César Franck's Early Piano Works:

Documenting the Implicit

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Abstract

The discovery of César Franck's Op. 7 *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle* (1843) encourages a fresher, more complete understanding of his early piano works. A look at other solo piano works from this period — the Op. 3 *Églogue* (1842), Op. 5 *Caprice* (1843) and the Op. 9 *Ballade* (1844) —allows a re-assessment of his compositional processes. Elements of compositional practice found in the young César Franck's output can be seen in his late period, often implied but never adequately presented in previous scholarship. The 'musical style' of César Franck will be addressed, as found in literature and through personal research, with several elements of his compositional habits compartmentalised, defined and located in both early and late piano works. Using the terms created for this thesis, a detailed examination will be made of the aforementioned four early piano works, with location of elements such as *Cathedral of Sound* (large registral sonority, inactivity of harmony and loose rhythmic pulse) and *Infinite Melody* (static tonality, repetition of scalic phrases from a weak beat). It will be discovered that certain aspects of assumed stylistic tendencies in César Franck are misinterpreted, such as his idiosyncratic use of basses misconstrued as originating from his time at the organ, or at least misinformed, such as the quarrelling opposing sides regarding the dilemma of his character in music, whether spiritual or erotic.

While the early piano works never elevated to the level of his late triptychs, their transparency in harmonic and formal processes as well as treatment of thematic material allows for clear dissection of his compositional style, many elements of which can then be transferred to his final works for a more holistic approach to his output.

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Context

Introduction

> It is interesting to observe that all the early piano compositions of the master are cast in the same mould: an allegro interposed between two expositions of an identical theme, the whole preceded by a short introduction. They likewise exhibit a conspicuously uniform tonality, owing to the almost complete absence of modulation, and they seem to have virtuosity for their sole objective. However, on closer examination, one finds frequently, as I have said, an inspiration derived from the great works of the past; and the desire to exploit a brilliant pianistic style often yields to the search for ideas which are purely musical.[1]

This quote, from Franck's most ardent disciple, spurred the birth of this thesis. While 'virtuosity for their sole objective' is frequently cited as a reason for the dismissal of the early piano works, it is the second half of the quote that is at the heart of the research question. How can we describe these 'purely musical' ideas, and can we find something that links them to the more ubiquitous late works? As research on Franck's 'mature' works developed in the past century, the lack of detailed investigation into the earlier works further widened the gulf between these two periods, resulting in a lack of a more complete understanding of Franck's compositional development.[2]

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate these works in further detail to illuminate the compositional methods of César Franck as a piano composer from 1842 to 1848 and scrutinise

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[1] 'Il est assez intéressant de constater que toutes les premières compositions pour piano du maître sont coulées dans le même moule: un allegro encadré entre deux expositions d'un même thème, le tout précédé d'une courte introduction. Elles présentent, au surplus, une assez notable monotonie par l'absence presque complète de modulations et semblent avoir pour unique but la virtuosité, mais, en les examinant de près, on y retrouve assez fréquemment, ainsi que je l'ai dit, l'inspiration des grandes œuvres postérieures, et le souci du brillant de l'écriture instrumentale n'est point tel qu'il ne cède souvent le pas à la recherche des formes purement musicales.' Vincent d'Indy (Trans. Charles Fonteyn Manney), *Selected Piano Compositions* (New York: Dover Publications, 1922), xxxiii.

[2] 'The critics take the masterpieces of the late creative period as the only yardstick - a narrow and too one-sided approach. Thus the lesser appears to be of no importance compared to the more significant./
Die Kritiker legen als einzigen Maßstab die Meisterwerke der spaten Schaffensperiode zugrunde - eine verengte und zu einseitige Betrachtungsweise. So erscheint das Geringere gegenüber dem Bedeutenderen als nichtig.**'** Armin Landgraf, "César Franck und die Musik für den Gottesdienst" in *César Franck et son temps,* (Bruxelles: Col. Belge de Musicologie, 1991), 153–154.

subsequent opinions of musicologists on these works. It is hoped that their relationship to the later works will be demonstrated with evidence, rectifying the dismissal of their significance. In light of this, the circumstances of the creation of the late two piano triptychs perhaps can be understood more precisely.

Considering that one of the four major piano works from this early period has recently been unearthed — Franck's Op. 7 *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle* was finally discovered and published in 2007 by Heribert Koch — it is finally time to propose a more complete understanding of Franck's compositional style and development in his piano works.

Three 'Periods' of César Franck's Piano Works

Three distinct terms will be frequently used:

'Adolescent' piano works: ≈ 1834–1842

'Early' piano works: ≈ 1842–1848

'Late' piano works: ≈ 1879–1890

These three 'periods' have clear markers in Franck's life both in compositional style and biographical checkpoints. They include all of Franck's solo piano music apart the miniature *Les plaintes d'une poupée* (1865) which will be referenced by name.

The first period, categorised as 'adolescent', starts from Franck's earliest compositions, ranging across numerous genres until 1841 when at the age of 19 César-Auguste Franck composed the opera *Stradella*, assigned with the opus number 33. This first numeration generally includes works that understandably centre on the piano as an instrument, such as works Op. 11 *Deuxième Concerto* for piano and orchestra and the Op. 13 *Première Symphonie à grand orchestre* (of which the manuscript has been lost). There are also solo piano compositions in this period, which will be touched upon at times, but delving in depth into the works of this period will be out of the scope of this thesis.

After having enrolled in 1832, Franck unexpectedly quit the Paris Conservatoire in April 1842. The following year he published his *Trois Trios* with an opus number 1, declaring his aim to restart his cataloguing, possibly with the hope of rebranding himself to the public. This numbering continued until Op. 26 *Les Éolides*, after which no more opus numbers were assigned. Therefore, the 'late' works such as the two solo piano triptychs and *Les Djinns* and *Variations Symphoniques* are without opus numbers. To convolute matters, Joël-Marie Fauquet elucidates how a 'third numbering, handwritten, was established around 1880',[3] reorganising some of the works from this early period. The piano works written in this short timespan (1842–1848) will be described as the 'early' piano works and this thesis will investigate four major solo piano works from this period. Contrary to the proposed grouping of piano works in this thesis, they are usually divided into two groups — 'early' and 'late' — following d'Indy's model which unifies the 'adolescent' and 'early' periods.[4] This, however, clearly ignores Franck's own intentions and, more importantly, their differing styles.

In 1848 Franck married Félicité Desmousseaux and it would not be until the *Prélude, choral et fugue* (1885) that Franck would seriously return to solo piano composition, a gap of almost forty years. This work, the *Prélude, aria et final* (1887), and the miniature *Danse Lente* (1886) are the 'late' solo piano works. *Les Djinns* and *Variations Symphoniques* are significant works for orchestra and piano from this period, covering many important elements of César Franck's style.

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[3] Joël-Marie Fauquet, *César Franck.* (Paris: Fayard, 1999), 845. Wilhelm Mohr provided a cataloguing system in 1942 (FWV = Franck Werke Verzeichnis) that is still sometimes seen in use today. More recently, in 1999, Fauquet provided a different system (CFF = César Franck Fauquet), similar to the FWV system in being grouped by genre but is more complete than the Mohr system.

[4] Heribert Koch, similarly way to Jo-Chi-Lin, in his preface to the *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle* makes no distinction between 'adolescent' and 'early' periods: 'the Piano Trio in F sharp minor (1843) remains the only composition from his first period that is performed from time to time.' César Franck, *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle: pour pianoforte,* ed. Heribert Koch (Köln: Dohr, 2007), 4. This thesis proposes a division of Franck's piano works into three periods. If the whole of his œuvre is considered, there would realistically be at least four distinct periods in Franck's compositional output that also relate comfortably to biographical events. Another example, from a recent album that contains early piano works: 'César Franck wrote his piano works in two separate periods, an early one lasting until 1848, and a late one from 1873 to 1887.' Julia Severus liner note to *César Franck, Early Piano Works* (Naxos, 2014), 2.

Not only are the three delineated periods in this thesis different from d'Indy's distinctions made at the end of his seminal biography,[5] as well as from those created by other commentators, but also the periods discussed here do not cover the entirety of Franck's compositional output. These works are bound by certain compositional characteristics, as we shall later see, while the years 1848–1875 are not labelled because of their lack of solo piano works.

Motivations for the choice of these four works

The first period, with works written between 1834 and 1842, as found in Fauquet's biography:

Première Numérotation[6]
Opus
01
02
03 *Grand rondo* pour piano
04 *Variations sur un thème original* pour piano et orchestre
05 *Variations brillantes sur l'air du Pré aux Clercs « Souvenirs du jeune age »* pour piano et orchestre
06 *Grand Trio* piano, violon, violoncelle
07
08 Variations brillantes sur la ronde favorite de Gustave III pour piano et orchestre
09 *Premier Concerto* pour piano et orchestre
010 *Première Grande Sonate* pour piano
011 *Deuxième Concerto* pour piano et orchestre
012 *Première Grande Fantaisie* pour piano
013 *Première Symphonie* à grand orchestre
014 *Deuxième Fantaisie* pour piano
015 *Deux Mélodies* pour piano.
016 *Deuxième trio* piano, violon, violoncelle Mi b M.
017 *L'Entrée en loge*, I^re^ cantate
018 *Deuxième Sonate* pour piano
019 *Troisième Grande Fantaisie* pour piano
020 *La Vendetta*, 2e cantate
021 *Orphée dans les bois*, 3^e^ cantate
022 *Troisième trio* piano, violon, violoncelle ré m.
023 *Agnès Sorel*, 4^e^ cantate
024
025
026
027
028
029 *Fernand*, scène lyrique, 5^e^ cantate
030 *Loyse de Montfort*, scène lyrique, 6^e^ cantate
031
032
033 *Stradella*, opéra

[5] If we are to draw parallels between Beethoven and Franck, as D'Indy wished, then the 'adolescent' works equivalent would be the undesignated opus works Beethoven created in Bonn, just like Franck, before marking his compositional readiness with his opus 1 piano trios.
[6] Fauquet, *César Franck,* 930.

This list, as can be seen, is so far incomplete. Some of these works, such as the contents of the Op. 012 *Grand Fantaisie,* are known only from Tiersot's comments. This first set of works have been ignored by both the public and literature. Vallas warned us:

> In these childish compositions, commissioned and imposed with the precise intention of easy success by a tyrant father, there is no need to look for originality. In every phrase, rather than the uncertain personality of the child, we find the flavour of 1830, the spirit of Franz Liszt and the pianistic manners of the illustrious virtuoso. It's only natural: the young Hungarian master's influence was too much for his peers to resist. Other pieces here and there hint at knowledge of the works of Weber and Schubert, as well as the early music of Schumann: César-Auguste had certainly heard of this composer, whose important piano pieces had been published before 1835, through his mother's family in Aachen or through his teachers at the Liège Conservatoire.[7]

References to the influence of Schumann on Franck, along with that of Chopin or even parallels to Brahms, will prove to be problematic and will be touched upon later in the thesis.

Norman Demuth insisted that in the *early* and *adolescent* piano works 'the published music shows the insistence of his father on everything the young man did',[8] dissuading the reader from pursuing a search for Franck's innovation in these works. The first piano sonatas of pianist-composers undeniably always attract interest, hence at least a reference is made regarding the *Première Grande Sonate* by biographers. Although Demuth was normally extremely critical of the adolescent and early works, he commented: 'only the *Première Grande Sonate*, written at the age of thirteen, is of any interest [...] The Sonata, however, is different because it shows the usual affinity with its models and is absolutely sure as regards form'.[9] In a similar vein, Alfred Cortot was dismissive of all piano works of the early and adolescent period in his *l'Œuvre Pianistique de César Franck*:

> We will be able, without disrespect or injustice, to quickly pass over these works of Franck's youth [...] They have only a very weak hint of his style and personality and only their documentary interest would lead us to analyse them. It will suffice for us to mention the titles

[7] 'Dans ces compositions enfantines, commandées, imposées dans une intention précise de succès facile, par un père tyran, qu'on ne cherche pas l'originalité. A chaque ligne, plus que la personnalité incertaine de l'enfant s'y manifestent le goût de 1830, l'esprit de Franz Liszt, les manières pianistiques de l'illustre virtuose. C'est très naturel : à l'emprise du jeune Maître hongrois ses collègues ne pouvaient résister. D'autres pièces laissent deviner ça et là la connaissance des œuvres de Weber, de Schubert, ainsi que des premières musiques de Schumann : de ce compositeur, dont d'importantes pièces de piano s'étaient répandues avant 1835, César-Auguste, par sa famille maternelle d'Aix-la-Chapelle ou par ses professeurs du Conservatoire de Liège, avait certainement eu connaissance.' Léon Vallas, *La Véritable Histoire de César Franck,* (Paris: Flammarion, 1955), 15.
[8] Norman Demuth, *César Franck* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1949), 144.
[9] *Ibid*., 143.

> [....] There is every reason to believe that this list of pianistic works from the first period is now definitive.[10]

This dismissal of works from this 'adolescent' period has been the catalyst for their subsequent neglect. Could analysis of these works, which remain almost untouched, provide insight into his compositional development? One does often find an energetic impulse in these works, an exploration and freshness, more influenced by improvisation than meticulously chiselled structures, a component that would benefit some of the early piano works. More recently, Joël-Marie Fauquet's biography *César Franck* provides insights on each of the 'adolescent' works available at the time. While these adolescent piano works have at their core a pursuit for showcasing the performer's technical skill, Fauquet observes an evolution in Franck's compositions for piano throughout this period, culminating in the *Troisième Grande Fantaisie*:

> With this Fantaisie op. 019, Franck went further in exploring the possibilities of colouring the piano. This approach was not unrelated to the progress of instrumental construction and to what Liszt had already learned from it. Like his contemporaries, Franck had a penchant for the brilliance of the extreme high register (here up to F6), but he also knew how to make the middle and low registers sing, employing extensive arpeggios, chordal clusters and tremolo effects. His concern is to remain a musician above all else, and in this he stands a clear distance away from Herz and Pixis.[11]

Considering these works are often dismissed as immature and unimportant show-pieces, this separation from the virtuosos of the time clearly indicates the value Fauquet has for Franck's piano music from this period, a view not often shared among commentators.[12] Some of the works are certainly worth further study, showcasing Franck's fondness for variation form and the

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[10] 'Nous pourrons, sans irrespect comme sans injustice, négliger au cours de cette étude les œuvres de jeunesse […] Elles ne sont que bien faiblement annonciatrices de son style et de sa personnalité et seul un intérêt documentaire nous porterait à les analyser. Il nous suffira d'en mentionner les titres […] Il y a tout lieu de penser qu'ainsi complétée, cette liste des œuvres pianistiques de la première période est désormais définitive.'. Alfred Cortot. *L'Œuvre pianistique de César Franck,* (Paris : Revue Musicale, 1910), 2.

[11] 'Avec cette Fantaisie op. 019, Franck va plus avant dans l'exploration des possibilités de coloration du piano. Ces recherches ne sont pas sans rapport avec les progrès de la facture instrumentale et avec ce que Liszt a su déjà en tirer. Comme ses contemporains, Franck éprouve un penchant pour la brillance de l'extrême aigu (ici jusqu'au fa6), mais il sait aussi faire chanter le médium et le grave, multiplie arpèges, batteries d'accords, effets de tremolo. Son souci est de rester musicien avant tout et, en cela, il se tient nettement à distance de Herz et de Pixis.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 72.

[12] There exists, however, an accomplished recording of some of these adolescent piano works: César Franck, *Franck: Piano Fantasies,* Franceso Bertoldi, Dynamic, 1992, 8007144060954.

reusing of material, as well as a wholly more liberal attitude to modulation and harmony compared to that of piano works written later in the early period.

In 1843, at the age of 20, Franck published his *3 Trios concertants pour piano, violon et violoncelle*, to give their full title, restarting his opus numeration with a designation of Opus 1. These Piano Trios are Franck's most discussed works from this period, ensnaring the attention of musicologists and biographers. Generally, opinions of these works have waned and then improved over the past century, from the first hagiographical biographer Vincent d'Indy:

> We can even observe a certain awkwardness, a certain timidity in the compositions, a defect that sometimes produces monotony and even becomes, in some works, a source of errors that Franck would not have tolerated in his students later. Beethoven, speaking of his *Septet* to the Englishman Potter, told him: "At that time, I didn't know how to compose". Franck could have claimed the same excuse for his works written before 1858.[13]

D'Indy always insisted on comparing Franck to Beethoven, even in this situation where Beethoven had almost a decade more experience than Franck, and by most accounts was more established and compositionally mature. These Piano Trios are sometimes praised by musicologists, particularly in German scholarship, though they have not been universally admired. Norman Demuth observations in 1949 on the trios:

> To perform these works in all seriousness today would be ludicrous if not to say amusing (in the true sense of the word). They are too clearly immature and altogether too much of their period. Nevertheless, we must remember once again that Franck had no French tradition to fall back upon. Chamber music was almost non-existent in France at the time; the German models which he studied were indisputably the best in the world but not in any way suited to the Gallic temperament. We can see, therefore, a not inconsiderable amount of enterprise in these youthful works, but it is more in the construction than in the inspiration or technique. Franck's genius in regard to form makes him a figure of paramount importance, and remembering that both our living authorities deny any influence from either Reicha or Leborne, it cannot be denied that from the first his mind sought out fresh moulds, and in these Trios formulated the structure of the later Symphony and other works.[14]

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[13] 'On peut constater même un certain embarras, une certaine *timidité* dans la composition, défaut qui arrive parfois jusqu'à produire la monotonie et devient même dans quelques œuvres, une source d'erreurs que, plus tard, Franck n'aurait pas tolérées chez ses élèves. Beethoven parlant de son *Septuor* à l'Anglais Potter, lui disait : « A ce moment-là, je ne savais pas composer ». Franck aurait pu alléguer la même excuse pour ses œuvres écrites avant 1858.' Vincent d'Indy, "La Première Manière de César Franck" *Revue De Musicologie 4, no. 5*, (February 1923): 3–4.

[14] Demuth, *César Franck,* 123.

Demuth frequently expressed his general negative opinion on these early works in his biography, stating his limited interest in their value. Referencing Demuth's opinion on the Op. 1 Trios, in 2012 the most recent anglophone biographer, R. J. Stove, overturned this allegation:

> This bizarre verdict cannot be attributed to ignorance of the music on Demuth's part because he proceeds to analyze it in some depth. Indeed, he almost certainly depended on the printed scores for his entire knowledge of the *Trios*; those music lovers who have actually heard the *Trios* in live or recorded performances have never found them ludicrous in any way. The music surprises, and pleases, by repeated revelations of how much its composer was able to achieve when everything seemed to be going against him. The appetite among Parisian audiences for chamber ensembles was not an appetite that necessarily extended to the consumption of markedly serious novelties.[15]

Audiences and performers seem have sided with Stove on this matter in recent years, with several recordings being made of the Piano Trios, including a live recording with Sviatoslav Richter in 1983.[16] Positive opinions of the piano trios are also found in Joël-Marie Fauquet's 1999 biography. It is fair to say that these works have garnered not only interest but also appreciation, whereas the solo piano works from this period have not gathered such attention from critics or musicologists. These progenies have had a seemingly immutable position of disinterest among musicians and the public alike, with biographies either failing to mention most of these works, or simply containing a pithy remark on a selected piano work, for example in Stove we can only find a description of the three hand section of the *Églogue*.[17] Once again it is in the Fauquet that we find descriptions and valuable insights on all the 'early piano' works available at the time.

To confuse matters even further, Franck created a new numbering system around 1876, removing some works and shifting others. Some works remain in their previous allocated position while others are moved or removed from the listing. This third numeration is as follows:[18]

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[15] R. J. Stove, *César Franck: His Life and Times* (Plymouth: The Scarecrow Press, INC, 2012), 42.
[16] Another recommended recording: César Franck, *César Franck Complete Chamber Music,* (Cyprus, 2012), CYP4637.
[17] Stove, *César Franck: His Life and Times,* 51.
[18] A detailed comparison of all three numerations can be found in: Fauquet, *César Franck,* 930–932.

Opus	
1	*Trois Trios* pour piano, violon et violoncelle
2	*Quatrième Trio* pour piano, violon et violoncelle
3	*Églogue* pour piano
4	*Duo* à 4 mains sur l'air *God save the King*
5	*Caprice* pour piano
6	Andantino [*sic*] pour violon et piano
7	*Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle* pour piano
8	*Quatre Mélodies* de Schubert transcrites pour piano seul
9	*Ballade* pour piano en 3 parties [sic]
10	*Ruth*, Églogue biblique pour solos chœur et orchestre.
11	*Trois Offertoires* solos et chœur
12	*Messe à 3 voix* soli chœurs et orchestre
13	[Sept] *Mélodies* [pour chant et piano]
14	Chants de l'Église harmonisés à 3 et 4 parties avec accompagnement d'orgue [*sic*] ; 1re partie : Messes ; 2e partie: Hymnes ; 3e Chants pour les saluts
15	Fantaisie sur des airs [*sic*] polonais pour piano seul *Six Pièces* pour le Grand Orgue
16	Fantaisie [en Ut M.]
17	Grande Pièce symphonique
18	Prélude, fugue et variation [pour orgue] le même arrangé pour harmonium et piano
19	Pastorale
20	Prière
21	Final
22	*Rédemption*, poème symphonie en 2 parties pour soli, chœurs et orchestre
23	*Cinq pièces* pour harmonium
24	Quasi Marcia pour harmonium
25	*Les Béatitudes*, grand oratorio pour solis, chœurs et orchestre
26	*Les Éolides*

There are some notable alterations between the second (started in 1842) and third 'revised' numbering systems (1876) for the four piano works focused on in this thesis:

Première Églogue	-	*Églogue*
Premier Grand Caprice	-	*Caprice*
Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle	-	[no alteration]
Première Ballade pour piano	-	*Ballade* pour piano en 3 parties

It should be noted that, along with his middle name Auguste, César Franck reduced the ostentatious titles and simplified them.[19] We are also unaware of any more églogues or caprices for solo piano, so the titles became more fitting in retrospect.

The solo piano pieces excluded in the revision, but which were originally given an opus number, are:

- Op. 11 *Première Fantaisie* sur des motifs de Gulistan de Dalayrac
- Op. 12 *Deuxième Fantaisie* sur l'air et le virelay « Le point du jour » de Gulistan
- Op. 13 *Fantaisie*
- Op. 16 *Trois Petits Riens*

[19] 'Symboliquement, César, en rompant avec son père, vient de quitter Auguste.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 204.

It is easy not to include these works as a focal point for the detailed examination in this thesis as Franck distanced himself from them by his own omission of them in this third renumeration. Biographers have questioned the reasoning for this change of opus numeration:

> Was it Franck's intention, which is quite possible, to discard some of the early piano pieces (written under authoritarian paternal pressure) as unworthy of inclusion in his artistic output?... and yet he left other pieces (Duo on *God save the King*, and *Souvenir[s] d'Aix-la-Chapelle* for piano) which must hardly have been superior to these... we shall never know.[20]

The above-mentioned Fantasies Op. 11 and Op. 12 are not on original themes and their purpose appears perfunctory.[21] Op. 13 has yet to be unearthed.[22] Opus 16 features 'a diminutive title, *Trois Petits Riens*, which seems to have been borrowed from Mozart's ballet. These duettino, waltz and nocturnal pieces — "Le Songe" — are part of the aesthetics of salon music'.[23]

For a similar reason the Schubert song transcriptions Op. 8 *Quatre Mélodies* and the Op. 15 *Fantaisie sur deux airs polonais* have been excluded from focus in this investigation,[24] the former being 'imitations of Liszt',[25] and possibly 'to take advantage of all the trends in the musical movement',[26] while the latter is 'a mediocre work',[27] a Lisztean setting with the same theme as Chopin's opus 13 *Grand Fantaisie*. Of the solo piano works from this period never assigned an

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[20] 'Franck eut-il, ce qui est fort possible, l'intention de répudier une partie des premiers morceaux de piano (écrits sous l'autoritaire pression paternelle), comme indignes de figurer dans sa production artistique?... et cependant il y laissait subsister d'autres pièces (Duo sur le *God save the King*, et *Souvenir[s] d'Aix-la-Chapelle* pour piano) qui ne devaient guère être supérieures à celles-là..., c'est ce que l'on ne pourra jamais savoir.' Vincent d'Indy, *César Franck* (Paris: Félix Àlcan, 1906), 104. Considering d'Indy, along with the other pupils, were the closest link we have to Franck's personal life and intentions, it is unlikely that we will ever come to a satisfactory reason for this renumbering. Also, d'Indy likely never became acquainted with *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle*.

[21] 'The three-act *opéra-comique Gulistan* (or *Le Hulla de Samarande*) was the most important of Dalayrac's later operas. It was premiered at the Opéra-Comique at Paris in 1805 and was performed until 1829. The opera later was re-scored by Adolphe Adam. Franck was inspired by the revival on 10 August 1844, and produced three works based on the opera, including two piano fantasies, opus 11 and opus 12, and a duet for piano and violin, op. 14. These three pieces were all composed in 1844. Both piano works were published by S. Richault in the same year.' Jo-Chi Lin, "From Virtuoso to Master: César Franck as a Composer of Solo Piano Music". (D.M.A. diss., Austin, Texas: The University of Texas at Austin, 2000), 68. It appears Franck, or Franck's insistent father, was capitalising on the popularity of writing fantasies on popular operas when composing these works.

[22] 'On ne sait rien de la Fantaisie opus 13 annoncée dans le catalogue des œuvres de Franck imprimé au dos de plusieurs autres compositions parues à l'époque, pas même si elle a été gravée.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 162.

[23] Fauquet, *César Franck,* 163.

[24] Jo-Chi Lin argues for two reasons that could discourage revival of these works today: 'The first relates to the fact that Franck had extraordinarily large hands […] Secondly, the fact that many of Franck's early piano works are based on pre-existing melodies poses an obstacle to modern audiences, who generally demand something familiar.' Lin, "From Virtuoso to Master: César Franck as a Composer of Solo Piano Music", 131.

[25] Cortot, *L'Œuvre Pianistique de César Franck,* 3.

[26] 'bien décidé à profiter de toutes les tendances du courant musical'. Fauquet, *César Franck,* 157.

[27] *Ibid.,* 162.

opus number there is a *Polka* (ca 1848), also arranged for four hands, a short dance 'though written in light-hearted vein, the pieces bear the unmistakable hallmark of Franck's characteristic style.'[28] It is unclear why Jack Werner considered the work unmistakably Franckian: it is a short work in rondo form with many repetitions of material, while the piano writing itself has more of a reliance on the interest of contrast of articulation than one would be used to in César Franck's piano writing from any period.

The justification made in this chapter of the exclusion of works not based on original themes or discarded by Franck, there remain four solo piano works:

Églogue pour piano
Caprice pour piano
Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle pour piano
Ballade pour piano en 3 parties

Serendipitously, though not unsurprisingly, these remaining piano works bear striking similarities to one another. Before linking them to the late two piano triptychs: *Prélude, choral et fugue* and the *Prélude, aria et final*, this thesis will look at several stylistic features from this early piano period.

Since there will mostly be references to piano works written between 1842 and 1846, a period in which Franck was assigning his own opus numbers, the second numbering system will be used. When referencing works between 1834 and 1842 (first numbering and the 'adolescent' period) Joël–Marie Fauquet's system of adding a 0 as a prefix will be employed.[29]

[28] César Franck, *Polka,* ed. Jack Werner (London: M. S. M. Music Publishers, 1977), 1.
[29] For example, in Franck's first numeration, the *Deuxième Fantaisie* (ca 1836) for piano was labelled Op. 14, whereas in Fauquet's CFF cataloguing it is labelled Op. 014, thus separating it from the *Deuxième Fantaisie* (1844) Op. 12.

Written Reception of Franck's Piano Works

Biographical

Literature on these four piano works is extremely limited, especially when compared with the vast quantity written on the two triptychs, to the extent where it is not enough to consider it simply a different period of Franck, but a forgotten one.[30] To date little exists in the way of detailed analysis and almost everything written about these works in the form of passing commentaries found in biographies. The most prominent are the following:

Vincent D'Indy (1851–1931) was the first to attract attention to the works from this neglected period, not just in his influential biography, but in his *Selected Piano Compositions* (1922): 'The pieces comprised in the present collection give a virtually complete idea of Franck's quality as a piano composer'.[31] D'Indy spoke of three of the four works selected for this study and the preface includes short details on each piece. Regarding the Op. 3 *Églogue* he writes that it 'gives place (especially in the second part) to some novel experiments in piano technique – evidence of which we find in his later compositions'[32], though there is no further clarification on what specifically he was referring to. His preface to the *Premier Grand Caprice* provides a brief description of structural and rhythmic features before dismissing the work as 'chiefly to lovers of virtuosity'.[33] The lengthy preface to the *Ballade* contains the germ of the undertaking of this investigation, as well as being the most significant information on these works.[34]

Julian Tiersot (1857–1936), a prominent musicologist and organ student of Franck, despite his insightful biographical and archival research glosses over the early piano works in *César Franck* (1922) with a dismissive remark: 'purely virtuoso compositions, in the style of the day, and quite futile. It is plain that he was still groping his way.'[35]

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[30] This is immediately obvious when perusing through Timothy Flynn's *César Franck: An Annotated Bibliography.* (New York: Pentagon Press, 2018).
[31] Vincent d'Indy, with a translation by Charles Fonteyn Manney, *Selected Piano Compositions* (New York: Dover Publications, 1922), xxx.
[32] *Ibid.,* xxxi.
[33] *Ibid.,* xxxii.
[34] See footnote 1.
[35] Julien Tiersot, trans. Frederick H. Martens, "César Franck". *The Musical Quarterly*, (January 1923) 28.

Alfred Cortot (1877–1962) published the encouragingly titled *L'Œuvre pianistique de César Franck* (1910) which chronologically passes through some known piano works. The opus numberings and dates of composition of a few adolescent works are solely stated before moving to the early piano works. Cortot is dismissive: '*Caprice* and *Églogue* are the outcome of a most convinced Lisztian feeling'. He finds the *Caprice* 'the most individual [caractéristique] of this series of piano pieces',[36] tantalising the reader while presenting no further information for the basis of this opinion, nor presenting us with a recording of the work. As for the *Ballade* and *Souvenirs*, there is only a single sentence, solely with regards to issues of their publication.

Léon Vallas's (1879–1956) distinguished *La véritable histoire de César Franck* (1955) provides only publishing data on the early piano works but offers insightful details on Franck's compositional habits and character with the chapters at the end of his book.

While Norman Demuth (1898–1968) includes scathing critique on the works from this period in his biography *César Franck* (1949), there are many musical examples from which he draws information on the stylistic traits of Franck. His *French Piano Music* (1959) only speaks of the late piano works in detail.

After d'Indy it would not be until Joël-Marie Fauquet's *César Franck* (1999) that a biography would delve into specific detail on the early piano works.[37] As well as an extensive appendix, Fauquet provides valuable insight into all works available to him at the time. He is more optimistic with regards to their quality: 'These two pieces, [*Caprice* and *Ballade*] like *Églogue* (Hirten Gedicht) op. 3, deserve the attention that d'Indy, as a first, gave them'.[38]

As an example of the representation of contemporary public opinion on Franck piano works from this period one could see *Guide to the pianist's repertoire* (2014) to get a tantalising

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[36] 'un Grand Caprice, à notre gré l'œuvre la plus caractéristique des compositions pianistiques de cette série.' Alfred Cortot, *L'Œuvre pianistique de César Franck.* (Paris : Revue Musicale, 1910), 3.

[37] 'The importance of Joël-Marie Fauquet's collection of Franck's correspondence (1998) and his biography (1999) cannot be overstated, although neither book has been much noticed in Anglophone media'. Stove, *César Franck: His Life and Times,* 317.

[38] 'Ces deux morceaux, comme l'Eglogue (Hirten Gedicht) op. 3, méritent une attention que d'Indy a été le premier à leur accorder'. Fauquet, *César Franck,* 148.

snippet: [on Op. 010, Op. 014 and *Trois petits riens*] 'The young Franck shows a few signs of later greatness',[39] though providing little indication as to what they may be.

None of the above–mentioned writers had access to Op. 7 *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle*,[40] but there are astute observations made by Heribert Koch in the *Interpretive remarks* section of the preface to its only publication with regards to form and its thematic material, including identifying a 'chorale' theme.[41] It would be interesting to have heard some of the biographers comment on the Op. 7 *Souvenirs* and, considering it stands apart from the other works from this period in many regards, determine whether they would be as similarly dismissive in their critique.[42]

Theses on the early piano works

The following sources paint a picture of the general stage of research on Franck's early piano works.

Jo-Chi Lin's thesis "From Virtuoso to Master: César Franck as a Composer of Solo Piano Music" (2000) is divided into two chapters: 'Historical Background and the Musical Environment' and 'Analytical of Each Work'. The score for *Souvenir[s] d'Aix-la-Chapelle* is listed as 'not found',[43] and so is not included in the analysis. The goal of the thesis was to trace stylistic changes from his earliest compositions to his latest works, to explain influences which may have contributed to his change. These include education, career, religion, his contemporaries and the

[39] Maurice Hinson and Wesley Roberts, *Guide to the pianist's repertoire*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 395.
[40] 'The first printed edition by Schuberth (Leipzig, no date) is not only listed in the whole older and more recent Franck-related literature as being out of stock. Obviously, none of the recent or earlier authors ever got hold of a copy, as all of them give a title that slightly differs from the printed edition: *Souvenir* (singular!) *d'Aix-la-Chapelle*.' Koch, *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle,* 4. Koch is not entirely correct here, as some English translations have mistranslated the word – Cortot mentions the work in *L'œuvre Pianistique de César Franck* (1910) on page 6, despite d'Indy's earlier incorrect appellation.
[41] *Ibid.,* 6.
[42] One such attitude to the other works: 'During this time of withdrawal César was able to look back without excessive regret over the productions of his childhood, adolescence, and early manhood. A critical sense was never one of his strong qualities; yet he became fully aware of the banality, the conventional character, of the whole of his pianistic output written according to his father's prescription.' Vallas, *La Véritable Histoire de César Franck,* 96–97. It would be difficult to argue for the conventionality of *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle*. The work is not mentioned by Vallas.
[43] Lin, "From Virtuoso to Master: César Franck as a Composer of Solo Piano Music", 8.

milieu of Parisian musical life, though while the biographical account and the analysis of each work from the early period is informative, there is no comparative analysis of technique between works that would provide insight for Franck's output as a whole. This leads to a method of analysis detailing the keys, textures and pianistic techniques of each piece, to be viewed from a solitary perspective but unfortunately not developing into an overview of Franck's compositional technique, nor detailing the many stylistic features that span the various works. The conclusion of the thesis reflects upon the musical climate:

> The two periods of Franck's piano music[44] reflect two different musical milieus. The works of his first period were inspired by musical life of Paris. French opera and the music of Hummel, Beethoven, Schubert, and Liszt strongly influenced Franck's early works. The works of the second period, regarded as his masterpieces, mostly reveal Franck's own characteristics. Moreover, Franck's large compositions of the late years reflect the influence of the music of Bach, especially his organ works.'

'Franck's own characteristics' are unfortunately not referenced in concrete terms. Lin refrains from referring to Franck's commonly cited compositional elements, such as structural or pianistic style or his economic use of material, which can in fact be found in the early works. Jo-Chi Lin's thesis had a similar goal to the research questions here, but however close it was to finding some correlation between the periods, it abstained from drawing any strong relationship and lacked access to the important Op. 7 *Souvenirs*.

Dennis Cranford's "Harmonic and Contrapuntal Techniques in the Late Keyboard Works of César Franck" (1992) is an effective and highly elaborated analysis of the late keyboard works of Franck (with a focus on the two triptychs and the *Trois chorals*). It includes many intricate compositional features which will be referenced in this thesis:

> this passage illustrates two important aspects of Franck's technique: (1) It is often the connection between elements that affords the opportunity for adjustment. (2) The goal, often diatonic, is important as a controlling factor in determining the logic of the progression. With so many variables, almost any key would have been possible. Yet, through the maze of adjustments, Franck chose to maintain the original diatonic goal. Said another way, a chromatic surface may elaborate closely-related large-scale relationships.[45]

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[44] Lin divided Franck's piano music into two groups, not separating between 'adolescent' and 'early'.
[45] Dennis R. Cranford, "Harmonic and contrapuntal techniques in the late keyboard works of César Franck". (Ph.D. diss., Denton, Texas: Graduate Council of the University of North Texas, 1992), 47.

Or, this important distinction described in a third way, in many places we see 'a quite conventional progression [...] the principle of conventional progression with chromatic alteration is present'[46] — confirming a long-held suspicion that even Franck's late works are conventional in their cadences and large-scale structure, with elaborated and unremitting modulations — a potential hidden link between the early and late works. Unfortunately there are no references to the early piano works in Cranford's search for Franck's characteristics in his keyboard compositions, opening the path for another researcher to find the links between them. Similarly to the Jo-Chi Lin paper, it is only inclusive of the works in question, with no mention of other works outside Franck's late œuvre, nor of his contemporaries or of his earlier works.[47] This illumination of Franck's 'stylistic' tendencies, though well fleshed out and convincingly presented, are deduced solely from the last ten years of his life.

Stephanie Gouin's "Teleology in César Franck's *Prélude, Choral et Fugue*" (2007) is another example of how scholarship on Franck neglects any piano works written before the composer had turned sixty years old; his earliest works mentioned are the *Six Pièces* (1860) for organ. Though, similarly to the Lin, there are snippets of illuminating gems on César Franck's style. Nonetheless it is peculiar to have a stimulating display of Franck's compositional transformation from a single germ, derived from a teleological perspective and the processes behind it, without references to his earlier piano compositions. Some of the mannerisms found in this work can be traced back to other works, an understanding that would be achieved through a more holistic approach.

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[46] *Ibid.,* 58. Stephanie Gouin, among others, also agrees with this analysis of Franck's harmonic language: 'Franck uses non-functional harmonies in order to chromatically connect functional chords, creating unexpected sonorities.' Stephanie Gouin, "Teleology in César Franck's Prélude, Choral et Fugue". (D.M.A. diss., London, Western Ontario: University of Western Ontario, 2017), 111.

[47] Cranford comments on his aims: 'The primary goal is to identify the salient characteristics of each piece; a secondary goal is to identify common harmonic and contrapuntal aspects of Franck's style' Cranford "Harmonic and contrapuntal techniques in the late keyboard works of César Franck", i.

The recent *Franck Annotated Bibliography* (2019) by Timothy Flynn is an indispensable vade mecum for the César Franck researcher. Though sometimes sources are outdated, when the 'bell' theme in the *choral* in PCF is said to be compared to Wagner's Parsifal as originating in Jo-Chi Lin, a link made already over a century ago in d'Indy, and indeed every subsequent biography, as well as proposing looking at d'Indy list of works from 1909 for a complete list of Franck's works, despite the far more precise and developed system of Fauquet (to say nothing of the earlier Mohr cataloguing). In the introduction all sources cited are translations. Flynn compartmentalises and describes 235 sources (one is erroneously not assigned a number).

Articles

Henry Colles, though writing in the *Musical Times* in 1915 before many of the major biographies or research provides in his short articles a wealth of insight into Franckian style unattained by many of the more substantial writings of that century. Other early explorations of the composer's musical style and contributions for English readers (both from *The Musical Times*) include Cecil Gray's article "Concerning César Franck" (1915) which is somewhat of a rebuttal to Colles's abovementioned study; and Sydney Grew's article entitled "The Third Period of César Franck," which investigates the various important works from the period of 1872 to 1890 named by d'Indy as the so-called 'third period'.

Generally, however, articles from Franck's peak of popularity tend to focus on works from his late period, particularly his symphony.[48] After the excitement for all things Franck reached its summit in 1922, the centenary of César Franck's death in 1990 produced a collection of fascinating articles in *César Franck et son temps* (1991) in 5 languages, ranging from precise elements of Franck's harmonic style (Wegener) to the change of Franck's style and reception

[48] Unique insight into Franck's symphony was given recently in a presentation by Simon Trezise: 'César Franck's Symphony in Performance and its fall from Grace' (2022) and Robert James Stove's presentation 'His Master's Voice: Franck on Recordings'. Conference: *César Franck and His Legacy,* (December 10, 2022), accessed January 10, 2022, www.cesarfranck2022.com/proceedings.

(Fauquet). Unfortunately, this promising compilation was not enough to reignite the interest of the public to the degree that was felt at the beginning of the 20th century.

The bicentenary of Franck's birth in 2022 sparked some curiosity amongst musicologists, but concerts and festivals with an emphasis on César Franck were disappointingly lacking outside of France and Belgium, displaying that the appetite for Franck's music was too weak to draw in a large public. There have been, however, a selection of albums that have been released in 2022 which include a variety of useful album liner notes, many of which present the same common perception of Franck perpetuated by d'Indy. It is unsurprising that most of the booklets tend to draw upon the character oppositions that will be touched upon later.

Stylistic interactions: connections with other composers

Contrary to what d'Indy would advise against, in this chapter we will look at some similarities between Franck's work and others of the period, particularly some that are not mentioned by other writers, with an emphasis on the works Franck was acquainted with at this time.

Lalo commented: 'It's hard enough doing my own kind of music and making sure that it's good enough. If I started to do someone else's I'm sure it would be appalling'.[49] The young César Franck's early style influences are not as clear as they at first seem to be, not quite wholly his own, not quite in keeping with the flair of the time. His music has held an enigmatic position in the Western Classical music canon: 'César Franck died two hundred years ago, and never has he seemed more mysterious',[50] in no area more so than his compositional 'idiosyncrasies' and what we consider 'Franckian'. What is important to note is that links of Franck to other

[49] Hugh Macdonald, "Lalo, Edouard(-Victoire-Antoine)", *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed 6 March 2024.www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grove/Lalo.
[50] 'César Franck est mort il y a cent ans, et jamais il n'a paru plus mystérieux'. Michel Stockhem, "La Sonate de César Franck : interprétation et tradition", *César Franck et son temps : actes du colloque de l'Université de Liège*, (Bruxelles : Soc. Belge de Musicologie. 1991), 145.

composers are the result of analysis and assumptions on the part of writers, as very little has been said by Franck himself:

> The letters tell us little about his musical tastes. Nor do they shed any light on Franck's alleged spiritual and aesthetic affiliation with Beethoven. The "Wagnerism" of the author of *Les Béatitudes*, so often invoked by biographers, which was late and distanced, does not appear at any time in the correspondence. One will look in vain for any trace of Franck's indebted admiration for the works of Liszt and Schubert. What is more, Bach's name is absent from these letters. This absence reinforces the somewhat idealised character of the link that has been attempted to be established between the two "fathers of music" since the end of the 19th century.[51]

D'Indy frequently calls upon the spirit of Beethoven to substantiate Franck's greatness, 'whom he had studied in depth and whose tradition he continued'.[52] Franck's first published work from the new numeration, the Opus 1 *Trois Trios,* are linked by d'Indy to the almighty from Bonn:

> The first trio in F# marks a step in the history of music; for it really is the first composition which, following the principle indicated by Beethoven in his last quartets, establishes frankly — one might almost say naïvely — the great cyclic form[53]

In his *Selected Piano Compositions* (1922), and the article *La Première Manière de César Franck* (1923), d'Indy provides a valuable source of insight into three of the piano works studied in this thesis and the circumstances of their conception. He speaks of Franck's influences:

> In addition to Méhul, Gluck, Bach and Beethoven, all subjects of constant admiration, the master cherished certain intimate melodists such as Schumann and above all Schubert, whose Lieder were an ever-new source of joy for him; he even had a rather inexplicable affection for some of Cherubini's works, as well as for the *Préludes* and *Chants* of Ch. Valentin Alkan, whom he considered to be a 'poet of the piano[54]

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[51] Les Lettres ne nous en apprennent guère avantage sur ses goûts musicaux. Pas plus qu'elles n'éclairent la prétendue filiation spirituelle et esthétique de Franck avec Beethoven. Tant de fois invoqué par les biographes, le « wagnérisme » de l'auteur des *Béatitudes,* qui fut tardif et distancié, n'apparaît à aucun moment dans la correspondance. On cherchera en vain la trace de l'admiration débitrice éprouvée par Franck pour les œuvres de Liszt et de Schubert. Qui plus est, le nom de Bach est absent de ces feuillets. Une absence qui renforce le caractère un peu idéaliste du lien qu'on s'est efforcé d'établir entre les deux « pères de la musique » depuis la fin du XIX^e^ siècle. Joël-Marie Fauquet, *Correspondance*, (Sprimont: Mardaga, 1999), 8–10.

[52] D'Indy, *La Première Manière de César Franck,* 3.

[53] D'Indy, *Selected Piano Compositions,* xii.

[54] 'Outre Méhul, Gluck, Bach, Beethoven, sujets constants de ses admirations, le maître chérissait certains mélodistes intimes comme Schumann et surtout Schubert dont les lieder étaient pour lui une source de joies toujours nouvelles ; il avait même une assez inexplicable affection pour quelques œuvres de Cherubini comme aussi pour les Préludes et pour les Chants de Ch. Valentin Alkan qu'il considérait comme un « poète du piano ».' D'Indy, *César Franck,* 71.

His later chapter *Predilections and influences* referenced a dozen composers and warns against comparisons of themes.[55]

Even those born after Franck are not safe from sweeping appropriation. Demuth's biography *César Franck* (1949), over forty years after d'Indy's and the first by an English author, is strewn with parallels between the music of Franck and Brahms. These similarities are laced between blunt criticisms of Franck's early works. Demuth finds Brahms' voice in the 2nd Trio from Op. 1, with an extract in which 'now and again we think we are listening to Brahms: but otherwise there is nothing to note except a freer use of the instruments, in imitation. Performance today would be intolerable',[56] despite the trio being written when Brahms was eight years old. Later Demuth writes, almost solely in such a regard: 'The connection with other composers is most interesting, for it was undoubtedly Schumann who governed his piano thought, not Beethoven, whose works he studied with the greatest care.'[57] It becomes more curiously tenuous when Demuth writes later:

> No study of Brahms ever mentions Franck, and it is extremely unlikely that Brahms, when he started as a composer, had ever heard of him, far less of his music. Perhaps Liszt had mentioned Franck's name [...] it signifies only to the extent that the whole thing reveals interesting individuality on the part of a young Belgian composer.[58]

However unwarranted this linking to Brahms is in a biography on Franck,[59] the association still lingers today, due perhaps to the overwhelming focus on the 'form' in Franck's music.[60] Though

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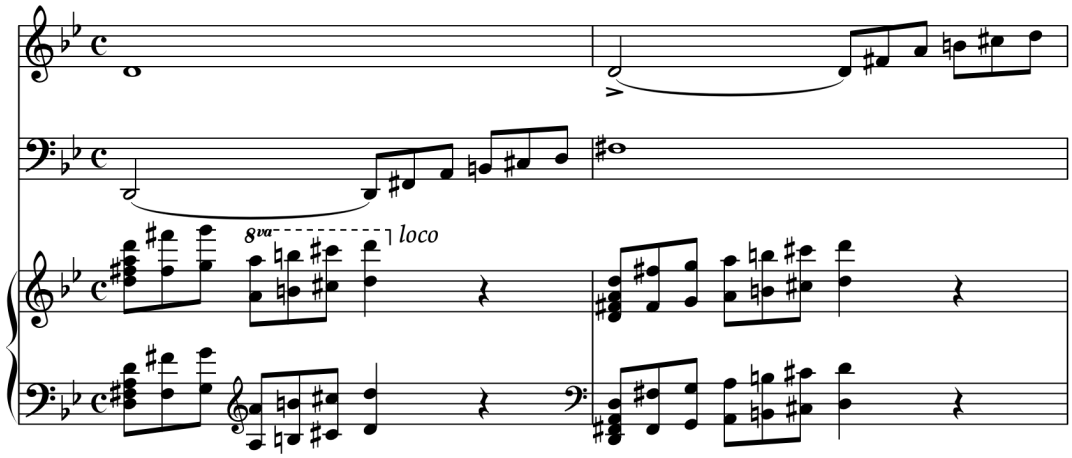
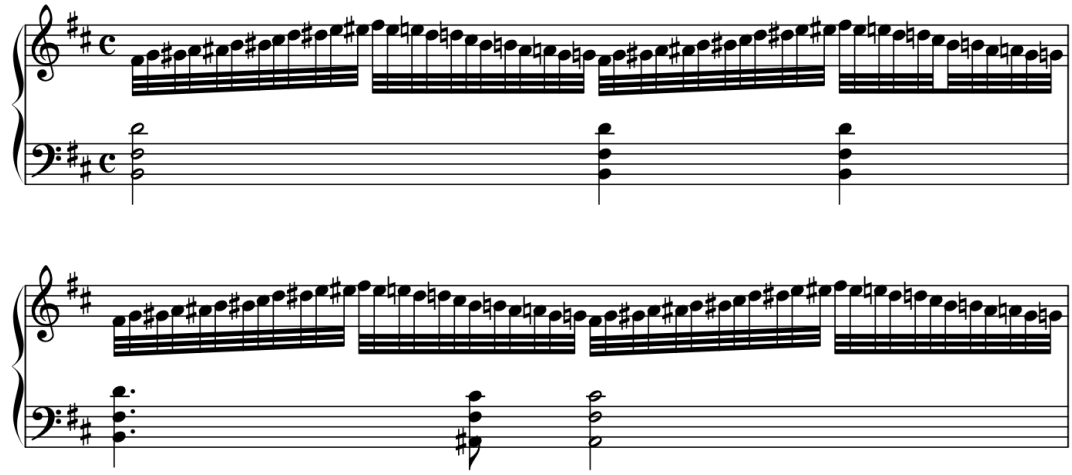
[55] 'lorsque j'aurai dit tout cela, aurai-je mieux fait connaître le style de mon maître que par les précédentes considérations? Je ne le pense pas, et je ne crois pas, au surplus, qu'il faille attacher aux ressemblances mélodiques ou autres une importance extrême'. *Ibid.,* 73.
[56] *Ibid.,* 127.
[57] *Ibid.,* 124.
[58] Demuth, *César Franck,* 124. Recently François de Médicis highlighted similarities between Franck's Quintet and other German composers, particularly Brahms, in his bicentenary lecture: *Searching for the Quintessential Franck: French Reception and Stylistic Affiliations of the Piano Quintet in f minor*.
www.cesarfranck2022.com/proceedings.
[59] Laurance Davies two decades later would also make a similar comparison, but comments 'We have already mentioned the name of Brahms, yet it is imperative to make clear that no mutual influences could have existed between the composers'. Laurence Davies, *César Franck*, (London: Orion Publishing Co., 1973), 71.
[60] 'It has been Franck's sad fate to win repeated praise for the wrong reasons. He is often considered to be significant primarily for his so-called cyclic form, as if that had the slightest connection with the reasons a composer attains immortality. Sibelius took satisfaction from realizing that nobody ever put up a statue to a critic. He could equally well have said that nobody ever put up a statue to a structural innovator' Stove, *César Franck: His Life and Times,* ix.

this judgement can be now considered misinformed, Demuth's pervasive sharp tongue often yields to revealing and precise criticisms, especially when considering Franck's compositional style, which we will see later.

