures 32-34 which eventually create the dominant seventh of the home key, the aria proper begins with a cadence announcing the arrival of g-sharp minor, firmly denoted by a matching key signature.

It is important to note that this particular key of g-sharp minor also has a minor dominant relation to the c-sharp minor sonority which dramatically concludes the opera, a sonority which accompanies Anne’s final words: “I can see.” Possibly this dominant/anticipatory and tonic/realization relationship between the two arias sung by the two related women is more than just a coincidental occurrence.⁴⁵

Continuing on with a musical analysis reveals that the aria proper is in A B A’ form. The first two large architectural portions of the piece respect the stanzas of poetry as written out by Boulanger in the working libretto. Either caesuras or cadential moments occur within the music as the poetry dictates, with the first two musical portions involving two and three stanzas respectively. The final A’ section however elides the poetic lines, pushing the music dramatically towards its conclusion, a technique typical of Boulanger as witnessed in her other songs.⁴⁶ The final section shares the same number of

⁴⁵ Coincidentally, the sonority of C-sharp major ends the opera *Pell  as et M  lisande*. The connection between these two operas and between Boulanger and Debussy will be discussed later in this chapter.

⁴⁶ This aspect of Boulanger’s songs was discussed by St  phan Etcharry in his article “Nadia Boulanger, Composer: The Example of the French Melodies,” read at the Fourth Triennial Susan Porter Memorial

stanzas as the B section, confirming that the elision has more to do with dramatic function than with squeezing excessive amounts of text into a small musical space. The final two lines of poetry are composed just as written in the libretto, as a coda, concluding the aria in a quiet moment of despair.

This aria has a very small range. Héb  's voice goes as low as an F-natural above middle-C and only four times ascends to the G-sharp an octave and augmented second above. Of these ascents, only one, located about two-thirds of the way through the aria, is maintained for any length of time. For the person performing the role of H    , this piece is not one of virtuosic exposition. Rather the performer remains restrained within a tight system of notes that mirrors the power relations which likewise limit the character's freedom. There is a sense of reservation and suffocation that this tightly controlled aria achieves by this limitation of pitch range.

There are only two melodic high points in the aria. The first of which is on F4 at measure 61-62, and the second is the aforementioned G-sharp 4 at measures 80-81. Both of these agogic accents mark moments in the text when H     emotes great empathy for the suffering other women have gone through. It is interesting that at neither point is she singing of her own inevitable death, but rather they are times when she is expressing the utmost empathy for those who have also experienced injustice which lead to fatality.

Perhaps the most important feature of *Vous me voyez mes soeurs* is its finale. Rather than ending on a high moment of exaltation or exasperation, H     instead returns to the lower g-sharp following her highest note in measure 81. At a dynamic marking which begins at *mezzo-forte* and gradually softens to *pianissimo*, H     begs for the night

to fall quickly and for her sisters to come and collect her. The aria ends with arpeggiated major chords ascending from the bottom to the absolute height of the piano which are each in their turn suppressed by the insistent g-sharp minor tonality. Twice major chords attempt to project a sense of hope or peace at the very end of the work, and twice they are denied by the minor mode and the thickness of the bass notes with which they are orchestrated.

This aria ends in a state of resigned acceptance. Héb   has made her choice; she will let her brother kill her as she sees this to be the only course of action which would end the collective misery of the group. In many ways, this musical setting is a comment on the injustice of the situation. Because of how Boulanger and Pugno have re-structured the opera, turning H  b   into a martyr and thereby granting her power over her own fate, they have also created a paradox.

H  b   represents both the weakest character in the work -- the youngest, most dependent, and least sexually aware. Yet she is also the strongest character in the opera being the only one who can satisfy anyone's needs; she alone can respond to Alexandre's advances, she alone can satiate L  onard's desires and she alone can soothe Anne's anxieties. This paradox leads to a power imbalance, and it is this imbalance which must be destroyed, meaning H  b   must die. If it were not for the male characters within the work, there would be no power imbalance and H  b   would be permitted to live. The musical denouement of *Vous me voyez mes s  eurs* shows H  b  's acceptance of the futility and injustice of this situation, allowing her to descend vocally and end the work in quiet acceptance that she has exercised agency in the end.

It should also be noted that the opportunity for the performer portraying Héb   to do so in a subversive manner certainly exists throughout this aria. The stage directions themselves allow for some interpretation. At the beginning of the scene they say:

To meet him in the maze of the dead city, she climbs the steps of the terrace. But, coming to the last one, she turns, panting, resting against the column and stays there watching the ruins under the ashes from the crypt. The wind again transports a shred of the savage choir... Silent tears fill the face of the virgin.⁴⁷

There is room within this text to infuse H  b  's character with a sense of defiance, anger, frustration, and agency. Certainly this would be in keeping with what the previous interpretation revealed about the music and the text setting of the aria. Similar to that of Salome discussed in the first chapter of this thesis, the strength and empowerment of H  b   is projected by her deference to what is happening musically. H  b  's physical body would be able to portray subversive behaviour, rather than mirroring the expected discourse of defeat and submission. This depiction would parallel the defiant, feminist text of the aria.

