

GURDJIEFF/ DE HARTMANN

MUSIC FOR THE PIANO

VOLUME I

ASIAN SONGS
AND RHYTHMS

Georges Ivanovitch Gurdjieff
Thomas de Hartmann

Music for the Piano Œuvres pour piano

Definitive Edition

Volume I
Asian Songs and Rhythms
Chants et rythmes d'Asie

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*Dedicated to the memory of Jeanne de Salzmann (1889–1990), to whom
Gurdjieff entrusted the continuation of his work. Her untiring efforts
inspired and guided the publication of this music.*

*A la mémoire de Jeanne de Salzmann (1889–1990) à qui Gurdjieff confia
la responsabilité de continuer son œuvre. Elle fut l'infatigable inspiratrice
de cette publication, qui sans elle n'aurait pas vu le jour.*

*Zum Gedenken an Jeanne de Salzmann (1889–1990), der Gurdjieff die
Fortführung seiner Arbeit anvertraute. Ihre unermüdlichen Bemühungen
gaben dieser Veröffentlichung entscheidende Impulse.*

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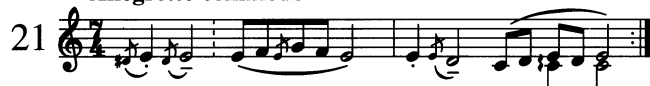
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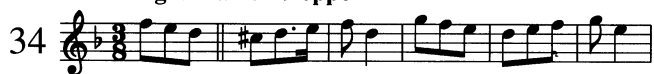
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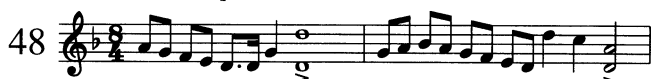
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Georges Ivanovitch Gurdjieff (1917)



Thomas de Hartmann (1923)

Preface

The piano music in this definitive four-volume edition was composed by G. I. Gurdjieff and Thomas de Hartmann in Fontainebleau, France, during the 1920's. While the music has only recently been introduced to the general public through a number of recordings, it has been for over sixty years an integral part of the teaching developed by Gurdjieff.

G. I. Gurdjieff

George Ivanovich Gurdjieff (1877–1949) was born of a Greek father and an Armenian mother in Alexandropol near the border of Russian Armenia and Turkey in the Caucasus, an area where many different ethnic groups had lived together for centuries. His father was one of the local bards known as "Ashokhs" who could improvise on religious or philosophical themes in verse and song and, as Gurdjieff described, would often recite one of the many legends or poems he knew, according to the choice of those present, or would render in song the dialogues between the different characters. Later, discovering the great antiquity of these legends, Gurdjieff began to attribute particular significance to them.

The eldest of six children, Gurdjieff lived as a young boy with his family in Kars (now in Turkey), where he sang in the choir of the Russian Orthodox Church. His quick mind and musical ability attracted the attention of the Cathedral dean, who assumed responsibility for the boy's education. Along with the usual school subjects, Gurdjieff was tutored in religion and medicine.

Despite this training, his many questions about the meaning of man's existence remained unanswered. With a group of companions, he began to search for a body of knowledge which, he suspected, had its roots in ancient traditions and might explain the contradictions he could not resolve. He and the other "Seekers of Truth," as they called themselves, traveled to Egypt, Tibet, Afghanistan, and other countries throughout Central Asia to discover these sources. Such journeys gave him the opportunity to listen to and assimilate the music of many ethnic traditions and ultimately led him to certain temples and monasteries, where he studied special forms of ritual, dance, and music.

After some twenty years of search, Gurdjieff appeared in Europe with a complete teaching that bridged the esoteric knowledge of the East and the scientific methodology of the West. He went to Moscow in 1913, where he gathered around him people interested in studying his ideas. P. D. Ouspensky, author of the most comprehensive book about Gurdjieff's ideas, *In Search of the Miraculous*¹, was part of this group.

In 1916 the young Russian composer Thomas de Hartmann joined Gurdjieff's circle in St. Petersburg. As the turmoil of World War I and the Russian Revolution descended upon them, Gurdjieff left Russia with some of

his pupils, including de Hartmann and his wife, traveling to Essentuki and Tiflis in the Caucasus. Joined in Tiflis by the painter Alexander de Salzmann and his wife Jeanne, they continued later to Constantinople and Berlin.

