

# On the function of the Tristan chord in Vincent d'Indy's dramatic compositions

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## 1. Introduction and problem statement.

The Tristan chord became a symbol of Wagnerian style for many composers (Claude Debussy, Alban Berg, Hanns Eisler, Benjamin Britten, Paul Lansky, Flávio Chamis etc.), due to, firstly, its phonic qualities and the degree of tension, as were considered in Ernst Kurth's famous treatise, and secondly, because of the extra-musical semantic layer, connected with it. The symbolic and emblematic function of the Tristan chord in post-Wagnerian opuses is discussed, for example, by Mark de Voto [1995], from whose reasoning it follows, firstly, that this sonorance is interpreted simply as a self-valuable "sign of the presence" of the Wagnerian trace (regardless of the meanings that this trace may potentially have — or it may not have); and secondly, that the semantics of the Tristan chord in *Götterdämmerung* and *Parsifal* is modified relative to "Tristan" and involves not so much the dialectic of the concepts of Love and Death, as the idea of destruction, the immutability of fate and the inevitability of cataclysm and the associated idea of damnation. Thus, the extra-musical meaning of the Tristan chord is directed towards both strengthening of tragic connotations,<sup>1</sup> which is undoubtedly facilitated by the specific harmonic quality of the Tristan chord, its immanent musical meaning,<sup>2</sup> to the study of which thousands of pages of scientific texts have been devoted. Their analytical review, in and of itself, could serve as the subject of a special study.<sup>3</sup> In general, the long course of

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<sup>1</sup> In *Tristan* itself, this chord marks the desire for inner peace, found conceptually — in the unity of dialectic opposites, and harmonically — in the final tonic of B major. In the "post-Tristan" operas, the appearance of this chord addresses the idea of ontological disharmony and the forces that cause it. Evidently, the semantics of the Tristan chord depend both on the sphere of extra-musical meanings of a particular opera, and on the context, semantic and the very musical (the leitmotifs, in the structure of which the Tristan chord is included, have their own circle of meanings).

<sup>2</sup> De Voto deduces the very possibility of an ambivalent interpretation of the harmonic function of the Tristan chord from its structure, paying special attention to the specifics of the diminished triad [De Voto, 139-140], which, one can add, even due to the acoustic properties of the triton depends on the context, in the aspect of modal gravity.

<sup>3</sup> Even in the last third of the XIX century, a lot of attempts were made to interpret the harmonic role of the Tristan Chord (e.g., [Mayrberger 1881]), and in the 1900s the first reviews of different interpretations appeared. See, for example: [Arend 1902, 105], [La Rédaction 1904, 156-158]. Summarizing all the functional interpretations of the Tristan chord, Nathan Martin has revealed "five broad families" of "explanations of the Tristan chord", which "take the Tristan chord as (1) a functional half-diminished seventh chord, (2) a minor triad with added sixth, (3) some sort of "pre-dominant" sonority, (4) a dominant-functioned harmony, and (5) a sonority that cannot be analyzed

history of harmonic analysis relating to the Tristan chord resulted in the conclusion that it has two aspects of perception and interpretation. First, it is to be found in the phonic qualities of the chord, its sounding as a “colour”; second, its harmonic function among other chords, constituting the *Sehnsuchtsmotiv*. From these perspectives, Jean-Jacques Nattiez indicates ‘two large families,’ related to the Tristan chord and the corresponding leitmotif, and two types of researchers: ‘those that ascribe some weight to the functional succession of chords, and those that do not’ [Nattiez 1990, 223].

Having the nature of a case study, this article does not aim to analyse all possible interpretations of the Tristan chord as a harmonic element and as a special sign referring to a whole layer of extra-musical meanings. Instead, it will focus on the implementation of this chord in the *musical texts* of Vincent d’Indy, who was – among all the French composers of the *fin de siècle* era – an ardent Wagnerist till his death in 1931, when, on the one hand, Wagner’s art became part of cultural memory, included in a new socio-political context and cultural sphere (e.g., experiments concerning the actualization of extra-musical sense of the Wagnerian dramas in the field of cinema), but, on the other hand, within boundaries of the development of the genre of opera itself, properties of Wagnerian drama as synthetic performance, its philosophical layer and its musical language as such began to be perceived as anachronistic (see, for example: [Holman 2001, 372-373]). The case of d’Indy is all the more interesting because, unlike, for example, Dukas or Debussy, he assessed Wagner’s influence on French culture as extremely fruitful, without which the development of neither real French musical drama nor French symphonism would have taken place. The leitmotif method was embodied in the scores of French composers in the form of a “cyclic principle”,<sup>4</sup> and the essence of the development of thematic material is represented by three main discoveries of Wagner: “the systematic intervention of chromatism”, “the remote transient modulations”, and “the alteration of tonal functions” [Indy 1930, 46-47, 60].

According to d’Indy, the last discovery finds its brilliant implementation just within the Tristan chord and its harmonic properties [Indy 1930, 47]. Obviously, it is this chord that reveals two other discoveries of Wagner: being integrated into the chromatic movement of chords, it often becomes the source of intense tonal development, with consideration to “ruptures of cadences”, marking the Wagnerian style [Ibid.]. That’s why it was Tristan chord

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in tonal terms” [Martin 2008, 7]; see also: [Gillie 2014, 69]. Summing up a kind of generalisation, one of the researchers notes: “But the Tristan chord was unanalysable. Musicologists have never agreed about how to characterize it <...>” [Magee 2001, 206].

<sup>4</sup> See: [Indy 1909, 375-378]; [Saint Arroman 2019, 13].

who could serve as a kind of emblem for d'Indy, a sign of Wagner's artistic thinking. Moreover, since the French composer was in the paradigm of “music as a language”, he actually considers this chord, together with the one following it, as the smallest syntactic structure – a “harmonic cell” [Indy 1909, 237-238],<sup>5</sup> which, having an expressive value in itself, serves to generate more extended structures, such as a motif, theme or musical idea.<sup>6</sup> And, since musical language is considered by the composer as a correlate of a system of verbal signs [Indy 1933, 6], in the sphere of “dramatic music” (which includes both music with words and with poetic program)<sup>7</sup> such a “cell” might be corresponded with the circle of extra-musical meanings. Thus, for d'Indy, the integration of the Tristan chord into musical texture of his *dramatic* scores, which he himself called “Wagnerian”: *Le Chant de la cloche* (1879-1883), *L'Étranger* (1898-1901), *La Légende de Saint Christophe* (1908-1915) [Indy 1930, 66],<sup>8</sup> leads to 1) its inclusion similar to an element of Wagner's language into d'Indy's “idiolect” in order to reach a new quality within his own style<sup>9</sup> via the assimilation of phonic and harmonic properties of this chord; and 2) the adoption of its extra-musical meanings. In dramatic works, each musical element is connected with concrete extra-musical meaning, predetermined by a plot, a scenic situation, a philosophical idea etc. In this case, elements of musical “language”, despite its metaphorical status, seem to be *signifying* a complex of extra-musical connotations as *signified*. In other words, it is the presence of a non-sounding semantic layer, which presupposes *semiotic* interconnections between itself and the musical material.