Even the final stage directions are relatively ambiguous. They state: "she lets herself fall to the foot of the column, without a sound and with the lightness of a silent veil that folds in on itself. Thus, withdrawing within herself, she cries silently."⁴⁹ This excerpt is further imbued with imagery which invokes discourses of femininity, and could be interpreted as H  b   giving in to fate and becoming that which is expected of her as a woman; she eventually succumbs to the inevitable. I would argue however that these

⁴⁷ Boulanger and Pugno, *La Ville Morte*, 244-246 : « Comme pour le d  couvrir dans le d  dale de la ville morte, elle monte les marches de la terrasse. Mais arriv  e    la derni  re ; elle vacille, haletante, s'appuie    la colonne et reste ainsi    regarder les ruines sous la cendre cr  pusculaire. La rafale transporte encore un lambeau du ch  ur sauvage... Des pleurs silencieux inondent le visage de la Vierge. »

⁴⁹ Bolanger and Pugno, *La Ville Morte*, 254. « Elle se laisse tomber, au pied de la colonne, sans bruit, avec la l  g  ret   muette d'une voile qui se replie; et ainsi repli  e sur elle-m  me, elle pleure silencieusement. »

final stage directions actually represent Héb   renouncing the external world and drawing upon her own inner strength in order to bolster her resolve.⁵⁰ H  b  's directed introversion represents a withdrawal from the madness and fatalistic elements of her life that inevitably will precipitate her death. For H  b  , these final tears are tears of frustration, anger, and solitude, surrounded by a fate which she does not desire, but which ultimately she has at least chosen for herself. This interpretation will itself be bolstered by a discussion of the harmonic syntax of this aria in relation to the work of Elliot Antokoletz on Debussy's *Pell  as et M  lisande*.

Debussy, Boulanger, Harmonic Inflections, and Gender

The connection between Nadia Boulanger and Claude Debussy (1862-1918) is undeniable. Their limited correspondence is available for consideration at the *Biblioth  que Nationale* and Spycket published one of their letters in his biography of Boulanger.⁵¹ In her articles on Boulanger's compositions, Caroline Potter has also connected Debussy's compositional style to Boulanger's output.⁵² Of *La Ville Morte* specifically Potter writes, "the strong resemblance between [d'Annunzio's] libretto and that of Debussy's *Pell  as et M  lisande* must have been a potent source of attraction."⁵³ She also writes that "given the libretto's connections with *Pell  as et M  lisande*, it is significant that many [musical] passages are highly indebted to Debussy, who was a favourite composer...and an inspiration to both [Boulanger] sisters."⁵⁴ She cites the

⁵⁰ It would be interesting to explore possible symbolic parallels with images of the Passion of Christ and this final scene.

⁵¹ Letters from the Biblioth  que Nationale Nos. 65-67 and Spycket, 25-26. There is no documented evidence of this relationship in the Rosenstiel.

⁵² Potter, "Sister Composers."

⁵³ Potter, "Ville Morte," 398.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 399.

prosody, the use of the harp and celesta, and the parlando style of melody as similarities between the two composers' styles.⁵⁵ Furthermore, of particular importance to the following discussion is her statement that for both composers

Parallel chordal progressions abound, a measure is often immediately repeated, and a single rhythmic figure, possibly an ostinato pattern, to unify a scene, is another stylistic trait common to Debussy's only completed opera and the Boulanger/Pugno collaboration.⁵⁶

This cataloguing of Debussyan traits within the music of Boulanger can also be seen in all of her songs including those written before her involvement with Pugno, as is discussed by Stéphan Etcharry.⁵⁷

Because of the direct connection between Boulanger and Debussy, one would assume that the Debussyan characteristics of *La Ville Morte* would imply that Boulanger was the primary composer. However, as Potter points out, "both Pugno and Boulanger are responsible for Debussyan passages... manuscript evidence militates against the view that the composers's styles are strongly distinct."⁵⁸ This does not mean that Boulanger was not the one to expose or familiarize Pugno with the music of Debussy or the ways in which he exploited his harmonic language. Boulanger manifested many of the compositional traits which both she and Pugno used on the opera, such as discerning the rhythmic setting of the text first, before she even worked with Pugno. For example, as Etcharry shows, when one considers Boulanger's sketches from 1902, there is evidence that she first composed textual rhythms prior to composing any melodic material.⁵⁹ This

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 399-400.

⁵⁷ Etcharry. These characteristics include: modal, whole tone, and double augmented scales, the use of altered and remote keys, dysfunctional or diverted dominant seventh chords and chordal enrichment through the addition of added notes such as sixths or ninths.

⁵⁸ Potter, "Ville Morte," 400.

⁵⁹ Etcharry. This would have been when Boulanger was fifteen years old, and would have been one year following her entrance into Fauré's class. I can also comment from personal experience as a second

would have been seven years before knowing Pugno. Indeed, before working with Boulanger, Pugno worked in what Potter describes as “the conservative genres of the opera comique, ballet, and character piece.”⁶⁰ Therefore, it would seem plausible that when the two musicians decided to collaborate, Pugno was interested in modernizing his musical tastes and through Boulanger’s mediation this was made possible. This becomes more significant when one considers the connections which Debussy made between his musical language and affectation.

As was already mentioned in chapter one of this thesis, in his book *Musical Symbolism in the Operas of Debussy and Bartok: Trauma, Gender and the Unfolding of the Subconscious*, Elliot Antokoletz makes arguments which connect gendered discourse with the musical syntax of Debussy’s opera.⁶¹ Through his analysis of *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Antokoletz shows how Debussy controls his musical language in order to dichotomize the mundane with that of the fatalistic. Antokoletz argues that Debussy creates “a sense of progression... by means of special transformations from one pitch-set to another: diatonic to symmetrical, or vice-versa. Pitch-set transformation is essential for linking the intricate web of symbolic associations” within the opera *Pelléas et Mélisande*.⁶²

While Antokoletz’s own analysis of gender as depicted in the opera falls short of connecting the use of specific pitch classes to gender, I believe that this association is implicit in his argument. He states that he chose *Pelléas et Mélisande* because of its

generation Boulanger student, that this particular method for composing texted music was what Boulanger taught her own students, and is the way in which many of her students continue to teach this form of composition.