Finally settling in France in 1922 at the Château du Prieuré in Avon near Fontainebleau, Gurdjieff established his Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man, which attracted a large number of people, mainly from England and the United States. Physical and intellectual work and a great variety of exercises, dances and movements were all part of an intense activity in support of Gurdjieff's aim: to offer to those present the means to discover their essential nature and develop its hidden possibilities.

After a near-fatal automobile accident in 1924, Gurdjieff changed the forms in which he conveyed his teaching. In just two years, beginning in 1925, he and de Hartmann composed most of the music in this collection. During this same period, Gurdjieff embarked on his major writing project, *All and Everything*.²

Over the years he made several trips to America to visit groups of people studying his ideas, as well as to give lectures and public performances of the movements and sacred dances. He gradually curtailed the activities of the Institute and closed it in 1932. Toward the end of the 1930's he resumed, with renewed intensity, work with his pupils in Paris which continued throughout World War II, the occupation, and afterwards until his death on October 29, 1949.

Thomas de Hartmann

Thomas Alexandrovich de Hartmann (1885–1956) received his musical education in the Russian school. Born in Ukraine to parents of German ancestry on September 21, 1885, de Hartmann was already drawn to the piano by the age of four. When he was nine his mother enrolled him in the academic military school in St. Petersburg. There his talent was soon recognized and he was permitted to spend all his spare time on musical studies.

At the age of eleven he was accepted by Arensky as a pupil in harmony and composition, and by Madame Annette Esipova-Leschetzky for the piano. He later studied counterpoint with Taneiev, and in 1903 received his diploma from the St. Petersburg Conservatory, which at that time was under the direction of Rimsky-Korsakov.

When he was only 21, his full-length ballet, *The Scarlet Flower*, was premiered to great acclaim by the Imperial Opera of St. Petersburg with Legat, Pavlova, Karsavina,

¹ P. D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1949; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1950.

² G. I. Gurdjieff, *All and Everything* (comprising three series): *Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson*, New York & London: Viking Arkana, 1992; New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1950; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1950; *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, New York: Dutton, 1963; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963; *Life Is Real Only Then, When "I Am,"* New York: Viking Arkana, 1991.

Fokine and Nijinsky in the cast. Tzar Nicholas II was present and, in recognition of de Hartmann's accomplishment, authorized his release from active military service to the status of reserve officer so that he could devote all his time to music. This enabled him to move to Munich to study conducting with Felix Mottl, a disciple and friend of Richard Wagner.

In Munich between 1908 and 1912, de Hartmann, along with Arnold Schönberg, joined the avant-garde cultural movement launched by Franz Marc and Wassily Kandinsky, whose anthology, *Der Blaue Reiter*, articulated the modernist search before World War I for a common spiritual basis of artistic expression. De Hartmann's article, in that landmark publication, entitled "On Anarchy in Music," proclaimed, "By discovering the new laws, art should ... lead to an even greater, more conscious freedom – to different, new possibilities."³ During this period he sketched the music for Kandinsky's experimental stage production, *The Yellow Sound*. De Hartmann returned to St. Petersburg in 1912 where his career continued to flourish. His musical activities included compositions for orchestra, piano and voice, music for the ballet, a one-act opera, and chamber music.

In 1916, his meeting with Gurdjieff gave a new direction to his life. De Hartmann said:

*It was clear to me long before I met Gurdjieff, ... that to be able to develop in my creative work, something was necessary – something greater or higher that I could not name. Only if I possessed this "something" would I be able to progress further and hope to have any real satisfaction from my own creation ...*⁴

For the next twelve years de Hartmann and his wife worked closely with Gurdjieff. When the Bolshevik revolution broke out, they first followed him to the Caucasus and then to Turkey. Whenever conditions of life permitted, de Hartmann and his wife, an opera singer, continued their own musical activities, teaching and giving concerts. Later, between 1922 and 1929, they lived at Gurdjieff's Institute in France where most of the music in the present volumes was composed.

In 1929, de Hartmann left the Institute and resumed his career, composing sonatas, concertos, ballet music, symphonies, the opera *Esther*, song cycles, and a setting for voice and piano of the final pages of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. During this period he earned his livelihood by writing scores for films.