As for the Tristan chord, it was Wagner himself, who defined its particular extra-musical sense and endowed it with the status of a sign through its famous quotation in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (on this subject see, e.g.: [Huebner 1999, 370]). When including Wagner's quotations in the context of “foreign” idiolects, they produce a double reference to an extra-musical layer: the first is revealed in a direct manner, and the second presupposes the evoking in the recipient's perception and characteristics of consciousness as well as sense of images and situations of Wagner' dramas, non-represented, but entailed. To establish a link between these

<sup>5</sup> By “cell” (*la cellule*), or “monad” (*la monade*) d'Indy means the smallest indivisible structural unit of musical texture. See: [Indy 1909, 234]; [Indy 1912, 26].

<sup>6</sup> On the term “idea” see: (Indy 1909, 241); (Indy 1912, 12, 18, 43).

<sup>7</sup> As for the division of all music into two spheres, *la musique symphonique* and *la musique dramatique*, see: [Indy 1912, 27].

<sup>8</sup> The only exception is the opera *Fervaal* (1889 - 1893), in which the minor major ninth chord (with a minor or major ninth) has a similar function.

<sup>9</sup> On “idiolect” and “sociolect” see the theory of Michele Rieffatterre, who elaborated principles of relevance for these or those verbal elements to the lexical, stylistic, syntactic and morphologic properties of a text as an author's manifestation. The choice of Rieffatterre's theory is caused by its possibility to explain the non-verbal systems of signs in terms of their function as correlates of verbal ones. See: [Rieffatterre 1981, 235-236].

two extra-musical systems of meanings is one of the most important functions of the idea of quotations. That's why d'Indy reserves the Tristan chord and the similarly related "longing motif" (*Sehnsuchtsmotiv*) for such scenic situations, which, in the aspect of their philosophical, emotional, and ideological senses, are very similar to their "doubles" in Wagner's operas.

Furthermore, in being quoted, Wagnerian "linguistic" elements possess the double *immanent* meaning, through being included in two different musical "idiolects". Such a kind of meaning is a derivative of timbre, harmonic, phonic and other qualities of musical elements. Therefore, d'Indy chooses the most characteristic and recognizable elements of Wagner's language, which can serve as valuable structures in themselves in terms of both semantics and their constructive properties. They should, accordingly, on the one hand, be quite clearly isolated from the sounding context surrounding them, and on the other hand, have some properties in common with it, so as not to feel like foreign inserts. D'Indy does not yet think in a postmodern way and does not consider such quotes as the basis for building a collage, although he is approaching such a method in *La Légende de Saint Christophe*.

Therefore, the "appropriating" of the Tristan chord and the *Sehnsuchtsmotiv* as the semantic symbols in d'Indy's scores allows one to create a kind of dialog between two semantic systems, Wagner's and d'Indy's, to articulate the correlations of extra-musical meanings, and to establish the properties of musical language, which were appropriated by d'Indy and became the elements of his own "idiolect". Moreover, it seems that, when developing his librettos, d'Indy specially created scenes similar to those of Wagner's dramas, in order to make the assimilation of Wagner's language more natural. This experience of creating intertextual connections can be considered a characteristic of the French opera tradition *fin de siècle* (*Le Roi Arthus* by Chausson, *Pelléas and Mélisande* by Debussy), but a comparative analysis of the implementation of this element within the variety of scores (and not only dramatic) of French musicians should also be investigated as a special task.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Thus, for example, Naomi Perley evaluates the influence of the *Sehnsuchtsmotiv* on the thematic structure of Franck's String Quartet (1890), especially in the second and the third movements (see: [Perley 2019, 72, 76-85, 87-88, 97-100, 103-104, 116-117]): "The Tristan allusions shatter any initial impression that this Quartet, by virtue of being an absolute work, might be devoid of an extramusical narrative" [Perley 2019, 72]. It's logical to reveal such quotations in the other symphonic works of the composers belonging to Franck's school, taking into consideration d'Indy's opinion on Wagner's influence on French culture. Among French composers of the *fin de siècle* epoch, it was Debussy, whose musical heritage has been under consideration in terms of his utilization of Tristan quotations in most cases, because of his outstanding role in the development of a new musical language. Scientists concentrate on the assimilation of the Tristan motifs in *Pelléas* (e.g. [Abbate 1981, 139-140], [De Voto 1995, 147], [Huebner 1999, 477]) and in Debussy's instrumental music ([De Voto 1995, 146], [De Voto 2014, 6], [Marion 2007, § 26, 27, 30, 32-34, 42-44], [Deville 2014, 24], the last sphere produces a large circle of extra-musical meaning connections and interpretations).

Concentrating precisely on the logic of the embodiment of the Tristan chord in d'Indy's scores, we can reveal 1) the composer's strategies of including the Tristan chord into a harmonic context of his own musical language in order to make it form a seamlessly integrated element; 2) the philosophical ideas, which are connected with semantics of the Tristan chord in d'Indy's interpretation and which cause the specificity of plot and characters in his dramatic works; 3) the measure of the presence of the "Wagnerian" layer in d'Indy's scores as a stylistic marker. If d'Indy's musical and dramatic opuses were considered in terms of the problem of the French style, in its relationship with the influence of Wagner's style, even during the composer's lifetime (for example: [Destranges 1890]), then the identification of the functions of the Tristan chord as a leitmotif in d'Indy's works has not yet been viewed as the subject for special consideration (with the exception of the use of harmony in *L'Étranger* [Huebner 2006]).<sup>11</sup>

Nevertheless, *Tristan und Isolde* was one of Wagner's dramas which d'Indy repeatedly considered from a theoretical perspective, along with *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, *Parsifal*, and *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. For example, in Book III of the treatise *Cours de composition musicale* such factors of the dramaturgy development in *Tristan und Isolde* as essential leitmotifs (*les motifs conducteurs* [Indy 1909, 375])<sup>12</sup> and significant tonalities (*les tonalités significatives*, see: [Indy 1930, 50-51])<sup>13</sup> are considered. The Tristan chord *per se* is analysed in Books I, II, and III of the *Cours*, as well as in an essay on the Wagnerian influence in French music [Indy 1912, 117-119]; [Indy 1909, 237-238]; [Indy 1950, 152, 209]; [Indy 1930, 47]. D'Indy not only explores the musical texture of *Tristan*, but also compares this drama to his own compositions. Thus, according to d'Indy, the theme of masculine heroics (*le thème héroïque masculin*) in Act 3 of *Fervaal* can be correlated with a variant of the theme of honour (*le thème de l'honneur*) from Act 3 of *Tristan* [Indy 1950, 209].

<sup>11</sup> Steven Huebner mentions the Tristan chord quotations in Massenet's *Esclarmonde* [Huebner 1999, 89-90, 98] and Chausson's *Le Roi Arthur* [Ibid., 378, 385], and touches on the theoretical reception of this chord in d'Indy's texts [Ibid., 311] in order to establish the basis of invention of the significant key systems, proposed by d'Indy concerning Wagner's dramas. Observing the functional interpretation of the Tristan chord in d'Indy's theoretical works, it's useful to take into consideration the report of Damien Ehrhardt "Zur Riemann-Rezeption in Frankreich" (The International Conference "Hugo Riemann: Musikforschung zwischen Universalität, Nationalismus und internationaler Ausstrahlung", Universität Leipzig, 10-12. Juli 2019), and also, for example, the outputs of Serge Gut [Gut 1998, 278] and Jean-Jaques Nattiez [Nattiez 1990, 37, 46-47, 53, 217, 219-226, 228-229, 230-233].