⁶⁰ Potter, “Ville Morte,” 400.

⁶¹ Elliot Antokoletz, *Musical Symbolism in the Operas of Debussy and Bartók: Trauma, Gender, and the Unfolding of the Subconscious*, Juana Canabal Antokoletz coll. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2004.)

⁶² Ibid., 56.

“powerful depiction of gender conflicts and their traumatic resolution, as reflected in the verbal dialogue as well as the musical structure.”⁶³ Ankoletz also draws attention to the fact that Debussy attributes to women an intimacy with fate and the subconscious that is inaccessible to men.⁶⁴ Furthermore, through an extensive analysis of the harmonic syntax of the opera, Ankoletz shows that Debussy connects the unconscious and fate with modality, and the real and the humane with tonality. Therefore, this text offers the possibility that the dichotomy of tonality/modality could also be mapped onto male/female in Debussy’s opera.

Boulanger’s own familiarity with the music of Debussy also reflects an awareness of his exploitation of tonality/modality. As was mentioned previously in this chapter, the music of *Vous me voyez mes soeurs* is organized through this dichotomization of symmetrical/modal structures – for example, French augmented sixths and whole tone scales -- and tonality, or the pitch center of g-sharp minor. Similarly, the symmetrical pitch sets/modal structures are also points which emphasize “the intrusion of fate into the human realm”⁶⁵ and the tonality/pentatonic harmonies are used to emphasize humanity, or the mundane. What differs between Debussy’s own use of these techniques and the presence of them in *La Ville Morte*, and this lends credence to the previous argument about the characterization of Héb  , is that whereas Debussy connects the unstable, modal pitch classes with femininity, in *Vous me voyez mes soeurs* this relationship is inverted. The mundane, human, and concrete aspects of *Vous me voyez mes soeurs* are directly connected to the agency and control exercised by H  b   in this aria over her external environment.

⁶³ Ibid., 31.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 56.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 27.

There are several remarkable examples of this exploitation within the aria itself. The first is the previously mentioned dissolution of the unstable, chromatic opening into the tonally centered g-sharp minor. This grounds Héb  's entry with stability. The second occurs just as H  b  's melody begins to become fairly chromatic at the end of the second, or B, section. In measures 61 and 62 of this aria,⁶⁶ H  b   ascends to her first substantial climatic point on the modally ambiguous F4 natural.⁶⁷ At this highly emotional point, H  b   risks abandoning herself to "fate," removing herself from the tonal center from which she started. Adding to the exceptionality of this section is the music which accompanies it. Perhaps acting as fate in its strongest form, the piano performs chords in a hemiola rhythm, which begin as harmonically identifiable (the first is a D-flat dominant seventh triad) and eventually dissolve into constructions which deny harmonic nomenclature. The most interesting aspect of the accompaniment is that when the pitches of these two bars are considered in their entirety, they form the whole tone collection E-flat/D-sharp, F, G, A, B, C-sharp/D-flat. This could be an example of the composers experimenting with pitch classes as sets, instead of organizing them by harmonic function.

Emphasising again the strength of H  b   and her denial of the external and the fatalistic, is that the final sonority of measure 62 eventually serves a dominant function and the aria again returns emphatically to g-sharp minor instead of losing itself to atonality. As if to reinforce her decisive control, the final phrase prior to the coda, and ultimately the longest and highest note of the piece, is sung eighteen bars later on a definitive g-sharp 4. With this high note decisively ending the piece in tonality and the

⁶⁶ Boulanger and Pugno, *La Ville Morte*, 250.

⁶⁷ In relation to g-sharp minor F natural is either #6, or bb 7, it is a pitch incredibly removed from the original tonal center.

mundane, Héb   has officially made her choice. This fourth example shows H     ending with finality, allowing the coda to reinforce her decision over six bars. As H    's voice disappears from the aria, the piano interrupts the g-sharp minor with the final example of this dichotomous harmonic discourse manifested as B-flat major and C major chords. These pitches of B-flat and C, when combined with the g-sharp that follows, also form part of the whole tone collection. Interestingly enough, this final attempt on the part of fate, coloured with the discourse of the major, to distract or disrupt the aria's ending is subverted by the g-sharp minor chord which cements the fate of H     as she has decided it shall be.

Was this music written only by Boulanger? Probably not. Primary source materials suggest that she and Pugno were both acquainted with aspects of the entire opera. But the harmonic language of the piece was a discourse which Boulanger alone was originally aware of and it was she who was responsible for bringing it to *La Ville Morte*. This suggests that Boulanger would have been able to exploit certain characteristics of the harmonic syntax without Pugno necessarily being aware of it. Considering that Boulanger was the one primarily acquainted with the musical techniques of Debussy; was the one predominantly concerned with the way in which H    's character was designed; and was the one responsible for endorsing the final version of the work; it is possible to suggest that her acceptance of the oeuvre came about because of the way in which she was permitted to infuse H    's character with meaning in a subversive manner. Boulanger's own subtle compositional language allowed her a method by which to express her own counter-hegemonic gender discourse, while at the same time appearing to acquiesce to societal expectations.

CONCLUSIONS

All conclusions drawn by this document have either been made possible or have been further enhanced by the incorporation of theories from the fields of gender studies, feminism, and feminist musicology. By identifying the gender discourses -- both societal and musical -- which Boulanger was exposed to and, then demonstrating how she navigated these discourses, reveals an increasingly variegated personality not currently represented in the literature.

What Was Nadia Boulanger's Role in the Making of *La Ville Morte*?

