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Gurdjieff and Music

*The Gurdjieff/de Hartmann Piano Music
and Its Esoteric Significance*

By

Johanna J.M. Petsche



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Contents

Acknowledgements	VII
Music Definitions and Abbreviations of Texts	IX
Notes to the Reader	XII
List of QR Codes	XV

Introduction	1
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1 Gurdjieff, His Music and Teaching	9
2 Music in the Biography of Gurdjieff	39
3 Music in the Biography of de Hartmann	65
4 The Collaboration	93
5 Sources and Styles	110
6 Sheet Music and Recordings	134
7 The Piano Music, Gurdjieff's Cosmology and Views on Art	154
8 Three Purposes of the Piano Music in Light of Gurdjieff's Life Circumstances and Esoteric Teaching	181

Conclusions	212
-------------	-----

Appendix A: The Movements and Music for Movements	221
Appendix B: The Struggle of the Magicians	236
Appendix C: The Harmonium Music	239
Appendix D: Chronological Order of Compositions	244
Appendix E: Biographical Sketches of Key Pupils	252

Bibliography	257
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Index	275
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Music Definitions and Abbreviations of Texts

Antiphony	A call and response style of singing, usually where one or more soloists sing in alternation with a choir.
Appoggiatura	An 'ornamental' note or dissonant melodic decoration that seeks to be resolved by leaning toward another note in very close proximity.
Cadence	A melodic or harmonic formula involving the movement of two chords that occurs at the end of a composition, section, or phrase, usually conveying the impression of a momentary or permanent conclusion.
Dissonance	A musical sound that requires resolution, and brings an element of tension or disturbance to the music. This is, of course, relative to the musical setting in which it occurs.
Drone	Also known as pedal point, it is a long-held note or combinations of notes, normally in the bass.
Equal temperament	Where the octave is divided into twelve equidistant semitones (the smallest step in the Western music system). No interval other than the octave is acoustically pure. The principle of equal temperament was most clearly expounded by the Chinese Prince Tsai-yu in 1596 and by Marin Mersenne in 1635. The system was universally adopted in Germany around 1800, and in France and England around 1850.
Harmonic series	A series of composite notes (harmonics) that accompany all notes produced by musical instruments. A sounding body tuned to give the note C, for example, also gives more faintly the C an octave above and the G a fifth above that, as well as a host of higher notes where intervals between notes become smaller and the sounds become fainter as the series ascends. Harmonics occur because a vibrating body, such as a string, vibrates simultaneously as a whole and in sections of one-half, one-third, one-fourth, and so on, of its entire length. A diagram of the first sixteen notes of the harmonic series beginning on a low G can be viewed in Chapter 7. However, notes in the diagram are approximate, as notes in the series differ slightly from equal temperament tuning.

Homophony	A musical texture where individual instrumental and vocal parts move simultaneously as blocks of harmony. This is in contrast to polyphony, where parts move independently of each other.
Interval	The difference in pitch between any two notes. Intervals can be determined precisely by the ratio of the frequencies of the notes or, taking notes in equal temperament tuning, according to the number of semitones or chromatic steps contained in the interval. Intervals of the octave, fifth, and fourth are known as 'perfect' intervals. Where the octave is acoustically 'perfect' or pure in equal temperament tuning as it derives from the harmonic series, intervals of the fourth and fifth are indistinguishably close to natural intervals of the harmonic series.
Mode	In its most general sense, a mode is simply the selection of tones, arranged in a scale, that form the basic tonal substance of a composition. In its narrower sense, the term denotes the medieval church modes that dominated European music for eleven hundred years, and continued to influence composers for at least another four hundred years. It is the latter definition that is applied here. St. Ambrose (c.340–397), Bishop of Milan, set out four eight-note modes based on earlier Greek modes. Pope Gregory (c.540–604) added four more modes, referring to the Ambrosian modes as 'authentic modes', and his new modes as 'plagal modes'. Much later, Swiss monk Heinrich Glarean (1488–1563) added another four modes, establishing the system of twelve modes that is known today. The twelve modes are known as: Hypodorian, Dorian, Hypophrygian, Phrygian, Hypolydian, Lydian, Hypomixolydian, Mixolydian, Hypoaeolian, Aeolian, Hypoionian, and Ionian. However, Church plainsong was, and still is, restricted to the earlier eight modes.
Monophony	Having a single melodic line without accompanying harmony, as opposed to homophony and polyphony.
Parallel motion	When two or more parts move together so as to maintain the same intervals.

Abbreviations

<i>Herald</i>	<i>The Herald of Coming Good</i> (G.I. Gurdjieff)
<i>Life Is Real</i>	<i>Life Is Real Only Then, When 'I Am'</i> (G.I. Gurdjieff)
<i>Meetings</i>	<i>Meetings with Remarkable Men</i> (G.I. Gurdjieff)
<i>Our Life</i>	<i>Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff</i> (Thomas and Olga de Hartmann)
<i>Search</i>	<i>In Search of the Miraculous</i> (P.D. Ouspensky)
<i>Struggle</i>	<i>The Struggle of the Magicians</i> (Gurdjieff's ballet)
<i>Tales</i>	<i>Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson</i> (G.I. Gurdjieff)
<i>Views</i>	<i>Views from the Real World</i> (G.I. Gurdjieff)

Notes to the Reader

Old city names like Tiflis, Alexandropol, and Constantinople (respectively modern-day Tbilisi, Gyumri, and Istanbul) are employed here so as to preserve the names used by Gurdjieff and maintain continuity between Gurdjieff's writings and scholarly writings about him. Altering place names to fit each historical context becomes confusing; place names will be used in accordance with their usage at the onset of the First World War. For example, here St Petersburg is always St Petersburg, even though it became Petrograd in 1914 and Leningrad in 1924 (and St Petersburg again from 1991).

The term 'the Middle East', also known in Europe as 'the Near East', 'the Far East', or more generally 'the East' or 'the Orient', is problematic due to its implicit Eurocentrism, its bundling together of a number of divergent societies and locales, as well as confusion over the regions it encompasses. Nevertheless, 'the Middle East' functions in this book as a useful umbrella term for the Caucasian regions of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, as well as countries of the Arabian Peninsula, and Turkey and Iran. This is because the sounds of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music indicate musical influences deriving from this area, while it is difficult to pinpoint exact regions as sources. The term 'the East', admittedly an even more vague term, is also employed here to designate the ideas and impressions that it conjured in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; those of exoticism and mystery. 'The East' is acknowledged as a nineteenth century Western concept.

When referring to men key to this book, such as Gurdjieff, de Hartmann, and Ouspensky, only surnames are employed. When referring to their wives, first names are employed; de Hartmann's wife is always Olga de Hartmann (or simply 'Olga' when repeated) and Ouspensky's wife is always Sophia Ouspensky (it is uncertain whether the Ouspenskys were legally married, but this is beside the point).¹ However, there is one exception. In the case of the de Salzmanns, Alexandre de Salzmann is of much less importance to this book than his wife Jeanne de Salzmann. Thus 'de Salzmann' will refer to Jeanne, and her husband will be referred to by his full name.

It is worth clarifying here what is meant by 'the Work', 'Foundation groups', 'Work members', and 'pupils'. The term 'the Work' is used here only in relation to Foundation groups, an international network of orthodox groups organised by key pupil Jeanne de Salzmann after Gurdjieff's death. Although some of

¹ James Webb, *The Harmonious Circle: The Lives and Work of G.I. Gurdjieff, P.D. Ouspensky and Their Followers* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980), 136.

these groups classify themselves as Gurdjieff Societies and others Gurdjieff Institutes, they all belong to this core network, and for this reason will all simply be referred to as Foundation groups. ‘Work members’ or ‘those in the Work’ denote second-generation followers of Gurdjieff, most of whom never met Gurdjieff, and who are involved in Foundation groups today. The term ‘pupil’, in contrast, is employed to denote first-generation followers of Gurdjieff who had direct contact with him.

A large selection of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music was published in *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann Music For The Piano Vols 1–4* (1996, 1996, 2002, 2005) by German music publisher Schott Muzik International (henceforth Schott). When referring to specific pieces, their location in the Schott edition is given. If pieces do not have titles, numbers allocated in the edition are provided. The volume and page numbers follow in brackets. For example, No. 32 (Vol. 3, 84–85). As is discussed in Chapter 6, a small number of original titles of pieces given by Gurdjieff were later altered for the Schott edition. In a few cases titles were even invented for the edition. For the sake of consistency, titles of pieces referred to throughout this book are always taken from the Schott volumes, whether or not Gurdjieff originally gave these titles. However, if a title itself is relevant to a particular argument, details of its origin will, of course, be given.

Appendix D presents the “Chronological Order of Compositions” placed at the end of the fourth Schott volume, which lists chronologically all Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano pieces published by Schott and where they are located within the four volumes.² As discussed in Chapter 6, this list does not represent all the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music as some pieces were omitted from the Schott volumes. Nevertheless, it is a very useful inventory that is referred to frequently in this study.

Finally, via Brill’s Youtube channel it is possible for readers of this book to hear nine pieces of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music and three pieces of de Hartmann’s own music. Gurdjieff/de Hartmann pieces included are “Easter Hymn and Procession in the Holy Night,” “Essentuki Prayer,” “Hindu Melody,” “Prayer of Gratitude,” “Sayyid Chant and Dance No. 10,” “Kurd Shepherd’s Dance,” “The Bokharian Dervish, Hadji-Asvatz-Troov,” and the first and tenth hymns from “Hymns From a Great Temple.” De Hartmann’s “Prelude,” “Nocturne,” and “Impromptu” from *Six Pieces, Op. 7* (1902) can also be heard. To listen to these compositions please scan the corresponding QR code from the List of QR Codes that follows these Notes, with a smart phone or tablet. A QR reader and

2 Linda Daniel-Spitz, Charles Ketcham, and Laurence Rosenthal, “Chronological Order of Compositions,” in *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann: Music for the Piano*, Vol. 4 (Mainz, Germany: Schott, 2005), 109–115.

video player should be installed on these devices. Alternatively, for the e-book version, you can simply click the link given in the references or footnotes at which point you will be redirected to the appropriate website. The link for the complete playlist is as follows: <http://jeuj.eu/brillgurdjieffmusicplaylist>. For this option only a video player should be installed on the device.

Esteemed pianist Elan Sicroff generously provided these tracks, which derive from his three recordings *Journey to Inaccessible Places* (1985), *Sicroff Plays Gurdjieff* (2002), and *Laudamus...* (2010). Sicroff, a pupil of Nadia Boulanger, worked closely with Olga de Hartmann on the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music after her husband's death, in preparation for private performances and recordings for Foundation groups. Sicroff has now given close to one hundred concerts of the music throughout Europe and America. Most recently, Sicroff is focussed on championing the music of Thomas de Hartmann through the Thomas de Hartmann Project, an exciting recording venture in collaboration with producer Gert-Jan Blom. For more, see Sicroff's website: www.sicroff.com.

List of QR Codes



Essentuki Prayer

1



Prelude, Nocturne, and Impromptu from Six Pieces, Op. 7

2



Prayer of Gratitude

3



The Bokharian Dervish, Hadji-Asvatz-Troov

4



Kurd Shepherd's Dance

5



Sayyid Chant and Dance No. 10

6



Easter Hymn and Procession in the Holy Night

7



First Hymn from Hymns From a Great Temple

8



Tenth Hymn from Hymns From a Great Temple

9



Hindu Melody

10



Complete Playlist of Music

11

Introduction

This book uncovers the tremendous role that music played in the life of Armenian-Greek spiritual teacher George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff (c.1866–1949), with focus on the large and diverse body of piano music he composed with Ukrainian composer and pupil of Gurdjieff, Thomas Alexandrovich de Hartmann (1885–1956). This music, mostly composed between 1925 and 1927, will be termed ‘the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music’ or simply ‘the piano music’. Elsewhere it has been referred to as performance music,¹ listening music,² salon music,³ programme music,⁴ or Gurdjieff/de Hartmann Music for the Piano.⁵ This music is one of three main types of music produced by Gurdjieff; the other two being the music for Movements and harmonium music. The music for Movements was composed by Gurdjieff and de Hartmann for the specific purpose of accompanying Gurdjieff’s early period of Movements (the Movements are dances and exercises choreographed by Gurdjieff), as well as his ballet *The Struggle of the Magicians*. Although this music was created in a similar fashion to the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music and both are comparable in style and sound, it is important to distinguish the two, as they were composed in two distinct periods of Gurdjieff’s teaching, and for different functions. The third type of music produced by Gurdjieff was his improvisations on the portable harmonium, many of which were recorded in the last ten months of his life. The harmonium was a constant companion for Gurdjieff from at least 1926 to his death in 1949. These other types of Gurdjieff’s music are examined in the Appendices.

Previous studies on the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music are limited to a fairly small number of articles and chapters in Gurdjieff-centred publications, to liner notes in recordings, and to the prefaces and notes of the four volumes of sheet music published by Schott. Many of these writings are by scholarly-oriented ‘insiders’, meaning people either in ‘the Work’ or people with strong personal affiliations towards Gurdjieff’s ideas. These writers often view the music from within a Gurdjieffian framework, employing Gurdjieff’s terminology and ideas to explain the music; concepts which are meaningless outside of

1 Gert-Jan Blom, *Oriental Suite: The Complete Orchestral Music 1923–1924* (Netherlands: Basta Audio Visuals, 2006), 41.

2 Julian Keble and Norman Higgins, personal communication (27 August 2009).

3 Joseph Azize, pers. comm. (10 July 2009); Roger Lipsey, pers. comm. (13 July 2010).

4 James Moore, *Gurdjieff the Anatomy of a Myth A Biography* (Shaftsbury, Dorset: Element, 1991), 350.

5 De Salzman coined this for the Schott edition of the music.

Gurdjieff's system. This means that discussions on the music have, up until now, been characterised by an uncompromising sympathy that precludes any critical analysis of it and of the circumstances surrounding its production, performance, and reception. For Laurence Rosenthal, for example, this music eludes contextual examination: “[t]o compare this music with other, more familiar, kinds of music, classic or otherwise, is pointless. Although its materials are utterly simple, recognizable, even conventional, it defies classification. It seems to have been created with a special aim, a special intent. It is, finally *sui generis*. It makes statements and asks questions not to be found elsewhere.”⁶

Considering that music and its effects were recurring themes, in fact almost compulsive interests, for Gurdjieff throughout his life, it is surprising that scholarship on Gurdjieff so frequently omits any serious study of his involvement with music. In his autobiographical writings Gurdjieff describes his great admiration for the musical abilities of the *ashokhs* or travelling bards, a profession of his father, which had fascinated him as a young boy in Kars, Turkey. He claimed to have played guitar as a youth and been a devoted chorister in the Russian Orthodox Cathedral choir.⁷ During his extensive travels as a young man Gurdjieff also describes playing, singing, hearing, recording, and memorising music, as well as becoming enthralled in the effects and properties of vibrations of sound and music.⁸ (However, as discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, Gurdjieff's largely unsubstantiated autobiographical writings must be read with a critical eye). In his teaching years Gurdjieff incorporated singing and other musical exercises into his pedagogy, and based his cosmology on musical analogues. He collaborated with de Hartmann on their piano music and music for Movements, and in the last twenty years of his life, when de Hartmann had left him, Gurdjieff consistently relied on his portable harmonium, playing music for groups of pupils and accompanying readings of his texts.

Synopsis

This book aims to situate, examine, and question the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music within its historical, socio-cultural, religio-spiritual context.

6 “The Sound of Gurdjieff,” *Gurdjieff International Review*, Vol. 2, No. 4, Summer 1999, 18.

7 G.I. Gurdjieff, *Meetings with Remarkable Men* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2002 [1963]), 32–33, 50, 52, 201.

8 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 208; G.I. Gurdjieff, *Views From the Real World* (London: Penguin Compass, 1984), 184–185.

Gurdjieff's intentions for the music will also be assessed in light of his life circumstances and esoteric teaching. The book will proceed as follows. Chapter 1 will provide a foundational background to Gurdjieff and the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music. Gurdjieff's persona, teaching, writings, and legacy will be outlined and explored, as well as the influence of Gurdjieff and his music on contemporary musicians. The piano music will then be positioned within the context of twentieth century compositional practice and shown to be indicative of two related artistic trends of the early twentieth century: exoticism and nationalism. This demonstrates that, despite Gurdjieff's apparent aversion to Western music and artistic fashions, the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music is not isolated from broader cultural currents. In this chapter the music is finally wrenched from the insular 'Gurdjieff bubble' within which it is usually considered.⁹

Chapters 2 and 3 present biographies of Gurdjieff and de Hartmann respectively, with a focus on their musical activities and experiences. Although these chapters largely involve a synthesising of already existing biographical accounts of the two men, they are unique in that these accounts are chronologically assembled and assessed for the specific purpose of pinpointing themes of music in their lives. This has enabled an uncovering of new information, offering original perspectives and insights into their relationship and piano music. Chapter 2 also marks a rare occasion where details of Gurdjieff's biography are cross-checked against historical evidence; the task of separating trustworthy facts about Gurdjieff from fanciful lore is rarely pursued by scholars. Further, the chapter will compare Gurdjieff's tales of travel, presented in his autobiography, with the travel tales of two other religious founders of that period: Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831–1891) and L. Ron Hubbard (1911–1986). It is argued that through their tales of travel, spiritual teachers of the period could best tap into the West's contemporary fascination with 'the East' and with ancient cultures, as well as legitimise their teachings with a sense of authority and authenticity.

Chapter 4 examines the unique process by which Gurdjieff and de Hartmann composed their piano music, with focus on the specific role of each man in the process, the prolificacy of composition, and the context in which composition was carried out. Chapter 5 explores the different styles and possible sources of the piano music. It will be shown that Gurdjieff promoted the idea that his

9 An earlier version of some of the research presented in Chapters 1, 5, and 8 was published in Johanna Petsche, "G.I. Gurdjieff's Piano Music and Its Application In and Outside 'The Work,'" in *Handbook of New Religions and Cultural Production*, eds Carole M. Cusack and Alex Norman (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

music, as well as his Movements and teachings, originated from esoteric sources accessed on his travels to remote, sacred locations through Central Asia and the Middle East. This idea will be assessed and argued to be unlikely for a number of reasons. The piano music will then be analysed within the three broad stylistic categories put forth by Laurence Rosenthal: Asian and Eastern Folk Music, Sayyid and Dervish Music, and Hymns.¹⁰ These categories are in some ways problematic, as discussed in the chapter, but comply with Gurdjieff's own titles of pieces, and with the subsequent categorising of pieces into volumes for the Janus and Schott editions of the sheet music.

The first part of Chapter 6 assesses the original manuscripts and published editions of the piano music. Original manuscripts reveal that some of the piano music was intended to be orchestrated, sung, or played on the harmonium. They also show that a number of original titles of pieces were later altered or completely changed after Gurdjieff's death for the Janus and Schott editions of the music. These editions are discussed and the Schott edition is critically examined. The second part of the chapter considers the plethora of recordings of the piano music, and the negative reaction some Work members have towards these recordings. Work members argue that recordings cannot deliver the spiritual results that Gurdjieff intended for the music. This will pave the way for Chapters 7 and 8, which evaluate Gurdjieff's intentions for the piano music in the context of his esoteric teaching.

Chapter 7 examines and in most cases discredits assumptions made by writers on the connection between the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music and Gurdjieff's theoretical ideas. These assumptions are that the numbers three and seven, representative of Gurdjieff's two cosmic laws, govern the music; that the music transmits 'inner octaves', one of Gurdjieff's cosmological concepts; and that the music was intended to be, or that it *is*, 'objective art', a term used by Gurdjieff to denote a type of art that can predictably affect people and phenomena. In this chapter the piano music is considered alongside an examination of Gurdjieff's cosmological principles and views on art. Where possible, these are situated within the lineage of Western esotericism. In Chapter 8 the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music is finally evaluated within the context of Gurdjieff's life and teaching methods at the time of composition, and also against the backdrop of his fundamental soteriological teaching and aims. Three major arguments about the significance and purpose of this music will then be presented.

¹⁰ Laurence Rosenthal, "Gurdjieff and Music," in *Gurdjieff: Essays and Reflections on the Man and His Teaching*, eds Jacob Needleman and George Baker (New York: Continuum Publishing, 1996), 308–309.

Sources

Before closing this Introduction I would like to give a brief outline of the main sources utilised in this book. Gurdjieff's writings and transcriptions of his talks were, naturally, indispensable, and these are discussed in Chapter 1. Also significant to this research is P.D. Ouspensky's *In Search of the Miraculous* (henceforth *Search*), a thorough and formal account of Gurdjieff's teaching from 1915 to 1923. The majority of *Search* appears in quotation marks as Ouspensky's verbatim recollections of talks Gurdjieff gave to early groups. Although J.G. Bennett claims that in Gurdjieff's last years he criticised Ouspensky for exploiting his ideas and for his excessively intellectual approach to the teaching,¹¹ it is generally agreed that Ouspensky's book is the clearest and most reliable explanation of Gurdjieff's ideas.

Valuable first-hand accounts of the piano music frequently cited throughout the book come from C.S. Nott, Carl Zigrosser and, most significantly, the de Hartmanns.¹² Their memoir *Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff* (henceforth *Our Life*), which chronicles the period spanning 1917 and 1929, is a descriptive and heartfelt account of Olga and Thomas de Hartmann's epic twelve years accompanying Gurdjieff during the growth of the Institute, which began in Essentuki and moved to Tiflis then Constantinople, Berlin, and finally to the Chateau du Prieuré d'Avon at Fontainebleau near Paris, where they lived from 1922 to 1929.¹³

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- 11 J.G. Bennett, *Witness: The Story of a Search* (New Mexico: Bennett Books, 1997), 205. See also J.G. Bennett, *Gurdjieff: Making a New World* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 177. However, at other times Gurdjieff praised the text. For more on this topic see: Joseph Azize, "Towards a Historical Study of Gurdjieff and his Legacy," in *The International Humanities Conference All and Everything Proceedings 2003*, 76–86; David Pecotic, "Body and Correspondence in G.I. Gurdjieff's 'Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson': A Case Study in the Construction of Categories in the Study of Esotericism" (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Sydney, 2004), 73–77; William P. Patterson, *Struggle of the Magicians: Why Uspenskii Left Gurdjieff* (California: Arete Communications, 1996).
- 12 See especially C.S. Nott, *Teachings of Gurdjieff: A Pupil's Journal. An Account of Some Years With G.I. Gurdjieff and A.R. Orage in New York and at Fontainebleau-Avon* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), 62, 64–65, 106–107; Carl Zigrosser, "Gurdjieff," in *Gurdjieff in the Public Eye: Newspaper Articles, Magazines and Books 1914–1949*, ed. Paul Beekman Taylor (Utrecht, Netherlands: Eureka Editions, 2010), 177–184; There are too many pages to reference here, but for particularly significant remarks about the music see Thomas de Hartmann and Olga de Hartmann, *Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff*, eds Thomas C. Daly and Thomas A.G. Daly (London: Arkana Penguin Books, 1992 [1964]), 155–156, 245–247.
- 13 Thomas C. Daly, "Foreword," in *Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff* (London: Arkana Penguin Books, 1992), vii.

They describe music-related events and experiences, and give accounts of the process of composing the piano music. Fortunately *Our Life* has proven to be an especially reliable source, where the events and dates given largely accord with other sources and documentation. There seems no reason to doubt its authenticity. In fact, what strikes the reader of *Our Life* is the extraordinary honesty and sincerity of the de Hartmanns. Other pupils speak of them with great fondness.¹⁴

Key secondary sources on Gurdjieff are James Webb's *The Harmonious Circle*, James Moore's *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, Sophia Wellbeloved's *Gurdjieff, Astrology and Beelzebub's Tales*, and Paul Beekman Taylor's *G.I. Gurdjieff: A New Life*.¹⁵

The large selection of Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music published in Schott's *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann Music For The Piano Vols 1–4* was invaluable to this research. I thank Dorine Tolley for allowing me to access two privately circulated editions of the sheet music: the five-volume Janus edition overseen by de Hartmann in the 1950s and the three-volume edition compiled by Olga de Hartmann with the New York Foundation group in 1970. These editions are discussed in Chapter 6.

Data was also obtained from field research which was undertaken at the Gilmore Music Library at Yale University, as well as the home of Thomas A.G. Daly in Montreal, and on travels between 24 April and 7 May 2011 through Armenia, Georgia, Turkey, and Russia, all significant countries to Gurdjieff's early life. Particular regions of interest in Armenia were Gurdjieff's birthplace of Alexandropol, Yerevan, where Gurdjieff sent de Hartmann in 1919 to hear Armenian music,¹⁶ Echmiadzin in Armavir Province, where Gurdjieff described going on a pilgrimage,¹⁷ and the Sanaine Monastery in Lori Province where Gurdjieff claimed to have been an acolyte to a priest for three

14 For example, C.S. Nott said of reconnecting with de Hartmann after the Second World War, "To meet 'Foma' [de Hartmann] again, whom I loved as I loved Orage, whom I had not seen or heard from in six long years, filled me with joy." He described smuggling food parcels to the de Hartmanns from America during the war and then, upon hearing of their whereabouts in Paris, immediately organising a trip there. See C.S. Nott, *Further Teachings of Gurdjieff: Journey Through This World* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), 216–217.

15 Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*; James Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth A Biography* (Shaftsbury, Dorset: Element, 1991); Sophia Wellbeloved, *Gurdjieff, Astrology and Beelzebub's Tales* (New York: Solar Bound Press, 2002); Paul Beekman Taylor, *G.I. Gurdjieff: A New Life* (Utrecht, Netherlands: Eureka Editions, 2008).

16 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 135–136.

17 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 79, 83–85.

months.¹⁸ In Turkey I visited Kars where Gurdjieff was schooled and sang as a chorister in the Military Cathedral,¹⁹ and Ani, where Gurdjieff claimed to have excavated ruins and discovered ancient Armenian parchments describing the Sarmoung Brotherhood.²⁰ In Georgia I travelled through Tiflis where in 1919 Gurdjieff organised the first version of his Institute and began developing his Movements. In these countries I attended concerts and obtained a number of recordings of traditional music that were recommended by locals.

Field research carried out in Alexandropol and Kars led to the uncovering of information about Gurdjieff's early life, which has in a minimal way supplemented this book. In Alexandropol Avetik Melik-Sargsyan, an Armenian historian, scriptwriter, and head of the Gurdjieff Centre of Gyumri (Alexandropol), showed me unpublished documentation and maps relating to Gurdjieff's early life in Alexandropol, and indicated a number of errors in the translation from Armenian to English of Gurdjieff's texts. He also disclosed the location of Gurdjieff's earliest house in Alexandropol, the address of which has not been published. Melik-Sargsyan plans to publish all his research finds in collaboration with Yerevan University. He kindly gave me permission to publish all the information he imparted in an article.²¹ With the aid of Melik-Sargsyan, I discovered in Kars that a photograph in Moore's biography of Gurdjieff was incorrect. Moore claimed that this photograph depicted the Russian Military Cathedral or fortress cathedral where Gurdjieff described singing as a chorister, but Moore was mistaken. I located the actual cathedral, now a mosque.²²

A final source for information was data collected from personal communication with researchers and musicians in the field, as well as Movements instructors and Movements pianists. In most cases people were a combination of the above. About half of these people were in the Work. In addition to email and phone conversations, I met with seventeen people in Europe, America, Canada, and Australia. They are Dorine Tolley, Joseph Azize, Gert-Jan Blom, Thomas A.G. Daly, Wim van Dullemen, Solange Claustres, Dushka Howarth, Elan Sicroff, Sophia Wellbeloved, Laurence Rosenthal, Charles Ketcham,

18 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 79. Gurdjieff refers to the 'Sanahin Monastery', but may well be meaning the 'Sanaine Monastery'.

19 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 50.

20 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 87–90.

21 Avetik Melik-Sargsyan, pers. comm. (27 October 2011). This article is Johanna J.M. Petsche, "Reflexivity and Objectivity in the Study of a Modern Esoteric Teacher: In the Footsteps of G.I. Gurdjieff," in Alex Norman (ed.), *Journeys and Destinations: Studies in Travel, Identity, and Meaning* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2013).

22 Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 178–179; Petsche, "Reflexivity and Objectivity in the Study of a Modern Esoteric Teacher," 171–172.

Norman Higgins, Julian Keble, Roger Lipsey, Annette-Courtenay-Mayers, Ken Adie, and Michael Griffith. Particularly memorable meetings were with two women who had closely known Gurdjieff; Solange Claustres, a significant pupil from 1941 to 1949, and Gurdjieff's daughter "Dushka" ("darling" in Russian) Howarth, originally Cynthia Ann, who Gurdjieff called "Sophie" after his favourite sister and/or maternal grandmother.²³ Claustres and Howarth were driving forces behind the continuation of the Movements after Gurdjieff's death, and shared a close relationship with his music. Howarth passed away a year after our interview. I was fortunate to have met this spirited and dynamic woman.

23 Dushka Howarth and Jessmin Howarth, *It's Up To Ourselves: A Mother, A Daughter, and Gurdjieff* (New York: Gurdjieff Heritage Society, 2009), 110, 115; Beekman Taylor, *A New Life*, 212.

Gurdjieff, His Music and Teaching

This book focuses on a significant but little-understood part of Gurdjieff's work: the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music. This music was composed in a peculiar collaboration between Gurdjieff, the unpredictable and provocative spiritual teacher with little musical training, and his devoted pupil de Hartmann, a refined and cultivated aristocrat, classically trained in composition to the highest of standards. In de Hartmann's memoirs and those of other pupils Gurdjieff and de Hartmann's unusual compositional process is described; Gurdjieff would whistle, sing, and tap melodies and rhythms and de Hartmann would immediately transform these indications into written Western notation, adding harmonies. De Hartmann attributed their music to Gurdjieff, "[i]t is not my music; it is his. I have only picked up the Master's handkerchief,"¹ but de Hartmann's compositional role should not be undervalued. After all, Gurdjieff could only minimally read and notate music, and he composed nothing before or after his contact with de Hartmann. Altogether, Gurdjieff and de Hartmann composed around 223 pieces of piano music; 156 pieces were published in four volumes of sheet music by Schott,² and around sixty-seven pieces remain unpublished. More sketches of pieces exist in draft form.

The piano music was not published or recorded in Gurdjieff's lifetime, and it appears that he never had plans for this to be done. Regardless, soon after his death in 1949 pupils were eager to preserve his legacy, including the piano music. On his successor Jeanne de Salzmann's initiative, it was organised to be privately recorded and published by de Hartmann. Between 1950 and 1955 de Hartmann made a large selection of recordings and oversaw the publication of five volumes of sheet music by Janus in Paris. Both the recordings and sheet music were intended initially for use strictly within Gurdjieff Foundation groups. The piano music first came to public attention decades later in 1979 with the release of the soundtrack to Peter Brook's relatively successful cinematic adaptation of Gurdjieff's semi-autobiographical *Meetings with Remarkable Men*. This featured orchestrations of the piano music by Laurence Rosenthal.

¹ Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 350.

² See Appendix D, from Linda Daniel-Spitz, Charles Ketcham, Laurence Rosenthal, "Chronological Order of Compositions," in *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann: Music for the Piano*, Vol. 4 (Mainz, Germany: Schott, 2005), 109–115. This number excludes pieces in the volumes that were composed for Gurdjieff's ballet *The Struggle of the Magicians*, and for Movements. For more see Chapter 6.

The following year renowned jazz and classical pianist Keith Jarrett released his *G.I. Gurdjieff Sacred Hymns*, recorded on the prestigious and eclectic German record label ECM (Editions of Contemporary Music). At this time Jarrett was at the height of his career; his landmark improvised recording *The Köln Concert* (1975) had sold more than five million copies and became the top-selling solo piano album of any genre.³ Jarrett's *G.I. Gurdjieff Sacred Hymns* was a catalyst in drawing attention to the music for a mainstream audience, and it remains the best-selling recording of Gurdjieff's music.⁴ More recordings of the music, mainly from within the Work, followed. Between 1996 and 2005, under the direction of de Salzmänn, Schott released four 'definitive' volumes of sheet music of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music. This was the first and only edition of the sheet music available to the public, making accessible a large quantity of the music that enabled yet more recordings, and now by musicians who were outside the Work. These recordings represent the piano music's greatest cultural penetration into wider society, though the consensus among more orthodox Work members is that the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music only has value when experienced live and in a Work context. Before delving further into Gurdjieff's music, it is necessary to give some background to Gurdjieff and his teaching.

Categorising Gurdjieff

Gurdjieff notoriously evades simple categorisation. To begin, it is difficult to class him as either an Easterner or a Westerner as he was born in Alexandropol in Russian Armenia, an area of the world that could be considered a meeting point between East and West. This is sometimes explained as symbolic of his attempts to reconcile Eastern and Western spiritual traditions.⁵ As he spent his most fruitful years as a teacher in Europe, and since his teaching can largely be placed in the lineage of Western esotericism (see below), he is here loosely considered a Westerner. This is the view taken by Andrew Rawlinson, who includes Gurdjieff in a long list of Western teachers in Eastern traditions. Rawlinson defines the act of synthesising various Eastern spiritual teachings as genuinely Western, stating that the uniqueness of "the phenomenon of Western teachers" is their discovery and absorption of Eastern teachings,

3 Dan Ouellette, "Out of Thin Air," *Down Beat*, Vol. 72, No. 8, August 2005, 38.

4 Steve Lake, pers. comm. (5 December 2010).

5 Fritz Peters, *Boyhood with Gurdjieff and Gurdjieff Remembered* (London: Wildwood House, 1976), 158, 292.

and in that process their changing them and becoming changed by them.⁶ Rawlinson's definition can easily be applied to Gurdjieff, whose synthesis of various Eastern religious ideas greatly appealed to Westerners in the early twentieth century; they were looking to the 'exotic' East for spiritual fulfilment.

It is also difficult to categorise Gurdjieff's role as teacher. Different writers have identified him as a spiritual teacher,⁷ philosopher,⁸ guru,⁹ thaumaturge,¹⁰ and mystic.¹¹

He is here sometimes referred to as a spiritual teacher, though the term 'spiritual' is famously difficult to define. The English and French terms 'spirituality' and 'spiritualité' emerged in Europe in the seventeenth century, deriving from a specific use of the Latin 'spiritualitas' in the ninth century work of Candidus, thought to be a monk of Fulda. Candidus opposed 'spiritualitas' to 'corporalitas' or 'materialitas'. From the seventeenth century the term became associated with the interior life and subjective religious experience, influenced by the Protestant Reformation with its emphasis on the individual's unmediated relationship to God. The rise of Romanticism and the development of psychology in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries further interiorised spirituality, locating it within the individual self. The term became most popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, providing the conceptual site for the various tensions between Romanticism and the Enlightenment, and religion and science. At this time it also linked with the burgeoning interest in spiritualism, the occult, and the exoticism of the East.¹²

6 Andrew Rawlinson, *The Book of Enlightened Masters: Western Teachers in Eastern Traditions* (Illinois: Open Court, 1997), xviii–xix.

7 Michel de Salzman, "Gurdjieff, G. I.," in *The Encyclopaedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1987), 139.

8 Garrett Thomson, *On Gurdjieff* (California: Wadsworth, 2003).

9 Peter Washington, *Madame Blavatsky's Baboon: Theosophy and the Emergence of the Western Guru* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1993), 25; Anthony Storr, *Feet of Clay: A Study of Gurus* (London: Harper Collins, 1997), 23–43.

10 Whitall N. Perry, *Gurdjieff in the Light of Tradition* (Bedfont, Middlesex: Perennial Books, 1978), 75.

11 Joseph Azize, "Gurdjieff's Sacred Dances and Movements," in *Handbook of New Religions and Cultural Production*, eds Carole M. Cusack and Alex Norman (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 297–298, 308; David Pecotic, "Body and Correspondence in G.I. Gurdjieff's 'Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson': A Case Study in the Construction of Categories in the Study of Esotericism" (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Sydney, 2004), 103–105, argues that Gurdjieff's system can be classed as mysticism due to the primacy of unity in his teaching, as unity is central to the category of mysticism.

12 See Jeremy Carrette and Richard King, *Selling Spirituality: The Silent Takeover of Religion* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 30–39.

The term is employed in this book in relation to Gurdjieff as ‘spiritual teacher’ and in regards to ‘spiritual development’, for want of a better expression. ‘Spiritual teacher’ really means in this context a teacher of esoteric doctrine. Much of Gurdjieff’s teaching can be seen to derive from the lineage of Western esotericism, as shown in Chapters 7 and 8. His focus on experiential rather than theoretical learning, his distrust of written language, and his consequent use of deliberately symbolic and cryptic language further attest to this. Gurdjieff himself classed his teaching as ‘esoteric Christianity’.¹³ He also described his pupils as being divided into exoteric, mesoteric, and esoteric groups, where pupils in the latter were to be initiated theoretically and practically into his teaching.¹⁴

Western esotericism has its roots in the Hellenistic world of the first centuries CE with traditions such as Gnosticism, Hermeticism, and Neoplatonism. These traditions were rediscovered and syncretised in the Renaissance which led, following the Reformation, to the rise of Christian Theosophy, Rosicrucianism, Freemasonry, and later to the modern occult revival that extends from nineteenth-century spiritualism, Theosophy, and ceremonial magical orders to twentieth-century esotericists such as Gurdjieff, Rudolf Steiner, and Alice A. Bailey, as well as Carl Jung’s analytical psychology.¹⁵ Wouter J. Hanegraaff argues that ‘Western esotericism’ is a heuristic concept rather than a historical reality, which is pragmatically used by scholars as an umbrella term for a wide range of currents seen as belonging together. He states that Western esotericism rests on a long polemical discourse of ‘othering’ ideas and currents from dominant discourses of the West, which have tended to be marginalised in academic research. Hanegraaff maintains that a reification of the concept

13 James Webb, *The Harmonious Circle: The Lives and Work of G.I. Gurdjieff, P.D. Ouspensky and Their Followers* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980), 519–525.

14 G.I. Gurdjieff, *The Herald of Coming Good* (Edmonds, Washington: Sure Fire Press, 1988), 38–39. G.I. Gurdjieff, *Life is Real Only Then, When I Am* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1981), 132, also spoke of ‘initiating’ pupils into exercises and information “considered “secret,” and which for the ‘average man’ might prove ruinous.” Further, in a talk given in 1922 in London, Gurdjieff, *Views*, 78, stated, “The theory of esotericism is that mankind consists of two circles: a large outer circle, embracing all human beings, and a small circle of instructed and understanding people at the center. Real instruction, which alone can change us, can only come from this center, and the aim of this teaching is to help us to prepare ourselves to receive such instruction.” See also P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous: The Teachings of G.I. Gurdjieff* (San Diego: Harcourt Inc., 1977 [1949]), 202, 204.

15 Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 3; Wouter J. Hanegraaff, “Empirical Method in the Study of Esotericism,” *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 1995, 109.

of Western esotericism underlies the contemporary perception of the concept as a separate field of research, rather than as a dimension of Western culture more generally.¹⁶

Antoine Faivre has given the most influential definition of Western esotericism, which can be seen to fit Gurdjieff's system. Faivre's sixfold typology argues that for a teaching to be defined as esoteric first it must hold that all manifest and unmanifest constituents in the universe are linked through a network of correspondences or analogies ('correspondences'). Second, it must consider the universe as complex, plural, and hierarchical, and continuously animated by a living energy or soul ('living nature'). Third, it must involve imagination or a "kind of organ of the soul" which can establish a cognitive and visionary relationship with a world of hierarchies that links macrocosm and microcosm ('imagination and mediation'), and fourth, it must maintain a belief in, and desire for, transmutation ('the experience of transmutation'). While these four factors are intrinsic to esotericism insofar as they must be present for the definition to apply, the fifth and sixth factors are extrinsic, as they are not necessary to the definition. The fifth factor is the notion that esoteric traditions spring from a single divine source of inspiration that inspires all religions and exoteric traditions ('the practice of concordance'), and the sixth is that the teaching is passed from master to disciple through an established path of initiation ('transmission').¹⁷ Faivre grouped Gurdjieff among "esotericists who take on the task of building a *Naturphilosophie*,"¹⁸ which is the application of Romantic ideas on ontology and epistemology onto the physical universe.¹⁹

16 Wouter J. Hanegraaff, "The Unspeakable and the Law: Esotericism in Anton Webern and the Second Viennese School," in *Music and Esotericism*, ed. Laurence Wuidar (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), 329–332; Wouter J. Hanegraaff, "Forbidden Knowledge: Anti-Esoteric Polemics and Academic Research," in *Aries*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 2005, 228. See also Wouter J. Hanegraaff, "Esotericism," in *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*, Vol. 1, eds Wouter J. Hanegraaff, Antoine Faivre, Roelof van den Broek, and Jean-Pierre Brach (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 336–340.

17 Antoine Faivre, "Introduction I," in *Modern Esoteric Spirituality*, ed. Antoine Faivre (New York: Crossroad, 1995), xv–xx; Goodrick-Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions*, 9–10. See Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1998), 397–400, for his assessment of Faivre's typology.

18 Antoine Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 99.

19 Arthur McCalla, "Romanticism," in *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*, Vol. 2, eds Wouter J. Hanegraaff, Antoine Faivre, Roelof van den Broek, and Jean-Pierre Brach (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 1005.

Finally, there is the difficult task of categorising Gurdjieff the man. This has divided writers; some portraying him as a redeemer, others as a charlatan.²⁰ In terms of the latter, Gurdjieff was certainly not averse to practical jokes, fabricating facts, mythologising details of his biography and teaching, or behaving opportunistically. In his second book *Meetings With Remarkable Men* he proudly describes himself when a young man carrying out tricks on unsuspecting people and partaking in different disguises: “I had already become an old hand in the art of playing a role.”²¹ In his later writings he claimed to have lived, for twenty years from 1912, “an artificial life,” which can be interpreted as a life of role-playing. Gurdjieff and his pupils explain this technique as a tool aiding his own detachment; outwardly Gurdjieff played a role and inwardly he ‘self-remembered’ and became free from that role.²² The stance taken here on Gurdjieff, based on a comprehensive study of his life, writings, and the eyewitness accounts of pupils, is that most if not all of Gurdjieff’s tricks and obfuscations were pedagogical tools. His teachings hinge on the precept that people need to be quite seriously shaken up or made uncomfortable if they have any hope of transforming spiritually. Pupil Fritz Peters sums Gurdjieff up by stating that “as a teacher, I would say that, however conscious he might have been, his sense of dedication to the dissemination of his method must necessarily be considered compulsive...he absolutely had to be a teacher.”²³

Of Gurdjieff the man, all accounts indicate that he was charismatic, unpredictable, and highly intelligent, with the capacity to attract and maintain a large body of pupils that included talented artists and intellectuals. He also possessed an eclectic range of skills; he choreographed dances, composed music with de Hartmann, ran businesses, wrote prolifically, cooked sumptuous meals, and demonstrated practical skills such as carpentry and construction.²⁴

20 For example Anthony Storr, *Feet of Clay*, 44, states, “As we have seen, Gurdjieff was, by his own admission, an accomplished confidence trickster who had no hesitation in deceiving other people and extracting money from them when he needed to do so.” For other fairly negative summations of Gurdjieff see Rom Landau, *God is my Adventure* (London: Unwin Books, 1965 [1935]), 136–155; Whitall Perry, *Gurdjieff: In the Light of Tradition*, 59–93; Louis Pauwel, *Gurdjieff* (New York: Samuel Weiser, 1972), 319–324.

21 G.I. Gurdjieff, *Meetings With Remarkable Men* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2002 [1963]), 261. See also Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 111, 137, 197, 230, 259–261.

22 Gurdjieff, *Herald*, 11–12; Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*, 20; C.S. Nott, *Teachings of Gurdjieff: A Pupil's Journal. An Account of Some Years With G.I. Gurdjieff and A.R. Orage in New York and at Fontainebleau-Avon* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), 111; G.I. Gurdjieff, *Views From the Real World* (London: Penguin Compass, 1984), 176–178.

23 Peters, *Gurdjieff*, 325.

24 Thomson, *On Gurdjieff*, 86–87.

He was venturesome, travelling ambitiously through war-torn regions, to arrive in Europe with no knowledge of European languages, and with his family and pupils to support financially. He not only sustained himself and his pupils, but for the most part thrived under these difficult circumstances.²⁵

The Work and Foundation Groups

Gurdjieff coined the term ‘the Work’ when he formed his St Petersburg group in 1916; it was a convenient contraction of ‘the group’s work’.²⁶ The term may have its origins in alchemy, where ‘the Great Work’ was that of transmuting base metals into gold, since Gurdjieff’s teaching methods were concerned with transforming people in an alchemical sense.²⁷ ‘The Work’ is now popularly employed as a portmanteau expression that serves as both a noun and adjective to denote all things ‘Gurdjieffian’.²⁸ Thus Gurdjieff’s teachings in their entirety are often designated ‘the Work’, meaning work to be done on oneself, or alternatively the ‘Fourth Way’, which is meant to contrast with ‘ways’ or spiritual paths centring exclusively on either the intellect, body, or emotions.²⁹

For clarity, the term ‘the Work’ is used here only in relation to Gurdjieff Foundation groups. These groups aim to represent a direct transmission of the teachings of Gurdjieff, though they also include elaborations of these teachings by de Salzmann, such as the exercise of sittings, where pupils sit in silence cultivating sensations in the body.³⁰ The first Foundation groups were established in Paris, London, New York, and Caracas, and these groups have now spread to most major cities of the Western world.³¹ Outside this network is a

25 For a detailed examination of Gurdjieff’s persona see Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*, 13–21. For a study of his flamboyant sex life and liberal relationships with women, some of them pupils, see Johanna J.M. Petsche, “Gurdjieff on Sex: Subtle Bodies, Si 12, and the Sex Life of a Sage,” in *Sexuality and New Religious Movements*, eds James R. Lewis and Henrik Bogdan (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

26 Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 3.

27 Sophia Wellbeloved, *Gurdjieff: The Key Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2003), 223.

28 Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 3.

29 Ouspensky, *Search*, 48–50.

30 For details see Johanna J.M. Petsche, “A Gurdjieff Genealogy: Tracing the Manifold Ways the Gurdjieff Teaching has Travelled,” in *International Journal for the Study of New Religions*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2013, 72–75.

31 Jacob Needleman and George Baker, “Gurdjieff Tradition,” in *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*, Vol. 1, eds Wouter J. Hanegraaff, Antoine Faivre, Roelof van den Broek, and Jean-Pierre Brach (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 450.

colourful assortment of independent Gurdjieff-centred groups, devoted to studying and experiencing his teachings.³² In this book, members of Foundation groups are referred to as ‘Work members’ or ‘those in the Work’, and are considered ‘insiders’. Work members usually attend weekly group meetings on the teachings of Gurdjieff, sometimes conducted by a person who was taught by a direct pupil of Gurdjieff. Meetings have a question and answer format and may include group readings of the writings of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky. Work days, weekends, and retreats are held throughout the year, where small crews do physical labour under the guidance of teachers. Foundation groups today are secretive, as will become apparent in later chapters, and this secrecy is thought to follow Gurdjieff’s own low-profile years from 1936 to his death in 1949.³³

Gurdjieff’s Soteriology

An outline of Gurdjieff’s teaching, with emphasis on his soteriology, follows. Gurdjieff taught that modern-day people, having been wrenched from the natural conditions in which they should be living due to “abnormal” education and culture, operate as dysfunctional machines.³⁴ These human machines have three major components called ‘centres’. Also variously termed ‘brains’ or ‘localisations’, these centres are located in the head, spinal column, and breast and represent, respectively, the intellect, body, and emotions.³⁵ Gurdjieff

32 For a discussion of these independent groups see Petsche, “A Gurdjieff Genealogy: Tracing the Manifold Ways the Gurdjieff Teaching has Travelled,” 67–72. See also Johanna Petsche, “The Value of E.J. Gold: Unearthing the Real Mr G,” in *Journal for the Academic Study of Religion*, forthcoming.

33 Sophia Wellbeloved, *Gurdjieff, Astrology and Beelzebub’s Tales* (New York: Solar Bound Press, 2002), 24. In an examination of the role of secrecy in esoteric groups, Hugh Urban argues that secrecy operates as a powerful form of ‘symbolic capital’, that is, a rare and precious resource that enhances prestige and status. Urban bases his arguments on the work of Georg Simmel and Pierre Bourdieu. See Hugh Urban “The Adornment of Silence: Secrecy and Symbolic Power in American Freemasonry,” *Journal of Religion and Society*, Vol. 3, 2001, 1–29. See also Hugh Urban, “The Torment of Secrecy: Ethical and Epistemological Problems in the Study of Esoteric Traditions,” *History of Religions*, Vol. 37, No. 3, 1998, 209–248.

34 Gurdjieff, *Herald*, 29. An earlier version of the research presented in this section was published in Petsche, “Gurdjieff on Sex: Subtle Bodies, Si 12, and the Sex Life of a Sage,” 2014.

35 G.I. Gurdjieff, *All and Everything First Series: Beelzebub’s Tales to His Grandson* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1964 [1950]), 439–441, 777–780. See also Gurdjieff, *Herald*, 28–31. Although in *Tales* he defined humans as ‘three-brained beings’, his focus on three centres sometimes extended to seven; the moving, instinctive, sex, intellectual, emotional, higher

argued that the centres are usually in constant disarray, with each struggling to dominate the others. In this condition people react totally mechanically and unoriginally in the world, particularly as each of their centres maintains a small repertoire of habits that repeat endlessly. It is worth noting here that in the late nineteenth century science sought to explain physical phenomena in terms of the structure and laws of motion of a mechanical system. This must have influenced Gurdjieff's conception of human beings as mechanical.³⁶

Living in this way, Gurdjieff held, one's core self, known as 'essence', is largely lost and life is carried out through the false 'personality'. This is a protective, illusory mask that compensates for the lack of essence. This rather pathetic condition characterises the two lowest (of four) states of consciousness in which most people carry out their lives; the first is literal sleep at night and the second is the sleep-like condition in which one lives; "a far more dangerous sleep" than the former.³⁷ Gurdjieff's teaching aimed to re-educate the mechanical behaviours of the three centres and bring them into harmony. This would allow people to become complete, to develop being, and to live more consciously.³⁸

Gurdjieff's view of human beings can be further explained with recourse to his cosmology. In Gurdjieff's cosmological system human beings function as 'energy transmitters', receiving energies from higher 'Worlds' and transmitting them to the lower World of the moon. This process is necessary for the universe to evolve, but the dire consequence of providing the moon with their

emotional, and higher intellectual centres. See Ouspensky, *Search*, 55–56, 115, 142. For the purposes of this book, the three main centres (intellectual, physical, and emotional), as well as the two higher centres, will be considered here. For insight into the ways in which Gurdjieff's views of the human being as comprising both three and seven components reflect Theosophical teachings, see Johanna Petsche, "Gurdjieff and Blavatsky: Western Esoteric Teachers in Parallel," *Literature & Aesthetics*, Vol. 21, No. 1, 2011, 110.

36 This scientific view also supposed an ontology of particles of matter in motion, which can be seen to underlie Gurdjieff's cosmology (see Chapter 7). See Peter M. Harman, *Energy, Force, and Matter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 1, 8–9.

37 Ouspensky, *Search*, 142–143. Similarly, H.P. Blavatsky, *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings 1889–1890*, Vol. 12 (Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1980), 532, posited seven states of consciousness where the second was 'waking-dreaming' and the third, 'natural sleeping'.

38 Ouspensky, *Search*, 53–54, 59–61; Thomas de Hartmann and Olga de Hartmann, *Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff*, eds Thomas C. Daly and Thomas A.G. Daly (London: Arkana Penguin Books, 1992 [1964]), 203; P.D. Ouspensky, *The Fourth Way: A Record of Talks and Answers to Questions Based on the Teachings of G.I. Gurdjieff* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957), 41–46; Gurdjieff, *Views*, 69, 156; Gurdjieff, *Herald*, 29–30.

energies is that human beings become mechanical. Gurdjieff's various teaching methods aimed to aid practitioners in outwitting the laws of nature and tearing free from the moon's influence.³⁹ Outwitting these laws meant struggling against the mechanical condition of one's centres, a condition that depends on the moon just as the moon depends on it.⁴⁰ It is a struggle precisely because it is not in the interest of nature that human beings overcome their mechanical ways, because they would then no longer serve nature.⁴¹

For Gurdjieff, the key to re-educating and harmonising the centres is in the all-important transition from the second sleep-like state of consciousness to the third state of consciousness known as 'self-remembering'.⁴² Self-remembering is "the most important work for a man"⁴³ and "that absolutely necessary factor in the process of self-perfecting."⁴⁴ Gurdjieff also used the expression 'red pepper' for the concept.⁴⁵ Self-remembering is critical to Gurdjieff's teaching and means remembering to be aware of oneself in the present moment. This is achieved by dividing attention so that one is simultaneously aware of the self and also the current exterior or interior event or situation experienced (for example a task or emotion). The faculty of attention is essential to self-remembering, and must be constantly cultivated as it can easily wander to useless activities like daydreaming or imagining things. Just as essential is the effort one makes to self-remember, as self-remembering cannot occur without it and this effort itself brings energy to the organism that is required for its development.⁴⁶ Gurdjieff taught that only through self-remembering can one break free from one's mechanical behaviours and somnambulistic condition to become conscious of oneself.

The ultimate objective of self-remembering was the setting into motion of an inner alchemical process in the body that could lead to the formation of subtle bodies or soul-like substances,⁴⁷ an objective reminiscent of many other

39 Ouspensky, *Search*, 85–86, stated, "If we develop in ourselves consciousness and will, and subject our mechanical life and all our mechanical manifestations to them, we shall escape from the power of the moon."

40 Gurdjieff, *Tales*, 131, 763–768, 1105–1108; Ouspensky, *Search*, 57–58, 184–186, 305–306.

41 Maurice Nicoll, *Psychological Commentaries on the Teaching of G.I. Gurdjieff and P.D. Ouspensky*, Vol. 1 (London: Vincent Stuart, 1952), 193.

42 Ouspensky, *Search*, 141.

43 Gurdjieff, *Life is Real*, 81–83.

44 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 18.

45 Nott, *Teachings*, 2, 96; Gurdjieff, *Tales*, 20–21.

46 Ouspensky, *Search*, 110, 118–120, 179, 188, 229–235. For more on attention see Wellbeloved, *Key Concepts*, 20–21.

47 Ouspensky, *Search*, 189, 193, 256.

esoteric traditions.⁴⁸ In his early teaching these subtle bodies were known as the astral, mental, and causal bodies, and their formation corresponded with one's accessing of two higher centres. In talks published in *Views* Gurdjieff also referred to three subtle bodies, but now the astral body was also termed the soul, and the third body was called the real I. In *Tales* he presented only two higher being-bodies, the body-Kesdjan or astral body, and the higher being-body or soul. These higher being-bodies are cultivated within, and 'coat', the 'planetary' body. Later they separate from it, but only the higher being-body has the possibility of becoming immortal.⁴⁹ One of Gurdjieff's central

48 It has been argued that before the eighteenth century alchemical practices in the West were mostly physiological; see Lawrence M. Principe, "Alchemy I: Introduction" in *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*, Vol. 1, eds Wouter J. Hanegraaff, Antoine Faivre, Roelof van den Broek, and Jean-Pierre Brach (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 14. From the mid-nineteenth century influential publications by Mary Ann Atwood, Thomas South, and Ethan Allen Hitchcock promoted a new, purely spiritual interpretation of alchemy. This strongly impacted on esotericism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Europe, and accorded with Theosophical and Spiritualist notions of alchemy at the time; see Caron, Richard, "Alchemy V: 19th-20th Century" in *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*, Vol. 1, eds Wouter J. Hanegraaff, Antoine Faivre, Roelof van den Broek, and Jean-Pierre Brach (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 52. The East, in contrast, has a long history of spiritual, 'inner' alchemical practices. From the third century BCE Chinese alchemical texts describe the Daoist practice of *neidan* ('inner' alchemy), which assumes an internal subtle physiology of the body made up of paths that lead to body organs, where energies flow or become blocked. Through physical, mental, and spiritual exercises, practitioners of *neidan* aim to direct energies around the body and refine and nurture them according to the philosophy that Daoist cosmic principles such as yin and yang and the five elements can be re-enacted in the body. *Neidan* aimed at immortality through union with the *Dao*, which is believed to occur once the soul has been nurtured back to its original state of purity, yang; see Thomas Boehmer, "Taoist Alchemy: A Sympathetic Approach through Symbols," in *Buddhist and Taoist Studies I*, eds Michael Saso and David W. Chappell (Hawaii: The University Press of Hawaii, 1977), 65–75; Kristofer Schipper, *The Taoist Body*, trans. Karen C. Duval (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 103–108. Similarly, Indian tantric practices aim to cultivate inner alchemical processes in the subtle or *vajra* body, made up of channels (*nadi*) through which substances flow and are directed by the practitioner, and points where these channels intersect (*cakras*). These practices appeared in a more or less complete form in Buddhist and Saiva texts in the ninth and tenth centuries CE, and can involve deity and *mandala* visualisations, and yogic practices with a marked sexual component. Arguments have been made for the possible links between Chinese and Indian inner alchemical traditions; see Geoffrey Samuel, *The Origins of Yoga and Tantra: Indic Religions to the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 224, 271, 280–281, 291.

49 Ouspensky, *Search*, 41, 180, 197, 282; Gurdjieff, *Tales*, 673–674, 763–768; Gurdjieff, *Views*, 214–218.

premises is that individuals are born with no soul or subtle body but that this can be acquired through self-remembering. This is because self-remembering enables space or the capacity for ‘impressions’ (sense experiences) to enter the organism and become refined and transformed into finer energy, which crystallizes in the body to form subtle bodies. De Hartmann gives a useful explanation of this:

the real purpose of the Work in Essentuki could become clear only if a man gave his attention to the idea of the crystallization of the soul. The products of food, both coarse food and air, are necessary; but without impressions, the great achievement, the crystallization cannot take place. In this effort a man can rarely succeed by himself...Material of a special quality received from impressions has to exist in the pupil if the teacher is to help this transformation to take place. To build up a sufficient quantity of this material, which the pupil had to collect by his own efforts, some kind of isolated ‘reservoirs’ are necessary, where special conditions permit this material to be deposited.⁵⁰

The fourth and highest state of consciousness, the ‘objective’ state of consciousness, is attained at the point where one manifests subtle bodies since it is, according to Gurdjieff, “the result of inner growth and of long and difficult work on oneself.”⁵¹ He also relates the attainment of this state to one’s accessing of the higher centres, which are equated with subtle bodies.⁵² In the objective state of consciousness one gains “knowledge of things in themselves” and can “see and feel the unity of everything.”⁵³ In this state pretensions and ego are eliminated which means, in Gurdjieff’s terms, one is stripped of personality and one’s essence or real I is revealed.⁵⁴ To summarise, Gurdjieff’s teachings aimed to elevate individuals from the second to the third state of consciousness, the latter known as self-remembering. Working to self-remember allowed practitioners to observe and correct their fragmented and mechanical conditions. In Gurdjieff’s system this led practitioners, by way of an alchemical process

50 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 69. For more see Gurdjieff, *Views*, 201–206, 214–215; Gurdjieff, *Life is Real*, 87, 170.

51 Ouspensky, *Search*, 142.

52 Ouspensky, *Search*, 180, 197.

53 Ouspensky, *Search*, 278–279. Blavatsky, *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, 662, also postulated an ‘objective’ state of consciousness, but for her, “everything seen on this plane must be reversed in translating it into terms of objective consciousness. For instance, numbers appear as though written backwards: 591 would appear as 195.”

54 Gurdjieff, *Life is Real*, 107.

within the organism, to attain the fourth state of consciousness and to cultivate subtle bodies.

The Teaching in Context

Gurdjieff's teaching is best described as a synthesis of Hindu, Buddhist, Judeo-Christian, and Islamic ideas, while drawing particularly strongly from Western esoteric, Sufi, and Theosophical discourses.⁵⁵ Gurdjieff's revival of esoteric traditions and his blending of Eastern spiritual ideas with Western thought share commonalities with Helena Petrovna Blavatsky's (1831–1891) Theosophical mission. Gurdjieff and Blavatsky were pioneers of the New Age movement, bridging the gap between nineteenth and twentieth century modes of thought. Counter-culture historian Theodore Roszak identifies Gurdjieff as one of three "occult evolutionists" along with Blavatsky and Steiner,⁵⁶ and religious studies scholar Paul Heelas believes that Gurdjieff's teaching is a "key ancestor" to the New Age movement.⁵⁷

Gurdjieff stridently repudiated contemporary ideological and artistic paradigms. This approach is typical of new religio-spiritual leaders wishing to present their system as superior to, or even as obliterating, other competing teachings and cultural manifestations. It is clear, however, that Gurdjieff formed and developed his teaching in an intellectual and artistic climate (including the cultural hub of 1920s Paris)⁵⁸ in which the notion of fragmentation, central to Gurdjieff's view of the human being, had common currency. The early twentieth century was a time of social and ideological disjunction and fragmentation due to the First World War, the rise of industrialisation, developments in modern physics, and the emergence of psychoanalysis. These

55 Wellbeloved, *Key Concepts*, xxviii. For discussions on his connections with Sufism see Anna Challenger, *Philosophy and Art in Gurdjieff's Beelzebub: A Modern Sufi Odyssey* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2002). For a study on his relationship with Theosophy see Petsche, "Gurdjieff and Blavatsky," 98–115.

56 Theodore Roszak, *Unfinished Animal* (London: Faber and Faber, 1976), 115–151.

57 Paul Heelas, *The New Age Movement: The Celebration of the Self and the Sacralization of Modernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 48. See also Johanna Petsche, "Gurdjieff and de Hartmann's Music for Movements," in *Alternative Spirituality and Religion Review*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2013, 93.

58 Gurdjieff spent the majority of his years as a teacher (from 1922 to 1949) in Paris which, in the 1920s alone, received visits from James Joyce, Gertrude Stein, Pablo Picasso, Igor Stravinsky, Francis Poulenc, Isadora Duncan, Jean Cocteau, Ernest Hemingway, Man Ray, Tristan Tzara, and Fernand Léger. See Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 191.

influences, further discussed below, can be detected in the central premise of Gurdjieff's teaching; that human beings live in a fragmented condition where their centres are out of sync and their core self, known as essence, has been forgotten.

The shock of the First World War on European life and culture gave rise to ideas of self-fragmentation and discontinuity, challenging earlier notions of the self as integral and coherent. The vivid terminology of Ezra Pound's (1885–1972) war poetry described a crisis in the self as well as a crisis of war: "To die with a bullet seems to be nothing; parts of our being remain intact; but to be dismembered, torn to pieces, reduced to pulp, this is a fear that flesh cannot support."⁵⁹ From his post-war stance Pound portrayed the modern, broken antihero as a collection of split-off parts; his heroine of "Near Perigord" was "A broken bundle of mirrors."⁶⁰ Further challenging earlier notions of the self as integral were the rise of industrialisation, which generated feelings of alienation and fragmentation in society and industry; the fragmentation of the classical atom into its mysterious parts; and the rise of psychoanalysis with its concepts of neuroses, self-deception, self-conflict, and multiple personalities, sparked by Sigmund Freud's (1856–1939) division of consciousness into id, ego, and superego.

These radical changes and theories spurred experiments with fragmentation in almost all contemporary artistic movements. There were the broken up and reassembled images of Cubism, the revelations of modern irrationality and meaninglessness of the Dadaists, the illogical dreamlike perspectives and conceptions of the Surrealists, and the fractured musical sounds and forms of composers Arnold Schoenberg (1874–1951), Béla Bartók (1881–1945), Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971), Anton Webern (1883–1945), and Alban Berg (1885–1935). This rejection of wholeness and exploration of fragmentation is nowhere more evident than in the Modernist movement in literature, which flourished from 1914 to 1924. Writers such as Marcel Proust (1871–1922), James Joyce (1882–1941), Virginia Woolf (1882–1941), Ezra Pound, and T.S. Eliot (1888–1965) vividly portrayed their characters as collages of disparities, conflicts, and self-deceptions.⁶¹

59 Dennis Brown, *The Modernist Self in Twentieth-Century English Literature* (London: Macmillan Press, 1989), 1–2, 43.

60 Brown, *The Modernist Self*, 14.

61 Interestingly, Wellbeloved, *Gurdjieff, Astrology and Beelzebub's Tales*, 25–26, considers *Tales* a modernist text due to its break with rational exposition, its experimental use of language, and its response to the irrational and to themes of religion, philosophy, and psychology. In *Tales* one can also detect influences of Darwinian, Freudian and Einsteinian theory, and the anthropology of James George Frazer's *The Golden Bough*.

As Eliot noted in his doctoral dissertation, “the life of a soul does not consist in the contemplation of one consistent world but in the painful task of unifying... jarring and incompatible ones.”⁶²

Gurdjieff’s Writings and Transcriptions of His Talks

Gurdjieff wrote the trilogy *All and Everything*, which includes *Beelzebub’s Tales to His Grandson* (henceforth *Tales*), *Meetings With Remarkable Men* (henceforth *Meetings*), and *Life is Real Only Then, When ‘I Am’* (henceforth *Life is Real*). He also wrote the tract *The Herald of Coming Good* (henceforth *Herald*). As these four works are referred to frequently throughout this book they will be outlined here, along with two published collections of transcriptions of his talks.

It is in the 1, 238 pages of *Tales* where Gurdjieff gives the most comprehensive account of his ideas. *Tales* is an exhaustive critique of the behaviour and customs of human beings (‘three-brained beings’), relayed by the wise, ancient extraterrestrial Beelzebub to his thirteen-year-old grandson Hassein as they travel through space. Work on *Tales* commenced in 1924 and, after a lengthy process of translating and editing the book with the help of his pupils, Gurdjieff finally received the proofs of the English language version on 21 October 1949. He died a week later on 29 October.⁶³ According to pupil C.S. Nott, Gurdjieff considered that one day *Tales* might be read in churches,⁶⁴ while pupil J.G. Bennett reports that Gurdjieff wished for it to be published in at least four languages, distributed throughout the world, and available to all at no cost.⁶⁵

In *Tales* Gurdjieff employs figurative language, neologisms, symbolism, and contradiction to test the attention and patience of readers, and emphasises provocative and polemical themes to challenge readers’ convictions and perspectives. Gurdjieff stated that *Tales* requires of the reader “an ability to read between the lines,” and that all the keys to *Tales* were in the book, but that they were not near the doors.⁶⁶ This aspect of the book is further examined in Chapter 8. Four chapters of *Tales* are of particular value to this book: Chapter 30, “Art,” Chapter 40, “Beelzebub Tells How People Learned and Again Forgot About the Fundamental Cosmic Law of Heptaparaparshinokh,”

62 Brown, *The Modernist Self*, 32.

63 Wellbeloved, *Gurdjieff, Astrology and Beelzebub’s Tales*, 31.

64 C.S. Nott, *Further Teachings of Gurdjieff: Journey Through This World* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), 77.

65 J.G. Bennett, *Witness: The Story of a Search* (New Mexico: Bennett Books, 1997), 206–207.

66 Nott, *Teachings*, 106.

Chapter 41, “The Bokharian Dervish Hadji-Asvatz-Troov,” and Chapter 39, “The Holy Planet Purgatory.” Where the latter represents the nucleus of Gurdjieff’s complex system of cosmology and soteriology, the others deal with themes of music and art.

Although it is common for writers on Gurdjieff to disregard *Tales* altogether in favour of Ouspensky’s much more comprehensible *Search*,⁶⁷ *Tales* is frequently employed here for three reasons. First and quite simply, *Tales* represents the lengthiest and most ambitious account of Gurdjieff’s ideas, including those on music and art. Second, *Tales* is the most authoritative expression of Gurdjieff’s words, as it is the only part of the English translation of his trilogy *All and Everything* that he himself finalised. De Salzmann edited the English-language editions of the other parts of the trilogy after Gurdjieff’s death.⁶⁸ And third, *Tales* has received little critical consideration and requires more attention by scholars.⁶⁹ The 1964 edition of *Tales*, published by E.P. Dutton and Co., is utilised here. This is an exact reissue of the 1950 edition that Gurdjieff oversaw for publication.⁷⁰ A revised translation of the text that was directed by de Salzmann is worth noting here. This was first published by Arkana two years after de Salzmann’s death in 1992 under the instruction of the Gurdjieff Foundation of New York. A second edition of the revised translation was published in 2006. In a letter from 1972 de Salzmann claimed that Gurdjieff was dissatisfied with the translations of *Tales* and directed her to work on them later.⁷¹ One should be aware that this revised translation differs significantly from Gurdjieff’s own words.

67 For example: Wellbeloved, *Key Concepts*; Michel Waldberg, *Gurdjieff: An Approach to His Ideas* (London: Arkana, 1989); Kathleen R. Speeth, *The Gurdjieff Work* (California: And/Or Press, 1976); Garrett Thomson, *On Gurdjieff*.

68 J. Walter Driscoll, “The Art of G.I. Gurdjieff,” <http://www.gurdjieff-bibliography.com>, 2004, 11. Retrieved 2 March 2010.

69 There are two commentaries on *Tales* by pupils. A.R. Orage wrote *Orage’s Commentaries on ‘Beelzebub’* and J.G. Bennett wrote *Talks on Beelzebub’s Tales*, which represents some of the many lectures Bennett gave on *Tales* from 1949 to his death in 1974; see Nott, *Teachings*, 125–215; J.G. Bennett, *John G. Bennett’s Talks On Beelzebub’s Tales*, comp. A.G.E. Blake (Maine: Samuel Weiser, 1993). Other key texts on *Tales* include Waldberg’s, *Gurdjieff: An Approach to His Ideas*; Wellbeloved’s *Gurdjieff, Astrology and Beelzebub’s Tales*. For scholarship on the text see: Anna T. Challenger’s “An Introduction to Gurdjieff’s ‘Beelzebub’: A Modern Sufi Teaching Tale” (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Kent State University, 1990); Challenger, *Philosophy and Art in Gurdjieff’s Beelzebub*; Pecotic, “Body and Correspondence.”

70 For an account of the various editions of *Tales* see Driscoll and Gurdjieff Foundation of California, *Gurdjieff: An Annotated Bibliography*, 1–2.

71 See Driscoll, “The Art of G.I. Gurdjieff,” 20.

The second text in Gurdjieff's trilogy is his semi-autobiographical narrative *Meetings*, which he commenced in 1927 or 1928 and worked on most intensively in the early 1930s.⁷² It was published in French in 1960 and English in 1963,⁷³ and made into a film by Peter Brook in 1979.⁷⁴ In *Meetings* Gurdjieff conveys the story of his childhood and travels through a bricolage of autobiography, allegory, parable, and travelogue.⁷⁵ Accounts in *Meetings* are the only source of information about the first half of Gurdjieff's life, though they largely resist verification. References to music are interspersed throughout the text. Gurdjieff describes his admiration for the music and skills of the *ashokhs* or travelling bards, a profession of his father, which he witnessed as a child,⁷⁶ and recounts his experiences as a young chorister at Kars Military Cathedral.⁷⁷ He also refers to music that he played, sang, and encountered on extensive travels through Central Asia and the Middle East.⁷⁸ His lengthiest account of music in *Meetings* can be found in the segment "Vitvitskaia" of the chapter "Prince Lubovedsky." Here Gurdjieff pays tribute to the beautiful Polish woman Vitvitskaia, who became part of his itinerant band after his friend Prince Lubovedsky saved her from the 'white slave trade' and entrusted her to Gurdjieff. He describes her preoccupation with the effects of the vibrations of music on listeners, a recurring theme in Gurdjieff's writings. In the story, Vitvitskaia became so intensely curious about the effects on the human organism of monotonous ceremonial music that she bit her finger and almost severed it from her hand.⁷⁹

As the concluding chapter of *Meetings* Gurdjieff inserted a transcription of a talk he gave on 8 April 1924, which he entitled "The Material Question." The talk was given in pupil Juliet Rublee's apartment in Manhattan after Gurdjieff formally established the New York branch of his Institute. After midnight refreshments Gurdjieff was questioned about how he financed his Institute

72 Biographer James Moore gives the commencement date for *Meetings* as 1928, though researchers Thomas C. Daly and Thomas A.G. Daly, using the de Hartmann archives, argue for 1927. Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 330; Thomas C. Daly and Thomas A.G. Daly, "Chronology," in *Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff* (London: Arkana Penguin Books, 1992), 269.

73 Driscoll and Gurdjieff Foundation of California, *Gurdjieff: An Annotated Bibliography*, 3.

74 See Carole M. Cusack, "An Enlightened Life in Text and Image: G.I. Gurdjieff's *Meetings With Remarkable Men* (1963) and Peter Brook's 'Meetings With Remarkable Men' (1979)," *Literature & Aesthetics*, Vol. 21, No. 1, 2011, 72–97.

75 Driscoll and Gurdjieff Foundation of California, *Gurdjieff: An Annotated Bibliography*, ix.

76 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 32–33.

77 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 50–52, 54, 200.

78 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 103–104, 127, 161, 174, 230, 236, 253–254.

79 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 122–135.

and “The Material Question” was his reply, which was transcribed by pupil A.R. Orage, then filtered through two translators and collated with another transcription by pupil Boris Ferapontoff. “The Material Question” gives details of Gurdjieff’s early life and the establishment of his Institute. His audience must have been impressed with the talk; one man, Samuel Hoffenstein, immediately handed Gurdjieff a cheque that night and pledged more for the future, while another audience member, Lady Lewis, promised Gurdjieff half of her pin money.⁸⁰

Gurdjieff described the final text of his trilogy, *Life is Real*, as his “summarizing-concluding book.”⁸¹ Written between 1933 and 1935,⁸² and first published in 1975, this seemingly unfinished semi-autobiographical text centres on Gurdjieff’s life at his Institute in Fontainebleau, and his experience writing *Tales*. Biographers Webb and Moore accept Gurdjieff’s version of events in *Life is Real*, though according to Beekman Taylor “much of it is carefully crafted fiction.”⁸³ Music-related comments are scarce, though two are of some interest: Gurdjieff recounts playing Russian folk songs on a mouth harmonica during his travels, and briefly describes de Hartmann giving demonstrations of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music for Orage’s groups in New York. De Hartmann would play a piece that they had composed the day before, followed by two more pieces at the request of the audience. After the music was played Gurdjieff would begin a talk.⁸⁴ This is one rare moment where Gurdjieff mentions their piano music in writing.

Gurdjieff’s short tract *Herald* was first published in 1933 and is thus the only work by Gurdjieff to be published in his lifetime, although he retracted it the following year and destroyed remaining copies. For this reason *Herald* is commonly neglected by writers on Gurdjieff, though it is an informative medley of autobiography and promotional synopsis of his trilogy, and it contains passages from *Prospectus No. 1*, a program Gurdjieff issued for his Institute in Fontainebleau.⁸⁵ Sophia Wellbeloved suggests that *Herald* is, in fact, one of Gurdjieff’s most significant works and that it was renounced as a trick; Gurdjieff wished to draw attention to it. Unlike all three parts of Gurdjieff’s trilogy, *Herald* was never read aloud to groups in Gurdjieff’s time.⁸⁶

80 Beekman Taylor, *A New Life*, 114–115.

81 Gurdjieff, *Life is Real*, 48.

82 J.G. Bennett, *An Introduction to Gurdjieff’s Third Series “Life is Real Only Then, When I AM”* (Sherborne, Gloucestershire: Coombe Springs Press, 1975), 12–14.

83 Beekman Taylor, *A New Life*, 154.

84 Gurdjieff, *Life is Real*, 12–13, 127.

85 Driscoll, “The Art of G.I. Gurdjieff,” 18.

86 Wellbeloved, *Key Concepts*, 227; Sophia Wellbeloved, pers. comm. (16 April 2010).

Views From the Real World: Early Talks in Moscow, Essentuki, Tiflis, Berlin, London, Paris, New York and Chicago, As Recollected by His Pupils (henceforth *Views*) is a collection of thematically ordered transcriptions of talks given by Gurdjieff between 1914 and 1930, primarily between 1923 and 1924. It was first published in English in 1973. Two short talks deal with music and art; “Creative art – associations” and “Questions and answers on art etc.” Here Gurdjieff discusses the nature and putative effects of ‘objective’ art and music (in *Views* these are termed ‘ancient’ or ‘conscious’ art and music). In “Questions and answers on art etc.” Gurdjieff also outlines connections between the musical scale and his cosmology. *Views* begins with “Glimpses of the Truth,” supposedly a transcription of Gurdjieff’s first meeting with a pupil in Moscow in 1915,⁸⁷ though Beekman Taylor argues that it was “probably composed by Gurdjieff himself.”⁸⁸ In any case, “Glimpses of the Truth” is the earliest record of Gurdjieff’s teaching, and was circulated among Moscow pupils in 1915 in order to publicise it.⁸⁹ There are two useful mentions of music in the transcription; a fairly detailed outline of analogies between cosmological and musical structures, and a comment that in Moscow Gurdjieff possessed a collection of stringed and wind instruments.⁹⁰

Transcripts of Gurdjieff’s Meetings 1941–1946 (henceforth *Transcripts*), first published in 2008, contains transcriptions of thirty-two wartime meetings in Gurdjieff’s Paris apartment. *Transcripts* is an unabridged version of William Patrick Patterson’s *Voices in the Dark*, published in 2000. Patterson’s book omitted what was originally considered controversial material in the transcriptions, such as outlines of spiritual exercises prescribed by Gurdjieff, which are guarded with secrecy by Foundation groups, along with dates of meetings and names of attendees and questioners. This was restored in *Transcripts*. Neither *Voices in the Dark* nor *Transcripts* was published with the approval of the Gurdjieff Foundations.⁹¹ The only significant reference to music in *Transcripts* appears in the three-page “Meeting Nineteen” where Gurdjieff discusses an engraving of seven Oriental dancers holding instruments and wearing head-dresses, which depicts a Tibetan ceremony into which he was apparently initiated. He explained that the vibrations of the body movements of these dancers

87 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 9; Ouspensky, *Search*, 9–11, describes first hearing this account read aloud in 1915.