Demuth, among others, referred to some works as having an influence on the young César Franck:



Example 1: Piano Trio, Op. 1 No. 2, (i), bars 57–58. What Demuth describes as 'now and again we feel like we are listening to Brahms'.



Example 2: Charles-Valentin Alkan, Op. 15 *Trois Morceaux de le Genre Pathétique,* No. 2 *Le Vent,* bars 3–4. A work specifically mentioned by Demuth. Certainly, the chromatic figuration is similar to Liszt's *Transcendental Étude* No. 12 *Chasse-neige*, but the only connection here to Franck's compositional style could be the wide spreads in the bass.[61]

As for Brahms's influence we see d'Indy mention 'Ce fut au cours de sa cinquante-sixième année que César Franck osa penser à la composition d'un quatuor pour archets ; et encore, en cette année 1888 où nous remarquions avec surprise, étalées sur son piano, les partitions des quatuors de Beethoven, de Schubert et même de Brahms'. D'Indy, *César Franck,* 165. In the manuscripts offered by Franck's son George to Arthur Coquard listed by Fauquet, only Brahms' *Valses à 4 mains* is listed (though this list is incomplete). For more see: Fauquet, *César Franck,* 945.

[61] 'Alkan wrote some charmingly deft things like *Le Vent* from "3 Morceaux dans le genre pathétique" and a *Scherzettino* from the "Fourth Suite". These reveal the source of much of Franck's wide stretches and leaps, and it

Vallas' influential biography, *César Franck*, was successful in its time for loosening the grip of Beethoven on Franck as projected by d'Indy, and as general appreciation for Schubert had grown in the 20th Century, so too have the links between the music of Franck and Schubert, as promoted more recently by Fauquet.[62]

Another forty years later — a curious time period similar to the gap in Franck's piano outputs and between the important d'Indy and Vallas biographies — Fauquet's monumental 1000-page *César Franck* (1999) contains a vast wealth of new research, including a new catalogue and a rich annex.[63] It includes a chapter entitled '*Beethoven ou Schubert*' in which once again d'Indy's voice was countermanded, with an inclination to connect Franck's music again to Schubert:

> But what matters to us is that in 1844, the year marked by illness, Franck was also in his year of Schubert. The young musician's inclination for "François" Schubert was not new. We saw him reveal to the Parisians the Trio No. 2 opus 100 as early as 1837 when it was mainly the "melodies" that were in vogue. This inclination becomes more apparent considering César-Auguste was meeting Chrétien Urhan at Saint-Vincent-de-Paul, the one who Ernest Legouvé in his memoirs assures us was Schubert's introducer in France.[64]

Could this Schubert trio feature some of the influences Fauquet was referring to? There is a resemblance in theme (extracts 3 & 4), first reaching a third, then a fifth, as well as the imitation in the strings on the first beat on the high note. Franck likely drew on Schubert's theme and texture of his development in this trio to create a large-scale movement. Considering Franck

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is likely that Franck developed his phenomenal spread through practice at Alkan's studies.' Norman Demuth, *French Piano Music*, (London: Museum Press, 1959), 31.

[62] 'Nous ne percevons plus aujourd'hui les œuvres de Schubert « comme de vastes improvisations, génialement inspirées il est vrai, plutôt que comme des œuvres véritablement construites et organisées » […] Franck continuateur de Beethoven ou continuateur de Schubert ? La question mérite d'être posée. Car si la raison, à travers le dogme propagé par le Cours de composition musicale de d'Indy, a tiré Franck vers Beethoven, l'oreille, elle, perçoit souvent de façon plus évidente dans la musique de Franck la résonance bouleversante d'un vécu sonore qui jusque-là n'avait appartenu qu'a Schubert.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 159–160.

[63] Although Cranford comments half a decade earlier was sceptical on the utility of a cataloguing system as it 'is almost superfluous because of the limited number of major works.' Cranford, "Harmonic and contrapuntal techniques in the late keyboard works of César Franck", 7.

[64] 'Mais ce qui nous importe est que 1844, année marquée par la maladie, soit aussi pour Franck l'année Schubert. L'inclination du jeune musicien pour « François » Schubert ne date pas d'hier. Nous l'avons vu révéler aux Parisiens le *2e Trio* opus 100 dès 1837 alors que ce sont principalement les « mélodies » qui ont la vogue. Ce penchant devient donc apparent au moment où César-Auguste est même de rencontrer à Saint-Vincent-de-Paul celui dont Ernest Legouvé, dans ses souvenirs, assure qu'il est l'introducteur de Schubert en France, Chrétien Urhan'. Fauquet, *César Franck,* 156–157.

played this trio in his youth, and that cyclic form was employed in both Schubert's trio[65] and Franck's Op. 1 Piano Trio No. 1,[66] it makes a strong case for the influence of Schubert on the young César Franck.[67]

Antonin Reicha (1770–1836) is a name that should be mentioned as well, being the young Franck's teacher for eleven months before Reicha's death in May 1836.[68] This influence is often cited, but to Jo Chi-Lin's dismay:

> Reicha was a man of cosmopolitan background and outlook, which may explain his liberal mind and the experimental nature of his music, such as his attempt at polytonality. Vallas states that the elements that Reicha influenced most in Franck's music are rhythms and key changes. However, Vallas does not indicate how he did this.[69]

Such observations confirm the relevance of this research. Franck's piano teacher at the conservatoire, Joseph-Guillaume Zimmerman (1785–1836), is also frequently mentioned, though not specifically to Franck's compositional output. Zimmerman also produced *Encyclopédie du Pianiste Compositeur* (1840) just before the start of Franck's early period in 1842, which will be referenced later when certain techniques apply to the early piano works.

The following are similarities between Franck's early and adolescent works with Schubert:

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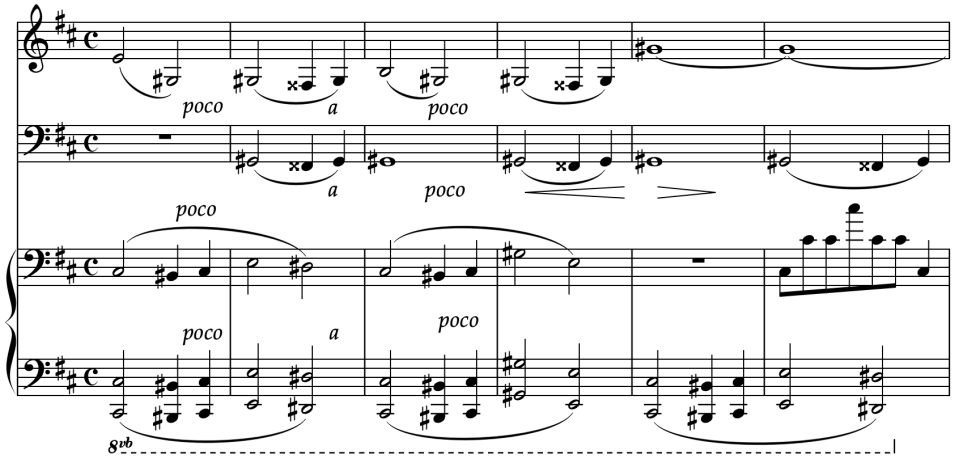
[65] 'Beyond the 'Wanderer' Fantasy (his most celebrated cyclic work and highly influential later for composers such as Schumann and Liszt) and the C major Violin Fantasy, the only other clear example of cyclicism in Schubert's output is the Piano Trio No. 2 in Eb, Op.100 (1827).' Benedict Taylor, *Mendelssohn, time and memory: the romantic conception of cyclic form*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 40.

[66] 'A reading of the 1st Trio convinces us that the cyclic form is immediately postulated by Franck as one of several compositional solutions - the 2nd and 3rd Trios do not apply it as such or at least in a much more allusive way'. Fauquet, *César Franck,* 132.

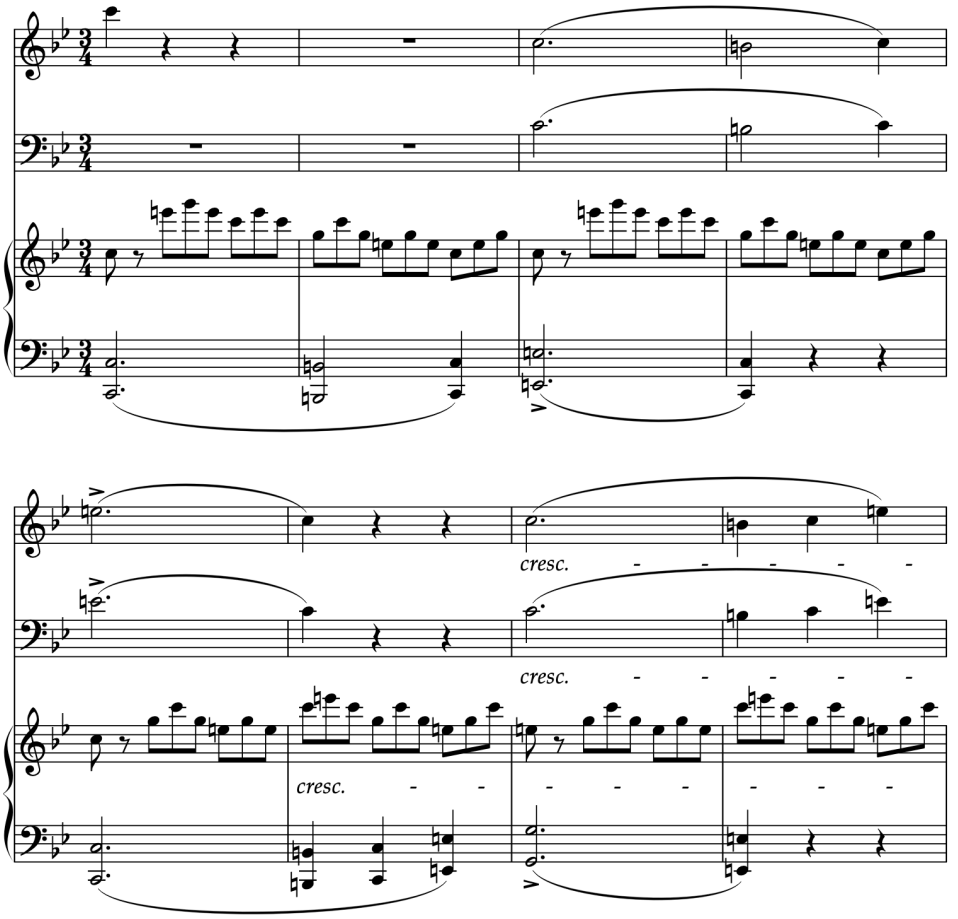
[67] Fauquet often postulated his influence: 'it is clear that Franck felt the influence of Schubert as much as that of Beethoven'. Fauquet, *César Franck,* 132.

[68] For more information see Gouin, "Teleology in César Franck's Prélude, Choral et Fugue", 24–31. A portion of the thesis is dedicated to the teachings of Reicha despite them lasting 'for only a brief period of time, since the teacher passed away less than a year after he and Franck met.'

[69] Lin, "From Virtuoso to Master: César Franck as a Composer of Solo Piano Music", 13. The section referenced is Vallas, *César Franck,* 20.

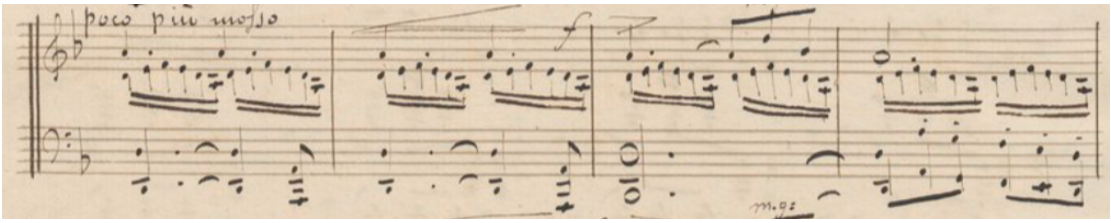


Example 3: César Franck, Op. 2 Piano Trio No 4, (i), (1842), part of the development.[70]

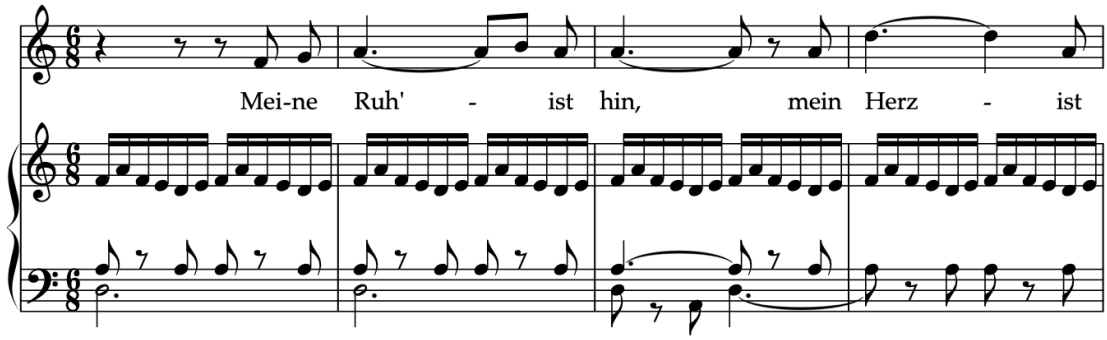


Example 4: Schubert Op. 100, D 929, Piano Trio No. 1, (i), (1828), bars 273–280, also the development. Note the similarity in the low thematic material: rhythmically it moves with a similar semi-tone descent followed by third, which is then enlarged to a fifth before finishing the phrase with a tertiary fall.

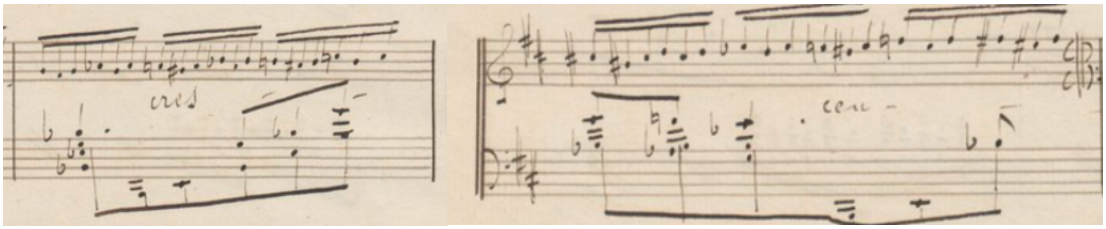
[70] D'Indy would relate this work to the future works of Franck. 'But, despite these professional inadequacies, here and there we find traces of the spark that will spring forth in the second period of the Master and become, in the third period, the fertile sun to which we will owe the emergence of the great works: the *Quintette*, the *Quatuor*, the *Sonate*, the *Symphonie*, the three *Chorals* and the *Béatitudes*.' D'Indy, *La Première Manière de César Franck,* 6–7. But as we can see above, there are already similarities with his op 1 from his early period.



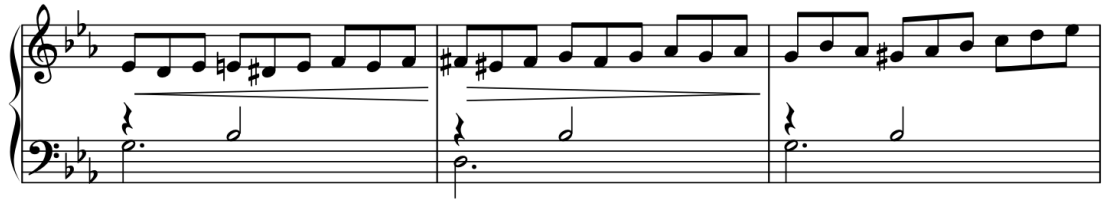
Example 5: Franck Op. 014, *Deuxième Fantaisie*, (1836), bars 41–44.



Example 6: Schubert, *Gretchen am Spinnrade*, (1814), bars 2–5.[71] Note in examples 5 and 6 the similarity in key, the restless inner voice, fifth movement in the bass and the melody reaching up to B^{b} and D.



Example 7: Franck Op. 014, *Deuxième Fantaisie*, (*Finale)*, (1836), bars 10–11.



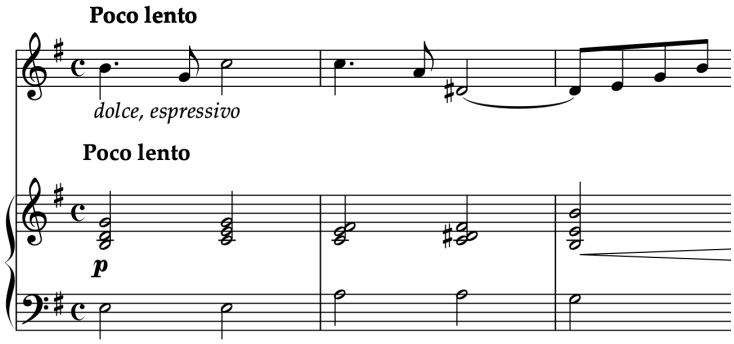
Example 8: Schubert Op. 90, Impromptu no 2, (1827), bars 4–6. Note the resemblance in the wandering chromatic figuration in the soprano line, a keyboard texture that Franck will never utilise again, encouraging one to consider this to be the 14 year-old Franck still finding his way.

Both pieces from examples 7 and 8 feature a perpetuum mobile in triple time, have an E^{b} major tonal centre, and a similar rising chromatic twist. Considering Franck was in possession of

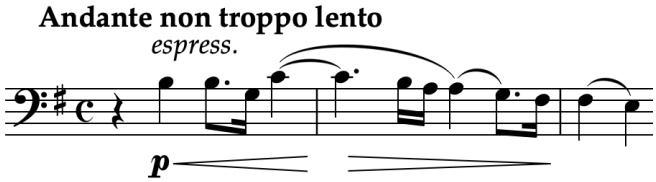
[71] Fauquet comments on this section as 'a rather Chopinian expression, goes into D minor.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 71. Franck had in his possession Liszt's *12 mélodies de Schubert,* of which no. 8 was Liszt's own transcription of *Gretchen am spinnrade*. Franck also wrote his own Schubert transcriptions, for example *Junge Nonne*, which opens his Op. 8 *Quatre Mélodies de François Schubert* (1844), which was also the 6th transcription in Liszt's compendium.

Schubert's Impromptu's Op. 90[72] and both emphatically repeat this melodic turn, it is not unreasonable to consider this linking.

Franck also quoted Berlioz;[73] in 1885 Franck wrote a short piece for violin and piano *Mélancolie*,[74] reminiscent of his Op. 6 *Andantino Quietoso* and evocative of the era forty years previously when Franck frequently performed with his brother, which opens almost identically to Berlioz's "Convoi funèbre de Juliette" from *Roméo et Juliette*.[75]



Example 9: Franck *Mélancolie* for violin and piano, (1885), bars 1–3.



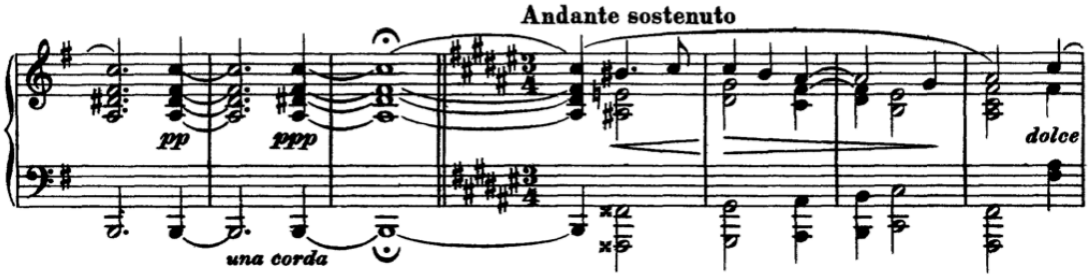
Example 10: Berlioz, *Roméo et Juliette*: *Convoi funèbre de Juliette: "Jetez des fleurs pour la vierge expirée"*, (1839), bars 1–3. The cello entrance.

[72] Fauquet, *César Franck,* 946.
[73] Though his thoughts on the French master was not clear: Au sujet de Berlioz, son opinion était partagée. S'il aimait *L'Enfance du Christ* et goûtait fort le duo nocturne de *Béatrice et Bénédict*, il ne se faisait pas faute de relever des maladresses de contrepoint et des « basses à côté » dans *La Damnation de Faust.' Ibid.,* 686.
[74] 'based on a solfège exercise and written at the height of the composer's creative powers, at about the same time as his famous violin sonata'. César Franck, *Sonate; Andantino quietoso: op. 6; Melancolie: pour piano et violon,* arranged for flute and piano by Franz Linden, ed. Gudula Schütz (Bärenreiter. 2015), foreword.
[75] The brothers would frequently perform together before the rift in 1846 when César left the household to live with his future wife Félicité Desmousseaux. 'During these years [1843-1846], the Franck brothers also participated in some public concerts. The works they performed not only included those by César, but also compositions by Mendelssohn and frequently Beethoven violin sonatas. The last appearance of the two brothers together took place on 1 June 1846 in front of King Leopold I of Belgium at the Palace of Laeken'. Lin, "From Virtuoso to Master: César Franck as a Composer of Solo Piano Music", 20.

Franck's piano works have been most frequently associated with Liszt's idiom, usually on the basis of the virtuosity found in both;[76] they even corresponded and influenced one another on some compositional level, possibly meeting sometime around 1842.[77] Vallas succinctly presents Liszt's influence in a footnote:

> From his adolescence Franck, as we have seen, had not only a lively appreciation of Liszt, but an admiration that never ceased; he proclaimed it in 1885: "Liszt is the richest melodic imagination of our time. His works, for piano and orchestra, are a mine of melodic and harmonic treasures."[78]

A musical link that establishes Franck's debt to Liszt even late in his life could be the shared rhythm and intervals in the unison strings opening both Franck's Symphonie and Liszt's *Les Préludes*.[79]



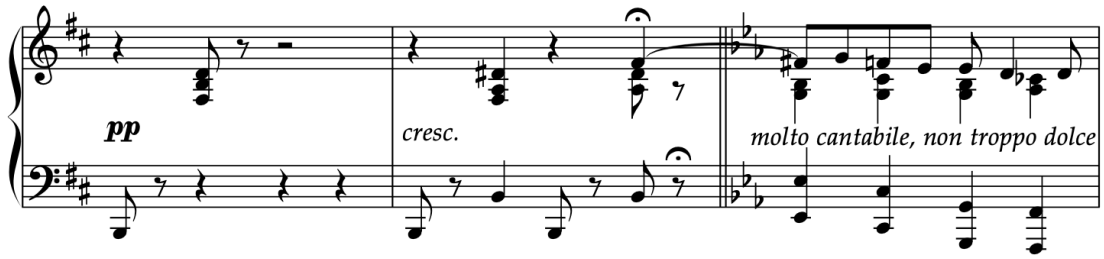
Extract 11: Liszt Sonata, start of 'second movement', Andante sostenuto.

[76] For example, when Cortot spoke of the Op. 3 *Églogue* and Op. 5 *Caprice*: 'De même que Églogue, le Caprice relève de l'esthétique lisztienne la plus convaincue : effets d'octaves alternées, division de la mélodie entre les deux mains, imitation de la « voix céleste » de l'orgue, bref, mise en œuvre d'un véritable appareil de virtuosité, en tous points conforme aux traditions du moment.' Alfred Cortot, *La Musique Française de Piano,* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1944), 54.

[77] This date is sometimes contested. 'Rien n'est moins sûr. Car il semble bien que ce voyage supposé n'existe que pour faire coïncider deux faits dont la datation est jusqu'ici restée imprécise : la rencontre avec Franz Liszt à la suite de laquelle César-Auguste a transformé le finale du *Trio n° 3* en un *4e Trio* ; la présentation des *Trois Trios* opus 1 à leur dédicataire, le roi Léopold Ier. Pourtant d'Indy l'atteste, fort des dires de son maître : l'entrevue avec Liszt aurait bien eu lieu en 1842 et à Bruxelles.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 124.

[78] 'Dès son adolescence Franck, comme nous l'avons vu, avait eu pour Liszt, non seulement une vive reconnaissance, mais une admiration qui ne cessa jamais; il la proclama en 1885: « Liszt est la plus riche imagination mélodique de notre temps. Ses ouvrages sont, au piano comme à l'orchestre, une mine de trésors mélodiques et harmoniques…» Vallas, *La Véritable Histoire de César Franck,* 233. This letter does not appear in Fauquet's *Correspondance.*

[79] The long-lasting link is mentioned frequently: 'Another master fascinated him, himself still young and resolutely looking to the future: Franz Liszt.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 138. Vallas also questions, regarding the similarity of Beethoven's Op. 135 *Muss es sein?* phrase first appearing in Liszt's *Les Préludes,* then appearing in Franck's Symphony: 'A-t-elle été voulue comme un hommage au grand Maître allemand?' Vallas, *La Véritable Histoire de César Franck,* 332, though Demuth was the first to do so: Demuth, César Franck, 80.



Example 12: Franck's *Prélude, choral et fugue*, start of the *choral*. Note the B^7 chord tied onto a descending melody.

It is worth remarking that Demuth hopes to refute the frequent beckoning of Liszt with a short paragraph in *French Piano Music* (1959):

> It was with Franck that the inner melody, both exposed and concealed, first became important in French piano music [...] This is the only respect in which Franck's pianism resembles that of Liszt.[80]

The provocative Demuth is contentious even in this as his opinion is rarely shared among writers. Schuman is another cited source of inspiration, albeit most often in passing and seldom with musical examples. Though this lack of clarification is examined by R. J. Stove:

> It is true that Schumann had exercised a certain subliminal influence on Franck, especially on the *Trios Concertants*; but the average French music lover considered Schumann to be a disagreeable eccentric. Massenet sadly remembered being told as a youth, when better known for his pianism than for his composition, "come and amuse us with some of your Schumann and its wrong notes!" [James Harding, Massenet, 1970]. To proclaim one's admiration for Schumann, as Castillon (unlike Franck) quite deliberately did, was itself a gesture of defiance.[81]

It is difficult to find similarities between the œuvre of the two composers, discouraged by the lack of cases presented by writers in which way the two shared resemblances.

With the present growth of interest in Mendelssohn it follows that one would expect the links between Franck's 'adolescent' & 'early' piano works with those of Mendelssohn to also be explored:[82]

> Vincent d'Indy, for instance, was often at pains to stress his teacher Franck's position as direct descendant of Beethoven, as part of the nationalist ideology of his time. While Beethoven was undoubtedly an influence on Franck, Mendelssohn's early works and the thematic technique of Berlioz – with the possible addition of Schubert's 'Wanderer' Fantasy

[80] Demuth, *French Piano Music,* 44.
[81] Stove, *César Franck: His Life and Times,* 143.
[82] 'Now that Mendelssohn has at last begun to receive the academic attention which he long lacked, César Franck is the most underestimated and misunderstood of the nineteenth century's musical masters.' Stove*, César Franck: His Life and Times,* vii. Nevertheless, similarities between the organ works of the two composers have frequently been explored.

> and the example of Franck's teacher Anton Reicha – are actually far more developed and realistic models for Franck's early efforts in the style.[83]

John Trevitt and Joël-Marie Fauquet also believe that Mendelssohn's Op. 1 Piano Quartet in B minor piano quartet and his early piano sonatas were an influence on Franck.[84] Thus, finding the influences on Franck's early compositional outpouring return a variety of far-reaching responses, ones which seem altered according to the predilection of the era in which they were written.

It seems likely that the frequent invocation of Beethoven by d'Indy and others derives from Franck's treatment of musical material, namely that of the use and reuse of small musical blocks. The continuation of cyclic form, an important part of the 'tradition' that d'Indy often made reference to, was for him the strongest case for Franck as a successor to Beethoven.

By now it can be seen that any, and all, names can be associated with the music of Franck. To add to the 'mystery' of César Franck, it seems there was no major composer post 1770 that did not have an influence on the young César Franck. Nowhere is this muddled perplexity put more succinctly than by Brian Hart in *Oxford Bibliographies:*

> Franck remains controversial for 21st-century scholars, if for more strictly musical reasons. For many years writers typically confined themselves to generic and subjective observations about Franck's music, and often they devoted more space to its alleged faults than to its virtues.[85]

The tradition of invoking many diverse composers as a strong influence on Franck could possibly be born out of an isolated understanding of his late works, one which disregards his other compositions and ignores a progression from his early works, while the study of his influence has always been bound by the nationalistic tendencies of the writer, which we will see in the

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[83] Taylor, *Mendelssohn, time and memory: the romantic conception of cyclic form*, 37.
[84] John Trevitt and Joël-Marie Fauquet, "Franck, César(-Auguste-Jean-Guillaume-Hubert)" *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed January, 2020, www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/Franck,César. Blanchard comments on a concert where Franck played Mendelssohn's Op. 1 Piano Quartet in B minor. Henri Blanchard, "Concerts", *Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris No 30* (25 April, 1841), 236.
[85] Brian Hart, "César Franck", *Oxford Bibliographies*, accessed December 22 2020, www.oxfordbibliographies.com/Franck.

upcoming chapter. As for the style of Franck as a young composer, we know he approached Mendelssohn at one point, but Fauquet has once again in his *Correspondance* addresses this:

> At the age of fifteen, when he left Liège for good, where he was born on 10 December 1822 and where he had received a full musical education, Franck was steeped in the piano music of Hummel and Herz. But late in his life, when he had composed the Quintet, *Prélude, choral et fugue* and when one expects him to assert himself with such fundamental works such as the Well-Tempered Clavier, the sonatas of Mozart and Beethoven or the Etudes of Chopin — he played his own works to his pupils and made them work on them, as we know — the pieces he recommended were the salon works of Ketterer,[86] Leybach,[87] Prudent[88] or Thomé.[89] This was the repertoire of the piano nurturer that the teacher taught in the wealthy districts.[90]

While many of the above musical examples have highlighted late works and canonic composers,[91] it is easy to forget other influences on Franck in the early stages of his compositional career, many of whom had strong connections with Franck through Paris/Paris Conservatoire but it cannot be ignored that Franck's recommendations to his students were often what we would now consider 'salon' composers, as well as the lighter opera genres,[92] whereas Franz Schubert was mentioned only once in the — albeit incomplete — collection of César Franck's letters.

Issues of Nationality

The issue of nationality is an inescapable topic; Franck's music has swung between being represented as 'Germanic', 'French' or 'Belgian', but never convincingly as a representative of

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[86] Eugène Ketterer (1831–1870) wrote a plethora of light piano works with evocative titles. Franck recommended his *Invocation* [Op. 272, published in 1870 by Schott?] in 1871 to a student, with practice instructions. Fauquet, *Correspondance,* 86. In another letter he requests for the score for *Soirée vénitienne* [Op. 138, published in 1864 by Schott?]. Fauquet, *Correspondance,* 90.

[87] Joseph Leybach (1817–1891) wrote works for the piano, harmonium and organ which caught Franck's attention, referring to an unknown work for a student. *Ibid.,* 86. His piano œuvre is dominated by *Fantaisies brilliants* on well-known themes.

[88] Emile Prudent (1817–1863), a pianist and composer, a work by whom Franck accompanied Pauline Viardot in 1860. *Ibid.,* 65. His *6 études de genre*, op.16 (1844) have faints of elements Franck's late piano writing, particularly No. 2 *Regrets.* Franck recommended in 1888 three works to a student by Prudent. *Ibid.,* 198.

[89] Francis Thomé (1850–1909), Franck cited some of his piano works in 1888 to a student. *Ibid.,* 198.

[90] *Ibid.,* 10. Also not mentioned: Ferdinand Hiller (1811–1885), a work of whose he recommended to a student. *Ibid.,* 198.

[91] 'Few clues survive regarding stylistic influences on many of Franck's compositions – that is, those that Franck made direct reference to'. Rachel Mary Swindells, "Tonality, functionality and Beethovenian form in the late instrumental works of César Franck", (Ph.D. diss., Dunedin: University of Otago, New Zealand, 2011), 191. This is why a look at the early works is needed, though my thesis has highlighted a few other direct connections.

[92] 'This persistent predilection for French opéra-comique is the classical foundation of Franckian art./ Cette prédilection persistante pour l'opéra-comique français est le fondement classique de l'art franckien.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 160.

any single idiom. Though perhaps the relevance is not as important for the early piano works – the later 1870 Franco-Prussian war ignited a strong artistic divide between the two musical cultures – the issue of nationality will nevertheless be touched upon in this sub-chapter, but only with a brief focus on the 1842–1848 period.

Some narratives keep reappearing when describing the 'essence' of French music - logic, clarity, moderation and balance.[93] It is unavoidable to have some classification:

> Just as there were nations before there was nationalism, music has always exhibited local or national traits (often more apparent to outsiders than to those exhibiting them).[94]

Franck's musical nationality is a contentious topic: d'Indy insisted 'Franck, though born in Belgium, was French in heart and sympathy'[95] in a similar vein to Demuth's own opinion on Franck's 'Gallic temperament',[96] while German musicologists during WWII heavily associated Franck's music with the Germanic tradition.[97] Roy Howat's *The Art of French Piano Music* (2014) is almost entirely void of any mentions of César Franck, and it is once again Joël-Marie Fauquet who provides a more well-rounded opinion on the topic.[98] This problem opens Laurence Davies's *César Franck*:

> Almost more than any other composer we care to name, César Franck epitomizes certain dilemmas of classification. There are some commentators who regard him as typically Belgian, others who shamelessly wave the tricolour of France above his name. A small minority insists that he was actually descended from the same Teutonic stock as his great organ-playing predecessors. Nationalist feelings obviously ferment easily in such a situation.[99]

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[93] As an example: **'**The qualities for which French art is famous — logic, clarity, moderation and balance — are corollaries or the direct results of this deliberate restriction of field, this concentration of the intelligence and the senses and this instinctive mistrust of the vague and large-sounding.' Martin Cooper, *French Music: From the death of Berlioz to the death of Fauré* (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), 2.

[94] Richard Taruskin, "Nationalism", *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online.* Oxford University Press, accessed December 1, 2019. www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/Nationalism.

[95]'Franck, belge de naissance, était bien français de cœur et de dilection'. D'Indy, *Selected Piano Compositions,* xiv.

[96]'There are still many who refuse to regard César Franck (1822–90) as a French composer, but he had as good a claim to that title as Handel had to being an English one. Indeed, Franck's is the more convincing case as he was trained at the Paris Conservatoire and absorbed all the French points of view from the outset of his career.' Demuth, *French Piano Music,* 41.

[97] Wilhelm Mohr's book *Cäsar Franck: ein deutscher Musiker* (1942, Stuttgart) and Reinhold Zimmermann's *Cäsar Franck: ein deutscher Musiker in Paris* (1942, Aachen) both published during the second world war, unsurprisingly with German nationalistic slants on Franck's origins.

[98] Both Vallas and Fauquet placed importance on Franck's German ancestry. 'He [Vallas] goes so far as to point out, based on the indications of May Rudder, that César, like his brother Joseph, "preserved throughout his life the habit of reciting in this language his prayers: *Vater unser, Ich heile dich ...*" and that "his big voice, with his distinctive, characteristic intonation, had been had been formed by the use of the first language he had heard and spoken, more than by the harsh Walloon dialect". Fauquet, *César Franck,* 34.

[99] Davies, *César Franck,* ix.

Belgian traits are not described and proclamations of Franck's *Frenchness* rarely focus on his music. Could it be, as Demuth describes in *French Piano Music*, that French piano music was almost irrelevant in the 19th Century until Franck's influence, so there was no concrete school with which to compare?[100]

While it is difficult to pinpoint what constitutes *German* music and what is *French* music, the placing of Franck within this theoretical Euler diagram often proves problematic.[101] D'Indy, along with anyone else he could grasp into his nationalistic grip,[102] firmly placed his teacher as the father of the dominant French school,[103] and as such his nationality should not even be up for debate:

> It is fashionable today, among certain informed musicographers, to reject César Franck purely and simply as a French national. Some invoke the 'scientific fact' of the current political boundary of our State, which since 1814 has unquestionably been between Liége (Grétry's homeland) and Paris; others, in the name of 'aesthetics', deliberately classify Franck and all his disciples, up to and including the author of this Course, among the Germans! The glorious lack of understanding that still protects Franck's work from admiration across the Rhine justifies this last rant. As for the other, we hope that the present biographical sketch is sufficient to 'set the record straight'.[104]

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[100] 'It was some time before either Saint-Saëns or Chabrier exercised a definite influence on French composers of piano music, for the idiom of Franck contained elements lacking in each, and it marked the beginning of a great tradition.' Demuth, *French Piano Music,* 40. Vallas earlier expresses an opposite opinion 'Vincent d'Indy, dans son désir, dans sa volonté obstinée de placer au pinacle son maître vénéré, en a même exagéré la nouveauté ; pour exalter l'originalité de la production pianistique des dernières années de Franck, il lui a sacrifié certains musiciens français du XIX siècle ; il a tenu à oublier que jamais la bonne musique de piano n'avait été laissée de côté en France ; les œuvres d'étrangers naturalisés, ou de Français d'origine ne manquent pas avant 1885 [names Alkan, Heller, Gounod, Bizet, Saint-Saëns]'. Vallas, *La Véritable Histoire de César Franck,* 231

[101] 'César Franck has always been a problem to musical theorists and historians – perplexing, on the one hand, those who claim that music has a national basis, by his singularly un-French characteristics.' Cecil Gray, "Concerning César Franck", The Musical Times (June 1, 1915), 341.

[102] As an example: 'Frédéric Chopin, born at Zelazowa-Wola, near Varsovy, into an emigrated French Family'. Despite some scathing opinion of Chopin's music, there is no mention of Poland nor Polish influence, and considers him solely French. Vincent d'Indy, *Cours de composition musicale* (Paris: Durand, 1902), 655.

[103] 'Avec Franck, génial continuateur français (1) de l'immortel symphoniste allemande, commence une période nouvelle et *exclusivement française* jusqu'à présent. [(1) On verra ci-après (p. 422), par une brève notice biographique sur César Franck qu'il fut réellement et exclusivement *français*.' D'Indy, *Cours de composition musicale Deuxième livre Première partie,* 391.

[104] 'Il est de bon ton aujourd'hui, chez certains musicographes avertis, de rejeter purement et simplement César Franck hors de la nationalité française. Les uns invoquent le « fait scientifique » de la limite politique actuelle de notre État, laquelle est incontestablement, depuis 1814, entre Liège (patrie de Grétry) et Paris. D'autres, au nom de l'« esthétique », rangent délibérément Franck et tous ses disciples, jusques et y compris l'auteur de ce Cours, parmi les Allemands! La glorieuse incompréhension qui protège encore l'œuvre de Franck contre les admirations d'Outre-Rhin fait justice de cette dernière divagation. Quant à l'autre, nous espérons que la présente esquisse biographique est suffisante pour la « remettre au point ».' D'Indy, *Cours de Composition musicale – deuxième livre,* 422.

There could be some contradiction in d'Indy's thought with his frequent invocation of Beethoven and his own admiration and influence of Wagner.[105] The French musicologist Vallas also repeatedly references German composers as an inspiration for Franck.[106] This, coupled with his sometimes not so hidden preference for Germanic music,[107] makes clear that he considered this music to be 'Germanic'.[108] The Belgian musicologist Ernest Closson already questioned Franck's *Frenchness* in 1913.[109] Tiersot, a student of Franck, firmly stated: 'it would be impossible to find a more perfected adoptive Frenchman'.[110]

Though nationalistic tendencies are generally calmer than in the preceding century, what significance has this clash? Not only do they argue that national tendencies are revealed in music; some musicologists swept Franck into their net to proclaim their own motherland as a great creator of genius progeny, particularly true in the years leading up to and including the second world war. There are certainly *soundworlds* that are considered to belong to certain nationalities, whichever artistic domain they may be. On one side of the border:

> The criticism [post 1870] of the period is full of references to 'the French' qualities, usually characterized as those of clarity and concision. In an article written in 1893 entitled 'Le drame lyrique', the novelist and journalist Émile Zola invoked 'the sharp clarity characteristic of the spirit of our race' when arguing for an abandonment of 'the current fashion of northern mythologies' in French opera.[111]

And a musical reference regarding Franck:

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[105] Davies warned of d'Indy's 'nationalistic tricks'. Davies, *César Franck,* 1. But the situation in Europe at this time was a complicated one, especially considering the New German School (*Neudeutsche Schule*): 'Anticipating the obvious objection that the school's two elder statesmen, Berlioz and Liszt, were neither of them German, Brendel asserted that it was 'common knowledge' that these two had taken 'Beethoven as their point of departure and so are German as to their origins'. Warming to the subject, he continued: The birthplace cannot be considered decisive in matters of the spirit. The two artists would never have become what they are today had they not from the first drawn nourishment from the German spirit and grown strong with it. Therefore, too, Germany must of necessity be the true homeland of their works.' Richard Taruskin, "Nationalism".

[106] 'D'une solide architecture allemande, imprégnée d'éléments étrangers, surtout germaniques, l'œuvre, grâce à sa solide construction cyclique, à sa forte écriture pianistique, à sa beauté formelle et surtout en raison de sa puissance expressive, fut considérée comme le point de départ d'une renaissance française de la musique pour clavier'. Vallas, *La Véritable Histoire de César Franck*, 184.

[107] 'Le wagnérisme profond et le franckisme ardent de ces jeunes exaspéraient les partisans d'un art moins complexe et jugé plus français, c'est-à-dire superficiel.' *Ibid.,* 191.

[108] 'Dès son enfance, vécue dans une atmosphère romantique où, parallèlement à Méhul, et aux aimables maîtres de l'opéra-comique français, son éducation, en grande partie d'outre-Rhin, l'avait familiarisé avec Beethoven, Weber, Schubert, Schumann, Liszt'. *Ibid*., 139–140.

[109] Ernest Closson, "Les origines germaniques de César Franck et les accointances de la jeune école française", *La Revue Musicale S.I.M. 9/4*, (April 15 1913), 24–30.

[110] Tiersot, "César Franck", 27.

[111] Thomas Cooper, "Nineteenth-Century Spectacle" in *French Music since Berlioz*, edited by Caroline Potter and Richard Langham Smith, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 21.

> Where in Franck [. . .] are the typical French virtues — the critical sense, the delicate economy of means, the sensuous grace, the wit, the gaiety?"[112]

The reactionary reasoning behind such nationalism is understandable as:

> in the concert halls, foreign composers also reigned supreme. In fact, the music of Beethoven, Mozart, Haydn and Weber account for half of all music performed in public concerts in Paris in the years immediately prior to 1870.[113]

Franck himself was affected by the French-German cultural divide:

> In any case, he was convinced that his future lay on the other side of the Rhine. He was not the only musician, as has been mentioned, to think so. In 1862, Édouard Lalo wrote to Ferdinand Hiller: "Let Germany, my true musical homeland, welcome me, otherwise my career is shattered". Franck had just written much the same thing to Liszt who, in his reply of October 25, 1853, disillusioned him: Works of a distinguished and high order generally have little chance of being adequately rewarded, both in Germany and in France. The noble ambition of a composer of instrumental music is barely supported and encouraged by a few connoisseurs or friends.[114]

In 1895 the start of the publication of Rameau's *Œuvres completes* in 18 volumes included a substantial and illuminating preface in which French qualities were described as *lumière, clarté, classicisme, goût.*[115]

Whatever we think is the perceived musical allegiance of Franck, conscious or otherwise, this was the environment in which he was educated and began his career, before the 1870 watershed moment in French nationalism, and it is a contentious task to align his works with common descriptions of the French musical idiom:

> There was no French tradition for Franck to work upon. Instead, he had to formulate it himself in the large forms. This he did and it is significant that after the early Trios he put aside all German influence — an examination of *Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne* [1846] shows that this work marked the dividing line between the two cultures and may very well have been the reason why Franck did not allow it to be published.[116]

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[112] W. Wright Roberts, "César Franck" in *Music and Letters* Vol. 3, No. 4 (October 1922), 317.
[113] Déidre Donnellon, "French Music Since Berlioz: Issues and Debates*"* in *French Music since Berlioz*, edited by Caroline Potter and Richard Langham Smith, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 1.
[114] 'Quoi qu'il en soit, il est persuadé que son avenir est de l'autre côté du Rhin. Il n'est pas le seul musicien, je l'ai dit, à penser ainsi. En 1862, Édouard Lalo écrira à Ferdinand Hiller : « Que l'Allemagne, ma véritable patrie musicale, veuille donc bien m'accueillir, sinon ma carrière est brisée. » Franck vient d'écrire sensiblement la même chose à Liszt qui, dans sa réponse du 25 octobre 1853, le désabuse : Les œuvres d'un ordre distingué et élevé n'ont en général que peu de chance d'être rétribuées comme elles le méritaient [sic], tant en Allemagne qu'en France. La noble ambition d'un compositeur de musique instrumentale est à peine soutenue et encouragée par quelques connaisseurs ou quelques amis.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 291.
[115] Charles Malherbe, Introduction to *Jean-Philippe Rameau, Œuvres complets,* (Paris: Durand, 1895), i–xxvii.
[116] Demuth, *César Franck,* 59.

In reviews of his concerts in years preceding to his abandonment of piano performances in 1848 we find works by Beethoven, Chopin, Mendelssohn and Weber.[117] While the influence of Chopin may have influenced all following piano composers,[118] it is far from the most noticeable influence on Franck, unlike that on the music of Ravel, Debussy or Fauré.[119] In *Chapter 2: Musical Style* we will refer to ascertain Franck's distinct compositional tendencies in piano writing, which will make clearer the origin and originality of his idiom.

César Franck the Piano Prodigy

In this section we will look at the various sources that comment on Franck's piano career, specifically reviews of his performances and observations on the works in relation to Franck as a pianist/composer.

> How, through his music, can we imagine César Franck, *Père Franck*, as anything other than old? How can we imagine that he was ever young when his pupils themselves only revered him as the alert and flourishing old man he became at an early age?[120]

When discussing Franck's 'early' piano music it is worth reflecting on how Franck himself performed in the years prior and during the years 1842–1846 when he was 19–23. His father, Nicolas-Joseph, organised concerts and accompanied the then young César-Auguste as soon as his musical talent had manifested. This fatherly promotion is often linked to the early piano works.[121]

> The fact that Franck's father tried to promote both of his sons, César and his younger brother Joseph (a gifted violinist), as child prodigies, seems to confirm the common prejudice that these works are merely virtuoso pieces lacking a deeper individuality.

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[117] Many of Franck's concerts were reviewed and documented in *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*.

[118] Michałowski has argued that Chopin has been the most appropriated composer in the past 200 years. Michałowski, Kornel, Reception chapter in "Chopin, Fryderyk Franciszek [Frédéric François], *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online,* Oxford University Press, accessed December 2, 2019. www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/Chopin. Along with France, here it is shown how Russia and Germany have also claimed Chopin as one of their own as well.

[119] Roy Howat, in his chapter *Musical roots and antecedents*, Franck is not mentioned as an influence. From the chapter *Chopin's legacy* he writes: 'Bizet, Chabrier, Saint-Saëns, Fauré, Debussy, Ravel and Satie were all fairly direct recipients of 'Chopin tradition' […] Fauré and Debussy, and to some extent Ravel, have long been seen as Chopin's natural heirs'. Roy Howat, *The Art of French Piano Music.* (London: Yale University Press, 2014), 63. In this chapter Chopin's *Barcarolle* Op. 60 is frequently invoked as a precursor to the idiom of these composers, and in fact one would not find many parallels with Franck's piano music from any period.

[120] Fauquet, *César Franck,* 696.

[121] Joël-Marie Fauquet was not so quick to outright dismiss Franck's father: 'Et quel que soit le jugement peu favorable que nous portions sur Nicolas-Joseph, reconnaissons à ce dernier le mérite d'avoir donné à son fils les meilleurs professeurs.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 61.

> The uncritical propagation of this judgement, often caused by the lack of people's own studies, may be due to the difficulties in obtaining scores for performance and research, as many of Franck's early works remained unpublished and the few printed editions are mostly exhausted.[122]

Nicolas-Joseph's aims were for his young César to be a towering virtuoso akin to those with whom he performed at a joint concert in 1837 as a fourteen-year-old: Pixis, Alkan and Liszt. Generally, his skill at the keyboard was appreciated as he had won the first prize for piano in 1838 at the Paris Conservatoire.[123]

Franck was mentioned frequently in the *Revue et gazette musicale*, from its first publication in 1835. Contemporaneous writers rarely spoke of his compositions and the predominant reviewer, the eloquently sardonic but always interesting Henri Blanchard, generally focused on his pianism. The following are some of the most telling quotes from reviews of his public performances:

Table 1: Reviews

Year	Comments
1837	'This child, only thirteen years of age, is already a skilful pianist and a good harmonist [...] I must also point out to him that the frequent reproduction of a musical phrase, however pleasing that phrase may be, becomes tiresome when one neglects to give it a new attraction drawn from a new harmonic or instrumental combination.'[124]
1839	'M. César-Auguste Franck is, although young, a distinguished pianist. If there is precisely no strength nor ardour in his style, there is elegance, clarity, grace, and sometimes brilliance. We wish we could say the same of his compositions. The dramatic scene that he played for us does not seem to reveal in him a composer for the opera.'[125]
1840	'We can say that M. César-Auguste Franck overcomes difficulty as if by playfully showing off; that his fingers are endowed with a singular lightness; that his playing, by turns mellow and energetic, elegant and warm, combines a brilliant style with the most solid qualities. These are the key elements of his talent. But look at how many pianists can truthfully be said to have the same talent, in this time when many are virtuosos before they are men and *just leaving childhood*.'[126]

[122] Koch, *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle,* 4.
[123] Constant Pierre, *Le Conservatoire national de musique et de déclamation: documents historiques et administratifs, recueillis ou reconstitués par Constant Pierre; sous-chef du secrétariat,* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1900), 586.
[124] 'Cet enfant, âgé de treize ans seulement, est déjà pianiste habile et bon harmoniste […] Je dois lui faire observer, aussi, que la fréquente reproduction d'une phrase musicale, quelque heureuse que soit cette phrase, devient fatigante lorsqu'on néglige de lui donner un nouvel attrait puisé dans une nouvelle combinaison harmonique ou instrumentale.' J. A. D, *Revue et gazette musicale*, (1837), 126.
[125] 'M. César-Auguste Franck est, quoique jeune, un pianiste distingué. S'il n'y a précisément pas de force, de fougue dans sa manière, il y a de l'élégance, de la netteté, de la grâce, et parfois du brillant. Nous voudrions pouvoir en dire autant de ses compositions. La scène dramatique qu'il nous a fait entendre ne parait nullement révéler en lui un compositeur pour le théâtre lyrique.' Jacques Schoboerlichaeraasfeldenberg [?], *Revue et gazette musicale*, (1839), 31.
[126] 'Dirons-nous que M. César-Auguste Franck enlève la difficulté comme en se jouant ; que ses doigts sont doués d'une légèreté singulière que son jeu tour à tour moelleux et énergique, élégant et chaleureux, unit un brillant style

1841	'*Veni, vidi, vici*. Certainly this young man has talent, but it is a mechanical talent. He runs through the keyboard, he goes, he goes, he always goes. It is clean, pure, dry. For him, inspiration as a composer or performer is a foregone conclusion. He knows and does not feel. Melody or difficulty never disturbs the smile that seems stereotyped on his face. What the hell! We, the jaded listeners, want an artist to be impeded, impressed, even unhappy with his impressions.'[127]
1842	'César-Auguste Franck, scorning the axiom that one does not run after two hares at once, has set out to pursue three; he teaches the piano successfully, performs as he teaches, and hopes to achieve no less success as a composer. Who can compare with this trinity of success? It is certainly not us.'[128]
1843	'We applauded, seven or eight years ago, the first tests of Mr. César-Auguste Franck, who was very young at the time, and we had no doubt that this precocious talent would develop in a brilliant manner in the future. Our expectations were not disappointed; the young pianist has become a master, and Belgium has another great artist. The most difficult challenges are nothing to him, he overcomes them without effort, and by preserving all his delicacy and expression in his playing. His compositions, which were performed yesterday, showed a great knowledge of harmony, and denote in the mind of the author a serious turn of mind, which can, by a wise application, give great prominence to his talent.'[129]
1844	'M. Auguste Franck is a pianist who interprets, translates, and also writes Schubert's melodies, which he plays very well, as well as his music, which he plays no less well. He has already given several musical matinees at his home, attracting a large audience who always applauded his brilliant performance.'[130]
1845	'A precocious child, an adolescent, who has almost already become a complete artist, a virtuoso, has made himself heard on Wednesday [...] this gave him the opportunity to display brilliant qualities, a clean, smooth and elegant playing [...] The critic's relationship with musicians who are on the road to fame is not an easy one. [...] he has a fine talent for execution on the piano, the aplomb of a conventional composer who plays in time, but knows little of the patience of a French audience which, despite its proverbial politeness, deserts in the face of the incomparable length of the trios and other musical works by M. César-Auguste Franck.'[131]
1846	'M. César-Auguste Franck is naive, excessively naive, and this simplicity served him well in the composition of his oratorio of *Ruth*, *églogue biblique* [...] If we show ourselves a little severe towards M. Franck, it is because he is young'[132]

aux qualités les plus solides ? Ce sont bien là en réalité les éléments constitutifs de son talent. Mais voyez de combien de pianistes on en peut dire autant, sans faillir à la vérité, dans ce temps où plusieurs sont virtuoses avant que d'être hommes el presque *au sortir de l'enfance*.' Maurice Bourges, *Revue et gazette musicale*, (1840), 144.