Nadia Boulanger was indeed intrinsic to the making of *La Ville Morte*, being its co-composer and main production proponent directly following Pugno's death in 1914. Boulanger prepared all of the score materials and was responsible for writing out the entire working libretto for the work, appearing more enthusiastic and motivated in writing the opera than her collaborator. She befriended the librettist, Gabrielle d'Annunzio and his mistress Elanora Duse, despite their notorious reputations. It was also Boulanger who completed the last edits to the piano proofs of the work after Pugno had died and she who attempted to have the opera performed at least twice following the end of World War I. Boulanger served as the main correspondent between herself, Pugno, and the librettist Gabrielle d'Annunzio, as well as being implicated in discussions with Henri Heugel, the work's publisher, and a possible financial backer, the Comte de Jan Martino. All of these actions were exceptional for a female in *fin-de-siècle* Paris, most especially the constant public appearances she would have made unescorted.

Compilation of secondary and primary sources has aided in placing a date of inception for *La Ville Morte* as circa August 1909, a year earlier than other sources state,

with the first notes of the opera being written on 22 May 1910. The earlier date of 1909 places the work at the most prolific compositional period in Boulanger's life and implies that she viewed this opera as an important project towards becoming a professional composer. In addition to this, Boulanger's actions while writing the opera, including independently contacting publishers, adds weight to the claim that Boulanger indeed tried to build a career for herself as a composer and performer prior to the year 1914.

The music of *La Ville Morte* is heavily influenced by the aesthetic styles of both Fauré and Debussy and for this reason connects Boulanger more strongly than Pugno with the choice of musical language for the opera. Also, comments made throughout the working libretto show that Boulanger was intensely concerned with the treatment of the character Héb  who it is possible that she, in some way, identified with autobiographically. The dramatic placement, text, and music of Act III, Scene 5 display a strong feminist discourse. Especially significant is the way in which the character of H    may be interpreted as a counter-hegemonic symbol of femininity compared with traditional operatic gender discourses of the period. Based on the connection between Boulanger, the musical techniques used in this scene, and the character of H   , it could be suggested that Boulanger espoused certain subversive feminist ideologies which were eventually manifested in her music.

What was the Relationship between Pugno and Boulanger?

There is much anecdotal evidence to suggest that Boulanger and Pugno were more than just collaborators. Doda Conrad,¹ Annette Dieudonn , Jules Gentil,² and others

¹ Doda Conrad also describes how Boulanger kept a picture of Pugno, d'Annunzio, and La Duse on her piano along with her family, Stravinsky, Val ry and others. Doda Conrad, *Grandeur et Myst re d'Un*

believe that they were indeed lovers, while some, including d'Annunzio, assert that they were no more than co-workers and friends.³ Rosenstiel writes in her biography that "it soon became part of the official lore that Nadia was Pugno's mistress, a rumour which was given extra credence by the adoring way she gazed at him in public and hung on his every word."⁴ She also writes of Pugno's treatment of his wife that "[she] was relegated so much to the background so as to almost not be noticeable at all. [Pugno] treated [his wife] as if she were not there."⁵ Potter however maintains that most of the speculation about the two musicians is idle gossip, writing that "although Pugno had a reputation as a womanizer, there is no evidence to suggest that they were more than close friends and collaborators."⁶

There is evidence in Boulanger's daily agendas that she thought of Pugno as more than just a collaborator. On several occasions, she notes the comings and goings of Pugno even though this information does not pertain to their composing together.⁷ One particularly conspicuous entry is the one made on 9 June when she speaks of picking Pugno up after a concert tour. Referring to him as "very preoccupied, but very sweet,"⁸ one gains the impression that perhaps Boulanger had a crush on the senior musician, or that their relationship was more than just that of co-composers.

Mythe: Souvenirs de quarante-quatre ans d'amitié avec Nadia Boulanger, (Paris : Buchet/Chastel, 1995), 68.

² Teresa Walters, "Nadia Boulanger, Musician and Teacher: Her Life, Concepts, and Influences," (D.M.A. Diss., Peabody Institute of the John Hopkins University, 1981), 27.

³ Spycket remains neutral on this subject, Jérôme Spycket, *Nadia Boulanger* (Stuyvesant, New York : Pendragon Press, 1992), pp. 23-24; Rosenstiel and Depaulis re-affirm d'Annunzio's assertion that they were not lovers, Léonie Rosenstiel, *Nadia Boulanger, A Life in Music* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982), 49; Jacques Depaulis, *Lettres à Nadia Boulanger/Roger Ducasse*, (Sprimont, Belgium : Mardaga, 1999), 38.

⁴ Rosenstiel, 75.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁶ Caroline Potter, "Nadia Boulanger's and Raoul Pugno's *La Ville Morte*," *Opera Quarterly* 16 (2000):398.

⁷ Nadia Boulanger, *Personal Agenda – A and B*, 1910, *Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris, France, 19 - 20 May 1910 and 9 June, 1910.

⁸ Nadia Boulanger, *Personal Agenda – B*, 9 June 1910 « très préoccupé mais tres gentil »

There is also the matter of a letter written on behalf of Boulanger to Ravel castigating him severely for his treatment of Pugno.⁹ The asperity of the letter leads one to believe that Boulanger was indeed not just professionally, but also emotionally, protective of her older friend. It suggests a bond stronger than friendship between the two, or that Boulanger believed there to be one. Similarly, there is the tour of the European spas that Rosenstiel describes Boulanger and Pugno making in 1913. The absence of Mme. Pugno on this trip is quite conspicuous as is the lack of any chaperone for the two musicians.