88 Beekman Taylor, *A New Life*, 44.

89 Beekman Taylor, *A New Life*, 43–44.

90 G.I. Gurdjieff, “Glimpses of the Truth,” in *Views From the Real World* (London: Penguin Compass, 1984), II, 17–24.

91 Joseph Azize, pers. comm. (20 March 2012).

gather into their headdresses and are sent into the valley, creating “divine music.” Although the figures in the engraving hold instruments, he maintained that it was their movements and inner exercises that created the music.⁹²

Gurdjieff and Western Art Music

The Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music was composed in early twentieth century France, a time and place of great musical change and innovation, though Gurdjieff appears to have been wholly uninterested in the avant-garde music of the day. He denounced the contemporary arts, which he saw as ‘imitation’ rather than original or creative,⁹³ and his piano music shows no real sign of the experimental harmonic language of, for example, Igor Stravinsky, Arnold Schoenberg, and Anton Webern. However, Gurdjieff and de Hartmann’s use of folk and religious musical gestures from what were then considered in Europe to be exotic parts of the world, and their adaption of these for the piano, represents compositional practices typical of the early twentieth century. Gurdjieff never claimed to be a serious composer, and the purpose of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music and the context in which it was written differ significantly from those of other twentieth-century composers. Regardless, this music can and should be considered within its socio-cultural setting. First, however, there will be a brief investigation of the little that is known of Gurdjieff’s contact with, and opinions on, Western music.

Accounts in the de Hartmanns’ *Our Life* reveal that Gurdjieff had some contact with Western art music. In Essentuki in 1918 he attended a concert given by the de Hartmanns of operatic arias from Mozart’s *The Marriage of Figaro*, Verdi’s *La Traviata*, and Puccini’s *Tosca*, and also de Hartmann’s own compositions, with Olga de Hartmann singing and de Hartmann accompanying her on piano. In Tiflis in 1919 Gurdjieff also attended a performance of Bizet’s *Carmen* and, in 1920, another concert of de Hartmann’s compositions. This indicates that Gurdjieff had at least heard the popular music of the major opera composers, as well as de Hartmann’s own music (for a description of his music see Chapter 3). The de Hartmanns’ accounts also indicate that Gurdjieff had brief contact with composers Sergei Prokofiev and Nikolai Nikolayevich Tcherepnin.⁹⁴ However, Gurdjieff seems to have been uninterested in

92 G.I. Gurdjieff, *Transcripts of Gurdjieff’s Meetings 1941–1946* (London: Book Studio, 2008), 100–102.

93 Gurdjieff, *Views*, 36; Gurdjieff, *Tales*, 98, 450–452; Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 8–16.

94 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 48, 115–116, 148–149, 206.

contemporary Western art and music. Pupil C.S. Nott remarked that although there were musicians, painters, designers, singers, and writers at the Prieuré, he did not remember a single discussion about the topic of contemporary art. It was considered unimportant compared with their purpose there.⁹⁵ Olga de Hartmann implies that Gurdjieff disliked nineteenth century romantic music, specifically the music of Chopin,⁹⁶ and Gurdjieff's aversion to jazz music is made clear in an article for the *Syracuse Herald* in 1924 where an unnamed journalist writes, "Gurdjieff looks upon our jazz as a sort of monstrosity, a travesty on real art."⁹⁷

In preparation for composing music together, Gurdjieff also clearly made efforts to redirect de Hartmann away from his Western musical background and towards Eastern and indigenous music. De Hartmann states that in Essentuki in 1918 Gurdjieff organised a performance by a small group of Transcaucasian musicians so that pupils, including de Hartmann, could "hear real Eastern music," and in 1924 Gurdjieff sent de Hartmann to a concert of American Indian music at New York's Neighbourhood Playhouse. De Hartmann states, "Mr Gurdjieff sent me specially to observe and listen, and write down their melodies. These notes I still have." Gurdjieff also encouraged de Hartmann to acquaint himself with Armenian music, instructing him to give concerts in Armenia in 1919 and introducing him to the music of contemporary Armenian composer Komitas.⁹⁸

Gurdjieff was fond of the "Bell Song" or "Où va la jeune Hindoue?," an aria for coloratura soprano from Léo Delibes' (1836–1891) opera *Lakmé* (1881–1882). This must have been due to its strong evocations of Eastern music, and to its theme of the cultural tensions between the East and West.⁹⁹ In the opera the title character Lakme, whose name is presumably a simplification of Lakshmi (the Hindu goddess of prosperity), sings the "Bell Song" to a crowd of English tourists. Her father Nilakantha, a Brahmin high priest and the head of the local anti-colonial resistance, hopes that her singing will draw her secret English lover, the soldier Gerald, out of the crowd, and it eventually does.¹⁰⁰ *Lakmé* was

95 Nott, *Teachings*, 102.

96 Olga de Hartmann states that in June 1926 Gurdjieff's wife Julia Ostrowska, on her deathbed, asked de Hartmann to play the piano for her, as she loved music. That day Gurdjieff was in Paris and Ostrowska said, "Since Georgivanch [Gurdjieff] is not here, would you play Chopin for me?" See de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 248.

97 Paul Beekman Taylor, ed., *Gurdjieff in the Public Eye: Newspaper Articles, Magazines and Books 1914–1949* (Utrecht, Netherlands: Eureka Editions, 2010), 141.

98 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 43, 133–135, 214.

99 For a comparison between *Lakmé* and Gurdjieff's ballet *Struggle* see Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 365–366.

100 Ralph Locke, *Musical Exoticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 185.

popular in Gurdjieff's time, having been performed five hundred times in Paris alone between its first performance in 1883, and 1960.¹⁰¹ De Hartmann recounts that in October 1918, at their first supper in the Black Sea port of Sochi after a strenuous journey on foot through the northern Caucasus mountains, Gurdjieff pointed to a piano in their hotel and asked Olga de Hartmann to sing the "Bell Song," "as if she had not just finished a two-month walk."¹⁰² According to de Hartmann, Gurdjieff "particularly liked" the aria, and recounts another time in 1924 when Gurdjieff requested Olga to sing it.¹⁰³ Gurdjieff may simply have liked the aria, though it is also possible that Olga's renditions were meant to familiarise Gurdjieff's pupils with the sounds of the East at times when it was not possible to hear more traditional Eastern sounds.

Exoticism and Nationalism

Although Gurdjieff distanced himself from the contemporary arts, the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music is indicative of an important artistic trend of the early twentieth century: exoticism. Musicologist Jonathan Bellman defines exoticism in music as:

the borrowing or use of musical materials that evoke distant locales or alien frames of reference [where] characteristic and easily recognized musical gestures from the alien culture are assimilated into a more familiar style, giving it an exotic color and suggestiveness...The exotic equation is a balance of familiar and unfamiliar: just enough "there" to spice up the "here" but remain comprehensible in making the point. Exoticism is not about the earnest study of foreign cultures; it is about drama, effect, and evocation. The listener is intrigued, hears something new and savoury, but is not aurally destabilized enough to feel uncomfortable.¹⁰⁴

Ralph Locke goes further in his definition, arguing that musical exoticism relates not only to established stylistic codes and devices in music, but also more broadly to the interaction between a work, in all its aspects, and the listener. He suggests that one must consider the non-musical elements in an

¹⁰¹ Alison Jones, *Lakmé* (Opera-Opera Pellinor, 2006), 3.

¹⁰² de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 111–112.

¹⁰³ de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 211.

¹⁰⁴ Jonathan Bellman, "Introduction," in *The Exotic in Western Music*, ed. Jonathan Bellman (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), ix, xii–xiii.

exotic work, such as its genre, title, plot where applicable, the intentions of the composer if known, and also the cultural values that shaped the work's composition and that continue thereafter to shape its performance and reception.¹⁰⁵

European composers began employing in their music the 'exotic' sounds of other cultures from around the beginning of the seventeenth century, with the rise of European colonialism and the discovery of the New World. Due to a common ethnocentric standpoint among Westerners at that time, composers largely employed these stereotypically, and amalgamated the music of quite separate Eastern cultures into a generalised Eastern sound. Two centuries later, when Britain, France, and other Western countries had increased dominion over the native populations of large portions of the world, more specific traces of Arabian, Persian, Turkish, Indian, and Chinese music filtered through works like Charles François Gounod's *La reine de Saba* (1862), Georges Bizet's *Les pêcheurs de perles* (1863), Giacomo Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine* (1865), Camille Saint-Saëns' *Samson and Dalila* (1877), and Léo Delibes's *Lakmé* (1883). This Western compositional practice of adopting music from foreign cultures was especially evident in France, where the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music was composed. French composers were interested in the East because, as a result of French colonialism, vast parts of the East were within the imperial reach of France. The Trocadéro, the site of the World Fair on the Right Bank of the Seine in Paris, included, in the words of one contemporary observer in 1900, "Hindu temples, savage huts, pagodas, souks, Algerian alleys, Chinese, Japanese, Sudanese, Senegalese, Siamese, Cambodian quarters...a bazaar of climates, architectural styles, smells, colours, cuisine, music."¹⁰⁶

The employment of exotic sounds in mid to late nineteenth century music occurred simultaneously with the nationalist movement in music that continued well into the twentieth-century, when composers such as Franz Liszt (1811–1886), Bedrich Smetana (1824–1884), Mily Balakiref (1837–1910), Antonin Dvořák (1841–1904), Edvard Grieg (1843–1907), Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908), and Jean Sibelius (1865–1957) utilised the modes and scales of the indigenous traditions of their own countries, evoking a national sound. As highlighted by musicologists Richard Taruskin and Ralph Locke, the boundaries between categories of exoticism and nationalism are often blurred. Works by composers like Dvořák, Isaac Albéniz (1860–1909), Astor Pantaleón Piazzolla (1921–1992), and Henryk Mikołaj Górecki (1933–2010) represent, in the composer's own country, what music history books would regard as 'nationalism'.

105 Locke, *Musical Exoticism*, 2–3, 46, 74.

106 Timothy D. Taylor, *Beyond Exoticism* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007), 90. For more see 86–87.

In the broader cosmopolis, however, they function instead or as well as an exotic product.¹⁰⁷

In the first decades of the twentieth century, due in large part to new communication, transportation, and sound-recording technologies, foreign cultures became much more accessible to Westerners. This allowed composers more than ever before the opportunity to explore the sounds of the music of other cultures. In their music composers such as Charles Ives (1874–1954), Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971), Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953), and the French composers of Les Six began drawing on Eastern and Western folk music, as well as church hymns and plainsong, as did Gurdjieff. They also drew from the sounds of nature.¹⁰⁸ Other composers such as Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958) and Aaron Copland (1900–1990) explored the folk music of their native countries. Inspired by these religious and folk sounds, many composers of the period preferred musical characteristics of clarity, economy, and directness over the emotional excesses and subjectivity of nineteenth century Austro-German Romanticism that had dominated music for over a century.¹⁰⁹

Minimalist composers of the 1970s such as Arvo Pärt (b. 1935), Steve Reich (b. 1936), and Phillip Glass (b. 1937) continued this trend, assimilating features of folk and religious music such as textural clarity, repetitive rhythms, and static harmonies into a new idiom. Minimalism in turn lay the foundations for New Age music, characterised, according to New Age scholar Steven Halpern, by five qualities: harmony and consonance, unpredictable melodic lines, a lack of traditional pulsing rhythm, an avoidance of instruments with harsh or shrill sounds, and open texture that creates a feeling of space.¹¹⁰ New Age music is generally intended as a spiritual or therapeutic tool, enabling serenity, inspiration, and relaxation. It was suggested to me on a number of occasions that the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music could be considered a precursor to New Age music, due to its repetitive rhythms, meandering melodies and harmonies, and its ‘calming effect’. However, in Chapter 8 it is argued that the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music was intended to cultivate self-remembering in pupils, breaking them out of habitual patterns of listening and feeling. This is antithetical to the relaxing, hypnotic effects of New Age music.

¹⁰⁷ Locke, *Musical Exoticism*, 77.

¹⁰⁸ Madeleine Hsu, *Olivier Messiaen, the Musical Mediator: A Study of the Influence of Liszt, Debussy, and Bartók* (London: Associated University Press, 1996), 9.

¹⁰⁹ Ton van Leeuw, *Music of the Twentieth Century: A Study of its Elements and Structure*, trans. Stephen Taylor (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005), 25–27.

¹¹⁰ Peter C. Blum, “Typification, Transcendence, and Critique. On the Social Construction of New Age Music,” in *All Music*, eds F.B. Dasilva and D.L. Brunsma (Aldershot, Hants: Avebury, 1996), 122.

There was a spiritual dimension to trends of exoticism and nationalism in the arts; it was believed that Eastern and indigenous art forms expressed spiritual truths as they facilitated a tracing back to the very sources of art, and the very sources of truth itself. Composers began to dispense with the rules and conventions of Western classical music, and instead followed 'higher' rules, the direct revelations of 'nature'.¹¹¹ Truth and inner content became more important than material form and outward appearance; the former had the least connection with the subjectivity and materialistic strivings of the world glorified in the Romantic period. Béla Bartók stated, "What we had to do was to grasp the spirit of the hitherto unknown music and to make this spirit (difficult to describe in words) the basis of our works,"¹¹² just as de Hartmann, when notating Gurdjieff's dictations, was to "'catch' and 'grasp' the essential character, the very *noyau*, or kernel, of the music."¹¹³ Bartók further asserts,

...a genuine peasant melody of our land is a musical example of a perfected art. I consider it quite as much a masterpiece, for instance, in miniature, as a Bach fugue or a Mozart sonata movement is a masterpiece in larger form. A melody of this kind is a classic example of the expression of a musical thought in its most conceivably concise form, with the avoidance of all that is superfluous...we have what is only fundamentally essential...from this music, we have learned how best to employ terseness of expression, the utmost excision of all that is nonessential – and it was this very thing, after the excessive grandiloquence of the romantic Period, which we thirsted to learn.¹¹⁴

In 1949 composer Arnold Schoenberg argued, similarly, that many European and Russian folk songs are "perfect" and thus too complete in themselves to allow for elaborate thematic and motivic development.¹¹⁵

Among the first composers to begin seriously collecting, studying, and transcribing into Western notation the folk music of other countries were Bartók (1881–1945), Zoltan Kodály (1882–1967), and Olivier Messiaen (1902–1992). Bartók collected and categorised thousands of folksongs, largely among Hungarian, Slovakian, Turkish, and Romanian peoples, between 1906 and

¹¹¹ Gelbart, *The Invention of "Folk Music" and "Art Music,"* 202.

¹¹² Barbara Nissman, *Bartok and the Piano: A Performer's View* (Lanham, Md. and Oxford: The Scarecrow Press Inc., 2002), 85.

¹¹³ de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 246.

¹¹⁴ Nissman, *Bartók and the Piano*, 87.

¹¹⁵ Locke, *Musical Exoticism*, 29.

1918.¹¹⁶ This overlaps the period in which Gurdjieff claimed to have travelled and ‘collected’ music through Central Asia and the Middle East (see Chapter 2). Bartók used an Edison phonograph, preserving the music he heard on wax cylinders and later transcribing it.¹¹⁷ Musicologist Barbara Nissman shows three ways in which Bartók employed folk melodies in his compositions. First, he used folk melodies unchanged or only slightly varied, adding accompaniments and sometimes introductory and concluding material that were usually treated as secondary in importance to the folk melodies. Second, Bartók invented imitation folk melodies, which were as important as his own added parts.¹¹⁸ Third, instead of employing original or imitation folk melodies he “absorb[ed] their essence”¹¹⁹ and gave primacy to his own compositional additions.¹²⁰ Bartók’s first method most closely resembles Gurdjieff’s claims for his music, though on a practical level it is unlikely that Gurdjieff could reproduce unchanged folk melodies without having made any record of the original music during his travels (see Chapter 5). Considering the ratio of importance between Gurdjieff’s dictated melodies and the added accompaniments of de Hartmann, their music most likely reflects a combination of all three of Bartók’s methods.

In light of the above it appears that the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music can quite comfortably be positioned within the artistic trends of its time. In accordance with many other twentieth-century composers such as Ives, Bartók, Kodály, Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Messiaen, and the French composers of Les Six, in their piano music Gurdjieff and de Hartmann abandoned musical gestures of nineteenth century Austro-German Romanticism, preferring to engage with the more austere religious and folk music sounds from different parts of the world. These sounds were usually set against the backdrop of Western harmonies and were presented on a Western instrument, in line with common practice at the time. In these ways their music conforms to the trend of exoticism that was then flourishing in the arts. As discussed in Chapter 5, it is also likely that Gurdjieff utilised musical gestures deriving from his native country of Armenia. This can be considered nationalistic. In fact, the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann pieces

116 Stephen Erdely, “Bartók and Folk Music,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Bartók*, ed. Amanda Bayley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 31, 33, 35; Victoria Fischer, “Piano Music: Teaching Pieces and Folksongs Arrangements,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Bartók*, ed. Amanda Bayley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 99.

117 Halsey Stevens, *The Life and Music of Bela Bartók* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 36.

118 Nissman, *Bartók and the Piano*, 129.

119 Nissman, *Bartók and the Piano*, 129.

120 Fischer, “Piano Music: Teaching Pieces and Folksongs Arrangements,” 100.

reminiscent of the music of Turkey and Russia (for example their Dervish pieces and Hymns) could also be considered nationalistic, as these countries were also essentially native to Gurdjieff. In these pieces he evoked a national sound that was nonetheless 'exotic' to people of countries outside his own. The Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music, then, can be viewed alongside practices and trends of early twentieth-century art and music. Gurdjieff's specific reasons for adopting these trends, however, obviously differ from the aims of professional composers. His intentions for the music are explored in Chapters 5 and 8.

Gurdjieff's Legacy and His Influence on Music and Musicians

During Gurdjieff's lifetime, other than the sensationalist press accounts written about his Movements demonstrations and concerning the death of writer Katherine Mansfield while in his care, Gurdjieff was almost unknown outside his circle of pupils. However, from the 1950s his ideas began to spread through the posthumous publication of his own writings and through the testimonies of pupils such as P.D. Ouspensky, Thomas and Olga de Hartmann, A.R. Orage, J.G. and Elizabeth Bennett, Fritz Peters, Margaret Anderson, René Zuber, and C.S. Nott. Gurdjieff's teachings now continue through Gurdjieff Foundation groups and independent groups in most major Western cities.¹²¹ Many artists, directors, choreographers, writers, actors, and thinkers have acknowledged the influence of Gurdjieff's teaching on their lives and work. They include J.B. Priestley, Aldous Huxley, Katherine Mansfield, P.L. Travers, Moshe Feldenkrais, Frank Lloyd Wright, Alan Watts, Peter Brook, Arthur Miller, and Bill Murray.

A considerable number of jazz and pop musicians have paid homage to Gurdjieff, perhaps having been impressed by his vision of an eternally vibrating universe that reflects musical structures, and by his ideas of the 'objective' powers of music. Among them is eccentric jazz electronic keyboardist Sun Ra (1914–1993), who was no doubt attracted to the theme of outer space in Gurdjieff's science fiction epic *Tales*, since Sun Ra claimed to be from Saturn, of the 'Angel Race', and sent by the Creator to redeem Earthlings through his music. His band performed in 'Saturn gowns', 'galaxy caps', and 'cosmic rosaries'.¹²² Jazz pianist George Russell (1923–2009) wrote *The Lydian Chromatic Concept of Tonal Organization* (1953), an all-encompassing system of harmony that he referred to as the "all and everything of tonality" (in reference to Gurdjieff's trilogy *All and*

¹²¹ de Salzmänn, "Gurdjieff, G. I." 139–140.

¹²² Michael J. Budds, *Jazz in the Sixties: The Expansion of Musical Resources and Techniques* (Iowa City: The University of Iowa Press, 1990), 139.

Everything). He noted that there is “a lot of correlation” between his book and Gurdjieff’s teaching.¹²³ Russell also wrote the song “Ye Hypocrite, Ye Beelzebub” (1956), featuring the name of the protagonist of *Tales*.¹²⁴ Jazz bassist and composer Charles Mingus (1922–1979) also dedicated one of his songs to Gurdjieff, “Myself When I Am Real” (1963), paying tribute to Gurdjieff’s *Life is Real Only Then, When I Am*. The most notable jazz musician to be influenced by Gurdjieff is pianist Keith Jarrett, who claims to have read virtually all of Gurdjieff’s writings,¹²⁵ and who in 1980 released *G.I. Gurdjieff Sacred Hymns*, the first publicly available recording of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music (see Chapter 6).

Guitarist Robert Fripp (b. 1946), best known as a member of the band King Crimson, and colleague singer-songwriter David Sylvian (b. 1958) cultivated an interest in Gurdjieff through unorthodox Work teacher J.G. Bennett in the 1970s. Fripp developed a course in musical performance known as Guitar Craft, based on principles derived from Gurdjieff.¹²⁶ Bob Dylan (b. 1941) made reference to Gurdjieff in an interview for *Playboy* in 1978: “Gurdjieff thinks it’s best to work out your mobility daily.”¹²⁷ Eclectic singer-songwriter Kate Bush (b. 1958) refers to Gurdjieff in her song “Them Heavy People” (1978) and to the concept of self-remembering in “Fullhouse” (1978), and Sicilian singer-songwriter Franco Battiato’s interest in Gurdjieff is apparent in the title of his popular song “Centro di gravita permanente” or “Permanent Centre of Gravity” (1981), and its repeated line, “Seeking a centre.”¹²⁸ This appears on *La voce del padrone* (The Master’s Voice), the first Italian album to sell more than one million copies.¹²⁹ Heavy metal guitarist Cynthia Witthoft released a single, “The Beelzebub’s Tales to His Grandson” (2004), and in the same year Swedish symphonic metal band Therion released the song “The Voyage of Gurdjieff” with the chorus, “Dance a Sufi dance and fall into a trance, Like a dervish you dance, Dance with Yezidis and learn their secret lore, Of the voyage of Gurdjieff.”¹³⁰

123 Ingrid Monson, *Freedom Sounds: Civil Rights Call Out to Jazz and Africa* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 291.

124 Ingrid Monson, “Oh Freedom: George Russell, John Coltrane, and Modal Jazz,” in *In The Course of Performance: Studies in the World of Musical Improvisation*, eds Bruno Nettl and Melinda Russell (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 155.

125 Ian Carr, *Keith Jarrett: The Man and His Music* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1992), 128.

126 For more see Robert Fripp, “Letters to the Second Guitar Craft (u.s.),” *Stopinder*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2000, 7–24.

127 Ron Rosenbaum, “Bob Dylan: A Candid Conversation with the Visionary Whose Songs Changed the Times,” *Playboy*, Vol. 25, No. 3, March 1978, 88.

128 Franco Battiato, *The Master’s Voice* (EMI Italiana, 1981).

129 Paul Royal and Double Bass, “Franco Battiato,” *Euro Pop Music*, http://www.europopmusic.eu/Italy_pages/Battiato.html. Retrieved 19 December 2009.

130 Therion, *Sirius B* (Germany: Nuclear Blast, 2004).

The most ambitious and bizarre musical work inspired by Gurdjieff is *Crazy Wisdom: The Life and Legend of Gurdjieff*, a flamboyant musical based on Gurdjieff's life between 1915 and 1949, written and composed by British composer and self-help writer John Maxwell Taylor. It was first performed at the Seaside Church in Encinitas, California in 2002 with a cast of fourteen singing to a pre-recorded digital master.¹³¹ A two-and-a-half-hour-long recording of the musical was released that year. The listening experience is unusual, with the rather dramatic and weighty events of Gurdjieff's life played out against a backdrop of bawdy humour, sexual innuendo, light-hearted irreverence, and puns. This is accompanied by the melodramatic tunes and upbeat dance rhythms that emerge from the musical's energetic fusion of popular, rock, and show music. *Crazy Wisdom* is of the lineage of 'blockbuster' Broadway musicals and rock operas such as *Hair* (1968), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1971), *Godspell* (1976), and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (1982). In the latter three the figures of Jesus and Joseph become superstars, as Gurdjieff does in *Crazy Wisdom*. Taylor's familiarity with Gurdjieff's biography and teaching is obvious and he has, or had, a personal investment in Gurdjieff's ideas. On his website he stated his desire to "trigger off essence" in his audience and explained, "The nature of the man makes the performers subject to his life purpose, which was to remain awake and fully functional at the same time."¹³²

The musical traces Gurdjieff's life as he established his Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man (henceforth Institute) and as he wrote *Tales*. His pupils, the de Hartmanns, the Ouspenskys, A.R. Orage, Fritz Peters, and J.G. Bennett, intersect the paths of the drama. Jeanne de Salzmann is curiously missing from the cast, possibly indicating Taylor's attempt to distance himself from the orthodox lineage of Gurdjieff Foundation groups, which were organised by de Salzmann after Gurdjieff's death. A good deal of humour comes from the repartee between Ouspensky and his wife Sophia. In one scene they sing of their previous lives, an allusion to Ouspensky's concept of eternal recurrence: (Ouspensky) "I have been an octopus, a mollusk, and an oyster, Once I was a cavalier who liked to drink and roister" (Sophia) "I spent that lifetime praying for your lost soul in a cloister" (Ouspensky) "When she was a prostitute any man could hoist her." Together they sing, "You can call it evolution, call it karma, call it dharma, you can't escape from the cosmic wheel. It's

131 John Maxwell Taylor, *Crazy Wisdom: The Musical*, http://www.johnmaxwelltaylor.com/crazy_wisdom.php. Retrieved 26 June 2011; John Maxwell Taylor, *John Maxwell Taylor: In-Depth Interview*, <http://www.johnmaxwelltaylor.com/interview.php>. Retrieved 26 June 2011.

132 Taylor, *John Maxwell Taylor: In-Depth Interview*.

part of the universal drama.”¹³³ Later they discuss *Tales* in song: (Sophia) “This book is sure to cause a great sensation” (Ouspensky) “Of course! It’s nothing more than a metaphor for cosmic masturbation.”¹³⁴ In the finale, Beelzebub’s redemption in *Tales* is superimposed onto a scene of Gurdjieff’s afterlife, where his pupils join to give testimony before an Angelic Hierarchy of what they learned from Gurdjieff. For pupil Leonid Stjoernval, “I was a drunkard he made me sober, In the Revolution of October, Now I have dignity in my soul, Because my soul is in control.”¹³⁵ The closing words of the musical affirm the possible salvation of the earth through love and consciousness.

The specific influence of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music on twentieth century art music is more limited. Most notably, Australian composer Larry Sitsky (b. 1934)¹³⁶ based his *Concerto No. 2 For Violin and Small Orchestra* (1983) on the sounds of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music and the symbols of Gurdjieff’s cosmology. Sitsky was introduced to Gurdjieff’s ideas and music by Hungarian violinist Jan Sedivka in the 1960s. Sedivka, himself a student of Gurdjieff at his Institute in Fontainebleau,¹³⁷ possessed copies of the Janus volumes of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music and lent them to Sitsky. These influenced the composition of Sitsky’s *Concerto No. 2 For Violin and Small Orchestra*, nicknamed *Gurdjieff*.¹³⁸ According to Sitsky’s programme notes, the concerto’s seven movements and the position of the violin cadenza within the work relate to Gurdjieff’s Laws of Three and Seven. The influence of these Laws can also be found in the placement of notes within the cadenza, where the semitone between scale degrees three and four blocks progression through the octave in accordance with the Law of Seven. Further, Sitsky divides the orchestra into three groups – wind, percussion and strings – and within the percussion section instruments are also in groups of three. Musicologist Patricia Shaw suggests other ways in which Gurdjieff’s Law of Three may be employed in the work.¹³⁹

133 John Maxwell Taylor, [Liner notes] *Crazy Wisdom: The Life and Legend of Gurdjieff* (Encinitas, California: World Transformations, 2002), 17.

134 Taylor, [Liner notes] *Crazy Wisdom*, 35.

135 Taylor, [Liner notes] *Crazy Wisdom*, 44.

136 Sitsky was born in China to Russian Jewish parents, and migrated to Australia in 1951.

137 Judith Crispin, “The Resounding Enneagram: The Seven Note Scale as a Model of the Universe,” in *The Proceedings of the 12th International Humanities Conference All and Everything*, 2007, 74.

138 Patricia Shaw, “The Laws of Three and Seven: Larry Sitsky’s Violin Concerto No. 2 (1983) and the Influence of Georges Gurdjieff,” *Musicology Australia*, Vol. 29, No. 1, 2007, 31–32.

139 Shaw, “The Laws of Three and Seven,” 36–39.

Music in the Biography of Gurdjieff

The challenge of presenting a biography of Gurdjieff is that, up until his entrée into Moscow in 1913, one can only know of Gurdjieff's early life through his own largely unsubstantiated accounts. These accounts are scattered through his writings, but found primarily in his second book *Meetings*. Biographer James Moore describes these as “impressionistic accounts, which – in the nature of myth – are innocent of consistency, Aristotelian logic and chronological discipline.”¹ Occult scholar James Webb similarly states that Gurdjieff's writings “present great problems when they are treated as biographical material [as they are] laden with symbols and allegorical stories...Most of these characters [in *Meetings*] probably had no historical existence...but a rich supply of autobiographical experience from Gurdjieff's undoubtedly adventurous past went into their making.”² Even Ouspensky emphasises Gurdjieff's vagueness regarding the details of his travels and questions the truth of some of his stories pertaining to them.³ Although most of Gurdjieff's autobiographical accounts resist solid verification, they are necessary in painting a picture of his early life. The three main secondary sources employed here will be James Webb's *The Harmonious Circle*, James Moore's *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, and Paul Beekman Taylor's *G.I. Gurdjieff: A New Life*.⁴ These cross-examine Gurdjieff's accounts with pupils' memoirs, a range of documentation, and interviews with pupils. In addition to these sources, there will be occasional recourse to the memoirs of pupils such as the de Hartmanns, P.D. Ouspensky, C.S. Nott, and J.G. Bennett.

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- 1 James Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth A Biography* (Shaftsbury, Dorset: Element, 1991), 319. Gurdjieffian publisher Sophia Wellbeloved, *Gurdjieff, Astrology and Beelzebub's Tales* (New York: Solar Bound Press, 2002), 9, 12–13, makes a similar point.
 - 2 James Webb, *The Harmonious Circle: The Lives and Work of G.I. Gurdjieff, P.D. Ouspensky and Their Followers* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980), 27–28.
 - 3 P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous: The Teachings of G.I. Gurdjieff* (San Diego: Harcourt Inc., 1977 [1949]), 36.
 - 4 Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*; Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*; Paul Beekman Taylor, *G.I. Gurdjieff: A New Life* (Utrecht, Netherlands: Eureka Editions, 2008).

Birth and Early Years (c.1866–1883)

The year of Gurdjieff's birth is unclear due to the absence of a birth certificate. Gurdjieff fostered this obscurity, probably to maintain his mystique. It is known that he possessed a number of passports with inconsistent birth dates and, when questioned on a trip to America about the birth date on his passport as it was some time in the future, he reportedly stated, "No mistake...you go arrange."⁵ Further, in 1930 Gurdjieff burned personal documents, including passports,⁶ destroying hard facts about himself. Scholars have suggested birth dates ranging from 1866 to 1880, though the most convincing date is 1866, as argued by biographers James Moore and Paul Beekman Taylor, archivists Thomas C. Daly and Thomas A.G. Daly, and Gurdjieff's own daughter Dushka Howarth.⁷ Moore shows that 1866 provides the only possible benchmark for reconciling Gurdjieff's accounts of his early childhood against historical events, and cites Gurdjieff stating in 1949 that he was eighty-three.⁸ Photographs of Gurdjieff in his last year support the contention that he was eighty-three.⁹ Gurdjieff celebrated as his birthday 13 January and Work members continue to honour this date though it is likely that it was purely symbolic, representing the liminal time of New Year's Day by the Old Style Russian Orthodox Church calendar used in Russia until the Revolution.¹⁰ Gurdjieff declared that he was born precisely at midnight,¹¹ also a liminal time, and commonly associated with the births of Krishna, Attis, Adonis, the Buddha, and Jesus, as well as Jesus' resurrection from the dead.¹²

5 Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*, 25.

6 Thomas de Hartmann and Olga de Hartmann, *Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff*, eds Thomas C. Daly and Thomas A.G. Daly (London: Arkana Penguin Books, 1992), 256.

7 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 260–262; Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 339–340; Beekman Taylor, *A New Life*, 17; Dushka Howarth and Jessmin Howarth, *It's Up To Ourselves: A Mother, A Daughter, and Gurdjieff* (New York: Gurdjieff Heritage Society, 2009), xv.

8 Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 339–340. See also David Pecotic, "Body and Correspondence in G.I. Gurdjieff's 'Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson': A Case Study in the Construction of Categories in the Study of Esotericism" (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis University of Sydney, 2004), 3–4.

9 Beekman Taylor, *A New Life*, 15.

10 Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*, 26.

11 G.I. Gurdjieff, "The Material Question," in *Meetings With Remarkable Men* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2002), 302.

12 Acharya S, *Suns of God: Krishna, Buddha and Christ Unveiled* (Illinois: Adventures Unlimited Press, 2004), 221, 235–236, 353, 451; Manly P. Hall, *The Secret Teachings of All Ages* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2010), 47.

Gurdjieff was born of Greek-Armenian parentage in the Greek quarter of the town Alexandropol in Russian Armenia, near the border of Turkey.¹³ Gurdjieff described Alexandropol as frequented by Armenians, Greeks, Kurds, Tartars, and Yezidis or Transcaucasian ‘devil-worshippers’,¹⁴ which suggests that as a youth he was exposed to a variety of ethnicities, religions, and, one would infer, musical traditions. Gurdjieff’s father Giorgios Giorgiades¹⁵ was originally a prosperous cattle owner in Alexandropol but was forced to turn to manual labour after a cattle plague. He began producing small wooden objects in a workshop but had little success so he relocated his family, which included his wife Evdokia, Gurdjieff, Gurdjieff’s younger brother Dmitri, and three sisters Luberia, Anna, and Sophia, to the nearby town of Kars, a better place for trade.¹⁶

Moore gives 1878 as the year of their move to Kars, and this accords with historical evidence; a cattle plague swept through Asia in 1873 and in late 1877 Tsarist forces began entering Kars¹⁷ (Gurdjieff described Kars as being newly under Russian administration when he arrived there).¹⁸ Moore’s date also supports the argument that Gurdjieff was born in 1866. Pupil J.G. Bennett describes Kars as a “derelict frontier town” full of refugees from other parts of the region, such as Caucasians, Tartars, Assyrian Christians, Kurds, Gypsies, and Armenians.¹⁹ Accounts thus indicate that Gurdjieff grew up amongst a diversity of ethnicities in both Alexandropol and Kars, and this will be further considered in Chapter 5, which explores possible sources for the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music. In Kars Gurdjieff attended the municipal school and also assisted in his father’s workshop. He claimed to have eventually assembled his own circle of customers, becoming known as the “master of all trades”.²⁰

13 For an account of my own experiences and discoveries there in 2011 see Johanna J.M. Petsche, “Reflexivity and Objectivity in the Study of a Modern Esoteric Teacher: In the Footsteps of G.I. Gurdjieff,” in Alex Norman (ed.), *Journeys and Destinations: Studies in Travel, Identity, and Meaning* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2013).

14 G.I. Gurdjieff, *Meetings With Remarkable Men* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2002 [1963]), 65–66.

15 Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*, 26, suggests that Gurdjieff’s father altered the original Greek name ‘Giorgiades’ to the Armenian ‘Gurdjian’ when he began moving in circles in which Armenian was the *lingua franca*. ‘Gurdjieff’, then, is the Russian form of ‘Gurdjian’. See also Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 340; Beekman Taylor, *A New Life*, 11–13.

16 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 40–41.

17 Clive A. Spinage, *Cattle Plague: A History* (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2003), 193–197; Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 10, 340.

18 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 50.

19 J.G. Bennett, *Gurdjieff: Making a New World* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 16.

20 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 42, 61.

This is a fitting title as throughout his life Gurdjieff turned his hand to a variety of trades, as well as art forms and teaching methods, which appeared useful to his immediate aims at the time.

According to Gurdjieff, his father was an amateur *ashokh* who by memory “composed, recited or sang poems, songs, legends, folk-tales, and all sorts of stories.”²¹ The term *ashokh* or *ashik* (lover) emerged in the sixteenth century, probably under the influence of Sufism, and denotes a bard found mainly in the northern highlands of Iran, Anatolia, Afghanistan, and Azerbaijan. *Ashokhs* are skilled in improvising and adapting existing material from a traditional store of poetic and musical motifs and formulae. After training for years, they perform in urban coffee houses and private homes. Their repertoire consists of short lyric poems with amorous, moral, patriotic, and religious content, and long narratives where spoken prose alternates with sung verse. *Ashokhs* often accompany their songs on the *saz* (plucked lute) and sometimes on a *daff* (drum) or *balaban* (double reed pipes).²²

Gurdjieff claimed to have witnessed three *ashokh* contests in the Caucasus as a child, describing participants expressing and replying to religious or philosophical questions through improvised melodies, where each melody would correspond harmonically with the previous melody expressed.²³ In her *Gurdjieff, Astrology and Beelzebub's Tales*, Sophia Wellbeloved makes the case that Gurdjieff absorbed and adopted many of the skills and strategies of the *ashokhs* in his writing and readings of *Tales*.²⁴ Gurdjieff states that he admired his *ashokh* father and marvelled at his astounding memory, particularly his ability to chant songs of the Epic of Gilgamesh from memory and then explain their meaning. His father's skill was later confirmed, according to Gurdjieff, when ancient Babylonian tablets were discovered with inscriptions of the legend of Gilgamesh, and the form of exposition almost exactly matched that of the songs and tales of his father.²⁵ There might well be truth in this, as the most complete texts of the legend were found in the mid-nineteenth century on clay tablets and fragments amongst the remains of the library of the Assyrian king

21 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 32.

22 See Amnon Shiloah, *Music in the World of Islam: A Socio-Cultural Study* (Hampshire: Scholar Press, 1995), 157; Charlotte F.A. Farr, “The Music of Professional Musicians of Northwest Iran (Azerbaijan)” (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Washington, 1976), 54–133; Yildiray Erdener, *The Song Contests of Turkish Minstrels: Improvised Poetry Sung to Traditional Music* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1995).

23 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 33.

24 Wellbeloved, *Gurdjieff, Astrology and Beelzebub's Tales*, 27–28.

25 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 32–49; Ouspensky, *Search*, 342.

Ashurbanipal (668–626 BCE). Assyriologist George Smith (1840–1876) was the first to translate these and announce the discovery shortly before his death.²⁶

Gurdjieff's appreciation for his father's memory and storytelling skills may have contributed to his lifelong conviction that esoteric knowledge existed through the faithful transmission of initiates over the generations. As an adult Gurdjieff also laid claim to a keen memory, attributing his teaching and large body of music and Movements to sources encountered on his travels decades earlier. According to Mary C. Bell, an English visitor to Gurdjieff's Institute in Fontainebleau, Gurdjieff cultivated the memories of his pupils, who were to memorise a sign language of numbers that they could communicate to one another without anyone else noticing. They also memorised foreign words and lists of one hundred Russian names of animals and operas. Bell states that these exercises were undertaken to prevent idle talk and wandering thoughts, as well as for the bewilderment of the large audiences that visited the Institute on Saturday evenings to see performances by Gurdjieff's pupils.²⁷

Kars Military Cathedral Choir

Gurdjieff states that he was chosen from among the pupils of his school as a chorister in the Kars military cathedral choir. Moore includes in his biography a photograph designated 'Kars military cathedral'.²⁸ However, while visiting the mosques in Kars, which were Orthodox Christian churches in Gurdjieff's day, I found that Moore's photograph was incorrect; he had photographed the former Apostles Church, now Kumbet Mosque, built between 932 and 937 CE by Bagradit King Abbas, with exterior walls of the dome's vault holding reliefs of the twelve apostles. This church was converted into a mosque in 1064 CE when the Seljuks conquered Kars, but was used again as a church between 1878 and 1918 when Kars fell to the Russians. After being temporarily converted into a museum it was reopened as Kumbet Mosque in 1994.²⁹ This information does not describe a former Russian military cathedral.

With the assistance of Avetik Melik-Sargsyan, head of the Gurdjieff Centre of Gyumri, I located Gurdjieff's cathedral, now Fethiye Mosque. This structure was built as a tribute to Alexander Nevsky in the late nineteenth century.

26 Nancy K. Sanders, "Introduction," in *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972), 10–11.

27 Mary C. Bell, "Some Memories of the Prieuré," in *Oriental Suite: The Complete Orchestral Music 1923–1924* (Netherlands: Basta Audio Visuals, 2006), 51–53. For more information on Gurdjieff's memory exercises see Beekman Taylor, *A New Life*, 97.

28 Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 178–179.

29 Information on a sign outside Kumbet Mosque, 1 May 2011.

It was erected for Cossack soldiers in Kars after the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877 to 1878,³⁰ a fact confirmed by the current imam there. Although it was converted into a mosque in 1985, original Christian architectural features can still be detected, such as marks in the exterior that indicate crosses. In *Meetings* Gurdjieff said that at the time he attended the military cathedral it was still in the process of being built. He recounted meeting his friends in the temporary bell-tower of the cathedral where the bells were hung in a makeshift wooden structure with a high roof, like an octagonal sentry-box. Here they smoked, told anecdotes, and prepared for lessons. He stated that when the permanent stone bell tower was completed and the bells installed, the Russian government gave the old temporary bell-tower to the new Greek church where it continued to be used as a bell-tower. Gurdjieff's description corresponds with the fact that the cathedral was built shortly after 1878 as, according to Moore, Gurdjieff's family moved to Kars around 1878 when Russia had taken over part of Turkey.³¹

Gurdjieff asserts that as a chorister he attracted the attention of the Cathedral Dean, the seventy-year-old Dean Borsh, who played the violin and composed sacred canticles such as "Glory to Thee," "O Thou Almighty God," and "Calm Light," some of which became very well known in Russia.³² The existence of Dean Borsh has been confirmed through the discovery of his death certificate, which notes that he died of pneumonia in 1899 at age eighty and was buried on the grounds of the Kars military cathedral.³³ According to Gurdjieff's accounts, Dean Borsh soon removed Gurdjieff from the school system so that he and other teachers could privately tutor Gurdjieff. The main areas of study were religion and medicine, and music is not mentioned among other subjects taught. This indicates that Gurdjieff did not formally study music, besides his experiences as a chorister, which entailed "singing and practices" in the cathedral.³⁴

30 Information on a sign outside Fethiye Mosque, 1 May 2011.

31 See Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 201–202; Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 320. For more on my discoveries in Turkey and Armenia see Petsche, "Reflexivity and Objectivity in the Study of a Modern Esoteric Teacher," 166–173.

32 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 52.

33 Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (16 April 2011), discovered this while scanning records of the military cathedral. The certificate shows that his first names are Damian Ambrosievitch, and that his surname was actually spelled 'Borshch'. See also Gert-Jan Blom, *Oriental Suite: The Complete Orchestral Music 1923–1924* (Netherlands: Basta Audio Visuals, 2006), 252 note 32.

34 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 50, 53.

Dean Borsh composed canticles for the choir in Gurdjieff's presence, and asked Gurdjieff to sing newly composed canticles to verify vocal transcriptions.³⁵ This suggests that at a young age Gurdjieff was exposed to the process of musical composition, and that he had enough musical knowledge and ability to be of assistance to the Dean. Gurdjieff maintains, "I had an exceptionally good voice, which stood out even in a big choir when I sang second voice."³⁶ He also puts it another way; he had "then a good voice,"³⁷ implying that at the time of writing *Meetings* he no longer regarded himself as having the singing ability of his childhood. That he 'stood out' in the choir might imply that Gurdjieff was confident in his second voice part, which would have required him to sing a secondary musical line underneath the first voice melody line, a skill that demands quite a good ear for music. One must, of course, all the while be wary of too readily accepting Gurdjieff's flattering accounts of his own musical skills.

It could be deduced from his accounts that Gurdjieff could read music, though he does not explicitly say so. What is clear is that music was an attraction for the young Gurdjieff. This is confirmed by his comment that when Dean Borsh went on a leave of absence Gurdjieff wished to move to Tiflis as he had "dreamed for a long time of joining what was called the Archdeacon's Choir – a proposal which had often been made to me and which was very flattering to my youthful self-love."³⁸ This dream, however, was overridden by a more pressing desire to find answers to his existential questions, and this defined the direction of Gurdjieff's life and aims thereon.

Tiflis and Beyond (1883–1887)

Gurdjieff describes moving to Tiflis, though this was not to sing but to work casually at a railway yard while beginning to pursue a spiritual path. Moore gives as the date of this move 1883, making Gurdjieff seventeen. Gurdjieff reports visiting at this time the monastery of 'Sanaine' and making a pilgrimage to the Armenian city of Echmiadzin, the Vatican of the Armenian Apostolic Church.³⁹ Up until this point in *Meetings* Gurdjieff's biographical accounts seem, on the whole, reasonably believable, but from here on reality and fiction become difficult to separate as *Meetings* begins to read like an adventure tale.

35 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 50, 52, 54.

36 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 50.

37 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 50.

38 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 200.

39 Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 18–19, 320.

Gurdjieff describes discovering a collection of old Armenian books and taking them to the quiet Armenian city of Ani to study them with his friend Sarkis Pogossian, a graduate of the Theological Seminary of Echmiadzin. In Ani they excavated ruins, finding a pile of ancient Armenian parchments that referred to the 'Sarmoung Brotherhood', "a famous esoteric school which, according to tradition, was founded in Babylon as far back as 2500 BC."⁴⁰ It is possible that Gurdjieff had been involved with excavations in Ani since the first archaeological excavations and building repairs were being carried out there at that time (Moore gives as a likely date 1886).⁴¹ In search of the Sarmoung Brotherhood, Gurdjieff and Pogossian set off for Kurdistan and, discovering a map of 'pre-sand Egypt' revealing sacred ancient sites,⁴² Gurdjieff's twenty-year expedition through Central Asia and the Middle East begins to unfold.

Gurdjieff attributed his desire for travel to his fascination in the paranormal phenomena he had observed in his youth,⁴³ and which his studies in religion and science could not explain. He became convinced in the esoteric notion that there is "a certain something' which people formerly knew,"⁴⁴ preserved through the transmission of knowledge by initiatic societies. Exactly what Gurdjieff was searching for might be indicated in his statement that, upon visiting his birth place of Alexandropol after his schooling, he carried out "certain practical experiments relating to questions which particularly interested me then, concerning the influence of the vibrations of sound on various types of human beings as well as on other forms of life."⁴⁵ Gurdjieff was ultimately looking to comprehend the meaning of organic life on earth and in particular, "the aim of human life."⁴⁶

In Gurdjieff's time there was a general fascination, and much experimentation, with vibration and energy. From the seventeenth century, culminating in the twentieth century with quantum physics, the concept of what is now called energy became established in the West, and matter became understood as a vibration of electrons, positrons, and neutrons. By the end of the nineteenth century the discovery of electricity was joined by discoveries of a number of other previously unheard of fluids and forces, which came about through new

40 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 87–90.

41 Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 321; Petsche, "Reflexivity and Objectivity in the Study of a Modern Esoteric Teacher," 172–173. In 1921 the Turkish National Assembly ordered that the monuments of Ani be demolished, and these excavations were destroyed.

42 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 99.

43 For examples see Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 59–72.

44 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 87.

45 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 208.

46 G.I. Gurdjieff, *The Herald of Coming Good* (Edmonds, Washington: Sure Fire Press, 1988), 13.

technologies like cathode ray tubes, radio transmitters, and X-ray photographs. Scientists such as Oliver Lodge and William Crooke speculated that the latest electric wave technology could be used to model the body, where the sense organs were receivers of vibrating ethereal impulses.⁴⁷ Gurdjieff must have been compelled by these new scientific discoveries and technologies as the study of vibration became a lifelong interest for him. This is particularly evident in his account of Vitvitskaia in *Meetings* and story of the Bokharian Dervish Hadji-Asvatz-Troov in *Tales*. Both figures were captivated by the affects of the vibrations of musical sound on listeners and other living things.⁴⁸

Travels Through Central Asia and the Middle East (1887–1907)

Over a period of twenty years (Moore gives the dates 1887 to 1907)⁴⁹ Gurdjieff claims to have travelled extensively, seeking out sacred cities and sites in pursuit of esoteric knowledge. He describes travelling some of the time with a group of companions, the Seekers of Truth, whose principle was “never to follow the beaten track.”⁵⁰ None of these companions have been identified as historical entities. Gurdjieff reports visiting Turkey, Mount Athos, Crete, Jerusalem, Egypt, Ethiopia, Mecca, Medina, India, Tibet, China, Siberia, and Central Asia, with the most fruitful period of his journey (occurring, according to Moore, roughly between 1896 and 1900)⁵¹ in the Islamic regions of Bokhara, Merv, and Samarkand.⁵² The Sarmoung Monastery is presented by Gurdjieff as the focal point of his travels, and is popularly considered to be the source of inspiration behind his music, Movements, and nine-sided enneagram symbol.⁵³ He describes its whereabouts only vaguely as “somewhere in the heart of Asia,”⁵⁴ and no factual evidence has been found pertaining to the existence

47 Otto Gonzalez, “The Transformation of Substances and Human Meaning,” in *G.I. Gurdjieff: Armenian Roots, Global Branches*, ed. Michael Pittman (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 86; Iwan R. Morus, *When Physics Became King* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 2005), 158–159, 177.

48 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 122–135; G.I. Gurdjieff, *All and Everything First Series: Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1964 [1950]), 891–897.

49 Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 31, 321–323.

50 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 166.

51 Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 31.

52 Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*, 41, 43.

53 Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 32. For Gurdjieff's accounts of the Sarmoung Monastery see Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 90–91, 148–164.

54 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 148.

of the monastery; the meticulous journals of contemporary explorers make no reference to it.⁵⁵ Some have speculated that the monastery relates to a group of nine or ten Nyingma Buddhist monasteries collectively called ‘Surmang’ in the Nangchen district of Tibet, though Gurdjieff presents the monastery as markedly Sufi.⁵⁶ It is possible that Gurdjieff fancifully created the Sarmoung Monastery as an explanation for the origins of his key teachings.

Gurdjieff’s travel stories share similarities with those of other flamboyant spiritual teachers of the time, particularly Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831–1891), who co-founded the Theosophical Society in 1875, and L. Ron Hubbard (1911–1986), who founded the Church of Scientology in 1953. Tales of travel are central to their hagiographies, which were strategically formulated from their own accounts of their lives as well as from the elaborations of followers. Blavatsky, Hubbard, and Gurdjieff all stated that their motivation to travel came from a desperate disillusionment with the contemporary world and traditional Western religions, and all described setting out as young seekers in pursuit of a universal principle or source of wisdom underlying all religions. Later in life they each established a body of teaching that synthesised Western science with Eastern spiritual ideas, where the latter was attributed to knowledge personally acquired on exhaustive and heroic travels to the East.⁵⁷

Blavatsky, Hubbard, and Gurdjieff each emphasised their travels through Asia and particularly Tibet, where Blavatsky and Gurdjieff claimed to have undergone initiation.⁵⁸ Gurdjieff stated that he travelled multiple times to Tibet, and worked there as a collector of monastic dues for the Dalai Lama, which gave him access to every monastery there.⁵⁹ Blavatsky claimed to have lived in Tibet for more than seven years (seven years traditionally being considered the period of apprenticeship for esoteric initiation), where she studied with Himalayan Masters in their mountain homes and was chosen to reach the

55 James Moore, “Gurdjieff, George Ivanovitch,” in *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*, Vol. 1, eds Wouter J. Hanegraaff, Antoine Faivre, Roelof van den Broek, and Jean-Pierre Brach (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 446.

56 P.T. Mistelberger, *Three Dangerous Magi: Gurdjieff, Osho, Crowley* (Ropley, Hants: O Books, 2010), 568.

57 An earlier version of the research presented here comparing travel accounts of Blavatsky, Gurdjieff and Hubbard was published in Petsche, “Reflexivity and Objectivity in the Study of a Modern Esoteric Teacher,” 159–166.

58 G.I. Gurdjieff, *Transcripts of Gurdjieff’s Meetings 1941–1946* (London: Book Studio, 2008), 100; Peter Washington, *Madame Blavatsky’s Baboon: Theosophy and the Emergence of the Western Guru* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1993), 32–33.

59 Paul Beekman Taylor, *Gurdjieff and Orage: Brothers in Elysium* (York Beach, Maine: Weiser Books, 2001), 30–31.

highest level of initiation.⁶⁰ Hubbard had apparently lived with bandits in the hills of Tibet.⁶¹ Tibet was, and still is, a country steeped in romantic symbolism due to its perceived remoteness. It came to represent in the West an almost archetypal location or liminal threshold that transforms people and incorporates them into a new community.⁶² Part of the attraction of Tibet in the period of Gurdjieff's travels must have been the publication in 1894 of Nicolas Notovitch's *The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ*. Here Notovitch contends that in the library of the Tibetan Buddhist Hemis Monastery are copies of texts concerning the activities of Jesus Christ, or "Issa" in India. Gurdjieff was probably familiar with Notovitch's book as in Tiflis Gurdjieff told journalist Carl Bechhofer Roberts that Jesus had studied in a Tibetan monastery.⁶³

It appears that it was almost a prerequisite for Western spiritual teachers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to have travelled, and particularly to regions considered exotic, remote, and ancient. It was through their travel stories that they could best tap into the West's contemporary fascination with the East and ancient cultures. Their tales of travel also legitimised their teachings, making them seem authoritative and authentic. Two principal notions can be discerned in each of their travel accounts. The first, essential to the category of esotericism, is that real spiritual wisdom is to be found in hidden sources of ancient, esoteric knowledge that has been transmitted through initiatic societies. This notion lives on today in the New Age movement, which promotes ancient wisdom as spiritually superior to contemporary Western thinking. Westerners today are popularly seen as spiritually out of touch; the idea being that over time humanity has regressed spiritually, rather than progressed.⁶⁴ The second notion underlying these accounts is the Orientalist assumption that spiritual wisdom can be located in the East. The East has been a bastion of light for Westerners since antiquity, and in the nineteenth century this Western reverence for all things Eastern reached its peak. Cultural critic Edward Said holds in *Orientalism* that the East became a glorified object of desire for Westerners, representing everything that the West was not.⁶⁵

60 Washington, *Madame Blavatsky's Baboon*, 32–33.

61 Janet Reitman, *Inside Scientology* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011), 4.

62 See Victor Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 33–34.

63 Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*, 527.

64 Christopher H. Partridge, "Truth Authority and Epistemological Individualism in New Age Thought," *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1999, 87–88.

65 Jonathan Bellman, "Introduction," in *The Exotic in Western Music*, ed. Jonathan Bellman (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), xi.

Scholars have argued that there is little reliable evidence to support Blavatsky and Hubbard's travel accounts, and that they are to be predominantly read as mythological.⁶⁶ James Webb shows some evidence for Gurdjieff's tales of travel,⁶⁷ though they too largely resist verification. Whether they are fact, fiction, or a combination of the two (the latter is most likely), what is evident is that Gurdjieff framed his teachings, Movements, and music as being derived from his travels. In 1913, when he emerged on the world stage in Moscow as an unknown teacher, this claim authenticated his teaching and enticed Westerners who were at the time looking to ancient and foreign cultures for spiritual answers to existential questions.⁶⁸

In terms of verifying the specific geographical origins of the various musical styles and devices employed in the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music, this is best left for an ethnomusicologist. If styles and devices in the piano music were found to resemble those of specific regions from Gurdjieff's alleged travels this would not necessarily validate his travels claims, as Gurdjieff may have possessed commercial recordings and used these as tools for composition. It would have been possible for Gurdjieff to obtain recordings prior to composing his first piece in 1918, had he desired to do so. The earliest known professional recording efforts include expeditions in 1895 to record Hungarian peasant music, in the late 1880s and 1890s to record Tatar and Bashkir songs, in 1900 to record Ukrainian music, and in 1903 to record music in Istanbul. By the turn of the century the market for recordings had grown rapidly in the United States and Europe.⁶⁹ As stated earlier, Gurdjieff may also have derived inspiration for his music from his apparently eclectic hometowns of Alexandropol and Kars. In addition, he spent time in Essentuki, Tiflis, and Constantinople prior to composing the piano music, as will soon be explained. Biographical details, then, cannot really answer the question of exactly where and when Gurdjieff derived inspiration for his piano music, though they do give a range of possibilities.

66 Mikael Rothstein, "Scientology, Scripture and Sacred Tradition," in *The Invention of Sacred Tradition*, eds James R. Lewis and Olav Hammer (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 19–20; Maria Carlson, *No Religion Higher Than Truth: A History of the Theosophical Movement in Russia, 1875–1922* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), 39–40.

67 Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*, 40–81.

68 See Johanna Petsche, "Gurdjieff and Blavatsky: Western Esoteric Teachers in Parallel," *Literature & Aesthetics*, Vol. 21, No. 1, 2011, 105–108.

69 Tony Olmstead, *Folkways Records* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), 7–10; Karl Signell and Richard Spottswood, [Liner notes] *Masters of Turkish Music* (Cambridge, Mass.: Rounder Records, 1990).

Encounters with Music During Travels

In *Meetings* Gurdjieff refers to music that he played, sang, or encountered on his travels. On long stretches of expedition he states that members of his group, the Seekers of Truth, would use music to entertain and occupy themselves. Perhaps it was also used to motivate group members and create solidarity. He reports, "Each of us entertained himself in his own way; one sang, another gesticulated, as if to prove something to somebody, another was whistling some military march," and mentions the "jovial songs and the shouting back and forth to each other from our improvised litters."⁷⁰ Gurdjieff also describes employing music as a gimmick in order to earn money. In Rome he claims to have created a device for shining shoes where the client could also hear the Marseillaise or an operatic air through earpieces attached to an Edison phonograph. On another occasion he apparently recorded on an Edison phonograph the local music of a Tekin street musician and opened a booth where people paid to hear the music through earpieces.⁷¹ It is plausible that Gurdjieff accessed phonographs during his travels. The phonograph was invented in 1877 and by the mid-1890s there was international interest in the machine. By 1899 151,000 phonographs had been made in the United States, with steadily growing markets in countries including Russia, and even India and Egypt. A recording engineer noted in 1910 that in the Caucasus Mountains phonographs could be heard playing unceasingly in every village.⁷²

Gurdjieff claimed to have heard sacred music connected to temple dances at the Sarmoung Monastery⁷³ though as stated earlier, this particular monastery may well have been a fanciful elaboration. He also reports hearing his friend Pogossian sing Armenian morning prayers every morning.⁷⁴ In one of Gurdjieff's more interesting accounts he describes learning many Persian chants, which he sang to the accompaniment of friend Professor Skridlov's tambourine beat. This was because Gurdjieff and Skridlov were preparing disguises for a trip to a monastery in Kafirstan. Skridlov disguised himself as a Persian dervish and Gurdjieff, a Seid, where "preparations consisted in learning a great many sacred Persian chants and instructive sayings of former times." When they arrived in Kafirstan Gurdjieff "sang religious verses in Persian, and

⁷⁰ Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 103, 174.

⁷¹ Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 127, 253–254.

⁷² Olmsted, *Folkways Records*, 7–10.

⁷³ Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 161.

⁷⁴ Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 104.

the professor, after a fashion, beat out corresponding rhythms on the tambourine, in which he then collected alms.”⁷⁵

In *Life is Real* Gurdjieff recounts discovering a mouth harmonica in his coat pocket during his travels in the Transcaspian region, near the Chiatura Tunnel, in 1904. He states that the instrument “rendered us a great service...On this original instrument I then played, I confess, not badly – although I played only two tunes: ‘The Peaks of Manchuria’ and ‘Valse Ozhidanie.’”⁷⁶ By playing familiar, patriotic folk songs Gurdjieff may have wished to uplift his travel companions, providing them with a sense of comradeship and purpose. These songs, otherwise known as “Na Sopkah Manchurii” and “Waltz Expectation,”⁷⁷ are typical of Russian folk music in that they are in minor keys, in waltz form, and frequently employ the leap of a sixth.

Where details of the origins of “Valse Ozhidanie” are scarce, information can be found about “The Peaks of Manchuria.” This song was composed by Ilya Alexeyevich Shatrov (1879–1952) in memory of Russian soldiers killed in the Battle of Mukden, the final land battle of the Russian-Japanese War, which took place in early 1905 near Mukden in Manchuria (present-day Shenyang, China). Shatrov was present on the battlefield. Returning from war in 1906 and stationed in the Russian town of Samara, he made the acquaintance of a local music shop owner, Oskar Knaube, who helped him publish “The Peaks of Manchuria.” It soon became famous; Knaube published eighty-two different editions of the song and it was recorded on gramophone and set in piano rolls.⁷⁸ Based on the 1905 Battle of Mukden and composed and published in 1906, this piece could not have been known to Gurdjieff in 1904. This is a hitherto unknown inconsistency in Gurdjieff’s writings.

Gurdjieff may have collected musical instruments on his travels. In the earliest written record of his teaching “Glimpses of the Truth” (1914) it is stated that in a room in Gurdjieff’s country house in Moscow, “[o]n the wall over the piano, set against a large carpet, hung a collection of stringed instruments of

75 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 230, 236.

76 G.I. Gurdjieff, *Life is Real Only Then, When ‘I Am’* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1981), 9, 12–13; Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 35, states that one of Gurdjieff’s sisters gave him the harmonica, but gives no source.

77 These songs can be heard in the collection of seventeen Russian war songs from the Soviet era on the recording *Where Are You, My Brothers?* (Hollywood: Delos, 2003), featuring baritone Dmitri Hvorostovsky.

78 See Matanya Ophee, *Ilya Shatrov: On the Hills of Manchuria, Waltz*, <http://www.edition-sorphee.com/repertoire/shatrov.html>. Retrieved 2 March 2010.

unusual shapes, among which were also flutes.⁷⁹ Also, at the Prieuré years later there was, according to pupil C.S. Nott, “a collection of stringed instruments and drums from the Near and Far East” hung around the gallery of the Study House (a large room used for Movements practice and composing the piano music).⁸⁰ There are no photographs of such instruments but pupil Alexandre de Salzmann had drawn them. These rough pencil drawings depict nine instruments including a drum, flute, and a range of stringed instruments.⁸¹ A French poster of 1923 advertising an upcoming Movements demonstration refers to Gurdjieff’s instruments: “Hieratic melodies of the remotest antiquity...will be rendered on 40 instruments of different kinds, collected by Mr. Gurdjieff on the spot and strictly authentic.”⁸²

Although in his travel accounts Gurdjieff never mentions collecting musical instruments, he does describe in “The Material Question” opening up a “Universal Travelling Workshop” in Turkmenistan during his travels, where he apparently made and repaired a range of mechanical items including gramophones, music-boxes, and musical instruments such as accordions, guitars, and violins. He also repaired, varnished, and tuned harmoniums, as well as upright and grand pianos.⁸³ This story might well be allegory; Webb suggests that the young ‘workshop Gurdjieff’ was symbolic of his later role as a kind of mechanic of the human organism, treating pupils like spoiled machines.⁸⁴ However, if there is truth to the story, Gurdjieff may have accessed musical instruments through his workshop, and later transported them to Moscow and then to France. It is also possible that Gurdjieff’s musical instruments were simply given to him, or that he bought them locally.

Tashkent (1907–1912) and Preliminary Teaching Phase (1913–1917)

After his travels Gurdjieff says that he settled in Tashkent, the Uzbek capital of Russian Turkistan, where for four or five years (Moore gives approximate dates of 1907 to 1912)⁸⁵ he began life as a “professor-instructor” in “pseudo scientific

79 G.I. Gurdjieff, “Glimpses of the Truth,” in *Views From the Real World* (London: Penguin Compass, 1984), 11.

80 C.S. Nott, *Teachings of Gurdjieff: A Pupil’s Journal, An Account of Some Years With G.I. Gurdjieff and A.R. Orage in New York and at Fontainebleau-Avon* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), 46. For another account see Bennett, *Making a New World*, 140.

81 Gert-Jan Blom, pers. comm. (22 April 2010). Blom showed me a copy of these drawings.

82 Blom, *Oriental Suite*, 31.

83 Gurdjieff, “The Material Question,” 255.

84 Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*, 31–32.

85 Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 323–324.

domains” due to a prevailing interest there in “occultism, theosophism and spiritualism.” In these spheres he refers to himself as a “maestro.” He claims to have studied the behaviour of people there or, in his own words, the “various manifestations in the waking state of the psyche of these trained and freely moving “Guinea Pigs,” allotted to me by Destiny for my experiments.”⁸⁶ In this period it is likely that he also visited Russia, where he began drawing together followers and where he married Polish Julia Osipovna Ostrowska, who was twenty-three years his junior.⁸⁷ Ostrowska’s background is unknown; she may have been a countess and lady-in-waiting to Alexandra Feodorovna, or even a prostitute. It is reported that she was tall and beautiful, kept her distance from Gurdjieff’s affairs, and loved music.⁸⁸ She never took the name of Gurdjieff, always remaining ‘Madame Ostrowska’. Webb posits that this was because they were never legally wed and that Gurdjieff already had a wife living somewhere in Central Asia, while Beekman Taylor discounts this, stating that in Russian society married women frequently retained their maiden names after marriage for informal use, and that on occasion she was listed as ‘Gurdjieff’ on official documents.⁸⁹ It is clear that Gurdjieff had deep affection for Ostrowska.⁹⁰

Upon arriving in Moscow in 1913⁹¹ Gurdjieff became, in his own words, “reputed to be a sorcerer and an expert in ‘questions of the beyond.’”⁹² Around this time he attracted as pupils his cousin Sergey Dmitrievich Merкуроv, who was a prominent sculptor, composer Vladimir Pohl,⁹³ and former barrister Rachmilievitch. Gurdjieff must have consolidated his core cosmological ideas upon arriving in Moscow, since they are outlined in “Glimpses of the Truth” (1914). Gurdjieff built groups in Moscow and St Petersburg and between February and August 1916 he had taught virtually all his cosmological and psychological ideas to the larger St Petersburg group, which had grown from six to

86 Gurdjieff, *Herald*, 20–22.

87 Beekman Taylor, *A New Life*, 40–47, 225; Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 324.

88 Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 67–68; de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 17, 19, 248.

89 Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*, 137; Beekman Taylor, *A New Life*, 18, 40.

90 Gurdjieff, *Life is Real*, 36–40; Peters, *Boyhood with Gurdjieff*, 76–77.

91 Moore gives 1912 as the year Gurdjieff arrived in Moscow, but pupil A.R. Orage gives 1913 and Beekman Taylor argues for 1913. See Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 324; Nott, *Teachings*, 1; Beekman Taylor, *A New Life*, 40–47, 225.

92 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 29.

93 Pohl was a Director of the Russian Musical Society and, at the age of thirty-one, became Sergei Rachmaninov’s successor as Director of the Empress Maria Musical Institute. See Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 71–72.

thirty pupils.⁹⁴ By the end of 1916 he had attracted as pupils mathematician Andrei Zakharov, doctor Leonid Stjoernval, journalist and polymath Piotr Demianovich Ouspensky, and Thomas de Hartmann.⁹⁵ Gurdjieff admitted that the turbulent political environment of the time contributed to his popularity as it had “shaken people out of their usual grooves...the wealthy and secure of yesterday found themselves the totally destitute of today.”⁹⁶

Before continuing, it may be beneficial to explain the five different phases of Gurdjieff’s teaching, which are proposed here for the ultimate purpose of shedding light on the significance of the piano music. There is the preliminary teaching phase between 1913 and 1917 when Gurdjieff was establishing his role as a teacher in Moscow and St Petersburg as described above. This phase is characterised by a didactic method of teaching. Gurdjieff’s first teaching phase, between 1917 and mid-1924, is, in contrast, distinguished by the inclusion of physical and interactive methods of teaching, while his second teaching phase between mid-1924 and 1930 mainly involved methods based on writing, readings, and composing and listening to the piano music. A transitional phase between 1930 and 1935 followed, where Gurdjieff separated from his pupils and travelled alone. His third and final teaching phase was between 1936 and 1949 and saw a return to physical and interactive teaching methods. Throughout this book, focus will be paid mainly to the first and second phases.

First Teaching Phase (1917–mid-1924)

The period from 1917 to 1929 spans the relationship between Gurdjieff and de Hartmann and therefore their years of music composition. A more detailed account of this period is given in Chapter 3. In mid-1917 Gurdjieff and thirteen pupils from his St Petersburg and Moscow groups moved to Essentuki in the Caucasus to begin six weeks of group work that involved household chores, discussion, dancing, and physical exercises and postures. Gurdjieff asked them to sense different parts of the body and demonstrated how to relieve unnecessary muscular tension. He required pupils to fast and pushed them to their limits physically, highlighting the mechanical nature of the body.⁹⁷ This marks the beginning of Gurdjieff’s first teaching phase.

94 Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 88.

95 Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 324.

96 Gurdjieff, “The Material Question,” 277. For a detailed description of the political climate of the period see William P. Patterson, *Struggle of the Magicians: Why Uspenskii Left Gurdjieff* (California: Arete Communications, 1996), 18–40.

97 For more see Ouspensky, *Search*, 345–367.

After side trips to Tuapse and Uch Darye near the Black Sea port of Sochi, Gurdjieff relocated to Essentuki in January 1918, and in February invited his pupils there. In a large rented house he opened ‘The Essentuki Home of the International Fellowship for Realization through Work’, the precursor to his ‘Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man’ (henceforth Institute).⁹⁸ In January 1919 the turmoil of the First World War and Russian Revolution caused Gurdjieff, the de Hartmanns, and a growing group of pupils to move to Tiflis. In 1920 they moved to Constantinople, where Gurdjieff attended Mevlevi dervish ceremonies and a concert of Turkish music (see Chapter 3 for details). In 1921 the troupe moved to Berlin where Gurdjieff’s Institute took shape. In Germany Gurdjieff sought a permanent residence for his Institute and came close to purchasing Swiss dance instructor Émile Jacques-Dalcroze’s international centre for La Méthode Rhythmique in Hellerau known as the Bildungsanstalt, which was built to Dalcroze’s own design (see Appendix A for more).

In February and March 1922 Gurdjieff made trips to London where he gave talks translated into English by Olga de Hartmann. He also organised groups of pupils there, and captured the allegiance of several key pupils such as A.R. Orage, Maurice Nicoll, and J.G. Bennett. On Bastille Day in July 1922 Gurdjieff arrived in Paris with twenty or thirty pupils mainly from his Russian and English groups. By October, owing to Olga de Hartmann’s negotiations, they had moved into the Prieuré, the three-storey main building of the Chateau des Basses Loge in Avon in Fontainebleau where Gurdjieff’s Institute took its final form.⁹⁹ The Prieuré was believed to have been the home of Louis XIV’s famous mistress Mme de Maintenon, and later a Carmelite monastery for priors (hence ‘Prieuré’). Its forty-five walled acres contained a large glass orangery, formal gardens with fountains, a small house known as Le Paradou, and other outbuildings. The community at the Prieuré eventually grew to around sixty or seventy residents.¹⁰⁰ From this time to his death Gurdjieff lived mainly in France; the only times he left were for nine trips to America, the longest lasting eighteen months, though there are also five months in 1935 where his location cannot be placed.

According to the Institute’s prospectus, three categories of pupils were accepted at the Prieuré: those wishing to undergo Gurdjieff’s educational

98 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 38, 58; Ouspensky, *Search*, 371. For information on exercises Gurdjieff prescribed for pupils at this time see Ouspensky, *Search*, 372–373.

99 Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 159–164, 167, 172, 327; Gurdjieff, “The Material Question,” 285.

100 Roger Friedland and Harold Zellman, *The Fellowship: The Untold Story of Frank Lloyd Wright and the Taliesin Fellowship* (New York: Regan, 2006), 60; de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 169–172; Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*, 234.

program, those wishing for theoretical instruction or seeking a cure through these methods, and those who only generally attended lectures and studied one special subject dictated by the Institute.¹⁰¹ As mentioned above, in this first teaching phase Gurdjieff prescribed rigorous physical exercises for pupils. These took the form of household chores, gardening, farm and construction work. Journalist Carl Zigrosser, who visited the Prieuré in June 1927, recounts manual work lasting from 8 a.m. to midday, then from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. and from 4.30 p.m. to 7 p.m.¹⁰² Pupils also worked on Gurdjieff's ballet *The Struggle of the Magicians* (henceforth *Struggle*) and practiced the Movements intensively, giving Movements demonstrations in Paris and America in 1923 and 1924.¹⁰³ For the Movements Gurdjieff and de Hartmann had composed accompanying music, which de Hartmann orchestrated for the demonstrations (see Appendix A).

In his first teaching phase Gurdjieff also employed music and sound as teaching tools. He had pupils sing along with violin parts played by other pupils, and required pupils to notice the intonation of their voices when they spoke, and how it changed when they lied.¹⁰⁴ He also asked them to pronounce the word 'T' and notice where the word sounded in the body. The purpose was to feel 'T' and bring it from one centre to another.¹⁰⁵ Gurdjieff used voice training as a personal exercise for his tone-deaf pupil Petrov, who de Hartmann states was trained by Gurdjieff not only to produce a precise note, but also later to attain absolute pitch. According to de Hartmann, this achievement was the result of work on "conscious self-concentration and self-observation" and observing the sensations in the throat.¹⁰⁶ These exercises may relate to the work of Gurdjieff's contemporary, Austrian esotericist Rudolf Steiner, who developed the art of eurhythm where physical gestures were held to correspond with speech and music. According to Steiner, singing must be freed from a mechanical approach and the singer must awaken to an understanding of true tone so that they can experience the "leading over of the tone into the etheric."¹⁰⁷

101 Gurdjieff, *Herald*, 38.

102 Carl Zigrosser, "Gurdjieff," in *Gurdjieff in the Public Eye: Newspaper Articles, Magazines and Books 1914–1949*, ed. Paul Beekman Taylor (Utrecht, Netherlands: Eureka Editions, 2010), 182.

103 Blom, *Oriental Suite*, 21–28.

104 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 53; Ouspensky, *Search*, 272.

105 Ouspensky, *Search*, 304.

106 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 53–54.

107 See Hilda Deighton and Gina Palermo, *Singing and the Etheric Tone: Gracia Ricardo's Approach to Singing Based on her work with Rudolf Steiner* (Hudson, New York: Anthroposophic Press, 1991), 15.

Gurdjieff's pupil Katherine Mansfield also reports that in 1922 Gurdjieff assigned her the exercise of "learning mental arithmetic beginning $2 \times 2 = 1$ [,] $3 \times 3 = 12$...at great speed to the accompaniment of music."¹⁰⁸ Memorising unusual sequences of numbers meant unlearning habitual, mechanical ways of thinking. The purpose of the accompanying music can be explained by Gurdjieff's statements in 1923 that while performing tasks to music one must not "pay attention to the music but...listen to it automatically," and that "[m]usic played during exercises diverts the movements innate in us which in life is the chief source of interference. Music alone cannot separate the whole of our unconscious automatism, but it is one of the aids to this."¹⁰⁹

Music was also employed as a tool to challenge de Hartmann. At no point during their time together did Gurdjieff ask de Hartmann to play or compose music in the styles in which he excelled. He clearly wished to stretch de Hartmann musically, and unsettle old habits. In 1918 Gurdjieff requested that de Hartmann play violin, an instrument he had never before played. When de Hartmann had fulfilled this task he was asked to play an accompaniment on violin to some music Gurdjieff played on guitar.¹¹⁰ The following year in Tiflis Gurdjieff deliberately set de Hartmann up to play on a poor quality piano, stating, "Every fool can play on a good piano. You must know how to play on a bad one."¹¹¹ De Hartmann was also required to play for a dance class only moments before he was to give an important concert in the Tiflis town hall. De Hartmann states, "I knew Mr Gurdjieff wished to show how people working with him had to be able to function on different levels, so he made it as a kind of test for me: what kind of pianist was I?"¹¹²

Car Accident

On 8 July 1924¹¹³ driving alone from Paris to Fontainebleau, Gurdjieff had a car accident that marks a major juncture in his life. The peculiar circumstances of that day have led some to speculate that Gurdjieff himself had arranged the

¹⁰⁸ Beekman Taylor, ed., *Gurdjieff in the Public Eye: Newspaper Articles, Magazines and Books 1914–1949* (Utrecht, Netherlands: Eureka Editions, 2010), 172.

¹⁰⁹ Gurdjieff, *Views*, 220.

¹¹⁰ de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 53. For more on Gurdjieff's guitar playing see Appendix A.

¹¹¹ de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 139.

¹¹² de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 131.

¹¹³ Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*, 287, gives as the date of the accident 5 July based on Olga de Hartmann's date in the first edition of *Our Life*. However, Daly and Daly, "Chronology," 263, convincingly argue for 8 July, as a file was found in Olga de Hartmann's handwriting on Institute letterhead, bearing all the signs of being written within days of the accident,

accident. Gurdjieff and Olga de Hartmann were in Paris that morning and, before their return to the Prieuré, Gurdjieff had planned for them to inspect some equipment ordered for the Prieuré. However, Gurdjieff abruptly changed the plans that morning, requesting that she not travel with him as she usually did but instead to call a mechanic to check his car thoroughly, make an inventory of his apartment, and return to the Prieuré by train. He also gave Olga his power of attorney, and asked her to persuade her parents to emigrate from Russia to avoid a famine that he predicted.¹¹⁴ Webb argues that these details suggest that Gurdjieff arranged the accident himself, and that it was meant to test his pupils; “to see how the menageries would function without its keeper; to see who would obey instructions given them before the accident and who would forget in the crisis induced by the tragedy...he would be able to test the temperature of his work as a whole.”¹¹⁵ Pupil Fritz Peters also thought the accident foreordained.¹¹⁶ Although no bones were broken, Gurdjieff apparently suffered lacerations of the hands and severe head injuries that left him concussed and unconscious for five days. Webb makes a case for Gurdjieff having faked his injuries but also suggests that, alternatively, Gurdjieff had arranged his accident badly, unintentionally injuring himself.¹¹⁷

It is certainly possible to imagine that Gurdjieff wished to radically change the direction of his Institute at this time, since he must have been suffering disappointment after the recent Movements demonstrations that represented the culmination of years of work. His audiences in Paris were shocked by the physical demands on the dancers, and not one French person joined the Institute. The American demonstrations had not been a popular success either, and Olga de Hartmann recalls looking out at the audience at Carnegie Hall and finding that half the people seemed quite asleep.¹¹⁸ The monetary

stating that the accident occurred on 8 July. The Dalys supposed that forty years later when she published *Our Life*, she had forgotten about the document, and had written in the incorrect date of 5 July. Further, original music manuscripts reveal that Gurdjieff and de Hartmann composed on 5 July, which is more evidence that the accident could not have occurred that day.

