

SAXOPHONE, STYLISTIC ORIENTATIONS AND DIRECTIONS IN *TABLEAUX DE PROVENCE* – J. M. PAULE MAURICE

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SUMMARY. Considered a reference work in the musical literature dedicated to the saxophone, the *Tableaux de Provence* suite for saxophone and orchestra was composed between 1954 – 1959 with dedication to a saxophonist virtuoso, but also family friend – Marcel Mule³. The programmatic vision is evident from the suggestive titles, suitable for each image. The contrast is a specific feature of the suite genre, being approached by composers at the thematic level as well as developed in all language elements. The purpose of this article is to decipher the interpretative stylistic – features of the *Tableaux de Provence* suite, which will lead to a better understanding of the style proposed by J. M. P. Maurice's.

Keywords: saxophone, Paris, contrast, suite, elements.

Introduction

The French music of the 20th century presents itself in a varied way, the process of diversification reaching maximum levels. It is the moment when the “impressionism proposed by Debussy proves to be also exhausting its resources, the advance on these ways being no longer possible without the risk of falling into pastiche or mannerism, imposing as necessary the new openings. Openings to the future, to authentic, renewing and lasting art”⁴.

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³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tableaux_de_Provence

⁴ Iliuţ V., *De la Wagner la contemporani*, vol. V, “Culturi muzicale eterogene in secolul XX”, (From Wagner to contemporaries, vol. V, „Heterogeneous musical cultures in the 20th century”), Editura Universităţii Naţionale de Muzică, Bucureşti, 2001.



The French composer of the 20th century, Paule Charlotte Marie Jeanne Maurice (29.09.1910-18.08.1967) attended the National Superior Conservatory of Music in Paris, where she had Jean Gallon as mentor in harmony, Noël Gallon on the counterpoint and the fugue and Henri Büsser on composition. From 1933-1947, Maurice was assistant to the Jean Gallon harmony class, and in 1965 she became professor of harmonic analysis at the Ecole Normale de Musique.

Together with Pierre Lantier, she wrote a treaty of harmony, entitled *Complement du Traite d'Harmonie de Reber*, which became a landmark work both in France and abroad.

Her most important work is *Tableaux de Provence* for saxophone and orchestra written between 1948 and 1955 and dedicated to the saxophonist Marcel Mule. It premiered on December 09, 1958, in Jean-Marie Londeix' s performance with Orchestra Symphonique Brestois, directed by her husband Pierre Lantier.

2. Tableaux de Provence – Paule Maurice

(I) *Farandoulo di chatouno*⁵

This first articulation in the cycle of five musical "tableaux" is inspired by the imaginative projection of the happiness and candor of young girls dancing a traditional folk dance known in France as the *farandolle*⁶.

The lied type structure is a visible feature in this context, but also in the following "paintings". Given that it is a homogeneous form, it gives the entire suite a classic-romantic view, but at the same time it can include a freedom of exposure not framed by a strict pattern, which means that it could undergo some changes at the thematic level, language, transformations that have the same context, but are surprising and effective – requirements necessary to the music of the 20th century⁷.

The modal factor is evident even from the introduction, by the overlapping of two linear meanings: the main melodic path is exposed on a Lydian mode on C, and the atmosphere context (the left hand) is oscillating on the mobile stage B – Bflat, which leads to a modal bipolar.

⁶ Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press. Web. 26, nov. 2012
<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/09298>.

⁷ https://thekeep.eiu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1039&context=honors_theses

E.g. 1

Paule Maurice, „Tableaux de Provence”, m. 1-8, tempo *Allegrissimo*

From the previous example, we can also see the binary metric overlay – ternary 6/8 with 2/4, which can alter, due to the lack of experience of the performer, the smoothness necessary for an ensemble, be it even by two instruments.

The main reason has no deviations from the sphere of the lidian mode on C. Of course, another basic element would be its melody, given by the scalar structures, but also by the technical indication legato:

E.g. 2

Paule Maurice, „Tableaux de Provence”, m. 17-20, tempo *Allegrissimo*

In order to avoid fragmentation of the phrase in measures 55-58, it is good for the performer to play the note A sharp with position 5 or 4, depending on how he or she considers best, thus, the legato indicated by the composers can be made perfectly, giving the necessary cursivity to the melodic content. For the same reasons, we can also assign to the note C the same passage TA position to the detriment of the “classic”⁸.