<sup>12</sup> D'Indy used various terms to designate the repeated themes, uniting the structure of the composition. However, he determined the equivalence of the German term *Leit Motiv* (the composer preferred the separate spelling) and its literal French translation *motif conducteur* ("leading motif"). See: [Indy 1909, 385].

<sup>13</sup> By "significant tonalities" d'Indy meant those which have specific semantics within a musical-dramatic composition and in addition form "compositional rhymes" at a distance, which provide the structural perfection of the whole. D'Indy compiled tables of "important tonalities" in Wagner's works, in particular in those belonging to the mature period of the German composer's creative activity, such as *Tristan und Isolde* [Indy 1950, 151-152], *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* [Indy 1950, 162], *Parsifal* [Indy 1950, 174-175], and the Tetralogy [Indy 1950, 286-287].

## 2. The harmonic function of the Tristan chord in d'Indy's interpretation.

D'Indy adheres to the simplest functional interpretation of the Tristan chord. Contrary to most researchers, such as Carl Mayrberger, Emile Ergo, Arnold Schoenberg, and Ernst Kurth, d'Indy sees nothing specific about the Tristan chord in terms of its function and believes that its conjunction with the chord that follows is of no interest. According to the composer, the complex harmonic analysis of the *Sehnsuchtsmotiv* suggested by some “ignorant people” (*les ignorants*) influenced the “reputation” (*la réputation*) of Wagner’s “harmonic system” (*système harmonique*) [Indy 1912, 118].

In the first volume of the *Cours*, d'Indy states: ‘Harmonic analysis [...] consists [...] – exclusively in indicating the *tonal functions* of a chord’ (*L'analyse de l'harmonie [...] consiste [...] seulement à rechercher les fonctions tonales de l'Accord*) [Indy 1912, 117; italics original; all translations in this article are by the author]. This implies that 1) a chord is considered within a particular context, which is specified by analyzing the modulation; 2) all the dissonant (*added*) tones (*les notes artificielles dissonnantes*) are removed, since they appear only due to the melodic progression of the voices, but are absent in the initial chord [Indy 1912, 117; italics original]. To illustrate the second rule, d'Indy cites the *Sehnsuchtsmotiv* and notes:

The harmony connoisseurs would have excelled themselves defining the first chord, using the most complex and sophisticated terms, such as “a chord with an augmented second (*Accord de seconde augmentée*)”, “the third inversion of the diminished seventh chord from G with altered D” or even “the chord with an augmented sixth (*Accord de sixte sensible*), the second inversion of the dominant seventh chord from the root note B with an altered (diminished) fifth and the descending *appoggiatura* to the seventh.” This enigmatic chord, whose sounding made Berlioz scream, is nothing other than a melodic compression on itself (*contracté mélodiquement sur lui-même*) of *tonal chord in A [minor]* in the *subdominant function* (*l'accord tonal de la en fonction sous-dominante*), and the harmonic sequence, the scheme of which we see here,<sup>14</sup> is ultimately the simplest in the world [Indy 1912, 117; italics original (Ex. 1)].

Function of subdominant                      Function of dominant

Ex.1: D'Indy's analysis of the Tristan chord.

<sup>14</sup> D'Indy then provides a musical example:  $F - A - D^1 - A^1 \rightarrow E - G \text{ sharp} - E^1 - B^1$ .

Jean-Jacques Nattiez identifies the Riemannian origin of such a view [Nattiez, 1990, 223-225].

[...] we have those analyses inspired by Riemannian doctrine. For Riemann, [...] all chords could be reduced to three functions: I, IV, and V. This single transcendent principle, however, will not necessarily generate a single, unique analytical solution. Different authors, faced with the chord's ambiguity, will play with the chord's constituent elements in terms of quite different plots [Nattiez 1990, 223].

In the *Cours de composition musicale*, d'Indy posits several rules based on Riemannian principles. First, he mentions 'the inertia of our comprehension, preferring a simpler action to a more complex one' (*l'inertie de notre entendement, qui préfère une opération plus simple à une opération plus compliquée*) [Indy 1912, 115]. Second, the composer is convinced that 'the study of harmony is reduced, by means of cadences, to the *three tonal functions of a chord (trois fonctions tonales de l'Accord)*, i.e., to the strict application of the *principle of tonality (principe de tonalité)*' [Indy 1912, 116; italics original]. Finally, as Nattiez has illustrated, 'd'Indy [...] summarized his conception of tonal harmony, in what amounts to a distant echo of the Latin *credo*, as follows' [Nattiez 1990, 224]:

1) there is *only one chord*, a *perfect* chord; it alone is consonant, because it alone generates a feeling of repose and balance; 2) this chord has *two different forms*, *major* and *minor*, depending on whether the chord is composed of a minor third over a major third, or a major third over a minor; 3) this chord is able to take on *three different tonal functions: tonic, dominant or subdominant* [Indy 1912, 116; italics original].<sup>15</sup>

According to Nattiez, unlike Riemann, who explained the Tristan chord as a chord containing D sharp and a "lowered seventh", d'Indy 'arrives at a different chordal structure because he rejects the Riemannian theory of the added "lowered seventh"' [Nattiez 1990, 224]. Following Riemann's theory of undertones, the minor triad should be built from its highest tone down, since the highest tone is considered to be the root of the chord. Thus, the chord is viewed as *a-f-d#-b↓*, with the root *a* [Riemann 1909, 714 (Ex. 2)]; while d'Indy regards *a-f-d* as the structural basis of the Tristan chord and defines it as the subdominant S.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> These notions can be compared to those of Riemann: 'I. There are only two types of sounds: overtones and undertones (*Oberklänge und Unterklänge*). All dissonant chords should be understood, explained, and described as modifications of over- or undertones. II. There are only three tonal functions of harmony (functions within a tonality), namely the tonic, the dominant, and the subdominant. The essence of modulation is to change these functions.' [Riemann s.d., 9].

<sup>16</sup> The issue was studied by Serge Gut [Gut 1998, 275], Stephanie Venturino [Venturino 2019] and others. This interpretation is particularly noteworthy, because d'Indy, aiming to achieve the complete symmetry between major and minor, extends it to the functional aspect. Thus, *A - F - D↓* in A minor is the dominant, and *B - G - E ↓* - the

"Klang"  
 indication:  ${}^0e$   $a^{VII}_{V<}$   $e^7$   
 Function :  ${}^0T$   $S^{VII}$   $D^7$

Ex. 2: Riemann's analysis of the Tristan chord.