114 Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*, 288–289.

115 Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*, 289, 297–298. For more on the circumstances of the accident see de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 221–235, and for a critical account see Beekman Taylor, *A New Life*, 118–124.

116 Paul Beekman Taylor, *Gurdjieff's America: Mediating the Miraculous* (England: Lighthouse Editions, 2004), 67.

117 Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*, 289, 296–297, 299.

118 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 206, 218; Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 196, 199.

outlays expended to stage these demonstrations, and an already outstanding debt at the Prieuré, forced Gurdjieff to work and live in Paris several days a week.¹¹⁹ Gurdjieff may well have considered a drastic change to his teaching necessary, and that this change might begin by monumentally shocking pupils.

On the other hand, Orage accepted the accident at face value, as did de Salzmann and the de Hartmanns (Olga de Hartmann blamed the accident on Gurdjieff's steering wheel which was found to be broken after the accident), though they still suspected that he was acting during his recovery to test how well pupils could carry on the teaching without him.¹²⁰ Moore simply attributes the accident to Gurdjieff being tired, satiated after a large Armenian lunch, and to his appalling driving; this was Gurdjieff's first of at least four car accidents.¹²¹ Gurdjieff himself jokingly explained to C.S. Nott years later that he had lost control of the car when he reached out of the window to pluck an apple from a tree.¹²² Whether or not Gurdjieff had arranged the accident, it marked a major juncture in his life, dramatically affecting his Institute and teaching methods; he disbanded the Institute, stopped work on Movements, began writing his trilogy *All and Everything*, and started composing with de Hartmann their piano music. This juncture can be understood as dividing the first and second phases of Gurdjieff's teaching.

Second Teaching Phase (mid-1924–1930)

After his car accident Gurdjieff's focus shifted dramatically when he announced to pupils in August 1924 his plan to disband the Institute and to "begin a new work." He stated that he felt he had failed to achieve his goals for pupils through his previous methods at the Prieuré, and that he was "disenchanted" with pupils who had disappointed him after all his work with them, and who had taken only parts of his teaching, rather than recognising its unity.¹²³ Only Gurdjieff's family, the de Hartmanns, and a few other close pupils stayed at the Prieuré while most pupils left, at least temporarily. Work at the Prieuré resumed

119 Gurdjieff, "The Material Question," 298; Gurdjieff, *Life is Real*, 93; Beekman Taylor, *A New Life*, 116.

120 Beekman Taylor, *Gurdjieff's America*, 67; Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*, 289; de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 232–233.

121 Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 206; Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*, 288.

122 Nott, *Teachings*, 100.

123 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 234–235; Gurdjieff, *Life is Real*, 4, 86–88; Gurdjieff, *Herald*, 42.

again gradually, but never regained the intensity of the period from 1922 to 1924.¹²⁴ From December 1924 Gurdjieff began writing *Tales*, which became his focus for the next few years, though amendments continued to the end of his life.¹²⁵

1925 and 1926 were difficult years for Gurdjieff. His wife Julia Ostrowska contracted terminal cancer in the winter of 1925 and died in June 1926,¹²⁶ and his mother Evdokia, affectionately called 'Babouchka' ('Grandmother') by Russian pupils,¹²⁷ died of liver disease on 22 June 1925.¹²⁸ The Institute was in financial trouble due to the expenses incurred by these illnesses, as well as the expenses of Gurdjieff's own medical treatment in the aftermath of his accident and also the outlays involved in the recent Movements demonstrations. Another difficulty Gurdjieff faced at this time was writing *Tales*. In March 1925 chief editor Orage reported that the first instalment of *Tales* was unintelligible, heralding Gurdjieff's long struggle with the text.¹²⁹ Pupils' accounts indicate that during these years Gurdjieff looked dreadful and moved with difficulty, he was largely inaccessible to pupils, and the Prieuré was lackadaisical and devoid of conversation. Webb paints the summer of 1926, following Ostrowska's death, as particularly gloomy, stating that there were no new residents at the Prieuré and that no one seemed to be in authority.¹³⁰

It was within this atmosphere that Gurdjieff and de Hartmann wrote the majority of their piano music. On 29 July 1925 they began an intense period of composition that lasted until 1 May 1927, though drafts dating from May, June, and July 1927 demonstrate that composition continued intermittently in these months. Unlike the music they had previously composed, the piano music was not intended to accompany the Movements. Chapters 4 to 8 will examine the piano music and its purpose in detail, so it will not be further discussed here. After the composition of this music petered out in mid-1927, Gurdjieff declined

124 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 237. For more see Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*, 290–299.

125 J. Walter Driscoll and Gurdjieff Foundation of California, *Gurdjieff: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1985), vii, 2; Wellbeloved, *Gurdjieff, Astrology and Beelzebub's Tales*, 30–31.

126 Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 329.

127 Beekman Taylor, *A New Life*, 127.

128 Thomas C. Daly and Thomas A.G. Daly, "Chronology," in *Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff* (Sandpoint, Idaho: Morning Light Press, 2011), 265.

129 Nott, *Teachings*, 92.

130 Bennett, *Making a New World*, 167–168; Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*, 313–314; Nott, *Teachings*, 84.

into the darkest period of his life. In November 1927, after completing his first draft of *Tales*, he realised that during public readings of the text listeners who were not pupils could not comprehend its meaning. This led him to contemplate destroying the text and even himself, describing the situation as “desperate.”¹³¹ However, on Christmas Day 1927 he had a breakthrough, realising that he had written most prolifically at the lowest points in his life, and decided to rewrite *Tales* and renew his health so that he had the energy to later disseminate his writings. In early 1928 Gurdjieff worked intensely revising *Tales* and, possibly to stimulate the writing process, in May he vowed to “remove from my eyesight all those who by this or that make my life too comfortable.”¹³² True to his word, he began encouraging senior pupils to leave him, or go on extended visits away. De Hartmann left him in 1929 and Olga in 1930, never to see Gurdjieff again.

Transitional Phase (1930–1935) and Third Teaching Phase (1936–1949)

From 1930 to 1935 Gurdjieff alternated between France and America, the latter having been regarded as an important source for additional pupils and funds. In this period Gurdjieff’s behaviour was erratic; he sabotaged negotiations with Alfred Knopf to publish *Tales*, created a final breach with Orage and Ouspensky, enforced the closure of the Prieuré (and later tried unsuccessfully to repurchase it), and began writing his controversial semi-autobiographical tract *Herald* which he published in 1933 but which he later repudiated.¹³³ Between June and October 1935 Gurdjieff travelled, though details are unknown.¹³⁴

From 1936 Gurdjieff commenced his third and final teaching phase, which lasted to the end of his life in 1949. During this phase he returned to a focus on the physical and interactive group work of his first phase of teaching, though

¹³¹ Gurdjieff, *Life is Real*, 33–34.

¹³² Gurdjieff, *Life is Real*, 45. See also 5, 33–35, 39, 41; Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 230.

¹³³ Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 236, 331–332.

¹³⁴ Gurdjieff was in Germany until 15 June, when his passport was stamped in Hamburg. The next official addition to his passport was on 27 July, with a visa issued in Berlin, followed by a passport stamp in Brussels on 8 September 1935. Then on 4 October a French visa was added and he arrived in Paris the next day, this being confirmed by a French railway stamp on his papers. The gaps between these dates and places suggest that Gurdjieff was travelling about, but no further information is available to clarify his itinerary or motives during this period. See Beekman Taylor, *A New Life*, 188.

now he taught much more informally. In 1936 and 1937, based in Paris, Gurdjieff taught his all-female and mostly lesbian ‘The Rope’ group. The name came from Gurdjieff’s explanation that to mount the slopes of consciousness group members must be tied together on a *cordée* or rope. The group had close, almost daily contact with Gurdjieff, with meetings held in restaurants or at his apartment. Gurdjieff taught them through readings of his texts, various exercises, and identifying members’ ‘inner animals’. Gurdjieff assigned each member an animal that he felt typified her inner nature, and they were to contend with their animals in order to best achieve the aims of his teaching. According to member Kathryn Hulme, she was a crocodile, while member Louise Davidson was a sardine, and Solita Solano a canary.¹³⁵

In 1940 de Salzmann presented to Gurdjieff her Sèvres group, a group devoted to Gurdjieff’s teaching that her husband had founded in 1931.¹³⁶ After Alexandre’s death in 1933, de Salzmann took the group as her first foray into teaching, which she continued to do for another fifty-seven years. The group included Pauline de Dampierre, Marthe de Gaigneron, Solange Claustres, Henriette Lannes, and René Daumal. All these members, with the exception of Daumal who died in 1944, became leading figures in the London and Paris Foundation groups established by de Salzmann after Gurdjieff’s death. Gurdjieff met with the Sèvres group regularly, and from 1943 to his death he taught them his later Movements, which he began choreographing in 1940 after a sixteen-year break from Movements.¹³⁷ When the Second World War ended in 1945, many English, French, and American pupils visited Gurdjieff’s Paris apartment, which became a daily meeting place that involved readings of *Tales*, listening to Gurdjieff improvising on his harmonium, and partaking in sumptuous, ritualistic meals. At these meals each person seated at the table had a particular function and ‘toasts to the idiots’ were carried out. Ritual toasting of the different types of ‘idiots’ at the table was meant to provide a mirror in which pupils could see themselves.¹³⁸ According to pupil Elizabeth Bennett, Gurdjieff explained:

135 Kathryn Hulme, *Undiscovered Country* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1996), 80–81; Beekman Taylor, *A New Life*, 191–192. For more see William P. Patterson, *Ladies of the Rope: Gurdjieff’s Special Left Bank Women’s Group* (California: Arete Communications, 1999).

136 Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 334.

137 Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*, 436–438.

138 Nott, *Teachings*, 102.

The word idiot has two meanings: the true meaning that was given to it by the ancient sages was to be oneself. A man who is himself looks and behaves like a madman to those who live in the world of illusions, so when they call a man an idiot they mean that he does not share their illusions. Everyone who decides to work on himself is an idiot in both meanings. The wise know that he is seeking for reality. The foolish think he has taken leave of his senses.¹³⁹

Gurdjieff's final visit to New York was between December 1948 and February 1949, and his living quarters there became another meeting place for followers. He recorded many of his harmonium improvisations there. In Paris on 14 October 1949, days after choreographing his last Movement, Gurdjieff collapsed at a Movements class. Just over two weeks later on 29 October he died of pancreatic cancer at the American Hospital of Neuilly, after dictating final instructions to de Salzmann days earlier.¹⁴⁰ As 1866 is taken here to be Gurdjieff's birth year, it seems that he died at the age of eighty-three, the same age as his father some thirty-one years earlier.¹⁴¹

139 J.G. Bennett and Elizabeth Bennett, *Idiots in Paris: Diaries of J.G. Bennett and Elizabeth Bennet, 1949* (Daglingworth, Gloucestershire: Coombe Springs Press, 1980), vii. For more on Gurdjieff's notion of the idiot see Anna Challenger, *Philosophy and Art in Gurdjieff's Beelzebub: A Modern Sufi Odyssey* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2002), 7; Nott, *Teachings*, 101–102; Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 353–355.

140 Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 336.

141 Beekman Taylor, *A New Life*, 219. For more on Gurdjieff's last years see Patterson, *Struggle of the Magicians*, 128–197; Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 331–336; Beekman Taylor, *A New Life*, 147–219.

Music in the Biography of de Hartmann

Where the biography of Gurdjieff was quite broad, chronicling the development of his Institute and outlining his different phases of teaching, the biography of de Hartmann will concentrate on the relationship between the two men from their first meeting in 1916 to their last in 1929. Due to a dearth of information on de Hartmann's own music, only a brief discussion of his compositional style will follow his biography. Major sources utilised here will be the de Hartmanns' memoir *Our Life* and Thomas C. Daly and Thomas A.G. Daly's supplementary notes and introductions in *Our Life*, as well as Olga de Hartmann's unpublished diary *What For?* and John Mangan's article "Thomas De Hartmann: A Composer's Life."¹

Early Years in the Ukraine and St Petersburg (1885–1907)

Thomas Alexandrovich de Hartmann was born in 1885 in the Ukraine on his family's estate, which bordered the village of Khoruzhevka, east of Kiev. His parents were aristocrats of Russian-German ancestry; his father was a captain in the Imperial Household Guards. At the age of four de Hartmann began improvising music and as a young child he was fascinated by fairy-tales, which became a recurring theme in his compositions. When de Hartmann was nine his father died and his mother sent him to board at the military school in St Petersburg. Here his talent for music was recognised and he was allowed to spend his spare time studying music.² At eleven de Hartmann began studying harmony and composition with Russian composer Anton Arensky, who had studied under Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov. Arensky was a friend of Pyotr Tchaikovsky and had taught Sergei Rachmaninov, Alexander Scriabin, and Reinhold Gliere. Arensky became Professor of Harmony and Counterpoint at the Moscow Conservatoire of Music from 1882, and later was the director of

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- 1 John Mangan, "Thomas de Hartmann: A Composer's Life," *Notes*, Second Series, Vol. 53, No. 1, September 1996, 18–29. An earlier and more concise version of the research presented at the beginning of this chapter was published in Johanna Petsche, "Gurdjieff and de Hartmann's Music for Movements," in *Alternative Spirituality and Religion Review*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2013, 97–99.
 - 2 Thomas C. Daly and Thomas A.G. Daly, "On Thomas de Hartmann," in *Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff* (London: Arkana Penguin Books, 1992), xxi–xxii.

the Court Singing Chapel in St Petersburg from 1894 to 1901.³ De Hartmann studied with Arensky for ten years until Arensky's death in 1906. De Hartmann also studied piano technique with prominent Russian pianist Anna Esipova-Leschetizky who had an interest in Theosophy.⁴ Esipova-Leschetizky was a teacher of Sergei Prokofiev, who later became an acquaintance of de Hartmann. During his time at Gurdjieff's Institute in Essentuki, de Hartmann describes Prokofiev visiting him from Kislovodsk to collect a quire of manuscript paper of a rare size.⁵

In 1903 at the age of eighteen de Hartmann received his diploma from the St Petersburg Imperial Conservatory under the directorship of Rimsky-Korsakov. In the same year he graduated from military school as a Junior Guards Officer. The first notable public performance of his work took place at this time. This was incidental music for the Alexandre Dumas tragedy *Caligula*, performed at the Imperial Theatre. In 1906 de Hartmann began studying counterpoint with Sergei Taneiev, a pupil of Tchaikovsky and close friend of the Tolstoy family.⁶ That year de Hartmann married Olga Arkadievna de Shumacher (1885–1979), whose father was a high government official. Olga was an opera singer who had studied with B. Curelli in Naples and Zöe Lody in St Petersburg. Her most notable singing roles include the lead role in Taneiev's opera trilogy *Oresteia* performed in Moscow, and the role of Violetta in a benefit performance of Verdi's *La Traviata* with the Imperial Opera in Constantinople.⁷

In 1907 de Hartmann's four-act ballet *La Fleurette Rouge* (*The Scarlet Flower*) was premiered by the Imperial Opera of St Petersburg in the presence of Tsar Nicholas II. It was choreographed by Nicolai Legat, and the cast included Anna

3 Alexandria Vodarsky-Shiraeff, *Russian Composers and Musicians: A Biographical Dictionary* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1969), 14; Donald Macleod, BBC Radio 3, *Composer of the Week: Anton Arensky*, Episode 2, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0132ncy>, 2011. Retrieved 7 January 2012.

4 James Webb, *The Harmonious Circle: The Lives and Work of G.I. Gurdjieff, P.D. Ouspensky and Their Followers* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980), 84, 151.

5 Thomas de Hartmann and Olga de Hartmann, *Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff*, eds Thomas C. Daly and Thomas A.G. Daly (London: Arkana Penguin Books, 1992), 48.

6 Thomas C. Daly and Thomas A.G. Daly, "On Thomas de Hartmann," in *Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff* (London: Arkana Penguin Books, 1992), xxii; Olga de Hartmann, *What For?*, unpublished diary, 32. For more on Taneiev see de Hartmann's own paper on the composer: Thomas de Hartmann, "Sergeii Ivanovitch Taneieff," *Tempo*, New Series, No. 29, Spring 1956, 8–15. See also Alfred J. Swan, *Russian Music and its Sources in Chant and Folk-Song* (London: John Baker, 1973), 131–134.

7 Thomas C. Daly and Thomas A.G. Daly, "On Olga de Hartmann," in *Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff* (London: Arkana Penguin Books, 1992), xxiii–xxix.

Pavlova, Tamara Karsavina, Michel Fokine, and Vaslav Nijinsky.⁸ This was a significant production and the notoriety it afforded him led to the publication of de Hartmann's early piano preludes, songs, and chamber works by Moscow-based publishing house Jürgenson.⁹ Tsar Nicholas II was so impressed by the ballet that he released de Hartmann from active service as a reserve officer so that he could devote himself to music.

Munich (1908–1912)

From 1908 to 1912 the de Hartmanns lived mainly in Munich, a major centre of artistic activity. In Munich de Hartmann studied conducting with Felix Mottl, a pupil of Richard Wagner and music director of the Munich Opera. Wishing to study orchestral repertoire, de Hartmann was able to play percussion in Mottl's rehearsals, in which the music of Wagner dominated. At this time de Hartmann met Richard Strauss who was visiting St Petersburg. De Hartmann invited him to dinner, communicating with him in German as Strauss knew no Russian.¹⁰

In Munich de Hartmann's compositional style developed, and he attributed this to his exposure to the groundbreaking paintings of van Gogh, Gaughin, and Cezanne, and to meeting Russian painters Yavlensky, Verekina, and especially Kandinsky. Wassily Kandinsky (1866–1944), twenty years de Hartmann's senior, formed a close friendship with de Hartmann that lasted for forty years until Kandinsky's death. Kandinsky's wife Nina remarked that among all her husband's friends, it was only de Hartmann whom he ever addressed by the familiar second person singular, and it was only de Hartmann who addressed Kandinsky likewise.¹¹ Kandinsky glorified music as the only truly abstract art, just as de Hartmann believed that "music is a higher revelation than philosophy and science."¹²

Kandinsky introduced de Hartmann to Alexander Sakharov, a young Russian dancer influenced by Emile-Jacques Dalcroze's eurhythmics, and de Hartmann composed music to accompany Sakharov's choreography. Their *Danses plastiques* was performed at the famous concert hall the Odeon in 1910.

8 Daly and Daly, "On Thomas de Hartmann," xxii.

9 Mangan, "Thomas de Hartmann: A Composer's Life," 19.

10 de Hartmann, *What For?*, unpublished diary, 23–24.

11 Daly and Daly, "On Thomas de Hartmann," xxiii.

12 Jelena Hahl-Koch, "Kandinsky and Schoenberg," in *Arnold Schoenberg Wassily Kandinsky* (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1984), 148; de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 5.

Collaborative improvisations between the three were a unique affair, with Kandinsky shouting out episodes of mimes and dance dramas based on fairy tales and Russian folklore, de Hartmann extemporising on piano, and Sakharov interpreting the music and storyline in dance.¹³ This process led to the creation of their choreographic suite *Daphnis, Narcissus, Orpheus and Dionysus* and their experimental one-act stage project *Der Gelbe Klang* (*The Yellow Sound*), a title inspired by the prevailing interest in synaesthesia in the arts. Neither work was staged at that time, despite de Hartmann's persistent requests to Moscow Arts Theatre director Konstantin Stanislavsky to stage *Der Gelbe Klang*.¹⁴

Like de Hartmann in these early years, Gurdjieff too experimented with links between colour and sound. He argued that colour and sound shared identical "inner construction and functioning" just as H.P. Blavatsky in *Esoteric Instructions* believed that colour and sound were essentially the same as they sprang from the same substance.¹⁵ Gurdjieff explored this in the Study House at the Priuré, where music was played and hummed against the backdrop of the changing multicoloured lights of mechanical fountains installed. It is also reported by pupil Louise Welch that in 1924 at the American Movements demonstrations dancers wore white tunics and trousers with different coloured sashes. In the "Obligatories" and first few Movements dancers were arranged in the order: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. Welch states that the swift movements of the dancers "in complex figures appeared to make the colors change and shift. Someone in the audience said that it seemed like watching white light passed very slowly through a prism and breaking into its spectral order."¹⁶ The earliest reference to synaesthesia is in John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), though it was in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that synaesthesia gained attention in science and the arts. Composers Franz Liszt, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Alexander Scriabin, and Olivier Messiaen have been linked to synaesthesia. Scriabin's symphony *Prometheus* (1911) incorporated a keyboard controlling the play of coloured light in the form of beams, clouds, and other shapes around the concert hall.¹⁷

13 Mangan, "Thomas de Hartmann: A Composer's Life," 20.

14 Mangan, "Thomas de Hartmann: A Composer's Life," 21.

15 See G.I. Gurdjieff, *All and Everything First Series: Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1964 [1950]), 827–828; Tim Rudbø, "The Mysteries of Sound in H.P. Blavatsky's 'Esoteric Instructions,'" in *Music and Esotericism*, ed. Laurence Wuidar (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), 254–259.

16 See de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 204–205; Blom, *Oriental Suite*, 144.

17 John E. Harrison and Simon Baron-Cohen, "Synaesthesia: an Introduction," in *Synaesthesia: Classic and Contemporary Readings* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1997), 4, 8, 10, 22.

Kandinsky and Der Blaue Reiter

Kandinsky's aesthetic and spiritual values resonated with de Hartmann. Kandinsky's religious background was Russian Orthodox and at the time of *Der Blaue Reiter* he was sympathetic towards Theosophical values, though he never referred to himself as a Theosophist. In the 1912 edition of his *On the Spiritual in Art* Kandinsky described Theosophy as "one of the most important spiritual movements" of his time, and a strong force in the "spiritual atmosphere, which offered redemption to many despairing hearts enveloped in gloom and darkness." He included in *On the Spiritual in Art* the conclusion from Blavatsky's *The Key to Theosophy*, which proclaimed "Earth will be a heaven in the twenty-first century in comparison with what it is at present." In the German edition of his book Kandinsky also praised Rudolph Steiner, the head of the German Theosophical Society that was based in Munich.¹⁸

In 1912 de Hartmann published an article called "On Anarchy in Music" in the prestigious avant-garde annual art publication *Der Blaue Reiter* (The Blue Rider), edited by Kandinsky and Franz Marc. *Der Blaue Reiter* was also the name of the movement founded by Kandinsky in 1911, whose core members were Alexej Jawlensky, Paul Klee, August Macke, and Franz Marc. The movement was fundamental to the Expressionist movement and had considerable influence on Surrealism. Kandinsky explained inventing the name *Der Blaue Reiter* with Franz Marc while sitting at a coffee table in a garden in Sindelsdorf: "We both loved blue, Marc liked horses, I riders. So the name came by itself. And after that Mrs Maria Marc's fabulous coffee tasted even better." The name is often linked to one of Kandinsky's paintings of 1903 of the same name, but this painting was originally "The Rider" and only during the revision of his catalogue of works did Kandinsky rename the painting.¹⁹

De Hartmann's views in "On Anarchy in Music" echo those of Kandinsky. At the centre of their convictions was the idea that art should be created from the "inner necessity" of the artist.²⁰ Kandinsky described the vibrations of the soul of the artist causing "an almost identical vibration in the soul of the audience" depending on "the audience's level of development and on the

18 See Rose-Carol Long, "Kandinsky's Vision," in *The Life of Vasili Kandinsky in Russian Art: A Study of the Spiritual in Art*, ed. J.E. Bowlt (Massachusetts: Oriental Research Partners, 1984), 45.

19 Klaus Lankheit, "A History of the Almanac," in *The Blaue Reiter Almanac* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974), 18–19.

20 Thomas de Hartmann, "On Anarchy in Music," in *The Blaue Reiter Almanac*, New Documentary Edition, ed. Klaus Lankheit (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974), 113; Wassily Kandinsky, "On the Question of Form," in *The Blaue Reiter Almanac*, New Documentary Edition, ed. Klaus Lankheit (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974), 153.

influence of the times (the absorbed soul).²¹ Through abstraction and geometrical shapes in his paintings, Kandinsky transformed images into hidden signs and meanings that aimed to express truth and cause vibrations that might synchronise with those of attentive observers, affecting their souls. Kandinsky believed that by requiring observers to decipher these signs his paintings could lead observers to take part in their creation almost as if he or she were taking part in a mystic ritual.²² Kandinsky, de Hartmann, and other proponents of *Der Blaue Reiter* argued for the integration of the arts and the expression of spiritual truths through an intuitive, spontaneous artistic approach. They also saw foreign and ancient art forms as facilitating a tracing back to the very sources of art. According to Kandinsky, “a link to the past” was a prerequisite for a “ray to the future.”²³

Kandinsky and de Hartmann, in line with *Der Blaue Reiter* artists, also advocated ‘conscious art’. De Hartmann stated in “On Anarchy in Music,” “To me, the engagement of the conscious element seems to be necessary [in art], absolutely necessary.”²⁴ Similarly, French art critic Roger Allard wrote in an article for the *Blaue Reiter Almanac*,

We are proclaiming the right of the new constructive movement in art. We defend its good purpose against all romantic points of view which deny the sleeper the opportunity to think and to speculate and in which he is regarded as an inspired dreamer whose left hand does not know what his right hand is doing. The most noble right of the artist is to be a conscious builder of his ideas.²⁵

Later in Chapters 5, 7 and 8 it will be shown that Gurdjieff expounded views on art similar to those promoted by *Der Blaue Reiter*. Gurdjieff believed that art should be created consciously and with the aim of making others conscious, and that foreign and ancient art forms were keys to truth and could portray ‘essence’. He also argued that art had material, vibratory affects, and that art could facilitate effort in people, which was valuable spiritually. It seems,

21 Wassily Kandinsky, “On Stage Composition,” in *The Blaue Reiter Almanac*, New Documentary Edition, ed. Klaus Lankheit (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974), 190–191. See also A. Rüdinger, “Wassily Kandinsky,” in *History of Modern Painting*, Vol. 3, ed. Maurice Raynal (Geneva: Albert Skira, 1950), 96.

22 Long, “Kandinsky’s Vision,” 49–50; Hahl-Koch, “Kandinsky and Schoenberg,” 141.

23 Lankheit, “A History of the Almanac,” 35.

24 de Hartmann, “On Anarchy in Music,” 118.

25 Roger Allard, “Signs of Renewal in Painting,” in *The Blaue Reiter Almanac*, New Documentary Edition, ed. Klaus Lankheit (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974), 108.

then, that de Hartmann and Gurdjieff shared views on art before they had contact with each other, and that these views were in line with the aesthetic discourses of the early twentieth century. Their common aesthetic and spiritual visions must have contributed positively to their collaborative relationship composing.

After the death of his mother in 1912 de Hartmann returned to St Petersburg where he continued composing. Two years later, with the outbreak of the First World War, he was ordered back to his regiment and stationed as a reserve Guards officer in Tsarskoye Selo.²⁶ At this time the de Hartmanns began searching for a spiritual teacher or group, having first become interested in esoteric matters in Munich where, according to Olga, everyone was reading Blavatsky, and where the de Hartmanns practiced séances with Kandinsky and other friends.²⁷ De Hartmann states that prior to meeting Gurdjieff he had been searching for “something greater or higher that [he] could not name,” and had come into contact with many ‘ways.’²⁸ The work of de Hartmann’s great-uncle Eduard von Hartmann, a metaphysical philosopher, may have inspired de Hartmann’s search. As well as composing songs and writing on music and aesthetics, von Hartmann published his three-volume *The Philosophy of the Unconscious* (1869), a work that greatly influenced Friedrich Nietzsche.²⁹ In fact Nietzsche had read the book numerous times and, according to one source, “[w]ith the exception of Schopenhauer and Lange, Hartmann is likely to have been the philosopher from whom Nietzsche learned most.”³⁰ Through a spiritual group in St Petersburg de Hartmann met mathematician Andrei Andreyvich Zakharov, who introduced de Hartmann to Gurdjieff in 1916.³¹

The de Hartmanns Meet Gurdjieff (1916–1917)

The period December 1916 to February 1930 encapsulates the extraordinary relationship between Gurdjieff and the de Hartmanns. Thus a more detailed account of these years will be given here. De Hartmann met Gurdjieff in

26 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 6.

27 Daly and Daly, “On Olga de Hartmann,” xxix.

28 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 5.

29 Eduard von Hartmann, *Philosophy of the Unconscious*, trans. William C. Coupland (London: Trübner, 1884); Mangan, “Thomas de Hartmann: A Composer’s Life,” 22.

30 Gregory Moore and Thomas H. Brobjer, *Nietzsche and Science* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2004), 30.

31 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 5.

St Petersburg on 16 December 1916 at the outbreak of the Russian Revolution³² through the efforts of mutual acquaintance Zakharov, who had earlier summarised for de Hartmann Gurdjieff's teaching on developing a soul.³³ Webb suggests that Gurdjieff kept watch for individuals who might be useful to him, such as Ouspensky who Webb predicts Gurdjieff was "out to catch" from as early as 1912 when he read Ouspensky's *Tertium Organum*.³⁴ Indeed Ouspensky states that when he attended one of Gurdjieff's lectures in Moscow in 1915 he was introduced to Gurdjieff "only after the persistent efforts" of Gurdjieff's cousin Merkurov.³⁵ Webb argues that Gurdjieff had planned and instigated their meeting well in advance. This could also have been the case for de Hartmann, who Gurdjieff may have considered an attractive candidate for composing for his newly conceived ballet *Struggle*. Gurdjieff had already begun reflecting on the music for *Struggle* in 1914, and had stated in 1915 that he had not yet decided who was to write the music.³⁶

Gurdjieff and de Hartmann met in the evening on the Nevsky Prospect (the main street of St Petersburg) in a café frequented by prostitutes, where Gurdjieff made the coarse observation, "[t]here are usually more whores here."³⁷ De Hartmann was a Guards officer at the time and had he been seen at the café he would have had to leave his regiment. According to de Hartmann, Gurdjieff did everything he could to create unfavourable conditions for this meeting, interpreting this as a technique in compelling de Hartmann to remember his true aim.³⁸ Gurdjieff immediately organised for de Hartmann to meet Ouspensky and to read "Glimpses of the Truth," the earliest account of his teaching. When de Hartmann showed this to his wife she was eager to meet Gurdjieff, "[s]uch a man I would like to meet!", and disappointed that she had not been included in their first meeting.³⁹

In February 1917 the de Hartmanns attended a meeting with Gurdjieff's St Petersburg group, and shortly afterwards de Hartmann met Gurdjieff for a third time before leaving for the Austrian front in the Ukraine. Gurdjieff was then adamant about de Hartmann, telling pupil Leonid Stjoernal in de Hartmann's presence, "He has to be entangled. Entangle him, Doctor!" De

32 For an analysis of the political situation of this time and its relation to Gurdjieff's activities see Patterson, *Struggle of the Magicians*.

33 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 6.

34 Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*, 133–135.

35 P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous: The Teachings of G.I. Gurdjieff* (San Diego: Harcourt Inc., 1977 [1949]), 7.

36 Gurdjieff, "Glimpses of the Truth," 35; Ouspensky, *Search*, 17.

37 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 8.

38 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 7, 74.

39 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 9.

Hartmann understood this to mean that he was to be diverted and provoked in order to find truth for himself.⁴⁰ In August the de Hartmanns joined Gurdjieff in Essentuki in the Caucasus, arriving with their chambermaid and two carriages of luggage, abruptly relinquishing their privileged lives.⁴¹ Four days later they followed Gurdjieff to Tuapse on the coast of the Black Sea, where Gurdjieff assembled forty pupils from Moscow and St Petersburg, living there for two months.⁴² After the de Hartmanns made a brief side trip to Rostov, Gurdjieff led them and six other pupils by foot on an arduous expedition over the northern Caucasus range to Uch Darye near the Black Sea port of Sochi. Here de Hartmann contracted typhoid and attributed his recovery to Gurdjieff's treatment and tenderness towards him. On Gurdjieff's advice the de Hartmanns travelled to Essentuki where they had access to medical facilities.⁴³ Their instant devotion to, and dependence on, Gurdjieff is clear from their early accounts in *Our Life*.

De Hartmann and Gurdjieff in Essentuki, Sochi and Tiflis (1918–1920)

In February 1918 de Hartmann was released from military service and could now devote himself and his musical skills to Gurdjieff. This development may have been Gurdjieff's intention as he had insisted earlier that the ailing de Hartmann go to hospital, perhaps knowing that there he would receive papers permitting his departure from military service. Gurdjieff had settled in a large rented house in Essentuki where he founded The Essentuki Home of the International Fellowship for Realization through Work, the precursor to his Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man.⁴⁴ At this time Gurdjieff began investing attention in de Hartmann, assigning him personal tasks and making assessments like, "Sometimes you act like a lamb and the tigers will eat you up." De Hartmann spoke of an "inner tie...an invisible bond with Mr Gurdjieff, who was then the person *nearest* to one, in the true sense of the word."⁴⁵ In 1918 they composed their first known piece of music, "Essentuki

40 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 14.

41 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 17.

42 J.G. Bennett, *Gurdjieff: Making a New World* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 120. For an account of these four days see de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 17–21.

43 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 30–37. For an account of this expedition see de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 22–28.

44 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 37–38, 58. For details of exercises prescribed by Gurdjieff that were carried out at this time see Ouspensky, *Search*, 372–373.

45 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 41–42.

Prayer” (Vol. 4, 69),⁴⁶ which, years later at the Prieuré, Gurdjieff often asked de Hartmann to play. Sometimes this was accompanied by the humming of pupils, led by Olga, and against the backdrop of the atmospheric Study House with the changing multicoloured lights of mechanical fountains.⁴⁷

Moving to Sochi with Gurdjieff in October after a strenuous journey on foot, the de Hartmanns were among a small few determined to stay with Gurdjieff, and they made a successful living there giving music lessons and concerts.⁴⁸ From this point on, when conditions permitted, de Hartmann continued to compose his own music, teach, and give concerts. At times Gurdjieff asked him to give up his musical activities, but at least on one occasion in Tiflis this appeared to be a test, as de Hartmann notes that Gurdjieff “seemed glad that I did not actually do so.”⁴⁹ In December the de Hartmanns gave a concert of operatic arias from *The Marriage of Figaro*, *La Traviata*, and *Tosca*, as well as de Hartmann’s own compositions, with Olga singing and de Hartmann accompanying her on piano.⁵⁰

Moving to Tiflis in January 1919 with Gurdjieff and his remaining pupils, de Hartmann encountered his friend, composer Nikolai Nikolayevich Tcherepnin, who immediately appointed de Hartmann Professor of Composition at the Imperial Conservatory of which Tcherepnin was Director.⁵¹ Through Tcherepnin, de Hartmann also became the artistic director of the Tiflis State Opera where he and Olga were involved in a production of Georges Bizet’s *Carmen*. Gurdjieff attended one of these performances in April, and this marks a rare occasion where he is known to have engaged with contemporary Western art music. Olga, who was singing the part of Michaela, remarks that in Act Four she noticed Gurdjieff at the back of the hall in his black hat, “a black spot,” which was a consolation as he had said that if she was afraid, “just look, and I will be there; sing and think about no one else in the hall.”⁵²

During rehearsals of *Carmen* de Hartmann reconnected with Alexandre de Salzmann who was designing the scenery. They had known each other in Munich where Alexandre was a well-known painter. The de Hartmanns

46 Hear QR Code 1; <http://jeuj.eu/essentukiprayer>

47 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 204–205.

48 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 113, 115.

49 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 158.

50 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 115.

51 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 119. Tcherepnin (1873–1945) studied composition under Rimsky-Korsakov, and was also a pianist and conductor. He conducted performances at the Marinsky Opera house in 1907, the first performance of Rimsky-Korsakov’s *Snegurochka* at the Opera Comique in Paris in 1908, and from 1909 to 1914, the Russian opera for Diaghilev’s Ballet Russes. In 1918 he became director of the Tiflis Conservatory. See Vodarsky-Shiraeff, *Russian Composers and Musicians*, 31.

52 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 132.

became friends with him and his wife Jeanne (henceforth de Salzmänn), who was a teacher of the Dalcroze system of dance, having been one of Dalcroze's principal dancers and chief artistic assistants in his celebrated production of *Orpheus*.⁵³ Through the de Hartmanns, de Salzmänn invited Gurdjieff to attend her Dalcroze dance class, and later placed the class at his disposal and Gurdjieff began training them regularly in Movements. De Hartmann played "accompanying chords" in these classes. Gurdjieff used de Salzmänn's class to stage his first Movements demonstration, held at the State Opera Theatre in June in the second half of a eurhythmics demonstration given by de Salzmänn. Later, with this same class, he gave a demonstration entirely devoted to Movements.⁵⁴

In the spring of 1920 de Hartmann composed music for Norwegian author and playwright Knut Hamsun's play *In the Grip of Life* and for Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore's play *The King of the Dark Chamber*, both commissioned and performed by the Moscow Arts Theatre. In June de Hartmann was assigned the lucrative job of orchestrating the music of Russian composer Meliton Balanchivadze, father of choreographer George Balanchine, but had to leave when Gurdjieff asked the de Hartmanns to prepare to depart for Constantinople. Before their departure their friends organised a farewell concert of de Hartmann's compositions, with de Hartmann on piano and Olga and professional tenor Zalipsky singing. Gurdjieff attended and was "satisfied" with the concert. On the request of their Armenian friends, the de Hartmanns also gave a concert of the music of Armenian composer Komitas Vardapet (1869–1935). This was in Batum, *en route* to Constantinople. (A year earlier, de Hartmann had researched and performed the music of Komitas, most likely on Gurdjieff's request. One of these concerts was given in Erevan, the capital of Armenia. See Chapter 5 for more). Some days later they arrived in Constantinople and Gurdjieff and the de Hartmanns never again returned to Russia.⁵⁵

De Hartmann and Gurdjieff in Constantinople, Berlin and Fontainebleau (1920–1928)

It was at Gurdjieff's Institute in Constantinople where de Hartmann first began composing music for Movements with Gurdjieff, and playing this music for Movements classes. De Hartmann and Bennett give valuable accounts of the process of composing this music (see Chapter 4). De Hartmann continued to accompany the Movements through the growth of the Institute, though other

53 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 120–121, 123.

54 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 121–123.

55 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 133–136, 147–150.

pupils such as Rose Mary Lillard and Carol Robinson are also said to have accompanied the Movements at the Institute in Fontainebleau (they may have replaced de Hartmann when he was unavailable due to outside musical commitments).⁵⁶ De Hartmann was also assigned the job of music instructor at the Institute.⁵⁷ Unfortunately he does not elaborate on this role, but Gurdjieff states that there were lectures on Movements, music, and painting, and their relationship to “objective science.”⁵⁸ Simultaneously, the de Hartmanns made a living through giving music lessons and organising concerts with an orchestra de Hartmann had founded. These concerts culminated in a performance of Verdi’s *La Traviata* with the Imperial Opera in August 1920. Olga sang the lead role of Violetta and de Hartmann played piano while conducting at the same time. As custom dictated that Turkish women could not attend these concerts in mixed company, the de Hartmanns organised special performances for Turkish women, consisting of works by Beethoven, Wagner, and Russian and French composers.⁵⁹

In July 1921 de Hartmann gave a benefit concert with his orchestra to raise funds for the Turkish press. On Gurdjieff’s request this concert included a Movements demonstration. It was so successful that repeat performances were given in Constantinople and nearby locations. In connection to these concerts, Gurdjieff and de Hartmann were invited to view the ritual of the Mevlevi whirling dervishes in a mosque in Pera, Constantinople, which was followed by a concert of Turkish music with flute and drum. De Hartmann reports that he was not able to make notes of the music at the time but later wrote down all he could remember.⁶⁰ It is possible that these recollected fragments might later have been used as a source for their music for Movements and piano music. Gurdjieff and his troupe, including the de Hartmanns, moved to Berlin in August 1921 in search of a permanent location for the Institute, and in February and March 1922 Gurdjieff and Olga de Hartmann visited London where Gurdjieff gave talks. In this period Olga began her chief roles as

56 See de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 155–156; J.G. Bennett, *Witness: The Autobiography of J.G. Bennett* (London: Turnstone Books, 1975), 112; Paul Beekman Taylor, *Gurdjieff’s America: Mediating the Miraculous* (England: Lighthouse Editions, 2004), 32; Roger Friedland and Harold Zellman, *The Fellowship: The Untold Story of Frank Lloyd Wright and the Taliesin Fellowship* (New York: Regan, 2006), 423.

57 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 156.

58 Gurdjieff, “The Material Question,” 283.

59 Daly and Daly, “Chronology,” 267; Daly and Daly, “On Olga de Hartmann,” xxix; de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 153–154.

60 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 157–158. For Bennett’s account of de Hartmann during this period, see J.G. Bennett, *Witness: The Story of a Search* (New Mexico: Bennett Books, 1997), 43.

secretary, translator, and assistant to Gurdjieff.⁶¹ In 1922, the year that Gurdjieff established his Institute at the Chateau du Prieuré d'Avon at Fontainebleau, de Hartmann was appointed director of the music publishing house Belaieff by the previous Belaieff director, composer Alexander Glazunov. Belaieff then published all de Hartmann's submitted compositions.⁶²

In the period between 1923 and 1928 de Hartmann had dropped most of his own musical commitments and was largely at Gurdjieff's disposal, except for occasions in 1924 and 1928 when the Prieuré was in financial trouble and de Hartmann took work as a film composer.⁶³ From 1923 to 1924 Gurdjieff and de Hartmann composed more music for Movements, and de Hartmann worked vigorously on orchestrating these pieces for the two big series of Movements demonstrations in Paris and America. From 29 July 1925 to 1 May 1927 they worked intensely on a new type of music: the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music. The circumstances of this period, and accounts of the composition, performance, and reception of both the music for Movements and piano music, are detailed in other chapters of this book and will not be repeated here. What can be stated here is that by 1924 the de Hartmanns had become Gurdjieff's most senior pupils. This is indicated by the details regarding their arrival by ship in America that year. Surviving documents with information on passengers collected by immigration authorities show that Gurdjieff's occupation was listed as 'Professor', the de Hartmanns' occupations were 'teachers', and most of the other pupils were 'students'. It was also documented that, upon meeting Orage in America, Gurdjieff and the de Hartmanns were taken to the Ansonia Hotel on Broadway, while the rest of the group were lodged in hotels nearby.⁶⁴

The de Hartmanns Leave Gurdjieff (1929–1930)

Between January and April 1929 Gurdjieff and the de Hartmanns were in New York. Orage, who was given the title of Gurdjieff's 'representative' in America, had insisted on the trip for the purpose of promoting Gurdjieff's *Tales* and *Meetings* through giving talks and readings, and also allowing people to hear some of the piano music, played by de Hartmann. De Hartmann recounts

61 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 169.

62 de Hartmann, *What For?*, unpublished diary, 214. For information on the Belaieff publishing house see Swan, *Russian Music and its Sources in Chant and Folk-Song*, 121–123.

63 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 238, 269.

64 Beekman Taylor, *A New Life*, 106.

that in New York the piano music was sometimes played in the evenings after a reading of *Tales*, “while other occasions were devoted entirely to music.”⁶⁵ This marks a rare occasion where the piano music was played outside Gurdjieff’s circle of pupils. From the first day of this trip Gurdjieff began encouraging de Hartmann to organise his life in Paris independently of the Prieuré and devote himself to composition. Soon after returning to the Prieuré the de Hartmanns found a house for themselves in Courbevoie on the outskirts of Neuilly, but refusing to believe that Gurdjieff wanted them to leave they continued to live at the Prieuré until an incident occurred in June that forced de Hartmann to leave permanently.⁶⁶ Olga broke with Gurdjieff eight months later, and from then on the de Hartmanns did not see Gurdjieff again in the twenty years to his death in 1949.

Writers skirt the issue of the abrupt end to the relationship between Gurdjieff and de Hartmann in June 1929, probably due to a lack of information. Olga described details of the circumstances in her unpublished diary *What For?*, which offers some material not available in *Our Life*. Olga de Hartmann bequeathed her diary, written in the 1970s, to Thomas C. Daly, who considered it insufficient to stand alone as a separate publication to *Our Life*.⁶⁷ Thus it remains unpublished and generally unseen. The editor’s introduction to the diary states:

This book has an aim: to put in print all manuscripts and personal writings which were not included in Thomas de Hartmann’s book *Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff*...The author wishes to print this material just as it was written, of events which happened sixty years ago, without corrections, without restrictions, without inventions, without embellishments.⁶⁸

This passage justifies my use of the diary here, since this book aims to present as full and accurate a picture as possible of the circumstances surrounding the music and relationship of Gurdjieff and de Hartmann.

In her diary Olga explained that in June, while she and her husband were looking for a house for themselves in Paris, they met Gurdjieff at a café in the train station Wagram. Gurdjieff asked Olga to telephone someone, and when she returned she saw her husband turn pale, jump from the table and run from Gurdjieff. Later de Hartmann said to her,

65 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 252–253.

66 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 253–254.

67 Daly, “Foreword,” viii.

68 de Hartmann, *What For?*, unpublished diary, i.

Can you swear never to insist that I see that man [Gurdjieff] again? He will always be my Teacher, and I will follow his teaching, but I never wish to see him again...I will certainly never change my attitude toward him as my Teacher, but help me never to see him again. You, please, continue to go to the Prieuré, you know it cannot exist without you.⁶⁹

De Hartmann never saw Gurdjieff again. Olga claims never to have known what was said at the café, but that this incident was “a tragedy that Mr. Gurdjieff had provoked,” and that it almost caused de Hartmann to have a nervous breakdown.⁷⁰ What was said at the café might be revealed by a later comment that Gurdjieff made to Olga in Berlin, “You are quite blind about your husband; you don’t even see that he is a pederast.”⁷¹ She did not understand the word and Gurdjieff told her that he had never seen such an idiot as she and that she did not understand that her husband was not interested in her, only in young boys. She laughed it off and asked him what he had said to her husband in Wagram to which he replied, “Nothing special. I told him that he has not to be so proud of you.”⁷² It is possible that at the café in Wagram Gurdjieff had accused de Hartmann of being a pederast, as de Hartmann’s dramatic reaction bears the possibility of this accusation. Gurdjieff’s intention was undoubtedly to force de Hartmann to leave him permanently. It may be worth noting that, according to pupil Elizabeth Bennett, Gurdjieff once used the term ‘pederast’ to denigrate Shakespeare; he had said that Shakespeare was a “passive pederast” and “such dirty thing’ had ruined the British language as Pushkin had ruined the Russian.”⁷³ As Gurdjieff despised modern literature he may have considered these writers, both of whom revolutionised the literary language of their native countries, representative of the profound problems he saw in contemporary society and the arts. This connotation could relate to de Hartmann if Gurdjieff was condemning him as a composer, since de Hartmann’s own compositional style drew on modern musical language, which Gurdjieff disliked.

Whether or not this was Gurdjieff’s accusation to de Hartmann is unknown, but the further question arises as to why Gurdjieff would tell Olga that her husband was a pederast, explaining the word to her in the literal sense, as this is the kind of remark that could destroy a marriage. A purely speculative

69 de Hartmann, *What For?*, unpublished diary, 205.

70 de Hartmann, *What For?*, unpublished diary, 206.

71 de Hartmann, *What For?*, unpublished diary, 206.

72 de Hartmann, *What For?*, unpublished diary, 206.

73 J.G. Bennett and Elizabeth Bennett, *Idiots in Paris: Diaries of J.G. Bennett and Elizabeth Bennet, 1949* (Daglingworth, Gloucestershire: Coombe Springs Press, 1980), 6–7.

answer to this could be that Gurdjieff wished for the de Hartmanns to separate as he himself wanted to be with Olga now that the Institute was dissolving and he was soon to begin a new life. They were certainly close at the Prieuré; Olga was entrusted with the most personal of tasks and they had on numerous occasions travelled together alone on Gurdjieff's request.⁷⁴ Gurdjieff once said that she was "the first friend of his inner life."⁷⁵ Beekman Taylor speaks of Olga becoming less and less esteemed by pupils from 1929 as she displayed an openly proprietary attitude to her relations with Gurdjieff. She let it be known that she and Gurdjieff shared information and ideas that others did not have. Indeed Orage once wrote to his wife Jessie at the Prieuré to advise her that, if she wished to get an idea to Gurdjieff, she should tell it to Olga as a secret, since Olga held no secrets from Gurdjieff.⁷⁶ Further, Olga describes a suspicious encounter with Gurdjieff soon before she left him permanently. One evening when they were alone at the Prieuré:

Mr Gurdjieff asked me to do something that I felt I could not do. I went to my room. Some time later Mr Gurdjieff came and told me that if I would not do what he asked, something bad would happen to my husband...I was utterly in despair, frantically weighing the yes and no...⁷⁷

This incident sounds very personal, particularly as she does not reveal Gurdjieff's request and is normally generous with details. It is well known that Gurdjieff had affairs with pupils; Jessmin Howarth and Edith Taylor bore him daughters in 1924 and 1928, respectively, while Elizaveta de Stjernvall and Jeanne de Salzmann, whose husbands were working with Gurdjieff at the time, bore him sons in 1919 and 1923. His affair with the married Lili Galumian produced a son in 1927, and there is also evidence that Gurdjieff made sexual advances to Jessie Orage in 1930. At the time of some of these affairs, Gurdjieff was married to Julia Ostrowska.⁷⁸

Olga's own strong feelings for Gurdjieff are revealed in her statement relating to his dire physical condition after his car accident, "I felt as if, without him, the forces of life would stop, and that if he died, all that lived would die..."⁷⁹

74 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 208–209, 219, 221.

75 Patterson, *Struggle of the Magicians*, 129.

76 Beekman Taylor, *A New Life*, 142–143.

77 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 255.

78 For more on the topic see Johanna J.M. Petsche, "Gurdjieff on Sex: Subtle Bodies, Si 12, and the Sex Life of a Sage," in *Sexuality and New Religious Movements*, eds James R. Lewis and Henrik Bogdan (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

79 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 225.

However, these may well be the words of a devotee rather than words of personal love, as her unshakeable loyalty to her husband is clear in her writings. If an erotic relationship was mooted, it is more than likely that the impulse came only from Gurdjieff.

J.G. Bennett recounts a story told by Gurdjieff years later about why he sent the de Hartmanns away. Gurdjieff said that on his Name Day Feast of St George on 23 April 1928 he had expressed his desire for English kippers, and that Olga de Hartmann immediately arranged for a case of kippers to be sent to Paris and brought to the Prieuré. Gurdjieff made this a pretext for sending the de Hartmanns away, as they made his life too easy for him.⁸⁰ Years earlier in 1923 Gurdjieff gave a different reason for his discharging of pupils. In an article for the *Daily News*, journalist E.C. Bowyer wrote that Gurdjieff wished to send pupils away when they had reached a certain stage of development so that they could “pursue a further course through life unaided.”⁸¹

Owing to her duties at the Prieuré, and on her husband's insistence, for eight months after de Hartmann left Gurdjieff Olga continued to visit Gurdjieff and accompanied him to Germany in October.⁸² He made life difficult for her, appointing a young art historian Louise Goepfert as his new secretary in June 1929, and once putting both secretaries on the same train journey, creating a painful atmosphere for Olga.⁸³ She left Gurdjieff permanently in February 1930 on the day he left Paris for a trip to New York. He must have suspected her decision to leave as he invited her to his apartment the previous evening and asked her for the key she possessed to his chest of drawers. He proceeded to burn personal papers, letters, and passports in the drawers, which Olga had guarded for him over the years.⁸⁴ At the train station at Gare Saint Lazare the next day Gurdjieff strangely requested of Olga that she and de Hartmann rejoin him in New York. As de Hartmann was seriously ill, and in any case had vowed never to see Gurdjieff again, she declined. Gurdjieff then gave her the ultimatum, “Come in a week's time or you will never see me again,” to which she replied, “Then you will never see me again.” She stayed true to her word; after an extraordinary relationship that spanned over a decade, the de Hartmanns left

80 Bennett, *Gurdjieff: Making a New World*, 172. Gurdjieff, *Life is Real*, 45, states of this occasion, “on this name day of mine, because of a certain action toward me on the part of one of the people near me, I decided to realise the following...to remove from my eyesight all those who by this or that make my life too comfortable.”

81 Blom, *Oriental Suite*, 67.

82 de Hartmann, *What For?*, unpublished diary, 206.

83 James Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth A Biography* (Shaftsbury, Dorset: Element, 1991), 233.

84 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 256.

Gurdjieff permanently, though de Hartmann remained utterly loyal to him, and Thomas C. Daly reports that de Hartmann regularly played the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music “to his dying day.”⁸⁵

De Hartmann’s Later Years (1930–1956)

Once they had both left Gurdjieff, the de Hartmanns moved to Courbevoie with Olga’s parents and de Hartmann supported the family by composing music for commercial films under the pseudonym Thomas Kross (Kross being the maiden name of his mother). In 1933 Gurdjieff sent a messenger to their house several times to request that they return to him and threatening that if they did not comply, “he [Gurdjieff] would die before the sun rose.” They declined these requests and Olga states pragmatically, “I was so sure that if he was our Teacher – it was all only a provocation to make us suffer more, if one wishes to call it so, and to see how we would react.”⁸⁶ It is curious that Gurdjieff adamantly demanded that they return to him after earlier pressing them to leave him. As Olga supposed, he may have been deliberately creating emotional conflict in line with his teaching methods, or perhaps he realised that he had made a mistake and did need the de Hartmanns. Regardless, this marks the beginning of a series of strange and erratic decisions and actions by Gurdjieff over the next five years (see Chapter 2).

By 1936 de Hartmann had written music to fifty-three films, the most successful being *Kriss* (1932), also known as *Guna Guna* or *Love Powder*, which played in the *Champs-Élysées* in Paris for about a year. A cousin of Franklin D. Roosevelt had written the libretto and asked de Hartmann to write the music. Composing for commercial films later allowed de Hartmann the freedom to devote himself to his own music. He wrote the ballet *Babette*, first performed in 1935 by the Opera de Nice, among other works including his first symphony, several concerti, song cycles, and solo piano pieces. These were premiered in the 1930s and 1940s by *Les Concerts Lamoureux* and other musical societies in Paris, Brussels, and London. De Hartmann would often play piano for these concerts.⁸⁷

85 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 256–257; Beekman Taylor, *A New Life*, 146; de Hartmann, *What For?*, unpublished diary, 233; Thomas C. Daly, [Liner notes] “Introduction,” in *Music for Gurdjieff’s 39 Series* (Holland: Channel Classics Records, 2001), 3.

86 de Hartmann, *What For?*, unpublished diary, 210.

87 de Hartmann, *What For?*, unpublished diary, 241–242; de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 257–258; Teresa Dybvig, “An Introduction to Thomas de Hartmann,” Unpublished MMA Seminar, Yale University, 1987, Appendix I, iii.

With the Nazi occupation of France the de Hartmanns were evicted from their home and sought refuge in a deserted house in Garches near Paris where they stayed throughout the Second World War.⁸⁸ As the house was equipped with a piano de Hartmann continued composing works including his opera *Esther*, based on the Jean Racine play, and songs set to texts by Verlaine, Proust, and James Joyce. After the war many of his compositions were performed in concert halls and on radio, and the de Hartmanns continued their friendship with Kandinsky. They also formed a close friendship with Catalan cellist Pau Casals i Defilló, known during his career as Pablo Casals, who performed de Hartmann's Cello Concerto, opus 57, with the Boston Symphony Orchestra.⁸⁹ In the late 1940s de Hartmann travelled to England several times where, with the help of Casals, he had pieces performed by the British Broadcasting Company, and gave lectures for them on the interrelationship of the arts. Esteemed American architect and admirer of Gurdjieff Frank Lloyd Wright heard these lectures and invited de Hartmann to lecture at his winter home Taliesin West in Arizona ('Taliesin' being Welsh for 'shining brow'), which became a School of Architecture run vaguely on principles derived from Gurdjieff.⁹⁰

In October 1949, twenty years after their break with Gurdjieff, de Salzman informed the de Hartmanns that Gurdjieff was dying. They were immediately bound for the hospital, despite de Hartmann having been in bed with an attack of heart palpitations at the time of de Salzman's call. When they arrived Gurdjieff was too weak for visitors so they left, planning to visit the following morning, however Gurdjieff died before they reached the hospital.⁹¹ In October 1950, a year after Gurdjieff's death, the de Hartmanns moved to New York on the advice of de Salzman to assist in the task of preserving Gurdjieff's legacy and music. They offered guidance to American Gurdjieff-centred groups and supported popular teacher of Gurdjieff's ideas Sophia Grigorievna Ouspensky and her pupils at her farm in Mendham, New Jersey. The de Hartmanns also founded the first Canadian group in Toronto in 1953.⁹² From 1950 to his death in 1956 de Hartmann organised the first private publications of selections of

88 Daly, "Foreword," vii–viii.

89 Wim van Dullemen, [Liner notes] *Music for Gurdjieff's 39 Series* (Holland: Channel Classics Records, 2001), 37–38.

90 Dybvig, "An Introduction to Thomas de Hartmann," 12. For more on Taliesin West see Johanna J.M. Petsche, "A Gurdjieff Genealogy: Tracing the Manifold Ways the Gurdjieff Teaching has Travelled," in *International Journal for the Study of New Religions*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2013, 62.

91 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 259.

92 Daly, "Foreword," viii.

the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music and music for Movements, which altogether formed eight volumes published by Paris-based music publisher Janus. He also made recordings and gave recitals of the music, and composed pieces to accompany the *39 Series* Movements that Gurdjieff choreographed in the 1940s. At this time de Hartmann wrote most of the Russian draft of *Our Life*, though he died of heart failure in the middle of his chapter “Music.”

De Hartmann died on 28 March 1956 in Princeton, New Jersey. His last words were to Olga, “If God and Mr. Gurdjieff do not wish for me to die, I will not die – if they wish me to die, I will die.”⁹³ The evening before his death de Hartmann played his Second Sonata for Piano, opus 82, dedicated to Ouspensky’s idea of the fourth dimension. This was for a group of friends who could not attend an upcoming concert of de Hartmann’s music. The concert, arranged by Boosey and Hawkes, went ahead at the New York Town Hall on 16 April, celebrating de Hartmann’s music and life *in memoriam*. The programme consisted of de Hartmann’s songs set to Joyce and Verlaine, passages from the opera *Esther*, his Second Sonata for Piano, and Two Nocturnes, all played by de Hartmann’s student Maro Ajemian.⁹⁴

Olga de Hartmann’s Later Years (1956–1979)

After de Hartmann’s death Olga organised for some of his own music to be recorded and performed, culminating in an oratorio-style presentation of his opera *Esther* in New York in 1976. Olga founded a Gurdjieff-based group in Montreal that was to develop into the Gurdjieff Foundation of Canada, and she oversaw groups at the New York Foundation.⁹⁵ She also prepared an abridged translation of *Our Life*, published in 1964, and published three new volumes of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music in 1970. Olga worked with professional pianists such as Elan Sicroff, Charles Ketcham, and Laurence Rosenthal, organising private concerts and recordings of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music for Foundation groups. For health reasons Olga later moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico, where she led another Gurdjieff-based group. In 1979 at the age of ninety-four, within days of sending the last of her husband’s papers

93 de Hartmann, *What For?*, unpublished diary, 257.

94 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 247; Daly and Daly, “On Thomas de Hartmann,” xxv; de Hartmann, *What For?*, unpublished diary, 253–256; Dybvig, “An Introduction to Thomas de Hartmann,” 14.

95 de Hartmann, *What For?*, unpublished diary, 261–262; Daly and Daly, “On Olga de Hartmann,” xxx.

to the Yale University Music Library,⁹⁶ Olga died of leukaemia. She left the copyright of de Hartmann's music to the Gurdjieff Foundation of Canada and the rest of her belongings, including de Hartmann's handwritten music notebooks and her diary, to her pupil Thomas C. Daly.⁹⁷

The Music of de Hartmann

As has been established, de Hartmann was a considerably successful and prolific composer in his lifetime and by his early twenties, according to musicologist John Mangan, was one of the best-known living composers in Russia.⁹⁸ He wrote ninety opus numbers including three operas, four symphonies, seven concerti, piano works, chamber music, and many songs on texts by Balmont, Pushkin, Verlaine, Joyce, Proust, Shelley, and Shakespeare. Esteemed performers and conductors have interpreted his music, including Leopold Stokowski, Sergei Koussevitsky, Eugene Bigot, Pablo Casals, Paul Tortelier, and Jean-Pierre Rampal. However, de Hartmann's music was largely forgotten soon after his death; sheet music and recordings became virtually impossible to obtain and even music publisher Belaieff, which de Hartmann himself directed in 1922, removed his compositions from their catalogue after 1960.⁹⁹

Pianist Elan Sicroff is one musician championing de Hartmann's music today. Sicroff was a pupil of highly influential French pianist Nadia Boulanger, and follower of J.G. Bennett, with whom he spent years at Sherborne House, a Victorian mansion in the Cotswolds countryside of Britain where Bennett founded The International Academy for Continuous Education.¹⁰⁰ After studying de Hartmann's own music and the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music with Olga de Hartmann, Sicroff has given close to one hundred concerts of this

96 Mangan, "Thomas de Hartmann: A Composer's Life," 28. These papers constitute thirty-one boxes, and include original manuscripts, published music, correspondence, concert programmes, reviews, photographs, passports, medical papers, and other materials. A register of the collection can be found online. See John Mangan, comp., *Yale University Library, Register to the Thomas de Hartmann Papers mss 46*, 1995, <http://drs.library.yale.edu:8083/HLTransformer/HLTransServlet?style=yul.ead2002.xhtml.xml&pid=music:mss.0046&query=&clear-stylesheet-cache=yes&hlon=yes&big=&adv=&filter=&hitPageStart=&sortFields=&view=all>. Retrieved 2 March 2010.

97 Daly, "Foreword," viii.

98 Mangan, "Thomas de Hartmann: A Composer's Life," 29.

99 van Dullemen, [Liner notes] *Music for Gurdjieff's 39 Series*, 38.

100 For more see Petsche, "A Gurdjieff Genealogy: Tracing the Manifold Ways the Gurdjieff Teaching has Travelled," 68.

music throughout Europe and America, and made a number of recordings. Both Sicroff and researcher Gert-Jan Blom are optimistic about the future of de Hartmann's music. They are currently working on the Thomas de Hartmann Project, an exciting recording venture that will include a representative selection of de Hartmann's piano, chamber, vocal, and orchestral works.¹⁰¹

At present there is very little information available on de Hartmann's music, as it is difficult to obtain in published or recorded forms. One can view some original manuscripts of his compositions at the Gilmore Music Library at Yale University (see above). What follows is a very brief sketch of his output and stylistic development.

De Hartmann's early music, written between 1899 and 1904, is reminiscent of nineteenth century Romanticism and Russian nationalism, and is comparable with the music of Arensky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Chopin, and Schumann.¹⁰² De Hartmann often employed tonal harmonies and sentimental melodies with moments of chromaticism, and utilised folk melodies and familiar forms like polkas, waltzes, and quadrilles, which he harmonised in different ways. From 1905 his music became more dissonant through the use of bitonality, atonal cluster chords, angular rhythms, and shifting meters, reflecting the music of Bartók and Scriabin. He also experimented at that time with modes, extreme chromaticism, pentatonicism, and ninth and eleventh chords. His most experimental period was in Munich between 1908 and 1914, but this music is either lost or unavailable except for some musical sketches from *Der Gelbe Klang* and a sound tape of de Hartmann working on it. In almost all his works composed after 1917 de Hartmann expressed a story, emotion, or spiritual message, often centred on a character or incident in a fairytale.

His mature works, composed after 1930, are diverse, ranging from diatonic pieces with uncomplicated rhythms, such as two of his "Trois Ballades" (1934) and most of his "Sonata for Violin and Piano" (1937), to highly virtuosic and heavily dissonant pieces such as his "Two Nocturnes" (1953). His post-1930 works have been described as reminiscent of the music of Prokofiev, Glazunov, Scriabin, and possibly Messiaen.¹⁰³ De Hartmann's artistic development mirrors that of Kandinsky, whose early paintings began as Romantic, representational, and soft in colour and form, and whose later works became distilled into angular shapes and sharp, dissonant colours. Surprisingly, there is barely any evidence of the sound of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music in de

101 Gert-Jan Blom, pers. comm. (5 March 2014).

102 Hear QR Code 2; <http://jeuj.eu/sixpiecesopus>

103 Dybvig, "An Introduction to Thomas de Hartmann," 18, 20–21.

Hartmann's own music. Pupil C.S. Nott made this point when he stated during his time with de Hartmann in France in the 1940s:

I stayed indoors during the day, listening to Hartmann composing his new opera *Esther*, or playing pieces that he had composed during the war. His music shows little trace of Gurdjieff's influence; in fact, it seemed as if he was making an effort to compose music that was entirely his own.¹⁰⁴

As de Hartmann's compositions were mostly forgotten soon after his death, one wonders to what extent de Hartmann's career was stunted by placing it aside at the height of success to follow Gurdjieff. De Hartmann's name lives on chiefly by virtue of his association with Gurdjieff, this book being an example. One might speculate about whether or not his legacy would have been greater had he continued on his path as a composer in 1916, never having met Gurdjieff.

104 C.S. Nott, *Further Teachings of Gurdjieff: Journey Through This World* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), 219.



ILLUSTRATION 1
*Gurdjieff observing movements
practice in the Dalcroze studio,
August, 1922*

PHOTO FROM THE COLLECTION OF GJ
BLOM, AMSTERDAM

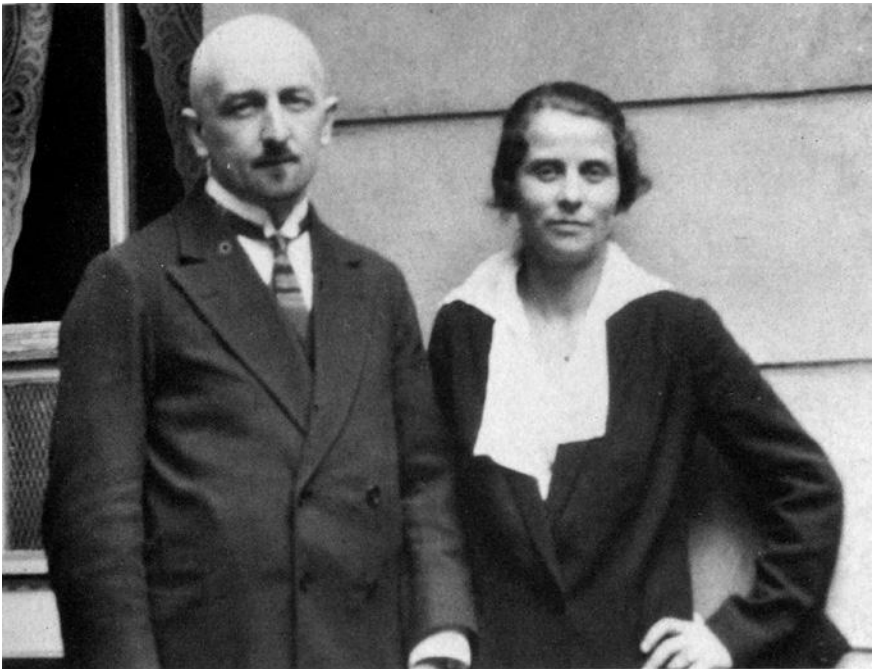


ILLUSTRATION 2 *Thomas and Olga de Hartmann, Berlin, 1920*

PHOTO FROM THE COLLECTION OF GJ BLOM, AMSTERDAM



ILLUSTRATION 3

Jeanne de Salzmänn

PHOTO FROM THE COLLECTION OF GJ BLOM,
AMSTERDAM



ILLUSTRATION 4

Alexandre de Salzmänn at the Prieuré

PHOTO FROM THE COLLECTION OF GJ BLOM,
AMSTERDAM



ILLUSTRATION 5

*Gurdjieff and his wife Julia Ostrowska,
Tiflis, 1919*

PHOTO FROM THE COLLECTION OF GJ BLOM,
AMSTERDAM

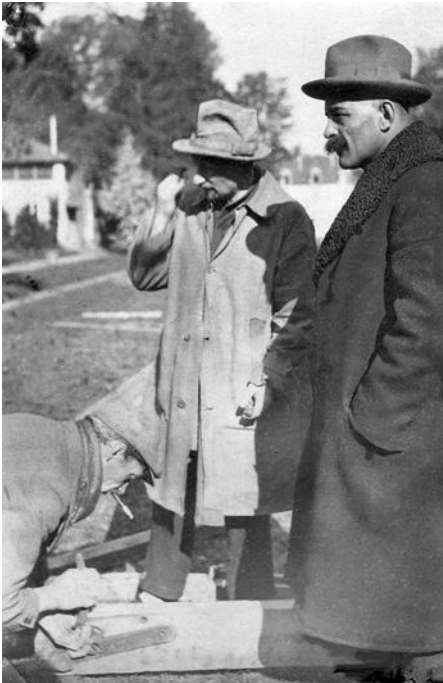


ILLUSTRATION 6

*Gurdjieff, Thomas de Hartmann, and
Alexandre de Salzmann (with cigarette
pipe) during the construction of the
Study House, late 1922*

PHOTO FROM THE COLLECTION OF GJ BLOM,
AMSTERDAM



ILLUSTRATION 7 *The salon at the Prieuré, where Gurdjieff and de Hartmann composed most of their piano music*
PHOTO FROM THE COLLECTION OF GJ BLOM, AMSTERDAM



ILLUSTRATION 8
Jeanne de Salzmann at the Prieuré
PHOTO FROM THE COLLECTION OF GJ BLOM,
AMSTERDAM



ILLUSTRATION 9
Gurdjieff's father, Giorgios Giorgiades
PHOTO FROM THE COLLECTION OF GJ
BLOM, AMSTERDAM



ILLUSTRATION 10 *Gurdjieff's harmonium*
PHOTO FROM THE COLLECTION OF GJ BLOM, AMSTERDAM

The Collaboration

Gurdjieff and de Hartmann, two men of utterly different characters, backgrounds, and musical abilities, together composed hundreds of piano pieces at the Prieuré, mostly between 1925 and 1927. The view that Gurdjieff was chiefly responsible for their music while de Hartmann was merely a conduit for Gurdjieff's musical ideas is commonplace among writings on the music. For example, Laurence Rosenthal states:

However elegantly and appropriately he [de Hartmann] harmonized and developed the melodies dictated to him by Gurdjieff, it is obvious that the essential musical impulse and the unique quality of feeling which the music evokes came from one man only. De Hartmann's draft of each composition was played to Gurdjieff and often extensively revised until Gurdjieff was satisfied that his intentions had been realized.¹

This idea was promulgated by the loyal de Hartmann himself. He modestly attributed all the piano music to Gurdjieff² and the title that de Hartmann, as editor, chose for the first publication of their music credits Gurdjieff alone: "The Works of G. Gurdjieff." However, Gurdjieff could only minimally read and notate music, and he composed nothing before or after his time with de Hartmann, which indicates that the composition of the piano music depended considerably on de Hartmann. Interestingly, Olga de Hartmann contended later in life that the music should be considered entirely de Hartmann's own,³ and journalist Carl Bechhofer Roberts, upon visiting the Tiflis Institute in 1919 to watch rehearsals of Gurdjieff's ballet *Struggle*, stated that "[Gurdjieff] himself could not play a note, and knew nothing of composition," though he continued, "but the academician [de Hartmann] who interpreted his ideas assured me that he had learned more of the theory of music from Gurdjieff than in any of the schools."⁴

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- 1 Laurence Rosenthal, "Gurdjieff and Music," in *Gurdjieff: Essays and Reflections on the Man and His Teaching*, eds Jacob Needleman and George Baker (New York: Continuum Publishing, 1996), 305.
 - 2 James Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth A Biography* (Shaftsbury, Dorset: Element, 1991), 350.
 - 3 Elan Sicroff, pers. comm. (11 July 2010).
 - 4 James Webb, *The Harmonious Circle: The Lives and Work of G.I. Gurdjieff, P.D. Ouspensky and Their Followers* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980), 178.

This chapter examines basic details of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music with focus on exactly how and when it was composed, how many pieces were composed altogether, and why composition was carried out in the presence of pupils. Other instances of collaborations in Western art music history will then be considered, particularly the collaboration between English composers Frederick Delius (1862–1934) and Eric Fenby (1906–1997). Delius and Fenby composed their music at almost exactly the same time as did Gurdjieff and de Hartmann, and in the same region of France. Interestingly, Fenby's accounts of the compositional process are remarkably similar to those of de Hartmann.

The Prolificacy of Composition

Estimates regarding the total number of pieces of Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music vary considerably between writers; Laurence Rosenthal, an editor of the Schott volumes, referred in an article to “two hundred or so musical compositions,”⁵ though later in conversation said that over 300 compositions were started, and about 161 or so were brought to completion.⁶ Another Schott editor, Charles Ketcham, estimated that the total number of pieces, including fragments of pieces, is about 225 or 250.⁷ Pianist/researcher Wim van Dullemen cited in the liner notes to one of his recordings 170 compositions and in other liner notes, 200,⁸ and researcher Gert-Jan Blom referred to “an astonishing 184 compositions for piano”⁹ but in a later publication cited 250 compositions.¹⁰

This uncertainty may stem from confusion over whether or not to include in the count drafts of pieces. (Original manuscripts are divided into draft and final manuscripts. The draft manuscripts represent the first sketches of the music, where de Hartmann roughly notated in pencil Gurdjieff's melodic and rhythmic dictations while adding harmonies almost simultaneously. The final manuscripts are pieces in their final form, neatly notated by de Hartmann in

5 Rosenthal, “Gurdjieff and Music,” 301.

6 Laurence Rosenthal, pers. comm. (22 July 2010).

7 Charles Ketcham, pers. comm. (19 July 2010).

8 Wim van Dullemen, [Liner notes] *Gurdjieff's Music for the Movements* (Holland: Channel Classics Records, 1999), 9; Wim van Dullemen, [Liner notes] *Music for Gurdjieff's 39 Series* (Holland: Channel Classics Records, 2001), 8.

9 Gert-Jan Blom, *Harmonic Development: The Complete Harmonium Recordings 1948–1949* (Netherlands: Basta Audio Visuals, 2004), 20.

10 Gert-Jan Blom, *Oriental Suite: The Complete Orchestral Music 1923–1924* (Netherlands: Basta Audio Visuals, 2006), 41.

black or blue ink. For more see Chapter 6). What is known is that Schott published 156 pieces of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music.¹¹ This is not counting six pieces from Gurdjieff's ballet *Struggle* and four pieces for Movements, which were strangely included in the Schott volumes (see Chapter 6 and Appendix B). In addition, at least sixty-seven completed pieces were omitted from the Schott edition. Thus the number of completed pieces composed was about 223, with sketches of more pieces existing in draft form.

In the original manuscripts almost all pieces bear dates of composition, and these dates indicate periods of daily musical output, often for weeks at a time. The most prolific period for composition was between January and May 1926. Schott published sixty-two pieces from this period (see Chapter 8 for an examination of the circumstances of this period and the possible reasons for this prolificacy). There were small gaps in the compositional process, often due to Gurdjieff's short trips away from the Prieuré. This is known from comments in original manuscripts and, in some cases, titles of pieces. On the original manuscript for "Hindu Melody" (Vol. 1, 88–89), composed on 22 February 1926, there is a comment, "the evening before the departure to Cannes," which explains the approximately three-week gap between this piece and the next.¹² Comments on original manuscripts of unpublished pieces, such as "the day of the arrival of G.I. from Dijon" (23 September 1926), "after the arrival from Marseilles" (5 March 1927), and "the arrival from Niece" (14 April 1927), all correspond with gaps in composition.¹³ This suggests that Gurdjieff was inclined to compose directly before or after trips away, indicating his dedication to the activity of composition.

The "Chronological Order of Compositions" placed at the end of the fourth Schott volume is a useful inventory.¹⁴ It can be viewed in Appendix D. As stated earlier, however, this does not represent all the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music as some pieces were omitted from the Schott volumes. If one were to rely solely on the "Chronological Order of Compositions," one would assume that there was a three-month gap in composition between June and September 1926.¹⁵ Such a gap could actually be explained as a consequence of the death of

11 Linda Daniel-Spitz, Charles Ketcham, and Laurence Rosenthal, "Chronological Order of Compositions," in *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann: Music for the Piano*, Vol. 4 (Mainz, Germany: Schott, 2005), 109–115.

12 See Daniel-Spitz et al., "Chronological Order of Compositions," 112.

13 Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (17 April 2011).

14 Daniel-Spitz et al., "Chronological Order of Compositions," 109–115.

15 Daniel-Spitz et al., "Chronological Order of Compositions," 113.

Gurdjieff's wife Julia Ostrowska on 26 June 1926. However, two pupils' accounts indicate that no break in composing occurred at this time. C.S. Nott wrote that in 1926, "Gurdjieff composed many new pieces this summer and autumn" and that almost every afternoon and evening de Hartmann played these in the salon on a "small pipe-organ."¹⁶ Similarly, Olga de Hartmann stated that after Ostrowska's death composition continued as before.¹⁷ Original manuscripts confirm that composition did continue in these months, but that these pieces were never developed to completion and thus were never published. There are approximately twenty-five drafts from this three-month period, with comments paying homage to Gurdjieff's wife, for example, "ninth day of Julia Osipovna" and "the consequence of the letter of the mother of Julia Osipovna."¹⁸ The "Chronological Order of Compositions," then, can only be employed as a rough guide to understanding Gurdjieff and de Hartmann's compositional activity and output.

Earliest and Latest Pieces

Gurdjieff and de Hartmann's first known piece, "Essentuki Prayer" (Vol. 4, 69),¹⁹ was composed in 1918 (the exact date is unknown), and de Hartmann indicates that as he played it, pupils hummed along.²⁰ The piece must originally have been memorised, as only later in the 1950s did de Hartmann notate it for piano. For these reasons, Thomas A.G. Daly suggests that "Essentuki Prayer" was intended as a choral piece.²¹ It is unknown whether de Hartmann played it as a piano solo during his time with Gurdjieff, and whether it really can be considered a piece of Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music. Pinpointing exactly when the first Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano piece was composed is complicated further by twelve other pieces dating from 1919 to July 1924, which may represent the earliest Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music, or may have been further pieces to accompany Movements.²² Schott published three pieces

16 C.S. Nott, *Teachings of Gurdjieff: A Pupil's Journal, An Account of Some Years With G.I. Gurdjieff and A.R. Orage in New York and at Fontainebleau-Avon* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), 106–107. De Hartmann sometimes played the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music on the organ. See Appendix C.