Additionally there is the letter Boulanger wrote shortly after Pugno's death to d'Annunzio which says of her departed collaborator: "the memory of my great friend who has left us is the focal point of my life."¹⁰ Curiously, as is pointed out by Spycket, Boulanger never commemorated Pugno's death with the same devotion as she did her mother and her sister Lili. It seems conspicuous that she chose to distance herself from Pugno as strongly as she did, unless she was protecting herself in some way from the association. There is even a moment in the Rice lectures when Boulanger speaks of her trip to Russia, the trip on which Pugno would have died, and yet never mentions the older musician. She speaks of the Russian people and her memory of them, using throughout the paragraph the pronoun 'we,' referencing Pugno and herself, but she never actually mentions the pianist by name.¹¹ The possibility of a romantic relationship between Pugno and Boulanger, or even Boulanger's unrequited desire for one, would explain this distancing. Pugno would have been the first person to truly endorse and support Boulanger's talent. Surely this would have bolstered her ego to an extent. With his

⁹ Spycket, 31, 34.

¹⁰ Spycket, 42.

¹¹ Don Campbell, *Master Teacher*, Washington D.C.: Pastoral Press, 1984), 145.

support, she was also buffered from the criticism and misogyny of the Parisian music world. Could this protection and endorsement have nurtured or caused a romantic liaison between the two? Without more conclusive evidence it is difficult to say, and perhaps this will be better elucidated once the sensitive documents in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* – France are made accessible to the public in 2009. Until then, however, it is certainly possible to suggest that something more than just compositional eagerness or professional admiration kept Nadia Boulanger marking down Pugno's name in her agendas as often as she did in 1910.

Why Did Boulanger Quit Composing?

There are many reasons presented as to why Boulanger stopped composing, the most popular and romanticised of which is that she decided to devote herself to teaching and the promotion of her sister Lili's music directly following Lili's death. While Boulanger did eventually abandon composition to teach and promote her sister's music, this decision was not made abruptly in 1918 when Lili passed away, but rather over the course of a decade. From Pugno's death in 1914 up until when the last version of *La Ville Morte* was prepared, Boulanger continued to compose sporadically while also traveling to America for the first time, and helping to open the school at Fontainebleau. Boulanger was involved in many activities during this transition period; there was no distinct clear break at which she stopped composing completely in order to devote herself to others.

The second theory, stated in chapter four of this thesis, has mainly been propagated by Caroline Potter, and upholds that Boulanger was too self-critical of her own work to actually complete anything. This theory was originally stated by Annette Dieudonné in 1978 during an interview with Teresa Walters while Boulanger was still

alive.¹² While there is evidence that indicates that Boulanger was highly self-critical of her music, I suggest that this was not the sole reason for her to dismiss her aspirations in this area. I propose that Boulanger chose to quit composing because of a complex hybrid of these reasons and others.

The year 1913 would have served as the peak of Boulanger's compositional aspirations. Lili winning the Prix de Rome in the same year no doubt frustrated and encouraged Boulanger's persistent and competitive edge; it would been significant for Boulanger to have her own opera produced simultaneous to her sister's newfound publicity if for no other reason but to maintain confidence in her own professional momentum. In 1914, with the death of Pugno, Boulanger learned how difficult it would be to promote any large scale work of her own without the protection of her male colleague. The onslaught of World War I forced the dismissal of her operatic ambitions until 1918. This would have been significantly upsetting to Boulanger, considering evidence shows that she was attempting to build a career in operatic composition. If she could not succeed in having her compositions staged, she would not be able to support herself, or her family, as a composer alone.

With the end of World War I and still no guaranteed production of *La Ville Morte*, the death of Lili in March, and the mounting demand for Boulanger to secure an income for the family, the possibility of a career teaching would have begun to appear as a healthy alternative to that of a composer. Boulanger would have suffered heartbreak twice over, first with Pugno's death and then with Lili's -- two people who she would have associated with anytime she decided to compose. At this same time Boulanger started to become more and more successful as a teacher. Having lost both the motivation

¹² Walters, 39.

of competing with her sibling and the mediating assistance and companionship of Pugno, perhaps Boulanger forced herself to re-evaluate her priorities. She would have been in her mid-thirties and the high standard of living which her mother insisted upon would have presented a particularly pressing burden. Certainly a stable income and professional respectability served to make the switch to education an appealing option. The combination of all of these influences over the period of a decade lead Boulanger to embrace that which she and others recognised she was so successful at: teaching.

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Appendix M) Translation to *La Ville Morte*, Act III, Scene 5

Appendix A

Catalogue of Primary Sources and Call Numbers at the *Bibliothèque Nationale*

Autograph Musical Sources	Call Numbers	Special Notes
"La Ville Morte," sketches of Act I	MS 19676	
"La Ville Morte," Act III	MS 19675	
"La Ville Morte," complete vocal score/fair copy	MS 19674 1-4, each Act is contained in a different folder.	
"La Ville Morte," piano/vocal score proofs	Vma. 3994	
Libretto Material <i>La Ville Morte</i> , Autograph Libretto Book A,B, and C.	Th. B. 4929 (1-3)	All three of these documents are grouped together by the library. It should be noted that the bibliographic letters A, B, and C correspond to the numerical codes 1,2, and 3 respectively.
Letters Audre Lorde Letters Claude Debussy Letters Henri Heugel Letters	82 (50-51) 65 (231-239) 75 (154-158)	The letters of Nadia Boulanger have their own specially demarcated card catalogue in which all correspondence can be located alphabetically (by recipient/sender). Each of these <i>correspondents</i> is assigned a number -- the first listed here. Subsequently, each <i>piece</i> of correspondence also receives a specific number -- the bracketed number listed here. This second number also refers to the location of each letter on each spool of microfilm.
'Personal Documents' Personal Agenda – A Personal Agenda – B Letter Diary	(Rés.) Vmf. ms. 85 (Rés.) Vmf. ms. 85 (Rés.) Vmf. ms. 87	At the time that this research was conducted, these three sources were kept together in a cardboard box along with all of the rest of Boulanger's extant agendas.
Accounting Ledger	(Rés.) Vmc. ms. 132 (1)	