Adhering to the Riemannian principle of functional analysis, d'Indy suggests his own way of interpreting the Tristan chord. But the composer's interest in Riemann's ideas, which influenced both his rhythmic concept and analysis of harmony, became a "figure of fun" to his contemporaries. For example, in his essay on d'Indy's aesthetics, Saint-Saëns made several harsh remarks, noting that in the pre-war period there was a general practice to borrow 'crazy ideas' (*les folles idées*) from 'the other side of the Rhine' (*de l'autre côté du Rhin*), and that d'Indy adopted many such ideas from Riemann, Hauptmann, Helmholtz, von Oettingen [Saint-Saëns, 1919, 11]. In the case of the Tristan chord, these ideas don't in fact seem as much "wild" as strange: indeed, this chord would not generate discussion if it were simple in terms of its harmonic function. Postulating that we have the chord of the simplest subdominant function, d'Indy, one can assume, pursues a two-fold objective. First of all, it was the idea of tonal logic, which was very important for the composer, and which is based either on the principle of related keys, or on special semantic relations of keys (each of them has a spectrum of extra-musical meanings in d'Indy's dramatic compositions). With his interpretation of the Tristan chord function, d'Indy fits this into the context of the classic-romantic tonality, albeit in obvious contradiction with auditory sensations, thereby emphasizing that Wagner's harmonic thinking remained within strict logic (of course, in d'Indy's interpretation), despite his innovations.

Secondly, with this approach, the expressive value of the Tristan chord for d'Indy turns out to be due to pure phonism, and not to the "mystery" of the functional interpretation, that is, the sound of the chord as such, and not its potential as an indicator of the formation of a new quality of tonality (or even as a sign of its denial). It is not surprising that d'Indy uses this chord in his own scores, in some cases separately, as an independent structure, a cell whose purpose is to set the listener up for an intense experience in terms of sonority – or, on the contrary, whose

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subdominant. Such a minor, "mirroring" the major, d'Indy considers the only "correct" one and calls it *le mineur inverse*, see: [Indy 1912, 100, 110]. Within the framework of such an "inverse minor", the Tristan chord would have to be regarded as a chord of the dominant function. However, the designation of the chord as the subdominant indicates the usual way of its functional treatment, although the composer himself does not comment on whether he considers the Tristan chord to be built from *A* downwards or from *D* upwards.



erratic sound, coupled with sharp timbres, should attract attention – and in other cases in the context of the usual romantic tonality with clearly expressed functional structure. The composer applies different means to reduce the functional perception of the Tristan chord: he separates it with pauses from the others or sustains it long enough for its interpretation as a continuous sonority.

This leads to the following questions: can any chord with the structure of a half-diminished seventh chord be considered the Tristan chord? Or is the harmonic context and the nature of the thematicism associated with this chord also important, and, observing a completely "non-Tristan" key, in what ways can we invoke the concept of the quote? As for instrumental music, the inclusion of a chord of this structure in a musical texture outside the melody of *Sehnsuchtsmotiv* is not necessarily a quotation; its use may be explained by harmonic logic or the logic of voice-leading.<sup>17</sup> If we are talking about *la musique de la parole*,<sup>18</sup> as in the dramatic opuses of d'Indy, then the extra-musical semantic layer becomes decisive: only then can this accurately show whether the listener is dealing with a quote.

### 3. The phonism of the Tristan chord.

Regarding the phonism of the Tristan chord, one can refer to Robert Erickson's statement on "the decline of tonality": "The Tristan chord is, among other things, an identifiable sound, an entity beyond its functional qualities in a tonal organization' [Erickson 1975, 18]. Erickson considered the Tristan chord as one where the 'chords are perceived as timbre' (or 'chords approaching timbres'), along with the examples from works by Debussy and Schoenberg (*Farben* from the *Fünf Orchesterstücke* Op.16).<sup>19</sup> As Ernst Kurth noted, the Tristan chord 'gathers in itself, as in a focus, all the rays,' synthesizes the whole 'oppressive atmosphere' (*Druckatmosphäre*) of the musical drama [Kurth, s.d., 42]. It was these qualities of the Tristan Chord that first of all interested French authors, for example Chausson [Chausson, 1999, 133, 206].

In d'Indy's works, the Tristan chord combines two harmonic roles (i.e. two aspects), which were later identified by Kurth: a tension chord and a resolution chord (*Spannungs- und Lösungsakkord* [Kurth, s.d., 50]). As Bryan Magee has mentioned, "It contains within itself not one but two dissonances, thus creating within the listener a double desire, agonizing in its

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, De Voto's analysis of Dvorák's *From the New World Symphony* [De Voto 1995, 145].

<sup>18</sup> See: [Indy 1909, 6-7, 241].

<sup>19</sup> "Schönberg in his *Farben* (colors) of the 5 Pieces for Orchestra Op. 16 will exploit these changes in timbres from one instrument to another, to definitively deny the tonal function of the chord" [Gillie 2014, 68-69].

intensity, for resolution. The chord to which it then moves resolves one of these dissonances but not the other, thus providing resolution-yet-not-resolution" [Magee 2001, 205]. In d'Indy's scores, the Tristan chord is used ambivalently, but this is a different kind of ambiguity, not in fact due to the twofold extra-musical reference to the concept of love and the concept of death at the same time [Gillie 2014, 70-71], and how this relates to the differing interpretation of the immanent phonic qualities of the chord. In the first case, the chord is perceived as harsh dissonance requiring immediate resolution; in the second, it is a soft dissonance pleasant to the ear. The difference arises from the duration of the chord's sounding, its timbre, and harmonic context. The longer the chord is sustained and the softer the timbre, the more delicate and enchanting its phonism seems. Building long pedals and organ points on the Tristan chord, d'Indy often chooses the same pitch position of the chord as in the famous *Vorspiel to Tristan und Isolde*.

The most impressive examples can be found in *Le Chant de la cloche*. As it is known, F. Schiller's *Das Lied von der Glocke* (*Song of the Bell*, 1799) became the basis for the work. However, as a contemporary of the composer E. Destranges correctly pointed out, d'Indy, following Wagner's example in writing the libretto himself, 'developed and dramatised' Schiller's poem [Destranges 1890, 9]. The latter manifested itself primarily in the emergence of characters, absent in Schiller's *Lied*: Wilhelm, the bell-maker, and Lénore, his beloved. The emphasis on the psychological aspect (each of the characters recites monologues illustrating the events and expanding feelings, which refer to Wagner) also contributed to that. In addition, the Prologue and the seven scenes are incorporated in a single line of dramatic development describing Wilhelm's life, his death, and the triumph of his art. The Tristan chord sounds in two scenes that can be seen as the internal climaxes of the plot: *L'amour* (Love) and *Vision* (Vision). In both scenes, d'Indy focuses on feelings, which are probably not as profound as in *Tristan und Isolde*, but quite clearly indicate a tendency to translate the action into the psychological realm. It is noteworthy that in *Vision*, Wilhelm listens to a prophecy uttered by the shadow of the dead Lénore; hence, these scenes organize a semantic pair of "love" and "death", which is slightly reminiscent of the concept of *Liebestod*. In these scenes, the Tristan chord is built on the root *F* (or enharmonically equal *E sharp*), as in the *Vorspiel to Tristan*, to form a reference to the corresponding Wagnerian concepts.

In *L'amour*, the Tristan chord instils the idea of a farewell to night and love. Undoubtedly, the linkage between the two concepts can, to some extent, recall the philosophy of *Tristan*. The piano timbre imitates the distant bell tolling, heralding the Catholic prayer *Angelus Domini*,

while the soft timbre of flutes is chosen for the leitmotif of love (*Amour-leitmotif* [Indy 1950, 310], Ex. 3). Thus, the serene, clear sounding of the Tristan chord differs from its intense sounding in Wagner's *Vorspiel* (oboes, clarinets, English horn, bassoons). Wagner's trace can be interpreted in this case as a reference to the concept of *Liebestod*, as an anticipation of future events.