17 Thomas de Hartmann and Olga de Hartmann, *Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff*, eds Thomas C. Daly and Thomas A.G. Daly (London: Arkana Penguin Books, 1992 [1964]), 249.

18 Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (16 April 2011).

19 Hear QR Code 1; <http://jeuj.eu/essentukiprayer>

20 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 205.

21 Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (10 August 2012).

22 Schott published seventeen pieces dating from this early period, though at least four were for Movements and *Struggle*: "The Initiation of the Priestess" (Vol. 4, 72–79), "Fragment

dating from 1919 to c.1923, and nine dating from June and July 1924.²³ The former, as well as “Essentuki Prayer” of 1918 for that matter, do resemble in their sounds, meters, and forms the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music. Their shifting pulses and metres, for instance, are not typical of the music for Movements, where constant metres are more often employed to support repeating series’ of physical gestures.

The other nine pieces could pass as either Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music or music for Movements. Evidence suggesting that they were music for Movements is that they were composed shortly after Gurdjieff had returned to the Prieuré after his time in America promoting his Movements, and up until this time Gurdjieff and de Hartmann were composing for Movements. Further, three of these pieces have ‘Dance’ or ‘Movement’ in titles: “Dervish Dance” (Vol. 2, 108–109), “Tibetan Dance” (Vol. 4, 62), and “Tibetan Movement” (Vol. 4, 63). De Hartmann also stated in *Our Life*, “[t]he exercises he [Gurdjieff] showed in August 1924 were the last new Movements he ever gave at the Prieuré. Beginning in July 1925 he began to create another kind of music.”²⁴ This suggests that Gurdjieff was still working on Movements until August 1924, and original manuscripts confirm that Gurdjieff and de Hartmann were composing music for Movements that month. According to original manuscripts six pieces of music for Movements were composed between 13 August and 20 August, headed “New Series” as if Gurdjieff was looking ahead to a new period of Movements.²⁵ De Hartmann clearly states that Gurdjieff did not begin “another kind of music” (the piano music) until July 1925. (However, as discussed above, the earliest pieces dating from 1919 to c.1923 do resemble their piano music). Evidence suggesting that these nine pieces were *not* for Movements is their strong lyrical quality, which is more reminiscent of the piano music, and also the fact that two pieces include parts for *daff* or drum – “Tibetan Dance” (Vol. 4, 62) and “Trinity” (Vol. 4, 64–65) – which is typical of their piano music

No. 6” from *Struggle* (Vol. 4, 60), No. 32 (Vol. 3, 84–85), and “Women’s Prayer” (Vol. 3, 109). This leaves twelve pieces that may represent the earliest pieces of Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music. In addition, original manuscripts reveal a few more pieces composed in 1924, which remain unpublished, that might represent the piano music. As these early manuscripts are not ordered and dated as methodically as the later manuscripts, it is difficult to know exactly how many of these early pieces there are. Adding to the ambiguity, these pieces are interspersed with pieces of music for Movements. Thus more unidentified early pieces exist, though only the early pieces published by Schott will form the basis of this discussion.

23 Daniel-Spitz et al., “Chronological Order of Compositions,” 109.

24 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 245.

25 Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (17 April 2011).

but atypical of their music for Movements. There is also the fact that no Movements are known to relate to these pieces.

If some or all of these pieces represent Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music, then this has some bearing on arguments made in Chapters 2 and 8 about the significance of Gurdjieff's car accident on July 1924 to the composition of the piano music. The existence of early pieces of piano music, composed prior to the car accident, would mean that the accident was not a clear-cut juncture in Gurdjieff's teaching that caused him to undertake the completely new activity of composing piano music. Rather, the accident would have interrupted the composition of piano music that had already commenced. Regardless, what is certain, and what is argued in Chapter 8, is that the piano music began to be composed with great intensity and commitment from 29 July 1925, and that this occurred during a dramatic period of change spurred by Gurdjieff's car accident. A small quantity of piano music may have been composed prior to 29 July, but de Hartmann himself still regarded the music of 29 July as representing the beginnings of "another kind of music."²⁶

Although it is difficult to determine with certainty exactly when the composition of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music began, thankfully details regarding their final pieces are less complicated. Their two final completed pieces, No. 24 (Vol. 2, 76–77) and "Sayyid Chant and Dance" (Vol. 2, 122–123), date to 1 May 1927. Twenty drafts dating from May, June, and July 1927 indicate that composition continued in these months, though these pieces were never completed and thus never published. 1 May was a fortnight after Gurdjieff was obliged to relinquish his Paris apartment due to financial difficulties,²⁷ and this may have affected the process of composition if de Hartmann had decided at that time to return to his own music career to financially support Gurdjieff. De Hartmann's own projects in 1927 are unknown but he had taken on Gurdjieff's financial needs on other occasions.²⁸ However, Thomas A.G. Daly suggests that they stopped composing when the process became too methodical. As evidence he points to draft and final original manuscripts, which begin to correspond exactly with each other from 1927, possibly indicating that the process of composition had been perfected by this time. He argued that this would have been a reason for Gurdjieff to stop the process.²⁹

26 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 245.

27 Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 220. Gurdjieff's focus at this time was on the writing of *Tales*, and he was thus unable to support himself.

28 In 1924, when Gurdjieff was recovering from his car accident, and in early 1928, de Hartmann worked as a film composer to earn money for the Prieuré. See de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 238, 269.

29 Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (17 April 2011).

The Act of Composing

The piano music was usually composed in the evening in either the Prieur's salon or Study House. The salon was spacious, fitted with a fireplace and Pleyel grand piano, and the Study House was a large room crafted from an old wooden air force hangar, used for Movements practice and small Movements demonstrations. It was elaborately decorated with oriental rugs, carpets, and divans, and a Bechstein piano stood to the left of the stage.³⁰ De Hartmann recounts that when Gurdjieff "began to play" the piano, he would rush over with manuscript paper in preparation for Gurdjieff's dictations. Dictations were carried out in front of all pupils.³¹ Pianist Elan Sicroff and Schott editor Charles Ketcham give two interpretations of this. Sicroff suggests that this audience of pupils played an essential role in the birth of the piano music as Gurdjieff and de Hartmann aimed to harness the 'finer energies' of the audience, produced from the 'inner work' undergone throughout the day.³² Ketcham speculates that the role of the audience was to place a greater demand on the composers, and to bring concentration and attention to the process.³³

The practice of composing in front of pupils may indicate the influence of the *ashokh* tradition of Gurdjieff's father. Ethnomusicologist Yildiray Erdener, who spent a year observing over six hundred song duelling contests in *ashokh* Cobanoglu coffee houses in Kars, Turkey, argues that the meaning of an *ashokh's* songs emerges from the social interaction between the performers and audience. *Ashokhs* improvise poems sung to melodies or *makam* that are always chosen to suit each specific audience, and their skill lies in responding to, and interacting with, the audience.³⁴ Similarly, Sufi music theorist Hazrat Inayat Khan states that the goal of the Hindu musician is to "answer to the demand of the souls that are sitting there."³⁵ This was also the view taken by Kandinsky and proponents of the *Blau Reiter*, including de Hartmann, who

30 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 184–188, 193–195, 203–207, 245; Fritz Peters, *Boyhood with Gurdjieff and Gurdjieff Remembered* (London: Wildwood House, 1976), 58. See also J.G. Bennett, *Witness: The Story of a Search* (New Mexico: Bennett Books, 1997), 85; Nott, *Teachings*, 46.

31 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 245.

32 Elan Sicroff, pers. comm. (11 July 2010).

33 Charles Ketcham, pers. comm. (19 July 2010). For the significance of attention to Gurdjieff's teaching see Chapter 1.

34 Yildiray Erdener, *The Song Contests of Turkish Minstrels: Improvised Poetry Sung to Traditional Music* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1995), 34–35.

35 Hazrat Inayat Khan, *The Mysticism of Music, Sound and Word* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2004), 101.

promoted an intuitive, spontaneous artistic approach. Kandinsky believed that the ‘vibrations’ of the artist and audience could synchronise.³⁶ In line with these views, Gurdjieff may have aimed to respond to, and interact with, the atmosphere and audience of the day, allowing this to guide the direction of compositions. This is probable considering Gurdjieff’s emphasis on feeling and sensing in his teaching,³⁷ and his spontaneous approach to situations. However, this would suggest that the piano music could not represent a pure transmission of esoteric music Gurdjieff heard on his travels, as he implied (see Chapter 5).

The Process

In *Our Life* de Hartmann gives two illuminating accounts of their process of composition. The first account describes the process of composing the piano music and the challenges de Hartmann faced upon transcribing the Eastern music Gurdjieff dictated into Western music notation. It not only gives insight into de Hartmann’s role in the process, but also into his interpretation of the process in light of Gurdjieff’s teaching. The second account describes the composition of their music for Movements in a Movements class in Constantinople in 1920. The two pieces alluded to in this account can be identified as music for the Movements “Ho-Ya” and “The Great Prayer.”³⁸ This account reveals Gurdjieff’s role in the process, and the extent of his musical abilities. After analysing both accounts, the specific contributions of each man to the music will be considered, with reference to other collaborations in Western art music.

Account One:

I had a very difficult and trying time with this music. Mr Gurdjieff sometimes whistled or played on the piano with one finger a very complicated

36 Wassily Kandinsky, “On Stage Composition,” in *The Blaue Reiter Almanac*, New Documentary Edition, ed. Klaus Lankheit (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974), 190–191. See also A. Rüdinger, “Wassily Kandinsky,” in *History of Modern Painting*, Vol. 3, ed. Maurice Raynal (Geneva: Albert Skira, 1950), 96.

37 G.I. Gurdjieff, *Life is Real Only Then, When ‘I Am’* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1981), 113–114; P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous: The Teachings of G.I. Gurdjieff* (San Diego: Harcourt Inc., 1977 [1949]), 107.

38 Dorine Tolley, who is well acquainted with the music for Movements and possesses copies of the privately circulated sheet music, brought this to my attention; Dorine Tolley, pers. comm. (26 June 2012). I was able to confirm this by comparing de Hartmann’s accounts with the sheet music.

sort of melody – as are all Eastern melodies, although they seem at first to be monotonous. To grasp this melody, to transcribe it in European notation, required a *tour de force*...

It was not easy to notate. While listening to him play, I had to scribble down at feverish speed the tortuous shifts and turns of the melody, sometimes a repetition of just two notes. But in what rhythm? How to mark the accentuation? There was no hint of conventional Western metres and tuning. Here was some sort of rhythm of a different nature, other divisions of the flow of melody, which could not be interrupted or divided by bar-lines. And the harmony – the Eastern tonality on which the melody was constructed – could only gradually be guessed.

It is true that Mr Gurdjieff would repeat several sections, often – to vex me, I think – he would begin to repeat the melody before I had finished writing it, and usually with subtle differences and added embellishments, which drove me to despair. Of course, it must be remembered that this was not only a means of recording his music for posterity, but equally a personal exercise for me to ‘catch’ and ‘grasp’ the essential character, the very *noyau*, or kernel, of the music. And I might add this ‘catching the essence’ applied not only to music. For me it was a constant difficulty, a never-ending test.

When the melody was written, Mr Gurdjieff would tap on the lid of the piano a rhythm on which to build the accompaniment, which in the East would be played on some kind of percussion instrument. The entire melody, as given, would somehow have to blend with the background of this rhythm, but without ever being changed or adjusted to fit the accompaniment. And then I had to perform at once what had been given, improvising the harmony as I went.

When I began the work of harmonizing the melodies, I very soon came to understand that no free harmonization was possible. The genuine true character of the music is so typical, so ‘itself’, that any alterations would only destroy the absolutely individual inside of every melody.

Once Mr Gurdjieff said to me very sharply, ‘It must be done so that every idiot could play it’. But God saved me from taking these words literally and from harmonizing the music as pieces are done for everybody’s use. Here at last is one of the examples of his ability to ‘entangle’ people and to make them find the right way themselves by simultaneous work – in my case, notation of music and at the same time an exercise for catching and collecting everything that would be very easy to lose.³⁹

39 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 245–246.

De Hartmann's fascinating account indicates that he was to notate Gurdjieff's melodic dictations and build harmonies for these melodies based on Gurdjieff's instructions. According to de Hartmann, Gurdjieff whistled, played on the piano, and tapped on the lid of the piano, to relay the music, though J.G. Bennett states that Gurdjieff also hummed melodies to de Hartmann, and Fritz Peters recounts Gurdjieff playing harmonium to indicate his ideas.⁴⁰ The challenge for de Hartmann was in organising Gurdjieff's "Eastern melodies," with their "tortuous shifts and turns," into Western music notation, while also adding Western harmonies.⁴¹ Eastern melodies do not easily accommodate Western harmonies; they traditionally occur in monophonic musical settings, underpinned only by a drone of the tonic and sometimes fifth, or a rhythm on percussion. The unusual and erratic time signatures and irregular harmonic patterns and phrase structures that frequently occur in their music indicate the ways in which de Hartmann dealt with these irregular Eastern melodies. De Hartmann must have been proficient in his role in the process of composition, as original manuscripts reveal that melodies show very few alterations from draft to final versions of pieces.⁴² This indicates that de Hartmann remained faithful to Gurdjieff's dictations, refusing to alter his melodies and instead, building the rest of the music around them.

De Hartmann did not see his role in the process as purely practical, but also as intended to reinforce for him aspects of Gurdjieff's teaching. In Chapter 6 it will be demonstrated that de Hartmann's playing of the music can also be understood in this way. He described the process of composition as a "personal exercise" in "catching the essence" of the music, stating that this "applied not only to music."⁴³ Interestingly, this was a common concern for twentieth-century artists who assimilated folk material in their art. For instance, Bartók spoke of the importance of grasping the "spirit" of the folk music he employed.⁴⁴ Gurdjieff taught pupils to hone in on the essential, particularly

40 J.G. Bennett, *Witness: The Autobiography of J.G. Bennett* (London: Turnstone Books, 1975), 112; Peters, *Boyhood with Gurdjieff*, 73.

41 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 245.

42 Linda Daniel-Spitz, Charles Ketcham, and Laurence Rosenthal, "Preface," in *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann: Music for the Piano*, Vol. 1 (Mainz, Germany: Schott, 1996), 11. There is evidence that on at least one occasion de Hartmann modified Gurdjieff's counter-melody to conform to contrapuntal and harmonic requirements. See Linda Daniel-Spitz, Charles Ketcham, and Laurence Rosenthal, "Critical Notes," in *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann: Music for the Piano*, Vol. 1 (Mainz, Germany: Schott, 1996), 121.

43 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 246.

44 Barbara Nissman, *Bartok and the Piano: A Performer's View* (Lanham, Maryland and Oxford: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2002), 85.

when expressing themselves, and constantly reminded them of the flaws and limitations of language.⁴⁵ In fact, it is later argued in Chapter 8 that a reason why Gurdjieff turned to composing music was to convey truths or essence through a medium unencumbered by the linguistic elaborations (“word prostitution”)⁴⁶ that he believed had ruined written and spoken language. This might explain why in 1918 Gurdjieff introduced music to his teaching methods at the same time that he first taught pupils about the inherent lack of precision in language.⁴⁷

According to de Hartmann, Gurdjieff aimed to “vex” him by dictating the same melody in slightly different ways before de Hartmann had fully notated it, which “drove [him] to despair.”⁴⁸ This is consistent with Gurdjieff’s teaching, which aimed to create friction in pupils. Original draft manuscripts confirm the rushed nature of the process, as sometimes de Hartmann wrote in a kind of musical shorthand, noting rhythmic motifs on the page once only and, to indicate quavers or quick passages, marking dots where notes should be.⁴⁹ Another way in which the process may have been intended to reinforce Gurdjieff’s teaching was in challenging de Hartmann’s ego by placing him in this submissive and humbling position. Certainly de Hartmann would not have been familiar with such a position in the realm of music, in which he excelled.

In his account de Hartmann reports that Gurdjieff related musical ideas on piano “with one finger,” and similarly Nott states that Gurdjieff “would pick [the melody] out on the piano with one finger, supplementing the notes by whistling.”⁵⁰ These remarks suggest that Gurdjieff could not play the piano with two hands, and journalist Carl Bechhofer-Roberts even asserts that, in 1919, Gurdjieff “could not play a note.”⁵¹ In comparison, on a private recording de Hartmann stated that Gurdjieff could play their piece “Reading from a Sacred Book” (Vol. 3, 54–57).⁵² In the published version of this piece it requires

45 See G.I. Gurdjieff, *Meetings With Remarkable Men* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2002 [1963]), 10–11; G.I. Gurdjieff, *Views From the Real World* (London: Penguin Compass, 1984), 41–44, 60–68; Ouspensky, *Search*, 383; de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 40, 62.

46 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 8.

47 See de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 40, 43–44, 51–54.

48 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 246.

49 Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (16 April 2011).

50 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 245; Nott, *Teachings*, 62.

51 Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*, 178.

52 Transcription of a talk given by de Hartmann in the 1950s. This private recording was provided by Joseph Azize, who obtained it from an associate of the late Michel de Salzmann. The recording is circulated only within Foundation groups, and represents the

the coordination of a steadily played repeated note in the left hand and a rhythmically free melody in the right. This would demand some skill. However, original manuscripts revealed that this piece was initially written solely as a melody, with no left hand accompaniment. Only later in the 1950s did de Hartmann add an accompaniment.⁵³ De Hartmann does not specify on which instrument Gurdjieff played the piece, and it actually seems most plausible that he played it on his lap harmonium as there are no other references to Gurdjieff playing their music on piano, while evidence suggests that he did play some of it on the harmonium. In any event, recordings of Gurdjieff improvising on harmonium in 1948 and 1949 demonstrate that he could reasonably comfortably play simple melodies with his right hand, albeit at the end of his life (see Appendix C).⁵⁴

Account Two:

[Gurdjieff] gave me the tempo of the exercise and a melody he himself had written on paper, from which I was expected to improvise the music on the spot. But then he gave me also a separately written upper voice, which was meant to sound as if played on sonorous little bells. It was now impossible to play everything with two hands, so he told Madame de Salzmänn to play the lowest part and me the upper part. I struggled feverishly to get it all down on paper and we began to play...

Copying and editing the music of the dance was very interesting. Everything had to be done then and there, according to his instructions. The main melody was now in my left hand with the added voice above it. He told Madame de Salzmänn to double the main melody one sixth lower with her right hand, and play the rhythm with her left. It was amazing how the accompaniment, the little high voice, and the two main voices a sixth apart, blended together like parts of a single machine.

Soon after that Mr Gurdjieff brought me another piece of music paper, with an unusual combination of flats in the key signature – the notes of an Eastern scale. The melody, with a monotonous beat in the bass, was

full account of an excerpt included on de Hartmann's publically available Triangle Edition recording: Thomas de Hartmann, *The Music of Gurdjieff/de Hartmann* (New York: Triangle Editions, 1989).

53 Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (18 April 2011).

54 For more accounts of Gurdjieff playing piano see Dushka Howarth and Jessmin Howarth, *It's Up To Ourselves: A Mother, A Daughter, and Gurdjieff* (New York: Gurdjieff Heritage Society, 2009), 475; Carl Zigrosser, "Gurdjieff," in *Gurdjieff in the Public Eye: Newspaper Articles, Magazines and Books 1914–1949*, ed. Paul Beekman Taylor (Utrecht, Netherlands: Eureka Editions, 2010), 183–184.

music for another big dervish dance, for which he began to show the positions.⁵⁵

This account from 1920 reveals a number of details about Gurdjieff's role in the process of composition. It illustrates that, at least on occasion, Gurdjieff himself notated music. This is also indicated in the original draft manuscript for the piece "Hymn for Good Friday" (Vol. 3, 77), which was notated in a blocky, dark script that does not resemble de Hartmann's much neater, finer script. This draft appears as a small sheet of paper separated from the other drafts, and may well have been an addition by Gurdjieff himself.⁵⁶ De Hartmann's account also shows that Gurdjieff constructed an "upper voice," or counter-melody. It is known that Gurdjieff also constructed the counter-melody to their piece "Greek Melody" (Vol. 1, 94–95).⁵⁷ This means that Gurdjieff contributed more than just melodies and rhythms; counter-melodies can be considered a form of harmony in the music as they create counterpoint with the primary melody. There is another reference to Gurdjieff contributing to the harmony; it is indicated on the original final manuscript to "Sayyid Dance" (Vol. 2, 70–71) that Gurdjieff gave the accompaniment to the first eight bars.⁵⁸ As there are no other such references, these seem to be unique occurrences. At the end of his account de Hartmann describes a piece with an "unusual combination of flats in the key signature – the notes of an Eastern scale...with a monotonous beat in the bass."⁵⁹ This can be identified as the music to the Movement "The Great Prayer," which has an unconventional key signature that reads A flat, A natural, E natural and D flat.⁶⁰ This key signature indicates that Gurdjieff was not concerned with complying with the rules of Western music theory, which do not, in any case, easily accommodate Eastern-style music.

De Hartmann's account stresses that Gurdjieff was in control of all stages of the process of composition, and other firsthand accounts by Nott and Bennett confirm this. Nott states that when de Hartmann "fill[ed] in harmonies" Gurdjieff stood over him "until it was as he wished. He would give Hartmann no respite until he got it as it should be." Once de Hartmann even "found the

55 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 155–156.

56 Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (17 April 2011).

57 Daniel-Spitz et al., "Critical Notes," Vol. 1, 121. De Hartmann indicated this in the original final manuscript.

58 Linda Daniel-Spitz, Charles Ketcham, and Laurence Rosenthal, "Critical Notes," in *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann: Music for the Piano*, Vol. 2 (Mainz, Germany: Schott, 1996), 131.

59 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 155–156.

60 Dorine Tolley, pers. comm. (22 October 2010).

situation so impossible when Gurdjieff was going for him that he got up from the piano and left the Study House.”⁶¹ Bennett reports that if de Hartmann went wrong, “Gurdjieff would shout at him and Hartmann would shout furiously back.”⁶² These reports contradict James Webb’s theory that the music was “interpreted by Thomas de Hartmann from Gurdjieff’s skeletal indications of melody, rhythm and harmony” just as, Webb asserts, senior pupils were left to work out Gurdjieff’s intentions for Movements choreography after Gurdjieff gave the “bare bones of a Movement.”⁶³

To summarise, de Hartmann’s accounts suggest that the melodic and rhythmic elements of their music came entirely from Gurdjieff; Gurdjieff dictated these to de Hartmann, who was required to translate them precisely to the piano. He was then to add harmonies that would serve Gurdjieff’s melodic and rhythmic elements. De Hartmann maintains that Gurdjieff retained control of the different stages of composition. Gurdjieff’s recorded harmonium improvisations give further evidence to support this view. These improvisations, which can be described as long, slow stretches of music with meandering melody lines, are highly reminiscent of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann Hymns (see Appendix C). This points to Gurdjieff’s principal role in the composition of the Hymns. Nevertheless, de Hartmann was clearly indispensable to the process, bringing the music to fruition. Although his harmonies were built under Gurdjieff’s direction and were to serve the musical elements Gurdjieff had provided, they would have required considerable creativity on de Hartmann’s part and relied on his vast musical training, though in most of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music de Hartmann does cast aside his own distinctive compositional voice.

There are, however, some interesting exceptions to this, where one finds sweeping melodic flourishes, impressionistic cluster chords, and lyrical, even sentimental, melodies reminiscent of the music de Hartmann composed prior to his time with Gurdjieff. Examples are Gurdjieff and de Hartmann’s No. 20 (Vol. 2, 68–69), “Prayer and Despair” (Vol. 3, 58–62), “The Resurrection of Christ” (Vol. 3, 114–115), and the second half of the third hymn from “Hymns From a Great Temple” (Vol. 4, 30–31). Other pieces, such as “Greek Melody” (Vol. 1, 22), No. 39 (Vol. 1, 98–99), “Prayer of Gratitude” (Vol. 3, 66–67),⁶⁴ and “The Bokharian Dervish, Hadji Asvatz Troov” (Vol. 4, 80–83)⁶⁵

61 Nott, *Teachings*, 62.

62 Bennett, *Witness: The Autobiography of J.G. Bennett*, 114, 112.

63 Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*, 240.

64 Hear QR Code 3; <http://jeu.jeu.eu/prayerofgratitude>

65 Hear QR Code 4; <http://jeu.jeu.eu/bokhariandervish>

possess markedly Western sounding melodies and harmonies. De Hartmann's influence clearly dominates in these particular pieces, and one might even consider the possibility that he composed them, or parts of them, alone. Interestingly, "Prayer of Gratitude" was composed on 30 July 1924, only weeks after Gurdjieff's car accident. Its date of composition, then, further suggests that only de Hartmann composed it, though original manuscripts reveal that its title was later invented for the Schott edition of the music; on original manuscripts there is no title, only the comment, "The day of recovery."⁶⁶ This indicates that Gurdjieff began to regain his health that day and may then, on the other hand, have been capable of composing.

Collaborations in Western Art Music

In the history of Western art music, instances of composers working in collaboration with other composers are relatively rare. Seventeenth century French composer François-Adrien Boieldieu composed operas in collaboration with different composers, in one instance with eight; Daniel Auber, Désiré-Alexandre Batton, Henri Montan Berton, Giuseppe Marco Maria Felice Blangini, Michele Carafa, Luigi Cherubini, Ferdinand Hérold, and Ferdinando Paer. This was for his final opera, *La Marquise de Brinvilliers* (1831).⁶⁷ Eighteenth century French composers François Rebel and François Francoeur jointly collaborated on two books of violin sonatas, eleven operas, and a number of ballets, and in the nineteenth century Aleksandr Borodin, Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Franz Liszt, César Cui, and Anatoly Lyadov together composed "Paraphrases" (1879) a collection of piano compositions for four hands based on the theme from the joke-piece "Chopsticks." On the death of Gioacchino Rossini in 1868 Giuseppe Verdi suggested that thirteen composers collaborate on thirteen sections of a Requiem in his memory, but due to a clash of idioms and style the idea was dropped.⁶⁸ A notable collaboration of the twentieth century was between Arthur Honegger and Jacques Ibert, who together composed the opera *L'Aiglon* (1937) and operetta *Les petites Cardinal* (1937). However, all these collaborations involved different composers composing various parts of works independently, where later these parts were joined and integrated

66 Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (17 April 2011).

67 Elizabeth Forbes, "Francois-Adrien Boieldieu," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed. Stanley Sadie, Vol. 1 (London and New York: Macmillan Press, 1992), 524, 526.

68 Percy A. Scholes, *The Oxford Companion to Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 180, 201.

together. This was not the case with the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music, where de Hartmann acted as amanuensis.

The most comparable collaboration to that of Gurdjieff and de Hartmann is between English composers Frederick Delius (1862–1934) and Eric Fenby (1906–1997). Fenby served as amanuensis to Delius between 1928 and 1934, the last six years of Delius' life when he was blind and paralysed. Delius and Fenby collaborated on their music at almost exactly the same time Gurdjieff and de Hartmann did. What is more, both pairs composed in the same region of France; Delius and Fenby composed at Grez-sur-Loing, near Fontainebleau. As Delius and Fenby were both trained musicians, Delius was able to describe in technical musical terms what he wanted of Fenby in a way that Gurdjieff could not. Rather than receiving literal instructions, de Hartmann was to intuitively sense how to organise and harmonise the music by “catching the essence” through Gurdjieff’s tapping, whistling, humming, and playing. Interestingly, what closely bound Gurdjieff and de Hartmann caused tension between Delius and Fenby; Fenby was a devout Catholic and Delius an atheist. Fenby reports that Delius asserted:

Throw those great Christian blinkers away, and look around you and stand on your own feet and be a man...you'll never convince me that music will be any good until it gets rid of the Jesus element. It has paralysed music all along.⁶⁹

Fenby gives a concise account of their compositional process in his memoir *Delius*:

We began by my playing what already existed; then came the moment I dreaded most – the pause as I waited for what he might do! By now he had changed from the paralysed figure propped up beside me to an upright, excitable, gesticulating fighter as he felt himself deeper and deeper into the music with more and more frenzied intensity, calling out the notes, their values in time, the pitch, the phrase-lengths whilst I struggled at the keyboard to reproduce them and jot them down in manuscript. He always dictated with great rapidity and was peeved if his meaning was not grasped immediately. Verbal or musical repetition incensed him equally at this stage in his life.⁷⁰

69 Eric Fenby, *Delius as I Knew Him* (New York: Dover Publications, 1994), 179, 181.

70 Eric Fenby, *Delius* (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), 84. For more see Fenby, *Delius as I Knew Him*, 29–37, 131–155.

There are striking similarities between Fenby and de Hartmann's accounts; in both cases the 'dictator' had total authority, dictated rapidly, and demanded spontaneous work, while both amanuenses, who were highly trained and respected composers in their own right, struggled to keep up with the pace of the dictation, and worked faithfully and submissively.

Sources and Styles

Chapter 5 examines the styles and possible sources of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music. Gurdjieff promoted all of his music (music for Movements, piano music, and harmonium music), along with his Movements and teachings, as deriving from ancient, esoteric sources that he had accessed on his travels through Central Asia and the Middle East.¹ As previously discussed, Gurdjieff was not averse to fabrication or to mythologising details of his life and teaching. Associating his teaching and methods with ancient, esoteric sources gave them authority and guaranteed the attention of his target audience: those with Theosophical and esoteric leanings. Writing of his time in Tashkent, the Uzbek capital of Russian Turkistan, prior to his arrival in Moscow in 1913, Gurdjieff admits that his teachings particularly interested “people giving themselves up to various “woeful” ideas in these spheres of quasi-human knowledge...which today are called “occultism,” “theosophism,” “spiritualism,” etc.” He continues, “I directed all my capacities and attention to coming into contact with people belonging to one or other of these vast organizations... my reputation...became that of a great “maestro” in all that comprised

1 Pupils' accounts demonstrate that Gurdjieff explained the origins of his music in this way, and that pupils accepted these claims. See Thomas de Hartmann and Olga de Hartmann, *Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff*, eds Thomas C. Daly and Thomas A.G. Daly (London: Arkana Penguin Books, 1992), 44; P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous: The Teachings of G.I. Gurdjieff* (San Diego: Harcourt Inc., 1977 [1949]), 386; J.G. Bennett, *Gurdjieff: Making a New World* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 167; C.S. Nott, *Teachings of Gurdjieff: A Pupil's Journal, An Account of Some Years With G.I. Gurdjieff and A.R. Orage in New York and at Fontainebleau-Avon* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), 167; Gert-Jan Blom, *Harmonic Development: The Complete Harmonium Recordings 1948–1949* (Netherlands: Basta Audio Visuals, 2004), 28, 59, 63. For statements on the sources of his Movements see G.I. Gurdjieff, “The Material Question,” in *Meetings With Remarkable Men* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2002), 291; Gert-Jan Blom, *Oriental Suite: The Complete Orchestral Music 1923–1924* (Netherlands: Basta Audio Visuals, 2006), 178; Paul Beekman Taylor, ed., *Gurdjieff in the Public Eye: Newspaper Articles, Magazines and Books 1914–1949* (Utrecht, Netherlands: Eureka Editions, 2010), 149–150. For Gurdjieff's comments on the sources of his teaching see Gurdjieff, “The Material Question,” 291; G.I. Gurdjieff, *The Herald of Coming Good* (Edmonds, Washington: Sure Fire Press, 1988), 20–24; G.I. Gurdjieff, *Life is Real Only Then, When 'I Am'* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1981), 28.

supernatural knowledge.”² By also indicating that his teaching and methods derived from Eastern sources, Gurdjieff tapped into the strong Western preoccupation with the exotic East at this time. Indeed pupil Margaret Anderson states that Gurdjieff initially struck her as,

[a] dark man with an oriental face...we immediately recognized Gurdjieff as the kind of man we had never seen – a seer, a prophet, a messiah?... the knowledge he had to offer was that which, in occult books and in the schools of the East, is given through allegory, dialogue, parable, oracles, scripture, or direct esoteric teaching...We looked upon this man...as a man who could clarify for us a world we had hoped to fathom - the world which the natural scientists had revealed but not interpreted.³

Similarly, in recollecting his first meeting with Gurdjieff Ouspensky describes him as “a man of an oriental type, no longer young, with a black mustache and piercing eyes, who astonished me first of all because he seemed to be disguised and completely out of keeping with the place and its atmosphere. I was still full of impressions of the East.”⁴

Gurdjieff’s claims of the origins of his music will be assessed and argued to be unlikely for a number of reasons. An examination of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music will then follow, with the aim of shedding light on its possible sources and influences. Adopting Laurence Rosenthal’s model in “Gurdjieff and Music,”⁵ the piano music will be examined within three broad

2 Gurdjieff, *Herald*, 21–22. When formulating his teachings in Moscow and St Petersburg from 1913 to 1916 Gurdjieff must have looked to Theosophical circles for pupils. At this time Theosophy was flourishing in Russia, particularly in these cities which were major centres for the occult revival. Indeed some of Gurdjieff’s closest pupils had ties to Theosophy, such as the de Hartmanns, P.D. Ouspensky, A.R. Orage, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Olgivanna Lloyd Wright (née Hinzenberg). For more see Johanna Petsche, “Gurdjieff and Blavatsky: Western Esoteric Teachers in Parallel,” *Literature & Aesthetics*, Vol. 21, No. 1, 2011, 98–115. Here it is argued that Gurdjieff capitalised on the popularity of Theosophy by donning a Blavatsky-like image and using recognisable Theosophical terminology in order to attract followers in Russia. In this way he could define himself in a way that was not just acceptable, but highly attractive, to his target audience; those familiar with, and ultimately disillusioned by, Theosophy.

3 Margaret Anderson, *The Unknowable Gurdjieff* (London: Arkana, 1962), 77–78.

4 Ouspensky, *Search*, 7.

5 Laurence Rosenthal, “Gurdjieff and Music,” in *Gurdjieff: Essays and Reflections on the Man and His Teaching*, eds Jacob Needleman and George Baker (New York: Continuum Publishing, 1996), 308–309.

categories: Asian and Eastern Folk Music, Sayyid and Dervish Music, and Hymns.

Purported Esoteric Origins

Gurdjieff promoted all of his music as deriving from esoteric sources that he had accessed on his extensive travels. As early as 1914, a year after he arrived in Moscow, Gurdjieff stated his intention to use in his ballet *Struggle* “fragments of the music I heard in certain temples” and in 1948 and 1949, the last two years of his life, Gurdjieff claimed that the music he was then playing on harmonium was two or three thousand year old “sacred music...temple music – very ancient,” and that some of the music came from a monastery where Jesus Christ spent time from his eighteenth to thirtieth years.⁶ This last comment may relate to Gurdjieff’s reference in *Meetings* to an Essene monastery where he claims that Jesus received his first initiation in the Brotherhood of the Essenes. He also stated that during his travels he made contact with the Essenes, who demonstrated how the playing of ancient Hebraic music could affect living organisms.⁷ Thus from 1914 to 1949 Gurdjieff maintained that he had accessed and remembered sacred music from his travels.

In an advertisement for Gurdjieff’s American Movements demonstrations of 1924 he explained his music for Movements in this way: it had apparently “come down to our time from the earliest antiquity, through inscriptions on monuments as well as through their performance in certain temples down to the present day.”⁸ An article in the *Boston Post* of that year also quotes Gurdjieff stating that for the purpose of training his pupils’ minds, emotions, and motions, “I brought out of the Orient, Russia, Afghanistan, Turkistan, India, Tibet, Africa and other lands 4000 dances, an equal number of musical compositions and a store of Eastern knowledge, which have never been seen in America.”⁹

6 G.I. Gurdjieff, “Glimpses of the Truth,” in *Views From the Real World* (London: Penguin Compass, 1984), 35; Gert-Jan Blom, *Harmonic Development: The Complete Harmonium Recordings 1948–1949* (Netherlands: Basta Audio Visuals, 2004), 28, 63.

7 See Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 58, 133. For an examination of the theory that Jesus was an Essene, see Olav Hammer and Jan A.M. Snoek, “Essenes, Esoteric Legends About,” in *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*, Vol. 1, eds Wouter J. Hanegraaff, Antoine Faivre, Roelof van den Broek, and Jean-Pierre Brach (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 340–343. Hammer and Snoek show that this motif was also explored in the work of Blavatsky and Steiner, and has infiltrated the New Age movement.

8 Blom, *Oriental Suite*, 178.

9 Beekman Taylor, *Gurdjieff in the Public Eye*, 149–150.

Pupils report that Gurdjieff explained the origins of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music in this way and that they believed these claims. De Hartmann states unequivocally that the piano music came from “remote temples during [Gurdjieff’s] Asian travels” and that “[a]t the time he could not note down these numerous melodies on paper, but kept them in his memory.”¹⁰ J.G. Bennett asserts that some of the piano music was “based on recollections of the sacred music and dancing of various dervish orders” in Central Asia.¹¹ Scholarly-oriented insiders writing on the music, such as John Allen Watts and the Schott editors in their prefaces to the Schott volumes, also appear to accept Gurdjieff’s claims about the origins of his music as fact.¹²

To be clear, Gurdjieff claimed that the basis of all his music was music he had remembered from his travels, which were made up to thirty years prior to composing his music for Movements and piano music, and up to sixty years prior to playing his harmonium music.¹³ Placing aside the fact that Gurdjieff’s tales of travel are largely unsubstantiated, as discussed in Chapter 2, on a practical level it is unlikely that Gurdjieff could have remembered much of the music of his travels, despite his father’s apparently exceptional memory that he may well have inherited, or that his father may have cultivated in him.¹⁴ There is no reference to Gurdjieff transcribing music during his travels, and in any case his music-writing abilities were modest as shown in Chapter 4. He does state in *Meetings* that during his travels he recorded on an Edison

10 Thomas de Hartmann and Olga de Hartmann, *Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff*, eds Thomas C. Daly and Thomas A.G. Daly (London: Arkana Penguin Books, 1992 [1964]), 247, 44.

11 J.G. Bennett, *Gurdjieff: Making a New World* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 167.

12 John Allen Watts, “Introduction to the Gurdjieff-de Hartmann Piano Music,” in *G.I. Gurdjieff: Armenian Roots, Global Branches*, ed. Michael Pittman (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 34; Linda Daniel-Spitz, Charles Ketcham, and Laurence Rosenthal, “Preface,” in *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann: Music for the Piano*, Vol. 1 (Mainz, Germany: Schott, 1996), 10. Rosenthal, “Gurdjieff and Music,” 309, is more careful in his own writings, stating that the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann Hymns “are said to echo” the music Gurdjieff heard on his travels. Wim van Dullemen also accepts these claims; see Wim van Dullemen, “A Fire in Siberia: The Music of Gurdjieff and de Hartmann,” *Bres Magazine*, April/May, No. 171, 1995, 68.

13 James Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth A Biography* (Shaftsbury, Dorset: Element, 1991), 31, 321–323, suggests that he travelled between 1887 and 1907.

14 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 32–35. Gurdjieff clearly valued the skill of memorisation as he assigned memorisation exercises to pupils; see Mary C. Bell, “Some Memories of the Prieuré,” in *Oriental Suite*, comp. Gert-Jan Blom (Netherlands: Basta Audio Visuals, 2006), 51–53; Paul Beekman Taylor, *G.I. Gurdjieff: A New Life* (Utrecht, Netherlands: Eureka Editions, 2008), 97.

phonograph the local music of a Tekin street musician,¹⁵ but no other references to such recordings are reported. He also admitted in *Views* that while observing Movements on his travels he had no time to listen to the accompanying music, which contradicts his claims about the origins of his own music. However, he alleged that upon returning from his travels he played music (presumably on guitar or harmonium) to accompany the Movements he had observed and remembered, and later found that the music he added was identical to the original music, “for the man who wrote it wrote mathematically.”¹⁶

The most significant evidence contradicting Gurdjieff’s claims about the origins of his music is that some pieces reflect Western musical forms, such as the music to his “Obligatories,” which are six preparatory Movements. In an introductory talk given at his Paris Movements demonstrations it was stated that the “Obligatories” originated from the Temple of Medicine at Sari in Tibet and the artificial caves of Kidjera in Kafiristan, and this implies the same or related sources for the accompanying music to these Movements. Yet the music to his second, fifth, and sixth “Obligatories” are particularly Western sounding, with the music to the sixth “Obligatory” composed in the style of a Polish mazurka.¹⁷ In fact, according to de Hartmann, Gurdjieff admitted to having taken waltzes and mazurkas from a study book for guitar (waltzes and mazurkas indicate Western sources), and that these were later used to accompany his Movements.¹⁸

Gurdjieff music researcher Gert-Jan Blom questions whether Gurdjieff’s claims for his music were simply meant as a joke, or to test the naivety of his audience, or whether he believed that he really could fool them.¹⁹ Accounts by pupils Bennett and Tchekovitch certainly confirm that Gurdjieff had the capacity to fabricate facts with ease and spontaneity, and that he could get away with it.²⁰ Gurdjieff is also known to have directly said to a young pupil “[n]ever

15 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 253–254.

16 Gurdjieff, *Views*, 186.

17 Blom, *Oriental Suite*, 186.

18 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 44.

19 Gert-Jan Blom, pers. comm. (22 April 2010).

20 Bennett explained that when Gurdjieff’s pupils were in danger from the conflict between the Cossacks and Bolsheviks in 1917, Gurdjieff managed to organise transport from the Provincial Government by spreading a rumour that he knew of rich deposits of gold and platinum in the Caucasus mountains which would fill the Government’s coffers. Bennett deduced, “In all this, he was demonstrating to his pupils the power of suggestion and the ease with which people could be made to ‘believe any old tale’”; see Bennett, *Making a*

believe anything you hear me say. Learn to discriminate between what must be taken literally and what metaphorically.”²¹

Even in regard to pieces of music for Movements and piano music that *are* reminiscent of Asian and Middle Eastern music (and these pieces do form the majority of the oeuvre), it seems impossible that Gurdjieff and de Hartmann could precisely capture music Gurdjieff had remembered due to the spontaneous, swift, and somewhat improvisatory nature of the compositional process. This process, examined in Chapter 4, does not support the idea that Gurdjieff was directly recounting music he had remembered, or that he wished to reproduce it exactly. In any case, Gurdjieff’s dictations were immediately assimilated through de Hartmann’s musical influence into Western harmonic language and for a Western musical instrument, which would have distorted any original music. The nature of Gurdjieff’s harmonium music, which can be heard on recordings he made in 1948 and 1949, also counter his claims, which extended to his harmonium music.²² These recordings give every indication that this music was primarily improvised. That is, Gurdjieff’s harmonium music was invented freely bar by bar, rather than representing music remembered from his travels.

Although it is unlikely that Gurdjieff’s music represents literal reproductions of music heard on his travels, if the music is left unanalysed and simply heard alongside such an explanation of its origins, one could imagine sympathetic listeners easily believing it. After all, Gurdjieff’s pupils were not ethnomusicologists, and some were not particularly musical at all. Further, this music must have sounded entirely new to his mostly European and American pupils. With this in mind, one could hypothesise an altruistic motive behind Gurdjieff’s claims for his music. By explaining its origins in the way he did, Gurdjieff gave his music an authority and power that might have made pupils all the more responsive to it. In light of his teachings there is a reason

New World, 121–122. Pupil Tcheslaw Tchekovitch gives a similar account, stating that Gurdjieff once gave pupils carpets to sell at a bazaar, and when they failed to sell them on the grounds that the price was too high Gurdjieff maintained that the prices were, in fact, impossibly low because “[t]hese are the carpets that the Shah of Persia offered to the Grand Duke Alexander on the occasion of a state visit to Russia, when the Shah was invited by the Grand Duke to a hunting party on the estate.” Pupils then began selling them at twice the price; see Joseph Azize, “Gurdjieff’s Sacred Dances and Movements,” in *Handbook of New Religions and Cultural Production*, eds Carole M. Cusack and Alex Norman (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 305.

21 Nott, *Teachings*, 75.

22 Blom, *Harmonic Development*, 28, 63.

why Gurdjieff may have wished for this; he may genuinely have intended his music to benefit pupils spiritually by evoking a sense of the timeless and the 'essence' of the East, which contemporary Western society had, in his opinion, altogether lost. This will be further discussed at the end of the chapter.

Gurdjieff's assertions about the origins of his music, teaching, and Movements hinge on a romantic perception of the East and ancient cultures, as well as the notion, key to esotericism, that hidden sources of esoteric knowledge still exist. The latter notion gained prominence in public culture in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with the rise of Theosophy. H.P. Blavatsky professed to access esoteric sources through trance and mediumship but also, like Gurdjieff, by travelling to the East, where it was believed that one could find relics of a purity and authenticity lost in the West. For literary critic Susan Stewart, 'authenticity' becomes an issue "in situations where there is a self-conscious perception of mediation; a sense of distance between one era and another, one worldview and another; a sense of historical periodization, transformation, and even rupture."²³ Gurdjieff, like the Theosophists, clearly perceived a rupture between the East, considered to be natural and authentic, and the more artificial modern West. By claiming to access esoteric Eastern sources, Gurdjieff could be seen to possess the key to restoring this disconnect.

Gurdjieff's romanticising of the East was not unique, nor was his glamorising of traditional, indigenous music. Music collectors from as early as the turn of the seventeenth century established the view that traditional music of indigenous communities was to be revered; it represented precious cultural artefacts created through an entirely organic process of oral transmission. This notion, which became commonplace among folklorists and ethnomusicologists, was opposed to the earlier view that oral tradition corrupted a single, original text. Musicologist Matthew Gelbart argues that in the West, indigenous music began to be understood as a kind of exotic Other, and then came to represent an authentic collective purity that had evolved over time, and that could contribute to the creation of a more organic, universal 'art music'. This is why modern composers sought to synthesise and absorb folk sounds into their music; they believed that this made their music more valuable or universal. Gelbart believes that these notions stem from European ideas of folklore established in the Enlightenment, when the 'noble savage' was sought within Europe as a remnant of the rural past preserved within modern Western civilisation.²⁴

23 Matthew Gelbart, *The Invention of "Folk Music" and "Art Music": Emerging Categories from Ossian to Wagner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 162.

24 Gelbart, *The Invention of "Folk Music" and "Art Music,"* 10–11, 162, 221, 226.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau's influential concept of the noble savage glorified the strength of the homogeneity of oral culture, the simple yet cohesive worldview of peasant communities, and their unanalytic spontaneity. Rousseau maintained that this spontaneity derived from an attitude to the world characterised by an absorbed and uncritical participation where the contradictions between history and legend, and experience and imagination, are not experienced as problems.²⁵

Three Categories of Gurdjieff/de Hartmann Piano Music

In line with Laurence Rosenthal's model the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music will be considered within three broad categories. I have named these categories Asian and Eastern Folk Music, Sayyid and Dervish Music, and Hymns, as these names comply with Gurdjieff's own titles of pieces, and with the subsequent categorising of pieces into volumes for the Janus and Schott editions of the sheet music, discussed in Chapter 6. The names of these categories, then, bring continuity and lucidity to discussions of the music, though they are less than ideal. The terms 'Eastern' and 'folk music' are rather vague Western constructions, while the terms *Sayyid* and 'hymn' are, in point of fact inaccurate, as will soon be made clear. Nevertheless, these categories are useful for casting light on the possible sources of the piano music, and for later considering the different roles that this music may have been intended to play.

Throughout the following analysis pieces will be linked with the Schott volumes and corresponding Wergo recordings (for examinations of these see Chapter 6). Before continuing, it should be noted that the first three Schott volumes are categorised according to style as opposed to the fourth Schott volume, which is a composite volume that contains small selections of different styles of pieces that were singled out for various reasons. However, at times, pieces seem misplaced in the volumes. For example, No. 9 (Vol. 1, 37) is composed in the style of the Hymns but is placed in the first volume, *Asian Songs and Rhythms*, rather than the third volume, *Hymns, Prayers and Rituals*. Similarly, "Reading from a Sacred Book" (Vol. 3, 54–57) and "Chant from a Holy Book" (Vol. 3, 110–111) are composed in the style of the Sayyid pieces and would be expected to appear in the second volume, *Music of the Sayyids and the Dervishes*, but were placed in the third volume, *Hymns, Prayers and Rituals*. In

25 Jack Goody and Ian Watt, "The Consequences of Literacy," in *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, ed. Jack Goody (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 61.

these cases the Schott editors followed de Hartmann's Janus volumes, published in the 1950s, where pieces are for unknown reasons not always grouped in strict accordance with style.

Asian and Eastern Folk Music

Gurdjieff and de Hartmann's Asian and Eastern Folk Music can primarily be found in the first Schott volume entitled *Asian Songs and Rhythms*, and on the corresponding Wergo recording.²⁶ It should first be noted that the term 'folk music' is problematic, being a notion developed in the Romantic period that only gains meaning through its dialectical relation to another Romantic notion, 'art music'. Both terms portray themselves as timeless categories and signal the Romantic fixation on origins and originality in art. Matthew Gelbart argues that from the eighteenth century the term 'folk music' was manipulated and bowdlerised by bourgeois intellectuals to conform to their ideas of 'the folk', while 'art music' quickly established itself as the 'highest' form of musical culture.²⁷ For present purposes, however, 'folk music' will simply be defined as an orally transmitted music that arises and evolves organically from within indigenous communities, from the communal singing of songs.²⁸

The Asian and Eastern Folk Music pieces of Gurdjieff and de Hartmann are mainly short and uncomplicated, and feature lyrical melodies. They are largely modal and rarely modulate, though some pieces are in major keys, which is uncharacteristic of their music as a whole. Some pieces include a part for *daff* or Middle Eastern drum, which may indicate Gurdjieff's wish to bring a more 'authentic' sound to the music. *Daff* lines are included in sixteen pieces of the first Schott volume, thirteen of the second Schott volume, two of the third, and three of the fourth. *Daff* parts usually consist of short rhythmic motifs that are to be repeated against piano parts. It is indicated in the music that notes with stems up are to be played with the fingers on the head of the drum, and notes with stems down are to be played with the palm on the rim.²⁹ Although

26 G.I. Gurdjieff and Thomas de Hartmann, *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann: Music for the Piano*, Vol. 1, eds Linda Daniel-Spitz, Charles Ketcham, and Laurence Rosenthal (Mainz, Germany: Schott, 1996); Laurence Rosenthal, Charles Ketcham, and Linda Daniel-Spitz, *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann: Music for the Piano*, Vol. 1 (Sandhausen, Germany: Wergo, 1998).

27 Gelbart, *The Invention of "Folk Music" and "Art Music,"* 5–7, 209.

28 Percy A. Scholes, *The Oxford Companion to Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 366.

29 Linda Daniel-Spitz, Charles Ketcham, and Laurence Rosenthal, *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann: Music for the Piano*, Vol. 2 (Mainz, Germany: Schott, 1996), 43.

in recordings of these pieces *daff* parts are usually omitted, some Gurdjieff Foundation groups include the *daff* during in-house performances and musical exercises.³⁰ Some of my interviewees stated that they were surprised that pianists do not include *daff* parts on recordings of these pieces since the *daff* dramatically changes the sound of the music, while other interviewees said that they found the sound of the piano and *daff* together uninspiring.

The pieces with *daff* lines seem to indicate that *daff* players are required to maintain a short rhythmic motif against counter-rhythms and time signature changes in the piano part. This would result in piano and *daff* parts falling out of sync with each other. Take for example the first bars of “Allegretto” (Vol. 1, 65) as given below, as well as the pieces “Oriental Melody” (Vol. 1, 80–81), “Persian Dervish” (Vol. 2, 34–35), “Dervish Dance” (Vol. 2, 60–61), No. 18 (Vol. 2, 62–64), No. 20 (Vol. 2, 68–69), and No. 24 (Vol. 2, 76–77). These pieces could be considered deliberate exercises in attention, effort, and coordination for the musicians, just as Movements like “Polyrhythms” and “Circles” test one’s attention by requiring the simultaneous coordination of different rhythms in different limbs. However, one interviewee suggested, on the contrary, that Gurdjieff did not intend to create these polyrhythms in the music (a polyrhythm occurs

Allegretto comodo ♩ = 132 11. II. 1926

The image shows a musical score for 'Allegretto comodo' by Gurdjieff. It consists of three systems of music. The first system shows the piano part in 7/4 time, starting with a piano (*p*) and expressive (*espressivo*) marking. The second system shows the piano part changing to 6/4 time at measure 21, and the *daff* part in 7/4 time. The *daff* part is marked *pp* and *simile*. The third system shows the piano part changing to 3/4 time, with a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand.

Note the time change from 7/4 to 6/4, “Allegretto” (Vol. 1, 65).

LINDA DANIEL-SPITZ, CHARLES KETCHAM, AND LAURENCE ROSENTHAL. GURDJIEFF/DE HARTMANN: MUSIC FOR THE PIANO, VOL. 1. MAINZ, GERMANY: SCHOTT, 1996.

³⁰ Joseph Azize, pers. comm. (10 July 2009).

when two or more different rhythms are played simultaneously). This interviewee, a pianist, had performed with a *daff* player ten pieces of Gurdjieff and de Hartmann's Sayyid and Dervish Music, and argues that *daff* rhythms were not meant to continue exactly as written for the duration of pieces. Instead, the *daff* player should be flexible and ornament the line in accordance with the Middle Eastern tradition of drum playing.

According to Gurdjieff's titles, pieces represent Greek, Kurdish, Armenian, Tibetan, and Arabian music, among other types. Titles read, "Kurd Shepherd's Dance," "Greek Round Dance," "Tibetan Dance," "Afghan Melody," and so on.³¹ However, one need not be an ethnomusicologist to detect the fact that many of these pieces do not resemble in any meaningful way the music of the different traditions purported to represent their origins. In a stand-alone analysis, researcher Gert-Jan Blom compared the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piece "Kurd Melody for Two Flutes" with a field recording of traditional flute music by Kurdish shepherds, arguing that the structure, mode, and rhythm was identical in each. Unfortunately he does not reference the recording and, in any case, only put one Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piece to the test.³² A comment on an original manuscript indicates Gurdjieff's uncertainty regarding the origins of one piece: "This music I heard in a place, an eastern country, at the same time I heard in Russia a similar popular song, obviously there is some connection, somebody brought it to Russia."³³ An ethnomusicological study of the music is necessary for a definitive statement on the relationship between these pieces and their titles professing their country of origin or inspiration.

If these pieces did not originate from music Gurdjieff heard on his travels they may have been inspired by the patchwork of musical influences to which Gurdjieff was exposed in his childhood. Indeed in the original draft manuscript of one piece entitled "Adash," there is the comment written by de Hartmann, "This was inspired by what his father sang, his father could sing harmonics like the 8th stop on the harmonium."³⁴ Also, Gurdjieff lived in Constantinople and Tiflis from 1919 to 1921 while developing his Institute, and it is known that he attended Mevlevi dervish ceremonies (which are accompanied by music) and a concert of Turkish music.³⁵ However it is Armenia,

31 Linda Daniel-Spitz, Charles Ketcham, and Laurence Rosenthal, "Chronological Order of Compositions," in *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann: Music for the Piano*, Vol. 4 (Mainz, Germany: Schott, 2005), 109–114. Hear QR Code 5; <http://jeuj.eu/kurdshepherdsdance>

32 Blom, *Oriental Suite*, 42.

33 Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (16 April 2011).

34 Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (16 April 2011).

35 Ouspensky, *Search*, 382–383; de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 157–158.

Gurdjieff's native country, which is a particularly likely source for Gurdjieff and de Hartmann's Asian and Eastern Folk Music. An early style of Armenian music that Gurdjieff might have favoured is that of the *tagh*. *Taghs* were composed by generations of poet-musicians, and are known for their expansive forms and virtuosic, free, and ornamented melodic lines. Gurdjieff was interested to acquaint de Hartmann with Armenian music, instructing him to give concerts in Armenia in 1919 and introducing him to the music of contemporary Armenian composer Komitas. De Hartmann interpreted this as an attempt at priming him for the composition of their piano music that followed six years later.³⁶

Gurdjieff may well have felt an affinity for Komitas Vardapet (1869–1935), born Soghomon Soghomonian, an Armenian priest, singer, ethnomusicologist, and composer. Komitas collected approximately four thousand pieces of Armenian, Turkish, and Kurdish folk music, notating them in Armenian neumes. He also deciphered the *khaz* system of notation, which occurs in Armenian music manuscripts until the eighteenth century. Komitas was among the first group of Armenian intellectuals to be arrested and exiled by the Turks at the outbreak of the First World War. They destroyed thousands of his transcriptions and compositions. When Komitas returned from exile he became mentally afflicted by the Armenian genocide, spending his last fifteen years in hospital in Paris.³⁷ There is no evidence that Gurdjieff and Komitas met, though a meeting has been speculated. According to record producer Steve Lake, "some sources have claimed that Gurdjieff studied with Komitas in Paris, and that Komitas' music is thus a primary source for the mystic philosopher's 'Sacred Hymns.'"³⁸ However Lake gives no details of these sources. David Kherdian, who was a student of Gurdjieff's pupil Annie Lou Staveley at her Gurdjieff-centred community in Oregon, states that an obituary on J.G. Bennett in a New Age journal mentioned Gurdjieff having known and probably studied with Komitas. When he personally asked de Salzman about it she told him that the two had never met.³⁹

Sayyid and Dervish Music

Gurdjieff and de Hartmann's Sayyid and Dervish pieces are here combined into one category, as they are in the third Schott volume entitled *Music of the*

36 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 133–136.

37 Vrej Nersessian, "Introduction," in *Essays on Armenian Music* (London: Kahn and Averill, 1978), 8–9; Sirvat Poladian, "Komitas Vardapet and his Contribution to Ethnomusicology," in *Essays on Armenian Music*, ed. Vrej Nersessian (London: Kahn and Averill, 1978), 14–15.

38 Steve Lake, [Liner notes] *Hayren* (Munich and New York: EMI, 2003).

39 David Kherdian, *On a Spaceship with Beelzebub* (Vermont: Inner Traditions, 1998), 82.

Sayyids and the Dervishes and the corresponding Wergo recording.⁴⁰ Their small number of Dervish pieces, most of which have ‘Dervish’ in their titles such as “Dervish Dance,” “Persian Dervish,” and “Moorish Dervish,”⁴¹ are reminiscent of the *chahar mezarab* instrumental pieces in classical Iranian music, with their emphatic, accented dance rhythms, decorative melodies, and *daff* accompaniments.⁴² Dervishes belong to a range of Sufi orders, such as the Mevlevi and the Chishti, in which devotional exercises with music are practiced. As Gurdjieff and de Hartmann wrote many more Sayyid pieces, these will be the focus of discussion.

Gurdjieff used the term *Sayyid* in many titles of pieces, though the *Sayyids* themselves left no music that can be specifically attributed to them,⁴³ thus Gurdjieff’s use of the term must have been fanciful, and meant to be evocative. *Sayyid* is an honorific title used by Muslims to designate males recognised as descendants of Muhammad.⁴⁴ In *Meetings* Gurdjieff described disguising himself as a *Sayyid*, which involved singing religious verses in Persian to beats on a tambourine.⁴⁵ Gurdjieff and de Hartmann’s Sayyid pieces most closely resemble the classical music of Iran and the religious music of the Sufis. As Gurdjieff witnessed Mevlevi (or Whirling Dervish) ceremonies in Turkey,⁴⁶ the music of these ceremonies might be a source.

Gurdjieff and de Hartmann’s Sayyid pieces often lack metres and bar lines in the spirit of the rhythmically fluid music of Iran, which is traditionally constructed by performers in the course of performance.⁴⁷ Their Sayyid pieces often possess a two-part structure, which is customary of the music of many

40 G.I. Gurdjieff and Thomas de Hartmann, *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann: Music for the Piano*, Vol. 2, eds Linda Daniel-Spitz, Charles Ketcham, and Laurence Rosenthal (Mainz, Germany: Schott, 1996); Laurence Rosenthal, Charles Ketcham, and Linda Daniel-Spitz, *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann: Music for the Piano*, Vol. 2. (Sandhausen, Germany: Wergo, 1998).

41 Daniel-Spitz et al., “Chronological Order of Compositions,” 112–113.

42 Bruno Nettl, [Liner notes] *Iran: Persian Classical Music* (New York: Elektra Nonesuch, 1974).

43 Daniel-Spitz et al., “Preface,” Vol. 1, 11.

44 C.E. Bosworth, “Sayid,” in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, eds C.E. Bosworth, W.P. Henricks and G. Lecomte (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 115.

45 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 230, 236.

46 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 178–179; Ouspensky, *Search*, 382–383; de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 157–158.

47 Hormoz Farhat, “The Dastgāh Concept in Persian Music” (Ph.D. Thesis, University of California, 1965), 2; Charlotte F.A. Farr, “The Music of Professional Musicians of Northwest Iran (Azerbaijan)” (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Washington, 1976), 153.

regions of the Middle East, including Azerbaijan and the Turkish coast of the Black Sea,⁴⁸ as well as of the music accompanying Sufi dervish ceremonies. The first part of their Sayyid pieces usually features an improvisatory-like melody or *taksim* on a mode (type of scale) in the right hand, underpinned by a drone-like *tremolo* (rapidly repeating note) or series of long, supportive chords in the left hand. The second part takes the form of a slow rhythmic dance usually in the same mode as the *taksim*, and is characterised by an active bass line, changing metres, a firm pulse, and triplet and dotted rhythms (see figures below). Traditionally, the first of the two parts signifies the invocation of higher forces, while the second represents the expression of these forces in the world.⁴⁹

Suggesting the influence of classical Iranian music is the declamatory quality of Gurdjieff's *taksims*, with their speech-like rhythms and subtle melodic

Andantino. Molto cantabile ed espressivo 3. IV. 1926

♩ = 116

10

p poco rubato

tr

poco rit.

a tempo

3

Taksim, "Sayyid Chant and Dance No. 10" (Vol. 2, 42).

LINDA DANIEL-SPITZ, CHARLES KETCHAM, AND LAURENCE ROSENTHAL. GURDJIEFF/DE HARTMANN: MUSIC FOR THE PIANO, VOL. 2. MAINZ, GERMANY: SCHOTT, 1996.

Allegretto ♩ = 116 – 120

pp

Daff

simile

sempre staccato

Second part of piece, "Sayyid Chant and Dance No. 10" (Vol. 2, 43).

LINDA DANIEL-SPITZ, CHARLES KETCHAM, AND LAURENCE ROSENTHAL. GURDJIEFF/DE HARTMANN: MUSIC FOR THE PIANO, VOL. 2. MAINZ, GERMANY: SCHOTT, 1996.

48 Linda Daniel-Spitz, Charles Ketcham, and Laurence Rosenthal, "Preface," in *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann: Music for the Piano*, Vol. 2 (Mainz, Germany: Schott, 1996), 11.

49 Thomas C. Daly, "The Music of Gurdjieff/de Hartmann," *Gurdjieff International Review*, Vol. 1, No. 4, 1999, 13. Hear QR Code 6; <http://jeuj.eu/sayyidchant>

inflections due to the employment of trills, quick repetitions of notes, and appoggiaturas ('ornamental' notes or dissonant melodic decorations that seek to be resolved by leaning toward another note in close proximity). These are reminiscent of vocal embellishments. The basis of Iranian music, like Indian music, is the sung recitation of sacred texts, literature classics, and poetry.⁵⁰ Titles of two of their Sayyid pieces indicate Gurdjieff's wish to evoke the sounds of sung recitation. The Schott editors published these titles as "Reading from a Sacred Book" (Vol. 3, 54–57) and "Chant from a Holy Book" (Vol. 3, 110–111), though the original title of the latter was "Special Reading of a Sacred Book." On the original final manuscript for this piece there is the comment, "Because he is reading, the pauses in between phrases and after long notes, must follow according to the breathing capacity of the singer."⁵¹ There is no evidence that the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann Sayyid pieces were sung, but this comment suggests that Gurdjieff wished to conjure the sounds and subtleties of the sung recitation of texts.

Hymns

The Gurdjieff/de Hartmann Hymns can primarily be found in the third Schott volume entitled *Hymns, Prayers and Rituals*, but also include the tenfold set of pieces "Hymns From a Great Temple" of the fourth Schott volume, *Hymns From a Great Temple and Other Selected Works*. They can be heard on corresponding Wergo recordings.⁵² Although the Schott editors chose the title *Hymns, Prayers and Rituals* to characterise the pieces in the third volume, it is impossible to class these pieces as either 'hymns', 'prayers', or 'rituals', thus the umbrella term 'Hymns' is adopted here. Gurdjieff rarely used the term 'ritual', but it appears in the title of an earlier volume of Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music, *Rituals of a Sufi Order* (1970), organised by Olga de Hartman. Charles Ketcham explains that the term was chosen by the Schott editors for the volume's title "to encompass the sense of ceremony, procession and ritual...which refer to the origins and roots of Gurdjieff's teaching."⁵³ The term 'prayer' was significant to

50 Nettle, [Liner notes] *Iran: Persian Classical Music*.

51 Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (17 April 2011).

52 G.I. Gurdjieff and Thomas de Hartmann, *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann: Music for the Piano*, Vol. 3, eds Linda Daniel-Spitz, Charles Ketcham, and Laurence Rosenthal (Mainz, Germany: Schott, 2002); G.I. Gurdjieff and Thomas de Hartmann, *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann: Music for the Piano*, Vol. 4, eds Linda Daniel-Spitz, Charles Ketcham, and Laurence Rosenthal (Mainz, Germany: Schott, 2005); Laurence Rosenthal and Charles Ketcham, *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann: Music for the Piano*, Vol. 3 (Sandhausen, Germany: Wergo, 1999); Laurence Rosenthal and Charles Ketcham, *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann: Music for the Piano*, Vol. 4 (Sandhausen, Germany: Wergo, 2001).

53 Charles Ketcham, pers. comm. (11 February 2010).

Gurdjieff. He used it in titles of a small number of pieces such as “Prayer” (Vol. 3, 26), “Essentuki Prayer” (Vol. 4, 69), and “Prayer and Procession” (Vol. 3, 71–72),⁵⁴ and described his harmonium music as “a prayer.”⁵⁵ Gurdjieff argued that prayers can “give results” when one reflects on each word because:

then it is precisely these thoughts which could do for him what he asks God to do. But what can he be thinking of and what result can a prayer give if he merely repeats like a parrot: ‘God have mercy! God have mercy! God have mercy!’⁵⁶

Gurdjieff consistently taught the importance of carrying out tasks in life consciously, rather than mechanically. If he associated his music with a prayer, he must have aimed to compose it consciously, and wished for it to be played and received likewise.

The composition of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music properly began in July 1925, but it was not until January 1926 when Gurdjieff and de Hartmann started composing a succession of Hymns. Prior to 1926 they had composed a small number of Hymns but the style was more frequently employed from 1926 (see Appendix D). Gurdjieff used the term ‘Hymn’ for only thirteen of the fifty-one pieces in the third Schott volume, but almost all pieces in the volume can be classed as Hymns because they share the same distinctive character; they are solemn, entirely or partly chordal, frequently changing in metre, usually in minor keys but with modulations to major keys and modes, and with meandering melody and harmony lines. There are exceptions to this, such as the romantic sounding “Prayer and Despair” (Vol. 3, 58–62) and dramatic “Night Procession” (Vol. 3, 93–96), which differ from the other more measured, chordal pieces of the third volume. Further, “Reading from a Sacred Book” (Vol. 3, 54–57) and “Chant from a Holy Book” (Vol. 3, 110–111) are composed in the style of the Sayyid pieces. Their pedal point ostinato bass figures and free, improvisatory-style melodies are reminiscent of an Islamic call to prayer. As mentioned earlier, stylistically these two pieces should appear in the second volume, *Music of the Sayyids and the Dervishes*.

54 There are two other titles in the third volume that include the term ‘prayer’, “Prayer of Gratitude” (Vol. 3, 66–67) and “Prayer for Mercy” (Vol. 3, 39), but these titles were later invented by the Schott editors, having been elaborated from comments on original manuscripts. See Chapter 6.

55 Dorothy Caruso, *Dorothy Caruso: A Personal History* (New York: Hermitage House, 1952), 178–179.

56 Ouspensky, *Search*, 300–302.

Although the Hymns are published without text, it seems that some were intended to be sung. In original manuscripts, alongside the music to the Hymns “Holy Affirming, Holy Denying, Holy Reconciling” (Vol. 3, 50–51) and “Hymn to Our Endless Creator” (Vol. 3, 90–91) are passages from Gurdjieff’s *Tales*,⁵⁷ and according to the original manuscript for the Hymn “Alleluia” (Vol. 3, 87), the word “alleluia” is to be repeated throughout.⁵⁸ Further, after the music to “Rejoice, Beelzebub!” (Vol. 3, 48–49) and the eighth hymn from “Hymns From a Great Temple” (Vol. 4, 40–42) there are blank pages in original manuscripts, possibly indicating that words were to follow. A comment on the latter states “the exact same for choir.” The original manuscript for “Prayer for Mercy” (Vol. 3, 39) includes the comment “choir for four people,” and on the original manuscript for “The Resurrection of Christ” (Vol. 3, 114–115) it is stated, “singing with the accompaniment of a stringed instrument.”⁵⁹ De Hartmann also reported that pupils hummed “Essentuki Prayer” (Vol. 4, 69),⁶⁰ and journalist Carl Zigrosser claimed that he was told that the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann Hymns were “studies for subsequent choral and orchestral compositions.”⁶¹ Nowadays many of the Hymns have been set for choruses and are sung in the various Gurdjieff Foundation groups around the world.

The Gurdjieff/de Hartmann Hymns capture the sounds and ceremonial character of Russian Orthodox hymnody and chant through the use of modes, asymmetrical melodies, organum (a form of early polyphony), and extremely low bass lines, as well as antiphony between upper and lower musical lines (a call and response style of singing), and parallel motion (where two or more parts move together so as to maintain the same intervals). In the Hymns they also frequently employ octave, fifth, and fourth intervals in line with traditional Byzantine chant, which is the basis for Russian Orthodox hymnody. These intervals, which represent the first natural intervals of the harmonic series, were considered by the Byzantines ‘spiritual sounds’ or *pneumata*, while intervals of the second and third were considered ‘bodily sounds’ or *somata*. This is the source of the traditional view that spiritual music can contain only fourths and fifths, whereas worldly music, for its part, can have thirds and seconds as well.

57 These passages come from G.I. Gurdjieff, *All and Everything First Series: Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1964 [1950]), 752, 1174.

58 Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (16 April 2011).

59 Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (16 April 2011).

60 Hear QR Code 1; <http://jeuj.eu/essentukiprayer>

61 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 205; Carl Zigrosser, “Gurdjieff,” in *Gurdjieff in the Public Eye: Newspaper Articles, Magazines and Books 1914–1949*, ed. Paul Beekman Taylor (Utrecht, Netherlands: Eureka Editions, 2010), 183.

In the Middle Ages this was indeed the chief difference between church and folk music.⁶²

The influence of the Russian Orthodox Church on the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann Hymns is also evident in titles employed for their series of Hymns relating to Holy Week, the high point of the Russian Orthodox Church Calendar: “Hymn for Easter Wednesday,” “Hymn for Easter Thursday,” “Hymn for Good Friday,” “Easter Hymn,” and “The Resurrection of Christ.”⁶³ (One might expect “Easter Hymn and Procession in the Holy Night” (Vol. 3, 117–119) to be listed here, but this title was created for the Schott edition and is not original. According to original manuscripts this piece was entitled “Essene Hymn and Procession in the Holy Night.” The Schott editors must have based their title on de Hartmann’s later title for the piece for the Janus edition, which is “Easter Hymn and Night Procession.”)⁶⁴ These titles demonstrate the importance of Easter for Gurdjieff, which is a symbol of liberation from the state of bondage. This must have resonated with Gurdjieff, as the central premise of his teaching is to release people from conditions that bind them. Indeed de Hartmann states that Easter was the most important feast of the year for Gurdjieff and that the occasion was for him “very, very heavy, important, and joyful.”⁶⁵

The Gurdjieff/de Hartmann Hymns would have been influenced by music of the Russian Orthodox Church services that Gurdjieff and de Hartmann attended in their youth. In *Meetings* Gurdjieff recounted singing as a youth in the Kars military cathedral choir of the Russian Orthodox Church, stating that sometimes the dean, Father Borsh, would compose canticles for the choir in Gurdjieff’s presence, and would ask Gurdjieff to sing his newly composed canticles to verify vocal transcriptions (see Chapter 2).⁶⁶ De Hartmann states that their hymn “Tibi Cantamus” (Vol. 3, 98) “is a church song belonging to Father Borsh, the first teacher of Gurdjieff, a priest for the church,”⁶⁷ indicating that, at least on one occasion, Gurdjieff had remembered and reproduced the dean’s music.

Russian Orthodox Church services were then, as they are today, usually entirely vocal (with no instrumental accompaniment), as they were at the

62 Peter M. Hamel, *Through Music To The Self*, trans. Peter Lemesurier (Great Britain: Element Books, 1991), 121.

63 Daniel-Spitz et al., “Chronological Order of Compositions,” 112–115.

64 Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (16 April 2011). Hear QR Code 7; <http://jeu.jeu/easterhymnandprocession>

65 Transcription of a talk by de Hartmann.

66 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 50, 52, 54.

67 Transcription of a talk by de Hartmann.

outset of the Russian Orthodox Church in the tenth century when the Byzantine model of church singing was adopted. Byzantine music developed from 330CE, drawing from Greek and Jewish music as well as plainsong, which evolved in the early Christian cities of Alexandria, Antioch, and Ephesos. It relied heavily upon the solo singing of chant lines. The process by which the music of the Russian Orthodox Church departed from its Byzantine roots is unclear, but it is commonly argued that this occurred as the result of the Westernising reigns of Tsar Alexis and his son Peter the Great in the seventeenth century. An influx of European music and techniques were brought to Russia then, among them the five-line staff and Western polyphony, which replaced the Byzantine style. However, in the mid to late nineteenth century Russian church composers returned to the old Byzantine style and this is the style that Gurdjieff and de Hartmann would have been exposed to in their youth.⁶⁸

In a traditional Russian Orthodox Church service the deacon sings hymns and litanies while the priest recites prayers in a low voice at the Holy Table. At other times hymns are sung in preparation for a reading so as to create, in the words of one Orthodox writer, “a favourable atmosphere for a fruitful hearing of the Lord’s teaching which is to follow.”⁶⁹ The fact that music is played to prepare the congregation for a reading might well relate to Gurdjieff’s use of his piano music in conjunction with readings of *Tales*. This is explored in Chapter 8.

What may have particularly excited Gurdjieff about these services was the sensitivity of the microtonal effects of the priest’s elaborate recitations, which traditionally parallel meanings in the texts. De Hartmann commented on an original manuscript of their music that Gurdjieff’s father could also create these effects: he “could sing harmonics like the 8th stop on the harmonium.”⁷⁰ Interestingly, an ear for music is a requirement for the priesthood in the Orthodox Church.⁷¹ While Byzantine hymnody and chant of the Russian Orthodox Church is reflected in the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann Hymns, the priest’s elaborated style of recitation is more reminiscent of their Sayyid pieces.

68 Paul S. Andrews, [Liner notes] *Russian Church Music* (Los Angeles: Harmonia Mundi, 1992); Dimitri E. Conomos, *Byzantine Hymnography and Byzantine Chant* (Brookline, Mass.: Hellenic College Press, 1984), 29–30.

69 Nicholas M. Elias quoted in Fenwick, *The Eastern Orthodox Liturgy*, 17. See also John Fenwick, *The Eastern Orthodox Liturgy* (Bramcote, Nottingham: Grove Books, 1978), 7, 16.

70 Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (16 April 2011).

71 Konrad Boehmer, ed., *Schoenberg and Kandinsky* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1997), 79.

Ten of the most challenging of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann Hymns, for both pianist and listener, form the set of Hymns, “Hymns From a Great Temple” (Vol. 3, 26–46). It is unclear why these Hymns were singled out to form a set; there are no other sets of pieces in the oeuvre though original manuscripts show that Gurdjieff had planned to form some (see Chapter 6). These pieces may have held special significance for Gurdjieff, as they appear to have done for de Hartmann who published “Hymns From a Great Temple” before anything else,⁷² and who played and recorded the first Hymn in the set more than any other piece.⁷³ In the Schott edition ten pieces comprise “Hymns From a Great Temple” but in the Janus edition the tenth Hymn, the longest and most enigmatic-sounding of the set, is separated from the others, having been placed in a different volume.⁷⁴ This is despite the fact that the very title of the segregated tenth Hymn in the Janus edition is “Hymn From a Great Temple.” On a wire recording from Mendham, New Jersey on 13 January 1951 de Hartmann can be heard playing only the first nine pieces, further indicating that he saw the set as ninefold.⁷⁵ Pianists Cecil Lytle and Alain Kremski followed suit, recording only nine of the ten “Hymns From a Great Temple” on their *Seekers of the Truth* and *Chercheurs de Vérité* respectively.⁷⁶ Both pianists include the tenth Hymn on other recordings.

It is unknown why de Hartmann separated this piece from the other nine. It might relate to the fact that the first nine pieces were composed in close succession between 10 and 31 January 1926, while the tenth Hymn was composed months later on 26 May (see Appendix D). De Hartmann may simply have overlooked it when paging through the chronologically organised original manuscripts to select pieces for publication. Pianist/researcher Wim van Dullemen gives a different suggestion, pointing to Gurdjieff’s ninefold symbol of the enneagram and arguing that the set was intended to comprise only nine pieces. Van Dullemen cites Beethoven, Bruckner, Vaughan Williams, Mahler,

72 This first Janus volume, with the slightly different title *Hymns From a Truly Great Temple*, was published in 1950 while the de Hartmanns were still in France, just before their arrival in America. The following four Janus volumes were collectively published in America under the title *The Works of G. Gurdjieff*, with the 1951 volume, *Songs and Rhythms from Asia*, considered as the first volume of the set. Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (17 April 2011), could not explain why the volume *Hymns From a Truly Great Temple* was separated from the others.