The last sentence of this musical articulation breaks the monotony created by the small intensities, the exposure being integral in the *forte*. Characterized in this way, the musical idea can be interpreted as a real release, which will highlight among others the performer’s sound qualities.

⁸ <https://www.saxontheweb.net/search/768521/?q=tableaux+de+Provence&o=relevance>

The middle section (B) starts with a melodic structure (upper embroidery) followed by an action based on opposite jumps, which will generate a continuous movement through sequential treatment, here being superimposed on a descending chromatic route⁹.

E.g. 3

Paule Maurice, „Tableaux de Provence”, m.79-82, tempo *Allegro*

In order to avoid the moving of the registers, but also for an easy fingering, it is necessary to use a technical artifice, in the sense that the note D¹⁰ encountered in the first passage of section B (m. 81 and 85) will be assigned to C₂. This will fully support the flow of the song, bringing a benefit to the clarity of the ensemble exhibited in *pianissimo* way.

So as to emphasize the expressiveness, but also the imposed style, the notes with a high rhythmic duration must be executed in a *vibrato* manner by the saxophonist, even if this is not written in the score (see m. 90,98,104). Thus, the performer will generate with this effect an extra sensitivity and a special color, marking in a personal way the climax of musical phrases¹¹.

Measures 114 and 119 impose the following interpretative peculiarities, coming to support the artistic act of the soloist: the note A sharp is good to be played without raising the G sharp position, and then with C₂, after which, the attack of the phrase is also made by fingers, thus avoiding the possibility of a “kix” or an unsafe sound to the maximum. Also, the generated articulations in this part have as main feature the equality and the sound accuracy of each note. From an auditory point of view, a pure, clear, crystalline sound must be traced by removing the “jamming” given by an uncertain or uneven movement of the tongue¹².

⁹ https://thekeep.eiu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1039&context=honors_theses

¹⁰ The saxophone score is written a minor third lower than the piano score, which is presented here

¹¹ Bartolozzi, B., *New sounds for woodwinds*, Oxford University Press, 1963.

¹² <https://www.saxontheweb.net/search/768521/?q=tableaux+de+Provence&o=relevance>

The solo passage exposed in the beginning of the re-transition (m. 129-135) denotes an accumulation of tension that passes through all the nuances. Both the rhythm and the articulations are uniform, the latter allowing a small accent. In this way, the saxophonist will delineate and develop 12 intensity steps, arranged symmetrically.

E.g. 4

The musical score for E.g. 4 is in 6/8 time and consists of two staves. The top staff is for the saxophone, starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The bottom staff is for the piano accompaniment, starting with a *cresc.* (crescendo) marking. The saxophone part features a series of eighth-note patterns with a consistent articulation, while the piano accompaniment provides a harmonic and rhythmic foundation with chords and moving lines.

Paule Maurice, „Tableaux de Provence”, m. 129-134, tempo *Allegriissimo*

The reprise is static, following the pattern of the three reference segments (a a1 a2) benefiting from an inner widening.

E.g. 5

The musical score for E.g. 5 is in 6/8 time and consists of two staves. The top staff is for the saxophone, featuring a melodic line with a *ff* (fortissimo) dynamic marking. The bottom staff is for the piano accompaniment, also featuring a *ff* dynamic marking. The saxophone part has a more melodic and expressive character compared to E.g. 4, with some slurs and accents. The piano accompaniment provides a strong harmonic support with chords and moving lines.

Paule Maurice, „Tableaux de Provence”, m. 165-169, tempo *Allegriissimo*

The Coda (m. 170-184) revives the main motif α valorized by its repetition, but also by variation based on arpeggiated figurations exposed in rhythmic complementarity soloist - accompaniment.

The general interpretive difficulty of this part lies in the fact that it can easily be considered as a whole passage of virtuosity, which abounds in intervals, articulations in various forms, and in difficult links and positions,

given by the range in which it is written B major but also by the moving tempo. In addition, the breathing technique of the performer must be impeccable, because a large air intake is required that must be appropriated in short breaks. Getting it right requires a well-organized and lengthy study.

(II) *Cansoun per ma mio*¹³

The second part of the suite is strongly contrasted to the previous one, characterized by sensitivity and emotion, a composition with a strong sense of romance.

The formal structure is proper to the small tristrophic pattern (a b a).