Appendix B
Timeline of Events – *La Ville Morte*

Date	<i>La Ville Morte</i>	Life Events
1909		
Pre – August 1909 Boulanger and Pugno begin work on <i>La Ville Morte</i>.		
		Aug 1909 Ducasse writes letter to Madame Cruppi.
		<i>Les Heures Claires</i> completed, 13 Aug.
1910		
8 January	Boulanger meets with Count Jan Martino.	
15 January	Boulanger meets with publishers Heugel and Hamelle.	
	30 April First meeting with d'Annunzio.	
12 May – 20 May	Meetings with d'Annunzio.	
	22 May First notes of <i>La Ville Morte</i> are written.	
		25 May Dieudonné comes to study with Boulanger.
9 June	Pugno returns from a concert tour.	

		25 June Boulanger meets Igor Stravinsky for the first time.
		End of Summer, Roger Ducasse works on <i>Martyre de Saint-Sébastien</i> .
6 September	Telegram from Boulanger to d'Annunzio.	
1911		
Pre-May	Letter from Boulanger to d'Annunzio asking for <i>Saint Sébastien</i> tickets.	
2 July Letter from Boulanger to d'Annunzio. Acts I and II are almost finished and the sketches for Act III have been started.		
1912		
18 July	Markings made in Act IV of the autograph libretto.	
28 July	Letter from Boulanger to d'Annunzio asking for edits for the "corner-stone" of the opera, Act III.	
	Undated letter from Pugno to Henri Cain.	
Early August 1912	Pugno grants interview to American reporter Ward Stephens.	

Summer 1912 Completion of the score for <i>La Ville Morte</i>		
7 December	Letter from Boulanger to D'Annunzio.	
1913 January	<i>Musica</i> publishes that Pugno and Boulanger have finished <i>La Ville Morte</i> and are working on <i>La Rédemption de Colin Muset</i> , libretto by Maurice Léon and Henri Cain.	
	Pugno publishes interview in <i>Excelsior</i> .	
31 January	Heugel writes to Boulanger of first meeting with Directors of the Opéra Comique.	
		5 July 1913, Lili Boulanger is the first woman to win the <i>Prix de Rome</i>.
		Summer 1913, Pugno and Boulanger tour spas of Europe together.
	Undated First letter from Audre Lourde.	

3 September	Letter to Boulanger from Audre Lourde.	
1914		3 January, Raoul Pugno dies during a concert tour to Russia.
	Telegram sent to d'Annunzio from Boulanger.	
5 March	Boulanger purchases paper to copy out "poème Ville Morte."	
29 May	Boulanger makes final edits to piano proofs.	
17 June	Boulanger is paid 2000 francs for <i>La Ville Morte</i> .	
17 August	Casting complete and chorus rehearsals scheduled for <i>La Ville Morte</i> .	
Shortly after 17 August	Gheusi is mobilized.	
1916	Opéra-Comique produces a publication to announce <i>La Ville Morte</i> would be performed.	
1918	Gheusi leaves the Opéra-Comique.	15 March 1918, Lili Boulanger dies.
1922		Boulanger completes her last 4 songs.

1923	Boulanger re-works <i>La Ville Morte</i> for Albert-Carré, new director of the Opéra-Comique.	
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Legend:

Pivotal dates or Events

Important dates or events

Events with approximate dates

Appendix C
Compositions of Nadia Boulanger from 1909.

Composition		Date(s)	Publisher and Dates
<i>Soir d'Été, en essai</i> for the <i>Prix de Rome</i>		4 voices with orch	
<i>Roussalka</i> (Dnégouchka)	Text: Adenis, Desveaux-Vérité, after Pushkin	3 voices with orch	4 June (completed) Hamel, 1909.
<i>Les Heures Claires</i> (with Pugno)	Text: E. Verhaeren.	Solo voice and piano	13 August (completed)
<i>Douze Mélodies</i>	Text : Verlaine, Samain, Delaquys, Heine, Maeterlinck, Bataille.		1914 (completed) Heugel published 1-7 in 1909. 1914, published 1-12.
<i>Compiègne</i>		1909	
<i>La Ville Morte</i>	Text: Gabrielle d'Annunzio; adaptation of <i>La Città Morta</i> .	ca. Aug 1909-summer 1912	P/V score, Heugel, 1914.

Appendix D
Telegram from Boulanger to d'Annunzio
6 September 1910

Believe it necessary to stop sending definitive details by correspondance. Losing time and and we will explain. Strongly wish to have a meeting. Say whether it is possible to see you. Fix place and time. Will be purposeful. Please respond to this telegram before reception of announced letter. Must be Saturday night.

My affection.

NADIA BOULANGER

Appendix E
Letter from Boulanger to d'Annunzio
6 September 1910

Dear d'Annunzio,

I do not know what response you will give to the hurried message I sent this morning, and therefore do not know whether to wait to give you my most grateful thanks.

With the new information you sent us, you have obliged us to make music for the sake of music and it seems to me that you felt that we should build it a temple where its unique presence and pure demeanor, would be the sole focus of our love and service.