73 Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (16 April 2011). Hear QR Code 8; <http://jeuj.eu/firsthymn>

74 Hear QR Code 9; <http://jeuj.eu/tenthhymn>

75 Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (16 April 2011).

76 Cecil Lytle, *Seekers of the Truth* (Tucson, Arizona: Celestial Harmonies, 1987); Alain Kremski, *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann: Chercheurs de Vérité* (Auvidis Valois, 2001).

and Schubert as each writing nine symphonies, asserting that when a composer goes through ‘nine cycles’ he dies, and that there are nine hymns in “Hymns From a Great Temple” because nine stands for a completed circle; the enneagram.⁷⁷ Van Dullemen’s suggestion is creative, though an examination of original manuscripts revealed that two more Hymns, both unpublished, were intended to join the set; one composed on 7 February 1926 (directly after the ninth Hymn), and one composed on 11 August 1926, appearing only in the draft manuscripts, with the title “Last of the Temples.”⁷⁸ This indicates that Gurdjieff did not plan to have only nine pieces in the set. Due to a reliance on the Schott volumes throughout this book and owing to the evidence above, this set of pieces will hereafter be considered as tenfold.

Interestingly, pupils and writers generally consider the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann Hymns as separate to, and more profound than, the other pieces in the oeuvre. De Hartmann described the Hymns as “the most deeply moving” of all the piano music, and that on “listening to this music one was touched to the depth of his being.”⁷⁹ Others state that only the Hymns were examples of objective music (see Chapter 7). For instance, in prefaces to the Schott volumes the editors state of the Hymns, “In considering the complete musical works of Gurdjieff/de Hartmann, we find in *Hymns, Prayers and Rituals* undoubtedly the most profound reflection of Gurdjieff the Master” as they “reveal another world,” “evoke a sense of the sacred,” and represent “the most nearly objective expression in all of this body of music.”⁸⁰ C.S. Nott asserts that the sound of the Hymns caused tears to stream involuntarily down pupils’ cheeks. He related this to Gurdjieff’s story of Vitvitskaia in *Meetings*, which is based on the theme of objective music. In another account of the Hymns, Nott describes their effect in a way that corresponds exactly with Gurdjieff’s description of the effects of the objective art of the ‘Adherents of Legominism’ in *Tales* (see Chapter 7).⁸¹

Certainly, the Hymns are much different in character to Gurdjieff and de Hartmann’s other two categories of piano music. Where the pieces of these

77 Wim van Dullemen, pers. comm. (5 May 2010).

78 Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (16 April 2011).

79 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 247.

80 Linda Daniel-Spitz, Charles Ketcham, and Laurence Rosenthal, “Preface,” in *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann: Music for the Piano*, Vol. 3 (Mainz, Germany: Schott, 2002), 13; Linda Daniel-Spitz, Charles Ketcham, and Laurence Rosenthal, “Preface,” in *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann: Music for the Piano*, Vol. 4 (Mainz, Germany: Schott, 2005), 11.

81 C.S. Nott, *Teachings of Gurdjieff: A Pupil’s Journal, An Account of Some Years With G.I. Gurdjieff and A.R. Orage in New York and at Fontainebleau-Avon* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), x, 107, 188.

other categories are generally short and melodious, the Hymns are long, slow, and often less accessible to the listener. One might conjecture that Gurdjieff began composing the Hymns, and composing them so prolifically, as a sympathetic gesture to his dying wife, Julia Ostrowska. This is one way of explaining the shift in the style of the piano music from January 1926. Indeed Gurdjieff stated that he had written *Tales* most prolifically at the lowest points in his life,⁸² and one could apply this statement to the piano music, which took on a new force in the year that Ostrowska was in the worst stages of her health, and the year in which she died. It should also be noted that, according to Olga de Hartmann, Ostrowska “loved music,” and that when she was confined to bed an upright piano was brought into her room and she would often ask de Hartmann to play music for her.⁸³ However, the Hymns continued to be composed after Ostrowska’s death and regardless, the music itself does not suggest that it was composed to soothe or please Ostrowska. It is known that Ostrowska enjoyed the music of Chopin,⁸⁴ an entirely different style of music to the Hymns. Thus, this explanation for the purpose of the Hymns seems insufficient.

The Piano Music Evoking the Timeless and Challenging the Musician

If one were to make a sweeping statement about the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music as a whole, one might say that the folk and religious sounds of the music capture the ethos of the East and a sense of the ancient and timeless. Perhaps these sounds were meant to lure listeners to a new state of simplicity, and to a realm closer to nature and truth in accordance with Gurdjieff’s romantic views of the East and ancient cultures. This is the view taken by James Moore: “None of these compositions is a slavish pastiche of ethnic music. Rather Gurdjieff transmutes and recanalizes the subtle essence of an ancient tradition, delivering it to modern man as a summons to awaken and a support for his effort to be.”⁸⁵ Titles of Gurdjieff/de Hartmann pieces such as “Oriental Song” (Vol. 1, 28–29), “Persian Dance” (Vol. 1, 69), and “Hindu Melody” (Vol. 1, 88–89)⁸⁶ suggest that Gurdjieff aimed to evoke Asian and Middle Eastern music and culture, even though the music itself does not always convincingly

82 Gurdjieff, *Life is Real*, 39.

83 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 248.

84 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 248.

85 Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 350.

86 Hear QR Code 10; <http://jeu.jeu/hindumelody>

reflect these. Gurdjieff characterised the people of Asia as being largely isolated from the negative effects of contemporary life. For Gurdjieff, they stood closer to nature, possessing three well functioning centres that led them to a true understanding of things, and to 'being'.⁸⁷ Gurdjieff may have intended his listeners to absorb and assimilate into their lives these positive values, which he assigned to the music. It may have been quite irrelevant to him whether or not the music truly derived from the sources he purported.

The strongly religious sounds of the Sayyid and Dervish Music and Hymns bring a sacred, devotional, and again timeless quality to the oeuvre. It is interesting to consider here the *stile antico*, a style of composition adopted by some composers from the sixteenth century onward. These composers would deliberately write in older musical genres, particularly in their sacred works. Composers of the high Baroque, for example, employed in their music imitative textures and modes, and were traditional in their approach to dissonance. At the time this would have been considered old-fashioned. The purpose was to imitate music of the late Renaissance, often using Palestrina's music as a model. Twentieth century examples of the *stile antico* mainly continued within the Catholic tradition, for instance Jean Langlais' *Messe en style ancien*, but tended to draw on medieval and chant models rather than the Palestrina idiom.⁸⁸ In a study of Bach's Mass in B minor, musicologist John Butt argues that older traditions of composition represented ideals of purity and durability, even a 'universal' humanity, and that Bach "believed the musical language of the 'thoroughbass age' to reflect a God-given structure and order."⁸⁹ Gurdjieff may have had a similar view, choosing to utilise musical techniques that reflected 'old' folk and religious sounds, summoning a sense of the ancient and universal.

A different way in which the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music may have been informed by Gurdjieff's teaching relates to pieces with polyrhythms. It was earlier suggested that Gurdjieff may have wished to create polyrhythms between piano and *daff* parts so as to challenge players, though it is also possible that *daff* parts were not meant to be played in a manner in which they fell out of sync with piano parts. However, there are clear instances of difficult polyrhythms in piano parts alone. Take "Sayyid Dance" (Vol. 2, 80–83), where pairs of quaver motifs are to be played against triplet motifs, "Dervish Dance"

87 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 8, 14, 17; Ouspensky, *Search*, 64–68.

88 Stephen R. Miller, "Stile Antico" in *Grove Music Online*, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy1.library.usyd.edu.au/subscriber/article/grove/music/26771?q=stile+antico&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit. Retrieved 7 July 2014.

89 John Butt, *Bach: Mass in B Minor* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 1–3, 102.

(Vol. 2, 84–85), where dislocated rhythms in each hand are played at a fast tempo, or No. 11 (Vol. 1, 39–41), where the left hand plays a rhythmic ostinato against an irregularly phrased melody in the right hand (see figure below). A prominent pianist in the Work stated of such pieces, “[t]hat is very Work oriented, to separate oneself from oneself, listening to both parts and doing two different things.”⁹⁰ This is a reference to Gurdjieff’s precept that individuals consist of a multiplicity of conflicting selves or ‘I’s, but that they are always identified with just one of these I’s. Gurdjieff taught pupils to observe this identification, realise that it is an illusion, and struggle against it by becoming aware of the whole of oneself.⁹¹ Those of Gurdjieff and de Hartmann’s pieces that incorporate polyrhythms could, then, be interpreted as exercises in attention and effort for pianists, and perhaps in detachment from what Gurdjieff saw as the illusion of ‘I. Other ways in which the music may have been meant to challenge pianists are discussed in the second half of Chapter 6.

18. XII. 1926

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece. It is labeled '11' on the left. The tempo is 'Andante con moto' with a quarter note equal to 44. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 3/8. The left hand plays a rhythmic ostinato of eighth notes. The right hand has a melodic line with a dynamic marking of 'p' (piano) and an 'espressivo' marking. The score is dated '18. XII. 1926' in the top right corner.

No. 11 (Vol. 1, 39).

LINDA DANIEL-SPITZ, CHARLES KETCHAM, AND LAURENCE ROSENTHAL. *GURDJIEFF/DE HARTMANN: MUSIC FOR THE PIANO, VOL. 1.* MAINZ, GERMANY: SCHOTT, 1996.

⁹⁰ Donald Barrett (pseud.), pers. comm. (15 April 2010).

⁹¹ Ouspensky, *Search*, 59–61, 239–140.

Sheet Music and Recordings

Shortly after Gurdjieff's death in 1949, his pupils became eager to preserve the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music by making recordings and publishing sheet music. This was despite the fact that Gurdjieff promoted only experiential approaches to his teaching and music, and made no indication that he wanted the music to be fixed in any form. The care and attention pupils paid to the piano music by immediately organising for it to be collated and recorded shows that it was significant to them, and did not merely represent for them a trivial pastime or ephemeral teaching tool. From the 1950s private recordings and publications of the music emerged from within the Work, and these were carefully guarded within Work groups. Work members believe that the music should, ideally, be played live by a sensitive pianist, and only within the Work.

This chapter will begin with an assessment of the original manuscripts, and this will lead to a critical examination of the three published editions of the piano music. When de Hartmann left Gurdjieff in 1929, the original manuscripts of their piano music were stored at the Prieuré, and later closely guarded by de Salzmann until Gurdjieff's death, when she began to arrange for the music to be published and recorded. The manuscripts were given back to de Hartmann, and after the death of Olga de Hartmann in 1979 they were bequeathed to her close pupil from her Montreal Gurdjieff group, Thomas C. Daly. Daly's son Thomas A.G. Daly is now the custodian of the manuscripts. In Montreal on 16 and 17 April 2011 I was generously granted access to these original manuscripts, courtesy of Thomas A.G. Daly. Examining the manuscripts yielded a number of exciting discoveries, as will soon be discussed.

Three editions of selections of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music have been published: five volumes were published by Janus in the 1950s, which were edited by de Hartmann, three volumes were published by Olga de Hartmann with the Gurdjieff Foundation of New York in 1970, and four volumes were published by Schott between 1996 and 2005, edited by Linda Daniel-Spitz, Charles Ketcham, and Laurence Rosenthal. The first two editions are privately circulated within Foundation groups while the Schott edition was made public. The latter was designated the 'Definitive Edition' of the music because it includes the majority of previously published and recorded pieces as well as additional pieces. Discussions of original manuscripts and the different

editions of the sheet music in this chapter were made possible by the kindness of Thomas A.G. Daly and Dorine Tolley, who allowed me access to original manuscripts and private editions of the music, respectively.

The chapter goes on to consider recordings of the piano music, and the negative reaction some Work members have towards them. These members argue that recordings cannot deliver the spiritual results that Gurdjieff intended for the music. This highly esoteric understanding and treatment of the piano music from within the Work could easily be overlooked nowadays, as Work members eventually made public a large quantity of sheet music and recordings. One might infer that these were released to the public in order to introduce outsiders to Gurdjieff and his music; the music is undoubtedly one of the most accessible avenues for approaching Gurdjieff and his teaching. However, it seems that Work members released the piano music for the main purpose of pre-empting unschooled interpretations of the music. One could argue that this was unsuccessful; the 2008 recording *Melos* includes arrangements of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music for cello, piano, and drums, where the piece “Tibetan Dance” is played against syncopated jazz drumming. This rendition strays far from the original piano version, and it is known that Gurdjieff disliked jazz.¹

Original Manuscripts

After de Hartmann’s departure in 1929 the original manuscripts of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music were stored in a suitcase at the Prieuré until its closure in 1933, when de Salzman, who was close to both Gurdjieff and de Hartmann, took the suitcase, saving it from being auctioned off with the contents at the Prieuré.² After Gurdjieff’s death in 1949 she arranged for the manuscripts to be published and the music recorded. Between 1933 and 1949 the music was only occasionally played by pupils. Gurdjieff’s daughter Dushka Howarth remarked that during the time she spent with Gurdjieff in

1 Paul Beekman Taylor, ed., *Gurdjieff in the Public Eye: Newspaper Articles, Magazines and Books 1914–1949* (Utrecht, Netherlands: Eureka Editions, 2010), 141.

2 Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (8 July 2010); C.S. Nott, *Further Teachings of Gurdjieff: Journey Through This World* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), 71. In the liner notes to the Wergo recordings of the music it states that the original manuscripts were stored in a steamer trunk; see Laurence Rosenthal, Linda Daniel-Spitz, and Charles Ketcham, [Liner notes] *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann: Music for the Piano*, Vol. 1. (Sandhausen, Germany: Wergo, 1998), 1.

the last years of his life he never mentioned the piano music and it was never played; “Mr. Gurdjieff himself had apparently abandoned them back in the Twenties. Until the end he never seems to have encouraged anyone to play this piano music. It wasn’t scheduled to be published or recorded.”³

Original manuscripts are divided into draft and final manuscripts. The draft manuscripts represent the first sketches of the music where de Hartmann roughly notated in pencil Gurdjieff’s melodic and rhythmic dictations, often adding harmonies on the spot. These manuscripts appear in pre-bound hard-cover notebooks with different coloured covers. It should be noted that in the prefaces to the Schott volumes, the editors distinguish between original melody drafts, which represent melodies notated by de Hartmann from Gurdjieff’s dictations, and rough drafts, showing de Hartmann’s initial “realization” of pieces, usually written underneath the original melodies, but sometimes on a separate page.⁴ As both usually appear on the one page, and were notated almost concurrently, they are here simply referred to together as the draft manuscripts.

The final manuscripts represent pieces in their final form, neatly notated by de Hartmann in black or blue ink. There are no obvious markings by Gurdjieff himself. The majority of pieces in the final manuscripts did not originally include many dynamic, tempo, phrasing, or articulation markings, but de Hartmann added these later in the 1950s in preparation for publishing the Janus edition.⁵ The draft and final manuscripts were meticulously organised by de Hartmann, with all pieces dated and in chronological order so that both types of manuscripts neatly correspond.

Final manuscripts were organised in four batches of folded loose pages: 1925, 1926a, 1926b, and 1927 batches. The 1925 batch went missing, perhaps on its way to or from the printers during the printing of the Janus editions. However, these pieces were not lost. Draft versions of pieces from 1925 were preserved in the draft manuscripts, and a bound volume survives, produced in 1935 by an unidentified copyist from Berlin. On its inside cover page it states that it was compiled and copied at Gurdjieff’s express request. The Schott editors concluded that the copyist must have worked from the lost final manuscripts. There are also the music notebooks of pupil Carol Robinson, which

3 Dushka Howarth and Jessmin Howarth, *It’s Up To Ourselves: A Mother, A Daughter, and Gurdjieff* (New York: Gurdjieff Heritage Society, 2009), 476–477.

4 See Linda Daniel-Spitz, Charles Ketcham, and Laurence Rosenthal, “Critical Notes,” in *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann: Music for the Piano*, Vol. 1 (Mainz, Germany: Schott, 1996), 115.

5 Daniel-Spitz et al., “Critical Notes,” Vol. 1, 115.

contain handwritten copies of a number of pieces from 1925. In the absence of the final manuscripts of 1925, the Schott editors utilised these other sources to determine a final reading of pieces.⁶

My examination of the original manuscripts led to six surprising discoveries about the music. First, it was found that de Hartmann made very few changes to Gurdjieff's melodies from draft to final versions of pieces, and where changes do occur, they normally involve only the lengthening of notes to fit rhythms or to fit the later addition of bar lines. Thus de Hartmann was faithful to Gurdjieff's melodic dictations from beginning to end of the composition process. Second, it was discovered that some pieces in the manuscripts showed markings that indicate that they were to be played on the harmonium and/or organ (for more see Appendix C). Third, on a small number of pieces there are comments that suggest that they were intended to be orchestrated. For example, the comment, "[t]he middle of the notes must give strength (stringed instruments)" was written on the draft manuscript of the first hymn from "Hymns From a Great Temple" (Vol. 4, 26–27), the comment "[t]he instrumentation should be with the oboe (oriental Zurna)" is noted on the final manuscript for "Persian Dervish" (Vol. 2, 34–35), and the comment "[a] bell takes part in the execution...very quiet, ad lib, very slow, outside the rhythm (G. Gurdjieff)" can be found on the final manuscript to "Dervish Chant and Dance" (Vol. 2, 36–37). The fourth discovery was that, on a number of manuscripts of the Hymns, there are indications suggesting that they were to be sung. These indications are outlined in Chapter 5. These third and fourth discoveries accord with journalist Carl Zigrosser's statement that he had been told at the Prieuré that some of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music were "studies for subsequent choral and orchestral compositions."⁷

Fifth, some original titles of pieces were found in manuscripts that do not appear in the published editions of the music. Some of these were descriptive titles featuring names of pupils, or events and situations at the Prieuré. These are discussed in Chapter 8. Other original titles revealed that Gurdjieff had planned to compose pieces grouped in different series, though he never fulfilled this beyond his "Hymns From a Great Temple" series. There are, for instance, pieces in the manuscripts that state that they are from the "Series of the Greek Gods," the "Bokharian Series," and the "Skridlov Series." On one unfinished piece there is also the comment, "We shall have music for seven kinds of idiots. This piece is for ordinary idiots. It is one of the means to what kind of idiots it belongs," which suggests that Gurdjieff had planned for a

6 Daniel-Spitz et al., "Critical Notes," Vol. 1, 115.

7 Carl Zigrosser, "Gurdjieff," in *Gurdjieff in the Public Eye: Newspaper Articles, Magazines and Books 1914–1949*, ed. Paul Beekman Taylor (Utrecht, Netherlands: Eureka Editions, 2010), 183.

series of pieces for ‘idiots’, but there are no other references to this in the manuscripts. (During meals with pupils Gurdjieff carried out a ritual toasting of the different types of ‘idiots’ at the table. See Chapter 2).⁸

Sixth and finally, it was found that some original titles of pieces were later altered or completely changed after Gurdjieff’s death, for the Janus and Schott editions. De Hartmann invented fifteen titles for the Janus edition in the 1950s, and those titles also appear in the Schott edition, while the Schott editors also used, for a small number of titles, the names that de Hartmann gave pieces on his recordings of the music. In addition, there are instances in the Schott edition where original titles have been altered, or new titles invented for originally untitled pieces. As original titles give insight into Gurdjieff’s intentions for the music, it was important to know which titles of pieces were originally given by Gurdjieff (and possibly de Hartmann) in the 1920s, which were given by de Hartmann in the 1950s for the Janus edition, and which were invented by the Schott editors for their edition (1996 to 2005). To make matters more complicated, some titles in the original manuscripts were not originally given in the 1920s; occasionally de Hartmann had added titles to untitled pieces in the manuscripts in the 1950s in preparation for publishing. Thomas A.G. Daly explained that if titles appeared in original manuscripts in English and Russian, and were set out in a particular way, that this indicated an original 1920s title. Russian titles are almost certainly original because de Hartmann had no need to write Russian titles in his later years, when he lived and worked in France and America. If, on the other hand, titles were in French, marked in pencil, and in a certain style of handwriting, these were most likely given by de Hartmann in the 1950s.

The Janus Edition and Olga de Hartmann’s Edition

Gurdjieff made no indication that he wanted the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music published, though de Hartmann does refer to the fact that Gurdjieff wished to preserve the music for posterity by having it notated. It is also known that in the 1930s Gurdjieff requested that pupil Louise March organise for a copyist to make two copies of the final manuscripts of 1925.⁹ One of these was

8 C.S. Nott, *Teachings of Gurdjieff: A Pupil’s Journal, An Account of Some Years With G.I. Gurdjieff and A.R. Orage in New York and at Fontainebleau-Avon* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), 102.

9 Thomas de Hartmann and Olga de Hartmann, *Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff*, eds Thomas C. Daly and Thomas A.G. Daly (London: Arkana Penguin Books, 1992 [1964]), 246; Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (14 March 2012).

the bound volume produced in 1935 by the unidentified Berlin copyist mentioned earlier. However, examinations of the piano music in Chapter 8 reveal that the music essentially served practical purposes relating to Gurdjieff's life circumstances and teaching at the time. This explains why Gurdjieff left so many pieces, and also Movements, untitled; he did not consider these fixed products and his catchcry was, "Never think of results, just do."¹⁰ This was the case with his ballet *Struggle*, which was intensely rehearsed by pupils for an expected performance, only to be abruptly abandoned when Gurdjieff was found destroying the props with an axe, explaining, "We have done it, so we don't need it anymore. Now it can go to the dump."¹¹ The end product was irrelevant to Gurdjieff's aims.

Regardless of the above, soon after Gurdjieff's death, between 1950 and 1955, de Hartmann oversaw the private publication of five volumes of sheet music of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music by Janus in Paris. Up until the time of the Schott edition, over forty years later when the music became available to the public, the Janus edition was closely guarded and only to be played sparingly at special Foundation group events. One Work member states, "It was thought that if it were played too much it would dilute itself and almost disappear."¹²

The company Janus was originally represented by Gurdjieff himself, along with 'managing director' René Zuber, one of Gurdjieff's French pupils from 1943. In Roman mythology Janus is the god of beginnings and transitions, most often depicted with two heads facing opposite directions. Symbolically they look simultaneously into the future and the past, and eastwards and westwards. The link between this symbolism and the nature of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music is remarkably apt, though surprisingly this was not intentional. Gurdjieff and Zuber signed a contract for the company in Paris on 1 July 1949, which stated only that Janus was to publish Ouspensky's *Search* and Gurdjieff's *Tales*. It was a year after Gurdjieff's death when it was confirmed that Janus would also publish the piano music, and that de Hartmann would have control over the publication. This is known from a later contract between Gurdjieff's heirs and Janus dated 2 October 1950.¹³

The five volumes of Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music published by Janus are: *Hymns From a Truly Great Temple* (1950) (nine pieces), and the four-volume series *The Works of G. Gurdjieff*, consisting of *Songs and Rhythms from*

¹⁰ de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 207.

¹¹ de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 147.

¹² Donald Barrett (pseud.), pers. comm. (8 August 2010).

¹³ Copies of both contracts were seen, thanks to Thomas A.G. Daly.

Asia (1951) (nineteen pieces), *Dances and Chants of the Seids* (1952) (fourteen pieces), *Dervish Chants and Dances* (1954) (ten pieces), and *Sacred Hymns* (1955) (seventeen pieces). They were also published with French titles. De Hartmann published one volume each year from 1950 to 1955, with the exception of 1953 when he was ill. Pieces that de Hartmann selected for the volumes indicate those he considered most significant, and his division of the music into five parts may reflect the way that he envisaged the oeuvre, though Thomas A.G. Daly predicts that de Hartmann would have continued to publish more volumes had he lived past 1956.¹⁴ This would mean that de Hartmann's fivefold division of the music should not be considered a complete representation of the oeuvre.

In 1970, fourteen years after de Hartmann's death, Olga de Hartmann organised the publication of another private edition of the piano music with the cooperation of the Gurdjieff Foundation of New York. This comprises three volumes: *Seekers of the Truth* (nineteen pieces), *Journey to Inaccessible Places* (nine pieces), and *Rituals of a Sufi Order* (eight pieces). Most of these pieces do not appear in the earlier Janus edition. All pieces are numbered and not titled, though she invented the titles for the three volumes. This is different to the Janus volumes, where many pieces bear titles.

The Schott Edition

In 1983 de Salzmann and Henry John Sinclair, 2nd Baron Pentland, the President of the Gurdjieff Foundation of New York from its inception in 1953, proposed that esteemed musicians Linda Daniel-Spitz, Charles Ketcham,¹⁵ and Laurence Rosenthal,¹⁶ along with meticulous archivist Thomas C. Daly, the possessor of the original manuscripts, assume the task of editing a third and

¹⁴ Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (8 July 2010).

¹⁵ Ketcham is an accomplished pianist and conductor. He has conducted orchestras throughout the United States and Europe. For more see Russian National Orchestra, *Charles Ketcham: Russian National Orchestra*, <http://www.russianarts.org/rno/ketcham.cfm>. Retrieved 2 December 2010.

¹⁶ As a pianist Rosenthal studied under Nadia Boulanger and made a number of impressive recordings of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music. He is also a composer, arranger, and conductor for theatre, television, and films. He has been nominated for two Oscars, two Golden Globes, and twelve Emmy Awards, and won seven Emmy Awards for his film music. For more see Laurence Rosenthal, *The Authorised Website of Composer Laurence Rosenthal*, <http://www.laurencerosenthal.com/Laurence%20Rosenthal.html>. Retrieved 11 February 2011.

final edition of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music. This was to be a 'definitive edition', which meant not only republishing the majority of previously published and recorded pieces, but also adding a substantial number of previously unpublished pieces. It also marked the first time that the piano music was made accessible to the public.

Under the direction of de Salzman and, after her death in 1990, her son Michel de Salzman, four volumes of Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music were published by the prestigious German publishing house Schott Music, who printed the first editions of such composers as Mozart, Beethoven, and Wagner in their own day.¹⁷ Through his conducting career Charles Ketcham was able to make the connection with the publisher, who had initially planned to publish only one or two pieces. The four Schott volumes that evolved are: *Asian Songs and Rhythms* (1996) (forty-nine pieces), *Music of the Sayyids and the Dervishes* (1996) (forty-two pieces), *Hymns, Prayers and Rituals* (2002) (fifty-one pieces plus variant versions of three pieces), and *Hymns from a Great Temple and other Selected Works* (2005) (twenty-four pieces plus variant versions of two pieces from *Struggle*). Volumes are also given the general title: *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann: Music for the Piano*.

In structure, the Schott edition is modelled on the Janus edition, though it consists of four rather than five volumes and contains extra material. The main difference between the two editions is that in the Schott, Sayyid and Dervish pieces are combined into one volume, as de Salzman believed that these pieces were similar in construction and flavour. Another difference is that in the Schott edition the set of pieces "Hymns From a Great Temple" comprises ten pieces (not nine as in the Janus edition, see Chapter 5), and these joined other pieces in the fourth Schott volume. De Salzman originally intended there to be twelve slim volumes, but later the editors agreed that four larger volumes was more feasible. The editors did, however, further divide the volumes into twelve parts or 'series', with each volume divided into three parts, to comply with her wish. Interestingly, de Salzman's wish for these smaller divisions was due to Gurdjieff's teaching on attention; dividing the music into small sections would indicate to pianists that only a few pieces were to be played at one time, and thus would create a listening experience where attention could best be sustained.¹⁸

17 Thomas C. Daly, "Foreword," in *Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff* (London: Arkana Penguin Books, 1992), xi.

18 Charles Ketcham, pers. comm. (19 July 2010). For Gurdjieff's teaching on attention, see Chapter 1.

There are sixty-nine pieces in the Janus edition and thirty-six in Olga de Hartmann's edition, which totals one hundred and five pieces. These were all included in the Schott edition with the exception of two pieces of music for Movements from Olga de Hartmann's edition, which were not considered to fit in with the rest of the material. Pianist Alain Kremski had recorded four previously unpublished pieces so these were included in the Schott edition, as were most of the previously unpublished pieces recorded in the 1950s by Carol Robinson and de Salzmann.

Approximately sixty never before published or recorded pieces were also included, though four of these were originally composed for the Movements and six for *Struggle*. The Movements pieces included in the Schott edition are: No. 32, also known as "The Big Group" (Vol. 3, 84–85), "Prayer" (Vol. 3, 99), "Women's Prayer" (Vol. 3, 109), and "Initiation of a Priestess" (Vol. 4, 72–79).¹⁹ It was debateable whether another piece in the Schott edition, "Assyrian Women Mourners" (Vol. 1, 82–84), should be added to this list, as a Movement with this title exists. However, this piece was notated in 1925, when work on the Movements had ceased. There is also no record of this music in any of the original manuscripts of the music for the Movements, and de Hartmann published the piece in a Janus volume of the piano music, *Songs and Rhythms from Asia*. Nowadays this piece is commonly played to accompany the Movement known as "Assyrian Women Mourners," but it seems that the piece was not originally intended for this purpose.

As the Schott edition was organised from within the Work it is curious that music for Movements was included at all, as Foundation groups are generally conscientious in guarding the music for Movements from the public (see Appendix A). However, it seems that two of these pieces, No. 32 and "Initiation of the Priestess," were included in the volumes as they belong to Movements that are now lost. These pieces then could not be used to accompany those Movements, which suggests that the concern for guarding the music for Movements is not about the music itself, but about the possibility of it being used by the 'uninitiated' to accompany Movements. In the case of "Women's Prayer," this had been previously published. In fact, according to Laurence Rosenthal, this piece was not originally composed for Movements; it was first composed as a piano piece and only later was a Movement attached to it. A version of the piece was then written for Movements, which is identical

19 It was confirmed that these four pieces represent music for Movements by Gert-Jan Blom, *Oriental Suite: The Complete Orchestral Music 1923–1924* (Netherlands: Basta Audio Visuals, 2006), 252 note 29; Wim van Dulleman, pers. comm. (23 April 2012). For details of the six *Struggle* 'fragments' see Appendix B.

except with longer or shorter chords to correlate with the Movement.²⁰ This could not be confirmed and Thomas A.G. Daly showed some evidence to the contrary. In original manuscripts the piece was written, along with other pieces at that time, with the heading “America, Spring, 1924,” suggesting that it was composed for the American Movements demonstrations. Also, the piece that directly follows “Women’s Prayer” in the manuscripts is titled “Exercise with Rhythm in the Bass,” and ‘exercise’ implies that this was for a Movement. There was a slightly altered version of “Women’s Prayer,” organised by de Hartmann in the 1950s in preparation for publication, but this consisted of very small adjustments to the original.²¹ For these reasons, this piece is here counted as music for Movements.

Apart from these four pieces, Gurdjieff and de Hartmann’s music for Movements was excluded from the Schott edition. Rosenthal explains that the music for Movements was considered as separate since it was written for a special purpose: as a musical adjunct to the Movements. The music for Movements is written with repetitions which, when heard without corresponding Movements, are meaningless. He believes that this music was designed to be a part of something else and is incomplete without corresponding Movements.²² This is certainly justifiable, but it is surprising then that the music for one of the longest of Gurdjieff’s Movements, “The Great Prayer,” was included on the Wergo recording that was made to correspond with the fourth Schott volume. This recording was produced from within the Work, with the music played by one of the Schott editors. It is unknown why they made this exception.

Around sixty-seven pieces from original final manuscripts were excluded from the Schott edition. This was for two reasons; Schott executives encouraged the editors to narrow the music down early in the process after realising that there was so much music, and de Salzmänn decided not to include pieces that might bring down the quality of the oeuvre. Many of the pieces excluded were Hymns, which apparently sounded too similar to each other, though according to one interviewee they sounded quite good. The selection process began in Switzerland where Ketcham and Daniel-Spitz played all pieces, including draft versions, from original manuscripts for de Salzmänn. De Salzmänn then decided which pieces were to be included. The designation “definitive edition” on the Schott volumes could be questioned, since pieces from the original final manuscripts are missing.

20 Laurence Rosenthal, pers. comm. (22 July 2010).

21 Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (10 August 2012).

22 Laurence Rosenthal, pers. comm. (22 July 2010).

Earlier it was stated that some titles of pieces employed in the Schott edition were not original, but invented by de Hartmann in the 1950s for the Janus edition and his recordings of the music. In addition, there are instances in the Schott edition where original titles have been altered, or new titles invented for originally untitled pieces. Some examples of these follow. The piece that the Schott editors called “For Professor Skridlov” (Vol. 2, 24–25) was originally titled “For the Skridlov Series,” but as the editors did not publish other pieces in the series, the title was altered. A similar alteration, which can also be found in the Janus edition, was made to the title “Greek Melody” (Vol. 1, 94–95), which was originally “Second from the Series of the Greek Gods.” Schott’s title “Chant from a Holy Book” (Vol. 3, 110–111) was originally “Special Reading of a Sacred Book,” and the Schott title “Duduki” (Vol. 1, 44–45) was given to a piece that was originally untitled, and with the specific instruction on the original manuscript, “One should not call this piece *duduki*.” Another comment on the manuscript for that piece indicates that Gurdjieff originally heard the music played on bagpipes rather than the *duduki*, a double reeded wind instrument. Regardless, the Schott editors employed the title “Duduki.” De Hartmann called this piece “Bagpipe Music” in the English version of the Janus edition, but “Doudouki” in the French version. De Salzmänn and Carol Robinson used the title “Duduki” on their 1950 recording of the music, *23 Pieces Pour Piano*.

The Schott title “The Bokharian Dervish, Hadji-Asvatz-Troov” (Vol. 4, 80–83) comes from the title de Hartmann gave the piece on his Janus recording. However, this piece was, in the manuscripts, untitled, with the comment: “[a]fter a reading about the dervish of Hadji-Asvatz-Troov (Beelzebub, ch. Bokharian Dervish).” The Schott title “Easter Hymn and Procession in the Holy Night” (Vol. 3, 117–119) was, in original manuscripts, “Essene Hymn and Cross Procession in the Holy Night.” The Schott editors must have based their title on de Hartmann’s title for the piece on his Triangle recording, which is “Easter Hymn and Night Procession.” De Hartmann’s Janus title for this piece is “Easter Hymn.”²³ It is uncertain why de Hartmann altered the original title, and why he used two different titles for the piece. Schott’s title “Prayer of Gratitude” (Vol. 3, 66–67) was also a title given on de Salzmänn and Robinson’s recording *23 Pieces Pour Piano*, but the original manuscript only bears the comment, “the day of recovery.” Similarly, Schott’s title “Prayer for Mercy” (Vol. 3, 49) was given to a piece that was originally untitled and with the comment “like lord have mercy.” Michel de Salzmänn, who oversaw the Schott project

23 Thomas de Hartmann, *The Music of Gurdjieff/de Hartmann* (New York: Triangle Editions, 1989); G.I. Gurdjieff and Thomas de Hartmann, *Sacred Hymns*, ed. Thomas de Hartmann (Paris: Janus, 1955); Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (16 April 2011).

after his mother's death, seems to have been responsible for the newly devised and altered titles. Certainly some of these new titles are defensible, but it is unfortunate that there is no indication in the edition as to which titles are Gurdjieff's and which were changed or invented for the edition.

Recordings

Gurdjieff did not attempt to have the piano music recorded, not even in the last years of his life when he had contact with recording producers and equipment, and had at his disposal a number of pupils who were capable pianists, such as de Salzmann, Rose Mary Nott, Carol Robinson, Solange Claustres, and Helen Adie. Gurdjieff did show an interest in the recording process itself. In 1948 and 1949 he had many of his harmonium improvisations recorded (see Appendix C), and on one of these recordings a conversation can be heard between Gurdjieff and Donald Whitcomb, who was operating the wire recorder. Here Whitcomb explained the recorder to Gurdjieff and Gurdjieff expressed his intention to purchase three of the devices.²⁴ Yet he never indicated that the piano music would be recorded.

In any case, de Hartmann recorded selections of the piano music for private circulation shortly after Gurdjieff's death. Other pupils also made private recordings of the music, such as de Salzmann and Carol Robinson together in the 1950s, and Rose Mary Nott and Helen Adie in the 1970s. Thirty years after Gurdjieff's death renowned jazz/classical pianist Keith Jarrett released his *G.I. Gurdjieff Sacred Hymns*, the first publicly available recording of the piano music. From then on, a string of recordings of the music by musicians in and outside the Work, though predominantly the former, emerged in the public sphere. Selections of aforementioned private recordings of the music by de Hartmann, Rose Mary Nott, and Helen Adie, were also later released publicly.

Notable recordings of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music currently available and not already mentioned in this chapter include Alain Kremski's *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann* in twelve volumes (1982–2004), Herbert Henck's *Gurdjieff De Hartmann* (1982), Elan Sicroff's *Journey to Inaccessible Places* (1985), *Sicroff Plays Gurdjieff* (2002), and *Laudamus...* (2010), Cecil Lytle's *Seekers of the Truth* (1987) and *Reading of a Sacred Book* (1988), Wim van Dullemen's *The Music of G.I. Gurdjieff* (1996), and Laurence Rosenthal's *Music by Gurdjieff – de Hartmann*

24 See a transcription of this conversation in Gert-Jan Blom, *Harmonic Development: The Complete Harmonium Recordings 1948–1949* (Netherlands: Basta Audio Visuals, 2004), 132–134.

in three volumes (2006, 2007, 2010). One hundred or so recordings of the piano music exist today. Focus will now be paid to three particularly significant recordings: de Hartmann's *The Music of Gurdjieff/de Hartmann*, Keith Jarrett's *G.I. Gurdjieff Sacred Hymns*, and Rosenthal, Ketcham, and Daniel-Spitz's four-volume set *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann: Music for the Piano*. There will then be a brief discussion about recordings featuring instrumental arrangements of the piano music, and an analysis of the negative reaction that some Work members have towards recordings of the piano music.

De Hartmann's Recordings

In the 1950s de Hartmann recorded some seventeen hours' worth of tapes of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music, though only a relatively small selection of this was released. He recorded some of the music at Bartok Studio in New York, and between 1951 and 1953 twenty of these pieces were privately released on a set of six 12-inch 78-rpm phonograph records. Some of this material was reissued by Janus as a three-volume series of LPs in 1954, 1955, and 1967 and also rearranged with other pieces on LPs corresponding with the Janus volumes of sheet music. De Hartmann also made informal recordings of the piano music on an old piano in the living room of Sophia Ouspensky's estate at Franklin Farms in Mendham, New Jersey. Her grandson Lonia Savitsky recorded de Hartmann.²⁵ The Mendham recordings have a homely quality, and include introductory talks by de Hartmann as well as a barking dog in the background of some pieces.

In the 1970s, Olga de Hartmann released three LPs of de Hartmann's recordings from Bartok Studio and Mendham. These LPs also include a rendition of "Hymns From a Great Temple" by Laurence Rosenthal. In 1985, selections from the Bartok Studio and Mendham recordings were remastered and issued publically as a set of four LPs and four cassettes by Triangle Editions. In 1989 these were rereleased, with other pieces included, on the three-CD set *The Music of Gurdjieff/de Hartmann* that is currently available. It includes a 2.07-minute excerpt of a talk de Hartmann gave at Mendham, entitled "Remarks by Thomas de Hartmann," on the esoteric significance of music to Gurdjieff and his teaching.²⁶

25 Dushka Howarth and Jessmin Howarth, *It's Up To Ourselves: A Mother, A Daughter, and Gurdjieff* (New York: Gurdjieff Heritage Society, 2009), 474; Walter J. Driscoll and Gurdjieff Foundation of California, *Gurdjieff: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1985), 9; Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (16 April 2011).

26 de Hartmann, *The Music of Gurdjieff/de Hartmann*.

At the time de Hartmann recorded the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music he had been separated from Gurdjieff, and engaged with his own compositions, for a period of twenty years. Regardless, his renditions sound as if they were directly informed by Gurdjieff's teaching; he plays each note deliberately, steadily, and with noticeable measure and restraint. Gurdjieff promoted attention and effort in all activities, and advocated artists who perform impartially and 'consciously', communicating their art purely and directly to the perceiver ('objective art') so that it is unadulterated by egoistic personal expression (which defines 'subjective art').²⁷ It is known that Gurdjieff wished for pianists to listen attentively to their every note. On hearing pupil Rose Mary Nott warming up her fingers by rippling off scales and arpeggios on the piano while reading a novel, Gurdjieff asked her to refrain from playing for a month, and then to resume only for as long as she could listen attentively to every note she struck.²⁸ Gurdjieff may have required de Hartmann to play music in the same way in which he required him to practice the Movements, which de Hartmann described as follows, "I had to learn that the value of an exercise does not lie in the knowledge of its source, but in what one experiences in doing it with conscious work."²⁹

It is interesting that of all the different recordings of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music, de Hartmann's renditions correspond least with the published music; he seems to play with rhythmical inaccuracies and even occasionally with wrong or missing notes. This may be explained by the fact that, where other pianists can only rely on the published music, de Hartmann knew alternative ways of playing pieces, and remembered ways in which Gurdjieff encouraged fluidity and elaboration. Or, perhaps de Hartmann did make mistakes and this was not a concern to him; for Gurdjieff, playing 'consciously' may have had little to do with playing accurately.

Keith Jarrett's *G.I. Gurdjieff Sacred Hymns*

Keith Jarrett's *G.I. Gurdjieff Sacred Hymns* (1980) marks the first occasion where the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music was made available to the public, and on the prestigious German record label ECM (Editions of Contemporary

27 P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous: The Teachings of G.I. Gurdjieff* (San Diego: Harcourt Inc., 1977 [1949]), 26. For more on Gurdjieff's concepts of objective and subjective art see Chapter 7.

28 Howarth and Howarth, *It's Up to Ourselves*, 66.

29 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 141.

Music) to boot.³⁰ Jarrett, a highly acclaimed jazz and classical pianist, was, at the time of the recording, at the height of his career after the huge success of his *The Köln Concert* (1975).³¹ His *G.I. Gurdjieff Sacred Hymns* drew attention to the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music for a mainstream audience. Jarrett became interested in Gurdjieff in the late 1960s through fellow band member Charles Lloyd who was at that time, to quote Jarrett, “on a Gurdjieff kick.”³² Jarrett apparently read virtually all of Gurdjieff’s writings.³³ Although it is uncertain as to how much of these Jarrett really understood, it is clear from his comments in interviews and liner notes that Gurdjieff’s teachings on cosmology, vibration, and art facilitated Jarrett in conceptualising and articulating his experiences of improvisation.³⁴ Jarrett did not join the Work; a member of the London Gurdjieff Foundation simply suggested the idea of the recording to Jarrett, who says of the album,

It was the most appropriate thing for me to record at the time, given that I knew more about it than just the music, and also given that I was asked by [a member of] the London group whether I would do it or not. That was enough for me. But it was also an exercise in disappearing personality. In the so-called Gurdjieff world, personality is not a positive thing...So I used that recording as an exercise in not inflicting that music with my personality.³⁵

Jarrett’s renditions of the music are generally faster than others, and played with a more percussive articulation due to his jazz background, though he made a notable effort to control his usual eccentric vocalisations, playing

30 ECM has now produced seven recordings associated with the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music: Keith Jarrett, *G.I. Gurdjieff Sacred Hymns* (Munich: ECM, 1980); Keith Jarrett, *Music for the Film Sounds and Silence* (Munich: ECM, 1980–2008); Anja Lechner and Vassilis Tsabropoulos, *Chants Hymns and Dances* (Munich: ECM, 2004); Vassilis Tsabropoulos, *The Promise* (Munich: ECM, 2007); Trygve Seim and Frode Halti, *Yeraz* (Munich: ECM, 2007); Anja Lechner, Vassilis Tsabropoulos, and U.T. Gandhi, *Melos* (Munich: ECM, 2008); Levon Eskenian and the Gurdjieff Folk Instruments Ensemble, *Music of Georges I. Gurdjieff* (Munich: ECM, 2011).

31 Dan Ouellette, “Out of Thin Air,” *Down Beat*, Vol. 72, No. 8, August 2005, 38.

32 Ian Carr, *Keith Jarrett: The Man and His Music* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1992), 41.

33 Carr, *Keith Jarrett*, 128.

34 For a full account of Jarrett’s statements on art and creativity in light of Gurdjieff’s teachings see Johanna Petsche, “Channelling the Creative: Keith Jarrett’s Spiritual Beliefs Through a Gurdjieffian Lens,” *Literature & Aesthetics*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 2009, 152–158.

35 Carr, *Keith Jarrett*, 129.

instead with sincerity and restrained reverence. His current position towards Gurdjieff is unknown; he stopped reading Gurdjieff's writings in the 1980s but maintained that, "the impression shouldn't be that I have at some point or other refuted it."³⁶

The Wergo Recordings: *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann Music for the Piano*

Corresponding with the four Schott volumes of sheet music are four CD sets (nine discs in total). These were released on the German record label Wergo, a subsidiary of Schott Music, and entitled *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann: Music For The Piano* (1998, 1998, 1999, and 2001). Sensitive renditions are given by the three Schott editors, Laurence Rosenthal, Charles Ketcham, and Linda Daniel-Spitz. On the track-listing they remain anonymous to avoid attachment to their performances in line with Gurdjieff's view that 'identification' is the chief obstacle to 'self-remembering'. Gurdjieff stated,

In order to remember oneself it is necessary first of all *not to identify*. But in order to learn not to identify man must first of all *not be identified with himself*, must not call himself 'I' always and on all occasions...So long as a man identifies or can be identified, he is the slave of everything that can happen to him.³⁷

Thomas A.G. Daly explains, "The Work is the most important thing in these sorts of projects."³⁸ This was also the case with *23 Pieces Pour Piano*, an early recording by de Salzman and Carol Robinson, where they do not specify who plays which piece. (It was hinted to me that Robinson, a professional pianist, played the more virtuosic pieces). In accordance with most other recordings of the piano music by Work members, the front covers of the Wergo recordings, particularly those of the first and second volumes, emphasise Gurdjieff and de Hartmann, rather than the performers. This is in contrast with recordings by musicians outside the Work. For example, one of Elan Sicroff's recordings, boldly entitled *Sicroff Plays Gurdjieff*, features both names in equal size on the front cover, and on cellist Anja Lechner's two recordings that include

³⁶ Carr, *Keith Jarrett*, 130.

³⁷ Ouspensky, *Search*, 151.

³⁸ Thomas A.G. Daly. pers. comm. (16 April 2011).

instrumental arrangements of the piano music, Gurdjieff is not even cited on the front covers.³⁹

De Salzmann herself worked with Rosenthal, Ketcham, and Daniel-Spitz on their piano technique in preparation for the recordings. She emphasised to them the importance of listening, attention, presence, and playing consciously.⁴⁰ De Salzmann was not alive when the recordings were made in Heidelberg, so the final renditions were in the hands of the three pianists. The Wergo recordings are not intended to be heard from beginning to end; they are structured systematically rather than in a way that is particularly accessible to listeners. Corresponding with the Schott volumes of sheet music, all Sayyid and Dervish pieces are grouped together, all Hymns are grouped together, and so on. Work members actually discourage listening to the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music in this way; they argue that as listeners should work to be attentive to the music, pieces ought to be arranged in a way in which different styles are carefully interspersed.

According to a Work member, the Wergo recording and Schott sheet music projects were not so much inspired by a desire from within the Work to allow the public access to the music as they were to fix authentic records of the music and pre-empt unschooled interpretations of it by musicians outside the Work. De Salzmann was apparently surprised by the success of Jarrett's *G.I. Gurdjieff Sacred Hymns*, which signaled to her the need for the piano music to be protected, and in the modern world this could only be effectively achieved by fixing it from within the Work. This intention is certainly reflected in the systematic organisation of pieces on the Wergo recordings. As stated above, these recordings are almost impossible to listen to due to the strict ordering of pieces by category. It seems that Work members behind the Schott and Wergo projects primarily aimed to set the record straight, pre-empting misinterpretations of the music and establishing themselves as authorities.

Instrumental Arrangements

In spite of the above, in recent years creative arrangements of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music for instrumental ensembles have emerged, where the music is reinvented through new timbres and textures. Ensemble Resonance, a

39 Elan Sicroff, *Sicroff Plays Gurdjieff* (Brighton, England: Elan Sicroff, 2002); Anja Lechner and Vassilis Tsabropoulos, *Chants Hymns and Dances* (Munich: ECM, 2004); Anja Lechner, Vassilis Tsabropoulos, and U.T. Gandhi, *Melos* (Munich: ECM, 2008).

40 Charles Ketcham, pers. comm. (19 July 2010); Laurence Rosenthal, pers. comm. (22 July 2010).

group of six musicians from Gurdjieff Foundation groups in Paris and New York, released two recordings of arrangements of the music, *Resonance* (2002) and *Resonance II* (2004), for two guitars, oboe, piano, bassoon, and flute.⁴¹ Two recordings by pianist Vassilis Tsabropoulos and cellist Anja Lechner, *Chants Hymns and Dances* (2004) and *Melos* (2008), include Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music arranged for cello and piano and, on the latter album, also drums played by jazz drummer U.T. Gandhi. *Chants Hymns and Dances* was so successful that it topped both the US and Amazon classical charts.⁴² Sydney based pianist Dorine Tolley and soprano Christene Bauden released *Making a New Sound: Music Arrangements of G.I. Gurdjieff and T. de Hartmann* (2008), which includes arrangements of the music for harmonium, monochord, drum, flute, and voice, with lyrics by Bauden that came intuitively to her, inspired by her interest in Gurdjieff.⁴³ The Solaris Quartet arranged twenty-two pieces of the piano music for string quartet on *The Mosaic Nomad* (2010).⁴⁴ There is also *Music of Georges I. Gurdjieff* (2011), featuring arrangements of seventeen pieces of the piano music by Armenian composer/pianist Levon Eskenian for traditional Armenian folk music instrumentation. These are played by the Gurdjieff Folk Instruments Ensemble, formed in 2008 for the purpose of “creating ethnographically authentic arrangements” of the piano music.⁴⁵ The above recordings are most easily obtained on the internet through Gurdjieff-related websites, or mainstream websites like Amazon and ebay. Only occasionally will one come across such recordings in a music store.

Work Members on Recordings in Light of Esotericism

More orthodox Work members generally react negatively towards recordings of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music, arguing that these recordings allow listeners to hear the music outside of the Work environment, which devalues

41 Ensemble *Resonance*, *Resonance* (New York: Shadowrider Records, 2002); Ensemble *Resonance*, *Ensemble Resonance II* (New York: Shadowrider Records, 2004).

42 Steve Lake, pers. comm. (12 October 2010); Anja Lechner and Vassilis Tsabropoulos, *Chants Hymns and Dances* (Munich: ECM, 2004); Anja Lechner, Vassilis Tsabropoulos, and U.T. Gandhi, *Melos* (Munich: ECM, 2008).

43 Christine Bauden, pers. comm. (11 April 2009); Dorine Tolley and Christene Bauden, *Making a New Sound: Musical Arrangements of G.I. Gurdjieff and T. de Hartmann* (Sydney: EarthStar Music, 2008).

44 The Solaris Quartet, *The Mosaic Nomad* (Corfe House, England: Blue Jelly, 2010).

45 Levon Eskenian and The Gurdjieff Folk Instruments Ensemble, *The Gurdjieff Folk Instruments Ensemble*, <http://www.gurdjieffensemble.com>. Retrieved 13 January 2012;

the music and neglects Gurdjieff's intentions for it. This reticence appears to stem from an interpretation of Gurdjieff's cosmological notion of 'inner octaves' as relating to the harmonic series in music. The implication is that the finer substances of the music, which are identified with harmonics, can potentially influence people as do the inner octaves in Gurdjieff's cosmology.⁴⁶ For these Work members, when the music is heard live, the pianist can connect with listeners in the moment and transmit inner octaves directly to listeners. Donald Barrett (pseud.), a Foundation Movements pianist, stated that compositional techniques employed in the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music emphasise the subtleties of the harmonic series. Barrett gave as an example of these techniques the pauses frequently placed over final chords in Hymns, where harmonics ring through as these chords die away.⁴⁷ If it is believed that the piano music is informed by the subtle laws of Gurdjieff's inner octaves then recordings must be considered all the more degrading, as subtleties of harmonics and the finer substances they can transmit would be largely lost in the recording process.

Another concern for Work members regarding recordings of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music is that they lead to 'mechanical listening', as the listener knows what is coming in the music. Recordings also promote listening to many pieces consecutively, where in a Work context only a small number of pieces are played so that listeners can remain attentive. However, Work members accept that it is possible to listen attentively for longer periods of time if pieces are placed in the appropriate order. According to Ketcham, when de Salzmänn organised programmes of ten or so Gurdjieff/de Hartmann pieces for performances within Work groups she arranged them in a way in which more demanding pieces were carefully combined with lighter pieces. This meant that changes in mood helped sustain listeners' attention, and that the performance was unified and the whole gamut of emotions experienced.⁴⁸ It is unclear whether Gurdjieff's Law of Seven, discussed in Chapter 7, governed de Salzmänn's arrangement of pieces.

Recordings of the music could be likened to Gurdjieff's published texts. Pupils had only ever heard Gurdjieff's ideas read aloud until Ouspensky wrote *Search* and these ideas became fixed in print. People began to read, rather than hear, Gurdjieff's ideas, and the atmosphere and meaning that he originally had

Levon Eskenian and the Gurdjieff Folk Instruments Ensemble, *Music of Georges I. Gurdjieff* (Munich: ECM, 2011).

46 For the significance of inner octaves (also called inner vibrations) to Gurdjieff's cosmology see Ouspensky, *Search*, 136–137.

47 Donald Barrett (pseud.), pers. comm. (8 August 2010).

48 Charles Ketcham, pers. comm. (19 July 2010).

created in readings were then missed. This is significant because Gurdjieff argued that the process of listening to something was a way of gaining access to meaning; what one receives aurally has the ability to bypass the intellectual centre and fall directly on the much quicker emotional centre, facilitating a better understanding. In a similar way, before recordings of the music were made available the music had always been experienced in the Work environment, and played live by a pianist. One could argue that, as Gurdjieff's texts and music are now fixed and not always presented live and in the company of a Work group, they are unable to effect people in the special ways in which Gurdjieff had intended (see Chapter 8).⁴⁹

The view that one must receive teachings experientially and from within a group is prominent in esoteric or initiatory circles. Eminent scholar of esotericism Antoine Faivre described esotericism as, "a type of knowledge, emanating from a spiritual centre to be attained after transcending the prescribed ways and techniques...that can lead to it."⁵⁰ Esoteric circles aim to preserve sacred teachings and materials, guarding them from outsiders who, with no experience of the system, might misinterpret or misuse them. This is why esoteric teachings and materials are traditionally passed on through experiential and initiatory channels; this ensures that they reach members directly, and in the suitable context and correct time. Esoteric teachings are traditionally thought to be powerful, even potentially dangerous if exposed to the wrong people under the wrong circumstances. This was a view taken by pupil Jessmin Howarth, who stated that to practice Movements that Gurdjieff did not authorise was "stupidly arrogant and ill-advised, if not downright perilous, considering the delicate, mysterious balances we are dealing with...To second guess Mr. Gurdjieff's intention is a dangerous precedent."⁵¹

This discussion has paved the way to Chapters 7 and 8, which will examine the significance of the piano music to Gurdjieff's esoteric teaching. In Chapter 7 it will be shown that although Work members and writers on the music interpret the piano music as conveying 'inner octaves' and relate the music to various other Gurdjieffian concepts, these do not appear to sufficiently explain Gurdjieff's intention for the piano music. Based on a thorough assessment of his life and fundamental teachings and aims at the time of composition, Chapter 8 will then posit and examine three main purposes that the piano music served for Gurdjieff.

49 See Seymour B. Ginsburg, *Gurdjieff Unveiled: An Overview and Introduction to the Teaching* (London: Lighthouse Workbooks, 2005), 76; Charles Ketcham, pers. comm. (19 July 2010).

50 Antoine Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 5.

51 Howarth and Howarth, *It's Up to Ourselves*, 470.

The Piano Music, Gurdjieff's Cosmology and Views on Art

The aim of Chapters 7 and 8 is to position the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music within the context of Gurdjieff's esoteric teaching in order to gain insight into the possible significance and purpose of this music. Considering that Gurdjieff devoted the vast majority of his adult life to promoting, developing, and executing his teaching, it is surprising that the piano music has never before been seriously assessed within this context. The current chapter is concerned with investigating three main assumptions about the link between the piano music and Gurdjieff's cosmology and theoretical views on art. These assumptions are made by a number of writers on the music, largely insider writers. They are, first, that Gurdjieff's cosmic Laws of Three and Seven are conveyed in structures in the music, second, that the music was intended to summon listeners to hear resonating harmonics, which reflect the 'inner octaves' of Gurdjieff's cosmology, and third, that Gurdjieff intended the music to be 'objective art' (in Gurdjieff's system, objective art is devised mathematically and has the capacity to predictably affect people and phenomena). Some writers claim that the piano music *is* objective art. This chapter will interrogate these assumptions, testing their plausibility.

The chapter also provides an opportunity to explore rather complex Gurdjieffian notions of the Law of Seven, inner octaves, and objective music. For this reason a fairly detailed and critical synopsis of these key notions will be provided. Where possible, they will also be positioned and considered within the lineage of Western musical esotericism. The Law of Seven and concept of inner octaves will be examined in the first part of the chapter and then for the first time considered alongside the piano music. An exploration of Gurdjieff's concept of objective art and its possible relationship to the music will follow this.

Synopsis of the Law of Seven

In Gurdjieff's cosmological system, two laws penetrate the functioning of all macrocosmic and microcosmic processes and entities: the Laws of Three and Seven. Where the Law of Three governs the causality of every phenomenon,

the Law of Seven governs the trajectory of every process or series of phenomena.¹ Focus will here be paid to the Law of Seven, as this Law is most relevant to discussions on the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann music. This is because the Law of Seven is itself affiliated with music, reflecting the intervallic organisation of what Gurdjieff termed the 'seven-tone scale'.² That is, the Law of Seven determines that all processes and phenomena in the universe proceed in seven stages that correspond to the seven notes of this scale. Each note of the scale also simultaneously represents another complete 'inner' seven-stage trajectory or 'inner octave'. The Law of Seven influences Gurdjieff's universe in the following way. The universe consists entirely of matter of varying degrees of density. This matter vibrates in a process that proceeds in seven stages from the finest, most dynamic matter to the coarsest matter ('involution'), and from the coarsest to the finest again ('evolution'). The ascending 'seven-tone scale' can be seen as a model for all 'involving' processes, where the descending scale reflects all 'evolving' processes.³ This reflects Hermetic philosophy where every thought, emotion, and mental state is seen to have a corresponding rate and mode of vibration that evolves and involves. The notion was also taken up by Blavatsky, who held that spiritual forces in the universe circulate through seven stages or 'rates of vibration'; spirit becoming matter, and matter returning to spirit.⁴

To better understand this there will be an explanation of the mechanics of Gurdjieff's principle of the 'discontinuity of vibrations'. This principle, which underlies the Law of Seven, holds that vibrations do not develop uniformly, but with periodical accelerations and retardations. There are two places where retardation in the increase of vibrations occurs. These can be discerned by dividing the period from the moment a string vibrates at the rate of one thousand per second, to the moment a string vibrates at the rate of two thousand per second. This period can be divided into an 'octave' of eight unequal steps, where the eighth step repeats the first step. Gurdjieff found the musical 'seven-tone scale' to be the best illustration of this principle. Gurdjieff's seven-tone

1 James Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth A Biography* (Shaftsbury, Dorset: Element, 1991), 44.

2 P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous: The Teachings of G.I. Gurdjieff* (San Diego: Harcourt Inc., 1977 [1949]), 124–125.

3 G.I. Gurdjieff, *All and Everything First Series: Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1964 [1950]), 753–761.

4 Ellen B. Crystall, "Esoteric Traditions and Music in the Early Twentieth Century with an Appraisal of Composer Cyril Scott" (Ph.D. Thesis, New York University, 1996), 461–462; Tim Rudbøg, "The Mysteries of Sound in H.P. Blavatsky's 'Esoteric Instructions,'" in *Music and Esotericism*, ed. Laurence Wuidar (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), 257.

scale consists of two sets of larger intervals (*do re mi* and *fa sol la si*) and two smaller intervals (between *mi* and *fa*, and *si* and the *do* of the next octave).⁵

The sevenfold structure that characterises the Law of Seven is, then, irregular, and the two smaller intervals are particularly significant to Gurdjieff's system. Gurdjieff taught that at these intervals a natural resistance is encountered and additional energy, known as a 'shock', is needed for processes in the universe to proceed. In the rather flamboyant cosmogonical narrative of *Tales* Gurdjieff explains the reason for these shocks. The Law of Seven was formed when the 'Creator' altered his original version of the Law for the sake of preventing the destruction of his dwelling place, the 'Sun Absolute'. This alteration allowed the Law of Seven to operate so that shocks from 'outside' could be received, enabling processes to proceed, and for new processes to commence.⁶

Taking as an example an ascending scale-process; progress through the larger intervals is smooth (*do re mi* and *fa sol la si*) but two discontinuities occur between the smaller intervals (between *mi* and *fa*, and *si* and *do*) and additional energy or effort must be applied in order for the process to continue and ultimately come to completion. Gurdjieff taught that a general lack of awareness of the Law of Seven explains why people rarely complete processes in life and achieve their aims; they are constantly stuck at these smaller intervals without knowledge of when and how to apply the effort that is required for processes to proceed.⁷

Synopsis of Inner Octaves

As mentioned above, Gurdjieff's Law of Seven not only relates to the notes of a single musical scale; it entails inner scales or inner octaves. The Law holds that each of the seven stages of a scale-process includes a complete inner octave (or inner scale-process). Inner octaves continue to occur within inner octaves, though it is uncertain whether or not Gurdjieff understood the series of inner octaves as infinite. In *Tales* he states that the Law of Seven holds that all phenomena comprise seven parts, where each part has seven parts and "so on to infinity," whereas in *Search* Gurdjieff maintained, "[e]ach note of any octave can be regarded as an octave on another plane. Each note of these inner octaves

5 Ouspensky, *Search*, 123–126; G.I. Gurdjieff, *Views From the Real World* (London: Penguin Compass, 1984), 187–189.

6 Gurdjieff, *Tales*, 753–754.

7 Ouspensky, *Search*, 127–129.

again contains a whole octave and so on, for some considerable way, but not ad infinitum, because there is a definite limit to the development of inner octaves." Similarly in *Views* he states that these octaves can be subdivided into further octaves "again and again to the uttermost divisible atom."⁸

In *Search* the universe is portrayed as a 'Ray of Creation' consisting of seven 'Worlds', each representing a discrete level of matter, but where the matter of each World penetrates the matter of other Worlds. In this system, for example, the coarser substances from the World of Earth are 'saturated' with the finer substances of the higher World of the Planets, and these finer substances are in turn saturated with even finer substances of the higher World of the Sun, and so on. These finer substances that saturate coarser substances are considered inner octaves.⁹ This underscores Gurdjieff's notion of the formation of subtle bodies; through the technique of self-remembering one accumulates and transforms the finer matter from higher Worlds within the coarser physical body.

The Seven-Tone Scale

There is a misconception, found in many secondary writings on Gurdjieff, of the Law of Seven as being a replica of the diatonic major scale in music. This would imply that Gurdjieff glorified this particular scale to the level of cosmic significance.¹⁰ However, Gurdjieff only ever referred to the "seven-tone scale" or "seven-toned scale of sound"¹¹ as indicative of the Law of Seven. The equal-tempered

8 Gurdjieff, *Tales*, 827–828; Ouspensky, *Search*, 135–136; Gurdjieff, *Views*, 189.

9 Ouspensky, *Search*, 88, 136.

10 This misconception can be found in the following works: Joscelyn Godwin, *Harmonies of Heaven and Earth: The Spiritual Dimension of Music From Antiquity to the Avant-Garde* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987), 180–181; James Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth A Biography* (Shaftsbury, Dorset: Element, 1991), 351; James Moore, "Gurdjieff, George Ivanovitch," in *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*, Vol. 1, eds Wouter J. Hanegraaff, Antoine Faivre, Roelof van den Broek, and Jean-Pierre Brach (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 449; Jacob Needleman, "Gurdjieff Tradition," in *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*, Vol. 1, eds Wouter J. Hanegraaff, Antoine Faivre, Roelof van den Broek, and Jean-Pierre Brach (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 451; C. Daly King, *The Butterfly: A Symbol of Conscious Evolution* (New York: Bridge Press, 1996), 71; Jim Gomez, "Musical Proportions and Sacred Geometry in Temple Architecture," in *All & Everything: The Proceedings of the 2nd International Humanities Conference*, 1997, 76. Also, Kathleen R. Speeth, *The Gurdjieff Work* (California: And/Or Press, 1976), 23, gives a diagram of the C major scale when explaining the Law of Seven.

11 Ouspensky, *Search*, 124–126; Gurdjieff, *Tales*, 853.

major scale is an artificially organised contemporary musical structure that is not specifically discussed by Gurdjieff. Details of Gurdjieff's seven-tone scale are found in *Search*, where the pitch of each note of the scale is given as a ratio. These ratios – 1 (*do*), 9/8 (*re*), 5/4 (*mi*), 4/3 (*fa*), 3/2 (*sol*), 5/3 (*la*), 15/8 (*si*), and 2 (*do*) – indicate that the seven-tone scale comprised natural intervals derived from the harmonic series.¹² This scale was also referred to by Blavatsky in her *Esoteric Instructions*, where she argued that the different 'rates of vibration' for one's sense of hearing corresponds with the vibrations of notes in this scale.¹³ This scale is based on the intervals of the 'perfect' octave, fifth, and fourth. The second, third, sixth, and seventh notes in the scale are established by dividing intervals in relation to these three perfect intervals. Gurdjieff might be alluding to this type of tuning when he states in *Tales* that the vibrations of a musical chord played on the piano do not acquire "vivifying power" until the vibrations "have been fused with the preceding vibrations produced, starting from the center of gravity of the totality of the vibrations of the note 'sol.'" *Sol* represents the perfect fifth of the 'seven-tone scale'.¹⁴

This scale was first described in the *Harmonics* of the second century Greco-Roman theorist Claudius Ptolemy, and is known as the *syntonon* (intense or tightly stretched) diatonic scale.¹⁵ It resembles the major scale in structure but unlike the major scale it is tuned to just intonation rather than twelve-tone equal temperament, which means that these scales sound slightly different to each other.¹⁶ For example, the third note (*mi*) of the major scale is 400 cents (one cent is 1/100 of a semitone of the equal tempered scale), where the third note of Gurdjieff and Ptolemy's scale is 386 cents. This makes a difference of fourteen cents, about one-eighth of a semitone, which is, surprisingly, quite noticeable.

In *Tales* Gurdjieff states that the seven-tone scale was used in ancient times and based on the Law of Seven, and was rediscovered more recently by the

12 Ouspensky, *Search*, 125.

13 H.P. Blavatsky, *The Esoteric Papers of Madame Blavatsky*, comp. Daniel H. Caldwell (Whitefish, Montana: Kessinger, 2004), 473–474.

14 Gurdjieff, *Tales*, 869.

15 David B. Doty, *The Just Intonation Primer* (San Francisco: The Just Intonation Network, 1994), 35–38.

16 Many thanks to Dorine Tolley for her invaluable assistance with work on the 'seven-tone scale', and for demonstrating the difference in sound between the two scales by tuning her harpsichord to the ratios of the 'seven-tone scale' outlined in *Search*. Tolley is familiar with this scale and system of tuning from her time as a core member of the School of Economic Science, founded by Leon MacLaren. As a harpist in an orchestra formed in 'the School', she played and recorded MacLaren's orchestral works, which were entirely based on this system of tuning.

Chinese scientist Chai-Yoo, who was “a being with a ‘completely formed inherency to wiseacre,’” in other words a person who speaks nonsense.¹⁷ Chai-Yoo created a new system of music based on this scale, but he neglected to incorporate the connection with the Law of Seven, and this connection was lost.¹⁸ Gurdjieff must here be referring disdainfully to the invention of the major scale as he alludes to the historical figure of Chu Tsai-Yü, a sixteenth century prince and music theorist of the Ming dynasty. Tsai-Yü's innovative work on equal temperament tuning influenced the formation of the Western diatonic system of tuning. (The better-known French music theorist and theologian Marin Mersenne adopted and published Tsai-Yü's theories).¹⁹ Chai-Yoo's new system of music, Gurdjieff continued, led to the development of contemporary musical instruments, which are “heavy sound-producing instruments complimented to the degree of idiocy, and in their power incommensurably degenerated to a ‘childish degree’, such as ‘clavicymbals’, ‘clavichord’, ‘organ’, ‘grand piano’, ‘upright piano’, ‘harmonium’, and so on.”²⁰ It appears that Gurdjieff, far from glorifying the major scale as writers have suggested, was strongly critical of the scale and the system of tuning on which it is based.

The Law of Seven and Esotericism

Gurdjieff's Law of Seven firmly belongs within the lineage of Western esotericism. The number seven is primary in every department of esoteric study. There is the system of seven Chaldaean Planets, the seven metals of Alchemy, the seven *chakras* in Yoga, the seven Heavens of Islam, and the seven Rays, Globes, Rounds, and Roottraces of Theosophy.²¹ Scholar of esotericism Joscelyn Godwin suggests that this number may have become symbolically significant after the discovery of the seven visible planets, or the progression of seven fifths in music.²² Gurdjieff's idea of the universe as governed by a law that reflects a musical scale can also be traced to esoteric sources, particularly to Pythagoras, who Gurdjieff mentions five times in *Tales*²³ and describes as one

17 Gurdjieff, *Tales*, 854.

18 Gurdjieff, *Tales*, 854. For related discussions see Ouspensky, *Search*, 124–125.

19 Robert Temple, *The Genius of China* (London: Prion Books, 1999), 209.

20 Gurdjieff, *Tales*, 855.

21 Godwin, *Harmonies of Heaven and Earth*, 137.

22 Godwin, *Harmonies of Heaven and Earth*, 137.

23 Gurdjieff, *Tales*, 455, 516, 888, 891.

of two “learned beings who were initiates of the first degree.”²⁴ Gurdjieff also called four or five of his Movements “Pythagoras.”²⁵

Pythagoras of Samos (c.570–c.480 BCE) is commonly attributed with providing the first known theory of the correlation between music and the universe, though the only coherent descriptions of his teaching from antiquity date from the third and fourth centuries BCE and are overlaid with Platonic philosophy, which makes it difficult to discern the ideas of Pythagoras from those of Plato.²⁶ According to tradition, Pythagoras made these discoveries on the monochord, to which Gurdjieff refers in *Tales*,²⁷ a single-stringed measuring instrument divided by seven frets that demonstrate the derivation of natural notes, known as the harmonic series. (Although the monochord is popularly ascribed to Pythagoras, it remains untraceable prior to about 300 BCE).²⁸ By plucking the string of the monochord when held at different frets, the vibrations increase and decrease in precise ratios. This led to the idea that these ratios were universal, corresponding with ratios governing the periodicity of the planets. Music came to be considered a terrestrial blueprint, and link between the world and the soul. Comprehensive theories of the harmony of the planets were postulated – a ‘Harmony of the Spheres’ or *Musica universalis* – which music researcher Fritz Stege interprets as the ‘idea’ of earthly music that presents itself to the ear via the mathematical interrelationships of sound.²⁹

Different theories of the universe paralleling musical ratios and scales were given by ancient Greek thinkers such as Plato (c.429–c.347 BCE), Plutarch (c.46–c.120), and Ptolemy (c.90–c.198), and these permeated work that followed in the field of musical esotericism, culminating in the Middle Ages with the theories of Johannes Kepler (1571–1630), Robert Fludd (1574–1637), and Athanasius Kircher (1601–1680). Joscelyn Godwin divides all these theories into Type A, B, and C ‘Planet-Scales’. Type A Planet-Scales, attributed to the school of

24 Gurdjieff, *Tales*, 455.

25 Joseph Azize, “Gurdjieff’s Sacred Dances and Movements,” in *Handbook of New Religions and Cultural Production*, eds Carole M. Cusack and Alex Norman (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 304.

26 Christoph Riedweg, *Pythagoras: His Life, Teaching, and Influence*, trans. Steven Rendall (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005), ix–x.

27 Gurdjieff, *Tales*, 888.

28 David Creese, *The Monochord in Ancient Greek Harmonic Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), II, 97–98.

29 Peter M. Hamel, *Through Music To The Self*, trans. Peter Lemesurier (Great Britain: Element Books, 1991), 93; James Webb, *The Harmonious Circle: The Lives and Work of G.I. Gurdjieff, P.D. Ouspensky and Their Followers* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980), 509, 511.

Pythagoras, relate to the idea that the planets are placed at intervals comparable to the stoppings of a string that produces a scale. For example, Pythagoras was accredited with the theory that the whole tone interval represented the distance from Earth to the Moon, and that other intervals represented the relative distances of other planets from one another. This concept can also be found in the work of Pliny the Elder (23–79), Censorinus (c. third century), Robert Fludd (1574–1637), and Jacques Handschin (1886–1955).³⁰ Type B Planet-Scales are associated with the motions of the planets, where the different planetary rates of revolution were considered to cause the different pitches of scales. This idea is found in the writings of Cicero (106–43 BCE), Nicomachus of Gerasa (c.60–c.120), Boethius (c.480–524), and seventeenth century theorist Abraham Bartolus.³¹ Type C Planet-Scales are based on the intervallic framework on which musical scales are built, and can be found particularly in the work of Plato, Plutarch, Ptolemy and, much later, Blavatsky³² and Gurdjieff.

According to Godwin, theorists affiliated with Type C Planet-Scales used, to reflect the structure of the universe, a musical scale common to his or her own time. He understands this as “an attempt to make the heavens accord with a system of earthly music, while asserting on the contrary that the earthly system is a result of the heavenly order.”³³ However, Godwin mistakenly interprets Gurdjieff's Law of Seven as being modelled on the major scale, leading him to ponder whether Gurdjieff would have invented a different cosmological scheme had he lived in a culture or era when a different form of seven-note scale was the norm. He then suggests the Greek Dorian mode as an obvious choice of scale, being the first mode of the Middle Ages, and the mode preferred by the Demiurge of Plato's *Timaeus* for the construction of the world.³⁴

One certainly *would* question the idea of Gurdjieff's universe being governed by a law that reflects the Western equal-tempered major scale, which is a rather arbitrary musical structure. However, as was earlier established, Gurdjieff did not align his Law of Seven with the major scale, and Godwin's criticism might better be directed towards Blavatsky, who explicitly refers to the diatonic major scale in her work. Although Blavatsky does once refer to the same scale as Gurdjieff (she gives ratios for seven notes that match those of

30 Godwin, *Harmonies of Heaven and Earth*, 125–127.

31 Godwin, *Harmonies of Heaven and Earth*, 130–138.

32 Blavatsky, *The Esoteric Papers of Madame Blavatsky*, 369, 395–396, presents seven-step diagrams depicting the correlations between number, colour, and sound within the hierarchical arrangement of the universe.

33 Godwin, *Harmonies of Heaven and Earth*, 126–127. See also 138, 140, 180–182.

34 Godwin, *Harmonies of Heaven and Earth*, 181.

Gurdjieff's seven-tone scale),³⁵ she also maintains that, where numbers, colours, and sounds have different rates of vibration, "the synthesis of the whole becomes audible to us on the material plane. It is...the actual tonic of nature, held by musicians to be the middle Fa on the keyboard of a piano...the F, or Fa, of the diatonic scale." She further states that the right and left divisions of the body represent "the sharps and flats of that Fa," and that when the Fa is struck by the "exercise of will-power," the practitioner awakens.³⁶

Diatonic scales only emerged fully in musical language, and only Western musical language, from the sixteenth century. Psychiatrist Anthony Storr rigorously argues against the notion that the Western tonal system is universal; a notion that is proposed by prominent Western writers on music, such as Leonard Bernstein, Heinrich Schenker, Paul Hindemith, and Deryck Cooke.³⁷ Storr asserts that this claim is based on an inaccurate understanding of the Western tonal system as directly derived from acoustic principles discovered by Pythagoras. He contends that this is not the case as all musical scales are arbitrary inventions, and no more so than Western diatonic scales governed by equal temperament tuning, where the octave is artificially divided into twelve equal semitones. Made popular by Marin Mersenne in 1636, this system of tuning meant an equalizing of intervals between semitones so that the system's relationship to natural or mathematically accurate ratios was destroyed.³⁸

The Piano Music and Gurdjieff's Cosmic Laws

Some writers, such as biographer James Moore, pianist/researcher Wim van Dullemen, and the Schott editors, suggest that the numbers three and seven, representative of Gurdjieff's two cosmic Laws, infiltrate the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music. Moore states that the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann Hymns are "identifiable as 'ideological music'; for example, 'Holy Affirming, Holy Denying, Holy Reconciling' correlates musically with the Law of Three and the Law of Seven,"³⁹ and van Dullemen argues that, "even a superficial analysis of Gurdjieff's Hymns cannot fail to uncover examples of his laws of Three and Seven."⁴⁰

35 Blavatsky, *The Esoteric Papers of Madame Blavatsky*, 473.

36 Blavatsky, *The Esoteric Papers of Madame Blavatsky*, 383, 441.

37 Anthony Storr, *Music and the Mind* (London: Harper Collins, 1992), 52.

38 Storr, *Music and the Mind*, 52–56.

39 Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 350.

40 Wim van Dullemen, [Liner notes] *Gurdjieff's Music for the Movements* (Holland: Channel Classics Records, 1999), 15.

He attempts to demonstrate this by analysing the first hymn from "Hymns From a Great Temple," "Prayer and Despair" and "Religious Ceremony." However, van Dullemen is right to warn of the danger in "looking for something we have already found; the most unscientific approach possible!" His analyses are unconvincing as he coerces the numbers three and seven out of musical structures, when it seems that just as many other numbers can be found in the music.⁴¹ For the Schott editors, "Among the most powerful hymns are those that represent musically the great laws on which Gurdjieff's teaching is based."⁴² As stated in Chapter 5, pupils and theorists consistently regard the Hymns as separate to, and more profound than, the rest of the piano music.