The element with the most variations is the lower embroidery, which undergoes various transformations: into upper embroidery, then undergoing the process of value compression.

E.g. 6



Paule Maurice, „Tableaux de Provence”, m. 7-11, tempo *Largo*

Of course, the accompaniment has the role of supporting this romanticized peculiarity through arpeggio figurations, which place attention on the processes of thematic development through the descending chromatic walk in latent form (see the previous example).

The median segment (*b*) surprises through the contrast of character conferred by the accompaniment, which is imposed by the *arpeggiato* pianistic process and by the two contrary planes: the ascending scale in parallel quarts and octaves, and, respectively, the melodic route based on opposite walking.

¹³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tableaux_de_Provence

E.g. 7



Paule Maurice, „Tableaux de Provence”, m. 13-14, tempo *Largo*

The reprise is static and keeps the tooth ratio thematic and emotional.

Interpretatively speaking, the whole part is characterized by a continuous support from the soloist in which the *vibrato* effect is dominant. In order to achieve it, as well as the nuances and the flow of the song in general, the air column must be conducted impeccably, according to the function of intervals, but also by the rhythmic formulas. (see m.11,12,15,16).

In the second half of the part, there are several rhythmic formulas based on sixteenths (m. 13, 14, 15, 16) which intervene under the impetus of the measure of 6/8, but also because of the rare *tempo*, they tend to destabilize the pulse.

(III) *La Boumiano*¹⁴

The next articulation is dominated by rhythm, highlighting the dancing character, with a formal structure of lied, tripartite type (A B A).

Being framed in an alert *tempo*, the composer creates a programmatic image by approaching an introduction with the *ostinato* base.

The accompaniment is divided into two planes of exposure: the left hand with a static representation on tonic and dominant, with equal rhythm *ostinate*, and the right-hand oscillating melodically on the interval of the major sixth.

The score of the median stanza brings a contrast at the tonal level, through the motivational exposure in the dominant sphere – G minor. Together with the tonal contrast, a new motif appears β , based on sequentially treated scalar melodic structures, followed by a syncope on the same sixth jump.

¹⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tableaux_de_Provence

E.g. 8

Paule Maurice, „Tableaux de Provence”, m. 26-31, tempo *Allegro*

The reprise (A) contains various new forms of the original motif, such as:

- recurring melodic structures (v_3 și v_4), with the same constant jump of the perfect quart solved contrary.
- variational exposure (v_5) based on the principle of ornamentation, with notes of passage and embroidery, the initial motivational elements being included in the melodic unfolding.

The sparkling, ever-optimistic spirit is musically surprised in the final cadence.

E.g. 9

Paule Maurice, „Tableaux de Provence”, m. 59- 60, tempo *Allegro*

The sound colour of this musical articulation is a very strong one, which highlights the interpretative qualities of the soloist. From the first measures we feel the strong contrast to the previous part (*Chanson per ma mio*), through an imposed *tempo allegro*, but also through nuances, all these unfolding with one exception (m. 71) in area *mf – ff*.

The *Ambitus* in which the musical phrases are carried out is not very extensive, but nevertheless there are problematic places such as those in measures 35 – 38, where words and sixths pose problems about sound equality between registers and correct intonation of intervals.

We can also say that the interpretation is enriched soundly by the echo effect, created by the composers in the middle area of the part (m. 42 – 48), meeting here the only deviation from the *forte* nuance which was mentioned earlier. Immediately after this, the performer may resort to a technical subterfuge in order not to fragment the piece. It consists in the fact that for the notes C and B from the measure 56, the position will be the „complete”, with the maintenance of the octave flap, and the D from the next measure will be his priority C₂ position, to the detriment of the classical one¹⁵.

(IV) *Dis alyscamps l'amo souspire*¹⁶

Sadness and lamentation are the experiences that dominate this musical articulation, the death of a family friend, his complaint at the Alyscamps cemetery from the province, inducing the composer's memory and emotions, what will be transposed into a tender score and at the same time with a certain note of the macabre.

Formally, the articulation has a structural appearance of lied (A B A), each strophe having two distinct phrases.

The two introduction measures create a sound uncertainty, having a cluster substrate, amplified and increased second created in poor time (m. 2).