I do not know how what to do with *La Ville Morte*, but I know already that all our spirit and all our pride that will give splendor to your manuscript, remains intact and we would not aid in destroying that which we adore so fervently.

I know that for you this could be nothing but a tedious chore, this necessary editing – with your kindness you have made yourself a musician, and for us you have brought forth from your mind a new *Ville Morte*, which, without destroying the first, nor by crudely adjusting it to the circumstance, but rather by suggestion, by virtue of the perfect essence you have infused it with, has given us more than it appeared we would ever have.

These lines have a little in common with the telegram which of course you will have received with a shrug, annoyed, sending to the devil all the inquisitors who come to trouble your peace. But many reasons left us to consider that it would be much simpler for us to hear from you definitively, avoiding long, difficult letters, so we have taken this chance!

Forse che si, forse che no...!!

And while waiting, I am writing you these few hasty lines, because one is always busy here and the only courier who travels near you leaves at 4 o'clock and is going to ring here shortly. I am not eloquent, not orally or literally, but I am counting on your intuition to show you, such as they are, the many sentiments which I attach to the tragedy which you permit me to call *our* tragedy, since you have in some ways, almost abandoned it, and which has made itself, each day, our passionate desire to know, to learn how to become more intimate with it, to love it with meaning, if we can, bestow all the love in our hearts to it.

The news which you gave me on the subject of Ducasse pleased me greatly, since he is a grand musician and a very dear friend. I am sure that you will greatly love his vast intelligence and heart of an artist.

I have given you no details about us, expecting to do so in person. Nonetheless, I can already tell you that we have done a large amount of work, and do not believe we are misleading ourselves.

Mother and Lili, very touched by your greeting, ask me to send you theirs – This I do asking you to believe, dear Sir, in my profound sentiments of admiration.

NADIA BOULANGER

Appendix F
Letter from Boulanger to d'Annunzio
Undate (ca. May 1911)

Dear Sir and Friend,

Pugno and I will have the greatest desire to be present at the premiere of *The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastien* – Is it grossly indiscreet to ask you for two seats? I want to believe that your response will not hold ill judgement against us.

In any case, we will see you on the first of May... Be kind and don't refuse this joy to your two collaborators who await your new work impatiently – and send us something for the 20.

In advance, *I thank you* and in the hopes of seeing you again soon, I selfishly – like the author of *La Città Morta*, ask you to not forget my sentiments of admiration and great sympathy.

NADIA BOULANGER

Appendix G
Letter From Boulanger to d'Annunzio
2 July 1911
Page 1

Dear Monsieur D'Annunzio

It has been ten days since Saint Sebastien came to brighten my life and... I did not know how to find a minute to give you great thanks for that which has borne in me such an agreeable feeling.

I cannot say that it is thanks to him that I read your work, but since its publication in *L'Illustration* it has been one of my companions, the best, I believe, for my inner self and knowing now that it is you who created it is infinitely pleasing.

I have heard *Saint-Sebastien* four times and circumstances beyond my control stopped me from seeing more. If I didn't write to you at that exact moment, it is first because I did not know if I could silence myself, and because I was afraid that in breaking the silence I would then not know how to say what my heart and mind felt and continue to feel, enduring from that moment on.

Fairly enough, I have the advantage of speaking to you today, having been in the moment where it is no longer possible to be content with yourself in silent admiration of that which you love.

For a long time, I have renounced any opportunity to hear this subject, but I am certain that you are too intuitive and too sensible to not understand that my entire artistic soul has been moved and expanded by your admirable art, immense and inexhaustible.

I know well that all manifestation of enthusiasm in a woman, to a man seems to reveal her to be ridiculous, a little hysterical, and that she risks the smile of male vanity and indulgence for all her excessive habits, imponderable and too numerous to stop and think of. Knowing this has often made it difficult for me to express my feelings, because I would feel naïve, sad and a little ashamed, that the expression and the condensation of the best of me, which is taken by others as a passing rather than permanent passion, but always superficial and in any case, very strange to my way of being and feeling.

You do not know me well, dear Sir, and thus will maybe find it strange, this long useless letter – but in my defence, perhaps you will permit me to explain myself.

My entire life found its *raison d'être* its peace and its conscience, its repose and its purest truth, in faith, in desire, and in love of that which is beautiful - truly beautiful.

I am not lying nor exaggerating in recognizing that your work is at the center of my religion and I want, once and for all, to be liberated of little hindrances which persist each time I would like to express a grand admiration for someone. Now, I would like, facing you to speak freely... I would like to add, without too much pride, I would like to add that beings far superior to myself have expressed their hearts in waiting for your work, in their love, in their atmosphere, but none among them knew how to give more sincerely.

Appendix G
Letter From Boulanger to d'Annunzio
2 July 1911
Page 2

And this brings me back to *La Ville Morte* (I am always so close that distraction is hardly possible) – If you only knew with what ardour, with what pity, and with what joy we work. I do not know how we will succeed, but I do know that each of the notes will come from the most intimate depths of ourselves – and it seems to me that one thing cannot fail to give our score a lasting value: and that is the sincerity and intense emotion that our two hearts give to it.

We are now at the moment of defining the 3rd act – as for the first two, they are virtually finished – May we show them to you?

We would be so happy to let you hear them and we are so impatient for your impression which would surely be a guide and perhaps a burning inspiration.

Make an effort, take up your pen, tell us where you are if you are able to look at it – give us a sign of life – and be our friend – we assure you that this would help us and bring us much joy.

Forgive me for having kept you for so long (admitting that is, if you're reading these lines) and with most cordial and fond remembrances of those you admire here, receive the most profound and best thoughts of your two 'chercheurs de notes.'