[127] '*Veni, vidi, vici*. Certainement ce jeune homme a du talent, mais c'est un talent mécanique. Il parcourt le clavier, il va, il va, il va toujours. C'est net, pur, sec. Pour lui l'inspiration comme compositeur ou exécutant est lettre close. Il sait et ne sent pas. La mélodie ou la difficulté ne dérangent jamais le sourire qui semble stéréotypé sur sa figure. Eh ! que diable ! nous voulons, nous, auditeurs blasés, qu'un artiste soit empêché, impressionné, malheureux même de ses sensations. Henri Blanchard, *Revue et gazette musicale*, (1841), 237.

[128] 'M. César-Auguste Franck, méprisant l'axiome qui dit qu'on ne court pas deux lièvres à la fois, s'est mis à en poursuivre trois ; il professe le piano avec succès, exécute comme il professe, et n'espère pas obtenir moins de succès comme compositeur. Qui est-ce qui peut s'op- poser à cette trinité de succès ? ce n'est certainement pas nous'. Henri Blanchard, *Revue et gazette musicale*, (1842), 116.

[129] 'Nous avions applaudi, il y a sept ou huit ans, aux premiers essais de M. César-Auguste Franck, bien jeune alors, et nous ne doutions pas que ce talent si précoce ne se développât dans la suite d'une manière brillante. Notre attente n'a pas été trompée ; le jeune pianiste est devenu maître, et la Belgique compte un grand artiste de plus. Les difficultés les plus ardues ne sont rien pour lui, il les surmonte sans effort, et en conservant à son jeu toute sa délicatesse et toute son expression. Les morceaux de sa composition qui ont été exécutés hier, prouvent une grande connaissance de l'harmonie, et dénotent dans l'esprit de l'auteur une tournure sérieuse, qui peut, par une sage application, donner un grand relief à son talent.' [author not written], *Revue et gazette musicale*, (1843), 301.

[130] 'M. Auguste Franck est un pianiste qui interprète, traduit, transcrit aussi les mélodies de Schubert, qu'il joue fort bien ainsi que sa musique qu'il ne joue pas moins bien. Il a déjà donné plusieurs matinées musicales chez lui; elles ont attiré une nombreuse société qui applaudissaient toujours sa brillante exécution.' Henri Blanchard, *Revue et gazette musicale*, (1844), 117.

[131] 'Un enfant précoce, un adolescent, qui est presque déjà passé à l'état d'artiste complet, de virtuose, s'est fait entendre mercredi […] lui ont donné l'occasion de développer de brillantes qualités, un jeu net, doux, élégant […] Nous dirons donc que M. Franck fils possède avec un beau talent d'exécution sur le piano, l'aplomb d'un compositeur de lieux communs jouant en mesure, mais connaissant peu celle de la patience d'un auditoire français qui, malgré sa politesse proverbiale, déserte devant l'incommensurable longueur des trios et autres œuvres musicales de M. César-Auguste Franck.' Henri Blanchard, *Revue et gazette musicale*, (1845), 108.

[132] 'M. César-Auguste Franck est naïf, excessivement naïf, et cette simplicité l'a servi dans la composition de son oratorio de *Ruth*, *églogue* biblique […] Si nous nous montrons un peu sévère envers M. Franck, c'est qu'il est jeune' Henri Blanchard, *Revue et gazette musicale*, (1846), 12–13.

After 1846, there is a long period of silence. The works produced after this moment, in terms of compositional style, are also of a different calibre - more focused on fantasy/improvisatory elements or miniatures, reverting back to his youthful works perhaps due to the unsatisfying progress in his career. 1846 was also the year where Franck's large scale work *Ruth* led the *Revue's* coverage, as we see in the final review. Towards the end of 1846 César-Auguste's brother Joseph would steal the limelight with his extensive teaching and concerts in Paris to such an extent that he would have an almost equal entry to César-Auguste later in Fétis's dictionary decades later.[133]

As a pianist, Franck generally focused on performing a variety of fantasies, most commonly those of Thalberg.[134] Of his own works, the Op. 5 *Caprice* was most often played, but unfortunately there are few comments on his compositions. These reviews show that the monotonous repetition of phrases in his compositions was already present from the start of his career from 1837 up until 1846 with *Ruth*. And yet, despite the critics' calls to its attention, Franck did little to attempt to conceal this composite of his compositional style.

The poetic reviews by the *La Revue et Gazette musicale* critic Henri-Louis Blanchard (1778–1858),[135] while flattering at times, frequently mocked Franck due to his 'ambitious and pompous first-names.'[136] This critic would prove to be a permanent thorn in the finger of Franck's early virtuosic career. His description of Franck's playing as having a 'clean, pure, dry' touch strongly contrasts with the reports of his teacher at the Paris conservatoire, Pierre-Joseph-Guillaume Zimmerman:

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[133] François-Joseph Fétis, *Biographie Universelle des Musiciens et Bibliographie Générale de la Musique,* (Paris: Librairie de firmin-Didot, 1881), 347.

[134] In fact, Blanchard went so far as to compare him to Thalberg: 'Dans le concert donné par mademoiselle Zélia Bincourt, M. César-Auguste Franck, un de nos bons pianistes, a voulu, lui aussi, exécuter la fantaisie de Thalberg sur Moïse. Que dire de ce jeune et brillant élève de Zimmerman ? Qu'il est en progrès, qu'il est déjà maître lui-même ; maître de son instrument, maître de son auditoire ; qu'il ne s'emporte plus comme il faisait autrefois, et qu'enfin il peut se dire : Je suis maître de moi... en ajoutant, si cela lui fait plaisir, comme de l'univers, ainsi que son homonyme César Auguste dans Cinna. Il a fait chanter religieusement le piano et vaincu les nombreuses difficultés du morceau à la mode. Nous pensons que si Thalberg avait entendu son jeune émule, il ne l'aurait pas applaudi, car il aurait cru s'entendre lui-même..' Henri Blanchard, *Revue et gazette musicale*, (1840), 167.

[135] Katherine Ellis writes: 'In respect of the *Gazette'*s criticism of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century music, the years 1849 to 1858 belong essentially to Henri Blanchard'. Katharine Ellis, *Music criticism in nineteenth-century France,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 79.

[136] For example, the quote above from 1841 and for more: Henri Blanchard, *Revue et gazette musicale*, (1846), 7.

> A remark by one of his teachers at least gives us an idea of the expressive quality of his playing: "Great talent and a tendency towards warmth that degenerates into daubiness..." An excess of a quality, which became a defect, against which his teachers warned him.[137]

This excessive 'warmth', possibly referencing a liberal use of rubato,[138] could easily be translated to the four solo piano works in discussion here, though the few accounts we possess of young Franck performing do not open many doors for us to a deeper understanding of the compositions, as there are no specific references to these works.

Franck's early pianistic career between 1836–1846 is hinted by Cortot as the largest influence on his compositional output at this time.

> In these pieces, despite being destined for the salon or the stage, one would look in vain for the easy attractions of a style with embellishments and tremolo, the lure of a cadenza, the ornamental flourish of an organ point; in a word the elements of virtuosity with which, around 1840, a pianist could hope to fanaticize the crowds. We have already noted that in the *Grand Caprice*, published in 1843, Franck was not insensitive to the seductions of the fashionable style, but it seems that, while doing his best to satisfy a purpose whose utilitarian side was unfortunately not to escape him, a secret resistance prevented the young musician from abdicating as completely as would have been necessary for his success. We do not expect to reproach him for this. [...]
>
> It was for such occasions and for audiences capable of putting up with such harlequinades — audiences of Philistines, as the quivering Robert Schumann on the other side of the Rhine was stigmatising them at the same time — that he found himself obliged to produce and perform, when he was already dreaming of *Ruth*, had just written the surprising Trio in F sharp, and was sketching out on Hugo's verses *Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne* [...][139]

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[137] 'Un jugement de l'un de ses maîtres nous donne au moins une appréciation de la qualité expressive de son jeu : « De grandes dispositions et une tendance de chaleur qui dégénère en barbouillis... » Excès d'une qualité, qui devient un défaut, contre lequel le prémunirent ses professeurs.' Vallas, *La Histoire Véritable de César Franck,* 13.

[138] This assumption is reinforced by Henri Libert who wrote 'Franck's playing of Bach was apparently most flexible with greater rubato than Widor permitted', as found in Roland W. Dunham in "From Yesterday No. 2: Franck, Libert, Widor," *The American Organist 37* (1954), 402–03.

[139] 'On chercherait en vain, dans ces morceaux pourtant destinés ouvertement au salon ou à l'estrade, les attraits faciles d'un style à fioritures et à trémolo, les appâts d'une cadence, la floraison ornementale d'un point d'orgue, en un mot les éléments de virtuosité grâce auxquels, aux environs de 1840, un pianiste pouvait espérer fanatiser les foules. Nous avons déjà marqué que dans le Grand Caprice, paru en 1843, Franck ne s'était pas montré insensible aux séductions du style à la mode, mais il semble cependant que, tout en s'ingéniant de son mieux à satisfaire un dessein dont le côté utilitaire ne devait malheureusement pas lui échapper, une secrète résistance empêchât le jeune musicien d'abdiquer aussi complètement qu'il eût été nécessaire pour sa réussite. On n'attend pas que nous lui en fassions reproche. […] C'était donc là ce que représentait pour Franck virtuose l'exercice de son art; c'était pour de telles occasions et à l'intention de publics capables de supporter pareilles arlequinades, — public de Philistins, ainsi que les stigmatise dans le même temps, de l'autre côté du Rhin, le frémissant Robert Schumann, — qu'il se voyait contraint de produire et d'exécuter, alors qu'il rêve déjà de Ruth, qu'il vient d'écrire le surprenant Trio en fa dièze, et qu'il ébauche sur les vers de Hugo *Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne*'. Cortot, *La Musique française de piano,* 59–60.

Despite comments such as these, there remains persistent reference to them as products of a travelling virtuoso prodigy, the 'early' piano works containing surprisingly little of the fireworks one would expect. Aside from his Op. 5 *Caprice* — the favourite of Alfred Cortot and Stephen Hough from this period and Franck's most often performed — technical pianistic display is generally confined solely to the middle section and the climax. The recently uncovered *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle* has an origin distanced from his virtuoso career:

> It is worth mentioning that Franck did not compose this piece with a performance in Aachen in mind. In fact, it was composed after his second (and last) concert trip to Aachen in 1843. So these circumstances give no additional indication for the assumption of Franck being a piano virtuoso attempting to conquer his Aachen-based listeners by recalling melodies popular among them in this particular piece.
>
> As he was soon to give up his concert career for good, he probably never played the piece in public. Thus, there are no concert reviews or other secondary sources that might yield additional information. The only report about the *Souvenirs* being performed is found in Maurice Kunel's Book *César Franck inconnu* (Brussels, 1958). Yet, while knowing the composition, this is a rather doubtable story: César's brother Joseph is said to have played his own arrangement of the piece for violin solo (!) to guests in Gemmenich.[140]

In the chapters where we examine the works more closely, we will see how the Op. 7 *Souvenirs* stands apart from the other pieces of the set in many respects. In 1846 César rebelled and left the family household, at once cutting ties from the past and forming a new path in his life with Félicité Desmousseaux, so as such his concert touring days were numbered and interest in writing for the piano would be sparked by his Piano Quintet in 1879. Perhaps the difficult break was exacerbated by the lack of an instrument:

> César-Auguste "only took with him what belonged to him but left a written commitment to pay his father's debts amounting to about 11,000 F, of which he did not have the first penny. The dreadful father of Franck, as we know him, insulted his own son while pocketing the written undertaking, but did not return anything to César, neither books nor music, not even the grand piano which had been given to him by the house of *Érard* or *Pleyel* on the occasion of his honorary prize at the Conservatoire".[141]

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[140] Koch, *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle,* 5–6.

[141] 'César-Auguste « n'emporta avec lui que ce qui lui appartenait, mais laissant un engagement écrit de payer les dettes de son père s'élevant à 11 000 F environ et desquels il n'avait pas le premier sou. L'affreux père Franck, comme nous l'appelions tous, invectiva son propre fils tout en empochant l'engagement écrit, mais ne restitua rien à César, ni livres ni musique pas même le piano à queue qui lui avait été donné par la maison Érard ou Pleyel à l'occasion de son prix d'honneur au Conservatoire ».' Edouard Brissaud, *Vieux souvenirs,* quoted from Fauquet, *César Franck,* 203.

It is not clear whether Franck found the Érard at his new domicile suitable.[142] This separation from home and the marriage to Desmousseaux marks the beginning of his forty-year gap in piano compositions.

Connections between events from Franck's life to his compositional output are presented convincingly in Lin's thesis:

> Thus, there were several factors, both environmental and personal, that led Franck to alter his career. Because of the February Revolution, the number of musical events in Paris was reduced. The popularity of virtuoso composer-pianists declined. Franck also lost the impresario — his father — who had planned performances for him. He had never achieved great success as a virtuoso. Moreover, he needed to make money to raise a family and to pay off his father's debts. Franck settled down as a church organist and a private teacher, rather than a virtuoso-composer.[143]

From around 1846, it would only be on rare occasions that he would still play some of his own solo piano works.[144] Maurice Emmanuel, a student of Franck's, comments on hearing Franck several times towards the end of his life:

> I heard César Franck play the piano several times between 1880 and 1890 at the home of one of his close friends, Mr. Edouard Lefébure, whose wife was his student. A few months apart, twice he performed Beethoven's *Adagio* from the Sonata in D (op. 10, N.3); he had an admiration for this piece that he shared with us. And, in these friendly receptions on boulevard Saint-Germain, he performed Chopin *Préludes* and *Études*, notably *Préludes* 4, 9, 10, 13, 15, 17, 21, 23 (We find an echo of this last piece, in the first bars of the piano in his quintet.) He performed the Études 9 and 11 with magnificent grandeur, due not only to the size of his hand but also to the passion he put into them. And he never failed to say that he loved Chopin's works "less as a pianist than as a musician".[145]

Bearing this in mind — both Franck's early virtuoso career and the upcoming study on his early piano works — connecting the early piano works to the late two triptychs would thus document

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[142] Mentioned in Franck's letter in Fauquet, *Correspondance,* 224.
[143] Lin, "From Virtuoso to Master: César Franck as a Composer of Solo Piano Music", 21.
[144] 'À Orléans, il a peu joué en soliste, et peu de ses œuvres. […] Interprète des autres compositeurs, Franck donne la préférence à ses amis « arrangeurs » Liszt et Alkan […] C'est donc en province que Franck aura jeté ses derniers feux de virtuose.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 250–251.
[145] 'J'ai entendu plusieurs fois César Franck entre 1880 et 1890, jouer du piano chez un de ses intimes, M. Edouard Lefébure, dont la femme était son élève. A quelques mois de distance, deux fois il a interprété l'Adagio de la Sonate en ré (op. 10, N.3) de Beethoven ; il avait pour cette pièce une admiration qu'il motivait. Et, dans ces réceptions amicales du boulevard Saint-Germain, Il exécuta de Chopin Préludes et Études, notamment les Préludes 4, 9, 10, 13, 15, 17, 21, 23. (On retrouve un écho de cette dernière pièce, aux premières mesures du piano, dans le quintette.) Il traduisait avec une ampleur magnifique, due non seulement l'ouverture de sa main, mais à la passion qu'il y mettait, les Études 9 et 11, où les écarts, formidables, étaient pour lui un jeu. Et il ne manquait jamais de dire qu'il aimait les ouvrages de Chopin « moins en pianiste qu'en musicien ».' Maurice Emmanuel, *César Franck : étude critique,* (Paris : Laurens, 1930), footnotes 111–112.

his compositional style in this medium as a whole. Fauquet reminds us to have a complete outlook on his pianistic output:

> One should not forget that before making his mark as an organist, Franck was a pianist capable of rivalling his friends Liszt and Alkan. All his life he retained the piano, at least as much as the organ, as the instrument most closely associated with his composition.[146]

A Note on 'Virtuosity'

Most commonly, we find that the early piano works are grouped together and thereby indistinguishable from the adolescent period and classed derogatorily as 'virtuoso salon' works. Looking at the adolescent works, even simply at the list of titles, we see what one typically expects from an upcoming virtuoso trying to make a name for themselves: fantasies, concertos, variations on arias etc.[147] This is reduced in the early piano works, at least in the earlier opus numbers.

Jim Samson's landmark work *In Virtuosity and the Musical Work: The Transcendental Studies of Liszt,* comments on early 19th century virtuoso pianism: 'Compositionally, it amounted to a populist, conformant idiom which developed from, and smoothed out, the individuality of late Classicism in the interests of virtuosity.'[148] As noted earlier, Franck was writing in a time where the fantasies and variations on popular tunes were fast becoming unfashionable, and his compositional style was often referred to as 'severe'. Lacking the 'ego' and charisma to break through as a virtuoso, coupled with the aforementioned naïve 'smile',[149] his works lacked what would be successful in Liszt's compositional output: 'a steady, sustained, cumulative filling-out of texture-space through intricately worked figurations – is the more telling in that it is measured against the constant presence of an uncomplicated song'.[150] Whereas it has been frequently noted

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[146] Joël-Marie Fauquet (trans. Mary Criswick), Introduction to *Prélude, choral et fugue pour piano,* (Paris: Éditions musicales du Marais, 1991), iv.
[147] 'Virtuosity and program music form the aesthetic signature of a brand of instrumental music conditioned by the spirit of the European capitals — meaning, in the final analysis, the spirit of the salons and concert halls of Paris.' Carl Dahlhaus, Trans.by J. Bradford Robinson, *Nineteenth-Century Music,* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), 145.
[148] Jim Samson, *Virtuosity and the Musical Work: The Transcendental Studies of Liszt,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 65.
[149] The 'look' of the virtuoso was crucial, and that included the dramas and discontinuities of his bodily activity.' *Ibid.,* 77.
[150] *Ibid.,* 91.

from this period that 'there is greater emphasis on musical ends in Franck's work, less display for its own sake.'[151] While the adolescent period does include these *grand* displays from an young musician trying to make himself known, it is curious that Franck abstained from writing etudes, preludes and other short character pieces that were so prevalent at the Paris conservatoire in this period.[152] After all, Franck was writing these works at the heels of the famous duel between Liszt and Thalberg in 1837, where 'the two pianists were so vastly different that comparison was scarcely possible';[153] Thalberg's playing was characterised by an intense cultivation of the legato cantabile style, his unostentatious manner contrasted vividly with Liszt's wild rhapsodic virtuosity. Where do we situate Franck on this spectrum of supposedly polar opposites?

After a reading of Franck's compositional techniques at play in these works, there will be a brief look at their compositional style in terms of 'virtuosity', where we will find three of the works to be more relevant to the *Thalbergian* manner of performing with its emphasis on legato and cantabile, while the *Caprice* is written more with the rhapsodic Lisztian technique in mind; Franck perhaps missing his opportunity considering that Liszt himself explained to Eduard Hanslick that *virtuosity* 'requires youth'.[154]

Zeitgeist of 1842–1846

This chapter will generally focus on the cultural life in Paris during which Franck would have affected by during 1842–1846. Other aspects, such as salon culture, will be explored further in *Salon/Improvisation*. Although we have at our disposal Fauquet's collection of letters in *César Franck Correspondance* (1999), Franck unfortunately wrote very little and the few that are extant rarely describe Franck's compositional process or mindset at the time, succinctly posed by Stove:

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[151] Davies, *César Franck*, 71.
[152] 'The tradition of the étude had developed at the turn of the century as part of a much wider institutionalization of instrumental pedagogy, notably at the Paris Conservatoire; indeed there is a real sense in which the étude was a creation of the Conservatoire.' Jim Samson, "Chopin, Fryderyk Franciszek", *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online,* accessed February 13, 2024.
[153] Kenneth Hamilton, "The virtuoso tradition" in *The Cambridge Companion to the Piano*, *Cambridge Companions to Music,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1998): 58
[154] *Ibid.,* 62.

> The sincere Franck buff would almost commit murder for the opportunity to disinter *any* document from Franck's pen that exhibited the extreme aesthetic self-consciousness of a Puccini, a Mahler, a Stravinsky, a Schoenberg, or a Hindemith.[155]

He seemed to be always in a hurry: 'Throughout his life, his adversary was time. The question of time is recurrent in his letters'.[156] One letter from 1884, however, stands out and will become a focus in Chapter 2: *Musical Style*.

The organised practicality that has been noted in his study books and will be seen in his early piano works is also present in his letters:

> laconism characterises a correspondence that often subordinates itself to the utilitarian function, not of transmitting ideas but of setting up appointments, formulating requests or presenting compliments, with the exception of letters written during a few weeks of the summer spent outside the capital [...] However, if this correspondence provides irreplaceable information, what it omits to say also has its share of significance: reluctance to give oneself up, self-effacement in front of the interlocutor that is the addressee, indifference to what is not exclusively of the musical order.[157]

It is certainly tempting to draw parallels between the practicality seen in his letters and notebooks and his focus on the organisation of form in his compositions; specifically the ubiquitous economy of material.

In 1842–1846 Franck was a small fish in a pond of golden composer-pianists who were still riding the waves left in the wake of Beethoven's piano sonatas.[158] This was the age of Schumann, Alkan, Mendelssohn, Chopin and Liszt. How could Franck compete? His productions, as we will see, stand apart in that they *lack* the ostentatious style of Thalberg, Kalkbrenner or Henselt. In his early works Franck displayed neither the prodigious gift for invention of the former group, nor the flair for brilliance of the latter. What sound world did Franck's early piano works occupy? Are they charming in their simplicity as d'Indy described

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[155] J. R. Stove, "Joël-Marie Fauquet, César Franck" in *Journal of Musicological Research* (2012), 61.
[156] 'Durant toute sa vie, son adversaire fut le temps. La question du temps est récurrente dans ses lettres.' Fauquet, *Correspondance,* 7.
[157] *Ibid.,* 8.
[158] 'Liszt was under no illusions about how he fared in relation to Beethoven, but he did nonetheless see his own music, especially from the Weimar years, as drawing the obvious conclusions from Beethoven's legacy.' It is not clear whether Franck was timidly approaching this problem his own way. Samson, *Virtuosity and the Musical Work: The Transcendental Studies of Liszt,* 134.

Plaintes d'un poupée (1865)?[159] The harmonic and compositional technique examination aims to address this question.

> This period was the summit of the earlier virtuosic tendencies:
>
> The heyday of virtuosity began with Paganini's tours of the European capitals in the early 1830s and ended in September 1847 when Liszt abandoned his career as a pianist [...] Virtuosity, improvisation, the "skeletal texture" principle, and a focus on aesthetic instant in its own right rather than as part of the functional nexus of musical form — all of these factors are mutually conditioned and interlinked.[160]

But for the purposes of 'Zeitgeist', it is worth considering the expectations of a pianist-composer of this period, in the shadow of the great composer-pianists of the previous decade, and it is not surprising that Franck's early piano works reflect some of this 'limbo' that he must have felt. To illuminate the circumstances in which Franck was composing these early piano pieces, works by fellow pianist-composers of this period are:

Table 2: Piano Compositions in 1842 and 1846

Composer	**Work written/published around 1842**	**Work written/published around 1846**
Frédéric Kalkbrenner (1785–1849)	- no works in 1842 Op.161 12 études progressives, [1843]	- no works in 1846 Op.182, *3 études en forme de toccata*, [1847]
Carl Czerny (1791–1857)	Op. 689, 2 Grandes fantaisies sur des motifs favoris de 'Norma'	Op. 777, *Les cinq doigts*
Henri Herz (1803–1888)	Op.131, Piano Concerto No.4	3 New American Polkas
Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy (1809–1847)	Op. 56, Symphony no. 3 'Scottish'	Op. 70, *Elijah*
Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)	Op. 53 Polonaise in A^{b} major 'Heroic'	Op. 60, Barcarolle in $F^{\#}$ major
Robert Schumann (1810–1856)	Op. 44, Piano Quintet in E^{b}	Op. 54, Piano Concerto
Franz Liszt (1811–1886)	*Fantasie über Motive aus Figaro und Don Juan*	Hungarian Rhapsody No. 1
Sigismond Thalberg (1812–1871)	Op. 43, *Grande fantaisie sur 'Les Huguenots'*	Op. 64, Les capricieuses
Charles-Valentin Alkan (1813–1888)	Variations on a theme from Donizetti: Ugo conte di Parigi	Op. 26, Marche Funèbre
Adolf Henselt (1814–1889)	Op. 14, *Duo* for horn or viola and piano	Op. 16, Piano Concerto [1847]
Theodor Döhler (1814–1856)	Op. 41, *Ballade*	Op.60, *3 Mélodies russes*,
Theodor Kullak (1818–1882)	Op.7, *Grande Sonate*	-

[159] 'charmantes en leur simplicité'. Fauquet, *Correspondance,* 287. This short, simple work was written for one of Franck's pupils.
[160] Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music (Trans. by J. Bradford Robinson),* 137–138.

We see from the table above that in 1842, when Franck decided to renew his opus numeration and start his early piano works, the style of Kalkbrenner's generation had ended;[161] Mendelssohn had completed all of his most significant piano pieces with the publication of his last major piano work Op. 54 *Variations sérieuses* in 1841; Schumann had finished his early piano outpouring and he was in his year of chamber music; Chopin was culminating his craft with his final *Ballade*, *Scherzo* and *Polonaise* (not including Op. 61 *Polonaise-Fantaisie*);[162] Liszt met Wagner in 1842, the year of publication of Franck's opus 1, at the height of 'Lisztomania', and had just written his first major piano collection *Album d'un voyageur*, though he was still to write his first Hungarian Rhapsody (1846) or publish an étude in its final form - his *Douze Grandes Études* and *Études d'exécution transcendante d'après Paganini* of 1837 and 1838 respectively would be revised some fifteen years later. Alkan's prodigious output continued to represent the prevailing fashion of variations on popular opera themes to showcase the performers skill[163] — Franck also succumbed to this, picking Dalayrac's *Gulistan* for two fantasies opus 11 & 12 — and it would be from 1847 with Alkan's Op. 31 *Preludes* and Op. 35 *Études* that his major piano works would be written.

There are connections between Franck and with some of the pianist composers mentioned in Table 2: his teacher in Liège, Jules Jalheau, had been a student of Herz and Kalkbrenner; Franck maintained a long-lasting friendship with Liszt; sent a copy of Op. 1 Trios to Mendelssohn; was an admirer of Alkan throughout his whole life; and Chopin was a subscriber for his Op. 1 Piano Trios.[164]

What can we expect from Franck's early piano works? The Hummelian figurations of the previous generation of pianists was over and the virtuosic appeal of the Thalbergian fantasies was approaching its end. Franck abstained from the decorative figuration of Liszt and Chopin, an

[161] Though his influence remained: 'The Kalkbrenner method hadn't died - Saint-Saëns's teacher Stamaty used Kalkbrenner's method, which Saint-Saëns believed was valuable.' Osche, *Organists and Organ Playing in Nineteenth-Century France and Belgium,* 53.
[162] 'Lermontov's transformation of Russian poetry of the 1820s might be applied rather neatly to Chopin's transformation of elements of the 'brilliant' style at precisely the same'. Jim Samson, "Chopin and Genre", Music Analysis 8, (1989): 216.
[163] Demuth, *French Piano Music,* 41.
[164] Fauquet, *César Franck*, 937–942. Chopin is marked number 30 out of 173 subscribers.

essential pianistic ingredient of the period. The 'cumulative ornamental variation' — as Jim Samson described Chopin's style[165] — is missing from Franck's piano works, or at least is underdeveloped. Perhaps also Franck lacked the 'ego'[166] from which these early piano works should sprout from, as the audience might have expected. Though, luckily for the young César Franck, this general 'zeitgeist' was approaching its end:

> Liszt's decision of September 1847 [to abandon his career as a pianist] might seem on the surface to have been dictated psychologically by weariness and disgust, it in fact documented a historiological insight; and we may assume that it was this insight which prevented him from subsequently revoking his decision.[167]

Away from the prevailing fashion, d'Indy with others shared the sentiment that Franck's writing at the time focused on 'recherche des formes purement musicales'.[168]

1848 was a clear watershed moment in Parisian musical life, particularly regarding Parisian piano composers, with the February Revolution of 1848 and Chopin leaving Paris. It was also a pivotal year for Franck, one in which he married Félicité Saillot Desmousseaux on the day of the beginning of protests, as well as abandoning serious solo piano composition until his *Prélude, choral et fugue* in 1884.[169] Fauquet summed up the post 1848 piano culture in France:

> That Franck should have chosen the organ rather than the piano for his *Six Pièces* project seems self-evident, after all we have learned about the deviated trajectory of his career. Yet let us note this: Chopin is dead, Liszt is gone, Alkan has retired, one suddenly gets the impression that from 1850 until after 1870 — in France, that is — the piano was becoming gentrified, taking on an essentially didactic, salon-like or museological role. Overwhelmed by exercises, character pieces as well as by the retrospective repertoire of which Aristide and Louise Farrenc's *Trésor des pianistes* was the jewel in the crown, it was no longer the foundation of these vast architectures where introspection competes with prospective sound. Franck would quickly realise this. Moreover, he did not write anything important for the piano before 1884. Of course, like so many others, he taught the instrument intensively. But not a single exercise or study ever came from his pen. His teaching method, as we shall see, was based on a diversified repertoire.[170]

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[165] Samson, *Virtuosity and the Musical Work: The Transcendental Studies of Liszt,* 20.
[166] As described in *Ibid.,* 74 et suiv.
[167] Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music (Trans. by J. Bradford Robinson),* 137–138.
[168] D'Indy, Selected Piano Compositions, xxxiii.
[169] As mentioned before, there is a simple, short work miniature in 1865 *Les plaintes d'une poupée*.
[170] 'Que Franck concevant les Six Pièces ait choisi l'orgue plutôt que le piano pour réaliser son projet semble aller de soi, après tout ce que nous avons appris sur la trajectoire déviée de sa carrière. Pourtant remarquons ceci : Chopin mort, Liszt parti, Alkan retiré, on a soudain l'impression que, de 1850 jusqu'après 1870 – en France s'entend -, le piano s'embourgeoise, qu'il tient un rôle essentiellement didactique, salonnier ou muséologique. Submergé par les exercices, par les morceaux caractéristiques aussi bien que par ce répertoire rétrospectif dont le Trésor des pianistes d'Aristide et Louise Farrenc est le fleuron, il n'est plus l'assise de ces vastes architectures où l'introspection le dispute

1848 Milestone

When Franck wrote these early works France was in a period of 'extreme instability in French society and politics.'[171] The years prior to 1848 in Paris are described as:

> the age of the "bourgeois king" Louis-Phillipe, who, harried by the royalists on one side and by republicans and Bonapartists on the other, saw his reign as a *juste milieu*. The catchword of the day was the concept of "zeitgeist," which mingled Hegel's spirit with that of the press, now risen to previously unforeseen importance. And what the "zeitgeist" demanded, whether in Parisian romantic circles or in Young Germany, was the fusion of art and politics.[172]

César Franck has already been shown to suffer at the hands of malicious critics, but he generally refrained from contributing to the fusion of art and politics: exceptions are his Op. 4 *Duo à 4 mains sur l'air God Save The King* (1842) which was written for the visit of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert to France,[173] and the later patriotic mélodie *Paris* (1870), a direct outcome of the 1870 Franco-Prussian war. It is in this aspect as well that we could consider his output more 'Germanic':

> The traces of politics detectable in the works of Wagner, Liszt, Berlioz, Chopin, and Schumann — not to mention Mendelssohn — are so trifling that the "romantic" label applied to all composers up to the 1848 revolution hovers strangely between the French and German meanings of the term, with the former including an element of political involvement and the latter tending conversely to shun affairs of the day.[174]

Franck would certainly belong to the latter: his output, particularly in later life, was generally more focused on worship (or even secular) than on the patriotic.[175] Traces of this are already present in his biblical églogue *Ruth* (1846). Dahlhaus further illuminates this 1848 milestone:

à la prospective sonore. Franck en est le premier conscient. D'ailleurs, il n'écrira rien d'important pour le piano avant 1884. Certes, comme tant d'autres, il enseigne l'instrument de façon intensive. Mais pas un exercice, pas une étude ne sortiront jamais de sa plume. Sa méthode d'enseignement, nous le verrons, reposait pourtant sur un répertoire diversifié.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 348.

[171] David Charlton, John Trevitt and Guy Gosselin, "Paris", *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, Accessed April 3, 2021. www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/Paris.

[172] Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music (Trans. by J. Bradford Robinson)*, 115.

[173] This being a result of how Franck's father tried to adhere to the prevailing 'zeitgeist': 'Pour Nicolas-Joseph, la vraie musique se fait au piano. Comme Goethe, il est convaincu qu'il n'est de bonne œuvre d'art que de circonstance quand il suggère à son fils de relier le plus possible son travail de compositeur à l'actualité.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 150.

[174] Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music (Trans. by J. Bradford Robinson)*, 115.

[175] 'There is an interesting relationship here between the religious and the secular, which is not necessarily thought of in terms of opposition. On the other hand, much remains to be said about the modes of performance of religious music at the time, about the contrast in sound texture that must have been produced by the juxtaposition of this unctuous music of the century, which was only the occasional ornament, for the carillonised feasts, of a liturgy whose commonplace was the plainsong of the missal, often modulated in a crude manner.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 325.

> a number of prominent composers who had to become "epoch-making" around 1830 had already completed their life's work by about 1848. Mendelssohn died in 1847, Donizetti in 1848, and Chopin in 1849; Schumann's output, some inconsequential works aside, was complete by 1851, while the decade and a half that remaining to Meyerbeer after *Le prophète* (1848) was basically dead time [...] On the other hand, Verdi, Wagner, and Liszt — who belonged to the same generation as Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Chopin — all broke through into uncharted territory around 1848, and their breakthrough set the cornerstones of music history for the second half of the century.[176]

The writings of Wagner and Hanslick are perhaps considered to be the most significant movement around this period. It is not certain just how involved Franck was with this discourse at the time, but it created significant dialogue regarding style in 1848:

> The either/or nature of Kahlert's[177] argument is characteristic of its time, for this was an era that liked to think in terms of binaries: dream and reality, abstract and concrete, individual and community.[178]

The unconcealed ternary form of Franck's early piano pieces and the emphasis on dichotomy would be in line with this mode of thought. The noticeable dearth of piano music that would begin from 1848 was clear to Fauré, who wrote in a letter in 1894:

> Do you disapprove of my obstinacy in writing for the piano? Don't you think that *eventually* these pieces will come to be played, in the same way as it took people some time to decide in favour of my songs! Modern piano music of any interest is *very hard to come by*, in fact there is virtually none.[179]

It is worth reiterating the chronology of the young César Franck in these 7 years:

1842: Withdrawal from the Paris conservatoire and composition of his op. 1 Trios.

1845: Composition of Biblical oratorio *Ruth.*

1846: Separation from father – 'another turning point for Franck: as an instrumentalist he became the anti-virtuoso, and as a composer the anti-hero'.[180]

1847: Post at the church of Notre-Dame-de-Lorette in Paris.

1848: Stopped piano compositions along with marriage to Félicité Saillot Desmousseaux[181]

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[176] Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music (Trans. by J. Bradford Robinson)*, 114.
[177] August Kahlert (1807–1864), German writer and music critic, writing extensively about the question of art in 1848.
[178] Mark Evan Bonds, *Absolute Music: The History of an Idea*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 130.
[179] Jean-Michel Nectoux, *Gabriel Fauré: His Life Through His Letters (trans. J. A Underwood),* (London: Marion Boyars, 1984), 229.
[180] '1846 est donc pour Franck une autre date-charnière : comme instrumentiste il devient l'anti-virtuose, et comme compositeur l'anti-héros.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 217.
[181] 'the dedication to Félicité Desmoussaux [of the *Deux* mélodies] in the year of their marriage (1848) and the fact that these are going to be his last significant piano pieces for more than 3 decades assign to them an important place

It is curious that between 1848 and his appointment at Sainte-Clotilde in 1859 we possess very little information on Franck's life, and nothing substantial was composed during this period. So, while Franck did not proudly pin his political alignments to his chest, his piano output at this time was directly convergent with political movements - though most likely, his departure from the family home and his marriage were the most direct influences.

The Rise of Conservatoire culture

This period also saw the birth and rise of musical conservatoires. Franck's father was under no illusion that this was the path for Franck's future success. As well as having arranged harmony and counterpoint lessons for several months with Antoine Reicha before his death in 1836, the earliest letters which we have praise how 'this young artist, aged 13, already possesses a remarkable talent. [...] he promises to be no less a composer than a performer'.[182] This letter was written with the hope of Franck competing for the vacant spot in Zimmerman's piano class.[183] Written by a Belgian politician to a French one, just 6 years after Belgian independence, Franck's early life was intertwined between France and homeland. His impresario father had to obtain French citizenship for his children to be admitted to the Paris conservatoire. The response from the Italian director Cherubini was a curious one:

> As a Belgian, this aspirant cannot claim to obtain the favour he is asking for, since our regulations do not allow foreign students to be admitted to the Conservatoire for the piano class. The number of places reserved for home students in this part of the curriculum is already too small to make an exception to a long-established rule from which it is important not to depart. In taking the liberty of submitting this observation to Your Excellency, I must

in his oeuvre. /In addition, the fact that the pieces have remained in almost total obscurity since the time of their creation is worth mentioning. According to even the most recent Franck related literature, the *Deux melodies « À Félicité »* have been kept in a private collection and the French musicologist Julien Tiersot (1857–1936) had been the only person who was ever allowed to take a look at the first page of the manuscript (the first 18 bars of the present edition).' Heribert Koch, *Quatre Mélodies,* (Köln: Dohr 2018). Fauquet, who didn't have access to the works, writes that they were composed probably to soothe his then student Félicité, whom he would make cry from lessons. Fauquet, *César Franck,* 196–197.

[182] A letter from Charles-Aimé-Joseph Comte Le Hon to Jean-Baptiste Teste. 'Ce jeune âgé de 13 ans possède déjà un talent fort remarquable. […] il promet un compositeur non moins qu'un exécutant.' Fauquet, *Correspondance,* 27.

[183] As a piano teacher at the Paris Conservatoire he taught, among others, Alkan, Louis Lacombe, Ambroise Thomas, Bizet and A.-F. Marmontel (who succeeded him in 1848). Frédéric Robert, *"*Zimmermann [Zimmerman], Pierre-Joseph-Guillaume", *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, Accessed March 31, 2021. www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/Zimmerman

> have the honour of informing him that I have received a visit from Mr Franck, père, to whom I have communicated the reasons why his request could not be granted.[184]

Franck's father was ultimately successful in obtaining French citizenship and enrolled Franck into the conservatoire the next year in 1837. In this period of the Grand Opera, Franck's father sent verbose letters to critics, musicians, and royalty in the hope of blossoming his children's careers, listing the accolades as vain trophies in the hope for future accomplishments, unfortunately with dismissing returns.[185]

We should assume that Franck's tuition in Paris was, and there is no reason to assume otherwise, similar to his teacher Zimmerman's method *Encyclopédie du pianiste* (1842) which contains musical examples generally from German and Austrian composers and extracts from Italian operas, with the odd work by Fétis and Meyerbeer. Time and again, Érard's salons in Paris come up in correspondence of Franck's performing and compositional career: it is there that many of his works are premiered and probably where he made valuable acquaintances. The possible effect of this 'salon' culture is looked at further in *Salon/Improvisation.*

This was the context of where Franck's main musical education, which took place in a Paris that welcomed many foreign artists but was perhaps in a crisis of its own, struggling at the time with its own piano identity, until the divisive rift caused by the Franco-Prussian war.

Germanic Influences

While the Germanic influences on Franck from the period are clear, from concert societies set up specifically for the propagation of Beethoven's music[186] to the frequent invocation of German and Austrian composers in pedagogy and style, Parisians at the time considered themselves less

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[184] 'En sa qualité de Belge, cet aspirant ne peut prétendre à obtenir la faveur qu'il réclame, attendu que nos règlements ne permettent pas l'entrée au Conservatoire d'élèves étrangers pour la classe de piano. Le nombre des places réservées aux élèves nationaux, dans cette partie de l'enseignement, est déjà trop restreint pour qu'il soit possible de faire exception à une règle établie depuis longtemps et dont il importe de ne pas s'écarter. En prenant la liberté de soumettre cette observation à Votre Excellence, je dois avoir l'honneur de l'informer que j'ai reçu la visite de M. Franck, père, à qui j'ai fait part des motifs qui s'opposaient à ce que sa demande put [*sic*] être accueillie.' Fauquet, *Correspondance,* 28.

[185] For example, letters found in Fauquet, *Correspondance,* 32 & 35.

[186] As described in the 1789–1870 chapter in Charlton, "Paris".

equipped than their neighbours with regards to musical education infrastructure.[187] It is in this culture that Franck tried to break through, and arguably the Germanic tendencies in his music, while often attributed to his mother's background, are also a clear result of this climate.[188] Franck was never the radical Berlioz, and one seldom encounters revolutions or surprises in his four early piano works, despite the innovation found in other genres by Franck at this time, as will be explored later. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that his more exploratory Op. 1 Trios, which he held dear throughout his life as can be seen in his correspondence, became accepted in Germany long before being welcomed in France due to Hans von Bülow's performances in the 1860s and Liszt's continuous enthusiasm; this must have surely created some attachment to his Germanic neighbours.

After finalising his studies in Liège Conservatoire, which lasted from 1830 to 1835 and settling in Paris in May 1835, it is noteworthy that his early piano compositions included fantasies on themes from Belgian composers, his Trios were dedicated to the Belgian king and his brother Joseph proudly signed himself in letters 'de Liège'.[189] Célestin Deliege makes an interesting observation:

> The fact remains, however, that seemingly trivial circumstances such as place of birth and family background cannot but influence the destiny of any artistic creation. The conditions for creation are extremely demanding and, in a peripheral environment, they are often difficult to meet in order to ensure the full development of resources early on. [...] Liège being in a geographical position at least as favourable for emigration to Germany as to France, it is not impossible to imagine that Franck's music would have been quite different, given his gifts, if the family had ended up in Aachen, from where the young musician's footsteps could

[187] Under '19th Century Music Education' in the GMO entry for "Paris": 'The Revolutionary authorities were asked to respond to a universally acknowledged education, as many people saw France as being behind the times by comparison with neighbouring countries.' François Lesure, Claudie Marcel-Dubois and Denis Laborde, "France", *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed March 30, 2021. www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/France.

[188] 'Franck possessed half-German ancestry, and without the German examples of Mendelssohn and Wagner his mature style would scarcely have developed in the way it did'. Stove, *César Franck: His Life and Times,* 310. Commenting on the late piano works of Franck, Armstrong wrote: 'Most importantly, it was this incredible Germanic influence which was absolutely integral to the fabric of Franck's musical idiom.' Asher Ian Armstrong, "The Catholic-Christian Masking of César Franck and Alternative Erotic Readings of his Piano Quintet, Violin Sonata, and Prelude, Chorale and Fugue", (D.M.A. diss., Toronto: Graduate Department of Music University of Toronto, 2015), 20.

[189] 'During the 1850s, Joseph Franck's name took over from that of César in the music press. A prolific composer and sought-after teacher, Joseph Franck was, even more than his brother, the typical musician of the Second Empire […] Possessing a definite sense of publicity and a pronounced taste for honors, the "second" Franck methodically and opportunely exploited his "belgitude," his Catholicism and the virtuosity he had acquired on the violin, the piano […] [he] wanted to call himself "de Liège"'. Fauquet, *César Franck,* 260–261.

> have been led to Weimar or Vienna, rather than to Paris. [...] Consider the extreme difference in mentality and cultural behaviour between German and French artists. On the one hand, there was a romanticism embodied in illuminist writings imbued with mysticism and religiosity; on the other hand, the very opposite, as Georges Gusdorf has remarkably defined it (1982: 131 & ff.), was a romanticism that bore witness to the survival of revolutionary ideology, that maintained the philosophy of the Enlightenment, and that was never able to forget the values of Classicism or to distance itself from them. Let us consider the way in which this difference was translated into music, where, in Central Europe, classical forms were maintained but with a considerable increase in individual introspection in content, whereas in France these forms had only ever been practised by very few masters, while the lyrical genre triumphed there with increasing emphasis. We can thus imagine, although without having the measure of it, the impact of all this on Franck's work. When Franck arrived in Paris there was practically only one great symphony, Berlioz's *Fantastique*. The independence of Franck's future commitment will, it is true, be all the more fortunate, but how can one escape the taste of the milieu, and beyond that how can one escape oneself?[190]

In Franck's correspondence and concert reviews we encounter the usual composers in vogue: Weber, Meyerbeer and frequent performances of Hummel's Op 18 fantasy, which Franck described as 'beautiful [belle]'.[191] While Mendelssohn and Schubert are frequently found, it is surprising to note the lack of the two names most frequently associated with Franck's music: Bach and Beethoven. Could it be that Bach only affected to Franck in a greater degree once he had engrossed himself wholly with the organ[192] and that his name became linked to Beethoven later in life because of the emphasis placed by his disciples as a continuer of the tradition?

Ultimately, Liszt outlines the reasons for Franck's failure to become more widely known and breakthrough into the more well-known musical spheres in this period:

> M. César-Auguste Franck has the fault:
> 1. - to be called César-Auguste
> 2. - of making beautiful music very seriously [...]
> What matters now for this young man is to make his mark. If there could be annual or decennial exhibitions for musical production, as there are for painting, there is no doubt that he would distinguish himself in the most honourable way, for among the young people who sweat blood and water to manage to put a few ideas on a horrid piece of music paper, I do not know of three in France who are worth it.[193]

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[190] Célestin Deliège, "César Franck et le jugement de goût", in *César Franck et son temps : actes du colloque de l'Université de Liège,* (Bruxelles : Soc. Belge de Musicologie), 18–19.

[191] Fauquet, *Correspondance,* 30. While this is a plain description from Franck made in 1837, it is noteworthy simply because we have so few of Franck's opinions on music.

[192] Though Franck certainly would have encountered Bach through his lessons with Reicha in 1835–1836: 'Antoine Reicha's teaching was important as a complement to the Conservatoire. After settling in Paris in 1808 he took many private composition pupils. His emphasis on German models, especially Bach, was new at the time, and his methods were thorough and successful, and appeared in several publications.' David Charlton, John Trevitt and Guy Gosselin, "Paris".

[193] 'M. César-Auguste Franck qui a le tort : 1. - de s'appeler César-Auguste 2. - de faire très sérieusement de la belle musique, […] Ce qui importe maintenant pour ce jeune homme c'est de se faire jour et place. S'il pouvait y avoir pour la production musicale comme pour la peinture des expositions annuelles ou décennales, nul doute que non

This was Liszt's promotion of the 22-year-old César-Auguste Franck. The many letters between Franck and Liszt suggest a genuine friendship and mutual respect. It is also worth remembering in this context that Franck only truly became widely recognised through the efforts of students from his *Bande à Franck.*

Closing Comments

To some writers, an in-depth analysis of these compositions would be a detailed look into *mediocre* works; though the quality of the music takes a secondary role in this thesis, it can be illuminating to consider the reasons why these works are considered weak while the late works are considered masterpieces. The main research question this thesis hopes to address is how the early and late works differ but more notably how they are the similar.

Two of the most common cited influences on Franck at this time, Liszt and Schubert, I would argue are most present and noticeable in his previous outpouring - his adolescent works. By Op. 1 *Trois Trios* he had attempted to create a new compositional style, a more personal one, possibly a reason for his dissatisfaction of the adolescent works and a motive to dismiss them with his new delineation of opus numbers. Delving into the early piano works I will propose a certain type of thought or musical construction that reigns in these compositions, which would seep into his later works. A compositional soundworld was created, containing features such as *Cathedral of Sound* and *Infinite Melody* which would always be present in his compositional identity.

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recommandé, il s'y distinguât de la façon la plus honorable, car parmi les jeunes gens qui suent sang et eau pour arriver à coucher quelques idées sur un méchant papier de musique, je n'en sache pas trois en France qui le vaillent.' Fauquet, *Correspondance,* 45.

Chapter 2
Musical Style

Franck's Compositional Method

'Style is a manner, mode of expression, type of presentation.'[1]

Before moving to features of Franck's compositional style, the question remains 'how' Franck composed – whether he needed the keyboard or was comfortable composing away from one. There are some hints that perhaps the two activities were related:

> [writing in 1871] "I have been working assiduously for six months on my piano and my organ; I have also been composing," he says, hoping that his correspondents 'will find that their teacher has made some progress.'[2]

But as usual, we have a dearth of information from his formative years. Fauquet suggests Franck claimed: 'the student should always 'make music', as much as possible at the desk, without the aid of the keyboard.'[3] We also know that during his lessons, while Franck was undoubtedly attentive to his pupils, it would also be a moment when his creative gears would still be whirling:

> Franck the teacher and Franck the composer were consubstantial with each other. "Very attentive to a pupil, he could nevertheless hear his inner voice [...]. Sometimes he would get up, go and write four bars and then resume the lesson that had been interrupted for a few seconds. In this way, long and very coherent works were first put down on paper in fragments that followed one another without hiatus."[4]

It would not require a great leap of faith to imagine the same processes happening with Franck at his organ loft in Sainte-Clotilde. Was this split concentration present in his early twenties? Would these works have been formed during Franck's many gruelling hours teaching and not

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[1] Robert Pascall, "Style", Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press, accessed December 2, 2019. www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/style..