Lénore se relève brusquement et s'adresse à la plaine déjà plongée dans l'obscurité.

LÉNORE.  
vibrato

A - dieu nuit a - mou - reu - se!

Fl.  
pp

Piano >  
Ped.

Ex. 3: V. d'Indy, *Le Chant de la Cloche*, Scene II, Z (the Theme of Love).<sup>20</sup>

In *Vision* the situation is more interesting. After Lénore's death, Wilhelm sits, deep in his memories, in a little room in the bell tower (*la chambre des cloches*), decorated in Gothic style. The master laments his inability to serve Art (*L'Art*) and Love (*L'Amour*) anymore: his aspirations are alien to people and his beloved is dead. But at midnight the world of shadows and ghosts arise: 'heraldic animals come to life and start moving; gargoyles and allegorical figures slowly march into the tower' [Indy 1924, 12]. Wilhelm hears the voices of the bells (*voix des cloches*) and the spirits of reverie (*les esprits du rêve*), who summon the master and advise him to hurry, for 'the night is short' (*la nuit est brève*) and 'in the distance a sorrowful day is already breaking' (*au loin le triste jour se leve*) [Indy 1924, 13]. The opposition of night and day probably originates in *Tristan*. The soul of Lénore, a woman in white with a crown of roses, explains that she is the eternal Harmony (*l'Harmonie éternelle* [Indy 1924, 14]) and pronounces an almost Wagnerian idea of the unity of Love and Death: 'The dulcet bond of souls in love / Still abides in infinity;' 'Let your immortal thought / Soar with me in the sky' [Indy 1924, 14]. The very moment of Lénore's spirit appearance is accompanied by the Tristan chord. Being

<sup>20</sup> See: Indy, V. d', [1886], *Le Chant de la Cloche*, op.18 [Vocal Score], Hamelle, Paris, p.46.

incorporated in the theme of love, it sounds in the highest register and has the enchanting sounding of four harps: this timbre, inherent in the French tradition, is typical for the score of *Tristan*, especially for love scenes (Ex.4).

Une lueur étrange illumine tout à coup le fond de la tour et enveloppe de ses raayons une figure de femme qui, couronnée des roses pâles et la tête couverte d'un long voile; se dresse, blanche et immobile devant Wilhelm.

EE  
4 Harpes.  
Instr. à vent.  
*pp subito*  
*sfz*  
Ped. ten.

Ex.4: V. d'Indy, *Le Chant de la Cloche*, Scene 4, EE.<sup>21</sup>

Such allusions to Wagner's style, harmonic and orchestral, were "programmed" by d'Indy himself. According to the composer, *Le Chant de la cloche* is the most "Wagnerian" of his dramatic works [Indy 1930, 71]. The musical texture of *Le Chant* includes almost exact quotations of Wagner's leitmotifs. For example, the phrase: 'jealous death / has parted you and me' [Indy 1924, 14] in Lénore's monologue is marked by the *Schicksal-Motiv* from Wagner's Tetralogy (Ex. 5). By changing the resolution chord of the *Schicksal-Motiv*, d'Indy turns a minor major seventh chord into a minor seventh chord with a diminished fifth, whose structure is equivalent to that of the Tristan chord. D'Indy also uses the Wagnerian timbre of brass instruments (trumpets, often French horns and trombones in Wagner's scores). Destranges summarises:

From both viewpoints, harmonic and orchestral, this work contains the rarest and most valuable treasures. The orchestration, replete with wonderful sonorities, is a true marvel. I know of no musician who could stand comparison with Vincent d'Indy in this respect now, when He who composed *Tristan* and *Parsifal* reposes in eternal glory in the garden of Wahnfried under a wide stone entwined with ivy [Destranges 1890, 21].

<sup>21</sup> See: Indy, V. d', [1886], *Le Chant de la Cloche*, op.18 [Vocal Score], Hamelle, Paris, p.117.

**Andante molto moderato.**  
(La ♩ = la ♩ = de la mesure précéte.)

LÉNOIRE.

O mon Wil - helm! la  
mort ja - lou - se De toi m'a sé - pa - rée qux plus

Ex.5: V. d'Indy, *Le Chant de la Cloche*, Scene 4, EE, bb. 16-17.<sup>22</sup>

An equally impressive example of the continuous Tristan chord can be found in the score of *La Légende de Saint Christophe*. Similar to the *Vision* scene from *Le Chant*, the extra-musical images here are also linked with Gothic style: a majestic Gothic cathedral appears in the last scene of Act 1. According to Jane Fulcher, in this scene 'we experience a typically Wagnerian blending of drama and spectacle, a dramatic idea expressed through visual imagery or contrast: the "armée de l'erreur" appears' [Fulcher 1990, 305].<sup>23</sup> Characteristically of d'Indy's late style and his artistic thinking, *Christophe* is replete with intertextual links, allusions to extra-musical phenomena and different styles. Moreover, in case of both extra-musical and intrinsically musical references, there are three types of semantic correlations: satirical, grotesque, and subtly poetic. In the previously mentioned scene from the Act 1, two parodies take place: the political one, of the Dreyfusards, and, in an artistic sense, of Debussy. The latter is highlighted by the use of a whole-tone scale and the terrible dissonant harmonic, sequences associated with

<sup>22</sup> See: Indü, V. d', [1886], *Le Chant de la Cloche*, op.18 (Vocal Score), Hamelle, Paris, p.117.

<sup>23</sup> Fulcher retells in detail the complex and intricate plot of *Christophe*, which refers, among other things, to the Golden Legend (*Legenda aurea*) by Jacobus de Voragine. See: [Fulcher 1990, 304].

the portrayal of antagonists: the King of Gold (*le Roi de l'Or*) and the Prince of Evil (*le Prince du Mal*).

Among the named connotations, the “Wagnerian” allusions are of particular significance. They become a means of parody not of Wagner, but aided by Wagner. Jane Fulcher compares the cortege of allegorical figures representing the delusions with the processions in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*; *Le Roi de l'Or* resembles Alberich; see: [Fulcher 1990, 305]<sup>24</sup>. In the immanent musical field, the references to Wagner’s style appear at the moment when *l'armée de l'erreur* sing in unison *Haine au Christ! Haine à la Charité!* (‘Hatred to Christ! Hatred to Mercy!’). The clouds dispel, and the lofty shape of an illuminated Gothic tower topped with a cross appears in the sky; *Le Prince du Mal* wants to destroy the Cathedral, and the giant Offerus (the future Christophe) understands that there is Someone stronger than this *King of Evil*. The emergence of the Cross is marked by a half-diminished seventh chord (Ex. 6). Quoting Reinhard Strohm, Fulcher notes: ‘This is a powerful moment of Wagnerian “Verdichtung” or scenic contrast that “condenses the drama”, as in *Tannhäuser*’ [Fulcher 1990, 306]. In contrast and in comparison to the whole-tone structures, phonism of the half-diminished seventh chord is perceived as a tense sonority demanding further development, which potentially has the impetus to movement. In the context of the scene, the sonority of the half-diminished seventh chord assists the modulation from the whole-tone scale to a diatonic B major, which is, according to d’Indy, the tonality of “genuine self-fulfilment” (*épanouissement véritable* [Indy 1950, 216]). Forming a sequence on the bass *f-c-g*, the Tristan chord is incorporated in the passage between the choir of *l'armée du Mal* and the madrigal of heavenly voices, between the symmetrical and diatonic modes. Thus, the half-diminished seventh chord creates *a balance between tension and resolution* and is incorporated here in d’Indy’s musical text as its essential element, in contrast to the whole-tone scale and the “impressionistic” major minor seventh chords.