In the late forties and early fifties Jeanne de Salzmann, who had become Gurdjieff's closest disciple, invited de Hartmann to give recitals of the music he had composed with Gurdjieff, to oversee the publication of a limited five-volume edition, and to compose new pieces for Gurdjieff's movements and sacred dances. From 1951, de Hartmann lived and worked in America until his death on March 26, 1956.

³ Th. v. Hartmann, "Über Anarchie in der Musik," in *Der Blaue Reiter*, München, R. Piper & Co. Verlag, 1912, page 94.

⁴ Thomas and Olga de Hartmann, *Our Life with Mr Gurdjieff*, Definitive Edition, London: Penguin Arkana, 1992, page 5.

The Music

In the course of his search to understand all facets of human nature, Gurdjieff became convinced that the music of different cultures both preserved and revealed essential characteristics of those cultures and also conveyed deeper meanings rooted in their traditions. He possessed an extraordinary capacity for remembering the intricate melodies he heard during the twenty years he spent living and traveling in Central Asia and the Near East. These "recordings" were essential for the work that was to follow.

The music Gurdjieff encountered descends from aural traditions of ancient provenance. As a rule, this music is not written down but relies on the musician's exact knowledge of its characteristic melodic movements. As in most monophonic music, a sense of harmony is implied by the melodic intervals themselves, often underpinned by a drone of the tonic, or with the added fifth. In certain styles one also finds a complex rhythmic interaction between melody and accompaniment. The systems of tuning, varying from region to region, are derived from divisions of the octave that result in intervals unfamiliar to Western ears.

De Hartmann, a musician of European culture, needed time and a special preparation to become sensitive to a musical language so different from his own, and to be able to hear – in the sense of receive – the essence of the music that was being conveyed to him. He described his first musical contact with Gurdjieff:

*In the evenings, he came with a guitar and would play, not in a usual manner, but with the tip of the third finger, as if playing a mandolin, slightly rubbing the strings. There were only melodies, rather pianissimo hints of melodies from the years when he collected and studied the ritual movements and dances of different temples in Asia. All this playing was essentially an introduction for me into the new character of the Eastern music which he wished later to dictate to me.*⁵

It was around this time (1917) in Essentuki that Gurdjieff began to develop extensively his movements and sacred dances. At first he provided the musical accompaniment himself on the guitar, (under wartime conditions no piano was available), while de Hartmann had to practice the exercises.

In 1919 when Gurdjieff and his pupils went to Tiflis, work on these exercises continued and, with a piano available, de Hartmann was asked to play. De Hartmann wrote:

*... Gurdjieff gave us the different modes of several nationalities, and not only the modes but also ... details peculiar to the character of each nationality. These modes served later on for the creation of music for a variety of exercises ...*⁶

It was also in 1919 that Gurdjieff sent de Hartmann and his wife to Erivan, the capital of Armenia, where the de Hartmanns gave concerts of European music and of the works of the Armenian composer Komitas Vardapet. As de Hartmann describes:

⁵ *Ibid.*, condensed from pages 43–44.

⁶ *Ibid.*, page 141.

*Mount Ararat was wrapped in a shroud of mist: an unforgettable sight. To accompany this vision there was authentic Eastern music, played on . . . the tar – a kind of stringed instrument. Through this trip to Erivan, . . . Gurdjieff gave us the opportunity of listening to Eastern music and musicians, so that I could better understand how he wished his own music to be written and interpreted.*⁷

For the five years between 1919 and 1924, the collaboration of the two men focused on music for Gurdjieff's movements and sacred dances. In 1925 the full intensity of the composing of the music in this edition began:

I had a very difficult and trying time with this music. Gurdjieff sometimes whistled or played on the piano with one finger a very complicated sort of melody – as are all Eastern melodies, although they seem at first to be monotonous. To grasp this melody, to write it in European notation, required a tour de force.

How it was written down is very interesting in itself. It usually happened in the evening in the big salon of the Château. From my room I usually heard when Gurdjieff began to play and, taking my music paper, I had to rush downstairs. Soon all the people came, and the music dictation was always in front of everybody.

It was not easy to notate. While listening to him play, I had to scribble down at feverish speed the shifts and turns of the melody, sometimes with repetitions of just two notes. But in what rhythm? How to mark the accentuation? Often there was no hint of conventional Western meters; at times the flow of melody . . . could not be interrupted or divided by bar-lines. And the harmony that could support the Eastern tonality of the melody could only gradually be guessed.