[2] '« J'ai travaillé assidûment depuis six mois mon piano, mon orgue ; j'ai composé aussi », précise-t-il, espérant que ses correspondantes « trouveront que leur professeur a fait quelques progrès ».' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 406.

[3] 'l'élève devait toujours « faire de la musique », le plus possible à la table, sans le secours du clavier.' *Ibid*., 464.

[4] 'Franck professeur et Franck compositeur étaient consubstantiels l'un à l'autre. « Très attentif auprès d'un élève, il entendait néanmoins la voix intérieure [...]. Parfois, il se levait, allait écrire quatre mesures et reprenait la leçon quelques secondes interrompue. Des œuvres de longue haleine et très cohérentes ont été ainsi jetées d'abord sur le papier par fragments qui s'enchaînent sans hiatus 1 » (GD, 17).' [G. Lekeu, *Correspondance,* letter to Kéfer, 15 XII 1889, p. 123]'. *Ibid.,* 461–462.

with dedicated time at a writing deck as with other composers? These are unfortunately questions which we will never be able to satisfactorily answer.

Pierre de Bréville wrote that Franck 'found treatises deplorable',[5] though allegedly he recommended Dubois[6] to use Reber's *Traité d'harmonie* (1862)[7] when the former was appointed professor of harmony in 1875.[8] Franck's own teaching method was 'based on a diversified repertoire'[9] and not a systematic method. His short preface of the work *Accompanement d'orgue du Chant grégorien restauré par le Père Lambillotte* is the only theoretical text of the musician that we have.[10] Should we transmit the resistance to treatises onto the young Franck? He certainly matured in an environment swimming with methods:

Table 3: List of Principle Methods

Muzio Clementi	*Introduction to the Art of Playing the Pianoforte*	1801
Louis Adam[11]	*Méthode de piano du Conservatoire*	1804
Anton Reicha	*Traité de mélodie*	1814
Johann Nepomuk Hummel	*Art of playing the piano forte*	1827
Friederich Wilhelm Kalkbrenner	*Pianoforte-Schule*	1832
Ignaz Moscheles	*Méthode des méthodes*	c. 1840
Johann Baptist Cramer	*Instructions for the Piano Forte*	c. 1840
Pierre-Joseph-Guillaume Zimmermann	*Encyclopédie du pianiste*	c. 1840
Henri Herz	*Piano-forte School*	1844

[5] Luc Verdebout *Guillaume Lekeu. Correspondance*, (Liège: Mardaga, 1993), 123.
[6] Théodore Dubois (1837–1924), organist, composer, professor of harmony at Paris Conservatoire. He studied under César Franck at Ste. Clotilde after 1858.
[7] Pierre de Bréville, "Les Fioretti du Père Franck," in *Mercure de France* (15 July 1937), 310. Henri Reber (1807–1880), composer and professor of harmony at Paris Conservatoire, 'who might be called a belated classicist having small regard for the masters of his own century, except perhaps for Schubert.' Robert, Frédéric "Reber, (Napoléon-) Henri", *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed March 12, 2024.
[8] As described in Fauquet, *César Franck,* 464.
[9] 'Sa méthode d'enseignement, nous le verrons, reposait pourtant sur un répertoire diversifié.' *Ibid.,* 348.
[10] *Ibid.,* 285.
[11] Louis Adam (1758–1848) taught the piano at the Paris Conservatoire from 1797 to 1842 and was the father of Adolphe Adam.

Looking through the treatises and methods around this time, including the various Czerny collections that are still in wide usage, it is difficult to find direct influence on Franck, particularly peculiar when examining the didactic material stemming from his teachers Reicha and Zimmerman. Perusing through their keyboard works in this period and those of other composers such as Alkan, Dohler, Ravina, Henselt, Prudent, Franck's early piano works stand out amongst the piano pieces of his contemporaries, not because of their importance, but because of their particular *soundworld*, as discussed earlier and dissected in more detail in this chapter. Zimmerman's method is of particular interest, perhaps being the most influential figure in Franck's formative years. It follows a similar path taken by others from the list — using popular, known extracts for didactic purposes. Some instructions Franck took to heart:

> The most fruitful resource for keeping your listeners on the edge of their seats is to use great variety in your intentions. Oppositions are generally one of the surest ways of producing effect; not only is the passage from force to sweetness a great help, but many forms of expression can also be found by means of flowing or detached notes, varied as they can be ad infinitum.[12]

However, Franck did not savour expression through various forms of articulation – generally resorting to a cantabile, singing style over using the variety of resources the instrument offers. Regarding piano works of the period Zimmerman also professes: 'no one has surpassed the great composer Hummel, whom we should consult, particularly in ensemble pieces'.[13] While this is an opinion that would not now be shared by many, it was not that uncommon judging from the other methods and it is worth noting that one of Franck's most beloved and most performed works was Hummel's Op. 18 *Fantasy*. Zimmerman also mentions only a few forms when discussing piano works: sonatas, theme and variations, polonaise & works for four hands, all of which Franck attempted in his limited output during this period. Similarly, looking through

[12] 'La ressource la plus féconde pour tenir en haleine votre auditeur, c'est de mettre une grande variété dans vos intentions, les oppositions sont en général un des plus surs moyens de produire de l'effet, non seulement le passage de la force à la douceur est d'un grand secours, mais on trouvera encore beaucoup d'accentuations au moyen des notes coulées ou détachées, variées comme elles peuvent être à l'infini.' J. Zimmerman, *Encyclopédie du pianiste compositeur,* 2e Partie, (Paris: L'autour, 1840), 58.

[13] 'Ici le maître par excellence, celui qu'il faut consulter: c'est Hummel, personne n'a dépassé ce grand compositeur, particulièrement dans les morceaux d'ensemble.' *Ibid.,* 48.

Reicha's *Treatise on Melody* (Paris, 1814), perhaps Franck had in him drilled 'characters' for various keys, knowing Franck's predilection for F♯, which Reicha describes as 'very brilliant and clamorous',[14] though other didactic units are not followed by Franck, particularly his insistence on modulation,[15] how to compose in large scale dimensions,[16] and how to circumvent monotony through avoiding perfect cadences.[17]

The purpose of this chapter is to locate what makes César Franck's music sound like it was written by César Franck and not anyone else, with reference to works in the following chapters which highlight the similarities and differences between the outputs of various composers from the time.

Identification

> César Franck's musical language is rigorously individual, with a timbre and accent that were until then unusual and that make it recognisable among all. No musician would hesitate to attribute a phrase that is still unknown to the master. Its harmonic stroke, the outline of its melody, distinguish it from any other as clearly as a phrase by Wagner or Chopin.[18]

Is there an unambiguously distinct *Franckian* style? Many writers claim there to be one; in agreement with the above quote by Paul Dukas (1864–1936), Vallas writes: 'César Franck's music is one of the easiest to recognise and to identify at first hearing; it cannot be confused with any other'.[19] This chapter will attempt to dissect Franck's musical style — more specifically the particular manner in which he engaged in the compositional process — with the creation of specific terminology to apply in the forthcoming examination for describing the repeated phenomena found throughout his piano compositions. An informed critical method drawn from

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[14] 'Les gammes fa dièse et sol bémol, dont on ne se sert que rarement, et qui ne font, sur le Piano, que la même gamme, sont par conséquent dans la nature fort différentes; la première est très-brillante ou très-éclatante, tandis que la seconde est fort sombre.' Anton Reicha, *Traité de mélodie*, (Paris: J. L. Scherff, 1814), 5.
[15] 'On module, parce qu'une Mélodie (principalement d'une certaine étendue) deviendrait monotone, si on ne la promenait que dans une seule gamme.' Reicha, *Traité de mélodie*, 6.
[16] *Ibid*, 46.
[17] *Ibid.,* 33–34.
[18] 'La langue musicale de César Franck est rigoureusement individuelle, d'un timbre et d'un accent jusqu'à lui inusités et qui la font reconnaitre entre toutes. Aucun musicien n'hésiterait sur l'attribution d'une phrase encore inconnue du maître. Sa frappe harmonique, le contour de sa mélodie, la distinguent de toute autre aussi nettement qu'une phrase de Wagner ou de Chopin.' Paul Dukas, "César Franck", *Chronique des arts*, (October 22, 1904), 274.
[19] 'De César Franck, la musique est l'une des plus faciles à reconnaître, à identifier à première ouïe; on ne peut la confondre avec aucune autre'. Léon Vallas. *César Franck*, 330.

suggestions of writers and personal experience, endemic to the music, will be devised specifically for this thesis.

As a good springboard for the Franckian essence, already in 1901 Fernand Baldensperger[20] illuminated much of what is to be discussed in this thesis in a concise manner, here quoted in full:

> And now, in order to find some elements of unity in this work, the complexity of which you have seen, should we take note of certain details of Franck's technique? Should we note that his harmony readily modulates from third to third, that, being very exacting in terms of the logical sequences, he generally keeps several notes in common with the chord he is leaving and the one he is entering, and that his chromaticism produces the successions of intervals that are decreased as much as possible? Should we point out that instead of beginning his phrases on the first or strong beats, Franck, like Handel and Bach, willingly begins with off-beats, often followed by syncopations? Should we note, in the same order of details, his predilection for the form of the canon, a scholastic cut that he intently softens and enriches, and that he ornaments in a very modern way, but towards which his musical thinking naturally tends, so that it is polyphony rather than harmony that characterizes his writing?[21]

Baldensperger's document is an overlooked resource, considering its succinct description that touches upon many elements that we would consider the 'essence' of Franckian sound. One assumes that this is with reference to the later works of Franck, considering the book refers almost exclusively to them, but we will see in this chapter how transferrable these descriptions are to the early piano works.

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[20] Fernand Baldensperger (1871–1958), according to Bibliothèque Nationale de France: 'Docteur ès lettres (Paris, 1899). - Professeur universitaire de lettres, spécialiste des littératures étrangères, historien et critique. - A fondé et codirigé avec Paul Hazard, la "Revue de littérature comparée" (1921). - Poète, il a utilisé le pseudonyme : Baldenne, Fernand, pour chanter la terre des Vosges'. https://data.bnf.fr/fr/11889964/fernand_baldensperger/.

[21] 'Et maintenant, pour rechercher quelques éléments d'unité à travers cette œuvre dont vous avez vu la complexité, faut-il prendre sur le fait certains détails de la technique de Franck ? Faut-il remarquer que son harmonie module volontiers de tierce en tierce, que, très exigeant pour la suite logique des dégradations, il garde généralement plusieurs notes communes à l'accord qu'il quitte et à celui qu'il aborde, et que son chromatisme multiplie les successions d'intervalles le plus diminuées possible ? Faut-il indiquer qu'au lieu de commencer ses phrases sur les premiers temps ou les temps forts, Franck, comme Haendel et comme Bach, débute volontiers par des contre-temps, souvent suivis de syncopes ? Faut-il noter, dans le mème ordre de détails, sa prédilection pour la forme du canon, coupe scolastique qu'il assouplit infiniment, qu'il enrichit, et qu'il ornemente d'une façon très moderne, mais vers laquelle tend naturellement sa pensée musicale, si bien que c'est la polyphonie plutôt que l'harmonie qui caractérise son écriture ?' Fernand Baldensperger, "César Franck, l'artiste et son œuvre" in *Courrier musical,* (Paris, 1901), 13–14.
Some of these sentiments were shared by Derepas in his *César Franck Étude* p. 32 (1897) almost to the point of plagiarism between the two, but the above Baldensperger quote is more concise. The translation is my own.

To help understand Franck's compositional process, we have at our disposal a letter written in 1884 to Pierre de Bréville (1861–1949),[22] who was writing a work based on Aeschylus' *Les Suppliantes*:

> For stage-music always be melodic. You know very well the kind of melody I mean.
> For trios and quartets I allow you to be more daring, however:
> (1) don't be too complicated.
> (2) your key must *never* be in any way doubtful.
> (3) your formal plan should be clearly defined. Stick to the classical mould.
> (4) not too lengthy.[23]

This letter will be referenced several times throughout this thesis.

There is another curious letter in which Franck writes of the *Prélude, choral et fugue* in 1888 , roughly four years after the completion of the work, where he describes the work as lasting thirteen minutes.[24] Asher Ian Armstrong's research finds that this work takes on average close to twenty minutes to perform, with the shortest being 15:55 by Egon Petri in 1942 — still a long way from the proposed timing by Franck.[25] The remaining relatively few letters that have survived from Franck in the years 1842–1848 are usually in reference to his Op.1 *Trios* and do not offer more insight into Franck's compositional process nor his musical style from this period.

The inclination of writers to divide Franck's œuvre into three periods, parroting a common view of Beethoven's output, leads many to attach particular characteristics to delineated periods. D'Indy was the first major proponent of this:

> Apart from certain typical compositions, the influences in this first style [1841–1858] represent a significant part of the composer's character: Beethoven in the trios, Liszt and the Romantic pianists in the piano pieces, and Méhul and the French of the late fifteenth century in all the vocal works. These influences are most noticeable in the general melodic turn and disposition; as for overall rhythm and musical architecture, the key points of the two subsequent styles, there is no sign of them in this early period. On the contrary, one is astonished to note a certain embarrassment, a sort of timidity in the structure of most of the works, a timidity that often results in the most conspicuous monotony and sometimes even

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[22] French composer and 'ardent member of 'la bande à Franck': Mimi S. Daitz. "Pierre de Bréville*" Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed January 10, 2020. www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/Breville.

[23] 'Pour la scène soyez mélodique n'est-ce pas. Vous savez bien quelle mélodie je veux dire./Pour le trio ou quatuor je vous permets *d'oser.* Cependant,/1 ne faites pas trop. compliqué,/2 que la tonalité ne soit *jamais* douteuse./3 la forme bien arrêtée. Prenez le moule classique./4 pas trop. long.' Fauquet, *Correspondance,* 142. A letter from September 1884, in which earlier Franck is advising Pierre de Bréville on his fugue.

[24] *Ibid.,*175. The letter is 'À un destinataire non identifié' and it is believed to be in private hands. The timing given by Franck is at the bottom of this letter.

[25] Armstrong, "The Catholic-Christian Masking of César Franck and Alternative Erotic Readings of his Piano Quintet, Violin Sonata, and Prelude, Chorale and Fugue", 133.

> becomes a cause of errors that Franck would never have tolerated thirty years later in his pupils.[26]

Naturally d'Indy's forthright opinions are now approached with more scepticism, but he had the dominant voice of the 20th century with regards to all things Franck.[27] This division into three periods is one of the current problems of this Franck research, as seen before, no distinction is often made between adolescent and early works.

When analysing Franck's style, we generally see a retrospective examination: style is extrapolated from his late output, which is then applied to his previous works, usually concluding with the notion that the early works are lacking Franckian style, his true idiom being fully developed towards the end of his life. This largely unsuccessful technique results in leaving the early creations almost always entirely ignored and rarely understood.[28]

Instead, this thesis hopes to achieve a holistic process with the development of his compositional style, the start of the Franckian idiom generally extrapolated from his early works and documenting possible progressions. This may also help with understanding what certain writers have found in these piano works to be forerunners of his later works, as shown in previous chapters and in the forthcoming study. Tiersot gave a terse observation of Franck's style:

> Franck, with his genius for combinations, as a teacher, organist and modern composer, in this triple element (classical diatonism, polyphony and chromatism of Bach, Gregorian modalities), melted it into a single whole and, by so doing, established a language of his own. The Quintet in F minor, contemporary with the completion of *Les Béatitudes*, is the first work in which we see this style as fully formed.[29]

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[26] 'Certaines compositions typiques mises à part, les influences, dans ce premier style, absorbent une notable partie de la personnalité, Beethoven dans les trios, Liszt et les pianistes romantiques dans les pièces pour piano, Méhul enfin et les Français de la fin du XVme siècle dans toutes les œuvres vocales. Ces influences sont surtout sensibles dans le tour mélodique général et dans la disposition; quant au rythme synthétique, à l'architecture musicale, points capitaux des deux styles subséquents, il n'en est pas encore question dans cette première période. Bien mieux, on constate avec étonnement un certain embarras, une sorte de timidité dans la structure de la plupart des œuvres, timidité qui a souvent pour effet la plus flagrante monotonie et devient même parfois une cause d'erreurs que Franck n'eût jamais tolérées trente ans plus tard chez ses élèves.' D'Indy, *César Franck*, 81–82.

[27] His writings are filled with succinct descriptions regarding these works: 'Franck has become an artist of definite principles, whose genius is no longer tentative and uncultured, as in the first period, nor dreamy and tending towards new horizons, as in the second'. *Ibid.,* 159.

[28] A typical example of these pieces being dismissed is in the chapter dedicated to Franck's piano works which rejects or ignores almost all of the early piano works: Laurence Davies, *César Franck,* (London: Orion Publishing Co., 1973), 63–73.

[29] 'Franck, avec son génie de combinaisons, vivant, comme professeur, comme organiste, comme compositeur moderne, dans ce triple élément (diatonisme classique, polyphonie et chromatisme de Bach, modalités grégoriennes), l'a fondu en un seul tout et, par là, il a constitué la langue qui est sienne. Le quintette en fa mineur, contemporain de

The compartmentalisation of the terms created for this thesis is admittedly arbitrary, but it makes them more accessible for future reference. Many of the features are linked with one another, but their distinctions will be made clearer through detailed examination. The upcoming features which will be explored in *Chapter 2: Musical Style* are presented in the table below:

Table 4: *Musical Style* categories and features

CATEGORY	DISTINCTIVE FEATURE		
TEXTURE	Cathedral of Sound	Franckian basses	Registral transfer
HARMONY	Chromatic Style	Counterpoint	The number 3
THEMATIC MATERIAL	Infinite Melody	Pivot points	Franck and the choral bells
RHYTHM	Note Value Diminution	Silence	Discreet/Delayed Down Beats & Emphatic weak beats
STRUCTURE	Chord and phrase pairs	The three parts	Cyclic form
KEYBOARD STYLE	Large chord spreads	Rapid alternating hands	Three hands technique
CHARACTER OPPOSITIONS	Spiritual/Erotic/Serene	Pianist/Organist	Salon/Improvisation

There are several chapters that are dedicated solely to describing Franck's style. The foremost among them that focus on his piano compositions are:

1. D'Indy: 'Predilections and Influences' (*César Franck,* 1909, 92–97).

2. Emmanuel: 'La langue et le style' (*César Franck: étude critique*, 1930, 89–110).

3. Cortot: 'The Piano Music of César Franck' (*French Piano Music,* 1932, 37–109).

4. Demuth: 'General Characteristics of His Music' (*César Franck,* 1949, 44–60).

5. Vallas: 'The Composer' (*César Franck,* 1951, 265–276).

6. Davies: 'The Piano Works' (*Franck,* 1973, 63–73).

There are also many articles which shed light on Franck's compositional language, specifically the various articles written around the centenary of Franck's birth in 1922 and death in 1990. For the following chapter, where possible, extracts will be taken from his *Églogue* (1842) and

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l'achèvement des Béatitudes, est la première œuvre par laquelle cette manière s'affirme avec une entière décision.' Julien Tiersot, *Un demi-siècle de Musique Française,* (Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan, 1918), 137–138.

Prélude, aria et final (1888),[30] the two most peripheral solo piano works of his compositional life, highlighting similarities which will help bridge the 40-year gap in his piano compositions. This research goes against the views of the preeminent Franck scholar at a recent conference in Liège:

> One thing seems certain: trying to standardise Franck's works is futile. They owe their originality to a certain irregularity.[31]

Textural Qualities

Cathedral of Sound

> These grand constructions of sound where a thought, in order to express itself fully, needs ample pauses and vast space to form itself, to allow for the necessary impulse for its development.[32]

One of the nomenclatures created for the purpose of this study, *Cathedral of Sound* plays on Franck being later distinguished as an organist, possessing a religious character and also celebrated for his musical structures; but most importantly it is highly suggestive of the soundworld it creates: it evokes hearing a single chord resonate throughout a cathedral, followed by the reverberating silence in which the ear continues hearing the previous harmonies, even if they have ceased to sound. We hear this texture frequently throughout the early piano works; in Franck's later works the harmonies generally become increasingly more dissonant and distant while maintaining similar effects. Previous writers have hinted at a somewhat similar feature, though in each case with a slight variation in meaning.[33] It is also suggestive of the Franckian religious mysticism fashioned by his students. It can be found throughout his entire output and

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[30] This work was published two years before his death. Paul Liang commented on the work: 'Today, the *Prelude, Aria and Finale* has lost much of its performance appeal, as pianists seem to prefer its predecessor, the *Prelude, Chorale and Fugue*'. Paul Liang, "An Analysis of the Major Solo Piano Works of César Franck" (Ph.D.. diss., Boston: Boston University, College of Fine Arts, 2002):103.

[31] 'Une chose semble acquise : essayer de normaliser l'œuvre de Franck est vain. C'est à une certaine irrégularité qu'elle doit son originalité.' Joël-Marie Fauquet, transcript from presentation in Liège University, from the César Franck Symposium, as heard on May 15th, 2022.

[32] **'**Ces grandes constructions sonores où se complaît une pensée qui, pour s'exprimer toute, a besoin des amples périodes, du vaste espace qu'elles lui accordent, s'édifient d'elles-mêmes, ainsi qu'il sied, sous l'impulsion nécessaire de son développement.' Paul Dukas, "César Franck", (*Chronique des arts*, 1904 October 22), 274.

[33] 'Son œuvre fut, comme celui de nos poètes de la pierre, de nos bons Français constructeurs de cathédrales, tout de splendide harmonie et de mystique pureté.' D'Indy, *César Franck*, 53. D'Indy elsewhere also refers to the music as a 'cathédrale sonore'. D'Indy, *Cours de composition musicale,* 603. His contemporary Saint-Saëns, speaking on the Mass Op. 12, is reported to have said 'C'est de la musique cathedralesque'. Langraf, "César Franck und die Musik für den Gottesdienst", 158. We have many permutations of this description throughout literature on Franck.

is an amalgamation of various other features. Despite what is perhaps his most frequently discussed characteristic — his chromatic style — it is in opposition to it. It is defined by:

(1) An inactivity of harmony, often encompassing a large range of registral sonority.

(2) Pinpoints of notes that penetrate through the dense sonorous range.

(3) Loose rhythmic pulse, frequently accompanied by fermatas/silence.

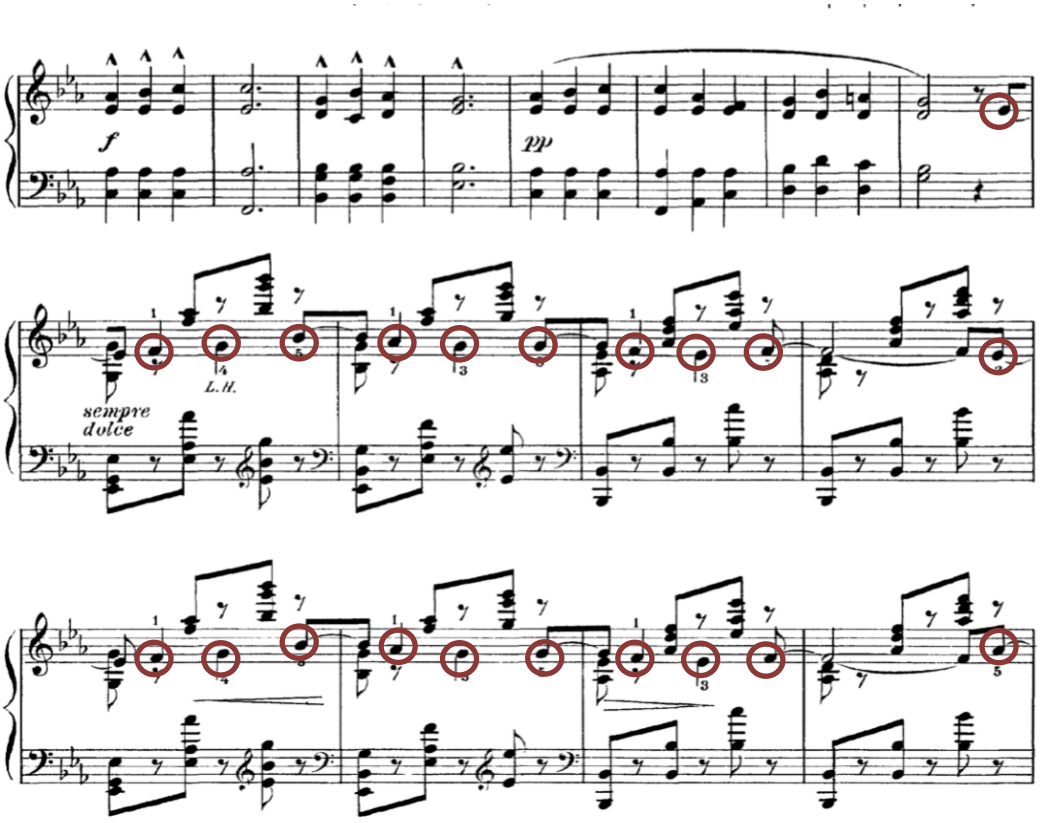
1. This differentiates Franck's use from instances such as those found in Liszt, where single tones would be played with little or no harmonic background. For Franck, playing single notes on the piano would rarely suffice; for example the opening passacaglia theme from his early work Op. 1/1 Trio (1842) is presented in octaves, or the curious canonic development in the Prélude of the *Prélude, aria et final* which commences in octaves. Franck always preferred, precluding and irrespective of the organ, grander sonorities.

2. Specifically, notes which strongly penetrate through a background of usually stable harmony. The notes are often found in the tenor voice, further enhancing the static atmosphere. We will see in Franck's chromatic style his general propensity for filling out the middle register.[34]

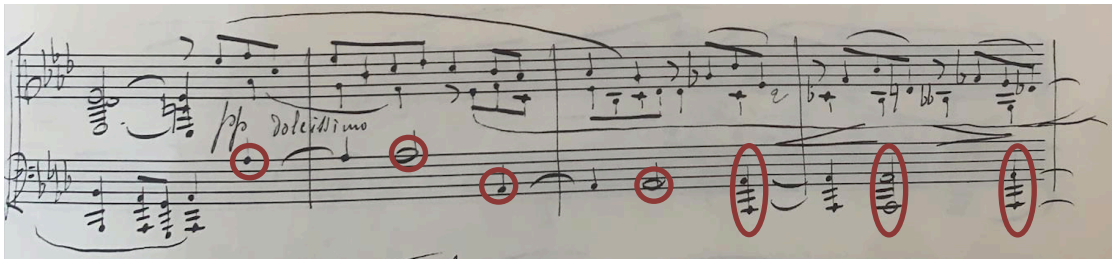
3. When not marching forward at a steady, predictable fashion, Franck utilised various techniques to enhance the loose rhythmic pulse, further explained in the section on *Rhythmic Qualities*. He seemed to relish the impression of a great stillness.

The mixture of the above characteristics creates the impression of an introduction akin to those found in the plethora of fantasies appearing in this period, and indeed it is often utilised before introducing new material or in the preparation of a new section.

[34] There are several examples from Scherers "César Francks Bearbeitung der vier Schubert-Lieder", 65–66 under 'changes for musical reasons' regarding Franck's filling in the middle register.



Example 13a: Op. 3, *Églogue*, bars 66–81, *Andante*. The highlighted tenor voice appears in a wash of harmony which splashes across the entire keyboard. Note that the chords are subtly relegated to both hands — *three hands technique* — as the thematic material must be held with the thumb or fifth finger while reaching the chord, alternating between both hands. Appearing daunting on the page, it is surprisingly comfortable for the pianist, whereas the listener might not realise the unique effect Franck created here from the pianist unless they see the performers hands.

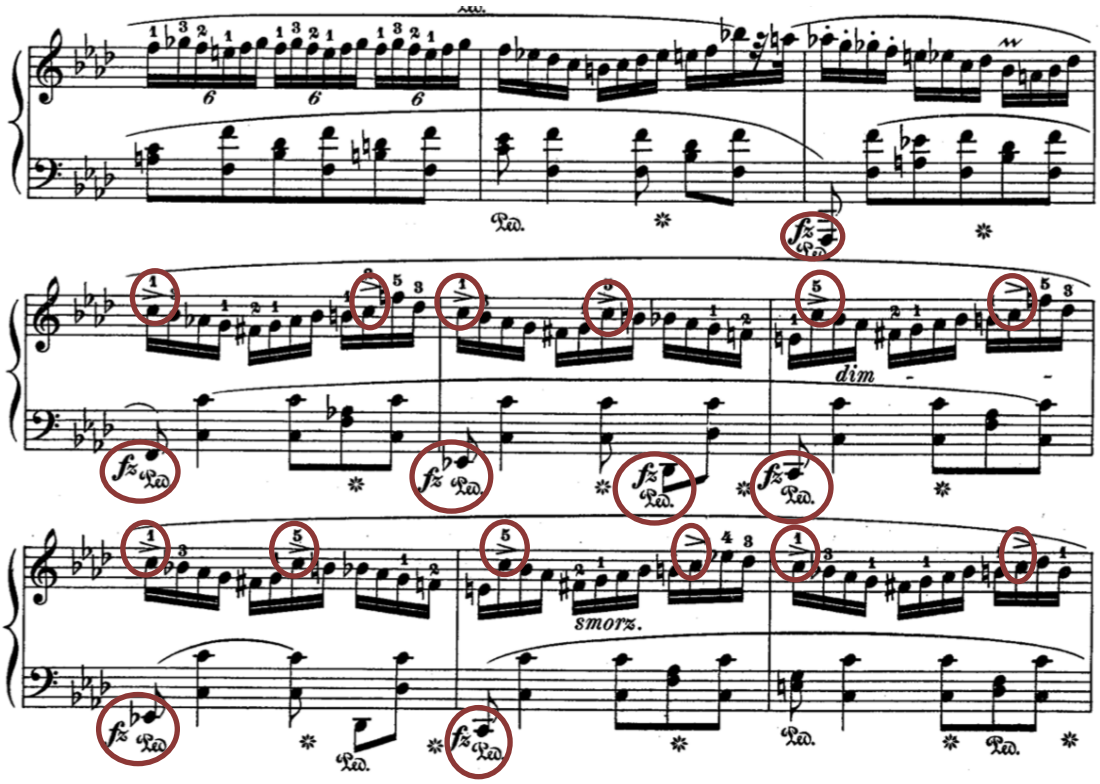


Example 13b: *Prélude, [aria] et final*, bars 221–224. Fac-similé de César Franck « Prélude, aria et final pour piano: manuscrit autographe, 1887 (Réf.5706) » avec l'aimable autorisation de Anne Fuzeau Productions - France - www.annefuzeau.com. Note the static harmony over the $A^{\flat}$ tonic syncopated basses — *Franckian basses* – which provide a loose rhythmic pulse in the *pp dolcissimo*. Whichever vocal line the performer decides to bring out will appear as pinpoints of notes across this meditative tonic chord. Gouin mistakenly believed this Franckian feature to be exclusive to this moment in his output.[35] Here the static harmony is even more emphasised than in the Op. 3 *Églogue*.

For another representation of the *Cathedral of Sound* see all four iterations of ***B*** theme in Op. 3 *Églogue*, the principal theme in *Prélude, choral et fugue*, and many moments in the Aria from the

[35] 'The *Aria* is perhaps unique in Franck's mature style in how it is melodically and, most importantly, tonally static.' Gouin, "Teleology in César Franck's Prélude, Choral et Fugue", 49.

Prélude, aria et final. Both examples above are marked *dolce*, a common and individual marking in Franck's usage. Of course, there are examples of this effect found in piano music not written by Franck, but there are subtle differences:



Example 13c: A non-Franckian *Cathedral of Sound* may be found in Chopin's '*Heroic*' *Polonaise* Op. 53, bars 140–148, published in 1843, a year after Franck's Op. 3 *Églogue* (1842).

In the above Chopin extract we see many Franckian features: basses which tie the section together and strongly reinforce the tonality; stagnation of harmony; pinpoints of melody; and descending scalic movement. Here though there is more chromatic dissonance and the pinpoints of notes are strongly rhythmic, unlike parallel instances in Franck.

Cathedral of Sound can be found not just in piano works by Franck – there are many instances in his Op 1. Piano Trios (1842), works for piano and voice, the oratorio *Ruth* (1845), and the orchestral *Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne* (1846), which is the exemplary work that

showcases this effect, with the parallel late work example being the opening of *Psyché* (1887). The effect is sometimes referred to as having a 'weightless' quality.[36]

Franckian basses

The use of basses in Franck's music has been particularly ruthlessly simplified; the perception of Franck as pre-dominantly an organist seems to have been the starting point for the understanding of Franck's basses and pedal points.[37] However, by taking the early piano works as a point of departure for understanding his style regarding this particular facet, we will see in the future examination that his unique use of basses could already be said to imitate that of an organ pedal board. Considering Franck's first organ piece was written in 1846 and that at the time of writing these early piano works Franck was still by and large considered a piano virtuoso, this may prove to be the most valuable understanding of Franck's style over previous interpretations of the early works, thus perhaps negating the organ lens often used for viewing Franck's music.

There are specific aspects to Franck's use of basses that are frequently employed. They are:

(1) Persistently supporting the rhythm.

(2) Accentuated, and sometimes accompanied with *vibrato* indication.

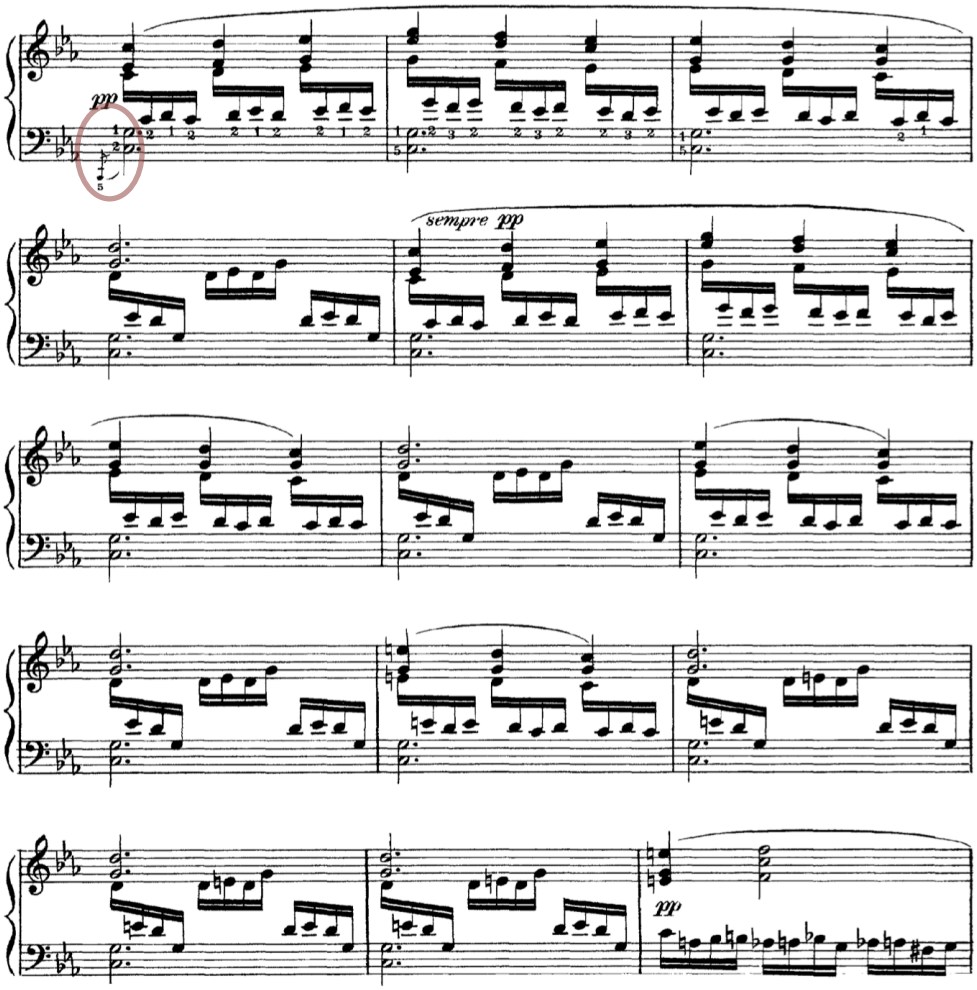
(3) Playing a prominent role throughout the work and tying it together.

1. Rhythm, as will be seen later, is perhaps the most criticised aspect of his music. The basses often pulse along on the strong beats, permanently present and generally lacking rhythmic variety. However, Franck did have a proclivity for basses that are syncopated or on weak basses. This will be seen in *discreet down beats.*

[36] '[Referring to *Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne*] What strikes one on hearing this work for large orchestra […] is the singular way in which, through a continuous weaving of sustained notes, ostinatos, tremolos and harmonics, Franck thinks simultaneously of space and time. "*Lento ma non troppo*" is the only indication of tempo in a single movement, with no breaks in tension, whose unity is sealed by the complementary nature of the thematic elements. The layering of the instrumental parts around E major makes the music weightless. The obsessive pulsation of the strings governs the flow of this meditation with its spectral and mysterious sonority, dominated by the immense low brass sixteen-bar chorale.' Joël-Marie Fauquet's album liner notes to *César Franck Complete Orchestral Works*, Orchestre Philharmonique Royal de Liège (Fuga Libera, 2022), 28, FUG791.
[37] Vallas, *César Franck,* 338.

2. Sometimes assumed to mean *vibrant*. For more on his use of the term *vibrato*, see *Performance Indications*.

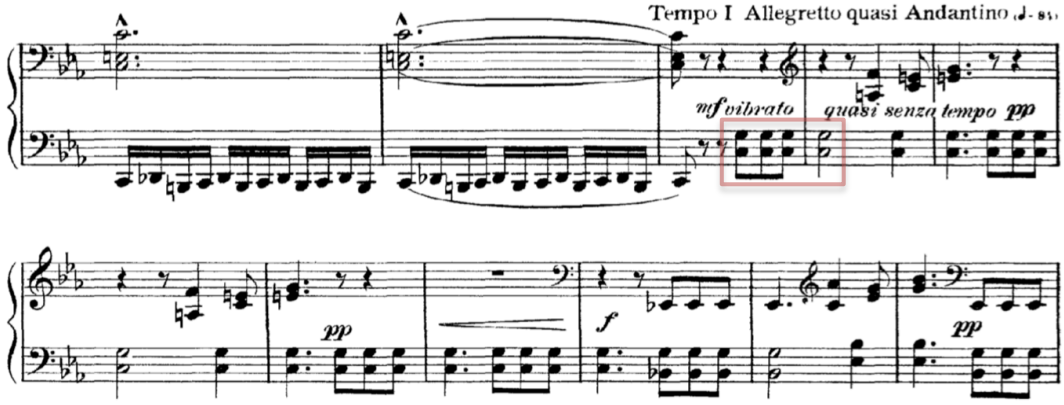
3. Found even in the early piano works: 'Franck forms large scale coherences by using latent organ points which are primarily to be "felt", whereas in other cases a skilful use of the pedal can make them clearly audible.'[38] This is a generally understood facet of Franck's style, though it is difficult to provide evidence for. In Chapter 4 *Form* we will see one possible compositional method Franck used, that of deciding keys as a starting point for composition. This pre-decided tonal plan in combination with the strong underpinning found in Franck's basses is one of the possible reasons for the implicit understanding of them tying the work together.



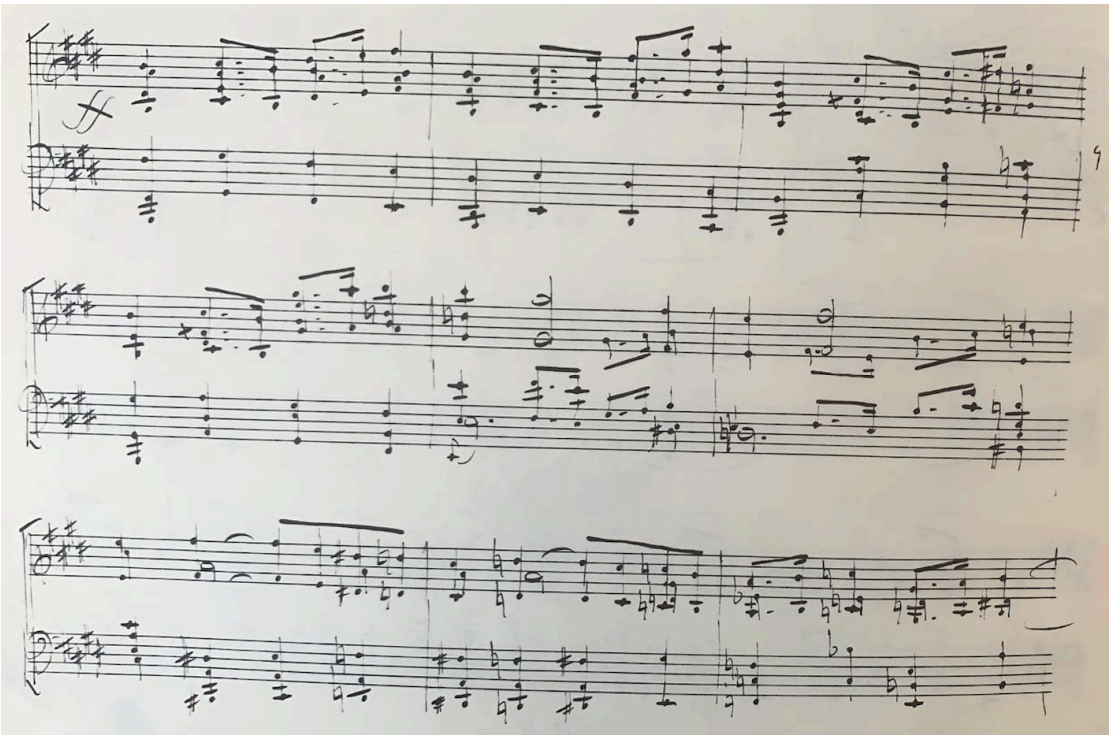
Example 14a: Op. 3, *Églogue* (1842), bars 309–323, *Allegro*. The highlighted C+G bass, which lasts 14 bars, could easily be considered imitative of organ writing, despite being composed four years before his first organ composition in 1846. Long-lasting basses are found throughout all his piano works.

[38] Koch, *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle: pour pianoforte*, 7.

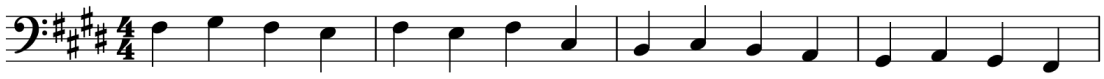
This would be considered *Cathedral of Sound* if not for the forward drive and the strong soprano line, and it is not the later defined *Infinite Melody* since the thematic material does not emphasis the weak beats nor cross barlines.



Example 14b: *Églogue* 333–343. Note how ten bars later the same fifth in the bass re-appears in a *quasi senza tempo* in a *Cathedral of Sound* setting, complete with a *vibrato* marking, heralding the new section and thus creating a thread with basses that ties the sections together.



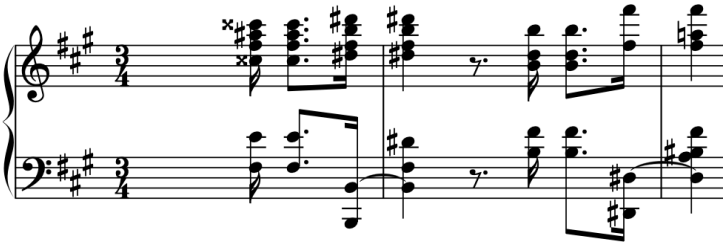
Example 14c: [*Prélude*], *aria et final*, bars 32–40. Fac-similé de César Franck « Prélude, aria et final pour piano: manuscrit autographe, 1887 (Réf.5706) » avec l'aimable autorisation de Anne Fuzeau Productions - France - www.annefuzeau.com. Note the basses moving generally by step, as if on a pedalboard. This *Prélude* features more unyielding basses on every beat than its triptych sibling.



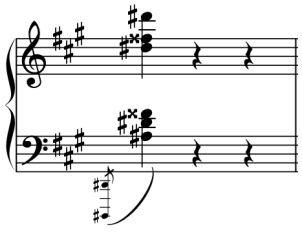
Example 14d: [*Prélude*], *Aria et Final*, bars 32–40, bassline. Note the regularity of the sequence, found throughout the work.

Basses are generally an integral part to any music and it must be stressed that each of these distinctions appear in the output of other composers, but it is Franck's expressive and structural use of basses that warrants attention.[39] Though mentioned with regards to his late piano compositions,[40] his orchestral works have also been critiqued for imitation of an organ pedal-board,[41] as well as the use of basses in his swansong *Chorals* abound with bass doubling, which could be seen as unnecessary and ineffective organ writing. Curiously, we have Cortot's enlargement of the range of the keyboard part in the *Variations symphoniques* 'to make up for the evident material inferiority of this sonorous fight',[42] overriding Franck's clear attentiveness and control over the basses, much in the same way that has been described with Berlioz's dealing with the same musical feature:

> the strong melodic role of the bass line becomes evident [...] Berlioz preferred a smooth, often stepwise, movement to the striding pattern of a functional bass. The bass line is in free counterpoint with the upper line, with harmonic filling.[43]



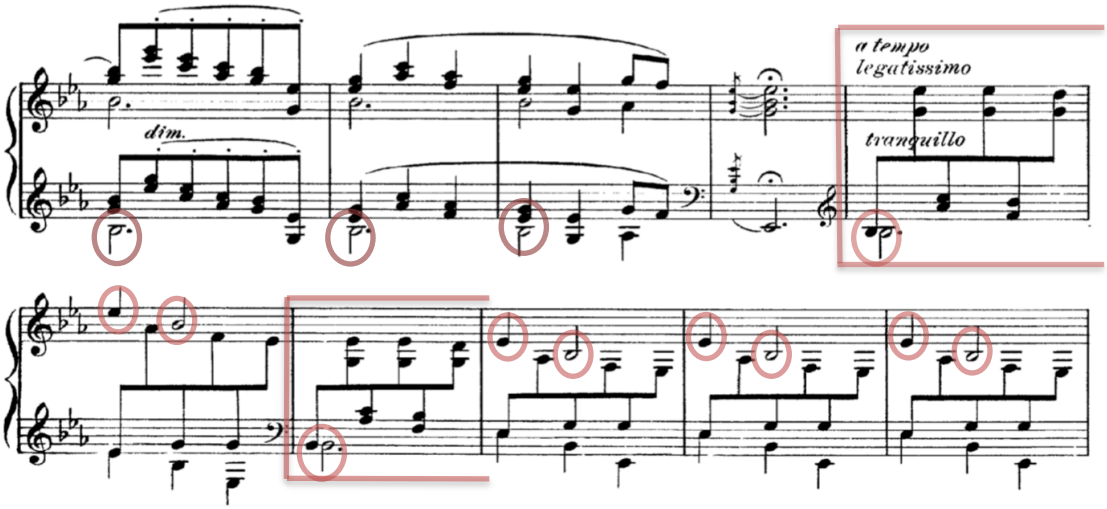
'The same thing for the suspense chord on D sharp preceding, six bars further on, the attack of the scales in octaves that we suggest be played as follows;'[44]



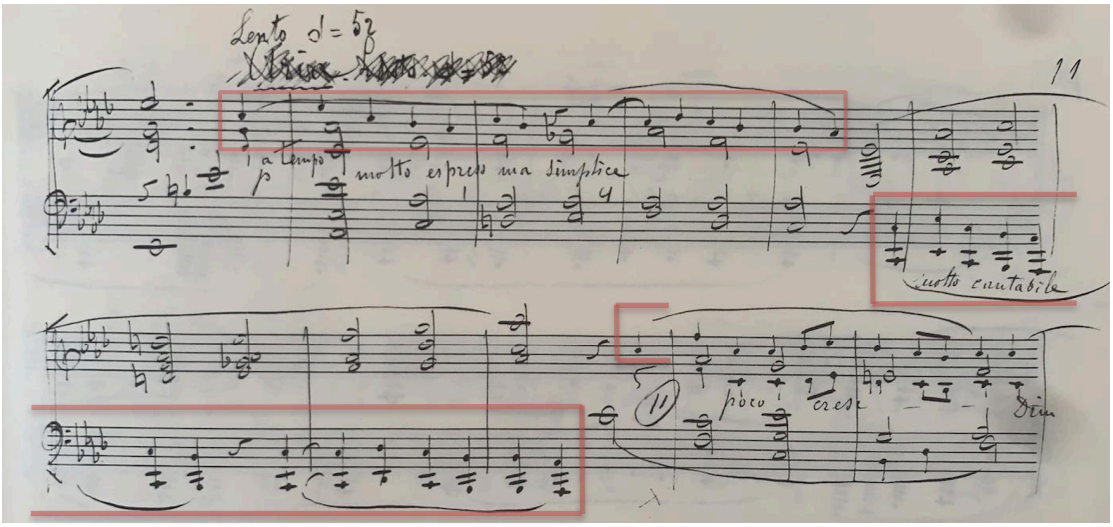
[39] Dennis R Cranford cites another example of Franck's particular usage: 'the bass line adds a linear connection between the major- and minor-third related key areas'. Cranford, "Harmonic and contrapuntal techniques in the late keyboard works of César Franck", 59.
[40] [on the *Prélude, aria et final*] 'the thick basses which underline this theme on most of its many appearances in the work suggest organ influences not apparent in the *Prélude, choral et fugue*'. Davies, *César Franck*, 71.
[41] [On Franck's orchestral writing] 'Gabriel Fauré, y a reconnu certaines défaillances, surtout « la fatigante continuité des basses, véritables pédales d'orgue ». / Gabriel Fauré recognised certain shortcomings in it, especially "the tiresome permanence of the basses, as if genuine organ pedals".' Vallas, *César Franck,* 338.
[42] Alfred Cortot, *César Franck Variazioni Sinfoniche*, (Milan: Edizioni Curci, 1950), 24.
[43] Hugh Macdonald, "Berlioz, (Louis-)Hector"*, Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed June 2020. www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/Berlioz.
[44] Cortot, *César Franck Variazioni Sinfoniche,* 24.

Registral Transfer

As will be seen in the examination, *registral transfer* is found ubiquitously in Franck's music, where his thematic material frequently moves between voices and changes register. Though it is generally a standard component of all music, it is one of Franck's structural and imitative ingredients, reminiscent of the baroque style, which gives his music a particularly Franckian flavour. The *aria* from *Prélude, aria et final* features this voice exchange prominently, as seen similarly in the early piano works, including the *Églogue*:



Example 15a: *Églogue*, bars 20–25. While the *registral transfer* here to the lower octave is somewhat mundane, it is worth noting that this lends itself naturally to Franck's counterpoint, and more specifically to *Cathedral of Sound*, where the pinpoints of melody are often found in middle voices, typically in the tenor. Also note the permanence of B^{b} pedal points in the previous phrase, a dominant pedal preparing the entry of the first theme in bar 26.