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<sup>24</sup> In the first Scene of Act 1 the Queen of Lust (*La Reine de Volupté*) clearly refers to the character of Venus from *Tannhäuser*. See: [Fulcher 1990, 304].

93

S.  
croix com-me le Christ leur mai - - - tre! Et Croix!

C.  
croix com-me le Christ leur mai - - - tre! Et Croix!

T.  
croix com-me le Christ leur leur mai - - - tre! Et Croix!

B.  
croix com-me le Christ leur mai - - - tre!

*ff*  
*dimin.*  
*molto*  
Ped.

Ex.6: V. d'Indy, *La légende de Saint-Christophe*, Act I, Scene 3, b. 93.<sup>25</sup>

As a result of this, both in *Le Chant de la cloche* and in *La Légende de Saint Christophe* the Tristan chord can be interpreted through the prism of Kurth's approach as the chord that combines two acoustic and phonic functions: a tension chord (*Spannungsakkord*) and a resolution chord (*Lösungsakkord*). Kurth considered the Tristan chord as an intense dissonance, formed by linear tensions in the outer voices and acquiring relative pacification in the sonority which follows it [Kurth s.d., 43-44]. In d'Indy's dramatic works, the Tristan chord at first seems to act as a tension chord, however, unlike Wagner's works, it does not resolve, continuing to unfold in time without changing in pitch (the changes concern just the timbre and the texture). The recipient gets used to the sound of the chord and stops interpreting it as a tension chord. Instead, it is re-categorised as a resolution chord, where the fact that it continues to sound feels as presence, which could be connected to the comprehension of the essence of epic, unhurried time.

Taking this into account, it is worth noting that "epic" time is immanent to the genres related to the corresponding category, including the oratorio genre: *Le Chant de la cloche* was marked

<sup>25</sup> See: Indy, V. d', [1917], *La légende de Saint-Christophe*, op. 67 (Vocal Score), Rouart, Lerolle & Cie, Paris, p.105.

by the author as an “epic oratorio” (*l’oratorio épique*) [Indy 1950, 309] and a “dramatic legend in 7 parts” (*légende dramatique en 7 parties*) [Indy 1950, 310]. Regarding his late musical and dramatic work, d’Indy notes: ‘*La Légende de Saint Christophe* [...] is a theatrical work which also, as we have already mentioned, originates in the oratorio genre, due to its prologues, performed by the narrator and the choir on the downstage’ [Indy 1950, 309]. In the designated genre sphere, d’Indy appears as Wagner’s successor, if we take into account his own interpretation of the essence of the Wagnerian reforms. In particular, d’Indy considered *Der Ring des Nibelungen* to be a “musical epic” (*l’épopée musicale*) and ‘the first real poem of the musical epic literature’ (*le premier poème véritable relevant de l’épopée musicale*) [Indy 1950, 286]. D’Indy states:

Wagner aimed to create a German epic poem; he brought to it his genius and his exaggerations. Unlike *Tristan*, *Meistersinger*, and *Parsifal*, *Der Ring* does not care about a dramatic action. The narrative thread is too subtle and too long to be able to create a storyline. Epic, on the other hand, is quite adjustable to fit a less sequential action [Indy 1950, 286].

#### 4. The Tristan chord as an intrinsically valuable element.

As part of another genre of musical-dramatic works by d’Indy, that is in the works defined as musical dramas, the application of the phonic characteristics of the Tristan chord differs. As is well known, the composer, referring to Wagner, did not only define the genre of *Fervaal* as a “musical performance” (*action dramatique*) [Indy 1950, 201] and *L’Étranger* as a “musical drama” (*drame musical* [Indy 1950, 210]), but he also relocated the development of the plot to the area of the characters’ feelings, the spiritual domain, similar to how a psychological intention becomes the impetus for the collision unfolding in *Tristan und Isolde*. The tense development of the couple’s feelings (Fervaal, the Celtic chief, and Guilhen, the Saracen-sorceress; the Stranger [*l’Étranger*] and Vita), is represented in the expansion of the harmonic aspect of musical material. In *Fervaal*, a minor major ninth chord with minor or major ninth can be considered as a leading chord (included in the scenes with Fervaal and Guilhen). In *L’Étranger*, the Tristan chord undertakes the role of the leading sonority despite a clearly weaker connection to this opera than compared to Wagner’s scores (considering the thickness of musical texture, timbre, disposition of instruments, and the very character of the themes and harmony in general). Thus, d’Indy’s contemporary, Guy de Lioncourt, insisted that ‘in this score, written by a more experienced hand rather than *Fervaal*, d’Indy also displays an undoubtedly higher level of maturity and individuality more independent from Wagner’s solutions [Indy



1950, 210].<sup>26</sup> The storyline in *L'Étranger* contains evident allusions to *Der fliegende Holländer*; see: [Huebner 2006, 263-281], *Lohengrin*, and *Parsifal*. The conflict focuses on the relationship between Vita and the Stranger, who bears the peculiar Christian mission of helping his fellow man, which sets specific commitments and interdictions, including the prohibition of ever experiencing earthly love. Therefore, the references to Wagner's musical language are quite natural. It's noteworthy, however, that allusions to Wagner's style are made subtly. For this reason is perhaps likely why Claude Debussy believed that in this opera d'Indy was able to overcome the direct influence of Wagner and find his own style (see: [Keym 2013, 12]).

Thus, the principles of applying the Tristan chord in the Wagnerian score and in d'Indy's opera are different. In Wagner's opera, the Tristan chord defines the characteristic appearance of many motifs and determines the specificity of the musical material, literally penetrating its every "cell", being connected by linear "flows" with the surrounding sonorities.

In contrast to *Tristan*, in *L'Étranger* the Tristan chord is not meant to accumulate tension and strive towards a resolution. It rather pierces the harmonic matter, as being the conflicting "external" dissonance. This chord is isolated from the others with pauses, changes in register, orchestration and texture type. Judging from how d'Indy applies this chord, the latter plays the role of a "semantic symbol" which appears at the moments when the characters say the lines that determine the essence of their relations or their future fate, or at pivotal points.

Steven Huebner provides one example [Huebner 2006, 277], keeping in mind the verbal layer of the score. It seems to the Stranger that wherever he went he met Vita: '...I sailed for a long time, across all seas. / Where did I see you before, how do I know it? Where? - you ask. - Everywhere!' (Ex. 7). The Tristan chord, separated with long pauses, marks the words *connaître* and *Ou donc*, as if reassuring that the Stranger's ultimate goal is Truth, not on its own but united with Love (In *Tristan*, the category of *Liebe*, or love, is the most important).

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<sup>26</sup> The third volume of the *Cours de composition musicale* which was published already after d'Indy's death, was compiled and partially revised by his student Guy de Lioncourt.