One certainly could imagine Gurdjieff employing symbolic numbers or even messages in the piano music. He spoke of his skill "in the art of concealing serious thoughts in an enticing, easily grasped outer form,"⁴³ and admired the use of symbols in art, as well as stories, myths and dance, to veil truths or knowledge that might later be deciphered by future generations.⁴⁴ Accounts also show that, prior to the composition of the piano music, Gurdjieff had developed a method of encrypting messages in rhythms. According to de Hartmann, during a rehearsal for the American Movements demonstrations Gurdjieff ordered his Russian musicians to whisper a word to him. He then told them to play a foxtrot and "took up the tambourine from the percussionist and began very skilfully to strike an interesting rhythm."⁴⁵ Moments later his pupils, at the other end of the hall, recited the word that was whispered by the musicians. The implication is that Gurdjieff's "interesting rhythm" was struck in a code that was understood by prepared pupils. This corroborates with a different account in the Ohio *Daily News* of 1926, asserting that during the American Movements demonstrations Gurdjieff sat at a piano and proposed to concentrate on words written down by audience members and to convey these to pupils by 'psychic emanations': "Gurdjieff was spelling out the word on the piano by a phonetic alphabet he had

41 Wim van Dullemen, "Examples of the Laws of Three and Seven in the Music of Gurdjieff/de Hartmann," in *All & Everything: The Proceedings of the 2nd International Humanities Conference*, 1997, 161–168; Wim van Dullemen, "The Great Theme: An Analysis of One of Gurdjieff's Hymns," in *All & Everything: The Proceedings of the 8th International Humanities Conference*, 2003, 155–158.

42 Linda Daniel-Spitz, Charles Ketcham, and Laurence Rosenthal, "Preface," in *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann: Music for the Piano*, Vol. 3 (Mainz, Germany: Schott, 2002), 14.

43 G.I. Gurdjieff, *Meetings With Remarkable Men* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2002 [1963]), 7.

44 Gurdjieff, *Tales*, 488; Ouspensky, *Search*, 284.

45 Thomas de Hartmann and Olga de Hartmann, *Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff*, eds Thomas C. Daly and Thomas A.G. Daly (London: Arkana Penguin Books, 1992 [1964]), 213.

devised corresponding to musical notations. If Houdini was in the audience that night, he must have laughed his head off.”⁴⁶ Mary Bell, a journalist and visitor to the Prieuré, similarly reports that during performances at the Prieuré de Hartmann communicated information from the audience to pupils on the piano through “accentuated notes in Morse Code.”⁴⁷

Music, being numerical, is well known as an effective vehicle for encrypting and disseminating esoteric number symbolism and hidden messages to those educated or initiated enough to recognise them.⁴⁸ A number of composers working around the time of Gurdjieff utilised such symbolism in their music. Béla Bartók (1881–1945) employed the Fibonacci number series (1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13...) in his *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* (1937) and some of his *Mikrokosmos* (1926–1939), emphasising the connection between music and the mathematical order of the universe (the Fibonacci number series has been discovered to appear in biological settings, particularly in spirally organised botanical elements, where most of the parastichy orders demonstrate the Fibonacci series).⁴⁹ Olivier Messiaen (1908–1992) emphasised prime numbers in his music, as they cannot be divided by any number but themselves and thus suggested to him “occult forces.” He also considered his non-retrogradable rhythms and polyrhythms (patterns of note durations that read the same way backwards and forwards) to parallel the mathematical order of nature and the movements of the planets.⁵⁰ Claude Debussy (1862–1918), Erik Satie (1866–1925), Gustav Holst (1874–1934), and Cyril Scott (1879–1970), who were all interested in esotericism (Scott wrote around thirty books on the topic), used the Golden Section or Mean in their music, considered to be a divine ratio calculated as approximately 1.6180339887.⁵¹

Given the above, it is surprising that there are only few instances of noticeable number symbolism in the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music. These mainly involve the number three, which is sometimes emphasised in metres

46 Paul Beekman Taylor, ed. *Gurdjieff in the Public Eye: Newspaper Articles, Magazines and Books 1914–1949* (Utrecht, Netherlands: Eureka Editions, 2010), 168.

47 Gert-Jan Blom, *Oriental Suite: The Complete Orchestral Music 1923–1924* (Netherlands: Basta Audio Visuals, 2006), 52.

48 See Judith Crispin, “Evoking the Mystical: The Esoteric Legacy of Ferruccio Busoni,” in *Music and Esotericism*, ed. Laurence Wuidar (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), 267.

49 See S. Douady and Y. Couder, “Phyllotaxis as a Dynamical Self Organizing Process. Part I: The Spiral Modes Resulting from Time-Periodic Iterations,” *Journal of Theoretical Biology*, 178, 1996, 266.

50 Madeleine Hsu, *Olivier Messiaen, the Musical Mediator: A Study of the Influence of Liszt, Debussy, and Bartok* (London: Associated University Press, 1996), 26–27.

51 Crystall, “Esoteric Traditions and Music in the Early Twentieth Century,” 5, 34.

(the organisation of beats in bars), the structure of pieces, the number of repetitions of pieces, and the number of notes in motifs (recurring musical gestures). The tenth hymn from "Hymns From a Great Temple" (Vol. 4, 44–46) is a clear example of the frequent use of three, as it is in the key of C minor which has three flats, has three distinct parts with the second and third parts predominantly in 3/4 metre, and there are three musical lines throughout part two. In "Holy Affirming, Holy Denying, Holy Reconciling" (Vol. 3, 50–51) three repetitions of the main melodic motif appear thrice, and the title itself cites the three 'forces' of Gurdjieff's Law of Three. Other pieces, such as No. 5 (Vol. 3, 21), "Prayer for Mercy" (Vol. 3, 49), "Hymn for Easter Wednesday" (Vol. 3, 102–103), and No. 49 (Vol. 3, 113), are to be played three times. The following comment on an original draft manuscript from April 1926 proves that, on at least one occasion, Gurdjieff aimed to portray the Law of Three in the music:

I came into the salon and there was a struggle of body, mind and feelings inside. When I calmed down a little I wanted to show how this law works or comes through. To write it in words is not possible, so I wrote it in music.⁵²

One could argue that symbolism of the three centres can be found in the tenth hymn from "Hymns From a Great Temple" (Vol. 4, 44–46).⁵³ The Hymn is divided into three parts, where the first part begins with a soft, solemn melody that repeats, gradually becoming louder. The second part is characterised by a dance-like rhythmic *ostinato* (repeated rhythm) in the left hand over a drone. It is in 3/4, a typical dance metre. The last part is slow, contemplative, and entirely chordal, with a sense of weight and stability to the rhythm. These three parts are distinct and disassociated; a paused chord disrupts the connection between parts so that they never come together. Perhaps this arrangement of musical material, which can also be found in the seventh hymn from "Hymns From a Great Temple" (Vol.4, 38–39), was meant as a musical parable regarding the disconnectedness of the three centres, so pivotal to Gurdjieff's teaching. That is, the first part of the hymn, with its melodic statement that rises dramatically represents the emotions, the second highly rhythmic part represents the body, and the final contemplative part, the intellect. It is significant

52 Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (17 April 2011). For a discussion of the relationship between language and music see Oliver Sacks, *Musophilia* (London: Macmillan, 2007), x, 242–244.

53 Hear QR Code 9; <http://jeuj.eu/tenthymn>

Bars 19–22 of Tenth Hymn from “Hymns From a Great Temple” (Vol. 4, 45), where part one ends and part two begins.

LINDA DANIEL-SPITZ, CHARLES KETCHAM, AND LAURENCE ROSENTHAL. *GURDJIEFF/DE HARTMANN: MUSIC FOR THE PIANO*. VOL. 4. MAINZ, GERMANY: SCHOTT, 2005.

that the parts are disparate, never flowing from one to the next. See figure above. This kind of musical analysis appears to have been encouraged by pupil A.R. Orage, who stated of music generally,

I am now asking for the reading of the content of the music – apart from its sonorous form – we should be able to read parables, ignoring what they ostensibly say and getting back to the real “prose” meaning. A parable comes from an integrated statement; this is why we are not capable of writing them, or true fairy tales, which have as their content a cosmic truth.⁵⁴

Gurdjieff may have aimed to hold a mirror to the listener that reflected the predicament of the flawed individual with disconnected centres. Through the music he may have hoped to touch the listener’s sense of incompleteness. De Salzmänn stated of Gurdjieff, “At the precise moment he found it necessary, he would have a particular chapter or a particular passage read aloud in his presence, bringing suggestion or images to his pupils which put them suddenly in front of themselves and their inner contradictions.”⁵⁵ However, this interpretation of the tenth Hymn is speculation and will not be further explored, as comparable examples of such symbolism could not be found in the oeuvre.

54 C.S. Nott, *Teachings of Gurdjieff: A Pupil’s Journal, An Account of Some Years With G.I. Gurdjieff and A.R. Orage in New York and at Fontainebleau-Avon* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), 165.

55 Jeanne de Salzmänn, “Foreword,” in *Life is Real Only Then, When ‘I Am’* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1981), xi.

The number seven is far less prominent in the piano music, appearing most obviously in the first hymn from "Hymns From a Great Temple" (Vol. 4, 26–27), which includes seven 7/8 bars and a recurring ominous-sounding seven-note bass motif.⁵⁶ It is surprising that instances of sevens in the music are rare, as music could have been an ideal platform for Gurdjieff to express and demonstrate aspects of his Law of Seven. For example, he could have employed melodies built on the major scale (which is comparable but not identical in sound and structure to his theoretical 'seven-tone scale') that drifted around the notes *do*, *re*, *mi*, delaying movement to higher notes. This could have illustrated Gurdjieff's principle about the tendency for processes to become 'stuck' at the interval between *mi* and *fa*, obstructing movement to *fa*. Indeed Australian composer Larry Sitsky portrayed this in his *Second Violin Concerto*, nicknamed "Gurdjieff" (see Chapter 1).⁵⁷ However, this cannot clearly be detected in the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music. The one contender for conveying this type of symbolism is probably the piece "The Bokharian Dervish, Hadji-Asvatz-Troov" (Vol. 4, 80–83), though it may be nothing more than coincidence that the melody remains within the interval of the major third (*do* to *mi*) at the beginning, initially resisting movement to the fourth note, or *fa*, of the scale.⁵⁸

In fact, one of the most noticeable aspects of the piano music is the prevalence of modes and minor keys, which, unlike major keys and scales, have little relation to Gurdjieff's Law of Seven and seven-tone scale. (To clarify, minor keys are no more characteristic of the folk, classical, and religious music from which Gurdjieff drew than are major keys). Further, no accounts indicate that Gurdjieff had the piano music played on a piano tuned to accommodate the seven-tone scale, which might have added an experiential dimension to pupils' understandings of the Law of Seven. This idea was later undertaken by Leon MacLaren who founded the School of Economic Science in London in 1938, adopting aspects of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky's teaching. MacLaren used the seven-tone scale, which he called the natural octave, in three of his major compositions of the 1970s and 1980s: *In The Beginning*, *Isha Upanishad* and *Rig Veda*. Based on his readings of Ouspensky's *Search*, he composed music for instruments tuned exactly to these ratios.⁵⁹ However, evidence suggests that,

56 Hear QR Code 8; <http://jeuj.eu/firsthymn>

57 Patricia Shaw, "The Laws of Three and Seven: Larry Sitsky's Violin Concerto No. 2 (1983) and the Influence of Georges Gurdjieff," *Musicology Australia*, Vol. 29, No. 1, 2007, 34–35.

58 Hear QR Code 4; <http://jeuj.eu/bokhariandervish>

59 Dorine Tolley, *The Power Within: Leon MacLaren A Memoir of His Life and Work* (Sydney: Dorine Tolley, 2008), 186–201.

unlike MacLaren, Gurdjieff did not envision a direct correspondence between his music and theoretical cosmological concepts.

The Piano Music and Inner Octaves

Movements pianist Donald Barrett (pseud.), Gurdjieff's pupil Henri Thomasson, overtone singing specialist David Hykes, and Middle Eastern music writer and performer Jeffrey Werbock suggest that the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music relates to Gurdjieff's cosmology in another way; the music is a call to hear the natural harmonics resonating within notes, which they identify as inner octaves. Barrett rightly asserts that compositional techniques in the Hymns emphasise the harmonic series, pointing to the frequent use of extremely low (and thus resonant) notes, and pauses placed over final chords where harmonics can be heard ringing through as chords die away.⁶⁰ For instance, in No. 6 (Vol. 3, 32–33) and the seventh hymn from “Hymns From a Great Temple” (Vol. 4, 38–39), a pause is placed over the final chord, which stretches down to a low E, three octaves below the E above middle

The image displays a musical score for the final three bars of No. 6. The top staff is a treble clef with a right-hand part (r.h.) and a left-hand part (l.h.). The right-hand part is marked 'm.d.' and 'ff e staccato', and is annotated with '(comme des grelots) (like sleigh bells)' and 'loco'. The left-hand part is marked 'm.g.' and 'ff e staccato'. A dashed line labeled '8va' indicates an octave shift. The bottom of the image shows a harmonic series diagram with notes on a grand staff.

Last three bars, No. 6 (Vol. 3, 33).

LINDA DANIEL-SPITZ CHARLES KETCHAM, AND LAURENCE ROSENTHAL. GURDJIEFF/DE HARTMANN: MUSIC FOR THE PIANO, VOL. 3. MAINZ, GERMANY: SCHOTT, 2002.

60 Donald Barrett (pseud.), pers. comm. (8 August 2010).

C. Similarly, in the tenth hymn from "Hymns From a Great Temple" (Vol. 4, 44–46) a series of long-held low Cs, three octaves below middle C, is to be played towards the end of the piece. Intervals of the fourth, fifth, and octave are also constantly employed in the music, and these signify the main intervals of the harmonic series that can be detected by the ear. Barrett's belief is that, due to Gurdjieff's special knowledge of vibration, harmonics operate in the piano music as perceptible expressions of inner octaves, and that these harmonics have the potential to influence listeners due to the finer substance they can transmit. This view stems from Ouspensky's account of inner octaves or "inner vibrations," which have "finer substance" that can influence people.⁶¹ Barrett went on to argue that the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music was particularly vulnerable to the recording process as these harmonic subtleties, wholly significant to the esoteric quality and purpose of the music, were lost in the process.

Likewise, Henri Thomasson, a pupil of Gurdjieff from 1947, suggests that the harmonic series represents the perceptible expression of the first inner octave contained in each musical note, and implies that Gurdjieff's different forms of music (including music for Movements and harmonium improvisations) illustrate this.⁶² David Hykes states that the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music "embodies magnificently Gurdjieff's teaching of what he called 'the law of vibration,'"⁶³ and Jeffrey Werbock argues:

[Gurdjieff's] regard for the importance of special music in connection with his ideas about inner work can still be appreciated today through his collaborative effort with Mr. Thomas de Hartmann. Even though it is not possible to play microtones on a piano, they found a way to overcome that, and thanks to their efforts, we now have a tradition of polyphonic music that is based on the knowledge of the inner workings of the octave, and the inner yearnings of humanity.⁶⁴

By describing the piano music as embodying Gurdjieff's "law of vibration" and demonstrating "the inner workings of the octave," Hykes and Werbock, respectively, imply the presence of inner octaves in the music.

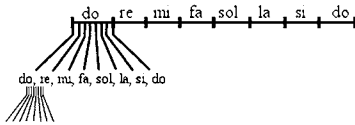
61 Ouspensky, *Search*, 135–137.

62 Henri Thomasson, *The Pursuit of the Present: Journal of Twenty Years in the Gurdjieff Work*, trans. Rina Hands (Amersham, England: Avebury, 1980), 103–104, 107–108.

63 David Hykes, "A Search For Awakened Listening" in *Gurdjieff: Essays and Reflections on the Man and His Teaching*, eds Jacob Needleman and George Baker (New York: Continuum Publishing, 1996), 313.

64 Jeffrey Werbock, *Inner Octaves and Eastern Music*, <http://www.gurdjieff.org/werbock1.htm>. Retrieved 14 February 2010.

Although Gurdjieff himself signalled that the piano music embodied inner octaves by indicating that the music was ‘objective’ (in his system objective music is based on inner octaves),⁶⁵ there appears to be no clear correlation between the harmonic series and Gurdjieff’s concept of inner octaves. For Gurdjieff, inner octaves are sevenfold in structure, where each octave envelopes a series of finer octaves, which in turn envelopes a series of even finer octaves and so on, whereas the harmonic series has no such structure. Instead, it proceeds from the ‘fundamental’ note sounded in an infinite series of composite notes, where intervals between notes become smaller and the sounds become fainter as the series ascends.⁶⁶ Compare the two diagrams below. The diagram of the harmonic series illustrates the first sixteen notes of the series beginning on a low G (notes in the diagram are approximate, as most notes in the series differ slightly from equal temperament tuning).



Inner Octaves



Harmonic Series

Also, although Gurdjieff states that inner octaves can occur in music, he describes them as inaudible and only “felt by the emotional centre.”⁶⁷ This may have drawn loosely from the ancient concept of the inaudible Harmony of the Spheres. This is the most obvious difference between the harmonic series and Gurdjieff’s inner octaves; where the harmonic series is up to a point audible to the keen ear, inner octaves are only felt, never heard.

Even if Gurdjieff did intend to communicate inner octaves through compositional techniques emphasising the harmonic series, the piano seems a strange medium in which to express them. Stringed and wind instruments have the capacity to enhance and control harmonics more effectively and sensitively than a piano ever could. In *Views* Gurdjieff even admitted, “With the piano one has to make a certain compromise,” and stated that he preferred to use instruments like guitar and violin at the Institute (de Hartmann refers to the use of these instruments in *Essentuki*) due to their more subtle tonal

65 Ouspensky, *Search*, 297–298.

66 Percy A. Scholes, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 9.

67 Ouspensky, *Search*, 297.

possibilities.⁶⁸ In *Tales* Gurdjieff also asserted that modern musical instruments (“heavy sound-producing instruments complimented to the degree of idiocy”) and equally tempered tuning, both of which characterise the piano, have inadvertently destroyed many elements of meaning in musical structure so that music has become less effective in transmitting esoteric knowledge.⁶⁹ Perhaps this is why Gurdjieff had spoken of his plan to build a “quarter tone organ,” which would have provided more subtle tonal possibilities than a piano.⁷⁰ This conception might relate to the “Luminous-Key-Board” or “Retro-Rebounding-Echoraising-Organ” that he claimed to have constructed in *Herald*, though he gives no details as to their tonal capacities.⁷¹ In *Tales* and *Meetings* Gurdjieff also demonstrates his keen interest in altering, specially tuning, or adding quarter-tone possibilities to pianos and other musical instruments.⁷²

Although the harmonic series cannot be equated with Gurdjieff's inner octaves, this does not undermine the possible significance of the frequent emphasis in the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music of low notes, which resonate at slower frequencies and thus accentuate harmonics, and perfect intervals, which represent the first intervals of the harmonic series. David Hykes may have a point when he argues that the piano music summons listeners to be sensitive to its finer sounds: “Our listening is often so conditioned, so filled up with thoughts and tensions, that it is as though we were deaf. The vibrations from subtler levels of our being, which Gurdjieff says are calling to us from within, go mostly unheard.”⁷³ Compositional devices emphasising the harmonic series in the music may well have been intended to provoke listeners to bring special attention and effort (both vital to Gurdjieff's teaching methods) to the listening experience. After all, harmonics are rarely discerned when one

68 Gurdjieff, *Views*, 186; de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 44, 51, 53.

69 Gurdjieff, *Tales*, 855, 866; Judith Crispin, “The Resounding Enneagram: The Seven Note Scale as a Model of the Universe,” in *The Proceedings of the 12th International Humanities Conference All and Everything*, 2007, 63.

70 E.C. Bowyer, “The New Cult: An Interview with the Master,” in *Oriental Suite: The Complete Orchestral Music 1923–1924* (Netherlands: Basta Audio Visuals, 2006), 68.

71 G.I. Gurdjieff, *The Herald of Coming Good* (Edmonds, Washington: Sure Fire Press, 1988), 88.

72 Gurdjieff, *Tales*, 847, 852, 867, 884, 893; Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 132.

73 Hykes, “A Search For Awakened Listening,” 320. John Allen Watts similarly argues that the piano music calls the listener to make a special effort to hear its “inner sound.” See John Allen Watts, “Introduction to the Gurdjieff-de Hartmann Piano Music,” in *G.I. Gurdjieff: Armenian Roots, Global Branches*, ed. Michael Pittman (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 41.

listens to music, and Gurdjieff may have explained this as owing to lazy or mechanical listening. To bring attention and effort to listening through accentuating the harmonic series may have been one of Gurdjieff's intentions for the piano music. This supports the third argument put forth in Chapter 8.

To summarise, it has been argued that Gurdjieff did not consistently encrypt the piano music with threes and sevens (these numbers being representative of his cosmic Laws). It was shown that in a small group of the Hymns the number three predominates, and this might indicate that Gurdjieff wished to convey the Law of Three in these pieces. One piece of evidence, a comment on an original draft manuscript, confirms that at least once he aimed to do this.⁷⁴ The majority of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music, however, shows no obvious indication of these numbers. Considering the cryptic, symbolic nature of his writings and his cynical view of ordinary written and spoken language,⁷⁵ Gurdjieff may well have employed symbolism and encrypted messages in the piano music, but this certainly was not implemented superficially or obviously. Gurdjieff constantly strove to teach pupils experientially by placing them in challenging circumstances. If symbolism does exist in the music one would imagine Gurdjieff employing it so that listeners were to struggle to decipher it; it would not necessarily appear on the surface.

As a number of insiders suggest, the harmonic series is emphasised in the piano music, particularly in the Hymns, though these insiders state or imply that the harmonic series can be equated with Gurdjieff's inner octaves, even though no feasible connection between the structure and qualities of the two can be found. Gurdjieff spoke of the existence of twenty-one musical 'clefs' as well, explaining the significance of the number as three times seven,⁷⁶ but nothing of the sort occurs in music in practice. The relationship between Gurdjieff's theoretical ideas and the structures of the piano music does not appear to be a literal one. In Chapter 8 it will be argued that, rather than wishing to portray his theoretical ideas on the surface of the music (even though music is an effective vehicle for this), he wished to affect listeners of his music experientially.

74 Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (17 April 2011).

75 See Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 10–11; Gurdjieff, *Views*, 41–44, 60–68.

76 Gert-Jan Blom, *Harmonic Development: The Complete Harmonium Recordings 1948–1949* (Netherlands: Basta Audio Visuals, 2004), 124. See de Salzmann's explanation of Gurdjieff's concepts of different 'clefs' and 'keys' in J.G. Bennett and Elizabeth Bennett, *Idiots in Paris: Diaries of J.G. Bennett and Elizabeth Bennet, 1949* (Daglingworth, Gloucestershire: Coombe Springs Press, 1980), 73–74.

Synopsis of Objective Music

Another concept from Gurdjieff's teachings commonly associated with the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann music is that of 'objective music'. Gurdjieff's views on art hinge on the distinction he establishes between 'objective' and 'subjective' art. Where objective art can predictably affect people and phenomena, having been created consciously, deliberately, and with a precise knowledge of mathematics, subjective art can only produce subjective responses in people, being the personal expression of the artist.⁷⁷ Gurdjieff used the antithetical terms objective and subjective art in his earlier teachings as given in *Search*, and later in talks transcribed in *Views* he also used the terms 'conscious' and 'unconscious' art and 'ancient' and 'present-day' art for the same notions.⁷⁸ In *Tales* Gurdjieff preferred the terms 'ancient' and 'contemporary' art where the former was created by the 'Adherents of Legominism', an ancient Babylonian club whose members based their art on knowledge of the Law of Seven. The initiates of this club, Pythagoras being among them, aimed to transmit knowledge through the generations by incorporating into their art 'lawful inexactitudes' or deliberate deviations from the Law of Seven.⁷⁹ In keeping with the prose style of *Tales*, Gurdjieff's account of ancient art is cryptic and lacks practical examples of 'lawful inexactitudes', though this ancient art is clearly comparable to objective art. Both were created with special knowledge and intentions, and engendered in people specific and deliberate effects.

Gurdjieff spoke specifically of 'objective music' which, in line with many other esoteric conceptions of special types of music, was consciously constructed so as to predictably affect people and phenomena. 'Subjective music', on the other hand, is created as a composer's personal expression and produces purely subjective responses in listeners.⁸⁰ In *Tales* Gurdjieff described the wise dervish Hadji-Asvatz-Troov's experiments with a five-toned monotonous piano melody that could wither flowers, and with a melody consisting of two tones of the lowest octave of the piano that, when played evenly and repetitively, could produce a boil positioned deliberately an inch below the left knee of the listener. A different series of notes would then swiftly remove the boil. The dervish's experiments came from his knowledge of an ancient

77 Ouspensky, *Search*, 26–27, 297.

78 Ouspensky, *Search*, 26–27, 295–298; Gurdjieff, *Views*, 179, 182–185.

79 Gurdjieff, *Tales*, 453–462.

80 Ouspensky, *Search*, 26–27, 295–298; Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 132–133; Gurdjieff, *Views*, 184–185; Nott, *Teachings*, 67–69.

Chinese science based on the Law of Seven.⁸¹ Another account of the effects of objective music in *Tales* relates to the music created by the aforementioned ancient club, the ‘Adherents of Legominism’. Through their music, different ‘impulses’ were deliberately engendered in the ‘brains’ (or centres) of listeners simultaneously; joy was engendered in the thinking centre, sorrow in the feeling centre, and religiousness in the moving centre. It can be gathered from this account that objective music affects the three centres simultaneously. In fact Gurdjieff states that music is the only art form that has the capacity to do this.⁸²

The physical and psychological effects of music on living things have received much attention through history. Ancient texts show that music was considered a powerful tool by the ancient Chinese, Indians, Persians, Egyptians, and Greeks. In the *Old Testament* David cured Saul’s melancholy by playing a harp (I Samuel 16.14-23), and blaring trumpets and shouts toppled the walls of Jericho (Joshua 6.12-20). Pythagoras is known to have said that music could improve and cure illnesses or, on the contrary, make one sick. Similar ideas were adopted by scholars in the Middle Ages, most notably in Robert Fludd’s (1574–1637) *Utriusque Cosmii*, and Athanasius Kircher’s (1602–1980) *Musurgia Universalis* and *Phonurgia Nova*. In the latter Kircher claimed that music could cure werewolves and madmen, and diagnosed a musical cure for tarantula bites. Particular musical ratios in the ears of the *tarantati* would be attracted to corresponding ratios in the venom, drawing out the poison and leaving the *tarantati* absorbed in the sweetness of the music.⁸³

In recent times, Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird explored the effects of music on plants in *The Secret Life of Plants*. After collecting an impressive body of evidence, the authors claim that plants flourish when certain types of music or musical tones are played in their vicinity. They found that Indian *ragas* and George Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue* made them sprout faster,

81 Gurdjieff, *Tales*, 891–895.

82 Gurdjieff, *Tales*, 489–491.

83 David Tame, *The Secret Power of Music* (Vermont: Destiny Books, 1984), 156; Alexander Jones, ed., *The Jerusalem Bible* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd), 1966; Frank Burch Brown, “Music,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Emotion*, ed. John Corrigan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 204; Robert Fludd, *Utriusque Cosmii*, trans. Patricia Tahlil (Edinburgh: Magnum Opus Hermetic Sourceworks, 1982 [c.1621]); Athanasius Kircher, *Musurgia Universalis* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1970 [1650]); Athanasius Kircher, *Phonurgia Nova* (New York: Broude, 1966 [1673]); Hamel, *Through Music To The Self*, 93–94; Charles Burnett, “Music and Magnetism, From Abu Ma’shar to Kircher,” in *Music and Esotericism*, ed. Laurence Wuidar (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), 19–21.

while playing the note F for eight hours a day retarded and even killed some plants.⁸⁴ Modern science continues to explore the effects of musical devices such as consonant and dissonant chords, different intervals, and varying rhythms, upon the human pulse, respiration, moods, and behaviours. In *Musophilia* Oliver Sacks deduces that one's auditory and nervous systems are "exquisitely tuned to music" and that music has a great therapeutic potential, though how precisely music relates to the complex, multi-level neural circuitry that underlies musical perception is not yet known.⁸⁵

Notions of the powerful effects of music on phenomena may originally stem from the ancient mystical conception of the universe originating from vibration, particularly in the form of the sound of sacred words. In Vedanta philosophy this is known as *Nada Brahman* (Sound God), in the Judeo-Christian tradition *Logos* (the Word), and similarly in the myths of the Hebrews, Celts, Chinese, Egyptians, Sumerians, American Indians, and Quechua Maya, the universe was created through the recitation of sacred words by the first god or gods.⁸⁶ Plainly drawing on these conceptions, Gurdjieff's universe emerged from the "emanation of the Most Most Holy Sun Absolute" designated by the neologism 'Theomertmalogos' meaning 'Word-God'.⁸⁷

If sound is considered the source of creation, it can also be considered the means of connecting to this source on the earthly plane. Thus certain types of music and sound, when played, sung, or recited in correct, sacred contexts, have come to be understood as earthly undertones of this prime sound, and to contain something of its supernatural power. Chanting and the intoned recitations of liturgy, religious formulas, and mantras were, and still are, considered crucial to the efficacy of rites, as well as to harmony between heaven and earth. This concept appears in Blavatsky's discourse, where the universe is a vibratory hierarchy of powers and forces that can be controlled through the special intonation of vibrations, or secret mantras.⁸⁸ Thus music and sound have come to be considered potent links to the gods, and to knowledge and truth, wielding a special power over the universe.

84 Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird, *The Secret Life of Plants* (London: Allen Lane, 1974), 135–145.

85 Sacks, *Musophilia*, xi–xii. For discussions on the effects of musical tempo and rhythm on listeners see also Sacks, *Musophilia*, Chapter 19.

86 Tame, *The Secret Power of Music*, 206.

87 Gurdjieff, *Tales*, 760.

88 Tame, *The Secret Power of Music*, 37–38; Rudbøg, "The Mysteries of Sound in H.P. Blavatsky's 'Esoteric Instructions,'" 256.

The Piano Music and Objective Music

Gurdjieff seems to have promoted the idea that his music represented objective art. Although he wrote almost nothing about the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music, a comment on the original final manuscript of the piece “Armenian Song” reads, “...The specific effect of vibrations on Metz, who was feverish...,” which implies that it was considered objective music. Of the music for Movements, Gurdjieff stated that his music proved identical with the original music that had accompanied the Movements he observed on his travels, “for the man who wrote it wrote mathematically.”⁸⁹ Accounts by pupils confirm that Gurdjieff also described his harmonium music as objective.⁹⁰ Gurdjieff made similar remarks about *Tales*. He said of a chapter in *Tales*, “How I write I don’t know. I speak objectivement,”⁹¹ and in an unpublished meeting in Paris in 1943 Gurdjieff stated:

...in *Beelzebub’s Tales*, I know, there is everything one must know. It is a very interesting book. Everything is there. All that exists, all that has existed, all that can exist...Subjectively, everyone is able to understand according to the level he occupies, for it is an objective book, and everyone should understand something in it. One person understands one part, another a thousand times more. Now, find a way to put your attention on understanding all of *Beelzebub’s Tales*.⁹²

Gurdjieff also implied that his Movements were forms of objective art.⁹³ Thus Gurdjieff presented himself as possessing a special knowledge of vibration that enabled him to create objective art. In a talk to his pupils Gurdjieff claimed that in his youth, by experimenting with the tuning of a musical instrument, he was able to produce predictable reactions in passers-by on the street.⁹⁴ He also stated to de Hartmann and pupil Anna Butkovsky-Hewitt, who were seated at the piano at the time, “I am going to hum you a melody

89 Gurdjieff, *Views*, 186.

90 See accounts by pupils Cecil Lewis and Dorothy Caruso in Blom, *Harmonic Development*, 62.

91 Bennett and Bennett, *Idiots in Paris*, 32.

92 J. Walter Driscoll, “The Art of G.I. Gurdjieff,” <http://www.gurdjieff-bibliography.com>, 2004, 8. Retrieved 2 March 2010.

93 Gurdjieff, *Views*, 182–183.

94 Gurdjieff, *Views*, 184.

which is an antidote to fever, for music has this hidden healing power which is generally unknown." Butkovsky-Hewitt commented,

We could even detect, within the musical vibration, the medical vibration – just as within infra-red rays there is the power to produce heat...These secondary vibrations within the music combined to create a positive power, which if treated in the right way acted in opposition to the negative elements of the disease it was to counteract...Later, Gurdjieff made similar experiments with Hartmann and myself, making several different combinations of vibration for different illnesses.⁹⁵

Gurdjieff's claims are unsurprising considering his disdain for subjective art, and considering that this implied that he himself had reached the objective state of consciousness, which appears to be necessary for creating objective art.⁹⁶ Further, as discussed in Chapter 5, Gurdjieff professed that his music, Movements, and teachings derived from ancient, esoteric sources accessed through initiates on his travels, and Gurdjieff equated ancient art with objective art.⁹⁷

Pupils generally supported his claims. Nott described an incident where the sound of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann Hymns caused tears to stream involuntarily down pupils' cheeks. He related this to Gurdjieff's story of Vitvitskaia in *Meetings*, which is based on the theme of objective music. Nott gives another account of the effects of the Hymns, which corresponds with Gurdjieff's description of the effects of the art of the 'Adherents of Legominism' in *Tales*. Here Nott states, "Listening to the music, one could observe in oneself three different processes proceeding simultaneously: one in the mental center, another in the emotional center, and still another in the instinctive center."⁹⁸ Similarly, Orage states of the music for Movements that it was music:

in which there are three separate sets of vibrations, having different effects upon the respective centers, consciously composed to induce in the hearers a striving, a wish to be. It is as if one were reduced to a state

95 Butkovsky-Hewitt, *With Gurdjieff in St Petersburg and Paris*, 115–116.

96 Ouspensky, *Search*, 73, 295–297.

97 Ouspensky, *Search*, 26–27, 295–298; Gurdjieff, *Views*, 179, 182–185; Gurdjieff, *Tales*, 453–462.

98 Nott, *Teachings*, x, 107, 188.

in which one is compelled to remember oneself in order to free oneself from the pangs of aesthetic misery.⁹⁹

Such music, asserts Orage, can only be composed by those “who understand the laws of vibration.”¹⁰⁰

Journalist and visitor to the Prieuré Carl Zigrosser also considered the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music objective:

It sang as if it had a message for me alone in the world – yet others have since told me that they had precisely the same feeling. It aroused in me at will the feelings of joy, pity, sorrow, fear, struggle, and above all an exquisite yet terrible yearning.¹⁰¹

Even Schott editor Laurence Rosenthal implies in an article that the piano music is objective, and in the third Schott volume the editors state that one finds in the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann Hymns “the most nearly objective expression in all of this body of music.”¹⁰² Researcher Gert-Jan Blom also intimates this of Gurdjieff’s harmonium music: “...even with these limited resources, Gurdjieff was able to create music that had a life-altering effect on listeners. It is clear that the science of vibrations held no secrets for him.”¹⁰³

Only maverick pupil Fritz Peters openly questioned Gurdjieff’s claims. Peters described Gurdjieff carrying out an ‘experiment’ in 1926 on a Russian girl visiting the Prieuré. Pupils had been told that the girl was susceptible to a special kind of hypnotism that involved the use of specific combinations of musical tones or chords. When de Hartmann played a piece that had been composed with Gurdjieff for the occasion, the girl went limp after hearing a certain chord, and Peters states that Gurdjieff had predicted that this would occur on this exact chord. Interestingly, Peters concluded that these experiments “may have been conducted to dramatize the existence of a form of ‘science’ which was unknown to us, but they also seemed, to some of us, just another demonstration of the way Gurdjieff would often ‘play’ with people.”¹⁰⁴

99 Nott, *Teachings*, 188.

100 Nott, *Teachings*, 188.

101 Carl Zigrosser, “Gurdjieff,” in *Gurdjieff in the Public Eye: Newspaper Articles, Magazines and Books 1914–1949*, ed. Paul Beekman Taylor (Utrecht, Netherlands: Eureka Editions, 2010), 184.

102 Laurence Rosenthal, “The Sound of Gurdjieff,” in *Gurdjieff International Review*, Vol. 2, No. 4, Summer 1999, 18; Daniel-Spitz et al., “Preface,” Vol. 3, 11.

103 Blom, *Oriental Suite*, 46.

104 Fritz Peters, *Boyhood with Gurdjieff and Gurdjieff Remembered* (London: Wildwood House, 1976), 132–134.

Whether or not Gurdjieff really believed or intended the piano music to be objective is debateable. It is difficult to know quite how one would identify an objective art form from a subjective one. As discussed earlier, in *Tales* Gurdjieff described forms of objective art as created with deliberate deviations from the Law of Seven, but he gave no comprehensible examples of how this was achieved practically. As there is no indication of Gurdjieff's Law of Seven in the piano music, it ensues that there is no indication of deviations from the Law of Seven in the music. Gurdjieff also described objective art as based on inner octaves,¹⁰⁵ but inner octaves seem quite irrelevant to music in practice, as shown earlier. Further, objective art, according to Gurdjieff, is constructed with mathematical knowledge and precision, but the piano music was a collaborative effort where de Hartmann (who presumably did not have the same special knowledge as Gurdjieff) made a substantial contribution to its composition. This does not suggest that it was composed entirely with mathematical knowledge and precision. Finally, in terms of Gurdjieff's harmonium music, pupil Cecil Lewis specifically described it affecting different listeners in different ways: "tough business men and scientists sit with the tears streaming down their faces, others are merely bored or puzzled, others again are moved but do not know why."¹⁰⁶ This response does not fit the criterion for objective art, which affects all listeners in the same way.

Gurdjieff's grand claims for his music may be more evidence of his fabricating facts for opportunistic ends: in this case to attribute authority and an otherworldly power to himself and his music. Or perhaps his claims were ultimately intended as pedagogical tools to benefit pupils; he wished to test their naivety and sharpen their powers of discrimination. He did, after all, advise them not to take him literally.¹⁰⁷ Nott even states that an aphorism learnt at the Prieuré was "[i]f you have not a critical mind by nature your staying here is useless," and admits that Gurdjieff "often exaggerated statements in order to shock us."¹⁰⁸ Gurdjieff may also have wished to challenge pupils' accepted notions of art and music. Indeed his chief intention for *Tales* (and the concept of objective art plays a considerable role in the text) was to "destroy, mercilessly, without any compromises whatsoever, in the mentation and feelings of the reader, the beliefs and views, by centuries rooted in him, about everything existing in the world."¹⁰⁹

105 Ouspensky, *Search*, 297.

106 Blom, *Harmonic Development*, 62.

107 Nott, *Teachings*, 75.

108 Nott, *Teachings*, 75–76.

109 Gurdjieff, "Preface" in *Tales*.

Whatever Gurdjieff's beliefs and intentions, what is certain is that it was generally accepted then, as it is now by some followers and writers, that Gurdjieff's music was an embodiment of his special, esoteric knowledge of vibration. It was shown how this could be considered problematic in a practical sense, just as the notion that Gurdjieff's cosmic Laws of Three and Seven infiltrate the music cannot be supported by enough sufficient evidence (there is only a small handful of examples of this). Where Chapter 7 aimed to explore common views held by insiders about the significance of the piano music, Chapter 8 will propose a number of other purposes of the piano music, based on an analysis of Gurdjieff's life and teaching at the time of composition.

Three Purposes of the Piano Music in Light of Gurdjieff's Life Circumstances and Esoteric Teaching

It was argued in Chapter 7 that the piano music was not explicitly informed by Gurdjieff's theoretical ideas on cosmology and art as (mostly insider) writers have suggested. This chapter aims to uncover the various purposes of the piano music, based on an examination of the context of Gurdjieff's life and teaching methods at the time, as well as his fundamental soteriological teaching and aims. Three arguments will be presented. The first argument addresses the question of why Gurdjieff began composing the piano music in July 1925.¹ At this time Gurdjieff faced a number of difficult circumstances: his own immobility after his car accident a year earlier, the declining health of his wife, the very recent death of his mother, financial troubles at the Prieuré, and his struggle with writing *Tales*. It will be argued that the piano music was initially composed for the purpose of occupying Gurdjieff with something new and creative while he was immobile and dispirited. It may also have been an attempt to preserve for posterity music heard in his early life. In addition, the music may have served Gurdjieff as a unique means for expressing his teaching at a time when he struggled terribly with expression in the writing of *Tales*.

The second argument of this chapter concerns some of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann Hymns, most of which were composed from 1926. It will be argued that these pieces were composed with the purpose of aiding pupils in listening to, and understanding, the complex content of *Tales*, which was regularly read aloud at the Prieuré. The third argument is considerably more involved, contending that the piano music can be viewed alongside *Tales* and the Movements as a chief teaching method employed at the time of Gurdjieff's

1 Earlier it was shown that Gurdjieff and de Hartmann composed more than twelve pieces between 1918 and July 1924. Some of these resemble Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music, where others may have been music for Movements or, in the case of "Essentuki Prayer" (Vol. 4, 69), intended to be sung by a choir. This does not contradict the fact that the circumstances Gurdjieff faced in July 1925 were catalysts for the composition of the piano music that began with great intensity and commitment from 29 July 1925. The piano music only began to be prolifically composed from this date, and circumstances of the time must have impacted on this activity.

Institute in Fontainebleau. Each of these three teaching methods – *Tales*, the Movements, and piano music – cultivated a different centre of the individual, where the music cultivated the emotional centre. Each method aimed to subvert the habits of a particular centre and generate effort and attention. In Gurdjieff's system this worked to facilitate a state of self-remembering, which is key to the ultimate goal of Gurdjieff's soteriology.

First Argument: The Piano Music as Stimulation and Distraction, as Preservation, and as a Reaction to the Problem of Writing

When Gurdjieff and de Hartmann began composing the piano music on 29 July 1925, Gurdjieff faced a number of unfortunate circumstances. He still had little mobility and energy in the aftermath of his car accident of July 1924, as is confirmed by pupils' accounts from May and June 1925.² In May C.S. Nott reported, "Gurdjieff had almost recovered, though his eyes troubled him, and he had to rest much more. He was also putting on weight physically."³ Margaret Naumburg, an American ornithologist who founded New York's progressive Walden School, and the wife of Waldo Frank (though at the time she was having an affair with her husband's protégé Jean Toomer), arrived at the Prieuré on 14 June 1925, a month and a half before Gurdjieff and de Hartmann began composing the piano music. In a letter to Jean Toomer she described Gurdjieff as looking dreadful and moving with difficulty, though he retained his interest in discomfiting pupils. He made Naumburg's first meal miserable by filling her full of whisky.⁴

At the time composing began, Gurdjieff not only faced his own physical weaknesses. He was also confronted with the declining health of his wife Julia Ostrowska, who had developed cancer in the winter, as well as his mother's death, which occurred a month before. Further, the Institute was in a dire financial state due to the expenses of these illnesses and of the recent

2 James Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth A Biography* (Shaftsbury, Dorset: Element, 1991), 214.

3 C.S. Nott, *Teachings of Gurdjieff: A Pupil's Journal, An Account of Some Years With G.I. Gurdjieff and A.R. Orage in New York and at Fontainebleau-Avon* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), 99.

4 Roger Friedland and Harold Zellman, *The Fellowship: The Untold Story of Frank Lloyd Wright and the Taliesin Fellowship* (New York: Regan, 2006), 106; James Webb, *The Harmonious Circle: The Lives and Work of G.I. Gurdjieff, P.D. Ouspensky and Their Followers* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980), 313–314.

Movements demonstrations.⁵ Gurdjieff's inactivity in the latter half of 1924, while recovering from his accident, also added to the financial strain. To exacerbate the situation Gurdjieff was, at the time he began composing, desperately struggling with work on his principal text *Tales*.

Thus the piano music surfaced at an especially problematic time for Gurdjieff. It is possible, then, that he began composing this music for the simple purpose of occupying himself with something new and creative while he was immobile and dispirited. This activity may have distracted him from the difficulties he faced. Indeed he stated that while recovering from his car accident he would take car trips "to relieve this suffering by taking in different impressions."⁶ He also explained that he began writing *Tales* after the accident to, "give my thoughts another direction and thus diminish these moral sufferings."⁷ These statements might also pertain to the composition of the piano music.

Interestingly, original manuscripts of the piano music reveal that it was in this early period of composing when titles of pieces were most playful. Gurdjieff used as the basis for many of these titles pupils' names and situations at the Prieuré. This trend did not continue much beyond 1925. Some titles of unpublished pieces from late 1925 include "Mido" (the nickname of Gurdjieff's brother Dmitri), "Julia Osipovna" (Gurdjieff's wife), "Doctor" (pupil Doctor Stoernal), "Metz" (pupil Bernard Metz), and "Adash" (the nickname of Gurdjieff's father). Unpublished comments and subtitles in original manuscripts from late 1925 include "Mr de Salzmann Sleeps" and "Conversation of Julia Osipovna and Rachmalievich." The latter appears above a piece with a repetitive bass line and wandering melody that seems to mimic a conversation.⁸ This evidence supports the argument that in the earliest phase of composing, the piano music served as stimulation and distraction for Gurdjieff.

Another reason for Gurdjieff to begin composing at this time might be his sudden concern to preserve the music of his youth and early life, spurred by the reminders of mortality that confronted him: the recent death of his mother, his wife's ailing health, and his own near-fatal car accident that occurred a year

5 Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 329. Gurdjieff's affectionate accounts of his mother in G.I. Gurdjieff, *Life is Real Only Then, When 'I Am'* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1981), 36–39, affirm their close relationship; G.I. Gurdjieff, "The Material Question," in *Meetings With Remarkable Men* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2002), 298.

6 Gurdjieff, "The Material Question," 298. For Gurdjieff, 'impressions' signify energy received through sense-experiences.

7 G.I. Gurdjieff, *The Herald of Coming Good* (Edmonds, Washington: Sure Fire Press, 1988), 41.

8 Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (17 April 2011).

earlier. Having been concerned primarily with experiential physical and interactive teaching methods prior to his accident (see Chapter 2) and having, after his accident, begun two completely new activities – writing a book and composing the piano music – Gurdjieff seems to have, for the first time, seriously considered the issue of preservation and transmission to future generations. Indeed de Hartmann himself gives as an explanation for the composition of the piano music, “a means of recording his music for posterity.”⁹ (It is maintained in the following two arguments that later, from 1926, the piano music became fundamentally experiential in nature; Gurdjieff was interested in its effects on pupils. The music, however, like *Tales*, was recorded on paper unlike his earlier modes of teaching. Even his music for Movements was not initially notated by de Hartmann but memorised, as discussed in Appendix A. So preservation may have become a consideration, at least at the time he began composing in 1925).

A final reason why Gurdjieff may have turned to composing the piano music in July 1925 concerns his struggle with writing *Tales*. Composing commenced only seven months after he began *Tales*, the writing of which became for him a desperate battle with self-expression. Gurdjieff believed, along with other esoteric thinkers and also Modernist writers of the day, that written language is inherently limited¹⁰ (T.S. Eliot demonstrates the ability of words to betray the intentions of the speaker in the character of Prufrock, who finds it “impossible to say just what I mean”).¹¹ In comparison, music was, for Gurdjieff, “a beacon light for the correct understanding of one of the aspects of truth.”¹² Music, a medium unencumbered by linguistic and conceptual barriers, may well have particularly appealed to him at this time. Although it was written later in April 1926, Gurdjieff did make the comment on an original manuscript of the piano music,

I came into the salon and there was a struggle of body, mind and feelings inside. When I calmed down a little I wanted to show how this law works or comes through. To write it in words is not possible, so I wrote it in music.¹³

9 Thomas de Hartmann and Olga de Hartmann, *Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff*, eds Thomas C. Daly and Thomas A.G. Daly (London: Arkana Penguin Books, 1992 [1964]), 246.

10 G.I. Gurdjieff, *Meetings With Remarkable Men* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2002 [1963]), 10–11; G.I. Gurdjieff, *Views From the Real World* (London: Penguin Compass, 1984), 41–44, 60–68.

11 See Dennis Brown, *The Modernist Self in Twentieth-Century English Literature* (London: Macmillan Press, 1989), 33.

12 Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 23.

13 Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (17 April 2011). For a discussion of the relationship between language and music see Oliver Sacks, *Musophilia* (London: Macmillan, 2007), x, 242–244.

Perhaps then Gurdjieff employed, or experimented with, music as a mode of expression for his teaching. As stated in Chapter 7, Gurdjieff did not, at least in an obvious way, consistently portray in his music theoretical principles of his cosmology (though instances of threes and sevens, signifying his cosmic laws, can be found in some pieces). He may, however, have aimed to express aspects of his teaching through the music in a more subtle way, communicating these through the atmosphere and feelings that his music generated. This might explain why he first introduced music to his teaching methods in Essentuki in 1918 at the time that he first presented to pupils his teaching on the serious limitations of language.¹⁴

Gurdjieff describes writing *Tales* as a last resort after his earlier teaching methods had failed him. He felt he was “forced to adopt” the profession of a writer and had “not the slightest wish to write, but attendant circumstances, quite independent of me, constrain[ed] me to do so.”¹⁵ *Tales* was constantly revised, edited, and retranslated, and the entire process was a struggle for Gurdjieff in fixing his ideas linguistically. He wrote the text in his native language Armenian but also dictated it in Russian and a pidgin French as he said that no single language gave him sufficient freedom of expression for his complicated ideas.¹⁶ He once remarked, “to write my books for conscious men would be easy but to write it for donkeys – very hard.”¹⁷ Editor A.R. Orage reported in March 1925 that the first instalment of *Tales* was unintelligible. This led Gurdjieff to contemplate suicide in November 1927.¹⁸

The notion that ordinary language is incapable of delivering truths is common among esoteric or occultist thinkers. Communication Studies scholar Joshua Gunn argues that this is because occultist thinkers consider truth and knowledge as ineffable and residing outside of human signification. Language, being humanly and thus imperfectly constructed, is then incapable of characterising truth. Gunn asserts that occult discourse is the result of a rhetorical antinomy, summarised by the contradictory statement, “The truth is ineffable,

14 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 40.

15 G.I. Gurdjieff, *All and Everything First Series: Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1964 [1950]), 4; Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 6. See also Gurdjieff, *Herald*, 42; Gurdjieff, *Life is Real*, 4, 31.

16 Fritz Peters, *Boyhood with Gurdjieff and Gurdjieff Remembered* (London: Wildwood House, 1976), 28; William P. Patterson, *Struggle of the Magicians: Why Uspenskii Left Gurdjieff* (California: Arete Communications, 1996), 114.

17 Patterson, *Struggle of the Magicians*, 121.

18 Nott, *Teachings*, 92; J.G. Bennett, *Gurdjieff: Making a New World* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 168; Gurdjieff, *Life is Real*, 33–34.

but let me tell you about it anyway.”¹⁹ He shows that occultists aim to transcend human language in three different ways: by either keeping silent, employing an imaginative dialectic, or utilising a special vocabulary that is claimed to have been discovered or divinely inspired. The latter might access spiritual realities by way of ritual, chant or the like.²⁰ Gurdjieff employed all three techniques, though he did not claim that the special vocabulary of *Tales* was divinely inspired. The point to be made here is that music may also have fulfilled this role for Gurdjieff, being a vehicle that could enable him to express his ideas in a way that transcended written and spoken language.

Music has been praised since antiquity for its unique ability to surpass linguistic and conceptual barriers. German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer went so far as to argue that music, being non-conceptual, was the incarnation of reality and highest manifestation of “the Will,” a universally operating force. Schopenhauer believed that through music one could attain objective knowledge of the world, or ‘noumenon.’²¹ His views derive from Plato, who argued that the sounds of music, unaccompanied by words, are the primary representation of the Ideas, and that the soul is structured according to harmonic principles.²² Many twentieth-century artists and composers adopted these views. Wassily Kandinsky argued that music, being the least material of the arts, is devoted to the expression of the artist’s soul, and Anton Webern understood music as a direct expression of the divine essence of the universe.²³ In contrast, psychiatrist Anthony Storr refutes the idea that music is in any way universal, stating that music employs a language of tones in arbitrary patterns that are relative to different cultures, and thus require as much conceptual thought as written language.²⁴

19 Joshua Gunn, “An Occult Poetics, or, The Secret Rhetoric of Religion,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 2, Spring 2004, 42.

20 Gunn, “An Occult Poetics,” 32–33.

21 Arthur Schopenhauer, “The World as Will and Idea,” in *Contemplating Music: Source Readings in the Aesthetics of Music*, eds Ruth Katz and Carl Dahlhaus, Vol. 1 (New York: Pendragon Press, 1987), 150.

22 Ruth Katz and Carl Dahlhaus, “Plato,” in *Contemplating Music: Source Readings in the Aesthetics of Music*, Vol. 1 (New York: Pendragon Press, 1987), 9.

23 Wassily Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, trans. M.T.H. Sadler (New York: Dover Publications, 1977), 27–28; Wouter J. Hanegraaff, “The Unspeakable and the Law: Esotericism in Anton Webern and the Second Viennese School,” in *Music and Esotericism*, ed. Laurence Wuidar (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), 334. See also Madeleine Hsu, *Olivier Messiaen, the Musical Mediator: A Study of the Influence of Liszt, Debussy, and Bartok* (London: Associated University Press, 1996), 25.

24 Anthony Storr, *Music and the Mind* (London: Harper Collins, 1992), 145–146.

Argument Two: The Hymns as a Supplement to Understanding *Tales*

Firsthand accounts by de Hartmann, Bennett, Nott, and Zigrosser reveal that some of the piano music was played for group readings of *Tales* at the Prieuré.²⁵ As will soon be shown, evidence suggests that Gurdjieff did not initially compose the music for this purpose but five months into composing he began employing it in this way. Readings were held in America, England, and France until Gurdjieff's death in 1949, and some Foundation groups and other Gurdjieff-centred groups still continue the practice today.²⁶ In Gurdjieff's lifetime, the piano music was played for readings only until 1929 while de Hartmann was still a pupil. The last documented period in which the music was played for this purpose was between January and April 1929, when Gurdjieff and the de Hartmanns were in New York. There, readings of *Tales* and *Meetings* were given and the piano music was sometimes played after these readings, while on other occasions the music was played alone.²⁷ (This occasion in New York may mark the first time that a draft of *Meetings* was read aloud, as Gurdjieff had only commenced it in 1927 or 1928, and was still working on it through the early 1930s. According to pupils, readings at the Prieuré were centred on *Tales*. This discussion will focus on readings of *Tales*). It seems that de Hartmann always played the music for readings, though it is possible that other pupils such as Carol Robinson and de Salzmann filled in when he was unavailable.

Readings enabled Gurdjieff to study the reactions of listeners to *Tales* and, as he wanted pupils to make great efforts to understand his ideas, he would then alter parts to make them more difficult.²⁸ Readings also allowed pupils to listen to, rather than read, Gurdjieff's ideas, and this was meant to bring them to a deeper understanding of these ideas. For Gurdjieff, listening was a way of gaining access to more profound meanings; the mannerisms and rhythmic and tonal expression of one's speech conveyed more of the text's meaning than would words on a page. Further, in Gurdjieff's system what one receives aurally had the ability to bypass the slower intellectual centre and reach directly the

25 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 246; Bennett, *Making a New World*, 167; Nott, *Teachings*, 178; Carl Zigrosser, "Gurdjieff," in *Gurdjieff in the Public Eye: Newspaper Articles, Magazines and Books 1914–1949*, ed. Paul Beekman Taylor (Utrecht, Netherlands: Eureka Editions, 2010), 183.

26 Joseph Azize, pers. comm. (17 August 2012).

27 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 252–253.

28 Sophia Wellbeloved, *Gurdjieff, Astrology and Beelzebub's Tales* (New York: Solar Bound Press, 2002), 30; Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 222.

much quicker emotional centre, facilitating a better understanding.²⁹ Zigrosser states of Gurdjieff, “It is interesting to notice that even in revising his own book, he often had someone read it aloud to him, for his grasp of it was better through his ears than through his eyes. With us in the West, the eye has become almost our only means of absorbing ideas.”³⁰

Gurdjieff’s views on listening and reading aloud may stem from Plato, who argued that the fleeting and immediate quality of speech mirrored reality much better than did writing, and that speech inspired a non-linguistic intuition between participants, where writing undermined the possibility of interpersonal inspiration and intuition. In the Sufi tradition too, hearing is the most highly valued sense as the ear is considered key to spirituality and gnosis. This is why scriptures are not read silently, but are recited to others or to oneself. Muslim theologian Abu Hamed Al Ghazzali stated, “There is no way of extracting their hidden things save by the flint and steel of listening to music and singing, and there is no entry into the heart save by the antechamber of the ears.”³¹

The exercise of listening attentively to readings and the accompanying music may also have been intended to prepare Gurdjieff’s pupils for listening to their ‘inner sound’. Gurdjieff said,

You hear [music] from inside when no music playing outside. This take a long time, hard work. You do same movement and listen to same music until you no longer hear or feel with body but with consciousness... Outside is noise of world. Inside is music of self.³²

This is in line with Hindu doctrine in the *Nadabindupanishad*, which gives instructions for the yogic liberative practice of listening to inner sound or *nada*, one level of the manifestation of the Absolute as Sound. Similarly, Blavatsky stated in *The Voice of the Silence* that one must aim to hear the

29 Seymour B. Ginsburg, *Gurdjieff Unveiled: An Overview and Introduction to the Teaching* (London: Lighthouse Workbooks, 2005), 76.

30 Zigrosser, “Gurdjieff,” 180.

31 Gilbert Rouget, *Music and Trance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 257–258. See also Gunn, “An Occult Poetics,” 33–34; Jack Goody and Ian Watt, “The Consequences of Literacy,” in *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, ed. Jack Goody (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 50; Judith Becker, *Deep Listeners: Music, Emotion and Trancing* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 81–82.

32 Paul Beekman Taylor, *Shadows of Heaven: Gurdjieff and Toomer* (York Beach, Maine: Samuel Wesley, 1998), 183. See also Gurdjieff, *Tales*, 904–906, where he states that all beings have a specific sum total of vibrations.

Soundless Sound or The Voice of the Silence, which is the voice of one's inner God or higher self.³³

Regarding the role of the piano music during readings de Hartmann explains: "After supper, when everyone was gathered together, the most recently harmonized music was played, then the latest text of Beelzebub was read, after which music was played again."³⁴ This might suggest that all three categories of piano music were employed for readings of *Tales* (these categories are outlined in Chapter 5), though de Hartmann also maintained that, "Mr Gurdjieff's music had great variety,"³⁵ and Bennett divided the oeuvre into three groups:

He composed music to be played before the reading of particular chapters, and demonstrated the difference in understanding that this made possible. Other pieces were evocative of the life of Central Asia and based on recollections of the sacred music and dancing of various dervish orders. There was also a remarkable group of religious pieces, predominantly on the theme of death and resurrection.³⁶

It appears that some, not all, of the piano music was employed for readings. The music itself suggests this; the solemn Hymns seem more fitting for accompanying readings of the challenging themes of *Tales* than the Asian and Eastern Folk Music and Sayyid and Dervish Music, which are more indicative of musical reminiscences from Gurdjieff's early life. Indeed Zigrosser explicitly stated that the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann pieces that evoked early church music (in other words the Hymns) were "composed for the prayers and invocations in his book, under the general title of Temple Music."³⁷ It is here proposed that the Hymns alone were employed for readings of *Tales*. As most of the Hymns were composed from January 1926, this would mean that Gurdjieff did not initially compose the piano music for the purpose of supporting readings, but only later employed it in this way. Unfortunately there is little definitive evidence clarifying exactly when the piano music was first used for readings, and specifically which pieces were employed in this way.

33 Gregory P. Fields, *Religious Therapeutics* (New York: State University of New York, 2001), 156; Tim Rudbøg, "The Mysteries of Sound in H.P. Blavatsky's 'Esoteric Instructions,'" in *Music and Esotericism*, ed. Laurence Wuidar (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), 260.

34 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 246.

35 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 247.

36 Bennett, *Making a New World*, 167.

37 Zigrosser, "Gurdjieff," 183.

Only titles of a small group of pieces, all of which are Hymns, give clues about which pieces were composed for readings. As discussed in Chapter 6, a number of original titles of pieces given by Gurdjieff were later altered for the Janus and Schott editions of the music. In some cases titles were even invented for these editions. To be clear, Gurdjieff himself gave all the following titles. One title features the name of the protagonist of *Tales*, “Rejoice, Beelzebub” (Vol. 3, 48–49), and may refer to the ceremony at the end of the text where Beelzebub is granted back his horns and the “sacred canticle entitled ‘I Rejoice’” is sung for him.³⁸ Another title, “Atarnakh, Kurd Song” (Vol. 1, 34–35), cites Atarnakh, a Kurdish philosopher in *Tales*. One piece links to the chapter of *Tales* entitled “The Bokharian Dervish Hadji-Asvatz-Troov,” which explores themes of objective music. The piece was originally untitled, with a comment in the original final manuscript, “After a reading of Hadji-Asvatz-Troov, the Beelzebub chapter of the same name, after supper.”³⁹ In the Schott edition it was entitled “The Bokharian Dervish, Hadji-Asvatz-Troov” (Vol. 4, 80–83).

Another title, “Hymn to our Endless Creator” (Vol. 3, 90–91), must refer to the Creator of *Tales*, who is designated “Creator Endlessness,” “His Endlessness,” and various other such titles.⁴⁰ In the original final manuscript of this piece Russian words are included, which derive from a Hymn sung at Beelzebub’s aforementioned ceremony in *Tales* before he is granted back his horns.⁴¹ This indicates that the piece was definitely linked with *Tales*, and also that it was to be sung. Finally, on a private recording of de Hartmann’s renditions of the piano music he introduces the fourth hymn from “Hymns From a Great Temple” (Vol. 4, 32–33) as “March of the Heropass,” which suggests that Gurdjieff made a connection between this piece and the concept of ‘Heropass’ (the flow of time) in *Tales*.⁴² All of the above-mentioned pieces, with the exception of “Atarnakh, Kurd Song,” were composed after 1925, which supports the argument that Gurdjieff did not begin composing the piano music for the purpose of supporting readings, but only later properly explored this possibility.

Accounts suggest that during readings the accompanying piano music was intended to express emotionally the intellectual concepts of *Tales*. This supports the idea, in the upcoming third argument of this chapter, that *Tales* was directed towards cultivating the intellectual centre and the piano music, the emotional centre. It also links with the earlier argument that Gurdjieff began

38 Gurdjieff, *Tales*, 1177–1178.

39 Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (16 April 2011).

40 See Gurdjieff, *Tales*, 52, 54, 769, 1128.

41 Gurdjieff, *Tales*, 1174.

42 Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (16 April 2011).

composing the music as a reaction to his struggles with writing *Tales*; he saw music as a unique mode of expression that overcame the linguistic problems he faced when writing. Zigrosser wrote in *New Republic* magazine in 1929 that he was told that Gurdjieff “plans to compose a body of music which will express the same meaning, in the world of emotions, that he is expressing for the mind in his book, making the two complementary to each other.”⁴³ Nott also reports that Orage was disappointed during a trip to New York to be without piano music to accompany the reading of a chapter of *Tales*, “since in it the ideas are realized emotionally as in the book they are realized intellectually.”⁴⁴ This notion is confirmed by Bennett: “Gurdjieff said that certain ideas could be grasped only if the emotions are tuned into them. He composed music to be played before the reading of particular chapters, and demonstrated the difference in understanding that this made possible.”⁴⁵ It seems that, while listening to readings of *Tales* was considered superior to reading it silently to oneself, listening to music in conjunction with listening to readings of *Tales* was seen to enhance one’s understanding of the text even further.

This accords with Gurdjieff’s view that to best understand something it is necessary to listen with at least two of one’s three centres. He stated that when more than one centre is engaged while listening, one gains a better understanding of a given thing: “If you wish to hear new things in a new way, you must listen in a new way...This new method consists in the following: when thought is already there, try to feel. When you feel something, try to direct your thoughts on your feeling.”⁴⁶ This might explain why the piano music was played alongside readings of *Tales*. It might also explain why, according to Ouspensky, in Essentuki in 1917 Gurdjieff sometimes presented his teaching “while music was being played,” and why Gurdjieff had the piano music played before giving talks in New York in 1929.⁴⁷ By allowing people to hear music in tandem with receiving his ideas, Gurdjieff aimed to engage both the emotional and intellectual centres, enabling a fuller understanding of these ideas. Thus it is here argued that some of the piano music worked to reinforce and further pupils’ understandings of *Tales*.

This reflects the principle behind the Sufi *sama* ritual, that music accompanying a text allows for a better understanding of that text. *Sama*, literally

43 Zigrosser, “Gurdjieff,” 183.

44 Nott, *Teachings*, 178.

45 Bennett, *Making a New World*, 167.

46 Gurdjieff, *Views*, 264. See also 169–170.

47 P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous: The Teachings of G.I. Gurdjieff* (San Diego: Harcourt Inc., 1977 [1949]), 346; Gurdjieff, *Life is Real*, 127.

'listening' or 'audition', is practiced by nearly all Sufi Orders, with the exception of the Naqshbandiyya who share the aversion to music with exoteric Islamic orthodoxy. There are three main components to the *sama* ritual: listening to recitations of the Qur'an, listening to recitations of poetry, and listening to music, all of which are considered capable of inducing *wajd* or ecstasy.⁴⁸ While the Qur'an is never set to music, poetry is often sung to an instrumental accompaniment and, according to theorist Leonard Lewisohn, this "poetry with musical accompaniment constitutes the main staple of the mystical soul."⁴⁹ That is, listening to poetry sung or accompanied by music was considered to be more powerful for the listener than listening to Qur'anic recitation because poetry and music are aesthetically pleasing and preeminently human, and the listener can best connect with them and thus understand them.⁵⁰ Lewisohn affirms that during *sama*, "[m]usic constitutes the poem's emotional body of water; the poem-fish is born and swims in the ocean of *Sama* – for without music, the vertical dimension of *Sama*, the poem expires on the dry land of literal and horizontal meanings."⁵¹ Thirteenth century Sufi theorist Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Tusi also stated that listening to poetry sung "consists in mystical deliberation over the hidden mysteries [concealed] within the highly refined poetry...Such audition induces them [participants] to...become aware of spiritual subtleties and mysteries."⁵² A similar philosophy on listening is found in the Turkic *ashokh* tradition that was known to Gurdjieff; an *ashokh's* ideal listener is, as defined by ethnomusicologist Yildiray Erdener, someone who would "listen with his eyes, his mind, his heart, and his imagination."⁵³

So far it has been argued that in July 1925 Gurdjieff turned to composing piano music as a reaction to a number of grim circumstances he then faced. Composing the music may have served as a form of stimulation and distraction, as well as preservation of music heard in his early life. The music could also have served Gurdjieff as a unique means of expression at a time when he struggled terribly with expression in the writing of *Tales*. None of these possibilities are mutually exclusive, and any or all could have contributed towards Gurdjieff's motivation to compose this music. It was then argued that from 1926 Gurdjieff began to incorporate the piano music into his teaching by

48 Leonard Lewisohn, "The Sacred Music of Islam: Sama in the Persian Sufi Tradition," *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 6, 1997, 4–5; Rouget, *Music and Trance*, 258.

49 Lewisohn, "The Sacred Music of Islam," 21. See also 20.

50 Rouget, *Music and Trance*, 269.

51 Lewisohn, "The Sacred Music of Islam," 15.

52 Lewisohn, "The Sacred Music of Islam," 15.

53 Yildiray Erdener, *The Song Contests of Turkish Minstrels: Improvised Poetry Sung to Traditional Music* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1995), 161.

having pieces played for pupils in conjunction with readings of *Tales*. Gurdjieff may not have initially anticipated the success of this new collaboration with de Hartmann, and the positive reactions of pupils to the piano music. Perhaps, from 1926, he began to see different possibilities for the music, which led him to employ some of the Hymns during readings to aid and further pupils' understandings of the text by engaging the emotional centre.

Argument Three: Three Chief Teaching Methods for the Three Centres

This third and final argument will be made with explicit reference to Gurdjieff's esoteric teaching, particularly to his soteriology, views on the three centres, and concept of self-remembering. It is well known that Gurdjieff experimented with a range of teaching methods involving intensive manual and domestic work,⁵⁴ cooking, eating,⁵⁵ the consumption of alcohol, addressing provocative remarks to pupils, and a variety of challenges customised for particular pupils. However, it is argued here that Gurdjieff implemented three chief teaching methods throughout the years of his Institute in Fontainebleau (1922–1932).⁵⁶ These were his primary text *Tales*, the Movements, and the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music, where each of these methods cultivated a particular centre; the intellectual, physical, and emotional centres respectively.

This argument is not common among writers, probably for these two reasons. First, most writers on Gurdjieff do not consider the piano music a

54 For a descriptive account by Bennett see J.G. Bennett, *Witness: The Story of a Search* (New Mexico: Bennett Books, 1997), 85–99.

55 Pupil René Zuber, *Who are You Monsieur Gurdjieff?* (London and New York: Penguin Arkana, 1980), 26–27, explains, “He cooked scientifically, like a dietician who foresees the action on the organism of each dish, each flavouring, each spice...Eating is the sacred act by which we absorb and assimilate what Gurdjieff called ‘the first food’...It cannot be done in the way one gives swill to a pig, while the mind and feelings are given over to their own affairs or dreams. This is why the meals at Mr Gurdjieff’s table always began in silence and the dialogues – questions and answers, that so often resembled a tournament in the lists – were kept for the end.” De Hartmann, *Our Life*, 237, also states, “To take life fully was one of Mr Gurdjieff’s principles. During our life with him we tried every sort of Eastern dish, some extremely exotic. He told us that in the East they have always paid particular attention to the refinement of food elements.”

56 Gurdjieff closed and disbanded the Institute in Fontainebleau in May 1932. See James Moore, “Gurdjieff, George Ivanovitch,” in *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*, Vol. 1, eds Wouter J. Hanegraaff, Antoine Faivre, Roelof van den Broek, and Jean-Pierre Brach (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 447.

teaching method at all. In fact it is a rare occasion when the music is even mentioned in the vast quantity of secondary texts on Gurdjieff and his teaching. Take, for example, two of the most rigorous and comprehensive examinations of Gurdjieff's life and teaching: Webb's *The Harmonious Circle* and Beekman Taylor's *G.I. Gurdjieff: A New Life*. In Webb's 608-page tome he casually mentions the piano music once, while Beekman Taylor says nothing beyond "Gurdjieff worked with Hartmann composing new music" in the ten pages he devotes to an account of the years 1925 to 1927.⁵⁷

However, according to Schott editor Laurence Rosenthal, de Salzman himself had said in his presence that Gurdjieff's teaching had three main vehicles: the ideas, the Movements, and the music.⁵⁸ Surprisingly, only three writers have taken up this argument: James Moore, Wim van Dullemen, and Seymour B. Ginsburg, co-founder of the Gurdjieff Institute of Florida. Moore and van Dullemen's arguments accord with that presented here. Moore states, "Gurdjieff promotes the harmonious development of head, heart, and hand...through his writings, music, and Movements" and van Dullemen asserts, "the books, music and Movements were not only expressions of the same vision, they are complementary to each other – representing intellect, heart and body – and were certainly intended that way by Gurdjieff."⁵⁹ Unfortunately they do not elaborate. Ginsburg, on the other hand, interprets each method as an effort to reach different types of people; "certain types of people will never open a book, others cannot sense rhythms, still others are tone-deaf. Gurdjieff attempted to reach them all."⁶⁰ Ginsburg's statement does not support the argument given here, which is that each method was intended to cultivate a particular centre of the individual.

The second reason why this argument is uncommon is that writers routinely explain Gurdjieff's various teaching methods as aimed at cultivating all three centres simultaneously. Taking the piano music as an example, pianist Elan Sicroff argues that this music was intended to affect the body through sound and rhythm, the intellect through melody lines, and the emotions through harmonies. Similarly, pupil Nott stated that while listening to the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann Hymns one could observe different processes occurring in each centre simultaneously.⁶¹ Certainly one could imagine that listening to music might be understood to aid a restoration of the links between the centres in

57 Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*, 240–241; Beekman Taylor, *A New Life* (Utrecht, Netherlands: Eureka Editions, 2008), 127.

58 Laurence Rosenthal, pers. comm. (22 July 2010).

59 Moore, "Gurdjieff, George Ivanovitch," 449; Wim van Dullemen, [Liner notes] *Gurdjieff's Music for the Movements* (Holland: Channel Classics Records, 1999), 10.

60 Ginsburg, *Gurdjieff Unveiled*, 82.

61 Elan Sicroff, pers. comm. (11 July 2010); Nott, *Teachings*, 107.

that music can cause physiological, emotional, and intellectual arousal at once. In fact, in *Tales* Gurdjieff described a special type of music, objective music, that had the power to do just this.⁶² However, it was shown in Chapter 7 that this type of music seems to have no obvious practical application to the piano music.

Although the argument that *Tales*, the Movements, and music aimed to cultivate the intellectual, physical, and emotional centres respectively, is not common among writers, in *Views* Gurdjieff clearly stated, “The essence of correct man’s work is the working together of the three centres...But before starting to work with all centers and concentrating them on the work, it is necessary to prepare each center separately so that each could concentrate.”⁶³ Similarly in *Herald* he maintained that each centre “demand[ed] a separate education,” and in *Search* it is said that an understanding of the composition and workings of each centre was necessary for the reparation and harmonisation of the centres. By first studying the separate details of each centre, practitioners could later see “everything taken together as a whole – the whole of himself such as others see him.”⁶⁴

Further, Gurdjieff indicated an order in which the centres should be cultivated. First was the physical centre because “A body which is lazy, automatic, and full of stupid habits stops any kind of work.” He described the study of this centre as an “elementary activity.”⁶⁵ This corresponds with an account by Fritz Peters, who states that Gurdjieff “pointed out that, in any attempt or effort to get to know oneself, it was always necessary to start with the physical body... the most highly developed of man’s three centres; it was for this reason that ‘self-observation’ always started by the observation of the body alone.”⁶⁶ Bennett also recounts Gurdjieff saying to him when he first entered the Prieuré, “You must begin at the beginning. You start as a kitchen boy; then you will work in the garden, and so on until you have learned how to master your body.”⁶⁷

62 Gurdjieff, *Tales*, 489–491, describes the musicians and singers of the Adherents of Legominism, an ancient Babylonian club, devising special melodies based on knowledge of the Law of Seven. These melodies affected all three ‘brains’ (centres) of listeners by evoking different impulses; joy was evoked in the ‘thinking centre’, sorrow in the ‘feeling centre’, and religiousness in the ‘moving centre’. In this way the music aided listeners in ‘self-perfecting’. Gurdjieff states that music is the only art form that has the capacity to affect the three centres of the individual simultaneously.

63 Gurdjieff, *Views*, 105.

64 Gurdjieff, *Herald*, 34–35; Ouspensky, *Search*, 146.

65 Ouspensky, *Search*, 112, 348.

66 Peters, *Gurdjieff*, 163.

67 J.G. Bennett, *Witness: The Story of a Search* (New Mexico: Bennett Books, 1997), 86.

Gurdjieff implied that the next centre to be developed was the intellectual centre, followed by the emotional centre when he stated, “the second center, as difficulties go, is the thinking center and the most difficult, the emotional.”⁶⁸ Margaret Anderson confirms this:

Gurdjieff’s system begins with neutral scientific observation of one’s self – taking notes on the body in the scientific manner. First the physical; later, notes on the mental and emotional centres. The centre of gravity of *change*: you can’t change by the mind alone; you must begin with the body, bring body and emotions into line. The body is the only tool you have to work with.⁶⁹

This order for the cultivating of centres correlates with the order in which Gurdjieff’s teaching methods were carried out. In Gurdjieff’s first teaching phase between mid-1917 and mid-1924 teaching methods were mostly physical, with chief focus on Gurdjieff’s ballet *Struggle* and the practice of Movements.⁷⁰ As stated in Chapter 2, in this period Gurdjieff required pupils to fast, to sense parts of the body, and to carry out intensive household chores and farm and construction work. He pushed them to their limits physically to highlight the mechanical nature of the body.⁷¹

After his car accident of July 1924, Gurdjieff’s methods of teaching shifted dramatically. He announced to pupils in August that he wished to “begin a new work” as he felt that he had failed to achieve his goals for pupils through his previous methods at the Prieuré.⁷² From December 1924 he began writing *Tales* and in July 1925 he began composing the piano music with de Hartmann. Accounts by Seymour Ginsburg, Wim van Dullemen, and pupils Orage and Bennett suggest that where *Tales* was associated with work on the intellectual centre, the piano music was connected to work on the emotional centre.⁷³ This correlates with Gurdjieff’s statement in November 1922 that his pupils had, up until then, studied “exercises for the body,” and “elementary exercises for the mind,” but “we have not yet done any exercises for the feelings – these are more

68 Gurdjieff, *Views*, 105.

69 Margaret Anderson, *The Unknowable Gurdjieff* (London: Arkana, 1962), 55.

70 See de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 17–28, 51–52, 62, 67, 76, 80, 84–115, 139–147, 166, 172–175, 178, 184–192, 202–220.

71 Ouspensky, *Search*, 345, 350–360.

72 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 234; Gurdjieff, *Herald*, 42; Gurdjieff, *Life is Real*, 4.

73 Nott, *Teachings*, 178; Bennett, *Making a New World*, 167; Ginsburg, *Gurdjieff Unveiled*, 82, 10; van Dullemen, [Liner notes] *Gurdjieff’s Music for the Movements*, 10.

complex...they are of the foremost importance to us.”⁷⁴ This implies that these “elementary exercises for the mind” paved the way for Gurdjieff’s main exercise for the mind, *Tales*, which came two years later, and also that “exercises for the feelings” were still to come with the piano music in July 1925.

Tales, the Movements and the Centres

Before demonstrating how listening to the piano music must have been intended to cultivate the emotional centre and facilitate self-remembering, it will be shown how *Tales* and the Movements relate to work on the intellectual and physical centres. Owing to Gurdjieff’s unique linguistic style, *Tales* demands of the reader great perseverance and concentration. Indeed Gurdjieff, in constantly revising *Tales*, was concerned to make the text more and more difficult to understand.⁷⁵ It is argued here that through this book Gurdjieff aimed to disrupt usual modes of thinking and reading, creating tension in the reader and disrupting mechanical behaviours of the intellectual centre. It is therefore a mistake to consider Gurdjieff’s writings as attempts only to preserve his teaching in theoretical form, a view put forth by Michel de Salzmann.⁷⁶ Gurdjieff demonstrated an ongoing interest in creating opportunities for pupils to struggle and face conflict so that they could understand his teachings experientially, rather than only theoretically.