NADIA BOULANGER

Appendix H
Letter From Boulanger to d'Annunzio
28 July 1912

Dear Sir and Friend,

Since your departure we have worked with ardour and waited with patience...

At this time we have almost finished – and a little anguish is growing between us, because we are missing the 3rd act and its revisions – now the fever to write which we possess so entirely, has the need to know no interruptions. It is for this reason that I come to you, begging fervently for you to give us the corner stone of *La Ville Morte*. The weeks which have just passed were for us full of enthusiasm, joy and emotion and I hope that you will feel it, or rather, that we will show you that we have searched to the bottom of our souls for this work – for far from feeling fatigued from all the work that is piling up right now, we have found new sources to draw from, living each day more intensely, more completely with these beings so dear to us now, so familiar, so close.

We have, amongst others, a great desire to see you again – for your words would surely bring us so much joy – and are the only thing for which we wait, henceforth, pure and intact, for what musician will judge us and understand our effort, like you have done – with a technical precision and a magic of words that we would be... naïve to wait for our colleagues!

And we assure you, with a sincerity such as is reserved for our manuscript, your fraternity remains with us, in success or in failure, unchangeably good, uniquely dear.

Please don't torture us, dear friend, and work in a way that we might quickly receive the third act, so we can finish!

Thinking affectionately of you, Pugno et moi, extend our hands to you.

Your,
 NADIA BOULANGER

P.S. Must I explain these corrections? I hope that you do not take offence to the familiarity and annoyance which they cause and that you do not wish me to have so little courage as to send it like this, since I know too well that I should have recopied this note – but...I count on your indulgence.

Appendix I
Telegram from Boulanger to d'Annunzio
7 December 1912

I am starting out alone at 5 a.m. Monday, dear friend, since Pugno cannot be closer.

We live in the memory of the hours profoundly good, beautiful and comforting that we had when you were here. Affectionately we extend our hands.

NADIA BOULANGER.

Appendix J
Letter from Audre Lorde to Nadia Boulanger
3 September 1913

Transcription :

Mademoiselle,

Voulez-vous, je vous prie, prendre la peine de me téléphones jeudi ou vendredi entre 1h et 1h1/2. J'ai une communication de la plus intéressants, je crois, à vous faire.

Sentiments respectueux,

Audre Lorde

Translation :

Mademoiselle,

Could you please be so kind as to take the trouble to call me Thursday or Friday between 1 and 1:30. I believe I have some very interesting information for you.

Respectfully Yours

Audre Lorde

Appendix K
Letter from Audre Lorde to Nadia Boulanger
Undated

Transcription :

7 : 836-83

5 Rue L'Abbé de L'Epée

Je n'ai pas besoin de vous dire que votre projet m'intéresse beaucoup mais je dois vous prévenir [dire] que M. Ricardi, mon éditeur a sure qualité pour prendre une décision.

Audre Lorde

Translation:

It goes without saying that your project interests me greatly, but I have to tell you that Mr. Ricardi, my editor is the only one allowed to make such a decision.

Audre Lorde

Appendix L
Telegram from Boulanger to d'Annunzio
1914

Received a grave letter from Gheusi saying that the absence of documents or the necessity of doing the scenery without your collaboration which is so inspired makes it impossible to mount *La Ville Morte*. I beg of you, dear great friend, reply with your decision immediately. The time is now quite dark to be thinking of such personal things, but Gheusi is insistent.

To you affection and a memory.

NADIA BOULANGER.

Appendix M

Translation of Text from *La Ville Morte*, Act 3, Scene 5 taken from:
Autograph Libretto, Book A and Nadia Boulanger and Raoul Pugno. *La Ville Morte*.
 Paris: Heugel, 1914, 246-254.

Vous me voyez mes soeurs Voyez- je m'abandonne Je bois mes deniers pleurs O ma douce Antigone Pauvre Cassandre, et toi, Apprêtez ma couronne Je bois mes pleurs, je bois Mon sang, je bois mon fiel Pour la dernière fois Je regarde le ciel Qu'emplissait l'alouette De son hymne immortel Comme une pierre muette Elle gît dans le sillon Et l'ombre était sa fête! J'ai chanté ma chanson Or, comme toi vivante, Je vais à l'Achéron Antigone, à là garde Ombre qui tout endort Et j'aurai ta garlande J'aurai ton masque d'or Scelle, o Priamide Sur mon visage mort Dans ton sépulcre vide Panure fille de roi. Coda O nuit, descends plus vite Mes sœurs, accueillez-moi!	<i>Trying to find him in the maze of the dead city she climbs the stairs. As she reaches the top step; she turns around, gasping, pressing herself against the column resting thusly to look at the ruins under the deathly ashes. A gust of wind again carries a shred of the savage choir's song.</i> The Choir – We have drank our tears, our tears! <i>Silent tears fall upon the virgin's face.</i> Hébé, <i>largly spoken</i> – You see me, my sisters, see! I give in. I drink my last tears. Oh my dear Antigone, and you kind Cassandra, prepare my crown, <i>with grandeur</i> I drink my tears, I drink my blood, I drink my bile, for the last time. I watch the sky which is filled with the birds of your immortal hymn. Like a silent rock, she lies in the furrow. <i>Largely</i> And in shadow she celebrated! I have sung my song. So, like you, living, I go to Acheron, Antigone, to the vast shadow in which all sleep, And I will have your garland. I will have your mask of gold sealed, O Priamide, on my dead face, in your wide grave, poor daughter of the king. O night, fall quickly! My sisters collect me! <i>She lets herself fall at the foot of the column, without any noise, with the silent lightness of a folded veil; and there, folded upon herself, she cries silently.</i>
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