E.g. 10



Paule Maurice, „Tableaux de Provence”, m. 1-2

The entire musical development is based on the two x and y generating cells, from which the further thematic development will start ($x_1 y_1$). A concern for the rhythmic side of these cells can be noted, the first x_1 by the value augmentation (in triplet – resulting in a binary-ternal overlap), and the second y_1 also by augmentation, but thought ternary, by means of syncopated rhythmic sequences.

¹⁵ <https://www.saxontheweb.net/search/768521/?q=tableaux+de+Provence&o=relevance>

¹⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tableaux_de_Provence

E.g. 11

The musical score for E.g. 11 is in 4/4 time. The piano part consists of a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the left hand and a melodic line in the right hand. The violin part features a melodic line with trills and triplets. Dynamics range from *p* to *mf*.

Paule Maurice, „Tableaux de Provence”, m. 3-8, tempo *Andante*

The round (A) has a static aspect, but it also contains an exception by the various resumption of the motif β (a_{1v}), which will have an improvising aspect, implicitly, of soloistic virtuosity (m. 56-63b).

Coda contains the melodic substrate of the two generating cells, with their results: $x y x_1 y_2 y_2 x$ on the final E.

E.g. 12

The musical score for E.g. 12 is in 4/4 time. The piano part consists of a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the left hand and a melodic line in the right hand. The violin part features a melodic line with trills and triplets. Dynamics range from *p* to *mf*.

Paule Maurice, „Tableaux de Provence”, m. 64-70, tempo *Andante*

The lyrical and internalized character is also surprised by the complex and the novel rhythmic formulas that, thanks to the tight digitization, induce small passages which are difficult to achieve from a technical point of view. In the study phase they can subdivide to be appropriated clearly and correctly, and then be perfectly integrated into the musical context (m. 25, 33, 58, 61, 62).

The dynamics of the part is built from phrases that gradually accumulate tension, but also from moments that have as *subito* indication (m. 23-24. 33. We can say that these dynamic fluctuations can slightly offset the pulsation, which is accepted especially when the musical phrase reaches its peak (m. 33, 34, 58, 61, 62, 63).

(V) *Lou cabridan*¹⁷

The term “*cabridan* „has a visual and auditory symbolism, being the name of a massive and noisy insect, native, as location, to the region Provence from France. The transposition into music of this phenomenon highlights the agility of the saxophone, and of course the performer, the instrument being honorably adapted to the agitation of this musical articulation¹⁸.

The formal structure is proper to the large tristrophic form of lied – A B A, this happens at the macro level, because the first segment (A) has a similar composition at the microstructural level (A A1 A), and in the median segment (B) a bistrophic composition (B B₁), is approached, with phrases ramifications.

The perpetual movement that characterizes this musical articulation is interrupted by a cadence of virtuosity, followed by an inning (A), with onset in the canon, which, besides the element of surprise given by its appearance itself, has the sonority and significance of the disappearance of the rapid sneaking of the insect, from the landscape of the province, which concludes with a general diminuendo.

The passage at the beginning of this musical articulation, in addition to the sound and rhythmic equality, imposes support problems related to the flow of the melody and the articulations. The latter must be equal, short and clear, the *allegro tempo* making these things even more difficult.

¹⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tableaux_de_Provence

¹⁸ Nicola Prost, *Saxophone à la française*, (Franch saxophone), Ed. Sax c'est l'air, Paris 2008

E.g. 13

The image shows a musical score for measures 1-11 of 'Tableaux de Provence' by Paule Maurice. The score is written for saxophone and piano. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. The saxophone part consists of arpeggiated and scalar figures. The piano accompaniment includes chords and bass lines. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'cresc.' and 'f'.

Paule Maurice, „Tableaux de Provence”, m. 1-11, tempo *Allegro*

The above-mentioned interpretative peculiarities, the passage, but also the whole part in general, impress through the technical difficulty and the extent of the musical phrases that do not avoid any register and pass through all the nuances, from *piano* to *fortissimo*, in a well-organized and logical manner, in relation to the melodic line. Thus, besides the technical mastery of the instrument, the player must also have a very high resistance, doubled by an impeccable breath.

The retransition provides the listener with the exposure of arpeggiated and scalar figures in the soloistic and accompaniment plan, with ornamental elements that mimic a strong movement and agitation (of the descriptive element - *cabridan*) (m. 47-62).