The idea that the practice of reading *Tales* was intended as an experiential and ultimately spiritually transformative exercise is creatively argued by Sophia Wellbeloved, who shows how the semantic and narrative complexities of *Tales* demand a form of hermeneutical process aimed at affecting the reader’s “level of being.” Wellbeloved states, “If the reader agrees to struggle with the syntax he enters into a relationship with Gurdjieff in which he agrees to the value of the text; he invests effort, and this is one of the demands of Gurdjieff’s teachings.”⁷⁷ Beekman Taylor makes a similar point when he reports that Gurdjieff would often speak with “impromptu inventions of words and grammatical formulations – that made comprehension extremely trying,”

74 Gurdjieff, *Views*, 171–172.

75 Wellbeloved, *Gurdjieff, Astrology and Beelzebub's Tales*, 30; Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 222.

76 Michel de Salzmann, “Gurdjieff, G.I.,” in *The Encyclopaedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1987), 139, states, “In the summer of 1924, after a nearly fatal automobile accident, Gurdjieff decided to reduce the activities of his institute and the circle of his followers, and to secure the legacy of his ideas in written form.”

77 Wellbeloved, *Gurdjieff, Astrology and Beelzebub's Tales*, 27, 77, 82.

and interprets this as “forcing his listener to concentrate his attention in order to get the meaning.”⁷⁸

Tales confronts the reader with a tapestry of peculiar linguistic devices such as page-long sentences, unconventional syntax, and a meandering, non-linear narrative brimming with contradictions and metaphors.⁷⁹ Gurdjieff also employed an alien vocabulary of neologisms such as ‘Legominism’, ‘Hep-taparaparshinokh’, ‘Triamazikamno’, and ‘Vibroechonitanko’. These are assemblages of syllables from a variety of languages, representing Beelzebub’s ‘Karatasian’ vocabulary. Gurdjieff scholar David Pecotic aptly states of *Tales*,

The coining of almost unpronounceable words from the number of languages he knew to whatever degree, combined with the precise torture he applied to English syntax and grammar, have a singular effect upon the casual reader, the most common of course being to start reading something else.⁸⁰

Psychiatrist Anthony Storr describes *Tales* as “deliberately obscure and often incoherent,” arguing that it “appears to the reader to be a psychotic delusional system.” Storr goes on to suggest that Gurdjieff was indeed psychotic.⁸¹ Even Gurdjieff himself stated that it was only with the third reading of *Tales* that one should even begin to “try and fathom the gist of [his] writings,”⁸² while chief editor of *Tales* Orage declared that although the text was “the profoundest, most illuminating book that I have ever seen or can imagine...Gurdjieff seems quite maliciously to have made it not difficult but impossible to understand.”⁸³ Gurdjieff’s extremely convoluted prose style was a deliberate teaching technique and reflects the trend among esotericists to employ language in a way that is aimed at transforming readers, facilitating their ascension to higher

78 Beekman Taylor, *Shadows of Heaven*, 181.

79 For an analysis of these devices see Wellbeloved, *Gurdjieff, Astrology and Beelzebub's Tales*, 73–83. Wellbeloved likens the formulaic phrases, interweaving episodes, and paratactic structures of *Tales* to the Turkic oral tradition of the *ashokhs*, with which Gurdjieff was familiar from his childhood. As did Gurdjieff, the *ashokhs* broke up familiar patterns of words to encourage listeners to remain actively attentive; see Wellbeloved, *Gurdjieff, Astrology and Beelzebub's Tales*, 11–13, 26–28.

80 David Pecotic, “Body and Correspondence in G.I. Gurdjieff’s ‘Beelzebub’s Tales to His Grandson’: A Case Study in the Construction of Categories in the Study of Esotericism” (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Sydney, 2004), 97.

81 Anthony Storr, *Feet of Clay: A Study of Gurus* (London: Harper Collins, 1997), 29.

82 Gurdjieff, *Tales*, preface entitled “Friendly Advice.”

83 Wellbeloved, *Gurdjieff, Astrology and Beelzebub's Tales*, 77.

states of awareness.⁸⁴ In the context of Gurdjieff's system, his idiosyncratic linguistic maneuvers in *Tales* must have been meant to challenge the habits of the intellectual centre and jolt or 'shock' the reader, who might then begin to read and think in a new, more conscious way.

Interestingly, Gurdjieff's choreographic devices in his Movements can be likened to the linguistic devices of *Tales*, as both were intended to affect individuals in similar ways. It should be noted that the following analysis is based on my own firsthand experience of the Movements.⁸⁵ The Movements are characterised by a foreign 'vocabulary' of unusual and symbolic gestures of the body, often placed in unpredictable sequences. This works to subvert one's habitual ways of moving and to facilitate self observation.⁸⁶ Celebrated Movements instructor Marthe de Gaigneron described the Movements in a way that also applies to *Tales*:

It is a new alphabet corresponding to a new language, a direct mode of knowing which enables the body to feel its mechanicalness and, at the same time, prepares it to receive other currents of energy as yet inaccessible. New attitudes, arising from a different inner order, begin to challenge an entire repertoire of deeply rooted automatic reactions.⁸⁷

Typical choreographic devices in the Movements that demonstrate this point follow. Most Movements require practitioners to carry out sequences of physical gestures that are unfamiliar to the body. For example, limbs must be bent at precise, unaccustomed angles, and wrists and fingers are to be kept unusually straight. These gestures often do not flow from one to the next, but instead change abruptly. This is particularly challenging in Movements that require practitioners to be positioned in canon, where they cannot imitate or rely on others but must operate independently, refraining from losing one's vital place in the row. Canons occur in a number of Movements, such as "Multiplication 13," "Multiplication 15," "Greek Letters," "Women's Prayer," "Men's Enneagram," and "The Big Seven."

Some Movements such as "Polyrhythms" and the first of the "Obligatories" require the simultaneous coordination of a separate series of gestures in the

84 Gunn, "An Occult Poetics," 33.

85 For five years I have participated regularly in a class in Sydney run by Dutch Movements instructor and pianist Dorine Tolley, whose parents were pupils of Ouspensky.

86 Gurdjieff, *Views*, 167–170.

87 Marthe de Gaigneron, "Sacred Dances," in *Gurdjieff: Essays and Reflections on the Man and His Teaching*, eds Jacob Needleman and George Baker (New York: Continuum Publishing, 1996), 298.

arms, legs, and head, an entirely unusual sensation for the body. In other Movements sequences of arm and leg gestures, which are to be carried out simultaneously, are different lengths. This is the case in No. 11 and No. 30 of the *39 Series*, and “Sacred Dance.” In the latter, an eight-bar long leg sequence is carried out against a twelve-bar long arm sequence, which proves difficult as the legs and arms must move as completely independent and unconnected entities. There are also Movements that require counting, or the repeating of phrases or words in different languages, such as Russian, Greek, Latin, French, Tibetan, and English, ensuring that attention is focussed and that the body and mind work in tandem. Finally, the Movements often disrupt expectations; patterns of gestures change at unpredictable moments so that one’s natural inclination to move in a certain way on a particular beat of the music is interrupted. In the first of the “Obligatories” one is required to remain completely still on the strong first chord of each sequence, where the instinct is to move on this chord.

These choreographic devices require practitioners to move in ways that are foreign to them, demanding strenuous attention, patience, and effort. It is here posited that the ultimate aim of these devices was to facilitate self-remembering by challenging usual, mechanical modes of moving the body. In other words, the Movements impede practitioners from carrying out habitual physical gestures, which means that they might be temporarily relieved of the sleep-like state of identification that usually accompanies these habitual gestures. In moments where one is relieved of this identification, self-remembering is facilitated. Gurdjieff referred to self-remembering as an artificial or outside ‘shock’; it comes from outside of the human being’s mechanical, habitual ways of living and identifying.⁸⁸

The Piano Music and the Emotional Centre

Just as Gurdjieff wished to highlight and disrupt the mechanical behaviours of the intellectual and physical centres through *Tales* and the Movements respectively, his music must have played a similar role for the emotional centre. Although Gurdjieff and his pupils write very little on the music, it is possible to piece together from available accounts a picture of how this worked. To begin, it seems that pupils were instructed to listen to the piano music without emotional attachment. C.S. Nott stated that when listening, “one did not wallow in

88 Ouspensky, *Search*, 188; Gurdjieff, *Tales*, 770; Dorine Tolley, pers. comm. (12 March 2010).

emotional daydreams as one is apt to when hearing music in general.”⁸⁹ Journalist Carl Zigrosser also remarked:

usually music prompts me to day-dreams and lovely fancies; it carries me outside myself into an unreal world of images and undischarged muscular stimulations, with an indirect stirring of the emotions. But this music [the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann music] did not carry me out of myself at all: it centred its effect upon my very essence...⁹⁰

Other pupils make similar statements about listening to music generally. Elizabeth Bennett proudly commented that although she loved Wagner’s opera *Tristan and Isolde*, during a performance she “remained free” and “came away feeling much refreshed.” She continues, “I know that if I hear something like that I can be collected.”⁹¹ Margaret Anderson maintained that she listened to music without being lost in it and that “surely this...is part of that process by which, according to Gurdjieff, we gradually emerge from the self-hypnosis under which we all live.”⁹²

Observing one’s emotions was central to Gurdjieff’s work. Margaret Anderson reported that Gurdjieff prompted pupils to discriminate emotions as if they were objects, watching how emotions arise automatically and questioning whether they were appropriate. Pupils were ultimately to try to experience emotion consciously.⁹³ Music was considered, at least in later years, a tool for this, as pupil from 1941 Solange Claustres stated of Gurdjieff’s harmonium music:

A new way of listening is possible, once we have been freed from the limitations of the world we live in, to actually hear the sound of joy, or sadness, and of seriousness or dance...These sounds inspire us to a really unusual quality of inner listening...[it is] an appeal to develop more “feeling.”⁹⁴

One could imagine that Gurdjieff considered the process of listening to music particularly effective for illustrating to pupils how quickly they can lose

89 Nott, *Teachings*, 65.

90 Zigrosser, “Gurdjieff,” 184.

91 J.G. Bennett and Elizabeth Bennett, *Idiots in Paris: Diaries of J.G. Bennett and Elizabeth Bennet, 1949* (Daglingworth, Gloucestershire: Coombe Springs Press, 1980), 88.

92 Anderson, *The Unknowable Gurdjieff*, 205.

93 Anderson, *The Unknowable Gurdjieff*, 64–65, 168.

94 Gert-Jan Blom, *Harmonic Development: The Complete Harmonium Recordings 1948–1949* (Netherlands: Basta Audio Visuals, 2004), 63.

themselves in emotions; music is often considered the most directly emotional of the arts, with the tensions and resolutions caused by rhythms, harmonies, and the rise and fall of melodies, affecting listeners' emotions based on their previous associations and experiences with music.⁹⁵ Psychologist Oliver Sacks argues that the human auditory and nervous systems are "exquisitely tuned to music" and that "[r]hythm turns listeners into participants, makes listening active and motoric, and synchronizes the brains and minds (and, since emotion is always intertwined with music, the 'hearts') of all who participate. It is very difficult to remain detached, to resist being drawn into the rhythm of chanting and dancing."⁹⁶ As Nott and other pupils indicate above, Gurdjieff's listeners were to remain aware of themselves while listening and avoid identifying with the music and their emotional reactions. Gurdjieff stated in *Views* that one "must observe the machine when it is working" and that "the starting points of this self-observation are: (1) that we are not one, (2) that we have no control over ourselves...(3) we do not remember ourselves."⁹⁷ He also said of listening generally, "The listener becomes active and begins to 'do' when they cease to listen passively."⁹⁸

The ideal of listening to music without becoming emotionally absorbed in it was promoted by Plato, St Augustine, and Arthur Schopenhauer among many others. Plato asserted, "beauty of style and harmony and grace and good rhythm depend on simplicity, – I mean the true simplicity of a rightly and nobly ordered mind and character" and that "simplicity in music was the parent of temperance in the soul." However, he warned that an undisciplined music listener "is melted and softened beyond what is good for him."⁹⁹ St Augustine stated that his physical delight upon listening to musical chanting "has to be checked from enervating the mind,"¹⁰⁰ while Schopenhauer drew from Plato's Theory of Forms, arguing that the function of art was to represent

95 Frank Burch Brown, "Music," in *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Emotion*, ed. John Corrigan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 200. For examinations of the psychological and physical effects of music on the emotions see G. Harrer and H. Harrer, "Music, Emotion, and Automatic Function," in *Music and the Brain*, eds Macdonald Critchley and R.A. Henson (London: William Heinemann Medical Books Limited, 1977), 202–216; Becker, *Deep Listeners: Music, Emotion and Trancing*, 45–56.

96 Sacks, *Musophilia*, xi–xii, 244–245. For more on the effects of musical tempo and rhythm on the body see Sacks, *Musophilia*, Chapter 19; Storr, *Music and the Mind*, 25–26.

97 Gurdjieff, *Views*, 80.

98 Gurdjieff, *Views*, 42.

99 Plato, "The Republic III," in *Contemplating Music: Source Readings in the Aesthetics of Music*, eds Ruth Katz and Carl Dahlhaus, Vol. 1 (New York: Pendragon Press, 1987), 28, 33, 34.

100 Becker, *Deep Listeners: Music, Emotion and Trancing*, 80.

the Ideas: “[Art] repeats or reproduces the eternal Ideas grasped through pure contemplation, the essential and abiding in all the phenomena of the world... its one aim the communication of this knowledge.” For both Plato and Schopenhauer, the music listener or observer of art must detach from personal concerns so that the aesthetic experience is unencumbered by subjective feelings. This would allow, said Schopenhauer, for a glimpse of the inner nature of the world: the aesthetic way of knowing.¹⁰¹

This notion of music listening is also integral to the philosophy behind both Hindustani and Sufi music. According to twentieth century Sri Lankan art historian Ananda Coomaraswamy, when listening to Hindustani music listeners should separate themselves from their emotions (*rasa*). He stated that this type of listening requires the active will and mind of the listener to carry consciousness to a higher plane, closer to the divine.¹⁰² Muslim theologian Abu Hamid Al-Ghazzali (1058–1111) spoke of the “right usages” that should govern the Sufi practice of ‘audition’ (*sama*), which involved listening to music. These included attention, inner concentration, and controlling tears and dancing unless it is impossible to restrain them.¹⁰³ A century before Al-Ghazzali, Shaykh Abu ‘Ali Daqqaq noted that the practice of audition was prohibited altogether for ‘common folk’ because of the effects of the strong emotions evoked by music on one’s carnal nature. Sufi poet Mir Husayn Harawi similarly expressed, “Sama’s not for one who’s bound by nature’s urges, wound up in greed and passion. Unless you cast aside all this, how should it be fit for you?”¹⁰⁴ For Sigmund Freud too, a contemporary of Gurdjieff, emotional tranquillity was superior to a state of arousal or excitement. Although Freud did not discuss music, he treated powerful emotions as disturbances that must be eradicated.¹⁰⁵

It was stated above that emotional responses to music are largely based on previous musical associations and experiences. This is a significant point considering Gurdjieff’s predominantly Western audience and the very Eastern sound of much of his music. Gurdjieff may have intended and expected his music to elicit quite new, unfamiliar, even unsettling responses and emotions in listeners. This would aid them in remaining detached during the listening experience by shaking up their ‘mechanical’ dispositions and emotions, ultimately

101 Schopenhauer, “The World as Will and Idea,” 145; Storr, *Music and the Mind*, 136.

102 Becker, *Deep Listeners: Music, Emotion and Trancing*, 76.

103 Rouget, *Music and Trance*, 260.

104 Lewisohn, “The Sacred Music of Islam,” 11–12.

105 Storr, *Music and the Mind*, 28; Anthony Storr, *Freud* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 15–16.

bringing them to a new level of awareness and stillness. In *Musicophilia*, Oliver Sacks argues that as one's tonal sensitivities are determined largely by culture and exposure, it is common for Westerners to find the diatonic scale 'natural', and the syncopations and polyrhythms of the music of the Sayyids unsettling or jolting.¹⁰⁶ Musicologist Jonathan Bellman similarly states, "One speaks less convincingly of the strange and the shocking in the language of the everyday. Inherent in the compositional choice to use a foreign language, musically, is the desire to evoke something titillatingly out of the ordinary."¹⁰⁷

From 1925, Gurdjieff's pupils at the Prieuré were mainly European and American, and of Christian background. They must have been most familiar with musical conventions stemming from the common practice period of Western music history, roughly between 1600 and 1900. The music of this period, which has thoroughly conditioned the Western ear, is characterised by functional harmony, where certain notes and harmonies represent goals and suggest stability and rest, while others imply motion away from these goals. The interplay between two primary notes provide the fulcrum: the dominant note or fifth of the key, which acts principally as the penultimate note to each gesture of music, and the tonic or first note, which is used to resolve or answer the dominant.¹⁰⁸ In *Emotion and Meaning in Music*, one of the best-known studies linking music with emotional patterns, Leonard Meyer argues that within one's cultural tradition one learns certain musical expectations, for instance that a dominant seventh chord must be followed by the tonic for satisfying resolution. He states that listeners' emotions are aroused chiefly when a tendency to respond to an expectation is prevented or inhibited.¹⁰⁹

Gurdjieff's music does not follow the rules of the common practice period. Take the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann Hymns as an example, which derive from music of the Russian Orthodox tradition. Where it is conventional in the common practice period of Western music and hymnody for melodies to appear in uniform patterns, melodic phrases in the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann Hymns are different lengths due to constantly shifting metres (the pattern of beats in a bar) that prevent melodic symmetry. This is particularly prominent

106 Sacks, *Musicophilia*, 99–100.

107 Jonathan Bellman, "Introduction," in *The Exotic in Western Music* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), xii.

108 See Eric Salzman, *Twentieth-Century Music: An Introduction* (Englewood Cliffs, NY: Prentice-Hall, 1967), 4; David H. Cope, *New Directions in Music* (Dubuque, Iowa: W.C. Brown, 1984), 5–7.

109 Leonard B. Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 22–23.

in the following Hymns, where metres change at almost every bar: “Prayer” (Vol. 3, 26), “Laudamus...” (Vol. 3, 30–31), No. 6 (Vol. 3, 32–33), No. 8 (Vol. 3, 35), “Rejoice, Beelzebub!” (Vol. 3, 48–49), “Orthodox Hymn from Asia Minor” (Vol. 3, 68), “The Resurrection of Christ” (Vol. 3, 114–115), the first and sixth hymns from “Hymns From a Great Temple” (Vol. 4, 26–27, 36–37), and “Easter Hymn and Procession in the Holy Night” (Vol. 3, 117–119). Other Hymns lack bar lines altogether.¹¹⁰ To someone outside the Russian Orthodox tradition these melodies might seem strangely disoriented, even resembling stories in *Tales* that meander haphazardly, sometimes dropping out of the narrative altogether only to be unexpectedly resumed later.

Due to these irregular metrical structures and asymmetrical melodies in the Hymns, cadences are unpredictable (a cadence is a melodic or harmonic formula involving the movement of two chords that occurs at the end of a composition, section, or phrase, usually conveying the impression of a momentary or permanent conclusion). The function of the cadence in the common practice period is strong, as it subordinates rhythmic patterns, metres, and melodies.¹¹¹ Unpredictable cadences, then, can leave the Western listener unsure about the basic trajectory of the music, and inhibit the listener’s tendency to respond by delaying the closure that is expected.¹¹² For instance, in “Easter Hymn and Procession in the Holy Night” (Vol. 3, 117–119),¹¹³ a series of chord progressions lead to a jarring, unexpected cadence in bars 24 to 25, where there is a shift from F minor to the parallel major, F major. In fact, the entire first half of “Easter Hymn and Procession in the Holy Night,” from bars 1 to 37, lacks an obvious harmonic trajectory. Instead, harmonies shift ambiguously and the music floats between Dorian, Phrygian, major, minor, and chromatic tonalities. The listener repeatedly loses sense of the tonic (the first and main note of a key; see musical example next page). There is no evidence that Gurdjieff’s pupils, other than the de Hartmanns, were particularly familiar with Russian Orthodox church music, so these Hymns may well have sounded unusual and even demanding.

As discussed in Chapter 1, however, Gurdjieff’s adoption of Eastern and what were considered foreign musical techniques within a Western setting was

110 The following pieces have no bar lines: No. 11 (Vol. 3, 41), No. 12 (Vol. 3, 42–43), “As if the Stormy Years Had Passed” (Vol. 3, 46–47), “Prayer and Despair” (Vol. 3, 58–62), No. 44 (Vol. 3, 106–107), and “Essene Hymn” (Vol. 3, 108).

111 Ton van Leeuw, *Music of the Twentieth Century: A Study of its Elements and Structure*, trans. Stephen Taylor (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005), 44.

112 For a discussion of music theorists Leonard Meyer and Hans Keller’s views on the effects of this musical device on listeners, see Storr, *Music and the Mind*, 86–87.

113 Hear QR Code 7; <http://jeuj.eu/easterhymnandprocession>



“Easter Hymn and Procession in the Holy Night”, bars 23–29 (Vol. 3, 118).

LINDA DANIEL-SPITZ, CHARLES KETCHAM, AND LAURENCE ROSENTHAL. *GURDJIEFF/DE HARTMANN: MUSIC FOR THE PIANO*, VOL. 3. MAINZ, GERMANY: SCHOTT, 2002.

not unique at this time. Composers such as Debussy, Ravel, Satie, and Stravinsky, all prominent in Paris at the time of the composition of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music, were blurring, modifying, and/or abandoning altogether traditional Western musical forms and structures that had dominated Western music prior to the twentieth century. Some twentieth century composers even intended to shock listeners or at least disturb their expectations of the music¹¹⁴ just as, it is argued here, Gurdjieff aimed to accomplish. The musical techniques that Gurdjieff employed were, then, largely in line with those utilised by contemporary composers, many of whom were also aiming to bring a radically new sound and experience to listeners. This leads one to question whether Gurdjieff’s music really would have seemed so unusual to pupils. How familiar Gurdjieff’s pupils were with contemporary music practices is uncertain, though Nott remarked that although there were musicians, painters, designers, singers, and writers at the Prieuré, he did not remember a single discussion about the topic of contemporary art. It was considered, he says, unimportant compared with their purpose there.¹¹⁵ Besides de Hartmann, pupils from this period make no specific reference to contemporary music in their memoirs, though the de Salzmanns, Orage, and Carol Robinson had ties to artistic and musical circles of the time and must have been conversant with it.

What is clear is that pupils consistently describe the music as sounding new and entirely unusual to them. Ouspensky says that Gurdjieff brought into his ballet *Struggle of the Magicians*,

the dances of various dervishes and Sufis and recall[ed] by memory the music he had listened to in Asia many years before. In this work was a very great deal that was new and interesting. Dervish dances and music were

114 van Leeuw, *Music of the Twentieth Century*, 12–13; Glenn Watkins, *Soundings: Music in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1995), 464–503.

115 Nott, *Teachings*, 102.

reproduced in Europe undoubtedly for the first time. And they produced a very great impression on all who were able to hear and see them.¹¹⁶

Nott asserts that the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music produced “such a great impression on me,” and that “I have never heard anything like these hymns of Gurdjieff.”¹¹⁷ Carl Zigrosser, not a pupil but a visitor to the Prieuré, described the music as having complex harmonies and rhythms, with dissonance used in an extraordinarily effective way. He continued, “The most unusual thing about this music was its effect on me when I heard it, different from that of almost any other music I had ever listened to...What I heard during those few hours made almost all other music seem tame and haphazard.”¹¹⁸ It may well be that the unique context in which pupils heard the music – while residing at Gurdjieff’s infamous Institute – heightened their experiences of the music, making it seem all the more powerful and unusual. This obviously differed dramatically from the context in which they may have heard comparable sounding music of contemporary composers.

However, pupils who joined Gurdjieff decades later make similar remarks about his music. They had not been a part of his Institute but had still spent time in the presence of Gurdjieff and his teaching. Helen Adie, who knew Gurdjieff in the 1940s, states, “In some ways, it is easier to listen to this music [the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann music] if you’re not particularly musical, because musical people will look for something that is not there – a conventional line of some sort, form, a conventional form. There’s no conventional form in it at all.”¹¹⁹ Comparable statements were made of Gurdjieff’s harmonium music. Kenneth Walker reports that Gurdjieff “calls out of his instrument music of a kind that I have never listened to before,”¹²⁰ Cecil Lewis describes it as “the strangest music,”¹²¹ A.L. Staveley spoke of “those strange haunting melodies that spoke in an unknown tongue,”¹²² and Solange Claustres stated, “His music has nothing to do with what we generally know and recognize as music. Gurdjieff’s music is a world of sounds of a universe unknown to us.”¹²³

¹¹⁶ Ouspensky, *Search*, 386.

¹¹⁷ Nott, *Teachings*, 82, 107.

¹¹⁸ Zigrosser, “Gurdjieff,” 183–184.

¹¹⁹ George M. Adie and Joseph Azize, *George Adie: A Gurdjieff Pupil in Australia* (Cambridge: Lighthouse Editions, 2007), 234.

¹²⁰ Blom, *Harmonic Development*, 58.

¹²¹ Blom, *Harmonic Development*, 60.

¹²² Blom, *Harmonic Development*, 64.

¹²³ Blom, *Harmonic Development*, 63.

It is interesting to consider present-day reactions of listeners to the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music, particularly those of musically educated listeners. In 2010 researcher/pianist Wim van Dullemen played the music to a mixed audience, finding that professional musicians and others well versed in Western classical music, more than other listeners, considered it boring.¹²⁴ Laurence Rosenthal also noticed this, suggesting that musically literate listeners are more likely to notice the technical elements of the music and “draw immediate and facile comparisons,” while listeners without musical training respond more directly and positively to the music.¹²⁵ Pupil Helen Adie made a similar comment about the music: “musical people will look for something that is not there – a conventional line of some sort.”¹²⁶

These responses support the argument that this music was intended to challenge listeners to let go of mechanical preconceptions and ingrained emotional reactions. It requires a new mode of listening. Holding onto one’s emotional needs and expectations while listening to the music can be likened to maintaining one’s usual modes of thinking when reading *Tales*. This can only result in boredom, confusion, or irritation. Gurdjieff exhibited a keen ear for music and a life-long interest in the effects of music on listeners.¹²⁷ He would surely have known and experienced the expectations that certain musical devices create in Western listeners; for a satisfying resolution, for example, a tonic chord must follow a dominant seventh chord. He must have been interested in the fact that people accumulate listening and emotional habits, and only when confronted with alternative modes of listening and feeling are they likely to reflect on these. The piano music, like *Tales* and the Movements, demands something new: a shift in mechanical behaviour so that a finer level of awareness becomes possible.

Tales, The Movements and Piano Music in Light of Gurdjieff’s Soteriology

If the piano music was a tool for observing and cultivating the emotional centre, then this attests to the importance of the music, as a cultivated emotional

¹²⁴ Wim van Dullemen, pers. comm. (5 May 2010).

¹²⁵ Laurence Rosenthal, “Gurdjieff and Music,” in *Gurdjieff: Essays and Reflections on the Man and His Teaching*, eds Jacob Needleman and George Baker (New York: Continuum Publishing, 1996), 307.

¹²⁶ Adie and Azize, *George Adie*, 234.

¹²⁷ Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 50, 52, 54, 122–135, 208; Gurdjieff, *Tales*, 891–897; Gurdjieff, *Herald*, 13; Dushka Howarth and Jessmin Howarth, *It’s Up To Ourselves: A Mother, A Daughter, and Gurdjieff* (New York: Gurdjieff Heritage Society, 2009), 476–477; Ouspensky, *Search*, 272, 304; de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 53–54.

centre was particularly significant to Gurdjieff's system for two reasons. First, Gurdjieff argued that the desire to understand and change oneself, the most basic requirement for working on oneself, came from 'essence', which is the "centre of gravity" of the emotional centre.¹²⁸ Carl Zigrosser associated this idea with the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music, which, he said, "centred its effect upon my essence, it appealed directly to my emotions."¹²⁹ According to Margaret Anderson, Gurdjieff stated, "One must strive for Being. If anyone desires to know and understand more than he knows and understands, he must remember that this new knowledge and new understanding will come through the emotional centre and not through the mental centre."¹³⁰

Second, Gurdjieff taught that a cultivated emotional centre functioning at its full capacity (which then made it the quickest of the three centres) leads to the operation of two additional 'higher centres'. The higher centres, Gurdjieff taught, operated in accordance with the formation of subtle bodies.¹³¹ Both these points demonstrate the soteriological significance of a cultivated emotional centre and explain Ouspensky's strong statement about Gurdjieff's teaching: "the study of emotions and the work on emotions became the basis of the subsequent development of the whole system."¹³² Further, as so many of Gurdjieff's closest pupils were intellectually inclined, such as editors Orage, Jane Heap and Margaret Anderson, writers Jean Toomer and Ouspensky, and psychologist Maurice Nicoll, he may have regarded the need to cultivate pupils' emotional and physical centres as particularly pressing.

Another point to discuss here is the all important relationship between the three chief teaching methods and the process of self-remembering. It was argued that by demanding effort and concentration, and disturbing the mechanical behaviours of the centres, these methods aimed to wrench individuals out of their usual sleep-like state of 'identification' where they can only function habitually and mechanically. When one is not in a state of identification, one is in a state of self-remembering. It is in this way that *Tales*, the Movements, and piano music are linked to Gurdjieff's soteriology. Their objective was ultimately soteriological as self-remembering in Gurdjieff's system facilitates individuals in attaining the highest state of consciousness¹³³

128 Gurdjieff, *Views*, 136–137, 143–147.

129 Zigrosser, "Gurdjieff," 184.

130 Anderson, *The Unknowable Gurdjieff*, 169.

131 Ouspensky, *Search*, 194.

132 Ouspensky, *Search*, 113.

133 Ouspensky, *Search*, 141–142, 180.

where their very organisms can accommodate subtle bodies.¹³⁴ This can be considered a type of inner alchemy in line with other religious and esoteric traditions.

To clarify this final point, a brief technical overview of self-remembering follows. Gurdjieff viewed the human being as a factory, where energy can be accumulated and expelled in accordance with one's behaviour, both internal and external. Unfortunately for human beings, the factory is defective, being controlled by three dysfunctional centres. This means that it produces very little energy, which, in any case, is wasted on identification, a state in which people normally carry out life.¹³⁵ This is where people constantly identify with (or become engrossed in) tasks, thoughts, emotions, and the like. In this state people not only forget themselves, but deplete the small amount of energy they produce by becoming absorbed in negativity, useless habits, and anything they encounter.¹³⁶ However, at the moment one self-remembers one can no longer be in a state of identification, and this has consequences for the production of energy in the factory.

By self-remembering, the great deal of energy usually wasted on identification is retained in the body. Further, the process of self-remembering actually generates more energy because self-remembering involves dividing one's attention so that one is simultaneously aware of the self and also the exterior or interior event or situation being experienced. The energy received through sense-experiences, known as 'impressions', then doubles. If one self-remembers while listening to music, for example, instead of receiving one impression of the music, the listener receives two impressions; one of the music and another of the self experiencing the music.¹³⁷ In light of this an oft-quoted but never before explained statement by de Hartmann now becomes explicit:

...after the work of Georgi Ivanovich, we can understand it more, we can understand it better, that music helps to concentrate oneself, to bring oneself to an inner state when we can assume the greatest possible emanations. That is why music is just the thing which helps you to see higher.¹³⁸

134 Ouspensky, *Search*, 180, makes a connection between one's attainment of subtle bodies and one's accessing of the higher centres.

135 Ouspensky, *Search*, 150.

136 Ouspensky, *Search*, 179–180, 196.

137 Ouspensky, *Search*, 188, gives a similar example.

138 de Hartmann quoted in Thomas C. Daly, [Liner notes] *The Music of Gurdjieff/de Hartmann* (New York: Triangle Editions, 1989), 12.

In Gurdjieff's system, this energy acquired through self-remembering becomes surplus energy in the body, which is then 'digested' and 'transformed' in a process that proceeds in accordance with the Laws of Three and Seven,¹³⁹ so that finer matter can be extracted from it.¹⁴⁰ (Earlier it was shown how Gurdjieff's universe consists of seven 'Worlds', each representing a discrete level of matter, and where the finer matter from higher worlds permeates the coarser matter from lower worlds).¹⁴¹ As pupil Maurice Nicoll described it, "A moment of self-remembering supplies every cell in the body with food of a kind that it does not ordinarily get."¹⁴² This finer matter, which can only be attained through self-remembering,¹⁴³ is key to Gurdjieff's ultimate objective for spiritual development: the crystallization of subtle bodies and the attainment of the highest state of consciousness. For this reason self-remembering was not an option, it was a duty; Gurdjieff described it as a fulfilling of 'Partkdolg-duty', a term that contains Armenian, Russian, and English words roughly translated as 'duty-duty-duty'.¹⁴⁴

Attaining the highest state of consciousness and forming subtle bodies within one's organism represent the end goals of Gurdjieff's soteriology and overall teaching. It has here been argued that *Tales*, the Movements, and piano music were intended to facilitate self-remembering. Gurdjieff stated, after all, "art is a means for harmonious development. In everything we do the underlying idea is to do what cannot be done automatically and without thought...our aim is to develop our soul, to fulfil our higher destiny."¹⁴⁵ The fact that scholars and writers on Gurdjieff continuously neglect the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music is most unfortunate. This music cannot be cast aside as a mere side project or pastime for Gurdjieff. On the contrary, it represented, at the time of Gurdjieff's Institute in Fontainebleau, one of three chief methods aimed at re-educating the centres and bringing pupils to a state of self-remembering.

139 See Ouspensky, *Search*, Chapter 9; Gurdjieff, *Tales*, 144–147, 763.

140 Ouspensky, *Search*, 188–189.

141 Ouspensky, *Search*, 88.

142 Maurice Nicoll, *Psychological Commentaries on the Teaching of G.I. Gurdjieff and P.D. Ouspensky*, Vol. 2 (London: Vincent Stuart, 1952), 656.

143 Gurdjieff, *Tales*, 792, describes the 'shock' of self-remembering leading to an alchemical process in the body that produces 'factors' that "serve as the sole possible means...for the coating and perfecting of the higher being-bodies."

144 J.G. Bennett, *The Sevenfold Work* (Daglingworth, Gloucestershire: Coombe Springs Press, 1979), 4.

145 Gurdjieff, *Views*, 183, 191.

Conclusions

This book aimed to establish basic academic groundwork on the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music. Focus was paid to key aspects of the music: its process of composition, its likely musical sources, its position within the artistic practices and trends of the early twentieth-century, and the sheet music and recordings that emerged after Gurdjieff's death. Gurdjieff's own claims about the music were explored, as was the relationship between the music and Gurdjieff's esoteric teaching, which shed light on the significance and purposes of this music. This study also contributed much-needed rudimentary work on Gurdjieff and de Hartmann's music for Movements and music for *Struggle*, as well as Gurdjieff's harmonium improvisations (see Appendices A, B, and C).

The current dearth of scholarship in this field is surprising considering that music played such a significant and unique role in Gurdjieff's life and teaching, and considering how prolifically musicians today have been recording the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music. This book strives to encourage scholarly, critical work on the music, as well as spur on further lines of research in the field, such as examinations of Thomas de Hartmann and his own music, or the ways in which Work groups today understand and employ the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music.¹ Also required is an ethnomusicological study of musical devices in the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music and music for Movements, and an exploration of the relationship between these devices and those specific to the classical, religious, and folk music of particular Asian and Middle Eastern regions. It is impossible in a single study to uncover the full secret of this music, and this itself testifies to the complex and sophisticated nature of Gurdjieff's work, which constantly teases our assumptions and expectations.

A summary of this book will follow. Chapter 1 gave an introduction to Gurdjieff, his teaching, and music, and highlighted his crucial role in the trajectory of contemporary religion. Along with other key figures of his time, most notably Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and Rudolf Steiner, Gurdjieff revived occult and esoteric traditions, synthesising these with Western contemporary thinking.² Further attesting to Gurdjieff's importance is the impressive stream of

1 For a brief exploration of this see Johanna Petsche, "G.I. Gurdjieff's Piano Music and its Application In and Outside "The Work";" in *Handbook of New Religions and Cultural Production*, eds Carole M. Cusack and Alex Norman (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 292.

2 Theodore Roszak, *Unfinished Animal* (London: Faber and Faber, 1976), 115–151; Paul Heelas, *The New Age Movement: The Celebration of the Self and the Sacralization of Modernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 48.

influential artists, directors, musicians, choreographers, writers, actors, and thinkers who have paid tribute to him. In this chapter the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music was also positioned within the artistic practices and trends of the early twentieth-century. This offered a fresh perspective on a body of music that has been hitherto deemed highly elusive and largely distinct from Western music and trends. It was argued that the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music can be considered alongside musical trends of exoticism and nationalism that flourished in the first decades of the twentieth century, where many composers employed in their music the 'exotic' sounds of other cultures, as well as the modes and rhythms of the indigenous traditions of their own countries.

Chapters 2 and 3 presented music-centred biographies of Gurdjieff and de Hartmann, which generated new insights into their relationship and music, and provided a useful backdrop to later chapters. In the many accounts available of Gurdjieff's life and teaching, music is rarely considered significant. It was demonstrated in Chapter 2 that, on the contrary, music was a dominating and recurring theme through his life. According to Gurdjieff's (admittedly unverifiable) autobiographical writings, in his youth in Kars, Turkey, he was fascinated by the musical abilities of the *ashokhs*, a profession of his father, and was a devoted chorister in the Kars military cathedral choir. Although Gurdjieff did not formally study music outside his experiences as a chorister, he helped verify vocal transcriptions of Dean Borsh's newly composed canticles by singing them to the Dean.³ Gurdjieff's accounts indicate that he was attracted to music at a young age, possessed musical skill, and was exposed to a variety of musical traditions in the cultural melting pots of Alexandropol and Kars, his hometowns. Later, on a twenty-year expedition through Central Asia and the Middle East, Gurdjieff described playing, singing, hearing, and recording music, as well as employing music to earn money. It is quite possible that music encountered during his childhood and travels could explain the origins of the styles and sounds of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music, as Gurdjieff claimed, though as his accounts are largely unsubstantiated this argument cannot be made with certainty.

What is known with certainty is that in the first phase of his teaching, from 1917 to mid-1924, Gurdjieff incorporated singing into his teaching methods and challenged pupils with personalised musical exercises.⁴ During this period Gurdjieff also collaborated with de Hartmann on music to accompany his

3 G.I. Gurdjieff, *Meetings With Remarkable Men* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2002 [1963]), 32–33, 50, 52, 54.

4 Thomas de Hartmann and Olga de Hartmann, *Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff*, eds Thomas C. Daly and Thomas A.G. Daly (London: Arkana Penguin Books, 1992 [1964]), 53, 131, 139;

Movements and ballet *Struggle*. It was shown that Gurdjieff's car accident of mid-1924 marked an important juncture in his life; he temporarily disbanded the Institute, stopped work on Movements, began writing *Tales*, and soon started composing the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music with great intensity. When de Hartmann left Gurdjieff in 1929 Gurdjieff stopped piano composition, preferring to improvise on his lap harmonium. The harmonium was a constant companion for him for at least twenty-three years, and he played it up until four days before his death.⁵ (Through his life Gurdjieff adapted to a number of musical instruments; voice, mouth harmonica, guitar, lap harmonium, and piano). All evidence indicates that Gurdjieff was uninterested in seriously acquiring technique in performance and composition, and in creating music to exhibit himself or to entertain others. He was, instead, thoroughly preoccupied with the effects of music on the human organism, and in his writings he demonstrates his familiarity with discourse on this topic, particularly within the context of Western esoteric music theory. Although a thorough analysis of Gurdjieff's theoretical views on music and art fell outside the scope of this book, some of his central concepts were examined in Chapter 7.

Chapter 3 traced the biography of de Hartmann and chronicled his time with Gurdjieff. It was established that upon meeting Gurdjieff, de Hartmann was at the height of his career, having been praised by the Tsar for performances of his opera *La Fleurette rouge* and having begun collaborations with Wassily Kandinsky, a pioneer of twentieth century art. De Hartmann's distinguished position within the arts in early twentieth century Europe was highlighted; he was a well trained, versatile, and prolific composer who had mingled with influential composers, performers, and artists such as Sergei Prokofiev, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Richard Strauss, Anna Pavlova, and Kandinsky. This makes de Hartmann's life changing decision to postpone his career to follow Gurdjieff all the more exceptional, and reveals de Hartmann's foremost devotion to his spiritual ideals.

De Hartmann had been searching for a spiritual teacher or group from 1914, having come into contact with Theosophical ideas in Munich between 1908 and 1912. He met Gurdjieff through mutual acquaintance Andrei Andreyvich Zakharov in December 1916 and felt an instant connection. Gurdjieff shared with de Hartmann fundamental aesthetic and spiritual views that were in line with aesthetic discourses of the early twentieth century. The attraction may

P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous: The Teachings of G.I. Gurdjieff* (San Diego: Harcourt Inc., 1977 [1949]), 272, 304.

5 Gert-Jan Blom, *Harmonic Development: The Complete Harmonium Recordings 1948–1949* (Netherlands: Basta Audio Visuals, 2004), 20–21, 113.

not have been one-sided; Gurdjieff could have considered the distinguished de Hartmann, even in advance of their first meeting, an appealing candidate for a pupil, particularly as he could compose music for Gurdjieff's newly conceived ballet *Struggle*. They worked together on the music for *Struggle* from 1919.

The relationship between Gurdjieff and de Hartmann was close, particularly from 1924, but remained hierarchical, with Gurdjieff strictly as teacher rather than friend. De Hartmann's unswerving loyalty is apparent; he was one of the few pupils to remain with Gurdjieff through the tumultuous political climate of the Russian Revolution, he took on work as a film composer when the Prieuré was in financial trouble yet dropped lucrative music work when Gurdjieff required it, and even after the brutal termination of their relationship caused by Gurdjieff, de Hartmann devoted the last years of his life to organising publications, recordings, and concerts of their music, and writing heartfelt accounts of their time together in *Our Life*.

Where the first three chapters served as a background to Gurdjieff and de Hartmann, and outlined the unusual setting in which these men came together and composed music, Chapters 4 and 5 honed in on the piano music itself. With the aid of original manuscripts and pupils' memoirs, Chapter 4 assessed their unique collaboration. Altogether, it was found that Gurdjieff and de Hartmann composed around 223 piano pieces, with more sketches of pieces existing in draft form. They sometimes composed daily and for weeks at a time. Short gaps in the compositional process were mostly due to Gurdjieff's brief trips away from the Prieuré, as is revealed in titles of pieces and comments in original manuscripts. Composition usually occurred in the evening in either the Prieuré's salon or Study House, and was carried out in the presence of Gurdjieff's pupils. This may indicate the influence of the *ashokh* tradition of Gurdjieff's father, as *ashokhs* create their music through responding to, and interacting with, their audiences. In terms of the compositional process, it was concluded that although Gurdjieff played a primary role as he dictated music and oversaw the different stages of composition, de Hartmann was invaluable to the music, bringing it to fruition by notating Gurdjieff's musical indications and adding harmonies. At times, de Hartmann's own unique compositional style can even be detected in the piano music.

Their most intense period for composing was between 29 July 1925 and 1 May 1927. Two reasons were suggested for why they stopped composing on 1 May: it may have been due to financial constraints, with de Hartmann having to work to earn money for the Prieuré, or due to the compositional process becoming overly methodical at this time, which would have been grounds for Gurdjieff to end it. A small number of pieces dating from 1918 to July 1924 may represent the earliest pieces of the piano music, though some of these might

be music for Movements, while “Essentuki Prayer” could have been meant as a choral piece. This uncertainty means that it is not possible to know whether or not Gurdjieff’s car accident on July 1924 signifies a clear-cut juncture in his life, marking the end of old teaching methods and the beginnings of the piano music. Regardless, what can be stated with certainty is that the piano music only began to be composed with great intensity and commitment from 29 July 1925, and that this occurred during a dramatic period of change provoked by Gurdjieff’s car accident.

Chapter 5 assessed Gurdjieff’s claims that his music (music for Movements, piano music, and harmonium music) derived from esoteric sources accessed on his travels through Central Asia and the Middle East. Even putting aside the fact that his travel tales are unconfirmed by any other sources, it was shown that this is unlikely for a number of reasons. To begin, there is no evidence that he recorded or transcribed music on his travels for this purpose, and it seems unlikely that he remembered music heard so many years prior to composing with de Hartmann and playing his harmonium. Gurdjieff’s travels would have ended around 1907, and he composed his first piece with de Hartmann in 1918. He played his harmonium music until his death in 1949 and in any case, recordings indicate that the harmonium music was entirely improvised. Further, de Hartmann recounts Gurdjieff admitting to having taken waltzes and mazurkas from a study book for guitar, and using these to accompany his Movements. This could well explain the Western sounds of some of the music to Gurdjieff’s preparatory Movements, the “Obligatories.”

In any case, due to the nature of the compositional process it would have been impossible to capture precisely the music that Gurdjieff had allegedly remembered. This is because the process was spontaneous, rapid, and somewhat improvisatory in nature, which does not support the idea that Gurdjieff was directly recounting music he had remembered, or that he wished to reproduce it precisely. Moreover, de Hartmann immediately assimilated Gurdjieff’s dictations into Western harmonic language, and for a Western musical instrument. This would surely have distorted any original music. Perhaps Gurdjieff made these claims about the esoteric origins of his music to authenticate it, or perhaps this was part of his teaching technique, which aimed to test his pupils and their powers of discrimination.

In the second part of Chapter 5, the piano music was divided into three broad categories in line with Laurence Rosenthal’s model.⁶ First is their Asian

6 Laurence Rosenthal, “Gurdjieff and Music,” in *Gurdjieff: Essays and Reflections on the Man and His Teaching*, eds Jacob Needleman and George Baker (New York: Continuum Publishing, 1996), 308–309.

and Eastern Folk Music, the sounds and titles of which indicate an array of musical influences. These pieces may have originated from music Gurdjieff heard on his travels, as he claimed, or may simply have formed out of the eclectic musical patchwork to which he was exposed in his early life and from his time later living in Turkey and Georgia. A particularly likely source for some of these pieces is the traditional music of Gurdjieff's native country of Armenia, though only an ethnomusicological study of the music could give a definitive answer. The second category of music is their Syyid and Dervish Music, reflective of the classical music of Iran and the religious music of the Sufis, and the third category is their Hymns, reminiscent of Russian Orthodox hymnody and chant. It was suggested that Gurdjieff wished to evoke through the folk and religious sounds of the piano music the spirit of the East and an impression of the ancient and timeless. The music may have been meant to lure listeners to a new state of simplicity, and to a realm closer to nature and truth in accordance with Gurdjieff's romantic views of the East and ancient cultures.

Chapter 6 examined the original manuscripts of the piano music and their relationship to the published editions of the sheet music that followed Gurdjieff's death. An analysis of original manuscripts yielded significant discoveries about Gurdjieff's intentions for some of the music; he had planned for there to be series of pieces but this was never fulfilled, some pieces were intended to be orchestrated or sung by choir, and some original titles of pieces were altered or changed after Gurdjieff's death when the music was published. The three editions of the sheet music were then critically considered: the five-volume Janus edition, three-volume edition by Olga de Hartmann, and four-volume Schott edition. The latter emerged in 1996 and marked the sheet music's foray into the public sphere, paving the way to the release of a chain of recordings of the piano music by musicians in and outside the Work. These were discussed in the second part of Chapter 6. Here it was argued that although these recordings have singlehandedly brought the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music to public attention and have undoubtedly linked Gurdjieff with a much larger audience,⁷ some orthodox Work members believe that the music does not fulfil its spiritual purpose outside the Work environment, and that recordings therefore devalue the music. This argument appears to stem from an interpretation of Gurdjieff's notion of inner octaves as relating to the harmonic series in music. If it is believed that the subtle laws of Gurdjieff's inner octaves informed the piano music, then recordings are considered degrading, as subtleties of harmonics and the finer substances they can transmit are largely lost in the recording process.

7 For more see Petsche, "G.I. Gurdjieff's Piano Music," 290–291.

Chapters 7 and 8 explored the connection between the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music and Gurdjieff's esoteric teaching. Chapter 7 focussed on Gurdjieff's cosmological and aesthetic ideas, with the aim of discovering whether or not these ideas informed his intentions for, and composition of, the music. Writers on the music, predominantly insider writers, make three assumptions: that Gurdjieff's cosmic Laws of Three and Seven infiltrate structures of the music, that the music is a call to hear natural harmonics, which are associated with 'inner octaves', and that the piano music was intended as 'objective music'. It was found that none of these assumptions bear scrutiny. In terms of the idea that the music was intended as 'objective', although the music shows no indication of this, it is of course impossible to know whether or not Gurdjieff truly believed that it was objective. In fact it is difficult to gauge from Gurdjieff's descriptions how one would identify an objective art form from a subjective one. In any case, the relationship between the piano music and Gurdjieff's cosmological and aesthetic ideas does not appear to be a literal one, and his cosmic Laws, inner octaves, and concept of objective art, although pivotal to his teaching, may well have been chiefly theoretical. At least it seems from the evidence available that they had no serious bearing on the composition of the piano music or Gurdjieff's ultimate intentions for it.

In Chapter 8 three arguments were posited about the purpose of this music. First, it was argued that Gurdjieff began composing as a response to a number of difficulties that he then faced in the aftermath of his car accident of July 1924. Composing may have served as a form of stimulation for him while he was still somewhat immobile, as well as a distraction from the declining health of his wife, the death of his mother, and financial troubles at the Prieuré. At that time Gurdjieff may also have felt the need to preserve for posterity his impressions of music heard in his early life, and to experiment with a new mode of expression since he was struggling with expression in his writing. None of these possibilities are mutually exclusive, and any or all could have played a part in prompting Gurdjieff to compose this music.

The second argument concerned the purpose of the piano music from January 1926, when Gurdjieff and de Hartmann began composing a succession of Hymns. Some of these were to be played in conjunction with readings of *Tales* in order to support and enhance pupils' understandings of the complex content of the book. The third argument stated that the piano music can be seen as a counterpart to Gurdjieff's two other major teaching methods implemented throughout the years at the Prieuré: his primary text *Tales* and the Movements. It was demonstrated how these methods can be seen to have been intended to facilitate self-remembering by disturbing the mechanical behaviours of the centres. Gurdjieff required listeners of the piano music to refrain

from identifying with it, and the music itself suggests that it was intended to inhibit mechanical listening and emotional habits. *Tales* and the Movements can be seen to make similar demands in relation to the intellectual and physical centres respectively. If the piano music was a major tool for observing and training the emotional centre, then this attests to the great significance of the music, since a cultivated emotional centre was particularly important to Gurdjieff's system of spiritual development. It is unsurprising that Gurdjieff would allocate such a role for music in his teaching, considering his deep interest in the effects of music; a theme that is strikingly evident in his writings, as well as in pupils' accounts of the teaching.

The Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music is diverse, and different pieces played different roles. Where some early pieces seem to have served as precious musical snapshots and impressions of Gurdjieff's past, most of the music functioned as an experiential tool for demonstrating principles central to his teaching and, considering his utter captivation with the power of music and vibration, he must have regarded this tool a particularly potent one. Where a number of pieces reinforced, for both listener and pianist, Gurdjieff's teachings on listening and attention through their challenging rhythms, others were to be heard in correlation with readings of *Tales* to enable deeper understandings of the book. The majority of pieces evoked, like no other medium, the essence of the East, which Gurdjieff believed offered age-old wisdom to contemporary Westerners. This wisdom, communicated through the exotic strains and pungent flavours of the music, touched and taught his highly receptive listeners in their quest to restore the dysfunctional machine and bring about spiritual transformation.

The Movements and Music for Movements

Gurdjieff's Movements are dances and exercises characterised by unusual and symbolic gestures of the body that are intended to highlight and challenge the body's mechanical nature.¹ Gurdjieff taught that the three centres of the individual are closely bound to each other so that if one's mechanical forms of moving are altered through Movements, changes in one's mechanical forms of thinking and feeling will follow.² The Movements were fundamental to Gurdjieff's first and third teaching phases (see Chapter 2), though between these phases the Movements were practiced and taught regularly by Gurdjieff's pupils. From 1925 onwards the Movements were practiced by Orage's groups in New York, and from 1936 to 1938 they were practiced by Ouspensky's groups in England, and by de Salzmann's groups in Paris.³

Gurdjieff first taught Movements between 1917 and August 1924. De Hartmann refers to the earliest Movements as 'Sacred Gymnastics' and 'Sacred Dances' as if they were precursors to the 'Movements,' a term that he employs in relation to Gurdjieff's dances from 1922.⁴ Nowadays all of these are collectively referred to as Movements, as has been the convention throughout this book. The Movements of this first period include the six "Obligatories," which are preparatory Movements traditionally practiced at the beginning of Movements classes,⁵ rhythmic 'dervish' dances, graceful 'women's' dances, several elaborate ritual Movements like "The Great Prayer" and "Initiation of the Priestess," as well as 'occupationals,' which emulate traditional occupations of peasant communities like shoemaking, carpet weaving, and spinning wool. Around twenty-seven of these Movements are remembered and practiced today.⁶

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- 1 An earlier version of the research presented in this appendix was published in Johanna Petsche, "Gurdjieff and de Hartmann's Music for Movements," in *Alternative Spirituality and Religion Review*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2013, 92–118.
 - 2 G.I. Gurdjieff, *Views From the Real World* (London: Penguin Compass, 1984), 167–169; P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous: The Teachings of G.I. Gurdjieff* (San Diego: Harcourt Inc., 1977 [1949]), 352–353.
 - 3 Jessmin Howarth, "Remember Inner Work," *Gurdjieff International Review*, Vol. 5, No. 1, Spring 2002, 38–39.
 - 4 Thomas de Hartmann and Olga de Hartmann, *Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff*, eds Thomas C. Daly and Thomas A.G. Daly (London: Arkana Penguin Books, 1992 [1964]), 51, 122, 168.
 - 5 Dushka Howarth and Jessmin Howarth, *It's Up To Ourselves: A Mother, A Daughter, and Gurdjieff* (New York: Gurdjieff Heritage Society, 2009), 53.
 - 6 Wim van Dulleman, [Liner notes] *Music for Gurdjieff's 39 Series* (Holland: Channel Classics Records, 2001), 12.

In an advertisement for Gurdjieff's Paris Movements demonstrations of 1923 he was specific about the apparent Eastern sources of his early Movements. According to the advertisement some came from 'The Seers,' an ancient school located in large artificial caves in Kafiristan, while his ritual Movements came from three monasteries: the Ksiljan Monastery of the Matchna Monks in Keril Oasis or Chinese Turkestan, the Monastery of the Takmur-Bogaeddin Order in Kafiristan, and the monastery, 'In the name of the Most Holy Lord Alia Son of Abu-Fhalibes' in Mazari-Sherif, Afghanistan.⁷ None of these monasteries have been located, though James Webb argues that the etymology of some of their names is consistent with the languages of these areas. Webb deduces that Gurdjieff had either been to these regions as he had claimed, or was closely associated with people who had travelled there.⁸ However, pupil J.G. Bennett stated that some of the Islamic orders specified in the advertisement traditionally eschewed dance in religious practice and, according to James Moore, no contemporary Central Asian geographer or anthropologist has reported any dances structured like Gurdjieff's Movements.⁹

The early Movements contrast with the more abstract and geometrical Movements of Gurdjieff's third teaching phase, which are between one and two hundred in number.¹⁰ They were choreographed between 1940 and 11 October 1949, eighteen days before Gurdjieff's death.¹¹ The thirty-nine Movements of this later phase that Gurdjieff regarded as complete became known as the *39 Series*, though on his last trips to America he added seven new Movements to this list. These forty-six Movements are known playfully as the 'American 39,' though in Europe only the original thirty-nine Movements are recognised as a part of the set.¹² Foundation groups today almost only teach the Movements of this later phase.

Gurdjieff added singing exercises to some of the later Movements. Dushka Howarth recalled a time when Gurdjieff required pupils to add a vocal accompaniment to one Movement, repeating "Alleluia" on each note of an ascending and descending scale.

7 Blom, *Oriental Suite*, 105.

8 James Webb, *The Harmonious Circle: The Lives and Work of G.I. Gurdjieff, P.D. Ouspensky and Their Followers* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980), 41–42.

9 J.G. Bennett, *Gurdjieff: Making a New World* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 105–106; Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 351.

10 Wim van Dulleman, "A Taste of the Sacred: The Gurdjieff Movements," *Stopinder* 4, Spring 2001, 26–27.

11 Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 352; Gert-Jan Blom, *Oriental Suite: The Complete Orchestral Music 1923–1924* (Netherlands: Basta Audio Visuals, 2006), 251 note 3.

12 For more on the *39 Series* see Joseph Azize, "Gurdjieff's Sacred Dances and Movements," in *Handbook of New Religions and Cultural Production*, eds Carole M. Cusack and Alex Norman (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 302–303.

She also states that for the Movement originally known as “French 5” or “American 2” but now renamed “The Pointing Dervish,” practitioners were required to sing a long sustained note in order to become ‘centred.’¹³ When de Hartmann composed music for the *39 Series* (see below) he included some singing parts. In the sheet music to the piece accompanying the Movement “No. 13” of the *39 Series* there are lines of music for soprano and alto voices. Also, in the sheet music for the piece accompanying the Movement “Persian Waltz” of the *39 Series*, parts are included for choirs 1 and 2.

Pupils de Salzmänn and Jessmin Howarth were leading figures in the preservation and teaching of many of the Movements after Gurdjieff’s death. Under de Salzmänn’s instruction, ten archival films were made of the Movements by French, English, and American Foundation groups in Paris between 1960 and 1974. These were based on the meticulous choreographic notes of Howarth, and made to document the Movements for posterity. These films are not available to the general public.¹⁴ The Movements continue to be taught today both in Foundation groups and independent Gurdjieff groups throughout the world in a process of choreographic transmission. These groups rarely stage public performances. In fact, most Foundation groups scrupulously guard the Movements, teaching long-term members only fragments to ensure that knowledge of the Movements is retained within these groups.¹⁵

The only officially released footage of the Movements appears in the closing sequence (between 1.29.28 and 1.38.24 minutes) of Peter Brook’s 1979 cinematic adaptation of Gurdjieff’s *Meetings With Remarkable Men*.¹⁶ Here Brook depicts six different Movements performed by members of the Foundation network, some of whom were taught directly by Gurdjieff.¹⁷ Interestingly, these performances, which were overseen by de Salzmänn, were deliberately executed with slight alterations.¹⁸ In any case only brief excerpts of Movements are shown. There seems to have been a concern that these Movements might be copied from the footage.

Work members would explain these sorts of precautions as necessary to protect the authenticity of the Movements, though they could also be understood as attempts to preserve power within the upper echelons of Foundation groups. Gurdjieff himself gave public demonstrations of the Movements on a number of occasions; he organised

13 Howarth and Howarth, *It’s Up to Ourselves*, 220, 477.

14 Andrew Rawlinson, *The Book of Enlightened Masters: Western Teachers in Eastern Traditions* (Illinois: Open Court, 1997), 312; Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 353.

15 For more see van Dullemen, “A Taste of the Sacred,” 33–39.

16 See Carole M. Cusack, “An Enlightened Life in Text and Image: G.I. Gurdjieff’s *Meetings With Remarkable Men* (1963) and Peter Brook’s ‘Meetings With Remarkable Men’ (1979),” *Literature & Aesthetics*, Vol. 21, No. 1, 2011, 72–97.

17 Peter Brook, “A Film and a Legend,” in *The Inner Journey: Views from the Gurdjieff Work*, ed. Jacob Needleman (Sandpoint, Idaho: Morning Light Press, 2008), 330.

18 Azize, “Gurdjieff’s Sacred Dances and Movements,” 321.

a demonstration in Tiflis in 1919, gave weekly demonstrations at his Institute in Constantinople in 1920 and 1921, presented demonstrations in the Study House at the Prieuré on Saturday evenings in the summer of 1923,¹⁹ and arranged a series of demonstrations in Paris and America in 1923 and 1924. When Olga de Hartmann asked Gurdjieff why he allowed so many people to attend the demonstrations when a large number of them seemed uninterested he replied, “How can you judge?... We have to let everyone hear. The results do not belong to us.”²⁰

As an aside, celebrated ballet impresario Sergei Diaghilev attended demonstrations given at the Prieuré, taking time off from work on Stravinsky’s ballet *Les Noces*. He apparently wished to incorporate Gurdjieff’s Movements as a novelty item in his Ballet Russes season.²¹ Two of Diaghilev’s dancers have links to Gurdjieff: Adolph Bohm and Nadine Nicolaeva-Legat. Bohm, a dancer in Diaghilev’s ballet troupe and an acquaintance of de Hartmann, arranged for Gurdjieff’s 1924 Movements demonstrations to be presented in Chicago. Nicolaeva-Legat, who had danced with the Ballet Russes, was a pupil of Ouspensky who had incorporated Gurdjieff’s principle of self-observation into a new gymnastic form of dancing. Her husband Nicholas Legat had earlier choreographed de Hartmann’s acclaimed four-act ballet *La Fleurette Rouge (The Scarlet Flower)* in St Petersburg in 1907, and it was the residence for Nicholas Legat’s ballet school that Ouspensky acquired in 1938 for his groups, which became known as Colet House.²²

Gurdjieff’s Movements and the philosophy behind them share similarities with the nineteenth and twentieth-century dance methods and theories of François Delsarte (1811–1871), Émile Jacques-Dalcroze (1864–1950), and Rudolf von Laban (1879–1958). Delsarte divided the individual into mental, emotional, and spiritual components and,

19 Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 192; Thomas C. Daly and Thomas A.G. Daly, “Chronology,” in *Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff* (London: Arkana Penguin Books, 1992), 267. Gurdjieff, “The Material Question,” in *Meetings With Remarkable Men* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2002), 283, explained the purpose of the Constantinople demonstrations as follows: “to accustom the pupils not to be embarrassed in the presence of strangers. The local Turks and Greeks, who assembled in large numbers to watch these demonstrations, showed a great interest in the movements and in the music which I had composed specially for them.”

20 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 218.

21 Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 192; James Moore, “Gurdjieff, George Ivanovitch,” in *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*, Vol. 1, eds Wouter J. Hanegraaff, Antoine Faivre, Roelof van den Broek, and Jean-Pierre Brach (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 447.

22 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 214–215; Jennifer Fisher, “The Legat Saga: Nicolai Gustavovitch Legat, 1869–1937 by John Gregory,” *Dance Research Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 1, Spring 1996, 72; Theodore Barber, “Four Interpretations of Mevlevi Dervish Dance 1920–1929,” *Dance Chronicle*, Vol. 9, No. 3, 1986, 335; Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*, 409.

like Gurdjieff, argued that thoughts and emotions affect the body and that body gestures affect thoughts and emotions. Delsarte claimed that if three men said 'Yes' to him, he could tell who was sincere and who was not by the exact position of the thumb. Like Gurdjieff, his principle was to bring individuals to a state of harmony. Delsarte also saw the universe consisting of trinities and, reminiscent of Gurdjieff's nine-sided enneagram symbol, developed the principle of the 'ninefold accord' where each element of a trinity is further divided into its triune aspects. Pupil of Delsarte Genevieve Stebbins explains the 'third term' of Delsarte's trinities as functioning to render the whole harmonious.²³ Similarly, the third 'force' of Gurdjieff's Law of Three was considered the 'neutralising' or 'reconciling' force, which was necessary for bringing about results in the world.²⁴

Émile Jacques-Dalcroze's system of dance exercises known as Eurhythmics aims, according to musicologist Gilles Comeau, "to harmonize the body, the emotions and the intellect,"²⁵ which is also the objective of Gurdjieff's teaching. Interestingly, there was a personal connection between Gurdjieff and Dalcroze; Jeanne de Salzmänn was originally a trained Eurhythmics instructor who had worked with Dalcroze at his Institute in Hellerau near Dresden between 1911 and 1914. Upon meeting Gurdjieff in Tiflis in 1919 she invited him to her Dalcroze class. The class was soon placed at Gurdjieff's disposal and he began training them regularly in his Movements.²⁶

In 1921 Gurdjieff sought a permanent residence for his Institute, and Dalcroze sent him a letter proposing that he purchase his residence at Hellerau. Dalcroze had relocated to Geneva, Switzerland in 1915 to escape the post-war conditions in Saxony. Gurdjieff found the premises suitable and initiated negotiations with Dalcroze, though these plans fell through. Ouspensky implies that legal problems prevented Gurdjieff from purchasing it.²⁷ Gurdjieff, on the other hand, states that at the time a group of English people proposed that he open an Institute in London and, as they offered to undertake the expenses, he pursued this possibility instead. He explains that his subsequent travels to London were sometimes made via France, and that this led to his

23 George W. Knight, *Symbol of Man* (London and New York: Regency Press, 1979), 29, 31; Nancy L.C. Ruyter, *The Cultivation of Body and Mind in Nineteenth Century American Delsartism* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1999), 76–78.

24 G.I. Gurdjieff, *All and Everything First Series: Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1964 [1950]), 138–139, 751; Ouspensky, *Search*, 77–78; Gurdjieff, *Views*, 189.

25 Gilles Comeau, *Comparing Dalcroze, Orff and Kodály: Choosing Your Approach to Teaching Music* (Ontario: Centre Franco-Ontarien de Ressources Pédagogiques, 1995), 49.

26 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 121–123.

27 Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 150–151; Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*, 187; Gurdjieff, "The Material Question," 284; Ouspensky, *Search*, 384.

final decision to establish his Institute in France.²⁸ In any case, Gurdjieff benefited from his time inspecting the residence in Hellerau, as he captured the allegiance there of some of Dalcroze's finest dancers, including Jessmin Howarth and Rose Mary Lillard (later Nott), who abandoned Eurhythmics to follow Gurdjieff's method. Webb argues that this trip to Hellerau led Gurdjieff to adopt the Dalcrozian role of 'dancing teacher,' which is how Gurdjieff later presented himself in Europe.²⁹

In 1923 Dalcroze attended Gurdjieff's Paris Movements demonstrations and was, according to de Hartmann, "very displeased" by them. De Hartmann believed that this was because "everything that he [Dalcroze] saw contradicted his own system of movement, which had been widely accepted. Here everything was based on quite another principle of anti-mechanical movement, simultaneously developing physical work with consciousness and even prayer."³⁰ Conversely, Dushka Howarth reported that her mother, pupil Jessmin Howarth, had said that on the night of the first demonstration in Paris Dalcroze's pupils protested in front of the theatre, shouting "Tricheur! Voleur!" ("Cheat! Thief!") as if Gurdjieff had stolen ideas from Dalcroze.³¹ As Gurdjieff began teaching Movements in 1917 it is possible that the Movements were influenced by, or a reaction to, Dalcroze's Eurhythmics, which was developed between 1903 and 1910 and was well known in Russia before Gurdjieff appeared there in 1913.³²

Rudolf von Laban encountered the dance methods of Delsarte and Dalcroze in the early 1900s and, following them, taught a threefold unity of body, mind, and emotions or spirit, where each component was interdependent on the others.³³ Laban stated that in dance one could recognise "an organised co-operation of our mental, emotional and bodily powers resulting in actions the experience of which is of the greatest importance to the development of the...personality." He believed, like Gurdjieff, that one of the main aims of the art of movement was "an experience of the reconciliation between the often antagonistic inner trends of man."³⁴ Redolent of Gurdjieff's

28 Gurdjieff, "The Material Question," 284.

29 Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*, 189–190. Paul Beekman Taylor, *G.I. Gurdjieff: A New Life* (Utrecht, Netherlands: Eureka Editions, 2008), 78, questions whether Lillard and Howarth were actually in Germany at this time.

30 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 206.

31 van Dullemen, [Liner notes] *Music for Gurdjieff's 39 Series*, 11.

32 For more on Dalcroze and Gurdjieff see Azize, "Gurdjieff's Sacred Dances and Movements," 308–309.

33 John Hodgson and Valerie Preston-Dunlop, *Rudolf Laban* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1990), 17.

34 Samuel Thornton, *A Movement Perspective of Rudolf Laban* (London: Macdonald and Evans, 1971), 34–35.

Institute, Laban began a Summer School in Ascona, Switzerland in 1913, which involved carrying out tasks associated with gardening, sewing costumes, making sandals, and culinary activities. Similarly to Gurdjieff, Laban aimed to bring pupils to a state of harmony by assigning them a diverse range of tasks, which they were to execute with an economy of energy. Laban was, like Gurdjieff, also interested in the Middle East, Russian Orthodox Christianity, Sufism, Sufi dance, and the folk dances of Eastern Europe.³⁵

The most comprehensive scholarly work on the Movements to date is Joseph Azize's "Gurdjieff's Sacred Dances and Movements."³⁶ Other useful studies are Mel Gordon's "Gurdjieff's Movement Demonstrations: The Theatre of the Miraculous," Theodore Barber's "Four Interpretations of Mevlevi Dervish Dance 1920–1929," Wim van Dulleman's "A Taste of the Sacred: The Gurdjieff Movements," Gert-Jan Blom's *Oriental Suite*, Jessmin and Dushka Howarth's *It's Up To Ourselves*, as well as my own more recent "Gurdjieff and de Hartmann's Music for Movements."³⁷ An informative website is Wim van Dulleman's *Gurdjieff Movements*.³⁸ A unique source for footage of the Movements is the DVD *Movements: The Work of G.I. Gurdjieff*, made by my own Movements group in 2014. This features nine Movements as well as renditions of Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano pieces, some transcribed for clarinet and harmonium.³⁹ A valuable though incomplete source for footage is Peter Brook's 1979 cinematic adaptation of *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, discussed above. Footage is also widely available on YouTube, which shows that Foundation groups have not successfully concealed the Movements from public exposure. Many of these YouTube clips depict Movements performances given at ashrams dedicated to internationally famous Indian mystic Osho or Acharya Rajneesh, originally Chandra Mohan Jain, who admired Gurdjieff and frequently mentioned him.⁴⁰ These generally inaccurate performances are regarded as disrespectful by Work members.

35 Hodgson and Preston-Dunlop, *Rudolf Laban*, 52; Karen K. Bradley, *Rudolf Laban* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 3, 58.

36 Azize, "Gurdjieff's Sacred Dances and Movements," 297–330.

37 Mel Gordon, "Gurdjieff's Movement Demonstrations: The Theatre of the Miraculous," *The Drama Review*, Vol. 22, No. 2, 1978, 33–44; Theodore Barber, "Four Interpretations of Mevlevi Dervish Dance 1920–1929," 328–355; van Dulleman, "A Taste of the Sacred: The Gurdjieff Movements," 15–44; Blom, *Oriental Suite*; Howarth and Howarth, *It's Up To Ourselves*; Petsche, "Gurdjieff and de Hartmann's Music for Movements," 92–121.

38 Wim van Dulleman, *Gurdjieff Movements*, <http://www.gurdjieff-movements.net>. Retrieved 2 March 2011.

39 A Flapping Production, *Movements: The Work of G.I. Gurdjieff* (Sydney: A Flapping Production, 2014).

40 Anthony Storr, *Feet of Clay: A Study of Gurus* (London: Harper Collins, 1997), 47.

The Music for Movements

When Gurdjieff first began teaching Movements in Essentuki in 1917, he himself provided musical accompaniments on a guitar borrowed from his landlord, since it was impossible to acquire a piano. He played waltzes and mazurkas that he claimed came from a study book for guitar,⁴¹ and de Hartmann states that he “played very well.”⁴² (In *Meetings* Gurdjieff described playing guitar in his youth to impress a girl, stating that she thought that he “played the guitar well.”⁴³ Also, on the original manuscript of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano piece “Long Ago in Mikhailov” (Vol. 1, 77–79) are the words “Played by G.I. a long time ago on guitar,”⁴⁴ suggesting that Gurdjieff had in the past played this melody). Pupil and lawyer P.V. Shandarovsky also took part in these early musical accompaniments to the Movements on his Guarneri violin. De Hartmann was not given a role in the music for the Movements until 1919. Until then he was required to practice the Movements with the other pupils.⁴⁵

From 1919 to 1924 Gurdjieff and de Hartmann collaborated on the music for the Movements, which was composed in similar fashion to their piano music (see Chapter 4) though composition took place within the context of dynamic Movements classes. It seems, at least according to Bennett’s account below, that de Hartmann had more creative license during work on the music for Movements. Bennett gives an account of a Movements class in 1923, describing Gurdjieff dictating Movements music and choreography almost simultaneously with de Hartmann immediately arranging and harmonising the music:

Gurdjieff would begin to tap a rhythm on the piano top. When it was clear to all he hummed a melody or played it with one hand on the piano and then walked away. Hartmann would develop a theme to fit the rhythm and the melody. If he went wrong, Gurdjieff would shout at him and Hartmann would shout furiously back.⁴⁶

41 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 44.

42 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 51.

43 G.I. Gurdjieff, *Meetings With Remarkable Men* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2002 [1963]), 201.

44 Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (16 April 2011).

45 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 53, 139–141.

46 J.G. Bennett, *Witness: The Autobiography of J.G. Bennett* (London: Turnstone Books, 1975), 112. For a similar account of the process see C.S. Nott, *Teachings of Gurdjieff: A Pupil’s Journal, An Account of Some Years With G.I. Gurdjieff and A.R. Orage in New York and at Fontainebleau-Avon* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), 62.

After Gurdjieff placed pupils in the desired positions, there were “a few words of explanation, and de Hartmann would begin to play the theme, which by then he had worked out into a rich harmony.”⁴⁷

De Hartmann was only asked to notate the music for Movements from 30 May 1923,⁴⁸ presumably in preparation for orchestrating pieces for the upcoming Paris Movements demonstrations. Before this time he must have either relied only on rough musical sketches made during Movements classes, or been required to arrange and play the music in classes completely from memory. It is known that pupils always practiced the Movements from memory as no choreographic notes were allowed. Solange Claustres, who attended Movements classes from 1941, explained, “We were never allowed to take choreographic notes, because this activity would reduce our first and complete impression to an analytical or rational attitude.”⁴⁹ This same philosophy may relate to the music prior to 1923.

Gurdjieff and de Hartmann’s music for Movements reflects the styles and sounds of their piano music, particularly their Asian and Eastern Folk Music (see Chapter 5), though the music for Movements is more repetitive and structured in a way that interacts with and supports the physical gestures of the Movements; often each chord, note, or first beat of a bar corresponds with a new physical gesture. As the structure of many Movements are governed by the numbers three, seven, and nine, in line with Gurdjieff’s cosmic Laws of Three and Seven, and enneagram symbol, the music reflects these numbers in rhythms and meters.⁵⁰ The music is traditionally played live in Movements classes by a pianist, whose role in the class is considered essential; esteemed Movements instructor Solange Claustres states, “it is the sound produced by the pianist that determines everything, it is this sound that has to complete the inner process brought into action by the movements of the dancers.”⁵¹ Interestingly, when Claustres was questioned in our interview about the role of music during Movements classes she paused for some time and then said unequivocally, “All. Most important.”⁵² In Movements classes held by Foundation groups, practitioners often must learn Movements before hearing the accompanying music. Thomas A.G. Daly suggests that the final addition of the music in these classes is meant as a ‘shock’ for practitioners (see Chapter 7 for a discussion of shocks). If practitioners hear the music ahead of learning the Movement, this might diminish the shock.⁵³ If, however, Foundation

47 Bennett, *Witness: The Autobiography of J.G. Bennett*, 112.

48 Daly and Daly, “Chronology,” 268.

49 van Dullemen, “A Taste of the Sacred,” 30.

50 For more detail on this aspect see Petsche, “Gurdjieff and de Hartmann’s Music for Movements,” 107.

51 van Dullemen, “A Taste of the Sacred,” 30.

52 Solange Claustres, pers. comm. (3 May 2010).

53 Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (10 August 2012).

groups teach only fragments of Movements in classes as van Dullemen suggests,⁵⁴ this implies that they would only play corresponding fragments of the music.

Movements instructor and pianist Dorine Tolley explains that the music for Movements should not distract or carry away practitioners, but instead should enable a transformation to take place where the group comes to realise and eventually overcome their mechanical behaviours. Through tempo, articulation, phrasing, tone colour, and *rubato*, the Movements pianist can provide the group with the greatest possible opportunity for spiritual development.⁵⁵ Tolley's comments reflect Gurdjieff's statements that the music for Movements is an aid for drawing away one's "mechanicalness," and that Movements practitioners should refrain from allowing attention to stray to the accompanying music. He also said that the music should centre individuals during Movements: it "diverts the movements innate in us which in life [are] the chief source of interference."⁵⁶

Recordings and Sheet Music

As the purpose of this music is to support the Movements, opinions differ on whether the music has any value when it is separated from corresponding Movements. Thomas C. Daly, pupil of the de Hartmanns and executor of their estate, argued that the music for Movements cannot be considered a "thing-in-itself" without accompanying Movements.⁵⁷ Others argue that while the Movements themselves cannot function without the accompanying music (this would be difficult to dispute),⁵⁸ much of the music can stand alone without the Movements. For example, in the liner notes to one of the only public recordings of the music for Movements, pianist/researcher Wim van Dullemen asserts, "it seemed appropriate to present this music independently and let it speak with its own voice."⁵⁹ Unlike the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music, the

54 For more see van Dullemen, "A Taste of the Sacred," 33–39.

55 Dorine Tolley, pers. comm. (27 October 2009).

56 Gurdjieff, *Views*, 220.

57 Thomas C. Daly, [Liner notes] "Introduction," in *Music for Gurdjieff's 39 Series* (Holland: Channel Classics Records, 2001), 3.

58 This became clear to me when practicing the Movement "Greek Letters" in Tolley's Movements class. Here a series of gestures of the arms, legs, and head are grouped in sets of four, and at the beginning of each set a Greek letter of the alphabet is recited. At first the class learnt and practiced the Movement without the music, and it felt incomplete and almost nonsensical. Later, when Tolley added the accompanying music the Movement immediately came together. Afterwards the class commented on the noticeable difference that the music made to their experience of the Movement.