Ex. 7: V. d'Indy, *L'Étranger*, Act II, Scene 2, b. 154.<sup>27</sup>

Sometimes the Tristan chord appears as a dense sonority based on overlapping thirds (in close position), rather than in the original Wagnerian version. It highlights the “dark” and intense phonism of the chord, which in this case is based on a diminished triad. It is in the context of the entire musical matter of *L'Étranger* and taking into account the correlation of the musical and extra-musical semantic layers that we can consider the half-diminished seventh chord as a variant of the Tristan chord, which not only has specific phonism, but also a significant position, because it has a strong presence against other chords or modulation. Horizontally or vertically arranged third's chains play a prominent role in *Der Ring des Nibelungen*: they form the baseline of the motifs of the Ring, Valhalla and Alberich's curse (the moment when Alberich curses the Ring is very illustrative: the movement sounds *f#-a-c-eb* which then compresses into the outline of a half-diminished seventh chord and is strengthened by an accent on the tone *f#* in the bass; see also on this point and semantics of the Tristan chord as being included into tetralogy leitmotifs, e.g.: [De Voto 1995, 143]).

*L'Étranger* also features enough similar examples of actualising the third's chains that are vertically arranged as a half-diminished seventh chord. Generally speaking, the appearance of such suspenseful sounding is connected with the ambivalent image-symbols that comprise such concepts as love and death in their unity. Thus, in Scene 2 of Act 1, in the first dialogue between the main characters, the chord *e#-b-d#-g#*, performed *pp* by the entire orchestra, marks the epithet “green sea” (*la verte mer*) – at the end of the opera the force of nature will “betrot” Vita and the Stranger and at the same time kill them (Ex. 8).

<sup>27</sup> See: Indy, V. d', [1902], *L'Étranger*, op. 53 (Vocal Score), Durand et Fils, Paris, p. 121.

Ex. 8: V. d'Indy, *L'Étranger*, Act I, Scene 2, b. 20.<sup>28</sup>

At the most intense moments of action, a half-diminished seventh chord is often included in the polyharmonic combinations that sound even more fierce, dissonant, and grim rather than the chord featured separated, by itself. For example, such “polychord” literally explodes in *fff*, breaking the silence in the orchestra after Vita’s phrase that brings the Stranger back to reality undermining his dreams of love: ‘... yes, I believe you because I trust you like a father...’ (*oui, je te crois, car j’ai placé ma confiance en toi comme en un père...* See Ex. 9).

Ex. 9: V. d'Indy, *L'Étranger*, Act I, Scene 2, measure 271.<sup>29</sup>

The harmony *f#-c-e-a*, amplified by horns, trumpets, and trombones, unites with *G sharp* in the bass (timpani, low strings, bassoons, the “Wagnerian” contrabass trombone) and then is further elaborated by the timbre of woodwind instruments (after the dissonant bass stops sounding), including clarinets (and bass clarinet) and gloomy “Tristanian” English horn. As the conflict between Vita and the Stranger intensifies, the harmonic structures become more complicated and incorporate the modified Tristan chord: such as the half-diminished ninth

<sup>28</sup> See: Indy, V. d', [1902], *L'Étranger*, op. 53 [Vocal Score], Durand et Fils, Paris, p. 37-38.

<sup>29</sup> See: Indy, V. d', [1902], *L'Étranger*, op. 53 [Vocal Score], Durand et Fils, Paris, p. 58.

chord *d-f-ab-c-e*, that sounds *ff* and separates the Stranger's words: 'Love is waiting for you with your handsome customs officer!' (*L'amour t'attend avec ton beau douanier!* See Ex. 10). The outline of the vocal phrase anticipates the appearance of the vertically arranged chord in the orchestra.

The image shows a musical score for a vocal and piano piece. The vocal line is in French and includes the lyrics: "L'a - mour t'at - tend a - vec ton beau doua - nier" and "Il lui tourne le dos et se dirige vers le lieu où il a laissé son filet". The piano accompaniment features a half-diminished seventh chord (d-f-ab-c-e) that builds in intensity from piano (p) to fortissimo (ff) over the course of the measure. The tempo is marked "Animé".

Ex. 10: V. d'Indy, *L'Étranger*, Act I, Scene 2, measure 359.<sup>30</sup>

The phonism of a half-diminished seventh chord emphasises the idea of *Liebestod* in the introduction to Act 2 and in the beginning of Scene 3 within the opening monologue of Vita (where, in fact, the half-diminished seventh chord serves as an additional constructive element).<sup>31</sup> Vita's vow and gifting of the emerald to the sea represents a turning point in the storyline as it forewarns of her and the Stranger's deaths. More such examples are readily available when analysing the score, but those will suffice for our current assessment.

Thus, in *L'Étranger*, the Tristan chord operates as a leading chord, which can naturally entail the confirm about the "cyclic function" of this harmonic element and, thus, the embodiment of the "cyclic principle" (*le principe cyclique*). Such a principle, according to d'Indy, constantly brings back a certain syntactic or thematic element, steadily repeats the modified pattern and is the supreme compositional strategy in both symphonic and dramatic music [Indy 1930, 60], [Indy 1909, 11]. "The "cyclic or synthetic form" is indeed for him the way to introduce the drama in the instrumental field without sacrificing anything of the requirements of the eurythmy'

<sup>30</sup> See: Indy, V. d', [1902], *L'Étranger*, op. 53 [Vocal Score], Durand et Fils, Paris, p. 64-65.

<sup>31</sup> According to d'Indy's remark, the introduction should reflect the passions raging in the Stranger's soul during the night, the internal struggle that he endures [Indy 1950, 214]. The introduction "absorbs" the crucial thematic material of the opera, and the cadence with continuous sounding of a half-diminished seventh chord accumulates the tragic implications of the underlying moment of action (the Stranger decides to leave forever the land where Vita lives).

[Saint Arroman 2019, 18]. Moreover, for d'Indy, the cyclic principle was a strategy grounded in his metaphysic views: "The cyclic idea is at the heart of Vincent d'Indy's thought and work. The cycle unites and summarizes the values that motivated his life as a man and an artist [...]" [Cathé 2020, 7]. That's why, though the plot of *L'Étranger* is really not far from the religious sphere of meanings,<sup>32</sup> the presence of the Tristan chord as the cyclic element in this score designates the most important psychological moments, in the fate of the main hero because of a substitution of the Christian love in his heart by the love for Vita.<sup>33</sup> This extra-musical meaning, complete with "new discovered sonority" [De Voto 1995, 143], by referring to the Wagnerian idea of prohibiting, which had been elaborated by the composer from *Das Liebesverbot* and until *Parsifal*, establishes *L'Étranger's* belonging to the dramas represented one of the most important Wagnerian philosophical concepts.

### 5. The semantic aspect of the Tristan chord application.

It is evident that in d'Indy's works the Tristan chord semantics is similar to that of the Wagnerian one. A specific extra-musical meaning can be assigned to the chord: this harmonic element communicates the tragic intensity of an impossible ambition to completely possess the ideal. It is crucial that *the vector of the semantic analysis of the Tristan chord was set by d'Indy himself*. The composer does not only consider the Tristan chord in its own right but also the immanent structure of the *Sehnsuchtsmotiv* (to which d'Indy calls "love by enchantment" - *l'amour par enchantement*) and derives it from the rhetorical signs of the 17th century: 'We would like to talk about *chromaticism*, which was significant for Ingegneri, Vecchi, Monteverdi. Wagner applies it again and adapts it to the contemporary major and minor' [Indy 1950, 152]. Application of such "Wagnerian" chromaticism can be clearly identified in *Le Chant de la cloche*.