Example 15b: *Prélude, [aria] et final*, bars 205–215. Fac-similé de César Franck « Prélude, aria et final pour piano: manuscrit autographe, 1887 (Réf.5706) » avec l'aimable autorisation de Anne Fuzeau Productions - France - www.annefuzeau.com. Note the first iteration of the theme is immediately

repeated in the bass, which is then repeated in the top voice. *Registral transfer* is one of the prevalent features of this Aria.

Since we frequently see this style of theme-handling, it is worth referring to one of Franck's students, Louis Vierne, on how counterpoint in improvisation was taught in a style of Gregorian chant:

> Existing since the foundation of the class in organ, it consisted in a note-for-note accompaniment of a liturgical chant in the upper part; then the chant became the bass in whole notes, not transposed, accompanied by three upper parts in a sort of classical florid counterpoint; the whole notes then passed into the top part, transposed a fourth higher, and received in their turn the classical florid accompaniment. Nothing was closer to formula than this counterpoint, strict without being exactly so, crammed with retarded fifths, with seventh chords prolonged with the fifth, with sequences - in a word, with all that is forbidden in written counterpoint.... In those bygone days one did not hesitate to accompany each note with a chord, an effect about as artistic as if it were applied to the vocal runs of *bel canto*.[45]

We frequently see the immediate *registral transfer* of material with Franck's basses. Since he joined the organ class of François Benoist in October 1840,[46] it can be assumed that already at the time of composing the early piano works Franck would have encountered this style of teaching. The constant counterpoint and chordal accompaniment could also explain Franck's lack of single unharmonized lines in his music, such as that mentioned in *Cathedral of Sound*.

All the above features described under textural qualities lend themselves to the orchestral nature of Franck's works, coupled with his generally larger forms (at a time when miniatures were generally in vogue): 'The symphonic breath pervades all of Franck's major works, regardless of the species to which they belong. There is no need to emphasise that this symphonic moment is inherently more instrumental than vocal in nature.'[47] While Armin Landgraf is referring here to his late works, it can be applied equally to the early works, both the symphonic — *Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne* and *Ruth* — and the early piano works.

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[45] Louis Vierne, *Mes Souvenirs*, (Paris: L'Orgue, 1970), 22.
[46] François Benoist held the post of organ professor at the Conservatoire for fifty-three years. Among his students were Hector Berlioz, Camille Saint-Saëns, Georges Bizet, Charles-Valentin Alkan.
[47] 'Der sinfonische Atem durchweht alle bedeutenden Werke Francks, egal welcher Spezies sie angehoren. Dass dieses sinfonische Moment von Haus aus mehr instrumentaler als vokaler Art ist, braucht nicht betont zu werden'. Landgraf, "César Franck und die Musik für den Gottesdienst", 159. **n**

Harmonic Qualities

Chromatic style

By far the most common cited feature, writers have correspondingly correlated chromaticism to the Franckian style; so much so that a lack of *chromatic style* makes a work appear to some to be distinctly *non-Franckian*. As an example of its importance:

> Perhaps even more so, Franck's Romanticism is constantly asserting itself, imposing itself, displaying itself in the very writing, if not in the early works, at least in the scores notated in maturity and old age: incessant, obstinate modulation ("Modulez! Modulez!" he would shout to his pupils in his organ class at the Conservatoire), constant chromaticism, deriving from various sources, J.S. Bach or Frédéric Chopin.[48]

This chromaticism was at times a cause for condemnation:

> The main criticism made against him was that he violated the regime of "neighbouring tones", the physiognomy of sound constructions. [...] Saint-Saëns himself, who, in *Harmonie et Mélodie*, dared to sound the death knell of classical tonality, was part of the protesters' camp. "Mr. Franck is too chromatic" said Ambroise Thomas[49]

The majority of studies have focused predominantly on his harmonic language. Though there is an important discussion in the way that Franck used chromaticism in later periods, we will see a noticeable lack of chromaticism in the early works. In his unique research George Norman Sanger found unsurprisingly that 'the statistical findings of this study also corroborate the historical premise that the styles of these works become increasingly chromatic.'[50] While there may have been a Wagnerian influence[51] — it may very well have been his encounter with *Tristan und Isolde* that created this important component of his late compositional style[52] —it was not as

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[48] 'Autant, plus encore peut-être, le romantisme franckiste s'affirme sans cesse, s'impose, s'étale en l'écriture même, sinon des premières œuvres, du moins des partitions notées dans la maturité et la vieillesse : modulation incessante, obstinée (« Modulez ! Modulez ! » criait-il à ses élèves dans sa classe d'orgue du Conservatoire), chromatisme constant, dérivant de diverses sources, J.-S. Bach ou Frédéric Chopin'. Vallas. *César Franck*, 303.

[49] 'Le reproche essentiel formulé contre lui fut de porter atteinte au régime des « tons voisins », à la physionomie des constructions sonores. […] Saint-Saëns lui-même qui, dans *Harmonie et Mélodie*, osait sonner le glas de la tonalité classique, rangeait dans le camp des protestataires. « M. Franck est trop chromatique », disait Ambroise Thomas'. Emmanuel, *César Franck : étude critique*, 91.

[50] George Norman Sanger, "Chromaticism in the solo keyboard works of Franck and Fauré" (Ph. D diss., Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1976).

[51] 'The influence of Wagner is clear […] Franck's seriousness of expression and characteristic chromatic harmony is also clear in his writing'. Cooper, "Nineteenth-Century Spectacle", 45.

[52] Though unlike his students, Franck never made the pilgrimage to Bayreuth. Pierre de Bréville, "Les Fioretti du pere Franck", *Mercure de France*, 1 septembre 1935, 262.

revolutionary or reactionary; writers noticed that Franck obeyed old classical principles when they studied his music on a larger scale.[53]

There are several characteristics of Franck's chromaticism that seem to make it distinctly *Franckian*:

(1) Classical in its grander assessment.

(2) Importance of the fifth degree of the scale.

(3) Ambiguity of major/minor mode.

(4) Preference for tonal centres with sharps, specifically F♯.

(5) Persistent modulations within a clear tonal framework.

1. Some sources claim that Franck's tonal shifts were pre-determined instead of transitory coincidences,[54] which would lend itself to the common impression that his music is rooted in tradition, specifically that of the large-scale tonal movement found in classicism, despite the constant modulations. Another response to the impression of tradition could be Franck's secure dominant-tonic cadences and modulations,[55] ubiquitous in the early works,[56] or the regularity with which he modulates, creating a logical underlying structure.[57] His 'classical' structures will be looked at in *Structural Qualities.*

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[53] His emphasis on tonal centres may have been what Cortot alluded to when he discussed Franck's chromatic style: '[on triptychs and organ works] one might describe it as static, in contrast with the dynamic, fiery chromaticism of Liszt or Wagner.' / 'l'on pourrait dire passif, par opposition au chromatisme mouvementé et agissant de Liszt ou de Wagner.' personality' Alfred Cortot. *L'œuvre pianistique de César Franck,* 13.

[54] 'I have it on reliable authority that he had reached the point where he had fixed in advance the modulatory scheme of his next work, regardless of what form it might take.' Alfred Cortot, *L'œuvre pianistique de César Franck,* 66. And: '[during teaching] il se montrait fort sévère sur le choix et sur l'ordre des modulations' Maurice Emmanuel. *César Franck : étude critique*,107.

[55] 'In keeping with Franck's adherence to tonality, the cadences of these works [late keyboard works] are quite conventional. In fact it is quite often the V – I authentic cadence that provides the only element of tonal identification to a highly chromatic passage'. Cranford, "*Harmonic and contrapuntal techniques in the late keyboard works of César Franck"*, 345–6.

[56] 'The large key relationships reflect closely-related keys, that of tonic and dominant. Remote relationships exist as transitory tonics' Cranford, "*Harmonic and contrapuntal techniques in the late keyboard works of César Franck"*, 59. While he speaks of the late keyboard works, this is also precisely what has been found in the early piano works.

[57] One thing is certain amongst critics; Franck's music is rooted firmly in tradition: 'L'harmonie chez César Franck, est appliquée à la tonalité moderne élargie. Elle procède pas à pas, en enchaînements hardis mais réguliers. Elle ne crée pas des vocables nouveaux : mais elle use des anciens avec magnificence ; elle en fait des moyens lyriques.' Maurice Emmanuel, *César Franck : étude critique*, 95.

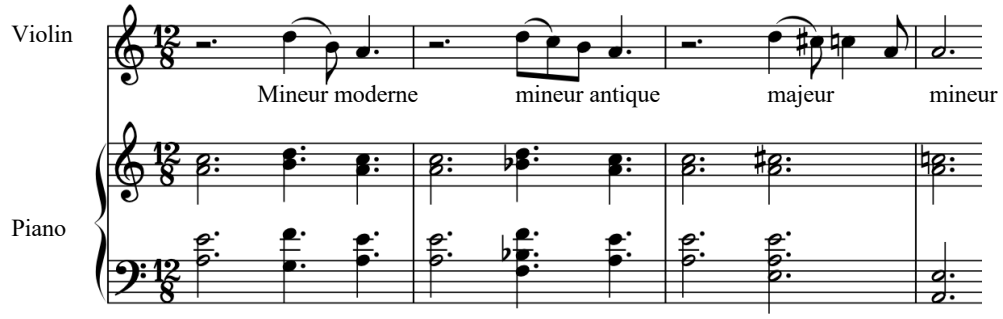
2. The perfect fifth seems to be an individual tool in Franck's harmonic arsenal and found throughout Franck's music with his own individual stamp, used as a tonal underpinning to stabilise chromaticism. Tiersot describes this foundation of the fifth and the classical impression:

> [on the Quintet, with examples] All the feeling for tonality would seem to have been lost did not the perfect fifth, the fundamental harmony, maintain its support without interruption, however shifting. Just as the theme ceaselessly reappears, intervening among the developments in which it is least expected, the same perfect chord, principle of all music, always ends by obtruding its weight to put an end to suspensions whose resolution, at times, we no longer expect. Hence this seeming polymorphism is brought back to unity, and that is one of the essential characteristics of César Franck's musical idiom: he greatly enriched harmony by lending it diversity; but at the same time, he respected the fundamental principles.[58]

It also lends itself to the impression of a Gregorian chant, which as noted previously was studied in the Paris Conservatoire and which we will see in the *Rhythmic Qualities* and the *Spiritual/Erotic/Serene* sections.

3. Coupled with the perfect fifth, his unceasing modulation also allowed him to often conceal the major/minor mode; this uncertainty being over-ruled when needed for expressive purposes.[59] This 'modal interchange' sound construction with a latent or implied third permits a frequent alternation of modes, as Tiersot notes:

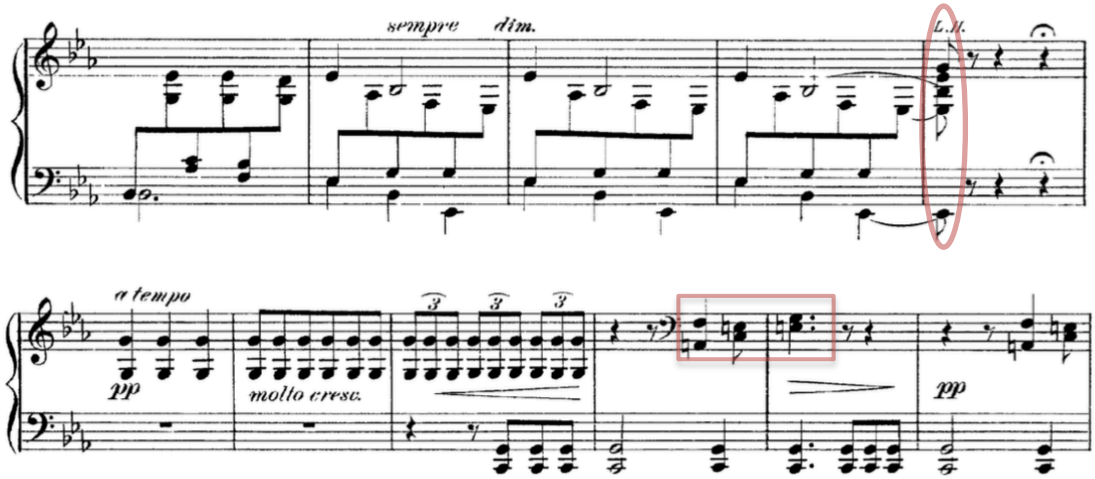
> He also liked the juxtaposition of the major and the minor and drew remarkable effects from it. We need only mention the first measures of *Lento* in the Quintet.[60]



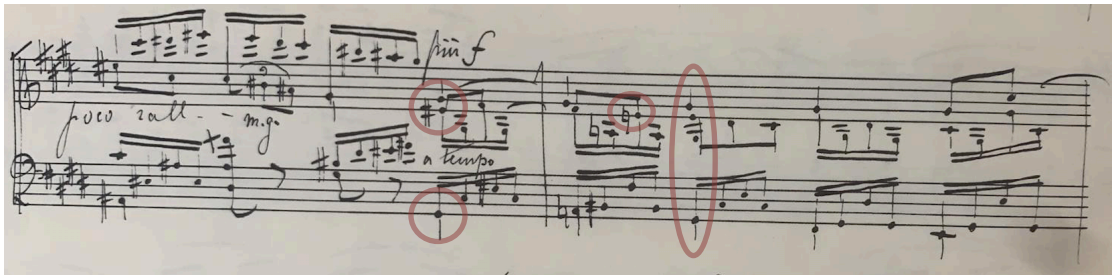
Example 16a: A reconstruction of the musical extract found in Maurice Emmanuel's *César Franck: étude critique,* (1930), page 100.

[58] Tiersot (trans. Frederick H. Martens), "César Franck", 52.
[59] [Regarding the *Prière*] 'The change to major key (i.e. E major) is particularly radiant and typical of the composer'. Davies, *César Franck*, 77.
[60] 'Il aima aussi la juxtaposition du majeur et du mineur et il en tira des accents remarquables. On citera seulement les premières mesures du *Lento* dans le Quintette.' Emmanuel, *César Franck : étude critique*, 100.

Cranford's analytical study of the late keyboard works found that 'a common gesture is the turning of a phrase to minor as the cadence approaches and then returning to major at the point of tonic arrival.'[61] Demuth had already noted this tendency in his early works: 'His fondness for suddenly changing the mode from major to minor, and vice versa, for a bar or two was evidenced at an early age.[62] But a single orchestral work, *Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne*, was the only evidence provided by writers of this feature being present in his early works, which we will see is also present in the early piano works studied in this thesis.



Example 16b: Op. 3, *Églogue*, bars 152–162, climax of first section and commencement of 'development' section. The emphatic E♭ major ending of the previous section lends itself to the E♮ surprise, as the listener expects a c minor chord instead of C major. As a result, we see the importance of the fifth degree of the scale, the ambiguity of major/minor and the work being classical in its grander assessment (see *Chapter 3: Franck's Compositional Techniques in Practice*).



Example 16c: [*Prélude*], *aria et final*, bars 64–65. Fac-similé de César Franck « Prélude, aria et final pour piano: manuscrit autographe, 1887 (Réf.5706) » avec l'aimable autorisation de Anne Fuzeau Productions - France - www.annefuzeau.com. The key has been firmly established as C♯ major in the preceding bars, so the E♮ and subsequent c♯ minor is unexpected. In this moment we see the fifth degree in the bass, which prepares the modal interchange (highlighted). This moment displays the

[61] Cranford, "Harmonic and contrapuntal techniques in the late keyboard works of César Franck", 347.
[62] Demuth, *César Franck,* 48. He provides an example from Franck's *Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne* (c. 1846).

importance of the fifth degree, modal interchange, and is also classical in its grander assessment (frequently referred to as a classical sonata[63]) and also features many instances of an F# tonal centre.

Another interesting moment of modal ambiguity occurs with the suspended note at the start of the *choral* from the *Prélude, choral et fugue*, which features a dissonance as a result of both major and minor thirds clashing. Finally, his modal effects were not limited to the ambiguity of the major/minor mode:

> Franck's use of modality (other than the major-minor interchange) must be considered as an accessory to his chromatic style. Throughout he maintains a sense of tonality. The use of modes may be viewed as explaining certain altered qualities (such as $IV^{b}7$ in minor and v in major). The use of melodic modal patterns is most prominent in the third organ chorale. Even there, however, the Phrygian-like cadences are primarily extensions of weak authentic cadences.[64]

Moments of modal ambiguity in the four early piano works will be noted in the examination. What is important to take away from Cranford's study is that Franck practiced what he preached by making his tonality always clear.

4. Franck had an evident preference for the key of F#, so much so that certain commentators have linked it to a spiritual side of him.[65] This is one of the most salient features of his music, found in all his compositional periods and genres. It could very well have stemmed from his piano playing:

> Playing a melody in C major feels very different under the hand from playing it in F-sharp major. We are physically in a different realm.[66]

Here Charles Rosen, though speaking about general piano playing, potentially exposes a secret of Franck's modulatory practice: the 'classical' reception of his works and his choice of keys. Franck, well famed for his large hands, could have felt particularly comfortable with playing in F#, enjoying the physical feeling of playing with this as his tonal centre. However, this caused

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[63] 'Very different from the work analysed above [PCF] is the construction of this one [PAF], which brings to the sonata the same elements of growth as the preceding composition supplied to the prelude with fugue.' / 'Très différente de celle que nous venons d'examiner est la construction de cette œuvre qui apporte à la *forme sonate* les mêmes éléments de rénovation que la précédente apportait au *prélude et fugue'.* D'Indy, *Selected Piano Compositions,* 38.

[64] Cranford, "Harmonic and contrapuntal techniques in the late keyboard works of César Franck", 348.

[65] 'de plus, ainsi que dans cette dernière œuvre, l'accès aux régions célestes se fait au moyen du ton de fa dièze majeur qui a toujours représenté pour Franck la lumière paradisiaque.' D'Indy, *César Franck*, 198. See *Spiritual/Erotic/Serene* for more.

[66] Charles Rosen, *Piano Notes: the hidden world of the pianist,* (London: Penguin books, 2004), 229.

problems for him since it was not just his piano works that frequent F♯ as a tonal root.[67] Vallas expressed similarly what was described above, but specifically with regards to Franck's music:

> [one only needs to] examine the full score of *Rédemption* from this particular angle, that work being the first in which Franck systematically put into practice his theories of tonal progression that would lead the music ever upward towards the extreme sharp keys. This planned tonality was of such importance to Franck that, if we may accept the reliable but disquieting testimony of Alfred Cortot, the composer, at least during his latter years, would fix in advance the modulations which would govern a forthcoming piece of music, though he as yet had not decided on its subject or its nature.[68]

Some writers have bloated this idea to apply his spiritual side into an amalgamation of character and modulatory choices:

> Basically, Franck appears to have used sharp keys to represent light or redemption. Flat keys, conversely, represented dark or evil. The more sharps or flats used generally correlated with the intensity of the light or darkness. It has been suggested that Franck had a synaesthetic sense; for him, each key had a coloraturas association and a mystical connection, like Scriabin, who was to follow.[69]

5. Finally, the persistent modulations are the most noticeable part of his chromatic style. It is what separates Franck from Wagner in terms of their compositional technique. We find some insight into the difference in Davies' *Franck and his Circle:*

> A close comparison of the styles of the two composers would nevertheless reveal definite disparities. Franck's chromatic leanings were always aimed at making modulation easier. That is to say, he never wished to remain in one key for long enough to establish a fixed sense of tonality. Wagner, on the other hand, was inclined to prefer static (or at best slow-changing) harmony, using chromatic movement to give a sense of inflection. [...] Whether Franck noted any kinship between himself and Wagner is accordingly rather dubious.[70]

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[67] [on the first performance of *Redemption* on Thursday in Holy Week, April 10, 1873] 'The musicians of the orchestra, put off by the fingering in the key of F sharp major, and following, moreover, a habit dear to the performers of the time with regard to beginners (Franck was, alas! at fifty, a beginner in front of the public...), the musicians of the orchestra, I say, declared this finale unperformable. However, the maestro energetically refused to make this new alteration and the performance was deplorably affected by the orchestra's unwillingness./ Les musiciens de l'orchestre, rebutés par les doigtés du ton de fa dièze majeur, et suivant, du reste, une habitude chère aux exécutants d'alors vis-à-vis des débutants (Franck était, hélas ! à cinquante ans, un débutant devant le public...), les musiciens de l'orchestre, dis-je, déclarèrent ce final inexécutable. Le maître se refusa toutefois avec énergie à pratiquer cette nouvelle mutilation et l'exécution se ressentit déplorablement de cette mauvaise volonté de l'orchestre.' D'Indy, *César Franck*, 133. One imagines D'Indy comparing Franck as a true successor to Beethoven who in a similar situation had responded to Schuppanzigh.

[68] Vallas, *César Franck,* 270. The Cortot moment referenced is: Alfred Cortot, *L'œuvre pianistique de César Franck.* (Paris: La Revue musicale 1 nov. 1925, 1 janv. 1926): 66. Demuth would disagree with this: 'An examination of the pencilled sketches of *Les Éolides* shows that he sketched out the melody first, paying scant attention to the harmony unless he wanted a definite harmonic figure. The themes grew out of each other with this process, and it is obvious how the question of key became of secondary importance. He went simply where the melodic contour dictated, and he took infinite pains over the matter. He crossed out at least two pages of his preliminary sketch, but unfortunately he did this too thoroughly to allow us to see exactly what he discarded, and why.' Demuth, César Franck, 50.

[69] James, William Raymond. "César Franck's Works for Piano and Orchestra", (D.M.A. diss., University of Miami, 1988), 58.

[70] Davies, *César Franck and His Circle,* 163–164.

In other words, there is a definable difference in the chromatic styles of the two romantic composers; Franck's modulatory practice as mentioned before was functional but continual, and the chromaticism was generally an extension of his modulatory practice and **not** purely for expressive purposes. This is an important distinction as it is not strictly in contradiction with the lack of chromaticism of the early piano works, but is in contrast with Wagner or Liszt, who would use chromaticism as an end in itself for their aesthetic purposes. In short, Wagner's chromaticism veils the tonal centre, whereas Franck's tonal centre is constantly moving, lacking the ambiguity of the former on a smaller scale. As noted in *Cathedral of Sound* and the upcoming feature *Infinite Melody* chromaticism and modulation are not a part of their definitions.

Other elements of Franck's harmonic language have been noticed by Maurice Emmanuel in his chapter *la langue et le style*, which goes into detail of Franck using the tetrachord, 'a basis for lament arias of later Baroque composers, among them Purcell, Handel and Bach',[71] though it is not mentioned often enough to be a consistent feature of Franck.[72]

The features described in this *Chromatic style* sub-section are consistent with the previously shown letter Franck wrote in 1884: 'Your key must *never* be in any way doubtful [...] stick to the classical mould.' The 'key', as described above, may be comfortably referred to as tonal centre, considering his propensity for modal interchange. Demuth, likely unaware of Franck's letter, confirms this impression in a rather vague description:

> Franck's harmonic sense was limited, but his chromaticism is always in the context, and is always tender if frequently sentimental. His insistence on tonality at any price, even at the expense of key relationship was dictated by the thought. When he wanted to be bright he chose sharp keys, when sad, flat; hence the dreadful muddle of the organ *Final* where the stereotyped notation leads him into the key of A sharp major — an enharmonic change would have eased the situation at once and given the player no anxious moments.[73]

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[71] Ellen Rosand. "The Descending Tetrachord: An Emblem of Lament". (*The Musical Quarterly,* 1979), 358.

[72] 'In studying César Franck, we noticed an already very bold use of accidentals, covering almost all degrees of the scale. Yet there is one of these degrees that he reserved: the fifth, which Franck persisted in considering, by its relationship with the tonic, as the fundamental basis of tonality.' / 'En étudiant César Franck, nous avons constaté un emploi déjà très hardi des altérations, portant sur presque tous les degrés de la gamme. Il est pourtant un de ces degrés qu'il réservait : la quinte, que Franck persistait à considérer, par son rapport avec la tonique, comme base fondamentale de la tonalité.' Emmanuel, *César Franck : étude critique*, 214–5. We will see in the study of Franck's compositional techniques more third movement than descending tetrachords, and fourth movement is usually done by leap. For more see *Role of Melody.*

[73] Demuth, *César Franck,* 47.

This 'tonality at any price even at the expense of key relationship' seems to insinuate that the key must be clear to Franck, and the chromaticism leads him into *undesirable* tonal centres because of his reluctance to be ambiguous.

Rarely will any of the above descriptors be applicable to the early piano works, unfortunately to their own detriment. Tension is quickly resolved and not dwelled upon, with dissonance resulting from suspension of predominantly tonic or dominant pedals.

Counterpoint

Jan LaRue's definition of counterpoint brings Franck to the fore:

> [counterpoint is] approximately equal activity of concurrent lines [...] As a sample problem, consider the so-called canon in the finale of César Franck's piano and violin sonata: it does not qualify as true counterpoint, since one part holds a single, long note while the other part moves. There is point but insufficient counter.[74]

Franck's counterpoint technique in particular draws attention from writers. Vallas portrayed Franck as a 'maître polyphoniste',[75] and in this regard it is Bach that is frequently invoked.[76] Dennis R. Cranford's detailed study gives more substantial classification to the role of counterpoint and its relationship to harmony in Franck's late keyboard works:

> All of these harmonic and contrapuntal techniques contribute to Franck's individual style. Always aware of the individual voice lines, Franck uses counterpoint masterfully as both an elaboration of the harmony and a determinant for the harmony.[77]

The dominant surface-level feature of Franck's late style is his combination of counterpoint and polythematism, becoming strongly individual as seen in his teaching method.[78] Without a doubt, some of his most effective writing is through the combination of themes in counterpoint:

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[74] Jan LaRue, *Guidelines for Style Analysis,* (New York: Norton, 1970), 46.
[75] Vallas, *César Franck,* 305.
[76] 'Il laisse entendre que le côté artisan d'église, par lequel Franck s'apparente si étroitement à ses ancêtres directs les Bach et les Buxtehude' Cortot, *L'œuvre pianistique de César Franck,* 50–51.
[77] Cranford, "Harmonic and Contrapuntal Techniques in the Late Keyboard Works of César Franck", 349. He determines five different ways in which to recognise the role of counterpoint in six of his late keyboard works: 1. Surface 2. Structural 3. Thematic elaboration 4. Fully contrapuntal 5. Thematic combinations.
[78] 'Un autre élève, l'un des derniers, Guilaume Lekeu, dans une lettre adressée, le 15 décembre 1889, à son ancien professeur belge Kiéfer, put donner des précisions sur la manière de Franck: « Pour les traités de contrepoint, Franck me charge de vous dire qu'il enseigne le contrepoint sans traité, rien que par les conseils oraux ; il trouve d'ailleurs tous les traités déplorables. Il ne connaît que très peu celui de Bazin, qui m'a paru ne pas lui inspirer une grande confiance : c'est celui qu'on suit au Conservatoire. Franck fait travailler le contrepoint en prenant pour thèmes des

> Some of the most compelling cyclic strategies, however, are those that tie thematic returns to combinatorial counterpoint so that the climax of a work reveals latent relationships between different themes. Franck was particularly adept at such contrapuntal displays.[79]

Immediately, the climaxes of the two triptychs come to mind, in which the combination of themes is the cause of the peak of drama as in the *Prélude, choral et fugue* or of the tranquillity as found in the climax of the *Prélude, aria et final.* However, while the idea of cyclic form existing in the early piano works will be examined, the counterpoint is limited in its ambition compared to his later compositions. D'Indy advised readers to consider Franck's works horizontally due to their contrapuntal nature,[80] though this will not yield much when analysing the early piano works. However, we may consider a continuation of Franck's compositional style even in his counterpoint if we reflect upon the transparency with which he presents his thematic material: 'There is clarity throughout and he never overlaid his lines with extraneous counterpoints and decorations which attract the attention from the real matter in hand.'[81]

The Number 'Three'

The use of the number three has been a constituent of different areas of his style:

(1) Harmonic

(2) Thematic Material

(3) Structural

(4) Biographical

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chants religieux : *Stabat mater, Dies iræ, Jesu Redemptor*, etc. Il veut que le travail broché sur ces admirables mélodies : 1° sonne bien (soit musical, si vous préférez) ; 2° soit expressif (surtout !). C'est ce qu'il appelle, avec raison, introduire la vie dans une étude qui, autrement, est la sécheresse suprême (I). »' Vallas, *La Véritable Histoire de César Franck,* 327–8.

[79] Timothy Jones, "Nineteenth-Century Orchestral and Chamber Music" In *French Music Since Berlioz*, edited by Caroline Potter and Richard Langham Smith. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 65.

[80] 'en effet, si l'on veut considérer le discours musical horizontalement, suivant les principes féconds des contrapuntistes médiévaux, et non pas verticalement selon l'usage des compositeurs qui sont seulement harmonistes, on trouvera que les contours des diverses phrases mélodiques superposées, forment, dans cette musique, des agrégations de notes d'une nature particulière qui constituent un style autrement fort et séduisant que les banales et incohérentes suites d'accords alignées par les producteurs qui ne voient pas plus haut que leur traité d'harmonie.' D'Indy, *César Franck,* 66–7.

[81] Demuth, *César Franck,* 50.

1. With regards to the number three in his harmonic language, Franck has been known for his 'tertiary modulation' or 'mediant modulation', irrespective of mode. However, it has been a noted part of the modulatory practice for many composers, from Chopin[82] to Debussy in particular[83] and the harmonic practice of 19th century composers in general.[84]

2. While thirds are undoubtedly an integral part of thematic material of many composers, Franck's use of thirds in the melodic material in the majority of his works is prominent if only to point out the classical triadic nature of his compositions. More detail will be given under *Thematic Material.* Nevertheless, his predilection for three-bar phrases can also be noticed, as will be seen in Chapter 2 *Chord and Phrase Pairs.*

3. As well as his name being strongly associated with the triptych structure in music,[85] we will see later the convenient division of most of his early piano works into three parts.

4. The religiosity of both Franck and his pupils playing no small part, the number three pops up time and again — writers cannot resist employing the word *trinity* – when reading the literature from his 'apostles'.[86] Further reasoning is explored in Chapter 2 *Spiritual/Erotic/Serene.*

Finally, it is worth commenting that interest in Franck's harmonic style was already noted at the point when he wrote the early piano works: in an article from 1844, with reference to Franck's *Premier Duo* on 'God Save the King', the French music critic George Kastner wrote: 'If this is not the work of a profound politician, it is certainly the work of a distinguished harmonist.

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[82] Samson, *Virtuosity and the Musical Work: The Transcendental Studies of Liszt,* 168.

[83] 'Debussy's musical language contains a significant expansion of harmonic vocabulary and syntax. In addition to the three traditional harmonic functions — tonic, dominant, and subdominant — chromatic third-relations abound'. Avo Somer, "Chromatic Third-Relations and Tonal Structure in the Songs of Debussy" in *Music Theory Spectrum* (Autumn 1995), 216.

[84] 'These non-monotonal works manifest two important preoccupations of nineteenth-century composers. First, they reflect the well-known predilection of these composers for the third relation' Harald Krebs, "Alternatives to Monotonality in Early Nineteenth-Century Music". *Journal of Music Theory* (Duke University Press, 1981), 14.
'It is also important to note that axial-type procedures did not necessarily begin with Beethoven. There are instances of Haydn and Dussek (and others) using third-related keys as secondary key areas in sonata form works, including (but not restricted to) Haydn's String Quartet Op. 20/4 and Dussek's Piano Sonata No. 26 Op. 70.' Swindells, "Tonality, functionality and Beethovenian form in the late instrumental works of César Franck", 73.

[85] Tiersot describes each of the *Béatitudes* as a triptych. Tiersot, "César Franck", 46.

[86] 'it should come as no surprise that d'Indy seems to have labored tireless to legitimize the "sanctification of Franck's cyclic forms as the theological symbol of perfection." Any appearance of the number "3" only exacerbates the crucifixionary precedent.' Armstrong, "The Catholic-Christian Masking of César Franck and Alternative Erotic Readings of his Piano Quintet, Violin Sonata, and Prelude, Chorale and Fugue", 34.

Mr Frank [sic] has long been regarded as such, and the duet we have here can only add to his reputation.'[87]

Finally, regarding harmony, other noted features in Franck's music have been his dominant ninth[88] and diminished seventh chords,[89] as well as sixth chords,[90] but these will be in this thesis once again considered extensions of the harmonic language of the nineteenth century, in particular these features are not found to be pertaining specifically to Franck's distinct individual style in the examination found later.[91]

Thematic Material

Infinite Melody

This term is distinct from Wagner's *Endless Melody,* [92] in that it specifically lacks the static tonality and repetition of scalic phrases. This Franckian distinction revealed by Demuth is too often overlooked,[93] but its use will be different in this thesis. A suggestive nomenclature, it describes

[87] 'Si ce n'est point l'œuvre d'un profond politique, c'est en tous cas l'œuvre d'un harmoniste distingué. Il y a longtemps, du que M. Frank [sic] passe pour tel, et le duo que nous avons sous les yeux ne pourra qu'ajouter à sa réputation.' George Kastner, *Revue et gazette musicale No 41,* (13 octobre, 1844), 344.

[88] 'While Liszt may be said to have immortalized the diminished seventh and Brahms the sixth, Franck certainly played an equal part with the dominant ninth — and here let us remember that it is Debussy who is usually credited with this venture. It was Franck, not Debussy, who formulated and practised the theory that in order to get a free music every chord must be considered a concord and a complete entity in itself. However, he treated the mass of sound with a strong feeling for progression and tonality.' Demuth, *César Franck,* 47.

[89] In an analytical study of *Les Djinns* these chords were found as having a focal point in Franck's harmonic language. Brent M. Jones, "An Analytical Study of 'Les Djinns' by César Franck" (D.M.A. diss., University of Northern Colorado, 1988). Also, Cranford found that: 'True to the harmonic practice of the nineteenth century Franck uses the diminished seventh chord quite frequently as a means of making immediate connections with remote tonal regions.' Cranford, "Harmonic and Contrapuntal Techniques in the Late Keyboard Works of César Franck", 344.

[90] Many of the studies on his late style describe his use of various versions of sixth chords. Specifically: Cranford "Harmonic and Contrapuntal Techniques in the Late Keyboard Works of César Franck", from page 133, and Jones "An Analytical Study of 'Les Djinns' by César Franck".

[91] I believe there is an interesting study to be made that the use of the diminished seventh chord by *every* composer is highly idiosyncratic, though this study only references the moments in Franck's music when it is employed as a weak and ineffective cause for drama. See theme ***F*** in Franck's Op. 9 *Ballade*, the use of which falls under this description in the context of Wagner's *Tannhauser*: 'The use of a diminished seventh chord exchanging with the tonic [a nonfunctional coloristic effect] is a seductive harmonic resource'. Derek B. Scott, *From the erotic to the demonic: on critical musicology.* (Oxford: Oxford Scholarship Online, 2008). Armstrong's doctoral thesis on Franck's eroticism frequently refers to Franck's unique use of diminished sevenths in his late works in respect to its erotic function.

[92] As as described in Jed Rasula, "Endless Melody" *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 55, no. 1(Spring 2013), 36–52.

[93] 'The "Infinite Melody", so perfectly illustrated in the *Choral*, requires firm playing, the continuity and emotion being found in the phrasing'. Demuth, *French piano music*, 45. Elsewhere Demuth writes: 'The whole of this section is built on the principle of theme and interlude. The interludial matter is one of those infinite themes which seem Heaven-sent.' Demuth, *César Franck,* 147. It has been adopted by this thesis for a specific feature of Franck's style

the effect of his music that is related to the spiritual and serene side of César Franck, as will be looked at in Chapter 2 *Spiritual/Erotic/Serene*. The specific qualities that create an *Infinite Melody* are:

(1) Static tonality.

(2) Repetition of short or long scalic phrases.

(3) Thematic material starting from a weak beat.

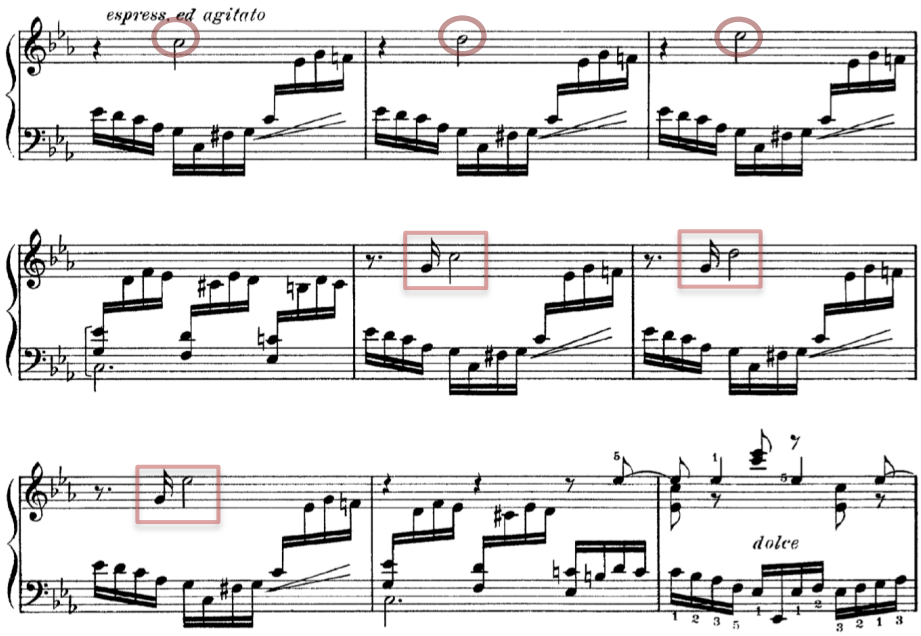
1. Static tonality is shared with *Cathedral of Sound*, but whereas the latter creates a soundworld in which the music usually stagnates without a clear direction through fermatas, lack of strong rhythmical elements and a generally slower pace, *Infinite Melody* is identified through the forward momentum that is created by a scalic movement towards an undetermined specific goal.

2. Step movement of thematic material is always repeated. This is done either identically, with slight variations or in sequence.[94] This is necessary to give the illusion of it lasting *infinitely.*

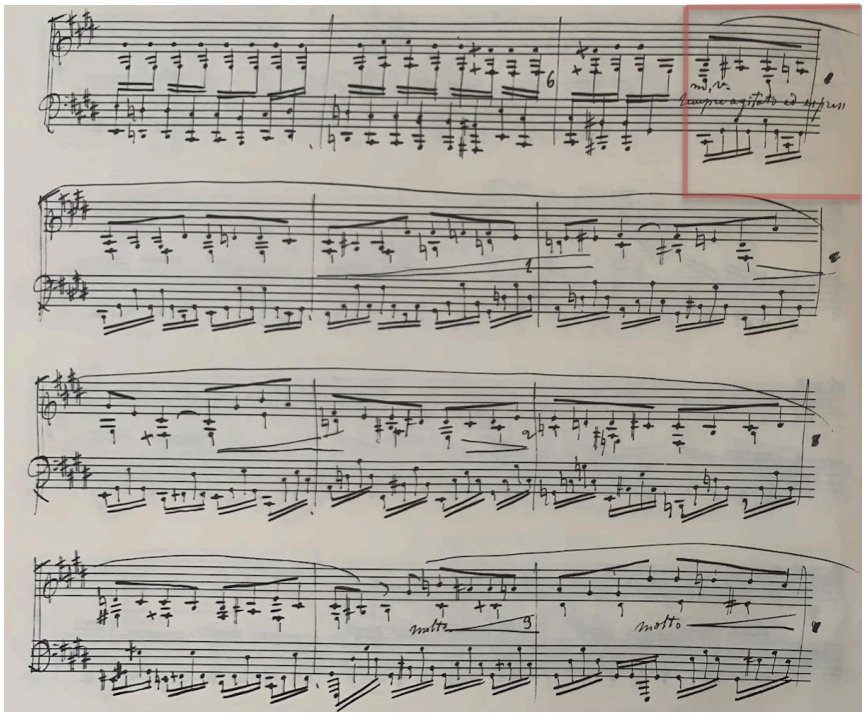
3. An integral part to the soundworld is the thematic material beginning off-beat or on weak beats, so that coupled with the previous qualities, it gives the illusion of being a continuous never-ending melody. Again, this is in opposition to the lack of strong rhythmical elements found in *Cathedral of Sound.*

found throughout his œuvre, though pertaining specifically to the early piano works and has been adjusted to describe the *Choral* theme itself, instead of the interludial material. Stephen Hough uses the term 'endless melody' in his album liner notes with regards to his own transcription of the *Troisième choral.* Stephen Hough liner notes to *César Franck Piano Music,* (Hyperion, 1997), 7, CDA66918

[94] Franck's had a predilection for sequences in creating themes: 'As we might expect, Franck uses sequence as a means of constructing melodic and harmonic patterns' Cranford, "Harmonic and Contrapuntal Techniques in the Late Keyboard Works of César Franck*",* 176. Though it is only in combination with the other two factors that it truly creates an *Infinite Melody* soundworld.



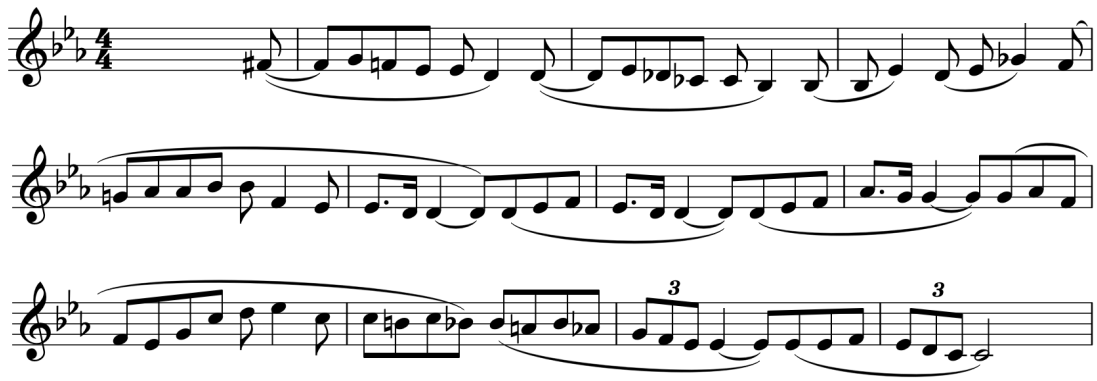
Example 17a: Op. 3, *Églogue*, bars 246–254, *D* theme second section, example of *Infinite Melody*. Note the substantial emphasis on c minor, lack of harmonic variety, weak-beat step movement from tonic to third, and how it repeats with the addition of a semi-quaver on the fifth degree of the scale.



Example 17b: *Prélude, Aria et* [*Final*], bars 315–326, principal theme after the introduction (which is a *rapid alternating hands* variant of this thematic material). Fac-similé de César Franck « Prélude, aria et final pour piano: manuscrit autographe, 1887 (Réf.5706) » avec l'aimable autorisation de Anne Fuzeau Productions - France - www.annefuzeau.com. Although it has harmonic movement, its repetitions, phrases which start and end on the third beat and its step movements give a strong impression of an *Infinite Melody*. Paul Liang criticised the work precisely because of its repetitions: 'one tends to find the going monotonous and somewhat 'unending'.[95]

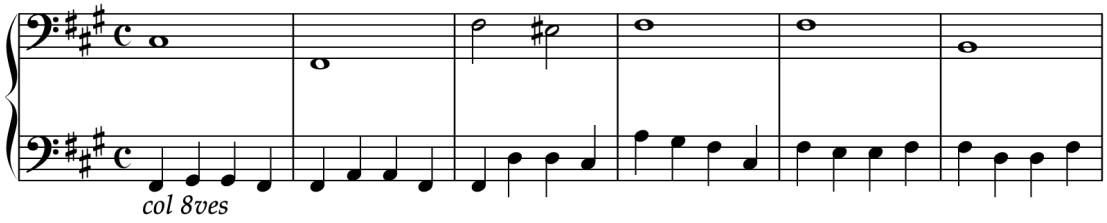
[95] Liang, "An Analysis of the Major Solo Piano Works of César Franck", 103.

It is important to understand the difference between my own definition of *Infinite Melody* used in this thesis and that of Demuth's. An example of his own *Infinite Melody* was that of 'the arabeske of Bach we find in the Infinite Melody of the third *Choral* and the *Prélude, choral et fugue*, an arabeske which is not so decorative, but is just as rhapsodic'[96]:



Example 18: Commencement of the *choral* from *Prélude, choral et fugue.*

Demuth's classification, seen in both his *César Franck* (1949) and *French Piano Music* (1959), seems to associate *Infinite Melody* with Franck's meandering, improvisatory episodes that flow between main thematic groups. He found that the following flowing melody 'presages much of the future Franck [...] which suggests the regularity of many future themes, the *Symphony*, *Psyché*, not infinite by any means, but absolutely flowing and unrhythmic':[97]



Example 19: Franck Piano Trio Op. 1 No. 1, bars 9–14.

The similarity with our definition of *Infinite Melody* are the step movements and repetitions, but it seems to be more interested in creating a *pivot note/chord* — in this case, around F♯ — than in endless scalic movement and, despite the meandering above the tonic point, there are many

[96] Demuth, *César Franck,* 59.
[97] *Ibid.,* 125–126.

implications of harmonic movement that counter stagnation and feel like a harmonic journey, even if we — in a typical Franckian manner — end up back at the tonic.

Pivot Points

An integral part to any analysis of Franck's music is his choice of thematic material. The *pivot point* has been referenced by all analysts and writers, such as in one of the first detailed analytical studies in the English language by Henry Colles, which finds this compositional device in both the first Op. 1 Trio and in many of his late works:

> The tune circles round the pivot note A with almost distressing regularity, and as with this, so with a hundred others of Franck's themes, one finds that they inflect upon a point of rest - they do not travel.[98]

He later points out:

> hypnotic concentration upon a keynote [...] A single note has so great a fascination for the introspective Franck that the departure from it and the return to it is in itself an event of the first magnitude [...] Such departures and returns in his early days were most naturally diatonic ones.[99]

Naturally, some have used this technique as a springboard for criticism:

> One could wonder whether this [*pivot point*] melodic trait signals a lack of confidence, a kind of apology for his own actions. Many of Franck's melodies tend to go in circles and are static instead of traveling to a certain destination. The melodies that pivot around a single note are often accompanied by changing harmonies.[100]

This *stasis* of movement is a general characteristic of his music, from the motionless harmony of the *Cathedral of Sound* to his lack of strong driving rhythms. Francophone literature also delves into detail regarding this element of his music: Maurice Emmanuel cites many instances of this in Franck's music and the widening of intervals with repetitions, which produces 'characteristic emphasis'.[101] That the compositional device features prominently in both the early and late piano works is further evidence for the continuity of his style. In some rare instances it is an entire chord that is used as a pivot for the phrase.

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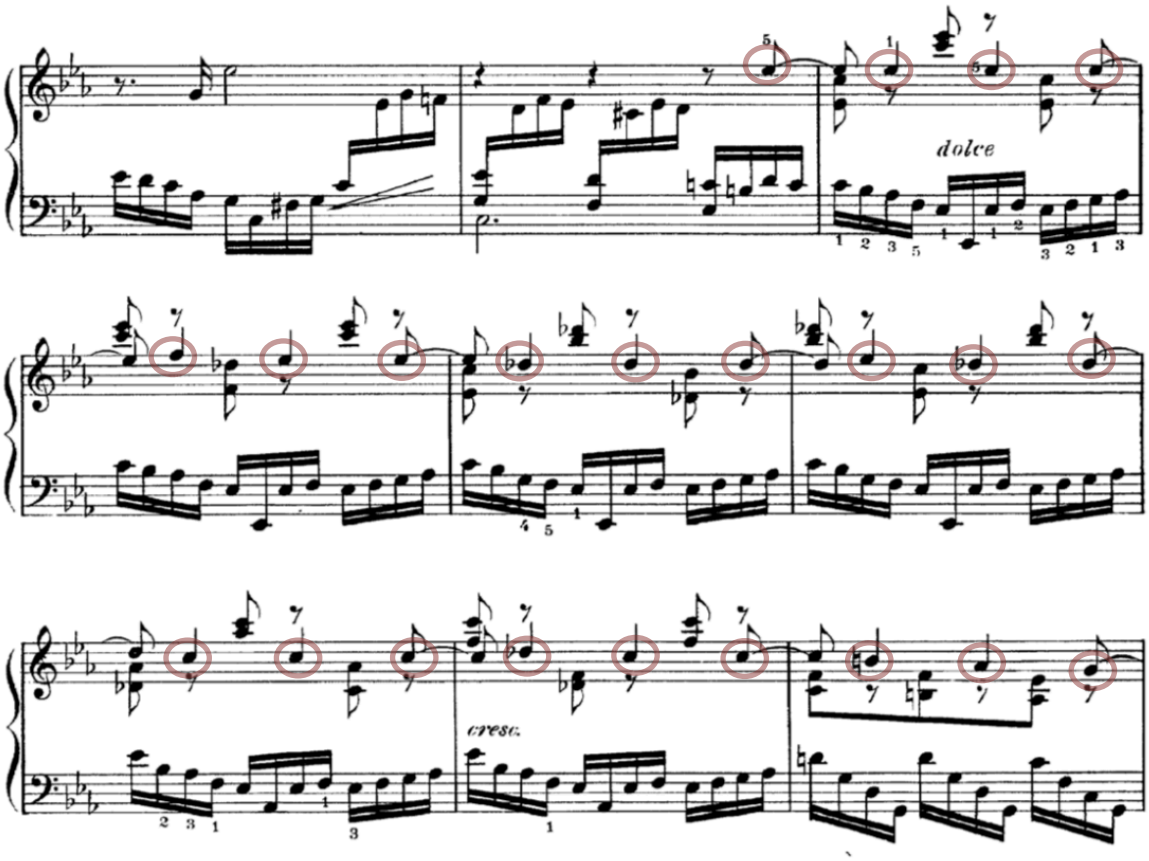
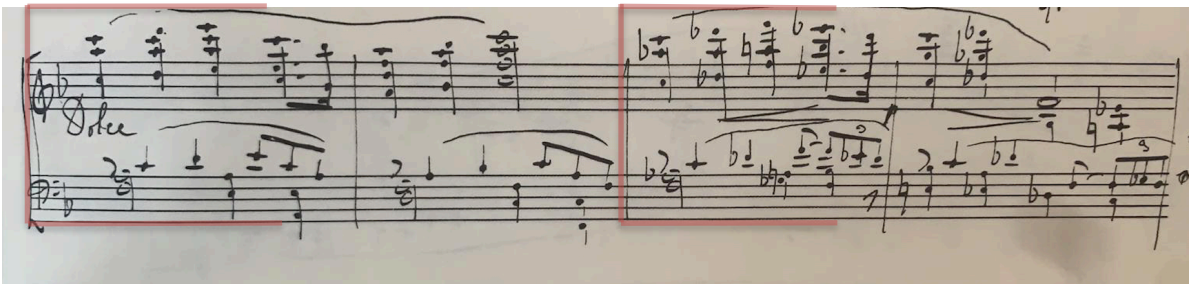
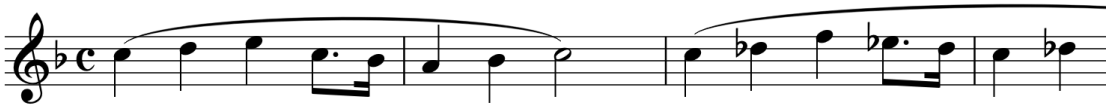
[98] Henry Colles, "César Franck and the Sonata" in *Musical Times* 56, no. 866, (April 1, 1915), 207. In this instance, a thematic example is taken from Franck's Symphony.
[99] *Ibid.,* 208.
[100] James, "César Franck's works for piano and orchestra", 101.
[101] 'Si l'on essaie de fixer leurs caractères extérieurs, on observera en premier lieu cette manière qui consiste à répéter, souvent par paire de mesures, une formule qui, en se réitérant, élargit ses intervalles [This includes 5 examples]' Emmanuel, *César Franck: étude critique*, 96.