Often – to torment me, I think – he would begin to repeat the melody before I had finished my notation, usually with subtle differences and added embellishments which drove me to despair. Of course it must be remembered that this was never just a matter of simple dictation, but equally a personal exercise for me, to grasp the essential character, the very noyau or kernel of the music.

*After the melody had been written down Gurdjieff would tap on the lid of the piano a rhythm on which to build the bass accompaniment. And then I had to perform at once what had been given, improvising the harmony as I went.*⁸

By this method over 300 piano pieces were worked on during those two years.

What is unique in this music is its specific combination of elements: the ethnic melodies, the ritual music of remote temples and monasteries, and the cadences of the Orthodox liturgy so intimately familiar to both men – all these transformed by Gurdjieff through de Hartmann's craftsmanship and absolute dedication. What resulted was sometimes distinctly Eastern, often clearly Western, but almost never typically either one. It is as though many of the specific attributes of the sources were distilled to leave a music largely free of elaborated

structure and decorative detail or of characteristic pianism. The force and clarity of its speech emerge from the underlying intention to speak directly to the listener's inmost self.

A close examination of the manuscripts yields a revealing insight: there are very few occurrences of rewriting in any of the various stages of notation. From the first dictation of the melodies, through harmonization and addition of rhythm, until the final manuscript, there is no evidence of basic change in compositional structure. In any process of composing this would be unusual, but in a collaboration it is quite extraordinary. The common understanding of the two men and the accelerated pace of their work together led to a fusion of musical thought – resulting in a creation as if from one mind. They became one composer.

The period of their musical collaboration ended in 1927. The manuscripts remained in various stages of completion: in some cases the melody alone was noted down, while in others the melodic line was partially harmonized and the piece never finished. This edition contains only those pieces that reached their full and final development.

The fair copies produced in the 1920's by de Hartmann in his impeccable calligraphy generally contain few indications of tempo, dynamics, phrasing, or articulation marks. Only in preparing the manuscripts in the early 1950's for a limited private edition did he add such indications, formalize the genres, and establish the sequence of pieces in each volume. Therefore, most of the previously unpublished manuscripts in this edition appear with few performance indications. It is left to the pianist to explore and find in the music itself the key to their interpretation.

Introduction to Volume I

The music of *Asian Songs and Rhythms* evokes the atmosphere of the peoples of the Near East and Central Asia, particularly of Gurdjieff's own Armenian and Greek ancestry. The musical folklore of these ethnic groups, among which he lived and traveled as a young man, was a primary influence on his tonal language.

It must be said at once that many of the titles cannot be taken literally. In some cases the music may indeed be an accurate recollection or echo of certain regional melodies Gurdjieff heard on his journeys, which he either quoted directly or recreated in the idiom of the locale. In other instances, the titles would seem to reflect a personal impression of a place, a people, or an ancient culture, translated into Gurdjieff's own musical language. A number of pieces were left untitled but clearly belong to the genre of this volume.

Several pieces in this edition, particularly in Volumes I and II, include an additional line for the *daff*, a Middle Eastern frame drum. Although the part is optional, its inclusion provides a new timbre, giving a quite different impression of the piece as a whole. In some cases it is used to reinforce the basic rhythmic pattern of the piano. In others, a new element is introduced by giving to the *daff* a meter different from that of the piano, thus creating patterns of contrasting cycles (Vol. I, Nos. 21 and 31, Vol. II, No. 17).

⁷ *Ibid.*, page 136.

⁸ *Ibid.*, condensed from pages 245-246.

The polyrhythms within the piano part itself present an interesting challenge to the performer. For example, in Vol. I, No. 11, the left hand plays a rhythmic ostinato while the right hand must execute simultaneously the irregularly phrased rhythm of the melody. This creates a demand to play two different rhythmic cycles at once. Here de Hartmann adopted the somewhat unorthodox method of barring only the lower staff. The intentional absence of bar lines in the melody reveals the independence of its rhythmic form.

The pieces collected in this volume are short, sometimes a single page, with only one theme, as if to illuminate a certain idea or evoke a particular feeling. In certain instances, for the essence of a piece to be fully expressed, a *Da Capo* is indicated. In a sense, each composition can be taken as a *moment musical*, a kind of “travel sketch,” with an intimation of deeper feeling beneath the surface, waiting to be discovered.