A passage that brings special problems from a technical point of view is the one from measures 49 - 52 which, through the intervals included, as well as through the *legato* formula of three in three sixteenths with joints that come unnatural in a binary meter, develops very heavy positions. In order for the sounds from different registers to have the same intensity, but especially colour, the saxophonist will have to perfectly dose the air column and the manner of study. Thus, it will be possible to understand that the note *mi* from the super-acute register at the beginning of the first passage (m.49) can be executed only by holding the position C₂, without pressing C₁. This will come

as a relief for the soloist instrumentalist, regardless of his level, with a substantial qualitative contribution to the entire musical discourse¹⁹.

The return segment of the main motive (A) contains the same elements of melodic construction, with some insertions, such as the latent march in rhythmic-melodic sequences, typical of the previous section. The finale is provided by a large *trill*, in two and a half beats, in an impressive *crescendo* that stops abruptly.

A new tonal dimension is imposed along with the median section B situated in the sphere of the tonality E flat Major with certain modulatory inflections towards the dominance area (B flat Major) but also in other distant dimensions – C sharp minor. The formal bistrophic framing (b b' – double period and b1) subjects the melodic elements that give the sonority a modal influence, with high intensity chromatic aspects. Thus, we encounter the color formula combined with the descending scalar-ornamental figuration, in a sequential sequence.

E.g. 14

Paule Maurice, „Tableaux de Provence”, m. 95-98, tempo *Allegro*

The soloistic cadenza capitalizes on the technical and interpretative properties of the instrumentalist, focusing on the melodic side that abounds in chromatic, scalar and arpeggios figurations, but also on the rhythmic aspect, which presents numerous elements of exceptional division, that will be interpreted with a certain freedom in exposure. The ambience of cadenza unfolding is very high, so that the intervals that build the melodic line, the alternative nuances, but also the generous legato, call at maximum the intonational technique and the sound equality.

¹⁹ Adler, Samuel. *The study of orchestration*, Third edition, London, 2002

The reprise of this articulation, which can also be considered a Coda, imposes the initial tonality. The composer compresses certain elements, such as: the canonical entries of the two planes and the sequences created later, which can create the false impression of a gap between the soloist and the piano accompanist.

E.g. 15

The musical score for E.g. 15 consists of two systems. The first system shows a soloist part (treble clef) starting with a whole rest, followed by a piano accompaniment (grand staff) with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The second system shows the soloist part with a *dim.* dynamic and the piano accompaniment with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4.

Paule Maurice, „Tableaux de Provence”, m. 170-179, tempo *Allegro*

These elements lead to a gradual action with explosion of intensity in the latest systems (m. 202-207), concluding with the element of surprise imposed by the programmatic of the work – *diminuendo* general.

E.g. 16

The musical score for E.g. 16 consists of two systems. The first system shows a soloist part (treble clef) with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic and a piano accompaniment (grand staff) also with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic. The second system shows the soloist part with a *dim.* dynamic and the piano accompaniment with a *dim.* dynamic, followed by a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and a piano (*p*) dynamic. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4.

Paule Maurice, „Tableaux de Provence”, m. 207-210, tempo *Allegro*

Looking at this last part of the *Tableaux de Provence* suite as a whole, we can say that the musical phrases that make up the melodic speech are built from ranges and arpeggios throughout the saxophone, which bring to light the virtuosity and the bright character, the interpreter being given the task – of easy place – to interpret under the auspices of lightness and equality.

In conclusion, this work is a reference in the repertoire for saxophone, with a valuable melodic potential and difficult to interpret.

3. Conclusions

The work of Paule Maurice, *Tableaux de Provence*, supports another face of the sound, characterized by sensuality, warmth, with a velvety, slightly blurred approach.

The musical score is made up of two aspects, both of which are included in the personality of the performer today. The first is related to the material-objective reality and involves technical virtuosity, and the second aspect (the most important one) belongs to the subjective reality and highlights the expressive capacity.

The approach and the promotion through interpretation and analysis of this paper represent the plus of knowledge offered by the thesis we elaborate. Thus, the desire to find a common denominator regarding the avant-garde and notoriety of this work can give rise to notable ideas of evolution.

The didactic purpose of knowing the *Tableaux de Provence* suite for saxophone is also outlined in this paper. Taking into account the degree of difficulty, it is addressed to the students, but also to the teachers who work in vocational education institutions, helping in this respect the development of the saxophone school.

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