Although d'Indy claims that the chromatic melody of the "longing motif" is inseparable from the chord progression, being included in the "initial harmonic cell" (*la cellule principale harmonique*) [Indy 1909, 237-238], in *Le Chant de la cloche* the composer divides this "cell" into the melodic and harmonic patterns. Melodic chromaticism, separated from the harmonic progression, functions on its own, instigating the "cyclic theme G" (*la thème cyclique G, thème chromatique G*) [Indy 1950, 311]. It is the so-called "landscape theme" (*le paysage*, Ex. 11).

<sup>32</sup> '[...] d'Indy connects this principle of composition with notions which have a symbolic and religious character' [Cathé 2020, 8], keeping in mind the idea of unity: 'the circle (κύκλος) represents the perfect proportion, the trinity in unity' [Indy 1912, 376].

<sup>33</sup> Autobiographical motives that could influence the inclusion of the Tristan chord in the opera score are indicated in the article: [Huebner 2006, 269-270], allowing us to take a psychoanalytical approach, akin to the one applied by Claire Gillie [Gillie 2014].

Étienne Destranges designates this theme as the “motif of spring evening” (*le motif du Soir de printemps* [Destranges 1890, 12]). According to his remark, ‘Vincent d’Indy adhered to the system of leading themes (*thèmes conducteurs*), however, unlike other French composers, who do not know how to derive a particular benefit from this Wagnerian principle and simply repeat the leitmotifs never taking the risk of developing or transforming them, d’Indy uses them with apparent skill and mastery’ [Destranges 1890, 9]. Such an opinion takes into consideration the specifics of d’Indy’s technique that implies the usage of leitmotifs as “generative themes” (*générative themes*) [Destranges 1909, 178, 221], which serve as rhythmic and intonational sources for other themes and their variants.



Ex.11: the “landscape theme”.

The “landscape theme” forms compositional rhymes between Scenes 2 (*Amour*) and 4 (*Vision*) and within Scene 2, establishing, within an extra-musical aspect, correlations between the concepts of *Love* and *Death*, which forms, in sum, the idea of *Liebestod*. Moreover, the semantics of this theme, as it appears, refer to the semantics of the *passus duriusculus* sign and its inversion; d’Indy spoke of “Monteverdi’s chromaticism”, probably recalling the scene of Seneca’s death from *L’incoronazione di Poppea*. The correlation of the “landscape theme” with the idea of death is highlighted by the verbal layer of the score as well. Thus, in Scene 2 (*Amour*) Wilhelm bids farewell to the sun and the semantics of fading is emphasized by Lénore’s exclamation about *love after death* (the Wagnerian idea of *Liebestod*). According to d’Indy [Indy 1950, 311], this exclamation conjoins with the descending chromatic passage which is in fact “landscape theme” inverted (Ex. 12).

**Adagio.**

[LÉNORE]

La mort... Ach!...

2 Clar.

*p* > *pp*

Cors (sons bouchés)

Ex.12: V. d'Indy, *Le Chant de la Cloche*, Scene 2, R, b. 18.<sup>34</sup>

In the beginning of Scene 4 (*Vision*), the “landscape theme” transforms into the “sadness theme” (*tristesse*; Ex. 13a and 13b), referring to the beginning of Act 3 of *Tristan* (premonition of death’s triumph). At this moment, Wilhelm parts with his dream: to live for art and love, and the Wagnerian idea of the inexorability of fate seems to be established through both verbal and immanent musical layers of the score.

D : tristesse

WILHELM.

Tout m'ac - cable à la fois!

*a tempo*

*pp* 4 Bassons. *ppp* C. Basses div. *pp* 8 C. Basses

4 C. Basses et Altos

*A a tempo*

*très-soutenu.*

Ex.13a and 13b: V. d'Indy, *Le Chant de la Cloche*, Scene 4, b. 10.<sup>35</sup>

## 6. Conclusion.

The Tristan chord is usually interpreted as a feature of Wagner’s style and as the ultimate expression of extra-musical narratives that uncover the philosophy of *Tristan und Isolde*. In the “Wagnerian” works by d’Indy this chord incorporates a whole spectrum of extra-musical connotations. Its frequent appearance in *Le Chant de la cloche* and *L’Étranger* allows one to

<sup>34</sup> See: Indy, V. d’, [1886], *Le Chant de la Cloche*, op.18 [Vocal Score], Hamelle, Paris, p.40.

<sup>35</sup> See: Indy, V. d’, [1886], *Le Chant de la Cloche*, op.18 [Vocal Score], Hamelle, Paris, p.91.

interlink all these moments into a single chain and arrange all separate connotations into a semantic line that counterpoints the storyline and complements it.

Using the Tristan chord and the *Sehnsuchtsmotiv*, d'Indy creates intertextual links between his works and Wagner's dramas, enriching his own style. It is interesting that in d'Indy's time, such intertextual correlations were not considered as borrowings or paraphrases; in any case, the quotation layer was read as part of d'Indy's own musical text, his idiolect. Destranges notes:

What can be admired about Monsieur d'Indy [...] is his outstanding individuality. A disciple of Richard Wagner, he did not allow that formidable genius to devour him as Saturn had done to his own children. While adhering to the ideas of the great German musician, he, nevertheless, stayed true to himself. All of his key works: splendid trilogy *Wallenstein*, brilliant *Symphonie pour piano et orchestre*, amazing legend *Saugefleurie*, equally interesting *Fantaisie sur un thème Cévenol*, together with *Le Chant de la cloche*, which is still his most significant work, everything, I believe, bears the imprint of originality, full of either charm or power [Destranges 1890, 23; emphasis original].<sup>36</sup>

The comparison between harmonic styles, algorithms that form the semantic connections between the immanently musical and extra-musical narratives used by d'Indy and Wagner therefore allows us to describe d'Indy's musical language in more detail and specify the harmonic logic which he favoured most. The further application of the Tristan chord in his students' (Albéric Magnard and Guy Ropartz) works could become the subject of a separate study. For instance, in the opera *Le Pays* (1910) by Ropartz, the principles of implementing the Tristan chord in the harmonic texture resemble those that are characteristic of d'Indy's compositions.

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<sup>36</sup> Destranges names the most impressive works by d'Indy that had been created by the time his essay was written (1890): aside from *Le Chant*, these are three symphonic overtures under the name of *Wallenstein* (1870 – 1881) created after a dramatic trilogy by F. Schiller; under the *Symphonie pour piano et orchestre* he meant the famous *Symphonie Cévenole* (*Symphonie sur un chant montagnard français*, 1886); *Saugefleurie* (1884) is one-part symphonic legend based on Robert de Bonnières's poem; behind the name *Fantaisie sur un thème Cévenol* lies the Fantasy based on the French folk themes for oboe with orchestra (*Fantaisie sur des thèmes populaires français for oboe and orchestra*, 1888).



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