Example 20a: Op. 3 *Églogue*, bars 252–260. In this exceptionally difficult passage, it is also *physically* a pivot point, as the hand must alternate rapidly between the thumb and fifth finger around a pivot that slowly descends.



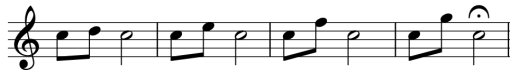
Example 20b: [*Prélude*], *aria et final*, bars 171–174. Fac-similé de César Franck « Prélude, aria et final pour piano: manuscrit autographe, 1887 (Réf.5706) » avec l'aimable autorisation de Anne Fuzeau Productions - France - www.annefuzeau.com. The opening theme, one which recurs prominently throughout the work, here in the recapitulation and in F major, circling around C, the fifth degree of the scale. This also features a sudden modal interchange to f minor, as described in *chromatic style.*



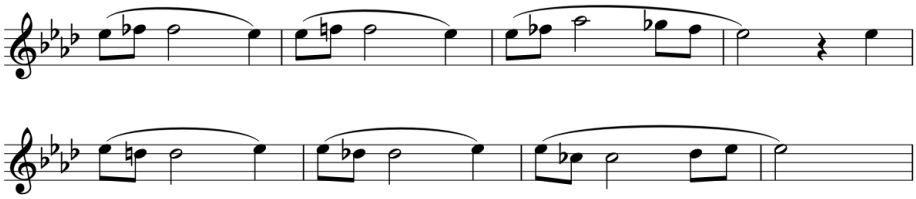
Example 20c: [*Prélude*], *aria et final*, bars 171–174, soprano line. The circling around one note is clearer here, around the note C.

A particular manner in which Franck treats these *pivots* was pointed out by Vallas:

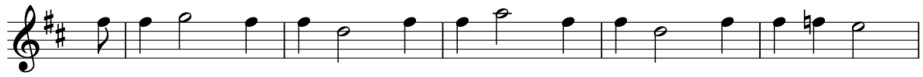
> it [his melodic inspiration] is expressed in phrases that are generally fairly short, that do not extend over a great length, but are repeated - square, symmetrical, widening, obstinate, growing with meandering insistence, often taking a point of support on a note, a sort of fixed pivot for the singing motif, or forming an embroidery with mobile intervals adorning around a stable sound. This process, certainly unconscious, can be seen as early as the youthful trios; it can still be observed in the mature works of the later period, and even in the *Chorales*. Here are three typical examples:



Pastorale, for organ (1862)

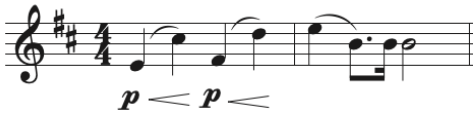


Piano Quintet (1879),

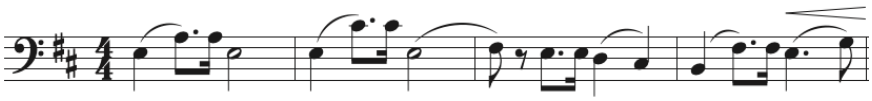


Symphony (1888)
Example 21: Reconstruction from Vallas. [102]

This procedure can openly be seen in the four piano works highlighted in this thesis. While we will see examples of this enlargement around a pivot note as shown above, another example is from his Trio No. 3 Op. 1:



The enlargement of intervals before returning in the dominant thematic material of the movement.



A theme sprouting from the previous example in the cello part.
Example 22: Extracts from Franck Op. 1, Piano Trio No. 3.

[102] 'elle s'exprime en phrases généralement assez courtes, qui ne s'étendent guère, mais se répètent, carrées, symétriques, s'élargissent, s'obstinent, roulent sur elles-mêmes avec une sinueuse insistance en prenant souvent un point d'appui sur une note, sorte de pivot fixe pour le motif chantant, ou forment une broderie aux intervalles mobiles ornant un son stable. Ce procédé, certainement inconscient, se remarque dès les trios de jeunesse ; on peut l'observer encore dans les œuvres de la maturité, de la dernière manière, voire dans les chorals. En voici trois exemples typiques' Vallas, *La Véritable histoire de César Franck,* 331.

Franck and the Choral Bells

Franck's name has become inextricably linked to chorales with his most popular piano work being his *Prélude, choral et fugue,* and his *Trois Chorales* as his last and most significant organ compositions. Tournemire claimed that his teacher described one of his organ chorales with the description that 'the choral develops in the course of the introduction'[103] and we will see that this is potentially also a reading of the newly discovered *Souvenirs*, which has a chorale-like section.[104] The introduction there suggests a 'bell-like sound',[105] similarly the choral theme in the *Prélude, choral et fugue* has often been compared to the bell motif in Wagner's *Parsifal*.[106]

Investigations on compositions from early on in his career have also found chorales. Fauquet commented on the Trio No. 3 from Op. 1: 'a chorale — already! — which suddenly plunges the work into a meditative atmosphere'.[107] Andrew Thomson found that in Franck's *Piéce* in E flat of 1846 — his first organ composition — 'Franck's distinctive voice emerges briefly in a choral-style passage, its harmonic sequence to the mediant giving it a curiously archaic flavour';[108] here chorale-like effect and third modulation are associated with his style. We see a peculiar entry in Hugo Riemann's influential *Musiklexikon* (1896) for *Chorale*:

> As used to-day, in spite of renewed attempts at reform, it consists of a series of sounds of equal length of a wearisome monotony, which only dogmatic credulity can deny.[109]

Curiously but perhaps unsurprisingly, just like Fétis's dictionary mentioned earlier, his entry for César Franck is exceptionally short compared to other composers.

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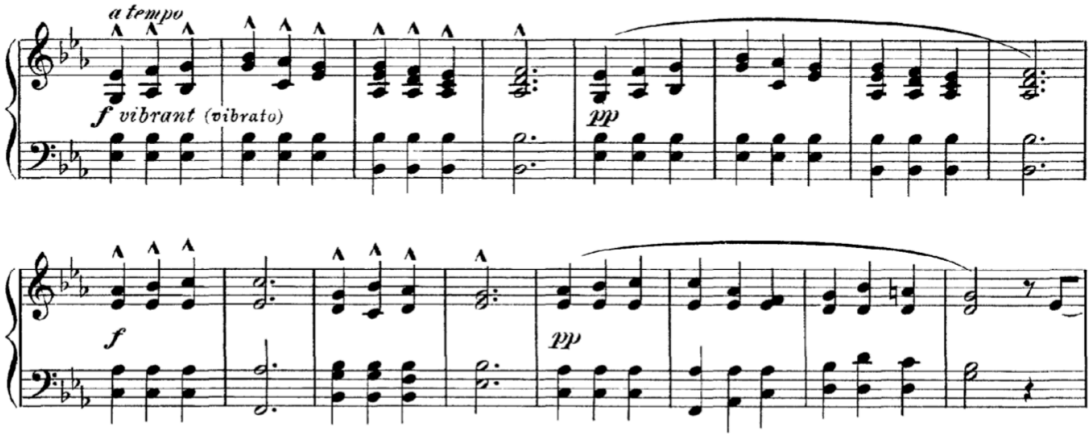
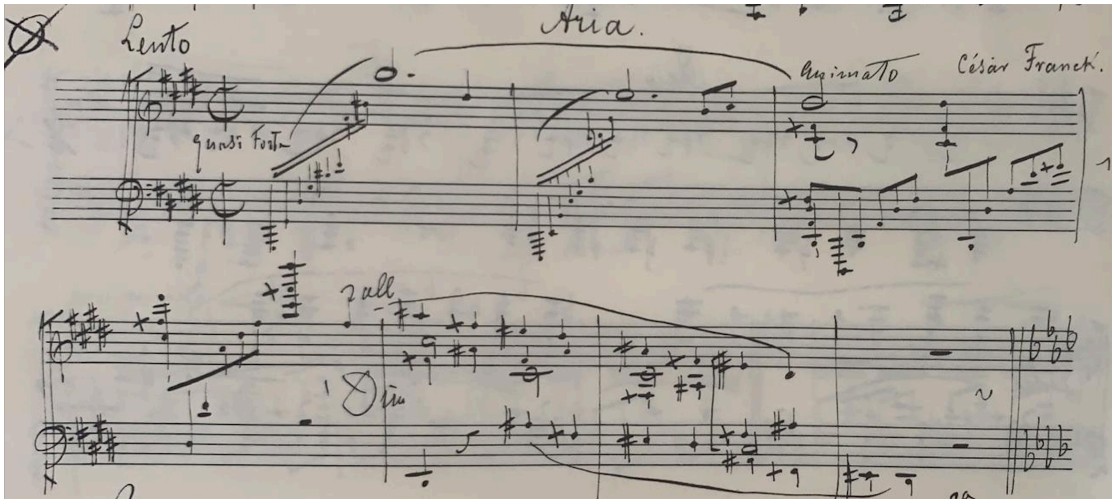
[103] 'Le choral se fait au courant du prélude'. Tournemire, *César Franck,* 28.
[104] The second theme in is identified as a 'choral theme' by Koch in the introduction. Koch, *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle: pour pianoforte*, 6.
[105] *Loc. cit.*
[106] First commented by d'Indy, though he claims the similarity 'probablement insconscient [*sic*]' on Franck's part. D'Indy, *César Franck,* 72. This resemblance is referenced by all subsequent major authors through Vallas (*La Véritable Histoire de César Franck,* 233) to the recent Ph.D. theses such as Lin ("From Virtuoso to Master: César Franck as a Composer of Solo Piano Music", 102). Analysis of *Les Djinns* has also returned a bell-like theme: James, "César Franck's works for piano and orchestra".
[107] 'Une surprise nous est pourtant réservée par Franck qui, brisant la trajectoire si bien amorcée, introduit au tempo « le double plus lent » un choral - déjà ! - qui, soudain, plonge l'œuvre dans une atmosphère méditative.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 137.
[108] Andrew Thomson, "César Franck: Mind, Flesh and Spirit" in *The Musical Times, Vol. 131, No. 1774,* (December, 1990.), 639.
[109] Hugo Riemann (Translated by John South Shedlock), *Musiklexikon*, (London: Augener & Co., 1896), 136.

Later in the examination of his compositional techniques we will look at the chorale theme in the Op. 7 *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle*, along with comparisons to the chorale theme from the *Prélude, choral et fugue*, but there are also passages in his Op. 3 *Églogue* and *Prélude, aria et finale* that could be considered chorale-like:

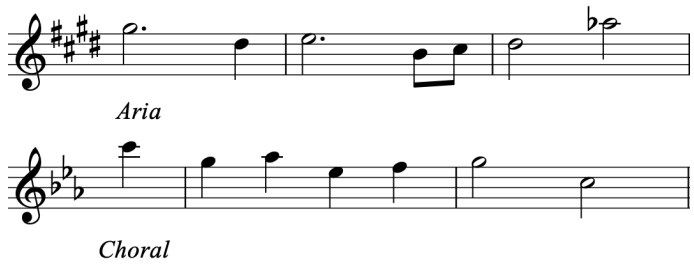


Example 23a: Op. 3, *Églogue*, bars 58–73. The first instance of this theme gives a chorale-like atmosphere before it moves on to *three hands technique*. Franck in his typical fashion presents the bare skeleton of the theme here first before subsequently developing it texturally.



Example 23b: *Prélude,* [*aria*] et *finale*, bars 190–196. Fac-similé de César Franck « Prélude, aria et final pour piano: manuscrit autographe, 1887 (Réf.5706) » avec l'aimable autorisation de Anne Fuzeau Productions - France - www.annefuzeau.com. While the *Aria* is generally more complex polyphonically than its *Choral* counterpart from the other triptych, many similarities have been noted.[110] Fauquet writes in his critical edition: 'In fact such remarks show the work in a better light if, instead of considering it exclusively as a cleverly disguised sonata form, as the d'Indy tradition would have us do, one approaches it as a structure that easily embodies chorale writing.'[111]

[110] Cranford, "Harmonic and Contrapuntal Techniques in the Late Keyboard Works of César Franck", 175.
[111] Joël-Marie Fauquet, Introduction to *Prélude, Choral et Fugue,* (Paris: Éditions Musicales du Marais, 1991), vii.



Example 23c: Reconstruction of Cranford's Comparison of Aria (PAF) introduction and (PCF) theme highlighting the similarities between the themes.[112]

Aside from the three features presented above, Franck also had a systematic approach to dealing with the thematic material. We will see this both in the early and late piano works — where Franck utilised little to no auxiliary material and instead focused on methodically developing themes — as well as his moments of combining thematic material. An emphatic feature of his works is how some thematic material sprouts from another, as seen in his late works:

> Here we have a trinity of themes in which none is greater or less than another, and so subtly does he move from one rhythm to another that one cannot always analyse the progress, or say to which original thought a passage refers.[113]

There will be more information on Franck's use of sequential and pairing techniques, as well as his use of combination of themes and melodies, in the Chapter 2 *Structural* chapter.

It is important to note that it was not just purely the elaboration of themes that marks Franck's style, but also the choice of thematic material which played an important role; we have several pieces of information passed down by his students which presented the importance of themes to Franck.[114]

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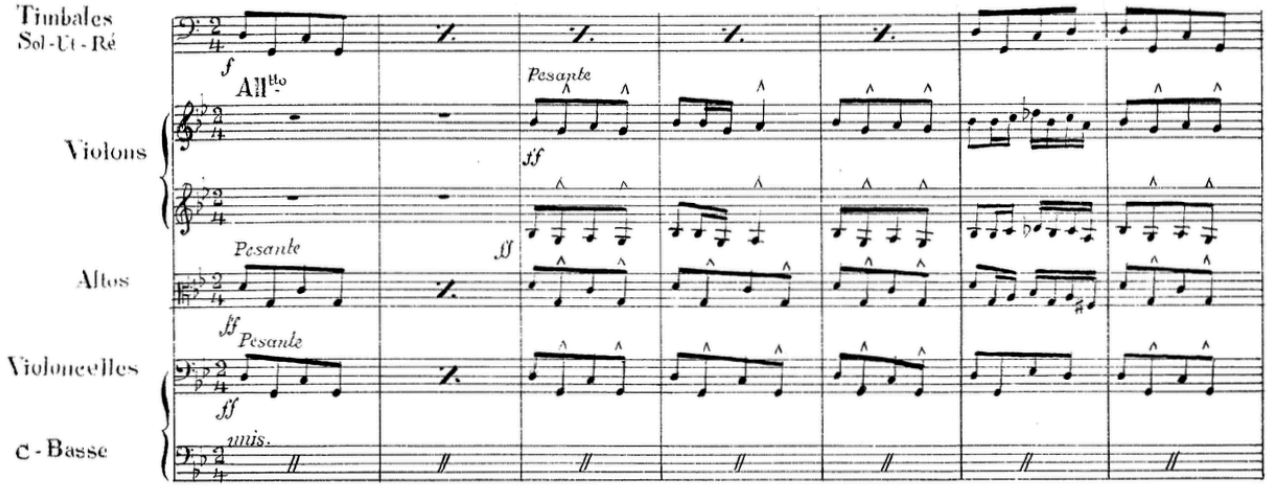
[112] Cranford, "Harmonic and Contrapuntal Techniques in the Late Keyboard Works of César Franck", 175.
[113] Colles, "César Franck and the Sonata", 208.
[114] 'Franck had little notebooks of themes which he always carried with him in the inside pocket of his frock coat. […] One contained themes of fugues that Franck collect at random from Bach, Handel, Gluck, Delibes; the subjects on one side, the answers on the other. In the red notebook were classic themes and Franck's original themes.' Rollin Smith, *Toward an Authentic Interpretation of the Organ Works of César Franck*, (New York: Pendragon Press, 1983), 22.

Rhythmic Qualities

'Rhythm is the very life-blood of music; it is the term for ordered change, however complex.'[115]

If rhythm is the lifeblood, then Franck's music pulses along at a steady pace, often at some speed derivation of *Andante*. It is the aspect of his music that attracts the most condemnation,[116] though that is not to say there are no moments in which rhythm is the dominating element.[117] While his treatment of rhythm is one which results in criticism,[118] it also extends to reproach of his prosody in his *mélodies*.[119]



Example 24: César Franck's *Hulda: Act 3 Danse de l'hiver* (1885). The sharp rhythmic off-beat punctuation makes a rare appearance in Franck's music.

[115] Pascall, "Style".
[116] As an example: 'La rythmique de Franck n'est pas dans son œuvre l'élément le plus remarquable ; elle est loin d'atteindre à la souplesse et à la variété de son harmonie contrapuntique ; elle risque même de sembler banale.' Vallas, *La Véritable Histoire de César Franck,* 336.
[117] An example is *Hulda* (1883), César Franck's opera with epilogue which has much interest in rhythmic devices. The *Danse de l'hiver* particularly, which has a marching rhythm and syncopated basses anticipates the forward drive found in Shostakovich. For more see: Charles Van den Borren. *L'Œuvre dramatique de César Franck.* (Bruxelles : Schotte Frères, 1907). However, César Franck's dramatic writing is also often critiqued: 'Little of the violence in the text is reflected either in the stage action or in the richly worked score which, though deeply influenced by Wagner, is in a style inherently lacking in drama.' Elizabeth Forbes, "Hulda" *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed January 17, 2020.
[118] 'Franck, qui est réputé avoir une rythmique pauvre'. Fauquet, *César Franck,* 568. However, the usually reproachful Demuth comments: 'The component parts of the Franck technique are a warmth of harmony, a sense of counterpoint within the context and a rhythmic vitality which does not always avoid vulgarity.' Demuth, *César Franck,* 46–7.
[119] 'Except in one or two instances he was unable to make much of the contemporary *mélodie* (his grasp of prosody was notoriously weak)'. John Trevitt and Joël-Marie Fauquet "Franck, César(-Auguste-Jean-Guillaume-Hubert)". Anyone perusing through the recent *Mélodies completes* (Les Presses du Collège Musical, 2020), or listening to Bru Zane's *César Franck's Complete Songs and Duets* (2023), will find a wealth of originality and a treasure of Franck's personal style as it evolved throughout his life.

Like all of Franck's operatic works, *Danse de l'hiver* has been long forgotten to the ears of audiences, having fallen out of favour.[120] Criticism of Franck's dramatic works and their rhythm started early in his career.[121] The above notwithstanding, some of the early works have been praised for their rhythm and pacing:

> In the *Trois Trios* there is no movement that is tighter in texture, richer in sound and more contrasting. The propulsive rhythmic incursion that characterises the main theme of this "moderato ma molto energico" plunges the mysterious "poco lento" introduction, also painful, interspersed with silences, into strangeness.[122]

Differentiating between the two divergent perceptions of rhythm — 'there is a tension between rhythm as continuously 'flowing' and rhythm as periodically punctuated movement'[123] — then the former 'flowing' description is generally more perceptible in his music; sharper punctuated moments rarely surface or come to the fore in Franck's music. And if we also consider 'claims that a particular piece or performance 'lacks rhythm' may be taken to mean that the piece or performance lacks rhythmic regularity and/or a coherent sense of motion'[124] then we can understand the criticism of his use of rhythm is one that lacks variety. This is within both the domains of rhythm and metre. Writers seem to find Franck's rhythmic devices problematic as they do not often obscure metre, like a hemiola would; nor do they emphasise rhythmic qualities, like a strong repetitive rhythmic group, which leads to monotonous interactions between rhythm and metre.

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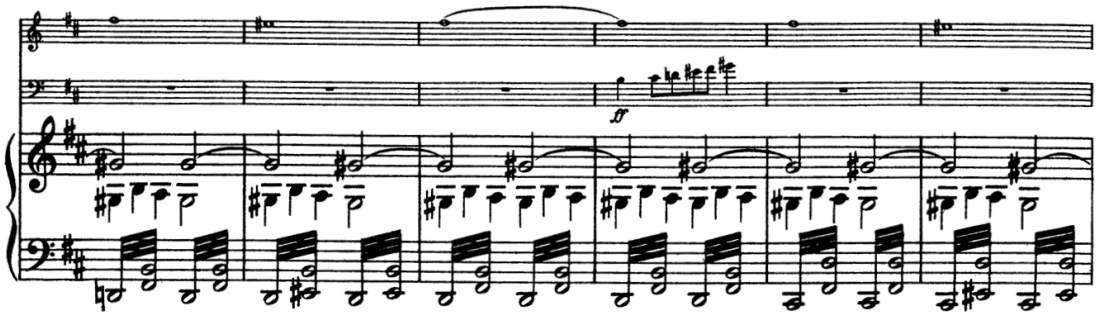
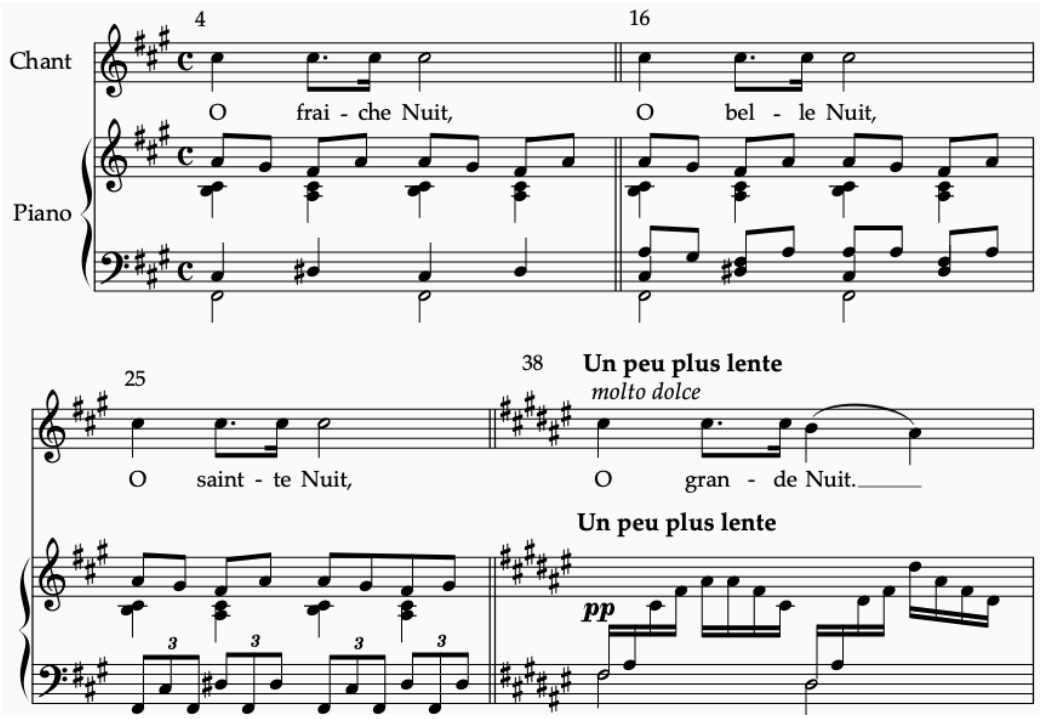
[120] As an example, this work was featured in the Proms in 1918, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, and then never again.
[121] Regarding a review of Franck's *Stradella* in 1845: 'Blanchard, présent encore, fait observer au jeune compositeur que, dans la musique de théâtre, « la mesure, c'est-à-dire la question de temps, est aussi une des conditions du succès du genre lyrique » Appliquée au talent dramatique de Franck, la remarque est pertinente : écrivant pour la scène, le compositeur sera toujours enclin à sacrifier les exigences de l'action à celles du développement musical.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 167.
[122] 'Dans les *Trois Trios*, il n'est pas un mouvement qui soit d'une texture plus serrée, d'une sonorité plus riche et plus contrastée. L'incise rythmique propulsive qui caractérise le thème principal de ce « moderato ma molto energico » plonge dans l'étrangeté l'introduction mystérieuse « poco lento », douloureuse elle aussi, entrecoupée de silences.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 137.
[123] Justin London, "Rhythm", *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed October 12, 2020. www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/Rhythm.
[124] *Ibid.*



Example 25: Franck's Op. 1, Piano Trio No 1, (iii), *Molto più lento* section. This trio, almost universally praised amid the reproach of the other early works, shows in this extract the tying over of notes across bar-lines as well as multiple notes values simultaneously (the crotches in the right hand are triplets).

Note Value Diminution

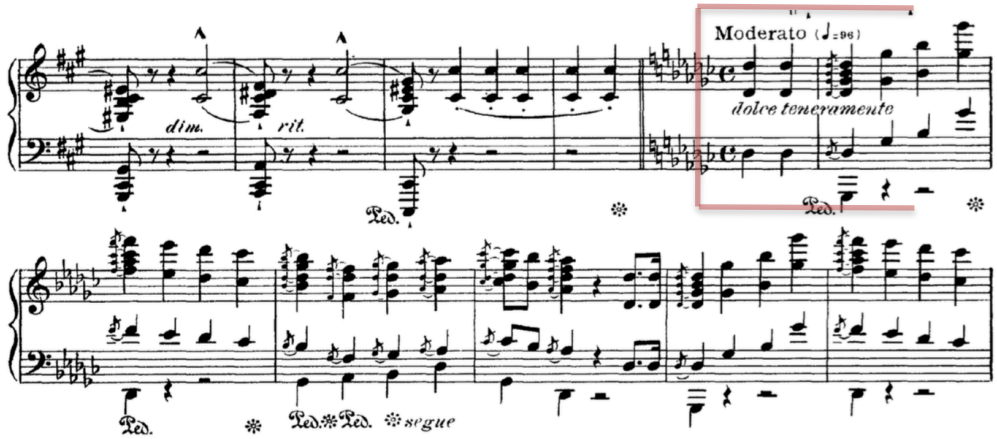
While a common technique, it is particularly prevalent under Franck's pen, if only for standing almost isolated as one of his distinct rhythmic features: 'everything goes by two, by four bars, by repetitions of the same length'.[125] As a result, the impression of a quickening of the pace by the shortening of note values becomes particularly noticeable; prime examples can be found in his *mélodies,* from *Aimer* (1849) to his late *Nocturne* (1885):



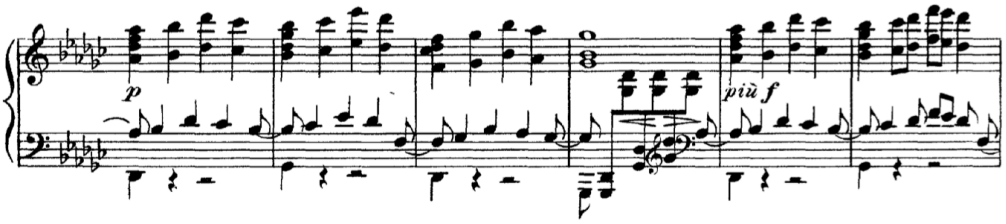
Example 26a: César Franck's mélodie *Nocturne,* bars 4, 16, 25 and 38. This late *mélodie* is a particularly exposing work of Franck as it contains many of the features of his style mentioned in this chapter condensed into one short work. In the isolated bars shown above, we precisely see the note value diminution described above in the piano part, from quavers to triplets to semi-quavers.

[125] 'tout va par deux, par quatre mesures, par répétitions de même longueur'. Emmanuel. *César Franck : étude critique*, 103.

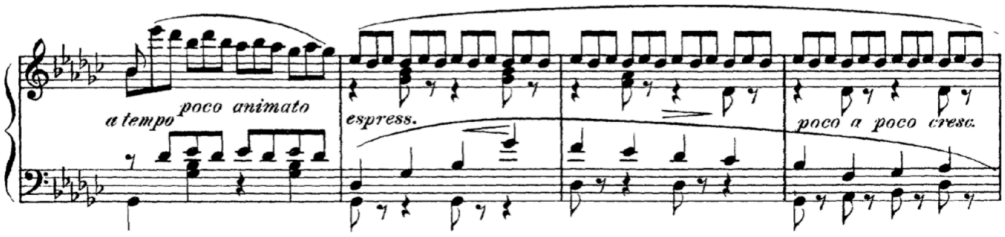
This rhythmic device of quavers–triplets–semi-quavers, is found in both of his piano triptychs: on a large scale in the fugue of his *Prélude, choral et fugue*, and in the aria from his *Prélude, aria et final.* Unfortunately, we do not find this feature in his Op. 3 *Églogue*[126] and encounter it first in the Op. 5. *Caprice.* It is strongly linked to his treatment of variation form, and creates a larger structure which some writers, as will be seen in Chapter 2 *Spiritual/Erotic/Serene*, will describe as *trajectory toward climax.* Even in miniatures outside of strophic form, such as his short piano work *Danse lente*, we see the same procedure.



Caprice, bars 4–13.

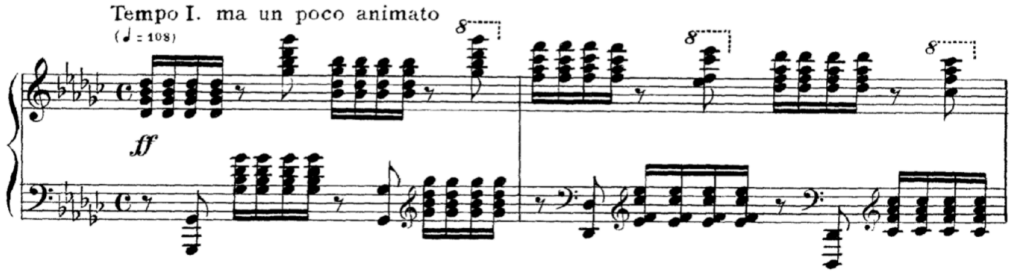


Caprice, bars 117–122.



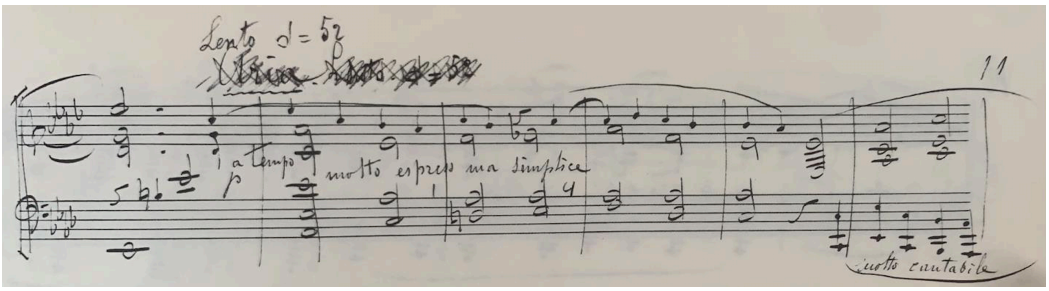
Caprice, bars 317–32.

[126] While the note value diminution of a single note at the start of the 'development' bars 157–159 and 174–177 arguably upholds this characteristic, the definition created in this thesis views the Franckian model as one which provides structural integrity and development, whereas the former *Églogue* development utilises a common written out accelerando technique.

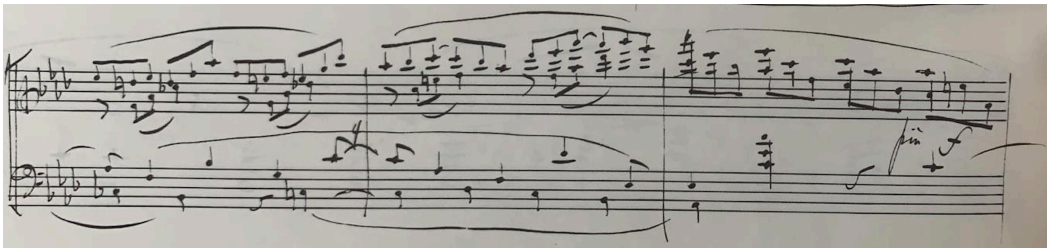


Caprice, bars 401–402.

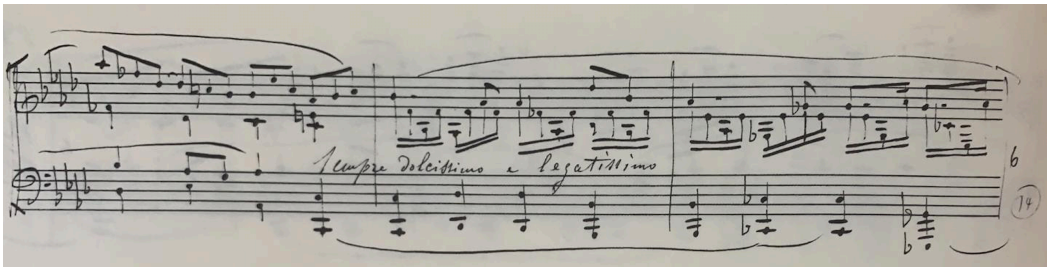
Example 26b: Op. 5 *Caprice*. The examples above are the first theme and its subsequent reiterations. Note the crotchet accompaniment in first extract, then the crotchet syncopation gives a quaver movement in second extract, while the third is accompanied by triplets and the last has perpetual semi-quavers.



Prélude, [aria] et final, bars 205–210. Fac-similé de César Franck « Prélude, aria et final pour piano: manuscrit autographe, 1887 (Réf.5706) » avec l'aimable autorisation de Anne Fuzeau Productions - France - www.annefuzeau.com.



Prélude, [aria] et final, bars 250–252. Fac-similé de César Franck « Prélude, aria et final pour piano: manuscrit autographe, 1887 (Réf.5706) » avec l'aimable autorisation de Anne Fuzeau Productions - France - www.annefuzeau.com.



Prélude, [aria] et final, bars 273–275. Fac-similé de César Franck « Prélude, aria et final pour piano: manuscrit autographe, 1887 (Réf.5706) » avec l'aimable autorisation de Anne Fuzeau Productions - France - www.annefuzeau.com.

Example 26c: The theme is accompanied with longer note-values (minims, crotches quavers) in the first extract, then from the second extract it is consistently accompanied with triplets, before the semi-quavers shown in the last extract. This is an identical systematic procedure to various other late works, such as the fugue in *Prélude, choral et fugue* and the shown previously mélodie *Nocturne*.

Silence

Franck's use of silence is particularly noticeable and is also an important component of the *Cathedral of Sound*. Though often associated with compositional maturity, it is found in abundance in the early piano works and it has become a recognisable part of his style. Maurice Emmanuel provides some enlightening views on this:

> As Jacques-Dalcroze says, we feel the rhythm crossing the silence, and in silence, living. But the many suspensions which, in the same piece, interrupt the discourse, produce, as in the Symphony, unexplainable breaks. "Give your music some air," Franck told his students. Perhaps he believed, through these breaks, that he was fulfilling his precept.[127]

D'Indy, in his typically idolatrous tone, claimed Franck:

> [was similar to] the early Italians for the purity of his monodic line, an unconscious reversion to the polyphonic composers of the sixteenth century for his mastery of counterpoint; to Bach for his style of writing and to Beethoven for general rhythmic disposition.[128]

but this last comparison is misleading when focusing on the early piano works. We will find in the examination that frequent breaks in the music and the *absence* of strong propulsive rhythm are more accurately considered features, particularly in the early works – the introductions of each of the four works are exemplary of this. Franck's use of silence in particular is peculiar as his early piano works are often considered extensions of the prevailing salon culture at the time; but the pages are surprisingly light on notes, unlike the contemporary fantasies and études of Kalkbrenner and Henselt. In fact, they are overall overwhelmingly simple and pastoral. Predictably, some writers have expounded on this as the influence of the organ:

> He knew the value of silences. 'Let in the air' and 'Let the music breathe'; so did he exhort his pupils. The detractors point to the organ as the origin and reason for his haltings, and the necessity for stop changing and the clearing up of echo. Nevertheless, these pauses are dramatic and herald the achievement of climaxes.[129]

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[127] 'On y sent, comme dit Jacques-Dalcroze, le rythme traverser le silence, et dans le silence, vivre. Mais les nombreuses suspensions qui, de la même pièce, interrompent le discours, produisent, comme dans la Symphonie, des brisures inexplicables. « Donnez de l'air à votre musique, » disait Franck à ses élèves. Peut-être a-t-il cru, par ces arrêts, accomplir son précepte.' Emmanuel, *César Franck : étude critique*, 104.

[128] 'les primitifs italiens pour la pureté de la ligne monodique, l'atavisme inconscient des polyphonistes du xvi^{e} siècle pour l'aisance du contrepoint, Bach pour l'écriture, Beethoven enfin pour la disposition rythmique générale.' D'Indy, *César Franck*, 112.

[129] Demuth, *César Franck,* 51.

Considering the works under scrutiny in this thesis were written before his first organ post – 1847 in Notre Dame de Lorette – and *Pièce,* his first organ piece from 1846, it is more likely this compositional process sprouted outside of his contact with the organ. This will be further addressed in Chapter 2 *Pianist/Organist.*

Discreet/Delayed Down Beats & Emphatic Weak Beats

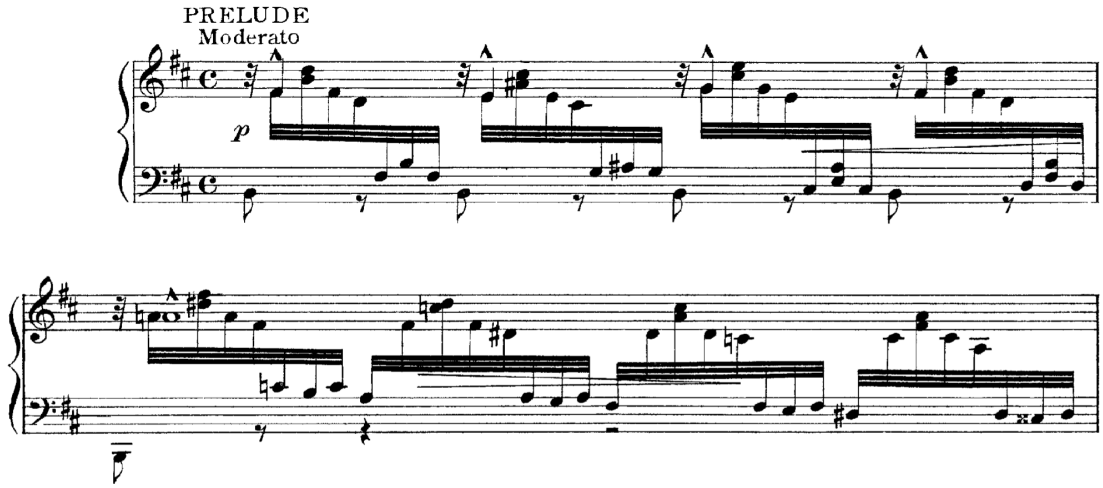
Luckily, there is one rhythmic feature that could potentially redeem Franck from a total damnation of his rhythmic style:

> With regard to rhythm and melody, again worthy of note, is Franck's habit of tying melody notes from a weak beat to a strong beat. This results in syncopations and false accents on the last beat of the bar, which according to Davies, has a deleterious effect on the music.[130]

It is worth pointing out that this happens not always in the top line, but often in other voices. This tying over the strong beats of the bar can be compartmentalised into his general subtle treatment of the first beat of the bar, or his attitude to the strong beats in general.

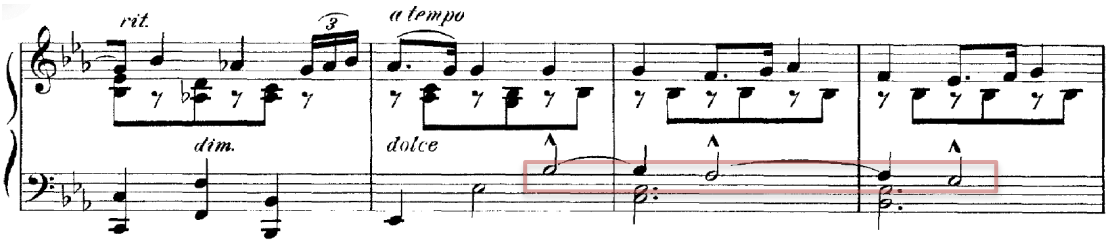
Unfortunately, the effect is rarely one that creates a propulsive forward rhythm. This diminution of strength on first beats does not often lead Franck to emphasise the weak beats, and, similarly to his treatment of harmony as seen in *Chromatic style,* this causes a malaise with regards to the rhythm. Often the phrases themselves are contained within the regular 4 beats but are simply phrased over the bar-line. Coupled with the generally uniform pace of Franck's music, commonly this means the music lacks rhythmic variety. As such, *discreet/delayed down beats & emphatic weak beats* could easily be placed under *Thematic Material*, as they generally seem to function as an extension of his creation of thematic material and not necessarily to provide rhythmic variety.

[130] James, "César Franck's works for piano and orchestra", 103.

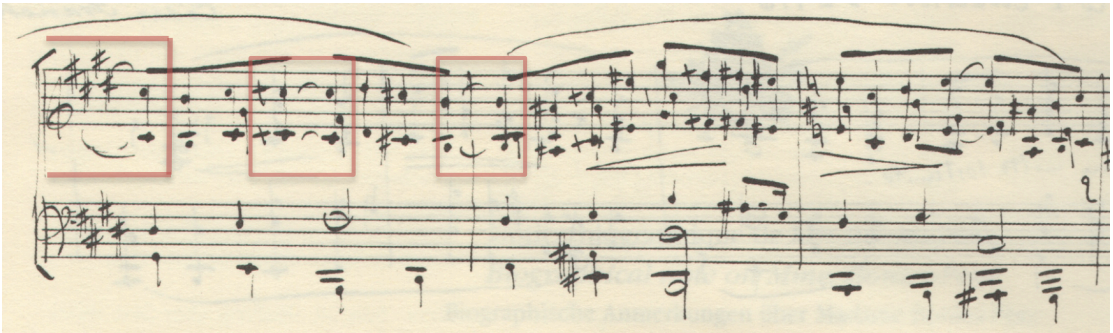


Example 27a: *Prélude, choral et fugue*, bars 1–2. A notable example of the thematic material reluctant to keep to the first beat. Armstrong comments: '*breaking* — playing melodic notes rhythmically unmatched from corresponding accompanying notes — but here it is actually written out by Franck. The effect of *breaking* highlights the piano's limitations in realizing the *vocal* — in the same way as the violin's portamento imitates expressive idiosyncrasies of the voice, piano *breaking* is, at heart, the same kind of thing, albeit for a much less vocal instrument.'[131]

The renowned three-hands moment in his Op. 3. *Églogue* is an example of this (see Example 13a), but we can also find an *emphatic weak beats* in other moments of his Op. 3:



Example 27b: Op. 3 *Églogue*, bars 94–97. Note the accented tenor line tied over the barlines.



Example 27c: *Prélude, aria et final*, bars 25–27. Fac-similé de César Franck « Prélude, aria et final pour piano: manuscrit autographe, 1887 (Réf.5706) » avec l'aimable autorisation de Anne Fuzeau Productions - France - www.annefuzeau.com.

[131] Armstrong, "The Catholic-Christian Masking of César Franck and Alternative Erotic Readings of his Piano Quintet, Violin Sonata, and Prelude, Chorale and Fugue", 61. Armstrong strongly applied 'vocal' effects to his reading of the piano writing.

Curiously, Sir Frederick Ashton successfully set a ballet to Franck's *Symphonic Variations* (premiere in 1946), and more recently Alexei Ratmansky did the same with *Psyché* (premiere in 2011).

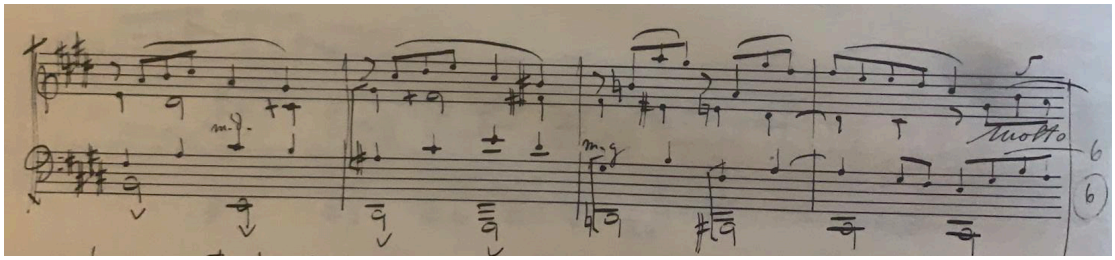
Other rhythmic predilections of Franck are duplets against triplets, at times causing tremendous difficulties for the pianist. While this is frequently seen in his music, it is also a common feature in piano texture at the time and so in this thesis it will be seen as part of the language of 19th century pianism, and not as an integral component of Franck's style.

Keyboard Style

As would be expected from a pianist-composer, some noticeable facets to his piano writing frequently appear and persist throughout his piano output. As mentioned before, Franck was stuck in a piano limbo between the dying fantasy forms and the emergence of Liszt's Sonata and the *Transcendental études*. There are some pianistic features that we see in Franck's triptychs that sprouted in his youth and his early piano works, producing his particularly Franckian flavour at the keyboard.

Large chord spreads

His large hand span (able to reach a 12th) is evident in much of his piano music, with liberal use of tenths.[132] This is particularly evident in dense contrapuntal sections where most pianists must spread the melodic lines between hands:

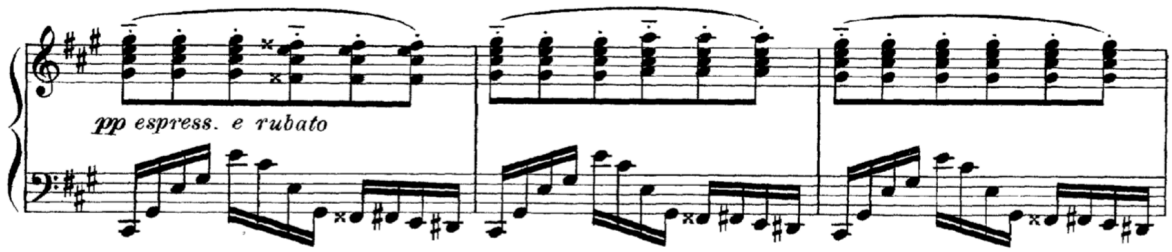


Example 28a: [*Prélude*], *aria et final*, bars 109–112, 'development' of the *Prélude* marked *molto dolce ed espress*. Fac-similé de César Franck « Prélude, aria et final pour piano: manuscrit autographe, 1887 (Réf.5706) » avec l'aimable autorisation de Anne Fuzeau Productions - France - www.annefuzeau.com.

[132] 'Franck's sprawling pianism dates from the days when he was concentrating on virtuoso exercises and cultivating an abnormally wide stretch. Nothing could ever convince him that this stretch was one of his own personal assets and that by not regarding it as such, he was limiting the acceptance of his piano music.' Demuth, *French Piano Music*, 43.

Other instances are more uncomfortable due to their faster tempo, but here is an example that displays Cranford's description of *choral* style of writing in this work, clearly presented in four-part writing.

Stephen Hough comments on a moment in an early piano work: 'swirls of impossibly awkward left-hand arpeggios. (If Franck's hand had been an inch smaller, most of the technical problems in his keyboard works would not exist!).'[133]



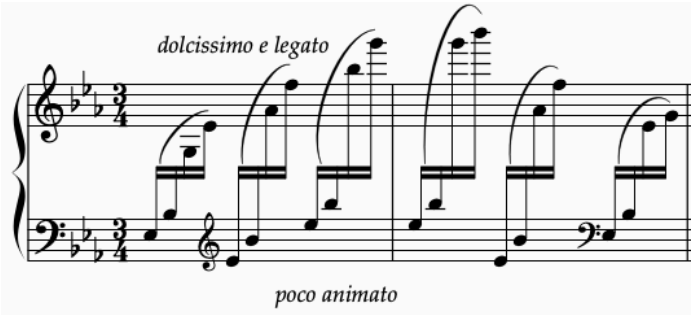
Example 28b: Op 5, *Caprice,* bars 202–204, 2nd section. This is the moment Hough was referring to.

Unsurprisingly, we find large stretches in the *Églogue* too, as shown in example 13a. Students of Franck would later say how 'Franck would empathize with those who had smaller hands than his own' and would rewrite passages for them so they 'would be more comfortable to play'.[134] Even in genres that generally refrain from virtuosic effects, such as his *mélodies,* the pianist is posed with difficulties due to awkward stretches and hand positions in an innocent, innocuous phrase. Franck's ability to cover much of the keyboard with his large hands creates a happy merging with his demand for larger sonorities.

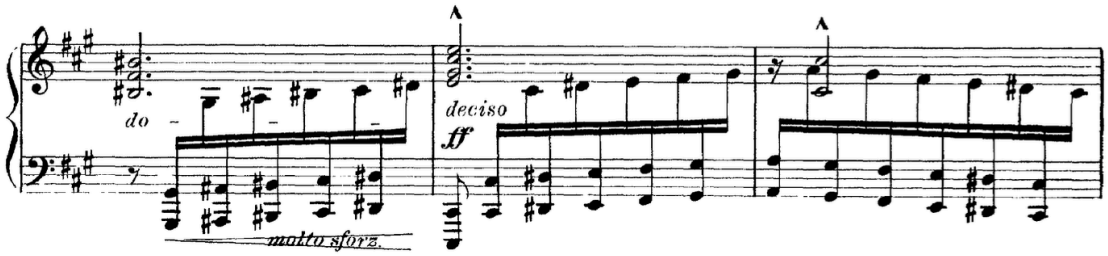
Rapid Alternating hands

This pianistic technique is in no way confined solely to works by César Franck, but it is one which cannot be easily translated to organ-writing and is found in a lot of his piano writing:

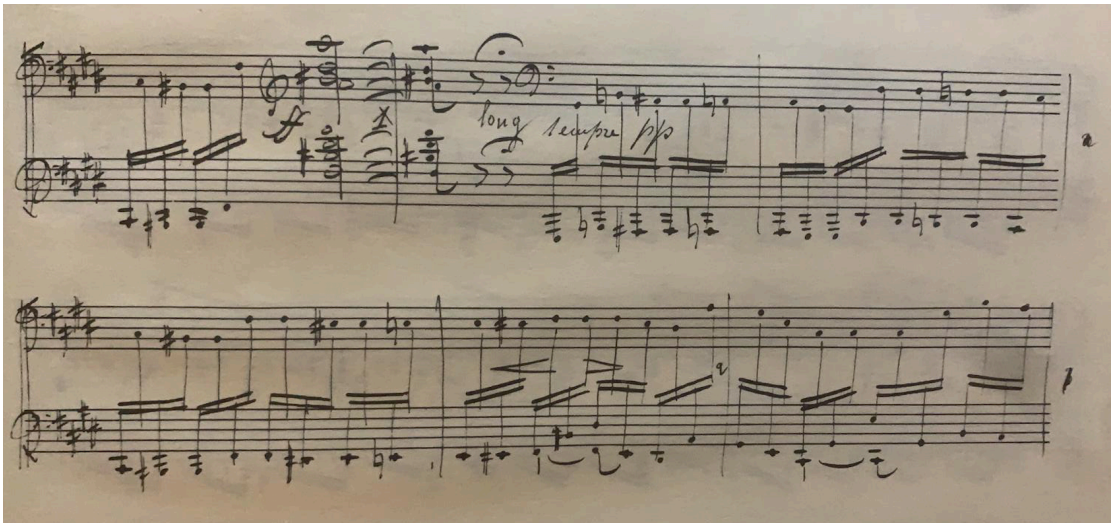
[133] Hough, Album notes from *César Franck: Piano Music* (Hyperion, 1997).
[134] Richard Braiser, Introduction to *César Franck: Intégrale de l'œuvre d'orgue*. 4 Volumes. (Lyrebird Music, 2023), 80.