The Editors

Préface

Cette édition révisée et complète de la musique pour piano de Georges Gurdjieff et Thomas de Hartmann comprend quatre recueils. La majeure partie de l'œuvre fut composée à Fontainebleau dans les années 1920. Pendant plus de soixante ans elle a été une part vivante de l'enseignement apporté par G. I. Gurdjieff. Elle commence à peine à être connue du grand public grâce à une série de disques édités au cours de ces dernières années.

G. I. Gurdjieff

Georges Ivanovitch Gurdjieff (1877–1949), d'ascendance grecque par son père et arménienne par sa mère, est né à Alexandropol, aux confins de l'Arménie et de la Turquie, dans une région du Caucase où pendant des siècles se sont cotoyés des groupes ethniques très divers. Son père perpétuait la tradition orale des bardes locaux ou *Ashokhs*. Il racontait en vers les grands mythes antiques et à la demande de l'assistance, pouvait improviser à l'infini sur des thèmes religieux ou philosophiques. Plus tard lorsqu'il s'intéressa à la source de ces légendes et de ces mythes, Gurdjieff leur accorda une attention particulière.

Dans sa jeunesse, Gurdjieff vécut à Kars, au sein d'une famille de six enfants dont il était l'aîné. Il chantait régulièrement dans le chœur de l'église orthodoxe russe. Son esprit aigu et son don pour la musique attirèrent l'attention du doyen de la cathédrale qui se chargea dès lors de son éducation. En plus de la formation scolaire habituelle il fut instruit en religion et en médecine.

Malgré cette éducation particulière, les questions qui le brûlaient sur le sens profond et la finalité de l'existence humaine ne trouvèrent pas de réponse. Il s'engagea alors, plein d'ardeur, avec un groupe de compagnons, à la recherche d'une *connaissance pérenne* susceptible de dépasser et de réconcilier les contradictions qui l'habitaient, et qu'il espérait retrouver au cœur des anciennes traditions.

Ainsi avec ses compagnons, «Les Chercheurs de Vérité», entreprit-il des expéditions en Egypte, au Tibet, en Inde, en Afghanistan et dans de nombreuses autres régions d'Asie Centrale, pour tenter de remonter aux sources de cette connaissance perdue. Au cours de ces voyages, il sut écouter et assimiler les musiques traditionnelles de l'Orient. Dans divers temples et monastères, il étudia les principes de l'art sacré et les formes spécifiques données au rituel, à la musique et à la danse. Après quelques vingt années de recherche, on retrouve Gurdjieff en Europe, porteur d'un enseignement théorique et pratique, très élaboré et très complet qui semblait relier la connaissance ésotérique de l'Orient et la méthodologie scientifique de l'Occident.

En 1913 à Moscou, se groupèrent autour de lui des gens intéressés par ses idées. Parmi eux se trouvait P. D. Ouspensky, à qui l'on doit certainement l'exposé le plus complet et le plus attachant sur l'Enseignement de Gurdjieff.¹

¹ P. D. Ouspensky, *Fragments d'un enseignement inconnu*, Editions Stock, Paris 1950

En 1916, le jeune Thomas de Hartmann rejoignit le groupe à Saint-Petersbourg. Quand les troubles liés à la première guerre mondiale puis à la révolution russe s'intensifièrent, Gurdjieff fut contraint de gagner le Sud du pays puis de quitter définitivement la Russie, suivi d'un certain nombre de ses élèves, dont Hartmann et sa femme. Ces tribulations les amenèrent dans le Caucase, à Essentuki et Tiflis – où ils furent rejoints par le peintre Alexandre de Salzmann et sa femme Jeanne – puis à Constantinople et Berlin.

Finalement, en 1922 il s'établit en France, au Château du Prieuré près de Fontainebleau. Son «Institut pour le Développement Harmonique de l'Homme», attira de nombreux élèves, venus principalement d'Angleterre et des Etats-Unis. L'Institut devait alors connaître une activité intense appelant les participants à mobiliser leur être dans sa totalité: travail physique, intellectuel, exercices les plus divers comprenant notamment la pratique de certains mouvements.