59 Wim van Dullemen, [Liner notes] *Gurdjieff's Music for the Movements* (Holland: Channel Classics Records, 1991), 17.

music for Movements is rarely recorded.⁶⁰ Van Dullemen released two two-CD sets: *Gurdjieff's Music for the Movements*, which was overseen by Gurdjieff's daughter Dushka Howarth, and *Music for Gurdjieff's 39 Series*, supervised by Thomas C. Daly.⁶¹ However, van Dullemen warns that such recordings can never replace a live pianist in a Movements class as "only he or she can feel what a class needs at a particular moment."⁶²

There is no publicly available edition of the sheet music for the music for Movements, probably due to the secrecy that surrounds the Movements. The music was published in three volumes by Janus in 1950, entitled *Music Pour les Mouvements de G.I. Gurdjieff*, and circulated privately.⁶³ These volumes are also known as the white, grey, and black books, due to the colour of their covers. The white book comprises twenty-eight pieces, including some of the earliest pieces for Movements and some of de Hartmann's own compositions for the later Movements composed after Gurdjieff's death. The grey book contains de Hartmann's music for the *39 Series*, discussed below, and the music that Gurdjieff and de Hartmann composed for the six "Obligatories." The black book combines seven pieces, though it is uncertain as to why these were separated from the others. The music for Movements was later republished in two volumes in 1990 by Triangle Editions in Canada, and called *Music for the Gurdjieff Movements and Exercises*.

Two unpublished private collections of sheet music for the music for Movements also exist, and are known as the Study Society manuscript (thirty-four pieces) and the Coombe Springs manuscript (twenty-seven pieces). They are associated with offshoot groups formed by Ouspensky and Bennett respectively, and contain minor variations to the Triangle edition. In his recording *Gurdjieff's Music for the Movements* Wim van Dullemen demonstrates the subtle ways in which these two manuscript collections diverge from versions in the Triangle edition. He recorded three different versions of one piece, which in the Triangle edition is designated "Rug Weaving," in the Coombe Springs manuscript is "The Carpet," and in the Study Society manuscript, "Carpet Weaving." Slight differences in the voicing of harmonies and the rhythm of the melody can be discerned. Van Dullemen also recorded two versions of the music for the Movement "The First Dervish Prayer," one from the Triangle edition and one being a combination of the ostinato added by the Study Society manuscript and the changed

60 For more on recordings see Petsche, "Gurdjieff and de Hartmann's Music for Movements," 116.

61 *Gurdjieff's Music for the Movements* (Holland: Channel Classics Records, 1999); *Music for Gurdjieff's 39 Series* (Holland: Channel Classics Records, 2001).

62 van Dullemen, [Liner notes] *Gurdjieff's Music for the Movements*, 21.

63 Walter J. Driscoll and Gurdjieff Foundation of California, *Gurdjieff: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1985), 8.

tremolos from the Coombe Springs manuscript.⁶⁴ As the music for Movements was so closely protected, if someone wished to obtain a copy of the music they may have had to copy it out by hand. Some of the variations in the music of these private collections may then represent simplifications and abbreviations made as it was laboriously written by hand.

Orchestral Music for the Movements Demonstrations of 1923 and 1924

Gurdjieff wanted his music for Movements orchestrated for the demonstrations given at the Théâtre de Champs Elysées in Paris in December 1923. De Hartmann carried out the majority of the orchestration work, which consisted of notating and orchestrating pieces they had earlier composed on piano for the Movements. Although the Théâtre de Champs Elysées was designed for a one hundred piece orchestra, de Hartmann had only thirty-five musicians at his disposal. To make matters worse, later in America, two days before the first demonstration was given in New York, Gurdjieff asked de Hartmann to adapt this Paris orchestral music for an even smaller ensemble of musicians. This may have been due to financial constraints, though de Hartmann found the task unnecessary as he could have simply accompanied the demonstrations on the piano.⁶⁵ De Hartmann states that he hired five musicians for this smaller ensemble – a violinist, cellist, double-bassist, clarinettist and percussionist⁶⁶ – though Gert-Jan Blom argues that there must have been eight in the ensemble. Blom was able to access original instrumental parts and found parts for two violins, cello, double bass, flute, clarinet, and percussion. As de Hartmann also played with the ensemble, it must have comprised eight players. No separate piano part was found but Blom believes that de Hartmann would have known the music by heart.⁶⁷

De Hartmann mentions a time when Gurdjieff contributed to the orchestration process, asking de Hartmann to add to the melody for the Movement “The Great Prayer” *pianissimo* sub-voices. These were to be constructed on the same scale as the melody. These sub-voices were to represent dervishes who were not active in the dance but who chanted prayers in low, muffled voices. Later in rehearsal Gurdjieff asked the orchestral players to pay special attention to the *pianissimo* when performing the sub-voices and de Hartmann found this “strikingly effective.”⁶⁸ By specially requesting the

64 See van Dullemen, [Liner notes] *Gurdjieff's Music for the Movements*, 29–30, 32.

65 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 203, 205, 212–213, 216.

66 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 213.

67 Blom, *Oriental Suite*, 181–182.

68 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 156.

addition of sub-voices and specifying a dynamic it appears that Gurdjieff was concerned with the texture and quality of the orchestral sound.

It is also reported that in rehearsals for the demonstrations Gurdjieff would at times specify which instrument would play which line. Jessmin Howarth interpreted this as a sign that Gurdjieff was concerned:

with the effects of different instruments, their individual tones and special vibrations, not so much on the ears of the audience, but much more importantly, on different parts of the performers' bodies. His music was exactly "right" in every way to help inspire the necessary physical responses.⁶⁹

Gurdjieff also directed the musicians in rehearsals. He would sometimes join the percussionist on tambourine, and in the last Paris demonstration he even took over the baton and conducted the orchestra himself.⁷⁰ Further, de Hartmann remarks that for the American demonstrations, "we had five good Russian musicians with whom Mr Gurdjieff could communicate,"⁷¹ which suggests that Gurdjieff was keen to engage with the musicians.

All orchestrations for the Paris demonstrations, all arrangements of the music for the smaller ensemble accompanying some American demonstrations, and fourteen orchestrated pieces composed before 1922 for the Tiflis and Constantinople demonstrations and for *Struggle*, can be heard on the four CDs included in Gert-Jan Blom's comprehensive 255 page book *Oriental Suite: The Complete Orchestral Music 1923–1924*.⁷² The book examines the Movements demonstrations in Paris and America and includes illustrations, historical documents, press articles, pupils' recollections of the demonstrations, photographs, and copies of orchestral manuscripts. The recordings were made in 2003 and 2005 by the Metropole Orchestra in the Netherlands. Included at the end of the fourth disc is a set of five Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano pieces that were orchestrated by de Hartmann in 1956: "Song of the Aisors," "Seid Dance," "Song of the Fisherwoman," "Bagpipe Music," and "Tibetan Masked Dance." De Hartmann called this set of pieces "Oriental Suite." In original manuscripts of the piano music there are occasional markings indicating Gurdjieff's plan to orchestrate some pieces (see Chapter 6). Journalist Carl Zigrosser also stated that he had been told while at the Prieuré that some of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano pieces were "studies for

69 Howarth and Howarth, *It's Up To Ourselves*, 476.

70 Dushka Howarth, pers. comm. (16 April 2009); de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 207, 213. De Hartmann states that Gurdjieff would communicate messages to pupils through his tambourine rhythms. This is discussed in Chapter 7.

71 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 213.

72 Blom, *Oriental Suite*; Gert-Jan Blom, pers. comm. (25 October 2009).

subsequent choral and orchestral compositions.⁷³ “Oriental Suite” may signify de Hartmann’s attempt to finally carry out Gurdjieff’s plan for particular piano pieces.

Music for the Later Movements

Gurdjieff did not compose any music after de Hartmann left him in 1929, so the music for the later Movements (1940–1949) was improvised on piano by pupils such as de Salzman, Jessmin Howarth, Carol Robinson, Rose Mary Nott, and Solange Claustres. Jessmin Howarth explained that Gurdjieff would give a rhythm to the pianist and his instructions were limited to, “Now, just do it!”⁷⁴ Solange Claustres, who won a Premier Prix for her piano playing, described these improvisations as “a living part of the inner work that takes place in the classes.”⁷⁵ Interestingly, pupil Pierre Schaeffer stated that the music for the later Movements was sometimes improvised on “a piano tuned to augmented seconds.”⁷⁶ (The interval of the augmented second is a widening of the interval of the major second by one semitone. In his writings Gurdjieff demonstrates his interest in specially tuning pianos and other musical instruments).⁷⁷ After Gurdjieff’s death, music was composed for the later Movements by, most notably, de Hartmann, Edvard Michael, Alain Kremski, Helen Adie, and Laurence Rosenthal.

Two days before his death Gurdjieff sent a message to de Hartmann requesting music for the *39 Series*.⁷⁸ De Hartmann obliged, composing thirty-seven pieces for the *39 Series* (the other two were to be improvised), as well as pieces for fifteen other Movements of the later Movements period. This must have been a strange assignment for de Hartmann, who had had no contact with Gurdjieff for twenty years and who had not taken part in these Movements, which were radically different to the earlier Movements in which he was involved. To familiarise himself with these later Movements, de Hartmann relied on written instructions by Jessmin Howarth and personal demonstrations by Solange Claustres, Josee de Salzman, and Marthe de Gaigneron. Claustres maintained that as de Hartmann had not witnessed a class carrying out these Movements, some of these compositions are not optimal.⁷⁹ In his music

73 Carl Ziggrosser, “Gurdjieff,” in *Gurdjieff in the Public Eye: Newspaper Articles, Magazines and Books 1914–1949*, ed. Paul Beekman Taylor (Utrecht, Netherlands: Eureka Editions, 2010), 183.

74 van Dullemen, [Liner notes] *Music for Gurdjieff’s 39 Series*, 15, 41 note 10.

75 van Dullemen, “A Taste of the Sacred,” 30.

76 Pierre Schaeffer, “A Session of ‘Movements’ The Old Man and the Children of the Age,” *Gurdjieff International Review*, Vol. 5, No. 1, Spring 2002, 35.

77 See Gurdjieff, *Tales*, 847, 852, 867, 884, 893; Gurdjieff, *Meetings*, 132.

78 Moore, “Gurdjieff, George Ivanovitch,” 449.

79 van Dullemen, [Liner notes] *Music for Gurdjieff’s 39 Series*, 16.

for the later Movements de Hartmann employs angular melodies, syncopation, poly-rhythms, whole-tone tonalities, and melodies played in consecutive octaves. These techniques are particularly noticeable in “The Automaton,” “The Three Tableaux,” “Dance,” “Stop Exercise,” and “March N26.”⁸⁰ This music reflects the style of the later Movements and contrasts with the simpler music for the first period of Movements, composed with Gurdjieff decades earlier. In July 1950 de Hartmann played many of these new compositions at a Movements demonstration at Colet Gardens in London.⁸¹

80 van Dullemen, *Music for Gurdjieff's 39 Series*.

81 van Dullemen, [Liner notes] *Music for Gurdjieff's 39 Series*, 16.

The Struggle of the Magicians

For over three decades Gurdjieff's ballet *The Struggle of the Magicians* (henceforth *Struggle*) was an ongoing conception for him. In 1914 he first advertised it in the political newspaper *Golos Moskvi* (*Voice of Moscow*) and in 1948 he had it rehearsed in New York.¹ The ballet was mostly a focus from 1919 to 1921 at which time Gurdjieff believed, according to Ouspensky, that it should itself become a school.² *Struggle* was never performed in its entirety, though a programme from a Movements demonstration in 1919 given in Tiflis includes a "fragment of a round dance from the 3rd Act of *The Struggle of the Magicians*."³ At least this one 'fragment', then, had been presented to the public. The de Hartmanns interpreted the ballet as an exercise in attention and effort, where the end product was basically irrelevant. One morning Gurdjieff was found destroying props pupils had made for the ballet with an axe. He explained, "We have done it, so we don't need it anymore. Now it can go to the dump."⁴

At times, however, Gurdjieff appears to have been serious about having *Struggle* performed. In 1920 he announced to pupils his intentions to have it staged at the Tiflis State Theatre and asked de Hartmann to give up music work outside the Prieuré to dedicate himself fully to the project (de Hartmann declined, as this was not possible for him financially).⁵ Decades later Gurdjieff also wished to have the ballet performed in New York, as stated above, though there are no details of his plans. Attesting to Gurdjieff's devotion to the ballet, the homily given at the high requiem mass at his funeral in the Alexandre Nevski Cathedral in Paris concluded with a quotation from the ballet: "God and all his angels keep us from doing evil by helping us always and everywhere to remember our Selves."⁶

1 An earlier version of the research presented in this appendix was published in Johanna Petsche, "Gurdjieff and de Hartmann's Music for Movements," in *Alternative Spirituality and Religion Review*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2013, 118–121.

2 James Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth A Biography* (Shaftsbury, Dorset: Element, 1991), 349; Thomas de Hartmann and Olga de Hartmann, *Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff*, eds Thomas C. Daly and Thomas A.G. Daly (London: Arkana Penguin Books, 1992 [1964]), 141–147, 153; P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous: The Teachings of G.I. Gurdjieff* (San Diego: Harcourt Inc., 1977 [1963]), 382.

3 Gert-Jan Blom, *Oriental Suite: The Complete Orchestral Music 1923–1924* (Netherlands: Basta Audio Visuals, 2006), 36.

4 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 147.

5 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 141–142, 147.

6 Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 349.

Set somewhere in the Middle East, the plot of *Struggle* concentrates on the efforts of Gafar, a wealthy Parsi prince, to win the affection of Zeinab, a devoted disciple of a white magician. Gafar engages the services of a black magician to help him achieve his aim and the struggle between these two opposing forces forms the foundation of the ballet. A rough scenario of the ballet survives,⁷ along with a number of detailed paintings of scenes by Alexandre de Salzmann.⁸ Ouspensky describes *Struggle* as a series of scenes “accompanied by music and intermixed with songs and dances” that Gurdjieff had remembered from his travels throughout Central Asia and the Middle East.⁹ Where Gurdjieff and Ouspensky wrote verses for the scenario, Alexandre de Salzmann painted the stage designs, and Gurdjieff and de Hartmann composed the music. The music was first conceived in 1919, thus representing some of their earliest compositions.

De Hartmann gives brief accounts of their collaboration on the music for *Struggle*, describing Gurdjieff whistling music for the second act, which de Hartmann transcribed spontaneously. Gurdjieff also gave de Hartmann different musical modes (or scales) that corresponded with the different nationalities of the people in the dances. These modes later served as music for exercises that Gurdjieff gave pupils,¹⁰ and some of the ballet music was later orchestrated for the Movements demonstrations of 1923 and 1924.¹¹ Recordings of these orchestrations were made by the Metropole Orchestra in 2003 and 2005 and can be heard as part of Gert-Jan Blom’s *Oriental Suite*.¹² It is likely that most of the fifteen pieces comprising the addenda of Blom’s second CD come from *Struggle*.¹³

De Hartmann must have originally memorised the music for *Struggle* as it was not notated for piano until late 1925, though one piece from the ballet, known in the Schott edition as Fragment No. 6, was notated some time between 1920 and 1924 (see Appendix D).¹⁴ After Gurdjieff’s death, the 1925 batch of original final manuscripts of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music, which also included music from *Struggle*,

7 G.I. Gurdjieff, *Scenario of the Ballet The Struggle of the Magicians* (Cape Town: Stourton Press, 1957).

8 Dushka Howarth and Jessmin Howarth, *It’s Up To Ourselves: A Mother, A Daughter, and Gurdjieff* (New York: Gurdjieff Heritage Society, 2009), 41. To view these paintings see Howarth and Howarth, *It’s Up To Ourselves*, 43, 47.

9 Ouspensky, *Search*, 16–17.

10 de Hartmann and de Hartmann, *Our Life*, 141, 145–146.

11 Blom, *Oriental Suite*, 34.

12 Blom, *Oriental Suite*.

13 Gert-Jan Blom, pers. comm. (25 October 2009). For a list of these pieces and information about them see Blom, *Oriental Suite*, 196–203, 213.

14 Linda Daniel-Spitz, Charles Ketcham, and Laurence Rosenthal, “Chronological Order of Compositions,” in *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann: Music for the Piano*, Vol. 4 (Mainz, Germany: Schott, 2005), 109–110.

went missing (see Chapter 6). For this reason, when de Hartmann recorded music from *Struggle* in the 1950s, he had to work from the skeletal musical indications in the original draft manuscripts. As the original draft manuscripts consist only of melodies, de Hartmann's renditions may well demonstrate the way in which he approached Gurdjieff's melodic dictations during the process of composing with him. That is, de Hartmann was to spontaneously add harmonies to Gurdjieff's melodic indications.

Some of de Hartmann's renditions of music from *Struggle*, which appear on his recording *The Music of Gurdjieff/de Hartmann*,¹⁵ were transcribed for the Schott edition. These are Fragments No. 3, No. 4, and No. 5 according to the Schott edition, and excerpts one, two, and three according to the recording. The Schott edition includes three more pieces from *Struggle*: Fragments No. 1, No. 2, and No. 6. Fragments No. 1 and No. 2 are based on copies that were made of some of the 1925 original final manuscripts before they went missing. Fragment No. 6 was composed some time between 1920 and 1924 so unlike Fragments No. 1 and No. 2, an original final manuscript for it exists.¹⁶ It is interesting to compare Schott's Fragments No. 2 and No. 4, which are different versions of the same piece of music. Fragment No. 2 represents the final version of the piece from 1925, where Fragment No. 4 is a transcription of a recording of de Hartmann's later version of this piece, which he could base only on the melody he had at his disposal from the original draft manuscripts. These pieces share the same melody but different harmonies.

15 Thomas de Hartmann, *The Music of Gurdjieff/de Hartmann* (New York: Triangle Editions, 1989).

16 Linda Daniel-Spitz, Charles Ketcham, and Laurence Rosenthal, "Critical Notes," in *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann: Music for the Piano*, Vol. 4 (Mainz, Germany: Schott, 2005), 94; Linda Daniel-Spitz, Charles Ketcham, and Laurence Rosenthal, "Critical Notes," in *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann: Music for the Piano*, Vol. 1 (Mainz, Germany: Schott, 1996), 115; Daniel-Spitz et al., "Chronological Order of Compositions," 109–110.

The Harmonium Music

The portable harmonium, a keyboard instrument played with the right hand while the left hand pumps the bellows, was a constant companion for Gurdjieff from at least 1926. In a letter from Orage to his wife dated November 1926 he writes that a service was held over the graves of Gurdjieff's wife and mother and that "in the afternoon G and Hartmann gave a 'concert.' You know G's piano accordion. He made three quite marvelous noo moosics."¹ By "piano accordion" Orage must mean the harmonium. Recordings of Gurdjieff playing the harmonium in 1948 and 1949 reveal that he improvised on the instrument, but it is also possible that he played some of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music on the harmonium. This has never before been suggested. There are some indications in the piano music, such as crescendo and decrescendo markings on single chords,² chords to be sustained over many bars,³ and *tremolo* markings over long notes,⁴ which are possible to execute on the harmonium but not on the piano. *Tremolo* markings, for example, which indicate a wavering effect, are much more suited to the harmonium, which actually has a *tremolo* stop. (Stops are valves on the harmonium that open the air flow, fix certain pitches, and produce different effects). Gurdjieff's main harmonium was a Kasriel model Hero-flutes No. 56 with a range of three and one-quarter octaves and had four stops: *trémolo*, *voix céleste*, *forté*, and *flute*.⁵ The closest one could come to a *tremolo* effect on the piano is to trill, meaning to rapidly alternate between two consecutive notes.

An account by journalist Carl Zigrosser reveals that Gurdjieff sometimes played the harmonium while de Hartmann accompanied on piano. Zigrosser implies, but does not explicitly state, that they played the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music in this way.⁶ Some of the piano music would certainly be suited to this combination of instruments. For example, in the Sayyid pieces left hand musical lines are often characterised by continuous drones or *ostinati*. These would be played more easily on the

1 Gert-Jan Blom, *Harmonic Development: The Complete Harmonium Recordings 1948–1949* (Netherlands: Basta Audio Visuals, 2004), 20.

2 See No. 7 (Vol. 3, 34), No. 8 (Vol. 3, 35), and No. 29 (Vol. 3, 78–79).

3 See "Joyous Hymn" (Vol. 3, 44), "Hymn for Easter Wednesday" (Vol. 3, 102), and "Kurd Shepherd Melody" (Vol. 1, 54–55).

4 See "Sayyid Chant and Dance" (Vol. 3, 46) and "Sayyid Chant and Dance" (Vol. 3, 124).

5 Blom, *Harmonic Development*, 22.

6 Carl Zigrosser, "Gurdjieff," in *Gurdjieff in the Public Eye: Newspaper Articles, Magazines and Books 1914–1949*, ed. Paul Beekman Taylor (Utrecht, Netherlands: Eureka Editions, 2010), 183.

harmonium than on the piano.⁷ One could imagine Gurdjieff playing these lines on his harmonium while de Hartmann played the more intricate melody lines of the right hand on the piano. However, a comment by de Hartmann indicates that Gurdjieff may also have played right hand melody lines on the harmonium. De Hartmann stated that Gurdjieff could play the piece “Reading from a Sacred Book” (Vol. 3, 54–57),⁸ and original manuscripts reveal that it was initially written solely as a melody, with no left hand accompaniment. Only later in the 1950s did de Hartmann add an accompaniment.⁹ As there are no accounts of Gurdjieff playing their music on the piano, it is possible that he played this on the harmonium. Interestingly, pupil Fritz Peters reports that Gurdjieff also utilised the harmonium when composing the piano music with de Hartmann.¹⁰

It is quite possible then that Gurdjieff played some pieces on his harmonium, though the harmonium-like indications in the piano music could also have been meant for de Hartmann. Accounts confirm that at the Prieuré de Hartmann sometimes played the piano music on an organ, also known as a pedal harmonium, which is played with two hands. This is different to Gurdjieff’s smaller portable harmonium, played with one hand with the other hand pumping the bellows. Zigrosser distinguishes between the two instruments when he states that the piano music was “played by Mr de Hartmann, sometimes on the piano, and sometimes on the harmonium – a small house organ. Occasionally Mr. Gurdjieff played a tiny organ, specially designed to be held on the lap.” C.S. Nott also states that at the Prieuré in 1926, “A small pipe organ had been put in the salon, and every day Hartmann played Gurdjieff’s music. Hearing it on the organ gave one a fresh understanding of it.”¹¹ The harmonium-like indications in the piano music would also be playable on the organ, and in the original final manuscript for the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piece “Chant from a Holy Book” (Vol. 3, 135) there is the

7 See “Sayyid Chant and Dance” (Vol. 2, 26–27), “Dervish Chant and Dance” (Vol. 2, 36), “Sayyid Chant and Dance” (Vol. 2, 42–43), “Sayyid Chant and Dance” (Vol. 2, 46), “Sayyid Chant” (Vol. 2, 52–53), “Sayyid Chant and Dance” (Vol. 2, 74), “Bayaty” (Vol. 2, 105–106), “Sayyid Chant and Dance” (Vol. 2, 122–123), “Sayyid Chant and Dance” (Vol. 2, 124–125), “Reading from a Sacred Book” (Vol. 3, 54–57), “Chant from a Holy Book” (Vol. 3, 110–111), and “The Bokharian Dervish, Hadji-Asvatz-Troov” (Vol. 4, 80–83). Thank you Dorine Tolley for your assistance with these ideas, and for demonstrating how the Sayyid pieces sound when played on the portable harmonium.

8 Transcription of a talk given by de Hartmann in the 1950s.

9 Thomas A.G. Daly, pers. comm. (18 April 2011).

10 Fritz Peters, *Boyhood with Gurdjieff and Gurdjieff Remembered* (London: Wildwood House, 1976), 73.

11 Zigrosser, “Gurdjieff,” 183; C.S. Nott, *Teachings of Gurdjieff: A Pupil’s Journal, An Account of Some Years With G.I. Gurdjieff and A.R. Orage in New York and at Fontainebleau-Avon* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), 106–107.

indication “Orgue: Voix Céleste & Tremolo,” which is a specific reference for organ.¹² However, the crescendo and decrescendo markings on single chords, mentioned above, would only be possible to execute on an organ with a swell pedal, and details of the organ played by de Hartmann are unavailable. While it is clear that de Hartmann sometimes played the piano music on the organ, it is also likely that Gurdjieff played some pieces on his portable harmonium.

After de Hartmann left Gurdjieff in 1929 and was no longer available to play the piano music for group readings of Gurdjieff’s texts (see Chapter 8), Gurdjieff provided music for readings on the harmonium. In 1929 pupil Louise March reported, “after dinner Gurdjieff played his harmonium and a chapter of Beelzebub’s Tales was read,” and pupil Kathryn Hulme stated that in December 1936 Gurdjieff played music on the harmonium that corresponded with the chapter “Professor Skridlov” in *Meetings*.¹³ It is also known that he played the instrument on a visit in 1934 to Olgivanna and Frank Lloyd Wright’s summer home Taliesin West, which operated similarly to the Prieuré, as well as for his all-female Rope group of 1935 to 1939.¹⁴ Accounts reveal that at this time Gurdjieff also played the harmonium in quite a different circumstance. Nicolas de Val, Gurdjieff’s son to pupil Elizabeth Stoernval, recounted that in 1937 Gurdjieff “isolated himself in the salon and spent a good hour improvising melodies [on harmonium] which were always a little sad,” and Fritz Peters mentioned an occasion where Gurdjieff greeted guests at the Prieuré, arranged for someone to entertain them and then “closeted himself in his room with his harmonium.”¹⁵ Peters stated that Gurdjieff considered it important for artists who create art with “being” and “real heart” to find an outlet for their creativity.¹⁶

Nineteen hours of recordings of Gurdjieff improvising on harmonium in the last ten months of his life are included with the book *Harmonic Development: The Complete Harmonium Recordings 1948–1949*, compiled, researched, and produced by Gert-Jan Blom.¹⁷ The first of these recordings was made in the early hours of Christmas Day in 1948 on the eleventh floor of New York’s Wellington Hotel, and the last was made in Gurdjieff’s bedroom in Paris shortly before midnight of 24 October 1949, four days before he died.¹⁸ It is clear from the circumstances of these two recordings that

12 Linda Daniel-Spitz, Charles Ketcham, and Laurence Rosenthal, “Critical Notes,” in *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann: Music for the Piano*, Vol. 3 (Mainz, Germany: Schott, 2002), 135.

13 Louise March, *The Gurdjieff Years 1929–1949* (New York: The Work Study Association, 1990), 35; Blom, *Harmonic Development*, 20.

14 Zigrosser, “Gurdjieff,” 182; William P. Patterson, *Ladies of the Rope: Gurdjieff’s Special Left Bank Women’s Group* (Fairfax, California: Arete Communications, 1999), 182.

15 Blom, *Harmonic Development*, 21; Peters, *Boyhood with Gurdjieff*, 132.

16 Peters, *Boyhood with Gurdjieff*, 108.

17 Blom, *Harmonic Development*.

18 Blom, *Harmonic Development*, 113–114.

Gurdjieff was not attempting to archive flawless improvisations. Indeed most of the harmonium recordings were made after intense nights of cooking, drinking, toasting, animated discussion, and readings of *Tales*.¹⁹ Gurdjieff was eager to have his improvisations recorded,²⁰ but this may have been due to his interest in the actual recording process, rather than in preserving his improvisations.

The value of these recordings lies in the unique opportunity they provide for witnessing Gurdjieff's own musical skills and sensibilities. Gurdjieff's improvisations are played with arresting intensity and self-control, and can be described as long, slow stretches of music in minor keys, with meandering melody lines with no obvious destination. They are reminiscent of the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann Hymns, which makes obvious Gurdjieff's principal role in the composition of the Hymns. Gurdjieff referred to both the Hymns and harmonium music as 'Temple music', as if they both originated from the same sources on his travels.²¹ Perhaps the most revealing aspect of these recorded improvisations is just how naturally improvisation came to him. This should come as no surprise considering that Gurdjieff's life and teaching can essentially be viewed as a continual experiment and improvisation. Gurdjieff commentator Peter Washington views improvisation as vital to Gurdjieff's method.²² Perhaps improvising his way through life was Gurdjieff's attempt at living consciously and keeping his movements challenging and unpredictable for himself and his pupils. It is noteworthy that improvisation was a popular practice in the arts at this time. Take, for example, literary figures such as Marcel Proust (1871–1922), Dorothy Richardson (1873–1957), James Joyce (1882–1941), Virginia Woolf (1882–1941), and William Faulkner (1897–1962), who each employed improvisatory or stream of consciousness narrative modes, often in interior monologues to portray a conflicted individual.

These recordings may expose Gurdjieff's modest technical abilities on harmonium, but they also reveal the profound effect his improvisations had on listeners. Blom's *Harmonic Development: The Complete Harmonium Recordings 1948–1949* brims with pupils' glowing accounts of the immense emotional impact of these improvisations, and their powerful influence over the surrounding atmosphere. For instance, Vivien Elliot states, "Strong men broke down and wept. It clearly touched somewhere very deep in a lot of people who hadn't cried for a generation...It was really an extraordinary phenomenon, the music, quite extraordinary," and Rina Hands recounts,

19 For colourful accounts of these evenings by pupils Kathryn Hulme, Iovanna Lloyd Wright, Paul Beekman Taylor, and William Welch see Blom, *Harmonic Development*, 30–31, 36–39, 40–43, 44–47.

20 Blom, *Harmonic Development*, 132–134.

21 This is revealed in accounts by Dorothy Caruso and Carl Zigrosser. See Blom, *Harmonic Development*, 63; Zigrosser, "Gurdjieff," 183.

22 Peter Washington, *Madame Blavatsky's Baboon: Theosophy and the Emergence of the Western Guru* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1993), 254.

“[w]hat he played was so unutterably sad you could cut the atmosphere of un-shed tears with a knife.”²³ The recordings show that large audiences were completely silent during improvisations. On track four of CD 1, entitled “The Scotch Story,” Gurdjieff tells a story that triggers laughter and a rowdy reaction from what must have been a considerably large audience. Yet during the improvisation on track five, which directly followed Gurdjieff’s story, this same large and boisterous audience is eerily silent.²⁴ Indeed pupils were so taken with these improvisations that, when Gurdjieff was too tired or ill to play, they would gather around to hear the recordings he had made of them.²⁵

23 Blom, *Harmonic Development*, 55, 64.

24 Gert-Jan Blom, pers. comm. (26 April 2010).

25 J.G. Bennett and Elizabeth Bennett, *Idiots in Paris: Diaries of J.G. Bennett and Elizabeth Bennet, 1949* (Daglingworth, Gloucestershire: Coombe Springs Press, 1980), ix.

APPENDIX D

Chronological Order of Compositions

Ordre chronologique des compositions

Date	Title	Volume	No.	Page
1918–1923				
1918	The Essentuki Prayer/La Prière d'Essentouki	IV	21	69
1919–1923	Prayer/Prière	III	40	99
1919–1923	The Initiation of the Priestess/L'Initiation de la prêtresse	IV	23	72
1920–1924	<i>The Struggle of the Magicians</i> , Fragment No. 6 Act III: Tibetan Dance/ <i>La Lutte des mages</i> , Fragment N° 6 Acte III: Danse thibétaine	IV	16	60
1923	Untitled/Sans titre	III	32	84
1. VII. 1923	Untitled/Sans titre	I	10	38
circa 1923/1924	Untitled/Sans titre	I	40	100
1924				
circa III.1924	Women's Prayer/Prière de femmes	III	46	109
15. VI. 1924	Trinity/La Trinité	IV	19	64
21. VI. 1924	Dervish Dance/Danse derviche	II	36	108
22. VI. 1924	Tibetan Dance/Danse thibétaine	IV	17	62
23. VI. 1924	Untitled/Sans titre	I	39	98
27. VI. 1924	Greek Melody/Mélodie grecque	I	1	22
1. VII. 1924	Tibetan Melody/Mélodie thibétaine	I	8	36
3. VII. 1924	Tibetan Movement/Mouvement thibétain	IV	18	63
5. VII. 1924	Tibetan Melody/Mélodie thibétaine	IV	20	66
30. VII. 1924	Prayer of Gratitude/Prière de gratitude	III	22	66
1925				
29. VII. 1925	Prayer/Prière	III	1	26
31. VII. 1925	Atarnakh, Kurd Song/Atarnakh, chant kurde	I	7	34
10. IX. 1925	Untitled/Sans titre	II	4	30

Date	Title	Volume	No.	Page
25. IX. 1925	<i>The Struggle of the Magicians</i> , Fragment No. 1 Act III: Before Rossula's decision to go to the Sorceress/ <i>La Lutte des mages</i> , Fragment N° 1 Acte III: Avant da la décision de Rossoula d'aller auprès de la sorcière	IV	11	49
28. IX. 1925	Sayyid Chant and Dance/Chant et danse (sayyid)	II	34	102
29. IX. 1925	Untitled/Sans titre	II	13	48
10. X. 1925	For Professor Skridlov/Pour le professeur Skridlov	II	2	24
7. XI. 1925	<i>The Struggle of the Magicians</i> , Fragment No. 2 Dance in G Minor/ <i>La Lutte des mages</i> , Fragment N° 2 Danse en sol mineur	IV	12	50
7. XI. 1925	<i>The Struggle of the Magicians</i> , Fragment No. 4 Variation on Fragment No. 2/ <i>La Lutte des mages</i> , Fragment N° 4 Variation sur le Fragment N° 2	IV	14	56
7. XI. 1925	<i>The Struggle of the Magicians</i> , Fragment No. 5 The Very Sweet Time/ <i>La Lutte des mages</i> , Fragment N° 5 En souvenir d'un temps très doux	IV	15	58
			15a	88
8. XI. 1925	Untitled/Sans titre	I	47	110
11. XI. 1925	Return from a Journey/Retour de voyage	IV	22	70
22. XI. 1925	Arabian Dance/Danse d'Arabie	I	45	107
22. XI. 1925	Persian Dance/Danse persane	I	24	69
28. XI. 1925	<i>The Struggle of the Magicians</i> , Fragment No. 3 Act V: When Gafar and Zeinab walk in a somnambulistic state/ <i>La Lutte des mages</i> , Fragment N° 3 Acte V: Quand Gafar et Zeinab marchent dans un état somnambulique	IV	13	53
			13a	87
29. XI. 1925	Ancient Greek Melody/Mélodie grecque ancienne	I	42	104
2. XII. 1925	Ancient Greek Dance/Danse grecque ancienne	I	43	105

(cont.)

Date	Title	Volume	No.	Page
6. XII. 1925	Greek Song/Chant grec	I	44	106
7. XII. 1925	Untitled/Sans titre	III	44	106
7. XII. 1925	Untitled/Sans titre	I	26	71
10. XII. 1925	As if the Stormy Years had Passed/La tourmente semble passée	III	14	46
10. XII. 1925	Untitled/Sans titre	III	11	41
12. XII. 1925	Assyrian Women Mourners/Les pleureuses assyriennes	I	32	82
15. XII. 1925	Untitled/Sans titre	I	12	42
20. XII. 1925	Greek Song/Chant grec	I	3	24
23. XII. 1925	Essene Hymn/Hymne essénien	III	45	108
25. XII. 1925	Greek Round Dance/Ronde grecque	I	2	23
26. XII. 1925	Mamasha/Mamacha	I	23	68
29. XII. 1925	Untitled/Sans titre	I	22	66
1926				
1. I. 1926	Reading from a Sacred Book/Lecture d'un livre sacré	III	19	54
1. I. 1926	Untitled/Sans titre	II	20	68
2. I. 1926	Tibetan "Masques," No. 1/Danse de masques thibétains, N° 1	I	48	111
2. I. 1926	Song of the Aïisors/Chant Aïissor	I	18	58
5. I. 1926	Prayer and Despair/Prière et Désespoir	III	20	58
7. I. 1926	Long Ago in Mikhaïlov/En souvenir de Mikhaïlov	I	30	77
7. I. 1926	Sayyid Chant and Dance/Chant et danse (sayyid)	II	19	65
9. I. 1926	Afghan Melody/Mélodie afghane	I	38	96
9. I. 1926	Ancient Greek Melody/Mélodie grecque ancienne	I	29	74
10. I. 1926	Hymn from a Great Temple No. 1/Hymne d'un grand temple N° 1	IV	1	26
12. I. 1926	Hymn from a Great Temple No. 2/Hymne d'un grand temple N° 2	IV	2	28
13. I. 1926	Hymn from a Great temple No. 3 <i>Hymn of the Cherubim</i> /Hymne d'un grand temple N° 3 <i>Hymne des chérubins</i>	IV	3	30

Date	Title	Volume	No.	Page
16. I. 1926	Hymn from a Great Temple No. 4/Hymne d'un grand temple N° 4	IV	4	32
20. I. 1926	Hymn from a Great Temple No. 5/Hymne d'un grand temple N° 5	IV	5	34
21. I. 1926	Persian Song/Chant persan	I	6	30
25. I. 1926	Hymn from a Great Temple No. 6 <i>From a Temple in India</i> /Hymne d'un grand temple N° 6 <i>Hymne d'un temple de l'Inde</i>	IV	6	36
27. I. 1926	Hymn from a Great Temple No. 7/Hymne d'un grand temple N° 7	IV	7	38
30. I. 1926	Hymn from a Great Temple No. 8/Hymne d'un grand temple N° 8	IV	8	40
30. I. 1926	Sayyid Dance/Danse sayyide	II	22	72
31. I. 1926	Hymn from a Great Temple No. 9/Hymne d'un grand temple N° 9	IV	9	43
8. II. 1926	Song of Ancient Rome/Chant de la Rome antique	I	25	70
8. II. 1926	Katzapsky Song/Chant katzapsky	II	32	98
11. II. 1926	Allegretto	I	21	65
14. II. 1926	Untitled/Sans titre	III	12	42
18. II. 1926	Sayyid Dance/Danse sayyide	II	31	96
20. II. 1926	Orthodox Hymn from Asia Minor/Chant religieux orthodoxe d'Asie Mineure	III	23	68
22. II. 1926	Hindu Melody/Mélodie indienne	I	34	88
14. III. 1926	Untitled/Sans titre	I	9	37
17. III. 1926	Sayyid Chant and Dance/Chant et danse (sayyid)	II	1	22
18. III. 1926	Oriental Melody/Mélodie orientale	I	31	80
21. III. 1926	Sayyid Chant and Dance/Chant et danse (sayyid)	II	30	94
22. III. 1926	Untitled/Sans titre	III	24	69
25. III. 1926	Untitled/Sans titre	I	28	73
26. III. 1926	Song of the Fisherwomen/Chant des pêcheuses	I	20	62
27. III. 1926	Oriental Song/Chant d'Orient	I	5	28
27. III. 1926	Hymn for Good Friday/Chant du Vendredi Saint	III	28	77
30. III. 1926	Sayyid Chant and Dance/Chant et danse (sayyid)	II	9	40

(cont.)

Date	Title	Volume	No.	Page
31. III. 1926	Persian Dervish/Derviche persan (pages 58–59)*	II	16	56
3. IV. 1926	Sayyid Chant and Dance/Chant et danse (sayyid)	II	10	42
6. IV. 1926	Armenian Song/Chant arménien	I	27	72
8. IV. 1926	Kurd Shepherd's Dance/Danse de bergers kurdes	I	19	60
10. IV. 1926	Sayyid Dance/Danse sayyide	II	21	70
14. IV. 1926	Untitled/Sans titre	III	43	104
16. IV. 1926	Greek Melody/Mélodie grecque	I	46	108
18. IV. 1926	Persian Dervish/Derviche persan (pages 56–57)*	II	16	56
19. IV. 1926	Religious Ceremony/Cérémonie religieuse	III	21	63
25. IV. 1926	Kurdish Song (Sayyid)/Chant kurde (sayyid)	II	40	119
26. IV. 1926	Caucasian Dance/Danse caucasienne	II	38	112
1. V. 1926	Prayer and Procession/Prière et procession	III	25	71
5. V. 1926	Hymn for Easter Wednesday/Hymne du mercredi de Pâques	III	42	102
6. V. 1926	Sayyid Dance/Danse sayyide	II	26	80
8. V. 1926	Kurd Melody/Mélodie kurde	I	41	102
9. V. 1926	Kurdo-Greek Melody/Mélodie kurdo-grecque	II	39	116
11. V. 1926	Sayyid Chant and Dance/Chant et danse (sayyid)	II	25	78
13. V. 1926	Hymn for Easter Thursday/Hymne du jeudi de Pâques	III	41	100
20. V. 1926	Dervish Dance/Danse derviche	II	17	60
22. V. 1926	Sayyid Chant and Dance/Chant et danse (sayyid)	II	42	124
23. V. 1926	Dervish Dance/Danse derviche	II	14	50

* This piece was composed on two different days: Part II, pages 58–59, was composed first, on 31. III. 1926, and Part I, pages 56–57, later, on 18. IV. 1926. The date of Part II was inadvertently omitted in the printed text.

Cette pièce fut composée en deux parties: la dernière partie—les pages 58 et 59—fut d'abord composée le 31 mars 1926, alors que la première—les pages 56 et 57—le fut par la suite, soit le 18 avril de la même année. La date de composition de la dernière partie a, par mégarde, été omise dans le texte imprimé.

Date	Title	Volume	No.	Page
26. V. 1926	Hymn from a Great Temple No. 10 <i>Essene Hymn/Hymne d'un grand temple N° 10 Hymne essénien</i>	IV	10	44
27. V. 1926	Dervish Dance/Danse derviche	II	27	84
29. V. 1926	Moorish Dance (Dervish)/Danse mauresque (derviche)	II	28	86
30. V. 1926	Sayyid Chant and Dance/Chant et danse (sayyid)	II	23	74
2. VI. 1926	Dervish Dance/Danse derviche	II	5	32
4. VI. 1926	Persian Dervish/Derviche persan	II	6	34
5. VI. 1926	Dervish Chant and Dance/Chant et danse (derviche)	II	7	36
6. VI. 1926	Hymn to our Endless Creator/Hymne à «Notre Créateur Eternel»	III	36	90
8. VI. 1926	“Rejoice, Beelzebub!”/«Réjouis-toi, Belzébuth!»	III	15	48
9. VI. 1926	Tibetan “Masques,” No. 2/Danse de masques thibétains, N° 2	I	49	112
25. IX. 1926	Kurd Shepherd Melody/Mélodie de bergers kurdes	I	17	54
26. IX. 1926	Untitled/Sans titre	III	9	36
26. IX. 1926	Sayyid Chant and Dance/Chant et danse (sayyid) (pages 26–27)**	II	3	26
30. IX. 1926	Sayyid Chant and Dance/Chant et danse (sayyid) (pages 28–29)**	II	3	26
7. X. 1926	Bayaty	II	35	105
8. X. 1926	Holy Affirming, Holy Denying, Holy Reconciling/Sainte Affirmation, Sainte Négation, Sainte Conciliation	III	17	50
10. X. 1926	Meditation/Méditation	III	37	92
13. X. 1926	Untitled/Sans titre	I	14	47
13. X. 1926	Untitled/Sans titre	II	11	45

** This piece was composed on two different days: Part I, pages 26–27, on 26. IX. 1926, and Part II, pages 28–29, on 30. IX. 1926. The date (30. XII. 1926) given in the printed text is an error.

Cette pièce fut composée en deux temps: la première partie—les pages 26 et 27—le 26 septembre 1926, et la seconde—les pages 28 et 29—le 30 septembre de la même année. La date du 30 décembre 1926 imprimée dans le texte est erronée.

(cont.)

Date	Title	Volume	No.	Page
20. X. 1926	Untitled/Sans titre	III	29	78
21. X. 1926	Pity for One's Self/Pitié de soi	III	3	28
22. X. 1926	Untitled/Sans titre	I	35	90
23. X. 1926	Untitled/Sans titre	III	5	32
23. X. 1926	Vespers Hymn/Hymne vespéral	III	48	112
24. X. 1926	Tibi Cantamus, No. 1/Tibi cantamus, N° 1	III	39	98
26. X. 1926	Untitled/Sans titre	III	27	74
31. X. 1926	Untitled/Sans titre	III	2	27
3. XI. 1926	Orthodox Hymn for a Midnight Service/ Hymne orthodoxe de Mi-Nuit	III	18	52
14. XII. 1926	Alleluia	III	33	87
15. XII. 1926	Tibi Cantamus, No. 2/Tibi cantamus, N° 2	III	31	82
			31a	126
18. XII. 1926	Untitled/Sans titre	I	11	39
1927				
2. I. 1927	Untitled/Sans titre	III	7	34
6. I. 1927	Untitled/Sans titre	III	8	35
7. I. 1927	Hymn for Christmas Day, No. 1/Hymne pour le jour de Noël, N° 1	III	10	38
7. I. 1927	Hymn for Christmas Day, No. 2/Hymne pour le jour de Noël, N° 2	III	34	88
22. I. 1927	Kurd Melody from Isfahan/Mélodie kurde d'Ispahan	I	33	86
23. I. 1927	Sayyid Chant/Chant sayyid	II	15	52
12. II. 1927	Joyous Hymn/Hymne joyeux	III	13	44
12. II. 1927	Sayyid Dance/Danse sayyide	II	33	100
19. II. 1927	Untitled/Sans titre	III	30	80
			30a	124
20. II. 1927	Laudamus ...	III	4	30
20. II. 1927	Sayyid Chant and Dance/Chant et danse (sayyid)	II	12	46
5. III. 1927	Prayer for Mercy/Prière pour la miséricorde	III	16	49
			16a	123
6. III. 1927	Greek Melody/Mélodie grecque	I	37	94
12. III. 1927	Chant from a Holy Book/Psalmodie d'un livre saint	III	47	110

Date	Title	Volume	No.	Page
13. III. 1927	Untitled/Sans titre	III	49	113
13. III. 1927	Duduki/Doudouki	I	13	44
16. III. 1927	Night Procession/Procession nocturne	III	38	93
19. III. 1927	Armenian Song/Chant arménien	I	36	92
19. III. 1927	Armenian Melody/Mélodie arménienne	I	15	48
19. III. 1927	The Bokharian Dervish, Hadji-Asvatz-Troov/ Le derviche boukharien, Hadji-Assvatz-Trouv	IV	24	80
22. III. 1927	Untitled/Sans titre	II	18	62
22. III. 1927	Untitled/Sans titre	III	6	32
31. III. 1927	Song of the Molokans/Chant des Molokans	I	16	52
1. IV. 1927	Untitled/Sans titre	II	37	110
1. IV. 1927	Untitled/Sans titre	III	35	90
16. IV. 1927	Easter Hymn/Hymne de Pâques	III	26	73
18. IV. 1927	Sayyid Chant and Dance/Chant et danse (sayyid)	II	8	38
22. IV. 1927	Kurd Melody for Two Flutes/Mélodie kurde pour deux flûtes	I	4	26
23. IV. 1927	Easter Hymn and Procession in the Holy Night/Hymne de Pâques et procession de la nuit sainte	III	51	117
24. IV. 1927	The Resurrection of Christ/La Résurrection du Christ	III	50	114
1. V. 1927	Untitled/Sans titre	II	24	76
1. V. 1927	Sayyid Chant and Dance/Chant et danse (sayyid)	II	41	122
Date unknown/Date inconnu	Sayyid Chant and Dance/Chant et danse (sayyid) (From a recording played by de Hartmann in the 1950s.)	II	29	90

Biographical Sketches of Key Pupils

John Godolphin Bennett (1897–1974) was a scientist and philosopher who first met Gurdjieff in Istanbul in 1921 when he was working as an interpreter and personal intelligence officer in the British Army. In London that year Bennett began attending meetings held by Ouspensky on Gurdjieff's teaching, and in 1922 he met Gurdjieff again. Bennett made brief visits to Gurdjieff's Institute at Fontainebleau in February and August of 1923. In the 1930s Bennett formed his own group of followers, and rejoined Ouspensky's group. In 1946 Bennett established an Institute at Coombe Springs, Kingston-on-Thames in Surrey. After a twenty-five year break Bennett renewed his ties with Gurdjieff in Paris in 1948 and 1949, at which time Gurdjieff taught him his new Movements. In 1949 Gurdjieff named Bennett his 'official representative' in England, with reference to the publication of *Tales*. After Gurdjieff's death Bennett became an independent teacher, drawing from Sufi, Indian, Turkish, and Subud traditions. In 1953 he travelled through the Middle East hoping to locate the sources of Gurdjieff's teaching among Sufi masters. By the end of his life he had written around thirty-five books related to Gurdjieff's teaching.¹

Maurice Nicoll (1884–1953) studied science at the University of Cambridge before travelling through Vienna, Berlin, and Zurich, eventually to become an eminent psychiatrist and colleague of Carl Gustav Jung. Nicoll was a member of the Psychosynthesis group, which met regularly under A.R. Orage, and this connection led Nicoll to Ouspensky in London in 1921. After meeting Gurdjieff in London in 1922 Nicoll went on to study with him at his Institute in Fontainebleau a year later, before organising his own groups in England on Ouspensky's advice. His five-volume *Psychological Commentaries on the Teachings of G.I. Gurdjieff and P.D. Ouspensky* (1952–1954) represent his lifetime work in reconciling the teachings of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky with modern psychology. De Salzmann later endorsed these discourses. At the time he died Nicoll's group numbered around six hundred members, and was kept going by his

1 David Pecotic, "Body and Correspondence in G.I. Gurdjieff's 'Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson': A Case Study in the Construction of Categories in the Study of Esotericism" (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Sydney, 2004), 59–62; Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 234. See also Johanna J.M. Petsche, "A Gurdjieff Genealogy: Tracing the Manifold Ways the Gurdjieff Teaching has Travelled," in *International Journal for the Study of New Religions*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2013, 57–58, 67–68.

close pupil and secretary Beryl Pogson until it split up into a number of factions. The largest faction joined the Gurdjieff Society of London.²

Charles Stanley Nott (1887–1978) first attended meetings held by Orage and Gurdjieff in New York and Boston in 1924. These meetings directly followed Gurdjieff's Movements demonstrations given in America, which had greatly impressed Nott. Between 1924 and 1925 he alternated between Gurdjieff's Institute in Fontainebleau and Orage's group in New York, before settling in London in 1928. Meanwhile, in New York in 1927, Nott married Rose Mary Lillard, another prominent American pupil of Gurdjieff. After Orage's death in 1934 Nott began associating with the Ouspenskys in London, while keeping in regular contact with Gurdjieff in Paris. Nott was proficient in the Movements and around this time gave semi-private Movements classes at Colet Gardens, where Ouspensky had established a residence for his groups. Before the publication of Nott's second memoir in 1969 he founded and subsequently visited Gurdjieff groups in Sydney, Australia.³

Rose Mary Cynthia Nott née Lillard (1897–1979) was a pianist and Eurhythmics instructor who became the first American to attend Gurdjieff's Institute. Between 1923 and 1928 she assisted Orage in group meetings and led Movements classes. In 1949, when the Gurdjieff Society was founded in London after Gurdjieff's death, she taught and played piano for Movements in this group. She continued work on the Movements with groups in England and North America until her late seventies.⁴

Alfred Richard Orage (1873–1934) became a public speaker for the Theosophical Society in England for a decade from the mid-1890s and joined the Society around 1896. He later led the Plato Group and Leeds Arts Club where he discussed Theosophical ideas and became widely known as a Theosophical lecturer, as well as a writer in the *Theosophical Review*. From 1908 to 1921 Orage co-owned and edited with Holbrook Jackson *The New Age*, the most influential literary review in Britain, and moved in literary circles frequented by writers such as T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, e. e. cummings, Dylan Thomas, and Katherine Mansfield.⁵ Orage met Ouspensky in London in 1921 and met Gurdjieff a year later. At the age of fifty, Orage abandoned his former life to follow

2 Andrew Rawlinson, *The Book of Enlightened Masters: Western Teachers in Eastern Traditions* (Illinois: Open Court, 1997), 300–301; Goodrick-Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions*, 234. For more see Petsche, "A Gurdjieff Genealogy: Tracing the Manifold Ways the Gurdjieff Teaching has Travelled," 55–56.

3 Pecotic, "Body and Correspondence," 65–69.

4 See Walter Driscoll, *Mrs. Nott and Katherine Mansfield*, <http://www.gurdjieff-bibliography.com/Current/katherinemansfield.htm>, 2006. Retrieved 11 September 2011; Anonymous, [Liner notes] *Music of the Prieuré* (Canada: Dolmen Meadow Editions, 2011), 4.

5 Peter Washington, *Madame Blavatsky's Baboon: Theosophy and the Emergence of the Western Guru* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1993), 202; James Webb, *The Harmonious Circle: The Lives and Work of G.I. Gurdjieff, P.D. Ouspensky and Their Followers* (London: Thames and

Gurdjieff. Orage spent time at the Institute at Fontainebleau before settling in America, where he founded groups and became Gurdjieff's 'representative'. Through his pupils Orage provided funds that sustained Gurdjieff's Institute, and his network of literary connections in England and America brought much of the English-speaking literary world in contact with Gurdjieff. In 1924 he was closely involved with the editing and translating of *Tales*. In New York in 1930 Orage and Gurdjieff had a falling out that no one could explain and Orage decided to return to his editing career in England, establishing a new journal, *The New English Weekly*. Regardless, Gurdjieff appears to have valued Orage; in his third book *Life is Real Only Then, When 'I Am'* Gurdjieff assigns great importance to Orage in his narrative account of events in 1930 and 1931, and it is reported that when Gurdjieff heard of Orage's death he wiped his eyes and said to the group: "This man...my brother."⁶

Pyotr Demianovich Ouspensky (1878–1947) is one of the earliest and most famous of Gurdjieff's pupils. In early 1909 he left his home town of Moscow for St Petersburg and, after establishing himself as a successful author of *Tertium Organum* (1912), travelled to India and Sri Lanka in 1913 in search of answers to existential questions. The following year he met Gurdjieff and shortly after joined Gurdjieff's core six-member St Petersburg group where, Moore asserts, twenty-five years of research was handed down in twenty-five weeks.⁷ Ouspensky began to separate from Gurdjieff in 1917 and two years later started lecturing on Gurdjieff's ideas. In 1921 Ouspensky attracted the attention of a wealthy English patroness and was invited to London where he continued to teach. When Gurdjieff visited London in 1922 several of Ouspensky's main pupils, such as Orage, Nicoll, and Bennett, became pupils of Gurdjieff. Ouspensky stayed at the Institute at Fontainebleau from late 1922 to late 1923, but in 1924 decided to separate completely from Gurdjieff.⁸ In 1935, having amassed about one thousand pupils, he bought a large country house, Lyne Place, in Surrey as the centre for his work. His wife, Sophia Grigorievna Ouspensky (known to her pupils as Madame Ouspensky), who had spent most of her time from 1920 in France with Gurdjieff, moved to England in 1931 to teach groups of pupils after Gurdjieff had sent her away.

Hudson, 1980), 198–199, 202; Anna Challenger, *Philosophy and Art in Gurdjieff's Beelzebub: A Modern Sufi Odyssey* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2002), 5.

6 Paul Beekman Taylor, *G.I. Gurdjieff: A New Life* (Utrecht, Netherlands: Eureka Editions, 2008), 153, 155–156, 184. For more on Orage see Petsche, "A Gurdjieff Genealogy: Tracing the Manifold Ways the Gurdjieff Teaching has Travelled," 58–59.

7 James Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth A Biography* (Shaftsbury, Dorset: Element, 1991), 88.

8 P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous: The Teachings of G.I. Gurdjieff* (San Diego: Harcourt Inc., 1977 [1949]), 389. See also Bennett's useful account of the deteriorating relationship between Ouspensky and Gurdjieff at this time: J.G. Bennett, *Witness: The Story of a Search* (New Mexico: Bennett Books, 1997), 100–105.

In 1941 the Ouspenskys moved to America where Sophia taught pupils at Franklin Farms, New Jersey, while Ouspensky lectured in New York. He returned alone to England in 1946 when he became seriously ill. Shortly before his death in 1947 he told his pupils that there was no 'system' in his teaching and that they must construct everything again from the very beginning. After his death Sophia encouraged all her pupils, as well as those of her husband, to make contact with Gurdjieff in Paris.⁹

Fritz Peters (1913–1979) spent the majority of the years between 1924 and 1929 at Gurdjieff's Institute in Fontainebleau, having been sent there at the age of eleven by his aunt Margaret Anderson and her partner Jane Heap. He also spent time with Gurdjieff in America from 1932 to 1937, and later in post-war Paris. In his memoirs he relates vivid anecdotes of his time with Gurdjieff, and is sometimes critical of Gurdjieff and his pupils.¹⁰

Carol Robinson (1889–1979) was a professional pianist who attended a lecture given by Gurdjieff in Boston in 1924 on the advice of friends Jane Heap and Margaret Anderson. Interestingly, she attended the lecture with historian of Indian art Ananda Coomaraswamy, who was a founder of the Traditionalist School. Coomaraswamy suspected Gurdjieff of being a charlatan.¹¹ Gurdjieff singled Robinson out in the audience to be one of four people to spend the summer at his Institute in Fontainebleau. She cancelled contracts to teach at three universities in order to attend. Robinson became a pupil of Gurdjieff and was involved with his music. She played the Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano music for Orage's groups and provided piano accompaniments to Gurdjieff's Movements in both Movements periods. Robinson was given the title of "pianist for movements" in a circular letter of 1949 that announced the forthcoming publication of *Tales*. It is reported that Gurdjieff loved hearing her perform.¹²

Jeanne de Salzmann (1889–1990) was a trained Eurhythmics instructor who worked with Èmile Jacques-Dalcroze at his Institute in Hellerau near Dresden between 1911 and 1914. There she met her husband-to-be, artist Alexandre Gustav de Salzmann (1874–1934), who was developing his skills in stage design and lighting. In 1914 they left

9 Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*, 450, 458; Rawlinson, *Enlightened Masters*, 297; Petsche, "A Gurdjieff Genealogy: Tracing the Manifold Ways the Gurdjieff Teaching has Travelled," 53–55.

10 Fritz Peters, *Boyhood with Gurdjieff and Gurdjieff Remembered* (London: Wildwood House, 1976), 177, 200, 207, 246.

11 Paul Beekman Taylor, *Gurdjieff's America: Mediating the Miraculous* (England: Lighthouse Editions, 2004), 49–50.

12 Beekman Taylor, *A New Life*, 148, 215; Roger Friedland and Harold Zellman, *The Fellowship: The Untold Story of Frank Lloyd Wright and the Taliesin Fellowship* (New York: Regan, 2006), 86–87, 423. For more on Robinson see Glenda Dawn Goss, *Music and the Moderns: The Life and Works of Carol Robinson* (Metuchen, New Jersey and London: The Scarecrow Press, 1993).

Germany for Moscow, and in 1919 they moved to Alexandre's birthplace of Tiflis, Georgia. Working as a stage designer at the Tiflis Opera House Alexandre reconnected with Thomas de Hartmann, whom he had met earlier in artistic circles in Munich, both having been friends of Kandinsky. De Hartmann told the de Salzmanns of Gurdjieff, which prompted de Salzmann to invite Gurdjieff to her Dalcroze dance classes. Gurdjieff soon began training the class in his Movements, and organised demonstrations with them. The de Salzmanns became pupils of Gurdjieff for the rest of their lives. After the Second World War Jeanne de Salzmann emerged as Gurdjieff's chief pupil, and was accepted as his successor after his death.¹³ According to de Salzmann, Gurdjieff's last words were to her, stating that it was essential "to prepare a nucleus of people capable of responding to the demand which will arise."¹⁴ After Gurdjieff's death she organised the various Gurdjieff groups scattered throughout the world into a number of Foundations, and became known as the most experienced dancer of the Movements. After her death in 1990 her son Michel (1923–2001) took over leadership of the Work.¹⁵

Carl Zigrosser (1891–1975) was a journalist and curator of the Philadelphia Museum of Art Prints. He visited Gurdjieff's Institute in Fontainebleau in June 1927 at the behest of Orage, as Zigrosser had been a regular member of Orage's Gurdjieff-based group in New York.¹⁶ Zigrosser's account of his time at the Institute, published in the June 1929 issue of *The New Republic*, offers unique insights into the role of music at the Institute.

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- 13 Moore, *Gurdjieff The Anatomy of a Myth*, 268, 361; Thomas de Hartmann and Olga de Hartmann, *Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff*, eds Thomas C. Daly and Thomas A.G. Daly (London: Arkana Penguin Books, 1992 [1964]), 120–123, 141; Webb, *The Harmonious Circle*, 173–174.
- 14 Jeanne de Salzmann, "Foreword," in *Life is Real Only Then, When 'I Am'* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1981), xii.
- 15 Rawlinson, *Enlightened Masters*, 312; Sophia Wellbeloved, *Gurdjieff: The Key Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2003), 235. For more detail see Petsche, "A Gurdjieff Genealogy: Tracing the Manifold Ways the Gurdjieff Teaching has Travelled," 62–67.
- 16 Beekman Taylor, ed. *Gurdjieff in the Public Eye: Newspaper Articles, Magazines and Books 1914–1949* (Utrecht, Netherlands: Eureka Editions, 2010), 177.

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Index

- Adie, Helen 145, 207–208, 234
All and Everything 23–24, 60
Anderson, Margaret 35, 111, 196, 201,
209, 255
Arensky, Anton 65–66, 86
Ashokh tradition
and *Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson*
42, 192, 198n79
and Gurdjieff/de Hartmann piano
music 99, 192, 215
profession of Gurdjieff's father 25, 42
- Ballet Russes 74n51, 224
Bartók, Bela 22, 33–34, 86, 102, 164
Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson 22n61,
23–24, 42, 61–63, 126, 131, 139, 156,
158–159, 171, 173–174, 176, 179, **182–200**.
See also 'readings' under Gurdjieff
teachings
The Bell Song 29–30
Bennett, Elizabeth 35, 63, 64, 79, 201
Bennett, John Godolphin 5, 23, 35–36,
41, 56, 81, 85, 102, 106, 113–114, 121,
187, 189, 191, 195–196, 222, 228–229,
231, 252
Blavatsky, Helena Petrovna 3, 17n37,
20n53, 21, 48, 50, 68–69, 71, 111n2, 112n7,
116, 155, 158, 161–162, 175, 188–189, 212
Borsh, Dean 44–45, 127, 213
Brook, Peter 9, 25, 35, 223, 227
Butkovsky-Hewitt, Anna Ilinishna 176–177
- Claustres, Solange 8, 63, 145, 201, 207,
229, 234
Coomaraswamy, Ananda Kentish 203, 255
*Crazy Wisdom: The Life and Legend of
Gurdjieff* 37–38
- Dalcroze. *See* Jacques-Dalcroze
Daly, Thomas C. 40, 78, 82, 85, 134,
230–231
de Gaigneron, Marthe 63, 199, 234
de Hartmann, Olga
death 84–85
1970 edition of piano music 6, 84, 124,
134, 140, 142
humming "Essentuki Prayer" 74, 96, 126
leaves Gurdjieff 62, 78–82
relationship to Gurdjieff 56, 59, 74,
76–82, 224
singing career 28, 66, 74–76
singing "The Bell Song" 30
- de Hartmann, Thomas
Belaieff, relationship with
publisher 77, 85
career and compositions XIII, XIV, 28,
66–68, 74–75, 77, 82–87
challenged by Gurdjieff 58, 72–74, 82,
99–106, 147, 232
death 84
early years 65–71
*La Fleurette Rouge (The Scarlet
Flower)* 66–67
leaves Gurdjieff 77–82, 134
legacy 85–87, 214
meets Gurdjieff 55, 71–73, 214–215
Munich 67–71
and music for Movements 75–77, 223,
228–230, 232–235, 237–238
"On Anarchy in Music" 69–70
Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff 5–6, 28,
78, 84
and Pablo Casals 83, 85
recordings of Gurdjieff/de Hartmann
music 9, 129, 145–147
relationship to Gurdjieff 71–82, 215
with Wassily Kandinsky 67–71, 83, 86,
214, 256
- de Salzmann, Alexandre 53, 63, 74–75,
237, 255–256
de Salzmann, Jeanne
forms Foundation network XII, 63, 256
meets Gurdjieff 74–75
and Movements 63, 75, 221, 223,
225, 234, 256
and Schott edition In5, 9–10,
140–145, 150
sittings 15

* Particularly significant page numbers are in bold.

- de Salzman, Michel 141, 144–145, 197, 256
- Delius, Frederick 94, 108
- Delsarte, François 224–226
- Der Blaue Reiter 69–71
- Diaghilev, Sergei Pavlovich 224
- Eliot, T.S. 22–23, 184, 253
- Esotericism (Western) 12–13, 19n48, 49, 116, 153, 159–162, 164
- Exoticism. *See under* Gurdjieff/de Hartmann
Piano Music
- Faivre, Antoine 13, 153
- Fenby, Eric 94, 108–109
- Fludd, Robert 160–161, 174
- Foundation network XII–XIII, 15–16, 35, 63, 142, 187, 222–223, 256. *See also*
The Work
- Fourth Way 15
- Freud, Sigmund 22, 203
- Fripp, Robert 36
- Gilgamesh, King of Uruk 42–43
- “Glimpses of the Truth” 27, 52–54, 72
- Godwin, Joscelyn 157n10, 159–161
- Gurdjieff
life
Alexandropol 10, 41, 46, 50, 213
Ani 46
birth date 40
car accident 58–60, 98, 107, 181–183, 196, 214, 216
childhood 41–47
Constantinople 56, 75–76, 120
death 23, 64, 83, 256
Essentuki 28–29, 55–56, 73–74, 170, 185, 191, 228
Kars 41–45, 50, 213
Moscow 54–55, 111n2
New York 25–26, 29, 64, 77–78, 81, 187, 191, 232, 236, 241
plausibility of autobiographical writings 14, 25–26, 39–53
St Petersburg 15, 54–55, 71–73, 111n2
Tibet 27–28, 47–49, 112, 114, 120, 200
Tiflis 45, 58, 73–75, 93, 120, 224, 236
- travels 2, 25–26, 39, 43, 47–53, 110, 112–115, 120, 176–177, 213, 216–217, 242
- and music
Chopin, views on 29, 131
collection of Eastern instruments, 52–53
conveying messages through music 163–168, 172
encounters with music on travels 51–53, 112–114
guitar 53, 58, 114, 170, 216, 228
harmonica 52
harmonium 1–2, 4, 53, 63–64, 102, 104, 106, 110, 112–115, 120, 125, 137, 145, 151, 159, 176, 178–179, 201, 207, 214, 216, 239–243
jazz, views on 29, 135
listening to music without identification, views on 200–204
playing music consciously, views on 125, 147, 173, 201
playing piano 100–104, 240
playing tambourine 163, 233
repairing musical instruments on travels 53
singing 2, 44–45, 122, 127, 213
singing/vocal exercises 57, 222–223
tuning instruments 53, 171, 176, 234
Western art music, experiences and views 28–30, 74
- role as teacher
affairs with pupils 80
fabricates facts and tests naivety of pupils 14, 110, 114–115, 179
five phases of teaching 55
send pupils away 60, 62, 78–82
- teachings
Adherents of Legominism 130, 173–174, 177, 195n62
art/music, objective and subjective 130, 147, 154, 170, 173–174, 176–180, 218
attention 18, 99, 119, 133, 141, 147, 152, 171–172, 182, 198, 200, 210, 230, 236
The Bokharian Dervish, story of 47, 173–174
Chai-Yoo 159
and contemporary science 17, 46–47
cosmology 17–18, 152, 154–180

- effort 18, 20, 70, 119, 133, 147, 156,
 171–172, 182, 197, 200, 209, 236
 emotional centre 153, 170, 182, 188,
 190, 193, 195–197, 200–209, 219
 enneagram 47, 129–130, 225, 229
 essence 17, 20, 22, 70, 101–102,
 116, 209
 Essenes 112
 identification 133, 149, 200–204,
 209–210
 idiots, ritual toasting of 63–64,
 137–138
 inner octaves 152–157, 168–172,
 179, 217–218
 intellectual centre 190–191,
 196–199
 language, flaws of 102–103,
 184–186
 Law of Seven 38, 152, 154–162,
 167, 173–174, 179
 Law of Three 38, 154, 162, 165–166,
 172, 225
 listening 152–153, 171–172,
 187–188, 191–192, 194, 200–203,
 208, 210, 219
 memory exercises 43, 58, 229
 musical exercises 57–58, 222–223
 personality 17, 20, 148
 physical centre 195, 197, 199–200,
 209
 readings 187–193, 241
 Sarmoung Monastery 46–48, 51
 self-remembering 18, 20, 149, 157,
 182, 193, 200, 209–211
 seven-tone scale 155, 157–159,
 162, 167
 shocks 156, 199–200, 211n143, 229
 soteriology 16–21, 208–211
 states of consciousness 17–18,
 20–21, 177, 209, 211
 subtle bodies 18–21, 157, 209–211
 teaching methods, various 55, 103,
 181–182, 184–185, 193–197, 213
 vibration 2, 25, 27–28, 46–47,
 152n46, 155, 158, 169, 175–178,
 233
 Vitvitskaia, story of 25, 47, 130, 177
 Gurdjieff/de Hartmann Piano Music
 and Armenian music 120–121
 Asian and Eastern Folk Music 117–121,
 189, 229
 “Assyrian Women Mourners” 142, 246
 and *Beelzebub’s Tales to His Grandson*
 77–78, 126, 128, 131, 181–197
 beginnings of composition 96–98,
 215–216
 to be orchestrated 4, 137, 233–234
 “The Bokharian Dervish, Hadji-Asvat-
 Troov” XIII, 106, 144, 167, 190, 251
 categories of 117–133
 “Chant from a Holy Book” 117, 124–125,
 144, 240, 250
 composition of 99–107
 and *daff* 97, 118–120, 132
 “Easter Hymn and Procession in the Holy
 Night” XIII, 127, 144, 205–206, 251
 esoteric origins of 110–117
 “Essentuki Prayer” XIII, 96–97,
 125–126, 181n1, 216, 244
 evoking the timeless 116–117, 131–132
 as exotic 206–207
 and exoticism 30–35
 and the harmonic series 126, 152, 158,
 160, 168–172
 Hymns 35, 106, 117, 121, 124–132,
 137, 143, 152, 162–163, 168, 172, 177–178,
 189–190, 193–194, 204–205, 207, 242
 Hymns from a Great Temple 106, 124,
 126, 129–130, 141, 146
 first Hymn XIII, 137, 163, 167, 205
 tenth Hymn XIII, 129, 165, 169
 instrumental arrangements of 135,
 150–151
 and nationalism 30–35
 and New Age music 32
 original manuscripts 94–98, 102,
 126–130, 134–138, 183–184
 polyrhythms, use of 119–120, 132–133
 “Prayer for Mercy” 125n54, 126, 144,
 165, 250
 “Prayer of Gratitude” XIII, 106–107,
 125n54, 144, 244
 “Reading from a Sacred Book”
 103, 117, 124–125, 240, 246
 recordings of XIV, 84, 145–153
 roles of composers 9, 100–107, 242
 and Russian Orthodox Church
 Music 126–128, 204–205

- Gurdjieff/de Hartmann Piano Music (cont.)
 Sanyid and Dervish Music 120–124,
 132, 141, 150, 189, 217
 and self-remembering 200–202,
 208–211, 218–219
 sevens in music 167
 sheet music publications 138–145
 and soteriology 208–211
 sources of 50, 120–124, 126–128, 217
 sung, to be 96, 126, 181n1, 190
 threes in music 164–166
 titles of xiii, 95, 97, 117, 120, 122, 124–125,
 127, 131, 137–138, 140, 144–145, 183, 190
 total number of pieces
 composed 94–95
 “Women’s Prayer” 97n22, 142–143, 244
- Hanegraaff, Wouter J. 12–13
 Harmonium. *See* Gurdjieff – and music
 Heap, Jane 209, 255
The Herald of Coming Good 23, 26, 62, 171
 Howarth, Dushka 8, 40, 135–136,
 222–223, 226–227, 231
 Howarth, Jessmin 80, 153, 223, 226–227,
 233–234
 Hubbard, L. Ron 48–50
- In Search of the Miraculous* 5, 24, 139,
 152, 157–158, 167, 173
 Institute for the Harmonious Development
 of Man, Fontainebleau 56–62, 76–77,
 80, 193, 226
- Jacques-Dalcroze, Émile 56, 67, 75,
 224–226, 255–256
 Janus Edition 127, 129, 129n72, 134, 136,
 138–142, 144
 Jarrett, Keith 10, 36, 145, 147–149, 150
 Joyce, James 21n58, 22, 83–85, 242
- Kircher, Athanasius 160, 174
 Komitas, Vardapet 29, 75, 121
- Laban, Rudolf von 224, 226–227
 Legat, Nicolai 66, 224
Life is Real Only Then, When I Am’ 23, 26,
 52, 81n80, 254
 Lillard, Rose Mary 76, 145, 147, 226, 234, 253
- MacLaren, Leon 158n16, 167–168
 “The Material Question” 25–26, 53, 224n19
Meetings With Remarkable Men 9, 14, 23,
 25, 39, 44–45, 51, 77, 112–113, 122, 127, 171,
 177, 187, 228, 241
 Mendham, New Jersey 83, 129, 146
 Messiaen, Olivier 32–34, 68, 86, 164
 Mingus, Charles 36
 Moore, James 6–7, 26, 39, 40–41, 47, 53,
 54n91, 60, 131, 143–144, 162, 194, 222
- Movements
 demonstrations 35, 53, 57, 59–61, 68,
 75–77, 99, 112, 114, 143, 163, 183, 222,
 223–224, 226, 229, 232–235, 253
 esoteric origins of 110, 222
 “Obligatories” 68, 114, 199–200, 216,
 221, 231
 secrecy surrounding 231
39 Series 84, 200, 222–223, 231, 234–235
 similar systems of dance 224–227
 and singing 222–223
 “The Great Prayer” 100, 105, 143, 221, 232
- Music
 and cosmology 173–175
 and emotion 202–204
 and language 186
 physical and psychological
 effects of 174–175
- Music for Movements
 composition of 75, 77, 97–98, 100,
 104–106, 184, 228–229
 improvising for later movements 234
 orchestration 229, 232–233, 237
 recordings and sheet music 142–143,
 230–233
 role of music 1, 229–230
 role of pianist 229–230
39 Series, de Hartmann composes
 for 84, 223, 231, 234–235
- Nationalism. *See under* Gurdjieff/de
 Hartmann Piano Music
 Nicoll, Maurice 56, 209, 211, 252–253, 254
 Notovitch, Nicolas 49
 Nott, Charles Stanley 6n14, 23, 29, 35, 53,
 60, 87, 96, 103, 105, 130, 177, 179, 182, 187,
 191, 194, 200, 206–207, 240, 253
 Nott, Rose Mary. *See under* Lillard

- Orage, A. R. 6n14, 26, 35–36, 54n91, 56, 60–62, 77, 80, 111n2, 166, 177–178, 185, 191, 196, 198, 206, 209, 221, 239, 252, 253–254, 255–256
- Ostrowska, Julia 29n96, 54, 61, 80, 96, 131, 182
- Ouspensky, Pyotr Demianovich. 5, 16, 24, 35, 37–39, 55, 62, 72, 84, 111, 146, 152, 167, 169, 191, 206, 209, 210n134, 221, 224–225, 231, 237, 252–253, 254–255. *See also In Search of the Miraculous*
- Ouspensky, Sophia Grigorievna XII, 37–38, 83, 254–255
- Où va la jeune Hindoue?. *See* Bell Song
- Peters, Fritz 14, 35, 59, 102, 178, 195, 240–241, 255
- Plato 160–161, 186, 188, 202–203, 253
- Prieuré. *See* Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man, Fontainebleau
- Prokofiev, Sergei 28, 32, 34, 66, 86, 214
- Pythagoras 159–162, 173–174
- Robinson, Carol 76, 136, 142, 144–145, 149, 187, 206, 234, 255
- Russell, George 35–36
- Russian Orthodox Cathedral Choir. *See* ‘singing’ under Gurdjieff and music
- Russian Orthodox Church Music. *See under* Gurdjieff/de Hartmann Piano Music
- Sacks, Oliver 175, 202, 204
- Said, Edward 49
- Sama*, Sufi ritual 191–192, 203
- Schopenhauer, Arthur 71, 186, 202–203
- Schott Edition
forming edition 140–141, 150
pieces omitted from edition 143
titles of pieces altered or changed XIII, 124, 125n54, 138, 144–145
- Sicroff, Elan XIV, 84–86, 99, 145, 149, 194
- Sitsky, Larry 38, 167
- Steiner, Rudolf 12, 21, 57, 69, 112n7, 212
- The Struggle of the Magicians*
music 72, 112, 206–207, 237–238, 244–245
sheet music 95, 96n22, 141–142, 238
as teaching tool 57, 139, 196, 236
- Study House 53, 68, 74, 99, 106, 215, 224
- Sufism 21, 21n55, 36, 42, 48, 99, 122–124, 140, 188, 191–192, 203, 206, 217, 227, 252
- Sun Ra 35
- Synaesthesia 68
- Taylor, Paul Beekman 26–27, 40, 54, 80, 194, 197–198
- Tcherepnin, Nikolai Nikolayevich 28, 74
- Theosophy 12, 17n35, 19n48, 21, 21n55, 48–49, 54, 66, 69, 110–111, 111n2, 116, 159, 214, 253
- Therion 36
- Tolley, Dorine 6, 100n38, 135, 151, 158n16, 199n85, 230, 230n58, 240n7
- van Dullemen, Wim 94, 113n12, 129–130, 145, 162–163, 194, 196, 208, 227, 230–231
- Views from the Real World* 12n14, 19, 27, 114, 157, 170–171, 173, 195, 202
- von Hartmann, Eduard 71
- Wergo recordings 149–150
- The Work XII–XIII, 1, 7, 10, 15–16, 133–135, 139, 142–143, 145–146, 148, 149–153, 223, 227, 256. *See also* Foundation network
- Zakharov, Andrei Andreyvich 55, 71–72, 214
- Zigrosser, Carl 5, 57, 126, 137, 178, 187–189, 191, 201, 207, 209, 233, 239–240, 242n21, 256
- Zuber, René 35, 139, 193n55