Example 29a: *Églogue,* bars 100–101. In this first early work, there are no significant rapid alternating hands technique, unlike in its sisters the *Caprice, Souvenirs* and *Ballade*. It is an arpeggiated treatment of the thematic material, the closest to alternating hands found here.



Example 29b: *Caprice,* bars 169–171. A clearer example of the alternating hands technique, which is strewn across the *Caprice,* in its various cadenzas and throughout the dramatic central section.



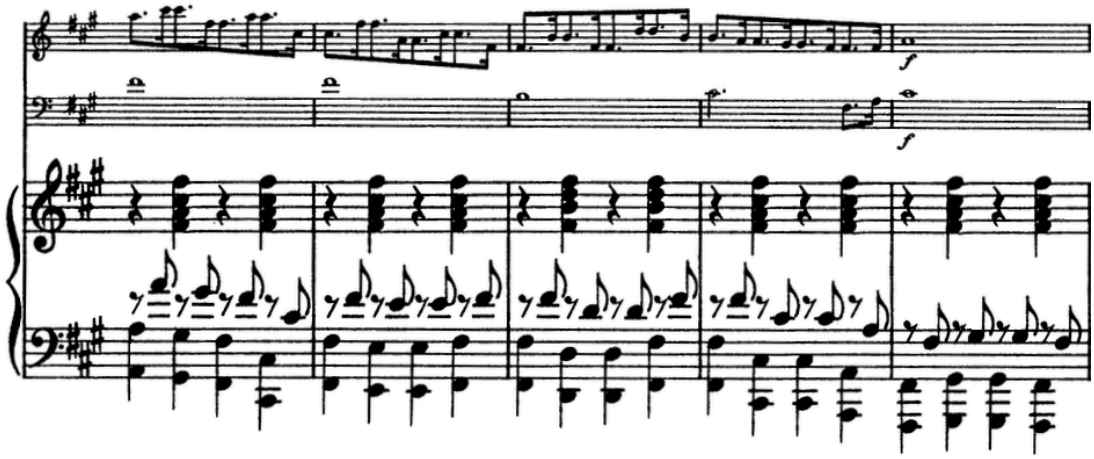
Example 29c: *Prélude, Aria et* [*Final*], bars 300–305. Fac-similé de César Franck « Prélude, aria et final pour piano: manuscrit autographe, 1887 (Réf.5706) » avec l'aimable autorisation de Anne Fuzeau Productions - France - www.annefuzeau.com. *Rapid alternating hands* playing a prominent role here.

It would be foolish to refer to these pianistic textures as quintessentially Franckian, but it is interesting to note how this technique, along with his lack of aspiration for technical display,[135] carried through the 40–year gap in piano writing, giving a somewhat 'archaic' feel to the triptychs.

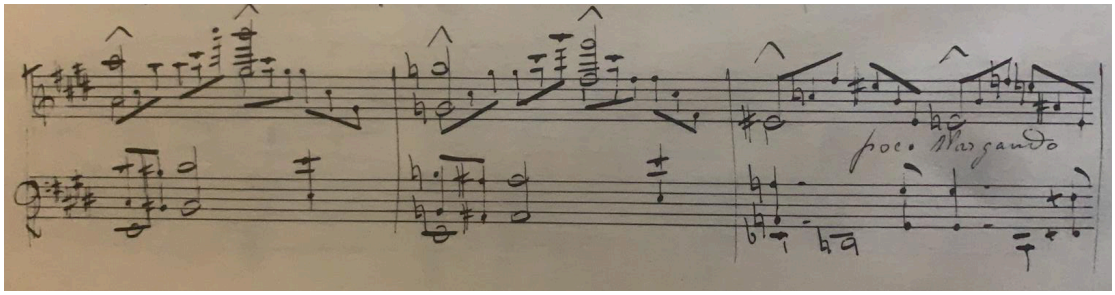
[135] '[On the *Variations Symphoniques* and *Les Djinns*] Car, de même que pour les Djinns, encore qu'ici le rôle du pianiste soit plus important, il ne peut s'agir pour lui que d'une intime collaboration avec l'orchestre, les distances étant heureusement abolies dans ces deux œuvres qui, pendant un temps et suivant une mode, avaient paru séparer le virtuose de la musique.' Cortot, *La Musique Française de piano,* 109.

Three hands technique

This particular feature is of note because of its close connection to his compositional process. It is likely that it came out of a necessity to encompass the entire keyboard range in a large sonority of sound, as opposed to the need to create a dazzling virtuosic effect like that found in Thalberg and Henselt. This is prevalent in each of the four early piano works looked at in this thesis and is found in almost every one of his works that features a piano.



Example 30a: Op. 1, Piano Trio No. 1, bars 76–80. An example is shown from his first opus number since the three-hand effect in *Églogue* was shown in Example 13a as an earlier instance of *large chord spreads*. Here the three-hand effect is in combination with a pedalboard-like moving bass that later would be labelled organ-like in his orchestral works, but it is important to note that 'it is doubtful that as a student of Benoist at the Paris Conservatoire, César Franck had acquired any facility in pedal playing. [...] His opportunities for the exercise of a pedal technique were after he left the Conservatoire.'[136]



Example 30b: [*Prélude*], *Aria et Final,* bars 121–123. Fac-similé de César Franck « Prélude, aria et final pour piano: manuscrit autographe, 1887 (Réf.5706) » avec l'aimable autorisation de Anne Fuzeau Productions - France - www.annefuzeau.com.Demuth names this as one of the 'typical examples of his clumsy writing'.[137]

[136] Smith, *Toward an Authentic Interpretation of the Organ Works of César Franck*, 30.
[137] Demuth, *César Franck,* 43–44. Possibly regarding the 'abnormally wide stretch'.

These pianistic features, particularly typical of many other romantic composers, are found in abundance in his transcriptions Op. 8 *Quatre Mélodies*,[138] though taking these into account for an analysis of his style could prove problematic because they could be considered imitations, either of Schubert, or of Liszt.[139] It is important to note that Franck's pianism had little to do with what we consider *chopinesque*: he preferred what could be described as 'thematic dissection and reintegration on the German model';[140] indeed, very seldom is Franck's piano writing compared to the alluring influence of Chopin. These *keyboard style* features have presented a notable compositional process: they all show a propensity towards larger sonorities and treating piano writing not just as left-hand-accompaniment and right-hand-melody,[141] but also his treatment of thematic material as the structural driving force. It will also be considered in the examination of his pianism whether or not the early piano works should be dismissed as virtuoso show-pieces, as they sometimes are: 'looking at these early published works [early piano works] and the earlier MSS one can frequently see how the musicianship in Franck came to the fore over and above the technical display for which they were composed.[142]

Structural Qualities

Here the interaction between thematic material from a larger perspective will be considered, a sizeable topic in Franck's case.[143] Franck's structures emerge out of the treatment of their thematic material, where repetitions and transformations form the foundation from which the

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[138] It is possible some of the elements of Franck's musical style may also have originated from these Schubert transcriptions, such as modal interchange.

[139] - 'Est-ce sous son influence ou pour céder aux instances de son père bien décidé à profiter de toutes les tendances du courant musical qu'il transcrit lui-même quatre des mélodies les plus chantées alors de « François » Schubert […] Franck possédait dans sa bibliothèque le recueil des douze lieder transcrits par Liszt en 1837-1838'. Fauquet, *César Franck,* 157.
- 'En 1844, année fertile, Franck transcrit pour le piano, à l'imitation de Liszt, quatre des plus belles mélodies de Franz Schubert.' Cortot, *L'œuvre pianistique de César Franck,* 3.
For more detail on these works see Bernd Scherers, "César Francks Bearbeitung der vier Schubert-Lieder". (In *César Franck et son temps: actes du colloque de l'Université de Liège*. Bruxelles: Col. Belge de Musicologie, 1991)

[140] Samson, "Chopin, Fryderyk Franciszek".

[141] 'Franck signals an advance in the importance of the left hand as it becomes more on par with the right-hand melody. In this regard, Franck anticipates Scriabin and his ensuing parts for the left hand, not to mention Scriabin's compositions of the left hand alone.' James, "César Franck's Works for Piano and Orchestra", 43.

[142] Demuth, *César Franck,* 144.

[143] 'On the matter of form he placed the highest importance, and we must devote some considerable space to its consideration because his name stands for everything that is logical and sound in this respect.' Demuth, *César Franck,* 52.

structure emerges; this methodical extrapolation of content has consequently led Franck's structures to be compared with those of the classical period, particularly those of Beethoven.[144] We can recall from his letter from 1884 the advice for a student to 'stick to the classical mould.' The structures on both the phrasal level and with the whole work under inspection have been noted for Franck's procedural compositional style.[145]

Chord and Phrase Pairs

Previous analyses have focused on contrasting themes and their interplay, which noted that Franck's compositional practice resulted in musical phrases often presented in pairs, meaning both phrases being linked (found together in most instances) and both forming a larger phrase (one will be a response to the previously heard phrase).[146] Generally we find these *pairings* on at least two levels:

(1) Chord Pairs

(2) Phrase Pairs

1. Chord pairs are the smallest unit in which we can understand the pairings in Franck's music. It is generally understood that this writing involves two different chords, of which the second is commonly longer and on a weak beat — *emphatic weak beats* – which creates an implied stress.[147] A typical example is found in the opening of the *Violin Sonata*:

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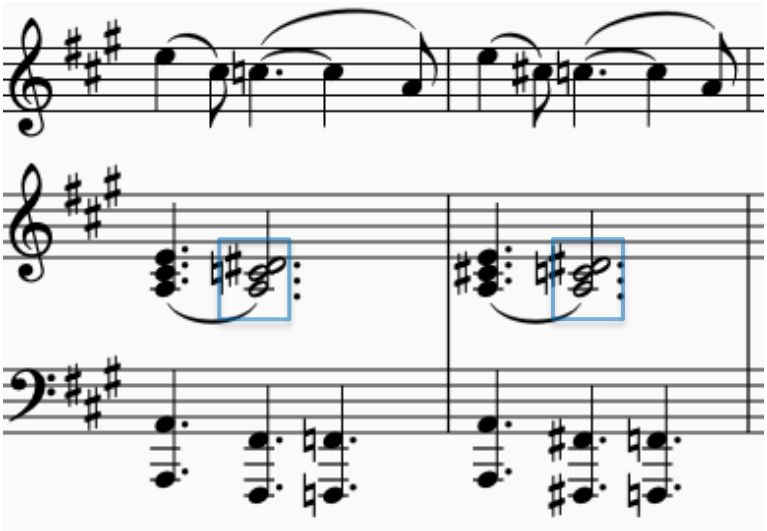
[144] Examples:
'generally cyclical habits and Beethovenian tendency to economize on thematic material.' Davies, *César Franck*, 66.
'L'œuvre de Franck, dans son ensemble, à partir de Rédemption (1872) est tout classique, par la langue, par les formes, par la généralisation des idées, par la carrure rythmique ; à l'occasion, par le dispositif orchestral.' Emmanuel, *César Franck : étude critique*, 89.
'Il semble avoir possédé naturellement un sens tonal impérieux, qui lui permit de renforcer la solidité d'édifices bien construits.' Vallas, *La Véritable Histoire de César Franck,* 336.

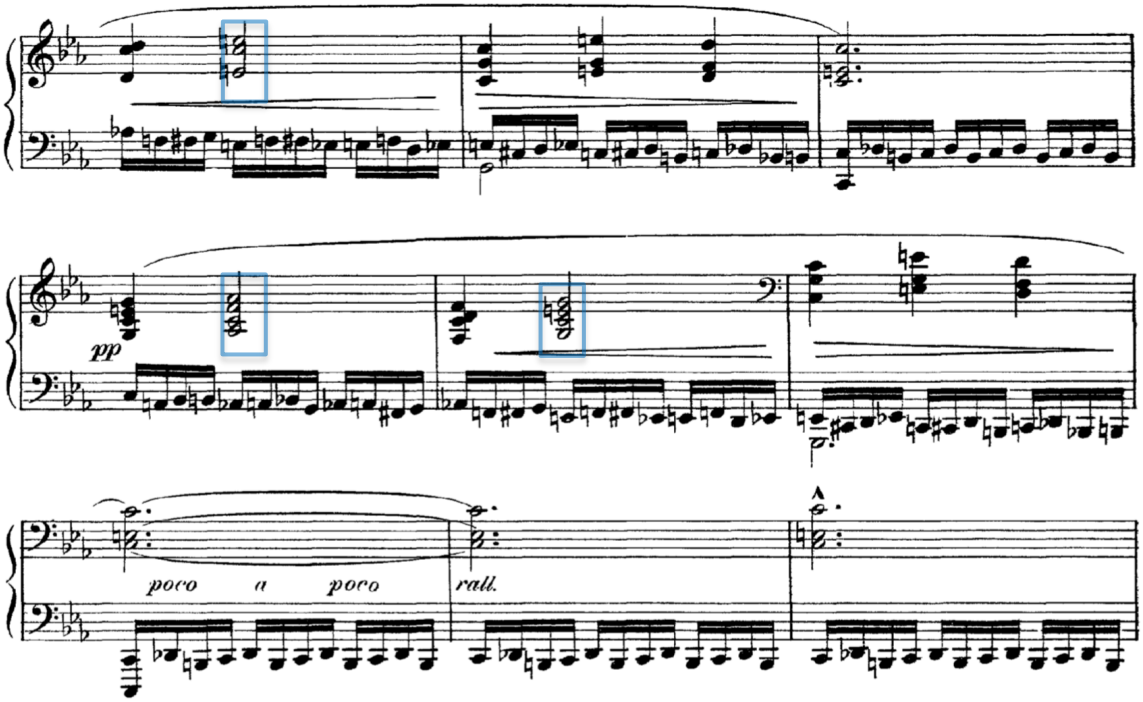
[145] Using Jan LaRue's *Guidelines for Style Analysis* and analysing the violin sonatas*,* it has been found that 'Franck's melodic phrase construction is more regular in length than both Fauré and Saint-Saëns.' David Tubergen, "A stylistic Analysis of Selected Violin and Piano Sonatas of Fauré, Saint-Saëns, and Franck", (D.M.A. diss., New York University, 1985)

[146] Cranford describes his pairs in one moment as 'that of juxtaposing the same material with an element varied', though this is only one facet of the understanding of pairings in this thesis. Cranford, "Harmonic and Contrapuntal Techniques in the Late Keyboard Works of César Franck", 187.

[147] Cranford's study explains: 'John Trevitt mentions this term, but with a slightly different meaning. For him, the origin is the "chord pair," meaning two adjacent chords that are associated together and thus form a pair. He goes on to say that the pair may be repeated with variation to the second chord, thus creating a focus (his term is "implied



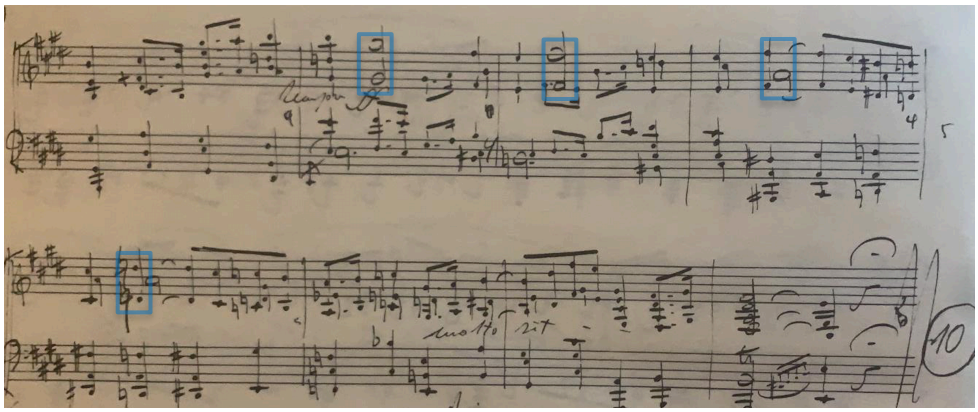
Example 31a: César Franck, *Sonata for Violin and Piano,* bars 9–10. John H. Baron described this 'chord pair' as 'two immediate soundings of the same chord, the second slightly altered and stressed (especially noticeable in the sonata).'[148]



Example 31b: Op. 3, *Églogue*, bars 324–333, end of 2nd section and commencement of 'recapitulation'. This can be said to contain a germ of the *chord pair*. Here the second chord is a resolution, so lacks the emphasis of the typical chord pair. While later works have dominant thematic material that feature this effect, it is also found in this guise in several early piano works.

sforzando"). He goes on to say that Franck applies the concept to melodic materials and to entire phrases. My use of the term "pair" differs in that the individual unit of the pair is not a single chord, but the entire melodic material that is repeated with variation.' Cranford, "Harmonic and Contrapuntal Techniques in the Late Keyboard Works of César Franck", 16–17. This thesis will only look at two different levels of pairings, though there is a case to be made for others.

[148] John H. Baron, *Chamber music: a research and information guide,* (New York: Garland, 1987), 332.



Example 31c: [*Prélude*], *aria et final*, bars182–189. Fac-similé de César Franck « Prélude, aria et final pour piano: manuscrit autographe, 1887 (Réf.5706) » avec l'aimable autorisation de Anne Fuzeau Productions - France - www.annefuzeau.com.This extract is similar to the extract of the *Églogue* above, in that it is a conclusion to a formal section, and so Franck utilised this rhythmic technique in similar instances in both works. In each case there is a strong emphasis on the second of the *chord pair*, on the second beat of the bar. While both cases are strongly rhythmic, *chord pairs* are placed under *structural* simply to group the pairings.

Often *chord pairs* are in the guise of the expansion of intervals, as seen in *pivot points*: all of the examples for pivot points which revolve around a single tone can be seen in a similar rhythm and with a second beat emphasis.

The above Op. 3 *Égolgue* example 31b is distant from the *chord pairs* often associated with Franck and music: their emphasis is reduced because they are generally consonant resolutions; they are not isolated chords but recognisable as part of a larger phrase. Since the quest of this thesis is to determine what constitutes a Franckian sound, specifically across his piano works, and uncover its presence in the early piano works, the two examples above may be seen more generally as faint presentations of Franck's predilection for an emphasis on weaker beats — such as that described in *discreet/delayed down beats & emphatic weak beats* — along with the retention of a chord on the second beat. While they do not fulfil most criteria for the 'stuttering style' typical of the proceeding era, foundations of this feature can be seen in these instances, components of which can be found scattered throughout his early piano pieces, as will be seen in Chapter 3.

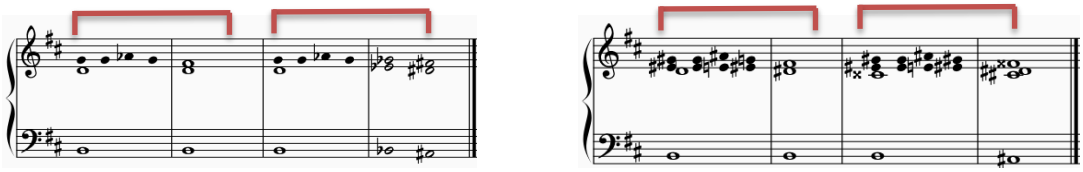
2. The pairings of phrases and thematic material are found on many levels; we will see these ubiquitously in the early piano works where within a phrase where there are two expressions: some form of call and response. Then the following phrase is a reply, also a composite of two parts, to the initial phrase. And found within all of this are repetitions and numerous alterations. Contrast is the fundamental component of these phrases, comfortably relegated to calls and responses: whether in range, dynamics or direction of melodic line.

These two distinct features are integral to the upcoming study of the early piano pieces where considering these phrase pairs as one unit allows one to observe the compositional process i.e. which blocks within a thematic group are re-used and modified. In the previous analyses of these early keyboard works each part of thematic material was uniquely labelled, obfuscating the simple structure of the works without necessarily providing deeper insight into the progression of Franck's compositional technique.[149]

Dennis R. Cranford's in-depth analysis of the late keyboard works defined five types of the sequential and pairing techniques: '(1) construction techniques, (2) intervallic relationships, (3) Harmonic-melodic relationships, (4) successive relationships, and (5) pairing techniques.'[150] The most prominent — 'construction technique' — is similar to the one proposed in this thesis for phrase pairs:

> grouping together of several small sequential units to form one unit of a larger sequence. [...] Franck employs this technique on both surface and deeper levels, involving both melodic and harmonic parameters. The new element of the second (or succeeding) unit, whether an enlarged melodic interval or a new harmonic goal, provides a musical focus, inevitably drawing the listener's attention to the point (Exx. 18 and 19). Franck's melodies are typically constructed by extensive use of the pairing and sequential techniques.[151]

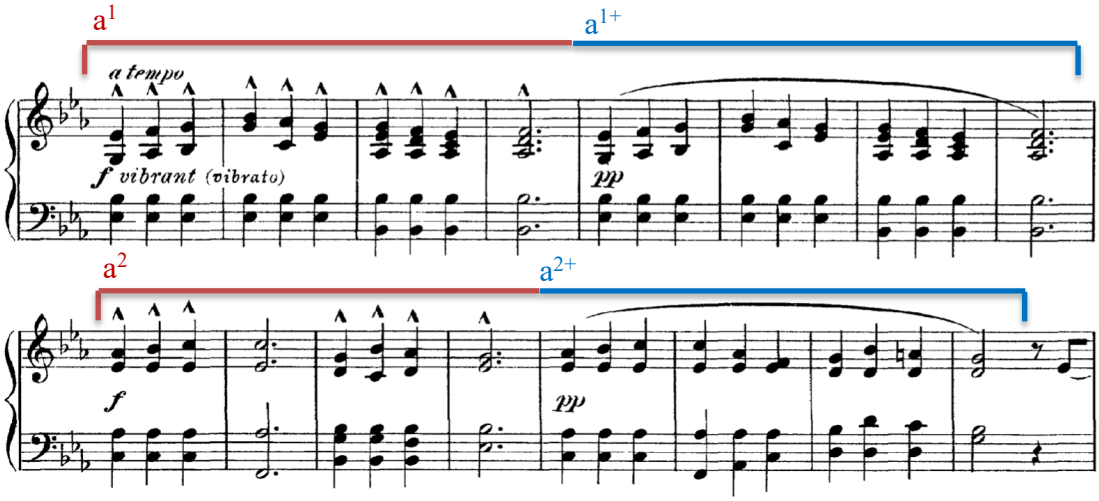
[149] This is particularly important when, for example, a part of the introduction is repeated later; Jo-Chi Lin's analysis would divide the almost uniform material into ever-smaller segments to show more precisely which part is repeated. While this fragmentation displays Franck's economy with thematic material, it leads to an over-complication and a lack of clarity into how the introductory material is utilised throughout each of the works.
[150] Cranford, "Harmonic and Contrapuntal Techniques in the Late Keyboard Works of César Franck", 338.
[151] *Ibid.*, 338–9. These accurately describe the dealing of thematic material to create larger structures. Where possible, parallels will be drawn between the early and late works using this method of analysis.



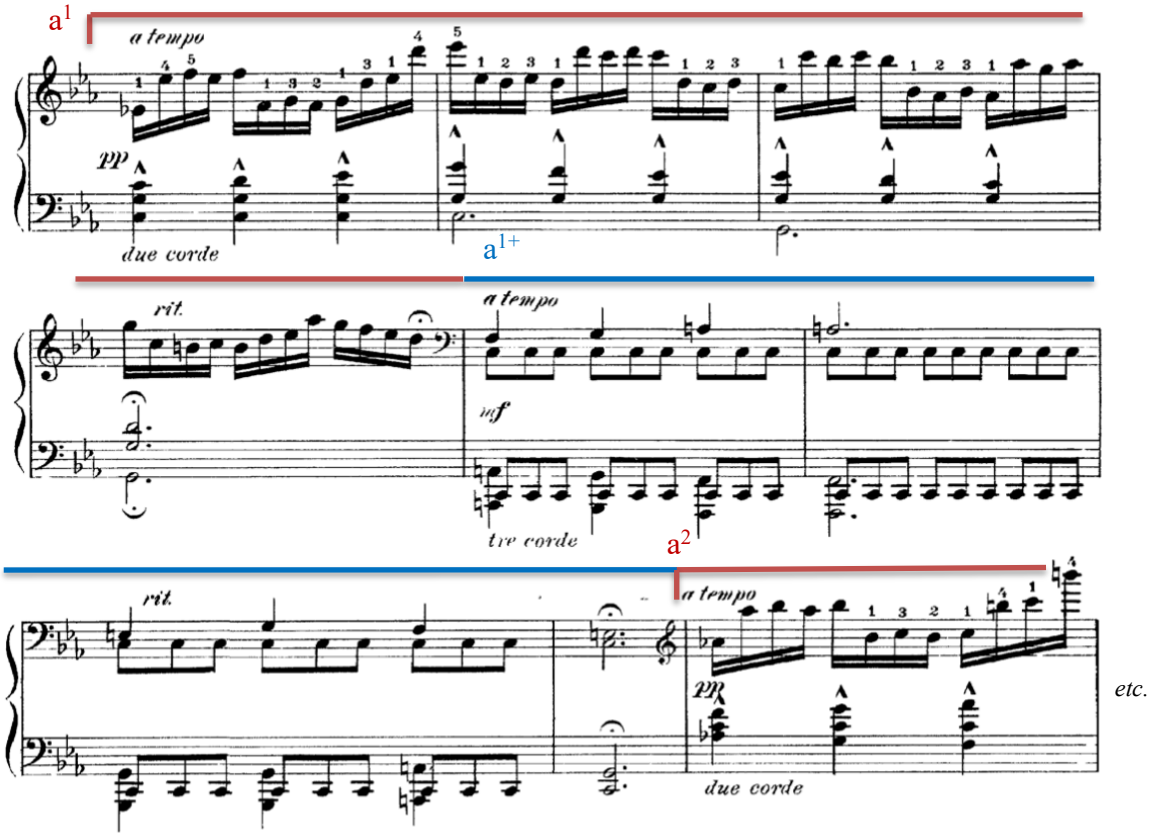
Example 31d: Reconstruction of the harmonic reductions of the [*Prélude*], *choral et fugue*, bars 42–45 and 48–51 respectively.

This 'new element of the second (or succeeding) unit [...] inevitably drawing the listener's attention' is something that we have seen in the description of the 'chord pair'. Individual phrases are usually composite phrases – often made up of a call and response cells, usually in 2 or 4 bar groups and typically repeating themselves.

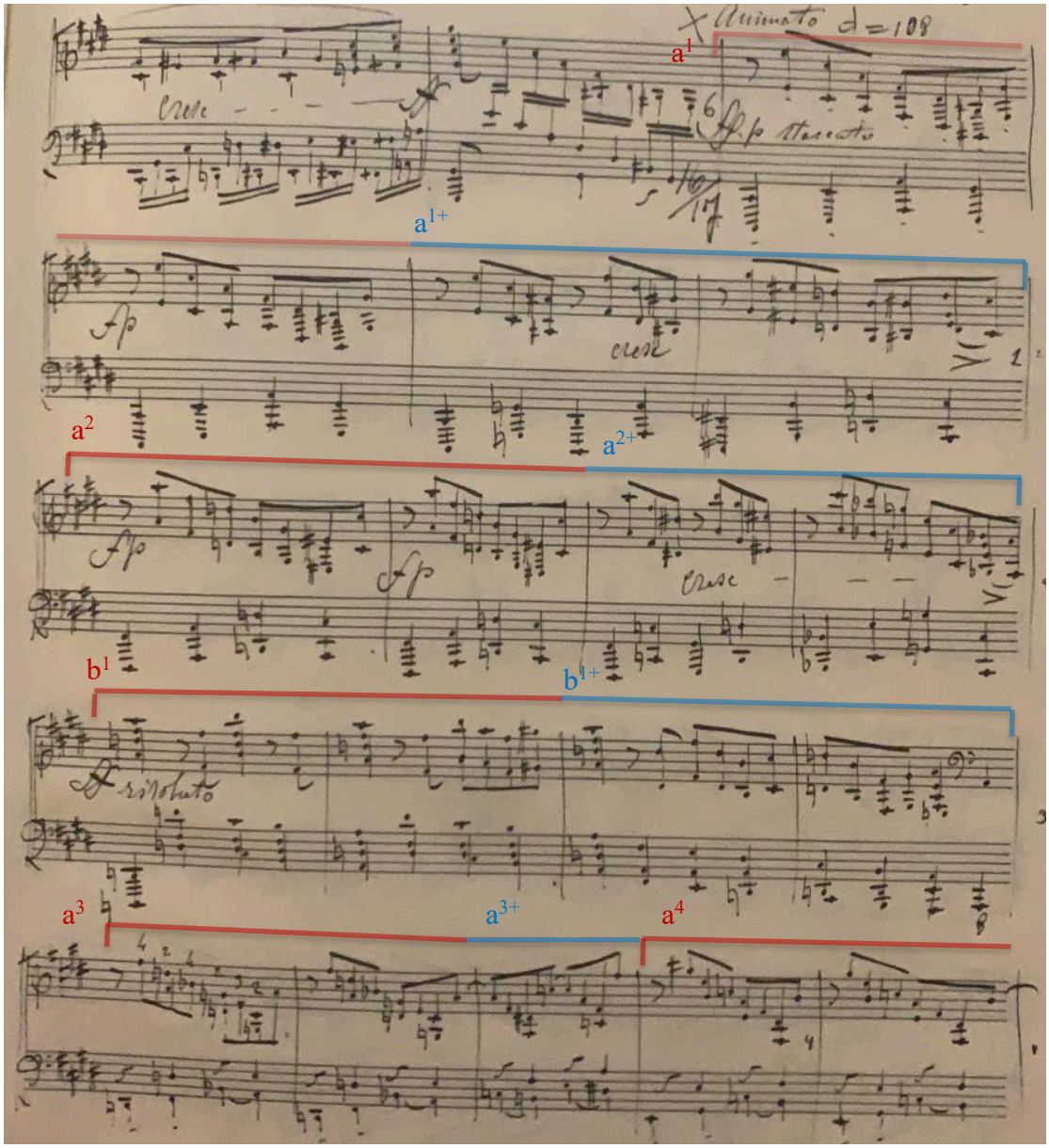
To exemplify this technique, there will be two extracts once more from the Op. 3 *Églogue* and *Prélude, aria et final.* First part of the phrase pair will be coloured red, and the second parts of a phrase pair will be denoted with a '+', and coloured blue.



Example 32a: Op. 3, *Églogue*, bars 58–73, theme ***B***, previously mentioned in *Franck and the choral bells.* This is the first iteration of this thematic group, the contrast of which will be accentuated later in the work, reinforcing them in their role as juxtapositional pairs. Apart from dynamics and articulation, phrase a^{1+} is a reproduction of a^{1}. Evidently envisaged as a call and response in this instance, they clearly form a pair; the two individual phrases form a unit and are always heard together. Defining them individually would miss Franck's compositional process, unnecessarily separating the two phrase pairs from which form thematic group.



Example 32b: Op. 3, *Églogue*, bars 198–206, theme *B*. The two phrases **a**[1] and **a**[1+], clearly separated by fermatas and strongly contrasted with dynamics, texture, key, rhythm and register, form a phrasal pair. This phrasal pair appears twice in succession; the contrasting features accentuated further compared to the first uniform iteration. Because the phrases always appear together, it is analysed as a single thematic group, or *theme*. This is clearer in its first, earlier iteration, where it visibly forms a whole. However, as well as the emphasised contrast between the phrases, the phrase pairs are altered in order of appearance (**a**[1] here is a variant of **a**[1+] phrase of the previous extract). Though in both instances, two contrasting phrase pairs form the thematic group. So here we see the combination/merging of themes and an unexpected *modal interchange* with f minor in second extract.



etc.

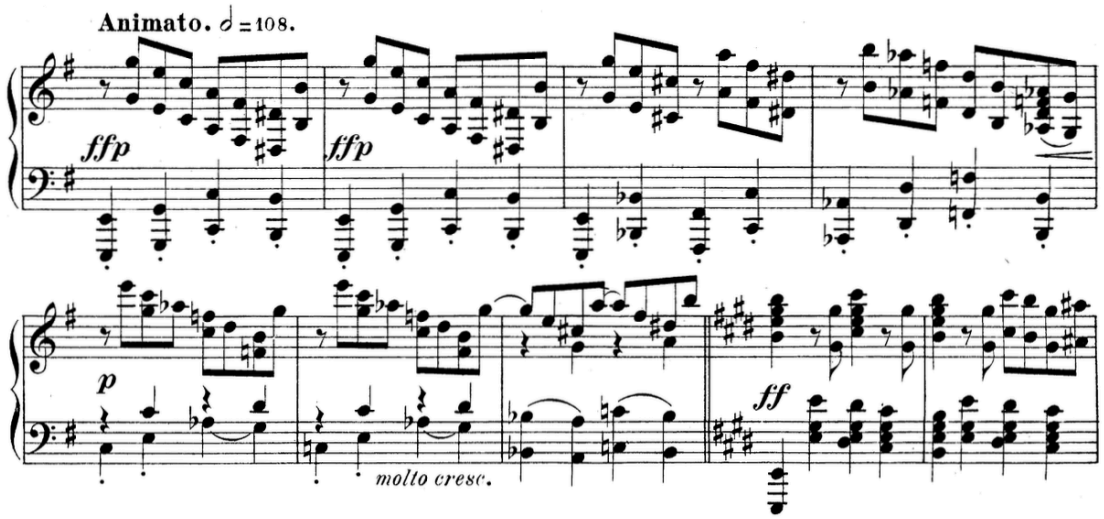
Example 32c: *Prélude, aria et final*, bars 39–46. Fac-similé de César Franck « Prélude, aria et final pour piano: manuscrit autographe, 1887 (Réf.5706) » avec l'aimable autorisation de Anne Fuzeau Productions - France - www.annefuzeau.com. The contrast within the phrase is not as strong as in the *Églogue* extract above. We also see *delayed down beats* occurring in the frequent right hand pauses, or *breaking* in Armstrong's terminology. Phrases **a**^{1} and **a**$^{1+}$ and the two subsequent times it is heard, contain repeated phrases, though modified; **a**^{3} and its response **a**$^{3+}$ form a 3 bar phrase, **a** and **b** *phrase pairs* here form a thematic group. This lens of Franck's structural procedure can be used to view all of Franck's piano works.

The above examples have also demonstrated a noted part of the essence of a 'Franckian phrase': repetition and variation.[152] Within each of the phrases we see repetition and variation, as well as

[152] 'Franck's mastery of variation is apparent in every work he wrote, whether the evidence be in the variation of a short phrase or of the whole material. This is one of the reasons for maintaining that the heritage of Bach and Beethoven descended on him, but there is no implication that his music is as great as theirs.' Demuth, *César Franck,* 59.

the phrase pairs being repeated frequently in close proximity. Once again, the systematic approach to composition that Franck employed enables a transparency of structure, if not at times leaving a somewhat segregated aural impression, had it not been for the evolution of phrases evolving from germ themes which help unify the works.

As seen in the above examples, the sudden switches between the phrase pairs have led writers to believe the works to be disjunct and even organ-like, and considering they usually follow clear 4–bar phrases, this in turn can lead to monotony and a predictable phrase structure. With the sudden contrasts and fermatas seen in the *Églogue*, and the dramatic shifts in register of the *Prélude* extract, one can also see the 'organ-like' or improvisation style of writing.



Example 32d: *Prélude, aria et [final],* bars 446–458, the return of this theme in the 'recapitulation' of the *final*. It is an interesting moment, as we can see here the phrase response takes the form of its repeat (**a**^{3} from the previous extract), which means that within this example we have phrase pairs of bar lengths 2–3–2. Both of these extracts feature Franck's fondness for the *AAB* bar form phrase structure.

The conjunction of two phrase pairs form a thematic group. We will further see in the upcoming examination why they are considered 'pairings', as they are not just contrasting, but also often share resemblances and are found usually bound together, not isolated. This lends itself to the general consensus of Franck being a great 'architect' of music, being able to handle large form structures. These thematic pairings are particularly important for writers who have commented on their more general allusions in Franck's music, in which diametric contrast is above all given

attention,[153] often coupled with implications of good vs evil.[154] Despite his letter seen earlier from 1884 informing his students to 'stick to the classical mould', original structures outside of music also attracted Franck, considering his decision to use Victor Hugo's *Les Djinns* as his piece to 'come back to the piano',[155] a poem which is above all noted for its interesting form.[156]

Looking at a large section of both his Op. 3 *Églogue* and his *Prélude, aria et final*, we will see pairings as important composites of the Franckian style.[157] For the purpose of highlighting phrase pairs, each subsequent pair will be labelled.

[153] '[on the *Variations symphoniques*] expressivement, on ne peut s'empêcher d'imaginer une fois de plus que les deux motifs représentent deux personnalités unies dans une existence commune mais en un conflit pathétique incessant ; l'une, celle de douceur, serait de l'auteur lui-même; nouvelle tragédie sentimentale, achevée dans un éclatant optimisme, dans une victorieuse allégresse.' Vallas, *César Franck*, 240–241.

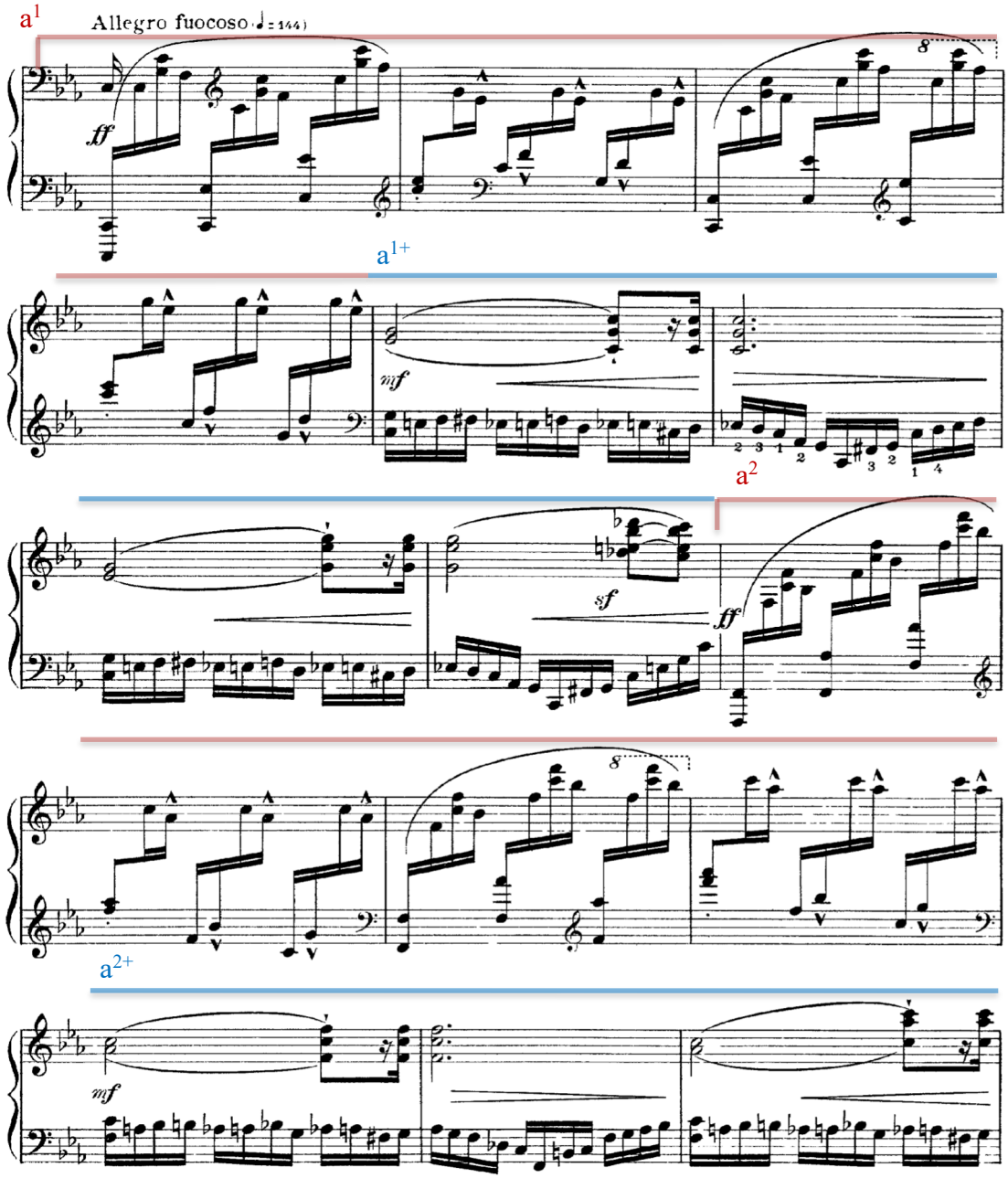
[154] '[On *Les Djinns*] Si, maintenant, nous envisageons la transposition morale et même chrétienne de la fable, prenant les Djinns comme symboles de nos mauvais instincts, de nos coupables désirs, comme une personnification du mal, et que nous supposions l'âme humaine opposant aux tentations qui l'assiègent, qui la pressent, qui la harcèlent, la défense palpitante de la prière, nous aurons une version que les quelques indications de sentiment ajoutées par Franck à la partie de piano, paraissent accorder à sa véritable intention.' Cortot, *L'œuvre pianistique de César Franck,* 18–19.

[155] 'C'est par les Djinns, avons-nous dit, que Franck, en 1883, et non en 1884, ainsi que l'indiquent plusieurs commentateurs, reprend contact avec le piano et pendant quatre ans, c'est-à-dire jusqu'en 1887, il ne fera plus appel à un autre traducteur de sa pensée musicale.' Cortot, *L'œuvre pianistique de César Franck,* 17. Though in reality, it was with the Piano Quintet that Franck made a dramatic and decisive return to the instrument.

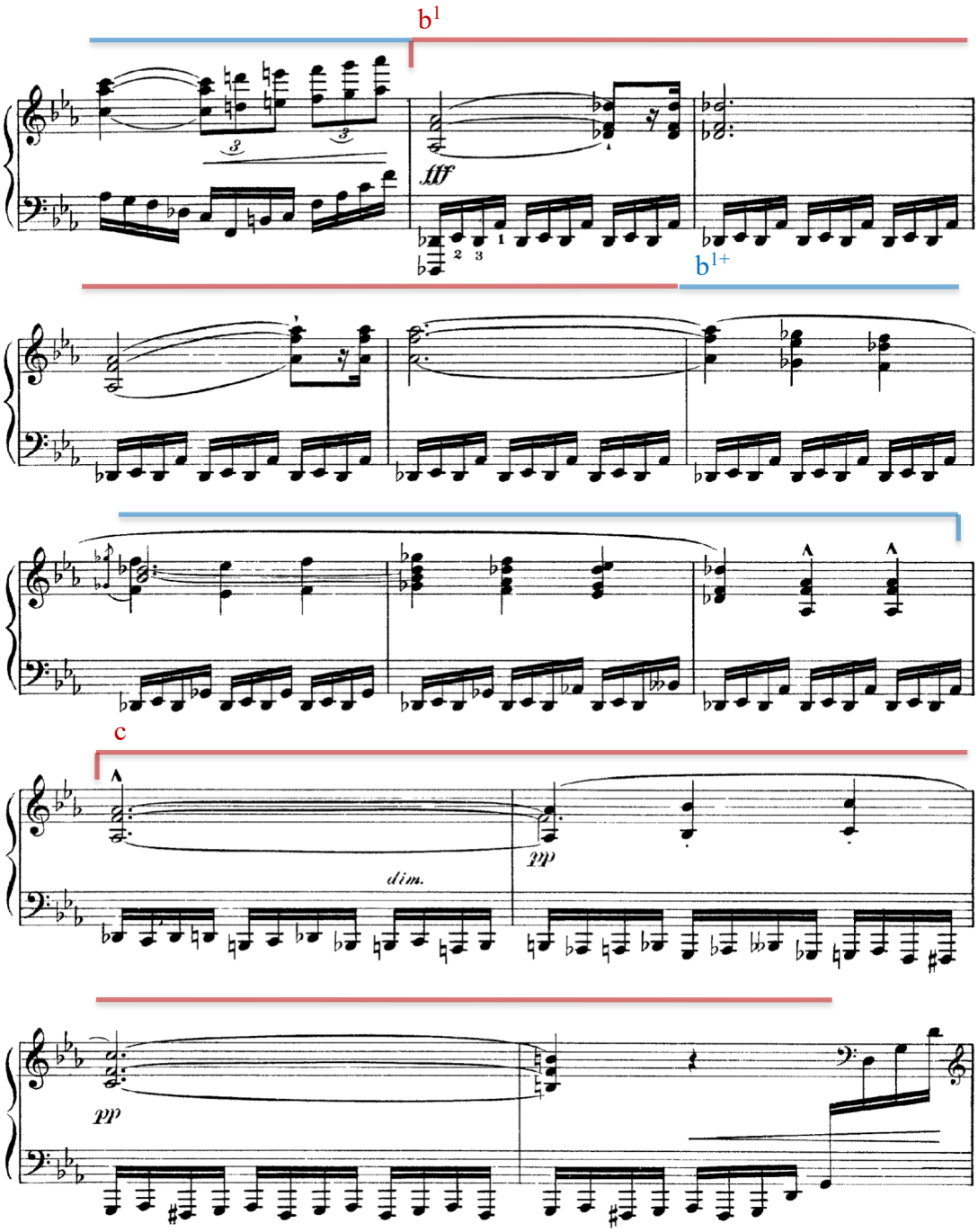
[156] Though, in contrast, Franck's piece itself has been found to be entirely classical in construction: '[On Brent Jones *An Analytical Study of Les Djinns*] The key scheme of the piece is similar to the classical sonata form, while the "use of recurrent figure in a ritornello fashion is reminiscent of the rondo procedure," and the fact that "changes occur with the return of previously sounded material" identifies the form with the idea of variation.' Flynn, *César Franck: An Annotated Bibliography,* 141.

[157] Cranford's 1992 study of 5 of Franck's late keyboard works found thematic pairs in each of the works.

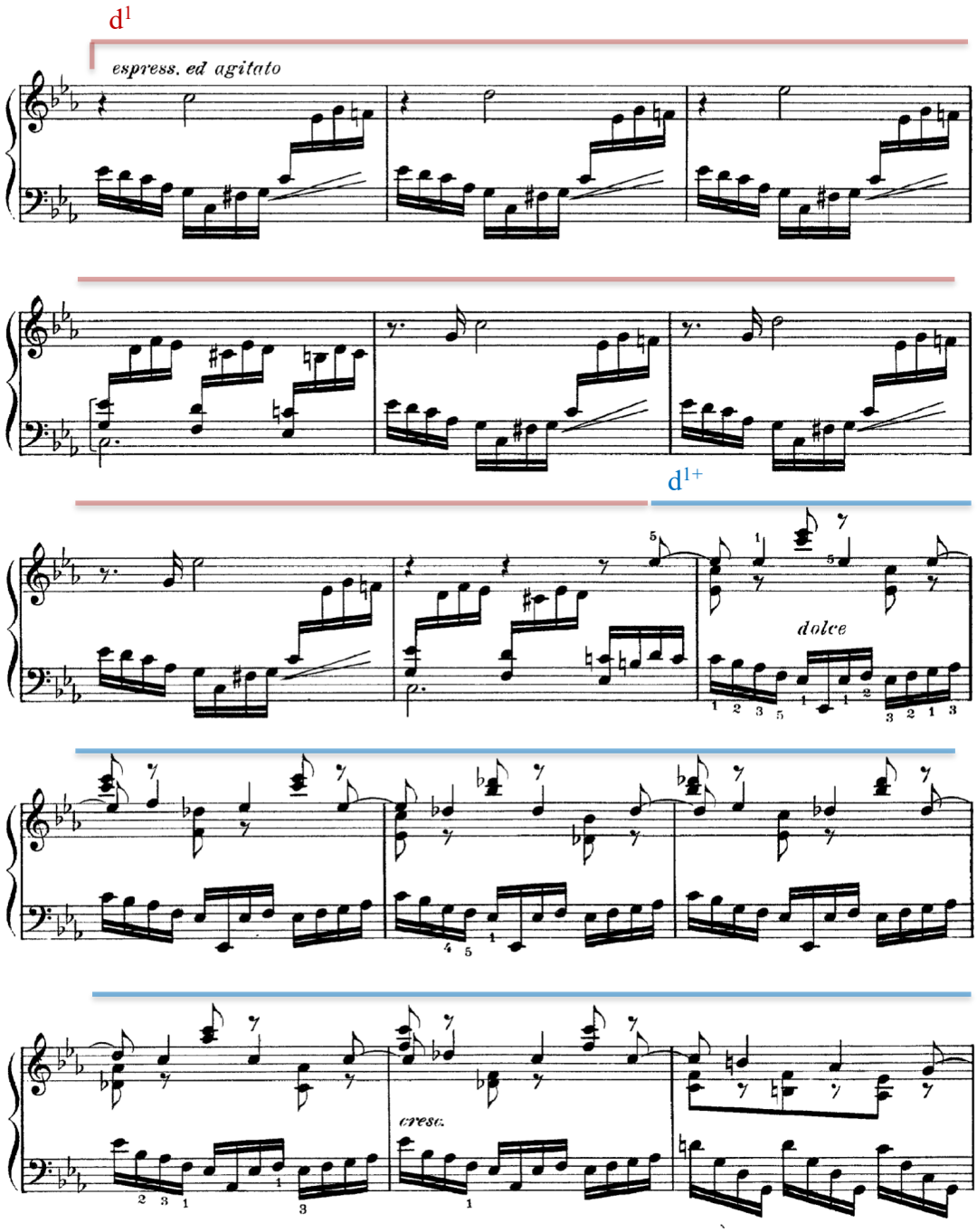
Example 33, *Églogue,* bars 218–281:



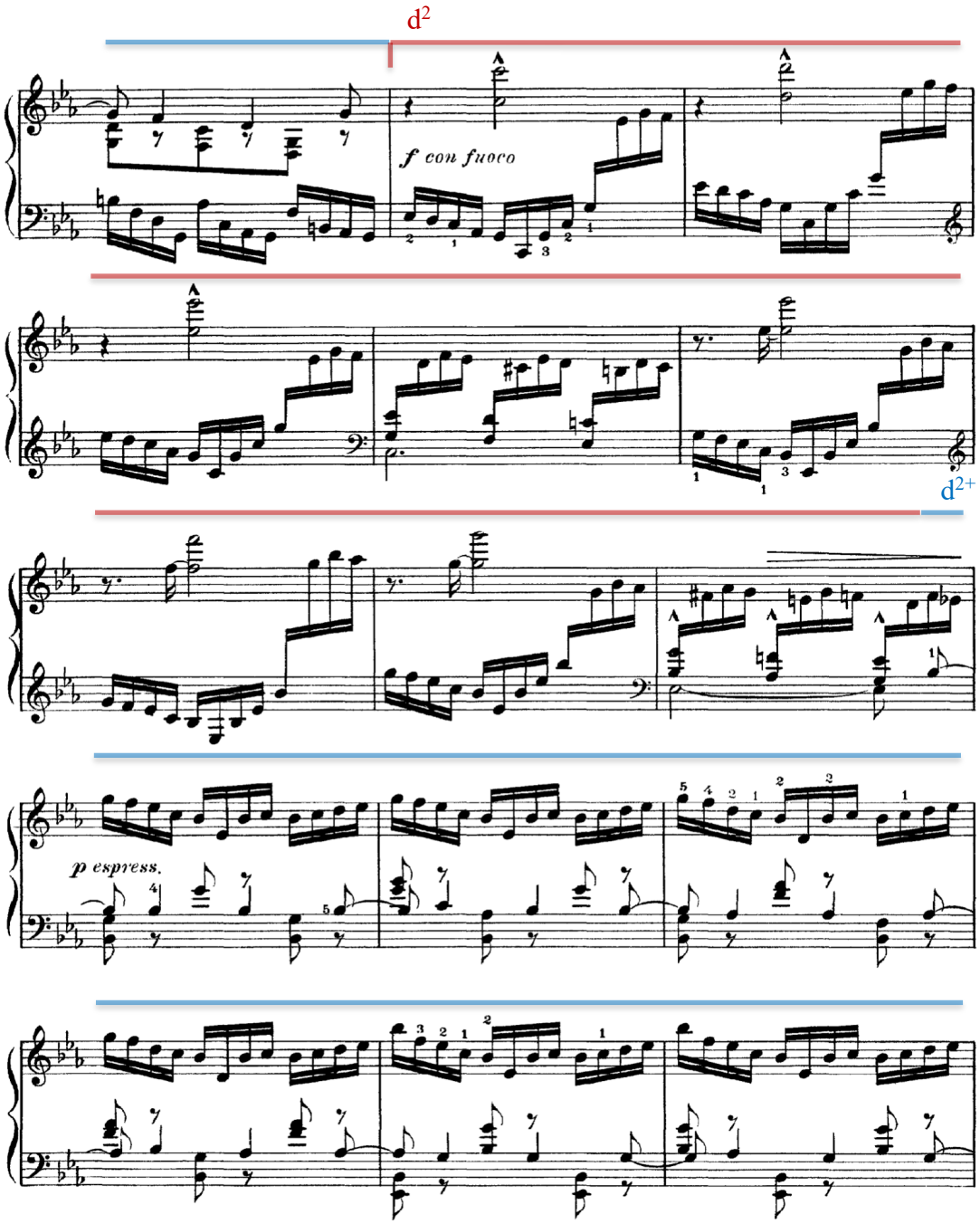
Example 33a: *Églogue*, bars 218–232. This extract is composed of 4-bar phrases, each consisting of two almost identical 2-bar phrases. The structure of these early works is generally transparent and procedural, which is why examination of them is so enlightening for Franck's compositional process at the time. The phrases a^{1} and a^{1+} form a thematic group that is then repeated.