En 1924, après un accident d'automobile qui faillit lui coûter la vie, Gurdjieff fut amené à développer de nouveaux moyens pour transmettre l'essence de son enseignement. C'est ainsi qu'en deux ans à peine, à partir de 1925, fut composée la majeure partie de la musique contenue dans la présente publication. C'est à cette époque également, que Gurdjieff se mit à écrire et qu'il traça les grandes lignes de son ouvrage: *Du tout et de tout*.² Les activités de l'Institut se réduisirent par la suite considérablement pour s'arrêter complètement en 1932. Gurdjieff effectua plusieurs voyages en Amérique pour y donner des conférences et des démonstrations publiques, éclairant notamment le rôle précis des Mouvements et des danses sacrées dans le développement intérieur de l'homme. A la fin des années 30, le travail avec ses élèves reprit intensément à Paris. Il continua pendant la guerre et l'occupation et ne cessa de s'amplifier jusqu'à la mort de Gurdjieff le 29 Octobre 1949.

Thomas de Hartmann

Thomas Alexandrovitch de Hartmann (1885–1956) reçut, sous les auspices de la tradition musicale russe, une formation classique de compositeur. Né en Ukraine, de parents d'origine allemande, le jeune Thomas, dès l'âge de quatre ans, sembla irrésistiblement attiré par le piano familial. A neuf ans il entra à l'école de l'Académie Militaire de Saint-Petersbourg. Son talent précoce fut vite reconnu et on l'aïda à consacrer tout son temps libre à l'étude de la musique.

Il avait onze ans à peine lorsque Arensky l'accepta à ses cours d'harmonie et de composition et qu'Annette Esipova-Leschetitzky l'admit à son cours de piano. Il étudia ensuite le contrepoint avec Taneiev et en 1903 obtint

² G. I. Gurdjieff, *Du tout et de tout, en trois séries: Récits de Belzébuth à son petit-fils*, Editions Janus, Paris, 1956
Rencontres avec des hommes remarquables, Editions Julliard, Paris 1960

La vie n'est réelle que lorsque «Je suis», Triangle Editions, Paris 1976

son diplôme du conservatoire de Saint-Petersbourg que dirigeait à l'époque Rimsky-Korsakov.

Il avait 21 ans lorsque fut présenté à l'Opéra Impérial de Saint-Petersbourg son premier grand ballet «La Fleur écarlate» qui connut un immense succès et la faveur d'une distribution remarquable comprenant la Pavlova, Legat, Karsavina, Fokine et Nijinsky.

Le tsar Nicolas II au vu de ce ballet et en récompense de son talent, le libéra de ses obligations militaires et l'exhorta à donner tout son temps à la musique.

Avec un statut d'officier de réserve Thomas de Hartmann put s'installer à Munich pour étudier la direction d'orchestre avec Félix Mottl, un disciple et ami de Richard Wagner.

Entre 1908 et 1912, en compagnie d'Arnold Schönberg, il adhéra au mouvement culturel d'avant-garde animé par Franz Marc et Wassily Kandinsky. Leur anthologie *Der Blaue Reiter* constitua une référence majeure pour les chercheurs qui aspiraient à donner à l'expression artistique moderne un fondement spirituel. Dans un article intitulé *De l'anarchie en musique* Hartmann proclamait: «En découvrant de nouvelles lois, l'art devrait conduire à une liberté encore plus grande, plus consciente, à une variété de possibilités nouvelles».³ Durant cette période, il collabora à un spectacle de théâtre expérimental créé par Kandinsky *Le son jaune*, dont il élaborait la musique.

Hartmann revint à Saint-Petersbourg en 1912 pour y poursuivre une carrière pleine de succès. Parmi ses compositions d'alors, on trouve des pièces pour orchestre, pour piano et voix, de la musique de ballet, un opéra en un acte, et de la musique de chambre.

En 1916, sa rencontre avec Gurdjieff marqua un tournant dans sa vie. Il écrira plus tard:

*Il était clair que bien avant de rencontrer Gurdjieff... pour que je me développe dans mon travail créatif, quelque chose de nouveau m'était nécessaire – quelque chose de plus grand, ou de plus haut, que je ne pouvais nommer. Seule, la croissance de ce «quelque chose» me permettrait de progresser, d'espérer obtenir une réelle satisfaction de ma propre créativité.*⁴

Pendant les douze années qui suivirent Hartmann et sa femme Olga restèrent en liaison étroite avec Gurdjieff. Lorsque la révolution éclata, ils le suivirent au Caucase, puis en Turquie. Chaque fois que les conditions le permettaient le couple reprenait ses propres activités musicales – enseignement et concerts – Olga étant elle-même chanteuse d'opéra. Plus tard, entre 1922 et 1929, ils rejoignirent l'Institut de Gurdjieff au Prieuré d'Avon, et c'est là que fut composée la plupart des pièces publiées dans cette édition.

En 1929 Hartmann quitta l'Institut et reprenant sa carrière, composa des sonates, des concertos, de la musique de ballet, des symphonies, son opéra «Esther», divers cycles de chant et un arrangement pour voix et piano de

la fin de l'*Ulysse* de James Joyce. Parallèlement, il gagnait sa vie en écrivant de la musique de film.

A la fin des années 40 et au début des années 50, Jeanne de Salzmann qui était devenue la disciple la plus proche de Gurdjieff, incita Thomas de Hartmann à donner des récitals de la musique qu'il avait composée avec celui qu'il considérait comme son maître. Elle lui demanda ensuite de superviser l'édition partielle de cette musique par les soins des Editions Janus et de composer de nouvelles pièces pour accompagner une série de mouvements enseignés par Gurdjieff dans les années 40. En 1951 Hartmann s'installa définitivement aux Etats-Unis et continua de travailler jusqu'à sa mort survenue le 26 Mars 1956.

La Musique

Au cours de ses recherches sur les «potentialités inexplorées» de l'homme, Gurdjieff avait acquis la conviction que des caractéristiques très essentielles, propres à certaines cultures, se trouvaient préservées et révélées dans leurs musiques. Selon lui, celles-ci avaient même le pouvoir de véhiculer une connaissance profonde que les mots ne pouvaient transmettre. C'est sans doute grâce à une capacité exceptionnelle que Gurdjieff a pu reconstituer, quelquefois dans les moindres détails, des thèmes complexes entendus au cours de vingt années de «pèlerinage» en Asie. Ces réminiscences, quelquefois nostalgiques, furent l'une des sources de la musique composée par la suite au Prieuré d'Avon.

Ces musiques issues de traditions «aurales» très anciennes sont rarement écrites. Elles reposent sur la connaissance exacte qu'a le musicien de la spécificité de chaque mouvement mélodique. Comme c'est le cas généralement lorsqu'il s'agit de musiques monophoniques, le sens de l'harmonie est révélé par les intervalles mélodiques eux-mêmes souvent soutenus en outre par un bourdon de la tonique ou par l'addition d'une quinte. Dans certains styles, on trouve aussi une interaction rythmique complexe entre la mélodie et son accompagnement. Les systèmes de tonalité qui varient d'une région à l'autre, sont issus de divisions de l'octave entraînant des intervalles peu familiers aux oreilles occidentales. Hartmann, musicien de culture européenne, quoiqu'ayant une oreille exceptionnelle, avait eu besoin de temps et d'une préparation spéciale pour devenir sensible à ce langage musical si différent du sien, et pour devenir capable d'«entendre» – au sens de «recevoir» – le sens de ce qui lui était communiqué. Il décrit ainsi ses premières séances de travail avec Gurdjieff:

*Le soir, il venait avec sa guitare et se mettait à jouer d'une façon inhabituelle, du bout du troisième doigt, comme s'il jouait de la mandoline, en frottant légèrement les cordes. Il s'agissait de mélodies jouées pianissimo, ressurgies des années où il avait rassemblé et étudié les mouvements rituels et les danses de différents temples d'Asie. Ce faisant, il voulait surtout me familiariser avec le caractère, nouveau pour moi, de la musique orientale qu'il désirait pouvoir, plus tard, me dicter.*⁵

³ Th. v. Hartmann, „Über Anarchie in der Musik,“ *Der Blaue Reiter*, R. Piper & Co. Verlag, Munich 1912, p. 94

⁴ Thomas de Hartmann, *Notre vie avec Gurdjieff*, Editions Planète, Paris 1968

Thomas and Olga de Hartmann, *Our Life with Mr Gurdjieff*, Definitive Edition, London: Penguin Arkana, 1992, p. 5

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 43-4, abrégé