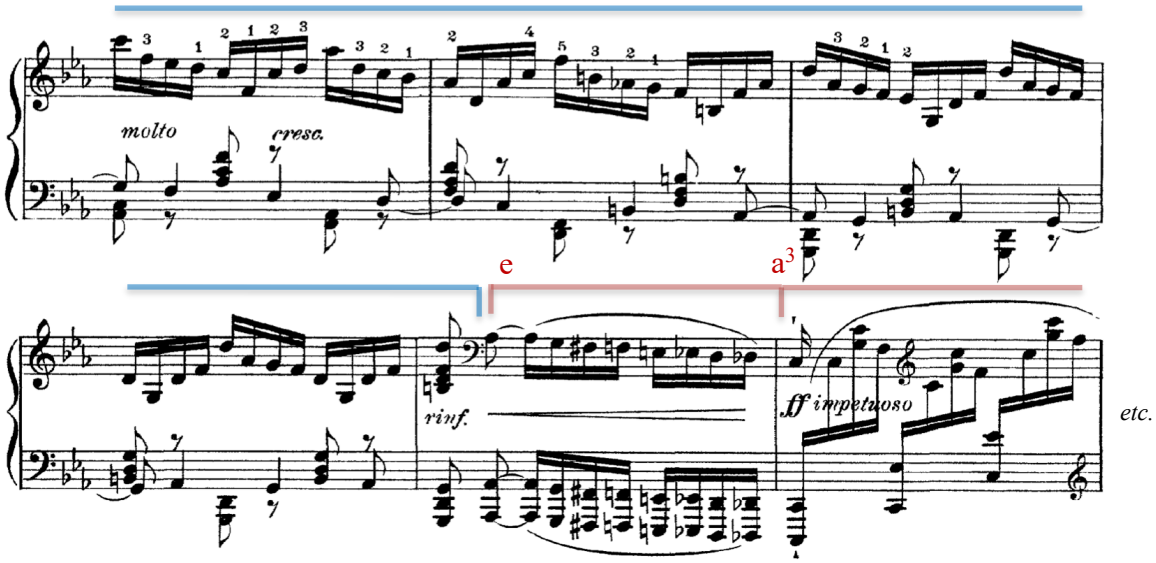
Example 33b: *Églogue,* bars 233– 245. Here b[1] is a+, the response to the first phrasal pair, becomes the statement and is coupled with its own scalic descending response b[1+]. The short c phrase can be heard as the dying away echo to the b phrase pair. As we can see, seven of the eight phrases presented consist of a repeating two-bar phrase. The unique b[1+] abstains from this procedure which reinforces its position as an outlier. The phrase c is related to a[+], but like we will see in the *Prélude,* Franck often placed a phrase without its pairing between new material.



Example 33c: *Églogue*, bars 246–260. The next part that follows doubles the phrase length, from four to eight. We see *discreet down beats* in both the call d^{1} and the response d^{1+}. The individual lengths are doubled, from two bars to four, and just like before they are also repetitions of one another. In Franck's late works the groupings will more regularly vary in length.

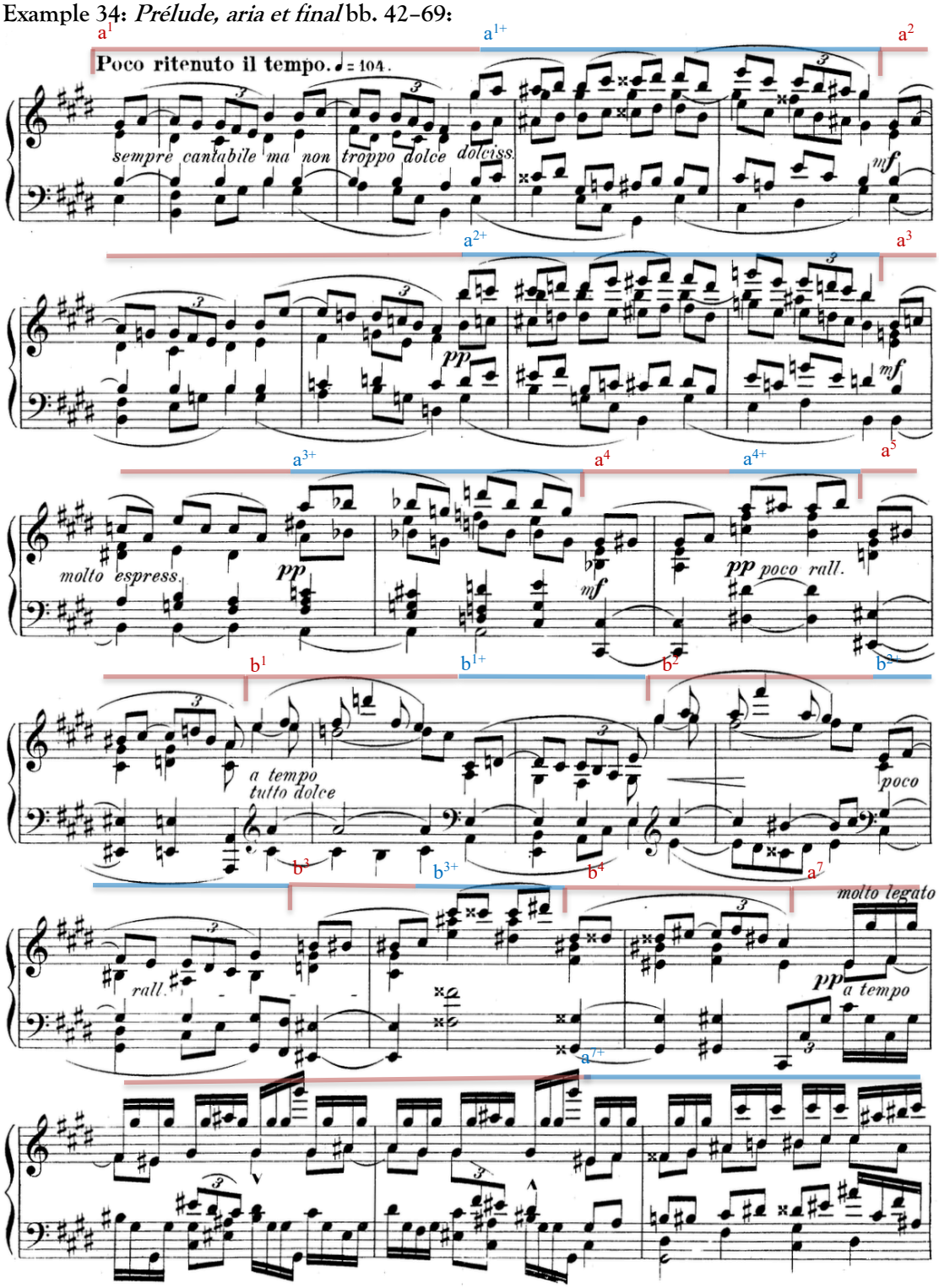


Example 33d: *Églogue*, bars 261–275. Just as in the first part of the 2nd section of *Églogue* shown above, the **d** and **d⁺** phrase pair is heard twice.

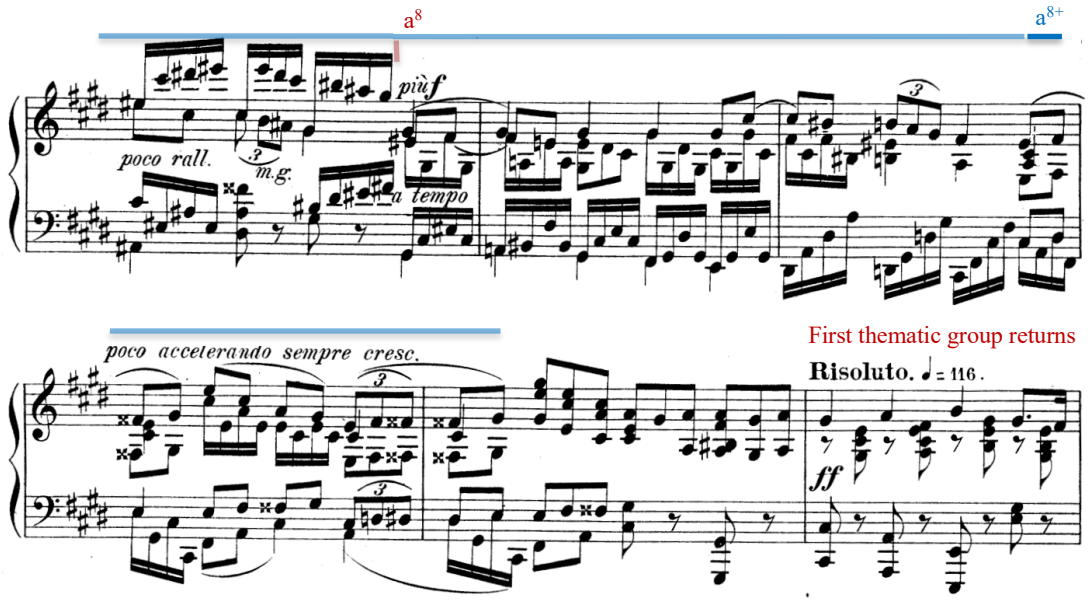


Example 33e: *Églogue*, bars 276–290. Just as in the first portion of the *allegro fuocoso* with the **c** phrase, there is a single phrase without a pair preparing a new part (the recap of this second section). Phrase **e** is a quote from the thematic material which prepared the *allegro fuocoso* and the **a** and **a**$^{+}$ thematic pairs, just like its function here which prepares the return to the first theme of the second section.

Example 34: *Prélude, aria et final* bb. 42–69:



Example 34a: [*Prélude*], *aria et final*, bars 42–63. Despite the music being vastly more complicated, it shares structural similarities to Franck's simple early piano works such as the Op. 3 *Églogue*. We see the *discreet strong beats* prominently here, with notes tied over the bar-lines throughout the extract. There is also an enlargement of intervals and range as the theme progresses. The differentiation between the 'call' and 'response' is just as clear here, with contrasting register and dynamics. We can see lone phrases whose functions are to usher in new/different material, **a**^{5} and **b**^{4} in this extract and **e** and **c** in the *Églogue*. The diminution of the phrase is more effective and clearer here with the **b** theme pairs, in which the role of call and response is inverted – **b**$^{1+}$ is the **a** 'call' adjusted into a response. There is an argument to be made that the phrases can be further divided in two.



Example 34b: *Prélude, aria et final* bars 64–69. This extract bears a structural resemblance in Franck's thematic procedure to the **d** theme pairs in the *Églogue* through their emphasis on contrast in the context of phrasal pairs. Franck's propensity for variation form and the tension that arises from the development of this material is effective here, and it can be assumed that this was Franck's intention in similar instances in the early piano works. It is also much more difficult to properly label the phrases due to their rich chromatic style which emerges from the initial embryonic phrase pair out of which develops the rest of the material (including **b** and **c** which show clear affinity to **a**). For the sake of clarity, another edition was used above.

In both extracts we see this structure in a Franckian theme:

| a | a | a+ | a+ |x2

As can be seen much of the above bears strong resemblance to the often-discussed musical 'period'[158] consisting of antecedent and a consequent, where a is repeated, followed by a response which is repeated, typically in regular groupings. The orderliness with which Franck treats his material is what has most likely led writers to approach his music as being strongly based in the

[158] 'The school-form for the sentence (eight measures) begins with a two-measure unit, followed by a repetition (mss. 3–4) which can be a sequence or else a more or less contrasting repetition. The sixth measure will be a sequence of the fifth, and mss. 7 and 8 will be cadences to various degrees.' Arnold Schoenberg, *Structural Functions of Harmony*, (London: Williams and Norgate, 1954), 114.

classical style, or at least, pre-romantic.[159] This use of sequences and variation, along with a pregnant motif supplying future material, is a foundation for the construction of Franck's works.

The Three Parts

In contrast to the pairings found in the previous section, a zooming out of the analytical lens will result in finding the works, movements and sections often to be comfortably divisible by three in structure, which we will find overwhelmingly in the early piano works.

The significance of this number also appears on a single movement level. There are clear segregations between the different sections in the early piano works, most noticeably through tempo and dynamic changes. This division applies to the individual movements of both triptychs *Prélude, choral et fugue*[160] and the *Prélude, aria et final,*[161] as well as *Les Djinns* and *Variations Symphoniques.*[162] Even if the works have an extended climax, like the final movements of his triptychs, they, like sonata form, are still psychologically perceptible as three parts with a coda. As to be expected, sonata form was a staple of his teaching and improvisation as a lecturer at Paris Conservatoire.[163] Importantly, this three-part with a tail appears on many levels of structural analysis: from an entire work to a section, to a sub-section and even often to a phrase grouping.[164]

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[159] 'The paradigm [of the classical style] is, of course, the four-measure phrase, but historically this is not the model, but only, at the end, the most common. Two-measure phrases are almost a trademark with Domenico Scarlatti, becoming four-measure phrases when they are, in turn, grouped by twos.' Rosen, *The Classical Style,* 57.

[160] Cranford's analysis of the *Prélude* from *Prélude, choral et fugue* finds three themes A, B and C, with A and B forming a thematic pair, and can be thought of as a three-part structure with an enlarged coda; the *choral* is divided into a 3-part structure; and the *fugue*, similarly to the *Prélude*, is a three-part structure with an extended coda: 'To summarize then, the Fugue is designed structurally according to an eighteenth-century model: (1) expositions in tonic and relative major, (2) a following section of greater instability concluded by a dominant "pedal," (3) a final tonic exposition.' Cranford, "Harmonic and Contrapuntal Techniques in the Late Keyboard Works of César Franck", 130–131.

[161] Cranford's analysis of the *Prélude, aria et final* finds a structure of four large sections for the *Prélude,* but one can merge the first and second sections if we consider the movement in a variation of sonata form; the *aria* is two large sections flanked by an introduction and climax, however: 'Because of the limited material, the harmonic and melodic character of the movement is almost completely defined by three primary phrases.' Cranford, "Harmonic and Contrapuntal Techniques in the Late Keyboard Works of César Franck", 175–176; and the *final* has been seen as a large two-part structure, compared to the sonata-form structure as exemplified by d'Indy.

[162] 'Franck's *Variations Symphoniques* is a one-movement work consisting of three sections: Introduction, Variations, and Finale.' James, "César Franck's works for piano and orchestra", 69.

[163] '[For improvising] The "*grande fantaisie*" was often adopted; the sonata-allegro, the lied were honoured.' Smith, *Toward an Authentic Interpretation of the Organ Works of César Franck*, 22.

[164] 'Franck employs three-part melodies: the first part comprising the opening; the second and amplification in terms of melodic intervals or harmonies; and thirdly, the completion of the design. One Franck penchant is his use of a two-note sigh figure which historically has been used as a gesture of expression.' James, "César Franck's works for piano and orchestra", 102–3. Unfortunately, no examples were provided.

What has also been mentioned, is the potential of 'bar form' — generally but not exclusively *AAB* — having great significance in Franck's phrase structure and larger form.[165] This is not noticeable in the early works with respect to his larger formal perception, as opposed to the late works, but it is discernible in his phrase structures.

Cyclic Form

If we zoom out even further with the analytical lens to approach the whole work while under the context of thematic material, we arise at the contentious term *cyclic form.* Despite writers such as Dahlhaus[166] and more recently Taylor[167] elucidating the term, the nomenclature still seems to have slippery definition that keeps expanding. Nevertheless, this structural procedure, in its many guises, is not as relevant to the early piano works as it is for others, such as his Op. 1 *Trois Trios* and the late works. An investigation for clarity in definitions will not be approached in this thesis, instead an overview of the term *Cyclic Form* will be presented here, whereas later in the *Techniques Commentary* the topic will be broached whether the early piano works fit into standard definitions of the terms, and what that means for the development of Franck's compositional style in general.

Franck's structures understandably generate considerable dialogue between writers, often circling around the term 'cyclic form'; and just as with his chromaticism shown earlier, a lack of perceptible cyclic structure has led some to believe a work to be distinctly *non-Franckian*:

> Thus, we will see until now respectable soothsayers bent over the insides of these *Trios,* considered as the genetic strain of Franck's art, to read the signs that herald "cyclic" without which there be no authentic *Franckian style* or even music worthy of the name. [168]

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[165] 'Franck was particularly fond of incorporating these motifs into a bar-form (*AAB*) phrase structure'. John Trevitt and Joël-Marie Fauquet, "Franck, César (-Auguste-Jean-Guillaume-Hubert)"

[166] Franck's structures are mentioned in detail here: Carl Dahlhaus, trans. by Mary Whittall, *Between Romanticism and Modernism: Four Studies in the Music of the Later Nineteenth Century,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 41.

[167] As described in Benedict Taylor in his book dedicated to the form, and specifically *Cyclic Forms in the Instrumental Music of Felix Mendelssohn: Time, Memory and Musical History*, 6.

[168] 'Ainsi, nous verrons jusqu'à nos jours de respectables aruspices penchés sur les entrailles de ces *Trios* considérés comme la souche génétique de l'art franckien, pour y lire les signes annonciateurs du « cyclisme » sans lequel il n'y aurait point de Franck authentique sinon même de musique digne de ce nom.' Fauquet, *César Franck*, 128.

Three of the early piano works in this thesis are generally predictable and structurally uniform, and as a result the consequential examination will not need to be as in-depth as analyses done on his major late works. Generally, his music is understood to evolve out of basic thematic material: themes are 'generative',[169] progressing through a series of alterations and developments out of which a *natural* structure emerges.[170] D'Indy reads this as Franck's style evolving from essentially the simplest form, that of variation form:

> [Franck would] firmly and definitely tie again the thread of the tradition of Bach and of Beethoven in the matter of the amplified Variation: from his first works [...] one feels the desire to vary the Themes, by means of their successive modifications and transformations which were to lead to cyclic form. [...] This fertile system of composition, already forecast by Beethoven before being categorically established by the strict logic and high artistic conscience of the French master, is shared necessarily, in reality, with variation form, either ornamental, or decorative or amplified.[171]

This foundational view of the generative quality of his themes, as shared by other writers, has been attributed as stemming from his lessons with Reicha:

> The ideal that serious instrumental music should be about strong musical ideas developed in complex and imaginative ways in works of ample proportions was absolutely central to the progressive aesthetic climate of the 1870s. In particular, the close attention paid by these composers to techniques of motivic transformation, the combinatorial treatment of themes, and cyclic organization are remarkably close to Reicha's detailed precepts.[172]

Some writers have understood some of Franck's features described in this thesis as evolving out of his close relationship with cyclic form as a fundamental structure. Approaching Franck's œuvre from this perspective, one can see the natural inclination towards 'generative themes' and 'cyclic form', as well as the pianistic techniques in the early piano works as a procedure to vary the

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[169] 'engendre'. D'Indy, *César Franck*, 82.
[170] 'Another method is to base the entire material of each movement on the initial phrase or phrases. In this case everything becomes a permutation of something already heard. The germ may be a short theme of no great musical significance, in fact, the less significant it is, the more opportunities it presents. The work, therefore, grows out of itself.' Demuth, *César Franck,* 53.
[171] 'renouer solidement et définitivement le fil de la tradition de Bach et de Beethoven en matière de Variation amplificatrice : dès ses premières œuvres, et notamment dans son *Trio* en *fa#* (1841), dont nous avons déjà parlé ci-dessus (p. 422) et qui sera analysé ultérieurement, on sent la préoccupation de *varier* les Thèmes, par le moyen de ces modifications et de ces transformations successives qui devaient aboutir aux *forms cycliques* telles qu'elles ont été précédemment étudiées au chapitre v. Ce système fécond de composition, pressenti déjà par Beethoven avant d'être instauré définitivement par la rigoureuse logique et la haute conscience artistique du maître français, participe nécessairement, en effet, de la *Variation*, soit *ornementale*, soit *décorative*, soit *amplificatrice*, Aussi n'est-on pas surpris d'en retrouver la trace en maint passage d'œuvres de Franck qui méritent, à ce titre tout au moins, d'être mentionnées ici.' D'Indy, *Cours de composition musicale,* 481.
[172] Jones, "Nineteenth-Century Orchestral and Chamber Music", 59.

thematic material, in contrast with the pianistic fireworks of his contemporaries who used variation of pianistic techniques as the driving factor of interest and sufficient in itself. We will see in Chapter 4 *Cyclic form?* an exploration of the definitions and whether Franck's creative path can be traced to his early piano works. It is nevertheless certain that the thought process was dear to Franck and 'seems to have been one of the few points that aroused Franck's sensitivities.'[173]

As much praise as there is for Franck's structural technique, the francophone world of the first half of the 20th century paired it with criticism in a typically poetic fashion: 'He was incapable of moving outside the rigours of musical forms, those stern classical laws of construction to which both by instinct and education he traced the essence of music's strength.'[174] Excluding the Op. 7 *Souvenirs*, the early works are impoverished from this viewpoint:[175] they lack the tonal tension of a sonata form, nor is there a strict variation form which displays the composers ingenuity for creating unique pianistic colours or harmonic variety, nor are they unpredictable in how they progress structurally.[176] This could very well lend itself to the serenity which will be commented on later in Chapter 2 *Spiritual/Erotic/Serene*. Everything moves along as expected, though the early works reveal a particularly characteristic compositional method of Franck found in his late works – his economy of material:

> This is sufficient to suggest the appropriateness of the simile which likens the music of Franck to the art of illumination. He enriches with an extraordinary beauty something which in itself has little artistic significance. His single note or single chord or single tonality is his groundwork just as the initial letter of a Response or a Lection was the groundwork for the

[173] 'On sait de diverses sources que l'exécution de la Symphonie de Saint-Saëns fit sur Franck une forte impression, au point qu'il n'admettait pas qu'on émît la moindre critique sur l'œuvre et son auteur. […] ceci près que Franck s'affligeait un peu que les critiques attribuassent à Saint-Saëns une initiative qu'il avait eue quarante ans plus tôt dans son Trio en fa dièse, celle d'employer des thèmes conducteurs dans le courant de l'œuvre entière.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 718.
[174] Cortot, *L'œuvre pianistique de César Franck,* 66.
[175] 'He produced a number of original display pieces, among them the *Églogue, Premier Grand Caprice* and *Ballade*. While being undeniably effective for their purpose, they were written to a simple ternary formula, and their long passages of static tonality and decoratively varied repetitions hardly presage the future master of development and tonality.' Thomson "César Franck: 'Mind, Flesh and Spirit'", 639.
[176] Ravel criticised Franck's music succinctly: '[on the symphonies by Brahms and Franck] Their faults have the same source: a similar disproportion of the themes and their development. […] In Franck: melody of a cultivated and cheerful spirit, daring harmonies of especial richness, but a devastating poverty in form […] groups of measures up to entire pages repeated, transposed texturally; he awkwardly abuses out-of-date academic formulas'. Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt, *Maurice Ravel: variations on his life and work*, trans. Samuel R. Rosenbaum. (Philadelphia: Chilton Book Company, 1968), 139–139.

> monk who took in hand the illumination of a Missal. He is not impelled forward from one emotional crisis to another like Tchaikovsky, nor moved to epic fervour like Wagner.[177]

Tiersot also commented on this tendency in the early works:

> [on cyclic form] this is one of the essential characteristics of César Franck's art [...] suffice it to say that works from Franck's earliest youth already mark a very pronounced trend in the same direction. The trios of his twentieth year offer the most characteristic examples of chromatic harmonies and tonal freedoms, and they were composed at a time when *Tannhäuser* was not yet conceived and when, in fact, Liszt had employed this genre in a famous gallop. These tendencies were therefore germinating deep in Franck's nature, and he needed the example of no one else to develop them.[178]

At its essence, cyclic form is a procedure that imparts unity across movements in larger works. Joris Verdin, one of the most erudite and active Franck researchers, makes an interesting point, enlarging the effect of cyclic form of unity not just from one work, but to a composer's whole output:

> The so-called cyclical process is not only found in each work itself. In reality, the entire œuvre is cyclical. This does not mean that there would be no evolution; the opposite is true. Yet the organ work forms a large whole through which constantly run references, quotations, affinities and connections. Motifs and ideas recur again and again in different guises. Just look at the heroic opening motif of Pièce in E^b Major from 1846: it returns as a melodic motif in *Prélude, fugue et variation* and as a seraphic quotation at the end of the 2nd Choral.
>
> We can safely say that Franck did not write a number of organ works, but a major organ work, in several episodes. With César Franck, everything is interconnected.[179]

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[177] Colles, "César Franck and the Sonata", 208.

[178] 'c'est là une des caractéristiques essentielles de l'art de César Franck. [...] mais qu'il nous suffise d'indiquer que des œuvres de la toute première jeunesse de Franck marquent déjà une tendance très prononcée dans le même sens. Les trios de sa vingtième année offrent les exemples les plus caractéristiques d'harmonies chromatiques et de libertés tonales, et ils furent composés à une époque où Tannhäuser n'était pas encore conçu et où, en fait de chromatique, Liszt n'avait employé ce genre que dans un célèbre galop. Ces tendances étaient donc en germe au fond de la nature de Franck et il n'a eu besoin de l'exemple d'aucun autre pour les développer.' Tiersot, *Un demi-siècle de Musique Française*, 140–141. Our present understanding of the origin of cyclic form is more complicated: 'The architectural principle with which his name is linked, cyclic form, sprang originally from two distinct sources: Beethoven's dramatic recall of previously heard themes, and the monothematic procedure whereby a number of movements employ variants or 'transformations' of the same material, as in Schubert's Wanderer Fantasy and E major Quartet op.125.' John Trevitt and Joël-Marie Fauquet, "Franck, César (-Auguste-Jean-Guillaume-Hubert)".

[179] 'Het zogenaamde cyclische procedé vinden we niet alleen terug in elk werk opzicht. In werkelijkheid is het hele oeuvre cyclisch. Dit wil niet zeggen dat er geenevolutie zou zijn; het tegendeel is waar. Toch vormt het orgelwerk een groot geheel waar voortdurend verwijzingen, citaten, verwantschappen en verbanden doorheen lopen. Motieven en ideeen komen telkens weer terug in verschillende gedaanten. Kijk maar naar het heroische beginmotief van Piece en Mi Bemol uit 1846 : het komt terug als melodisch motief in Prelude, Fugue, Variation en als serafijns citaat Op. het einde van de 2e Choral./ We kunnen gerust stellen dat Franck niet een aantal orgelwerken heeft geschreven, maar een groot orgelwerk, in verschillende afleveringen. Bij Cesar Franck heeft alles met alles te maken.' Joris Verdin, "De invloed van get harmonium op César Franck's klaviertechnie". In *César Franck et son temps : actes du colloque de l'Université de Liège*. (Bruxelles: Col. Belge de Musicologie, 1991), 212–213.

James alludes to something similar: 'This trait of returning to genres long since forgotten mirrors the cyclical method of composition that he used in many works.' James, "César Franck's works for piano and orchestra", 12.

In some ways, this suggestion by Verdin is precisely what this thesis envisages, to see the continuity of thought between Franck's works, which has been demonstrated with the similar traits and compositional process between the early piano works and the late piano works.

This subchapter has not dissected the various definitions, but has had as its primary focus, perhaps superfluously, a presentation of how César Franck's compositional style has been associated with cyclic form throughout history — from d'Indy's preference for the cyclic Piano Trio No.1 to the visualising of Franck's entire organ output as part of a subconscious cyclic system in Verdin's writings — the term and the composer are inextricably linked. What does that mean for the position of the early piano works in the œuvre of a methodical creator whose works accentuated structural qualities? We will see an investigation into the foundations to this process in the early piano works, of which he was already well acquainted with his performances of Schubert's Piano Trio No. 2 Op. 100 and his own venture with his Op. 1 Trio.

Character Oppositions

Character oppositions are the more general perceptions of his music, typically rooted in biographical origins, which have greatly influenced the reception of his music. The three discussed will be:

- Spiritual/Erotic/Serene
- Pianistic/Organistic
- Salon/Improvisation

Each of these 'characteristics' are far beyond the scope of this thesis to analyse their origin and context in depth, but it would not be a sufficient delving into Franck's idiomatic style without addressing them. The biographical is often presented in various combinations of the features found in this *Musical Style* chapter, resulting in a sometimes-enlightening general understanding of Franck's compositional practice, though always under the guise of some broad, enigmatic

manifestation. The following three oppositions are the most relevant to the early piano works, and are presented as conditions in which Franck's psychological and compositional process evolved and exhibited themselves in his work. Oppositions have always been considered the basis of Franckian sound:

> War-Peace. Shadow-Light. Evil-Good. Earth-Sky. Men-Angels. Unrest-Calm. Minor-Major. Antithesis is the basis of allegory. César Franck derived a rigorous compositional principle from it. For him, tonal law is the same as divine law: it is intangible.[180]

The character oppositions presented in this chapter are not necessarily antitheses to one another, nor contradictory, but are approaches to a general understanding of Franck's compositional style. Verdin follows this procedure too:

> In this *3rd Choral*, there are 3 well-defined characters: heroic in the beginning, melodic in the *Adagio* middle movement, and seraphic in the chorale. We take these 3 characters as a subjective basis; we can then fit the other works into this triangle where each work leans towards one of the angles, *eroicus*, *melodicus*, or *seraphicus*, to a greater or lesser extent. Of course, these characters are not exclusivities of Cesar Franck. We find them throughout musical history. Nevertheless, this turns out to be a useful working hypothesis; if we put the works of contemporaries next to it, it becomes clear how Franck makes them into a coherent whole. [...] But just as these characters are not equally represented in every work, we note that a shift took place during Franck's lifetime.[181]

Spiritual/Erotic/Serene

'Serene otherworldliness is César Franck's unique contribution to music.'[182]Just as commentators write with difficulty regarding his nationality, over– or under–stating the Germanic side to his music, so too do they refer to the spirituality in his music; these are not isolated incidents - it is

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[180] 'Guerre-Paix. Ombre-Lumière. Mal-Bien. Terre-Ciel. Hommes-Anges. Agitation-Calme. Mineur-Majeur. L'antithèse fonde l'allégorie. César Franck en tire un principe compositionnel rigoureux. Pour lui, la loi tonale vaut la loi divine : elle est intangible.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 445, when speaking of *Rédemption.*

[181] 'In deze *3e Choral* zijn er 3 goed afgetekende karakters : heroïsch in het begin, melodisch in het Adagio-middendeel, en serafijns in het koraal.
Deze 3 karakters nemen we als subjectieve basis; de andere werken kunnen we dan in deze driehoek inpassen waarbij elk werk Op. zich in meer of mindere mate toeneigt naar een van de hoeken, eroicus, melodicus, of seraficus. Natuurlijk zijn deze karakters geen exclusiviteiten van Cesar Franck. We vinden ze terug in de gehele muziekgeschiedenis. Toch blijkt dit een bruikbare werkhypothese te zijn; als we de werken van tijdgenoten er naast leggen dan wordt het duidelijk hoe Franck er een samenhangend geheel van maakt. […] Maar zoals deze karakters niet in elk werk evenredig vertegenwoordigd zijn, zo stellen vast dat er in de loop van Franck's leven een verschuiving heeft plaats gehad.' Verdin, "De invloed van get harmonium op César Franck's klaviertechniek", 211–212.

[182] Lillian Luverne Baldwin, *A Listener's Anthology of Music*, (New York: Silver Burden, 1948), 176.

difficult to find a single piece of writing that does not refer to his music with spiritual connotations.

D'Indy's creation,[183] robing Franck in unashamedly Christian cloaks as a *'Pater Seraphicus,'*[184] is one which was subsequently oft-contested and one which evokes a caring and gentle religious organist shying away from the limelight, whose unwavering devotion results in always parting from the organ bench to kneel during consecration – an image which has burned into the minds of many.[185] This was greatly augmented and proliferated by Cortot's hand,[186] who superimposed his own strong Christian ideologies onto Franck's music**:** 'the interpreter should not only be a musician: it is even more important that he be a believer'.[187] Sprouting from this strong imagery many writers have spoken of a finding a *spiritual* side in Franck's music, though not always precise in their clarifications, but generally using lexicon linked to *serenity*.[188] However, it is worth noting, that in the 1850s the organ has been described as 'spectacular, dramatic, too scenic, too sensual.'[189]

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[183] '[on d'Indy's biography] Cet ouvrage dévotieux, qui autant qu'à l'histoire ressortit à l'hagiographie, a répandu par le monde la légende dorée d'un véritable saint de la musique.' Vallas, *La Véritable Histoire de César Franck,* 5.

[184] 'one particular identity has stuck: that of the *Pater Seraphicus*, composer of music imbued with deep Catholic-Christian piety. Those largely responsible for this identity are Vincent d'Indy and Alfred Cortot.' Armstrong, "The Catholic-Christian Masking of César Franck and Alternative Erotic Readings of his Piano Quintet, Violin Sonata, and Prelude, Chorale and Fugue", ii.

[185] 'Both of the original Bach themes mentioned above refer to the sufferings of Christ, and the 'motto' motif of redemption happens to be shaped like a cross. The final (unintentional?) pun is that this same 'motto' theme, present and transformed in both works, appears in the 'Transformation Scene' from *Parsifal* when bread and wine are changed into Christ's Body and Blood - the redeeming re-enactment of the Last Supper. This interpretation might not seem too far-fetched if we recall that Franck habitually left his organ bench during the Mass to kneel at this same moment of transformation.' Hough, "César Franck Piano Music", (Hyperion, 1997).

[186] 'Il appartenait à Franck d'ajouter à ces accents celui de la prière et Prélude, Choral et Fugue, Prélude Aria et Finale, autant que des œuvres d'art sont des actes de foi..' Cortot, *French Piano Music,* 63.

[187] 'The feeling of contemplative awe that inspires this sublime page can only be expressed by words of ineffable tenderness. No religious soul has ever sung with accents more pure and more moving, the trust in the infinite pity of the Redeemer. No musician has ever abandoned himself with similar exstasy [*sic*] to the mystic contemplation of the Spotless Lamb. Here the interpreter should not only be a musician: it is even more important that he be a believer.' Alfred Cortot, *Preludio Aria e Finale,* (Milan: Edizioni Curci, 1950), 17. Though an idea like this may seem antiquated to some, Sir Colin Davis recently, before performing Beethoven's *Missa Solemnes* in the 2011 Proms, was asked 'Is some sense of faith essential to performing this work?' he replied: 'I'm sure that's true. You don't have to believe, in the religious sense, but when Beethoven says 'he believes' we have to go along with it.' www.youtube.com/watch?v=zmG1-heqqlY, at the 2"00 mark.

[188] Anglophone literature for example: 'The key-note of such music is serenity.' Demuth, *French Piano Music,* 46. Also found in Davies' writing: [on *Grande Pièce Symphonique*] 'The keys also represent a simpler outlook than we attribute to the mature Franck. […] The second movement […] does, however, contain elements of serenity'. Davies, *César Franck,* 76. The second movement is in B major.

[189] 'En 1854, le critique Blanchard […] reprochera à l'orgue en général d'être « spectaculeux, dramatique, trop scénique, trop sensuel » tous mots qui comptent dans la définition de ce qu'est, à l'époque, l'expression du religieux en musique'. Fauquet, *César Franck,* 270.

Though while not all writers have succumbed to the imposed dogmatism of d'Indy, the piety of Cortot or the mysticism of Tiersot[190] around *Père Franck*, they often still cannot resist referencing *spiritual* aspects to his music.[191] This can be understood to result from his moments of tonal stability or cerebral counterpoint, another point which often, along with the spiritual and as organists, links Franck to Bach. While the analyses are referencing *religious* or *spiritual* moments in the late works, one may find origins of these features of his music in the early piano works, long before his serious commitment to the organ. The examination will point to various moments that could be interpreted as *spiritual* due to their stability and lack of contention or dissonance.

Just as previous authors have overridden the case for Franck's *Frenchness*, so too has a recent thesis made a strong case against d'Indy's *Pater Seraphicus* creation: Asher Ian Armstrong's "The Catholic-Christian Masking of César Franck and Alternative Erotic Readings of his Piano Quintet, Violin Sonata, and *Prelude, Chorale and Fugue*" (2015). Here the dialectic is drawn to the other extreme, one in which Franck is veiling the explosive erotic tendencies in his works:

> where does this leave us in our understanding of Franck's aesthetic voice? In analyses of other works (nearly all of which feature the cyclical element), musicians and scholars have often suggested a religious interpretation; but, as demonstrated, one might as easily put forth an erotic interpretation.[192]

There is a strong difference between the argument of Franck as a *religious exponent* or as a *creator of the erotic*. The former is erected from a biographical foundation, much of which originates from

[190] Tiersot's writing on his teacher in particular, though studying with Franck for only one year, exudes mysticism.
[191] This is in convenient conjunction with perceiving Franck as an organist: 'the organ, ideologically as well as physically [is] tied to the church […] Even today the organ is irrevocably tainted with religiosity'. Rosen, *Piano Notes, the hidden world of the pianist,* 19. He later writes: 'Franck […] wrote music that would allow a performer to impress listeners with a spectacular virtuosity or – when this was lacking – deep spiritual sensibility.' *Ibid.,* 181.
[192] Armstrong, "The Catholic-Christian Masking of César Franck and Alternative Erotic Readings of his Piano Quintet, Violin Sonata, and Prelude, Chorale and Fugue", 51.

d'Indy's accounts, as well as from his other students such as Tournemire[193] and Tiersot,[194] while the latter — generally narrative surrounding Franck's *Psyché* and Armstrong's thesis — is based on previous literature on Wagner[195] and Debussy.[196] This distinction is important because, quite simply, we do not have enough historical material to present Franck as a particularly radical personality, the most frequently cited case being that of Augusta Holmès,[197] a composer and student of Franck, often presented as a seductive personality for whom Franck dedicated his last chorale,[198] understandably disregarded by d'Indy.

Armstrong's technique is one of defining *erotic markers*,[199] which are then found in three chamber works. He tantalisingly tempts the reader with uncomfortably evocative erotic language: **'**the contents of the *Fugue* seen here are drenched in expressive/erotic markers', 'passionate and nearly uncontrollable', 'obsessive "fetishistic" repetitions', '[*Prélude, choral et fugue*] is in many ways a bedfellow of the Quintette', 'its eroticism is now on full display — as seen, palpitations are everywhere; Franck's inexhaustible frustration of rhythmic stability', 'throbbing culmination which precipitates outbursts from the piano'; the writing abounds in such extremely visual lexicon. He also explains d'Indy's spiritual hagiography with psychological reasoning: 'it seems almost a foregone conclusion that d'Indy grew up with a painful father situation, and found in

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[193] 'Like every man of genius, César Franck left an indelible stamp on his music: original chromaticism, ingenious use of common notes, seraphic modulations, lofty melodies, structure worthy of a great architect and, above all, the pure expression of religious sentiment.' Charles Tournemire, (trans. by Ralph Kneeram), *César Franck,* (Northwestern University: Evanston, 1983), 63.

[194] 'Possessing a generous heart, a tender soul, moved with pity for the poor, the humble and the simple, he listened from the elevation of his organ-bench to the words of Christ, and was impenetrated by them'. Tiersot, "César Franck"*,* 32.

[195] 'Franck's frequent citation as some kind of "Wagnerian" does not help the cause of those who still cling to the comfortable picture of the innocent St. Clotilde organist'. Armstrong, "The Catholic-Christian Masking of César Franck and Alternative Erotic Readings of his Piano Quintet, Violin Sonata, and Prelude, Chorale and Fugue", 28.

[196] Many moments of Armstrong's reasoning are derived from: Richard Langham Smith, *Debussy on Music*, (London: Secker & Warburg, 1977).

[197] 'In addition, if there is sexual passion in this work [Piano Quintet], the same scholars seem in agreement as to the identity of the catalyst which aroused this passion in the aging, "Father Franck," long-married organist at the St. Clotilde Basilica in Paris. Her name was Augusta Holmès'. Armstrong, "The Catholic-Christian Masking of César Franck and Alternative Erotic Readings of his Piano Quintet, Violin Sonata, and Prelude, Chorale and Fugue", 31.

[198] 'This is made more obscure when one considers Augusta was not herself an organist, nor a real colleague of Franck and when other possible dedicatees might have included his wife Félicité, his son Georges, or his *star* pupil Vincent d'Indy'. *Ibid.,* 135–6.

[199] 'To give a sort of short-list, some of these devices include the trajectory- toward-climax scheme (seen in examples from Wagner and Liszt), dense chromaticism — both harmonic (symbolic of *decadence*) and melodic (seen frequently in "seductive" tropes) – melodic syncopations ("gasps"), and, the appearance of "palpitations" at the climactic point'. *Ibid.,* 35–6.

César Franck a perfect father-figure'.[200] But the effectiveness of the analysis is less conclusive; the chapter on Franck's violin sonata begins with an exploration of Debussy's eroticism (utilising the aforementioned research) and applying it approximately to parallel instances in Franck (teasing the reader with suggestive erotic language), while his own research relies on a syncopated two-note descending motif, referred to as a 'sigh',[201] all of which hopefully results in an alternative reading of the sonata: one which is not necessarily representative of an amicable marriage, but the night of consummation.[202]

> Armstrong recognises the history of merging eroticism and music:
>
> > Because of these plentiful (and often disturbing) historical consequences, full interpretations of the erotic in music from the late Romantic era and before must grow and develop from the *obscure*, but they are all the more *needed*, for the same reason.[203]

The erotic element becomes an overwhelming character for Franck's musical idiom under Armstrong's pen, just as d'Indy's Christian outlook embraces overwhelmingly his own analysis of Franck. Where the latter sees Franck's use of structure as religious triptychs, the former sees the '*structural* necessity of (harmonic) restraint exerted on explosive expressive urges which then continue, unaccountably, to expand until reaching *physical* boundaries';[204] d'Indy links Franck's pianism to the religious organist, while Armstrong sees 'the piano's many-tentacled intensity seems, inexplicably, somewhere between the feral and the mechanical';[205] this could continue for many of the fragments described above in Franck's *Musical Style* chapter, where the two writers

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[200] *Ibid.*, 11.
[201] Armstrong also references delayed climaxes and trajectory-towards-climax. Cortot, among many, counters the two-note motif as an erotic signal. He writes when referring to the sighing motif in the *Poco Allegro* section before the fugue proper: 'Above all the characteristic rests which divide the sorrowful inflexions of the principal melody should be given their full questioning meaning'. César Franck, edited by Alfred Cortot, *Preludio Aria e fuga* (Milan: Edizioni Curci, 1950), 20.
[202] The work was dedicated to the violinist Ysaÿe as a wedding gift.
[203] Armstrong, "The Catholic-Christian Masking of César Franck and Alternative Erotic Readings of his Piano Quintet, Violin Sonata, and Prelude, Chorale and Fugue", 138.
[204] *Ibid.,* 112.
[205] *Ibid.,* 105.

would argue for their case of *Christian* vs *Erotic*.[206] To many, especially his students, this questioning would have been deemed sacrilegious.[207]

A third vantage point is a purely musical one which is proposed in this essay. Franck's musical idiom could be seen as conflicting interactions; we will see that the early works are obsessive in their tonal stability (a serene character), and the argument could be made that a combination of Franck's encounter with *Tristan* in 1874[208] and his improvisational practice produced some of the elements found in his *late style* — namely that of his chromaticism as snippets of other elements can already be seen in his early works — it is a congregation of two opposites, two contradictory forces which create the drama we hear in his music. Norman Demuth has another characteristically controversial outlook on a composer's personality in music:

> A composer's true personality can shine out in his music. Creative work does not always go by contraries. The old story of the organist whose playing sent his hearers to Heaven every Sunday but who beat his wife regularly every week-day does not necessarily apply to composers although there are isolated instances — not of wife-beating, but of a mild man like Roussel, for example, whose musical violence was utterly at variance with his personality[209]

Related to this angelic and serene side of Franck is the frequent approach to his music based on good vs. evil, as touched upon in Chapter 2 *Chord and phrase pairs*,[210] and we have the interesting example of Franck's own treatment of this contrast in his two symphonic poems with piano *Les Djinns* (1884) and *Variations symphoniques* (1885): whereas Liszt would present himself as the

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[206] Though it is certainly more complicated than polar opposites, as Armstrong fuses his eroticism even into the most sacred elements of Christianity: 'As seen, his is music which might also be given the description: "a bewildering and eroticized combination of the physical and the spiritual". Hill's presentation of the Eucharist as a "paradigm of desire" is also highly interesting. Is it possible that Franck, who surely participated in the Eucharist thousands of times throughout his life, saw the erotic implications in this most intimate of Christian symbols'. *Ibid.*, 52

[207] 'The qualities of his heart were, moreover, one of the purest sources of his genius. / Les qualités de son cœur furent d'ailleurs une des sources les plus pures de son génie.' Tiersot, *Un demi-siècle de Musique Française,* 120.

[208] 'It is probable that all he discovered in the *Tristan* story was a celebration of the fleshly love he is so renowned for repressing.' Davies, *César Franck and His Circle,* 163.

[209] Demuth, *César Franck,* 44.

[210] 'In Franck's symphonic poems, one finds a preponderance of supernatural elements, his common theme of good versus evil, and of particular interest is his dealing with diablerie, that element in music most commonly associated with many of Liszt's works.' James, "César Franck's works for piano and orchestra", 26.

Faustian devil at the piano against the backdrop of the orchestra,[211] Franck, who was himself cultivated as a pianist first and foremost, bathed the pianist in the opposite light – in heavenly and delicate colours.[212]

The argument made in this thesis is one which almost totally ignores elements of his character as explanations of his idiom, in favour of supporting the proposal that his *late style* is the combination of the compositional technique from his youthful compositions which then encountered various other influences; predominantly that of Wagner and the necessity to improvise at the organ for employment. Regardless, considering that his chromaticism and trajectory-towards-climax is the overloaded argument for his eroticism,[213] it is the *spiritual* side of Franck that we find in abundance in the early works, and accordingly it seems that this element is the dominant part of his musical style and *not* the eroticism. Though if one was inclined, they likewise could find elements of the erotic in the early piano works too with a little stretch of imagination. In the Op. 3 *Églogue* the syncopated rising third found in theme ***C*** immediately comes to mind; in the Op. 5 *Caprice*, ***B'*** theme would be described as 'palpitations' in Armstrong's appellation; the sudden violent outbursts in the Op. 7 *Souvenirs* would surely be an erotic marker for those desperate to find something; it's uncertain what would be found in the

[211] As a counter to Franck's symphonic poems we can take Liszt's *Malédiction* (1833), described in this way in James, "César Franck's works for piano and orchestra", 49, who would also succumb to the *Pater Seraphicus* with descriptions of an important motif in *Les Djinns* as a 'faith' motif. He also mentions this in combination with *Franck and the Choral Bells*: 'At measure 395, a new theme, that is derived from the "faith" theme, is heard over the developments' new ostinato. This new theme is a bell-like motif which represents victory (morally speaking) or redemption (in religious terms) […] It could very well represent the victory of man's faith and hope over his temptations or tribulations. The final statement of the development's bell-like theme begins in the piano (measure 581) over the development's ostinato in the cellos. This could very well represent, with religious connotations, again, the triumph of good over evil.' *Ibid.,* 53–57.

[212] '[on *Le Chasseur Maudit*] The orchestration is thick, with a pre-ponderance of brass; and the knight who was dragged down to hell for preferring hunting to church-going on Sunday is not, in Franck's hands, a very convincingly villainous figure. […] [on les djinns] The emotional content of the work is typically Franckian, for it depicts the struggle between 'light' and 'darkness' in which the Djinns represent the evil instincts of man, finally overcome by the power of prayer and that mystical, luminous, instinctive faith which was Franck's greatest quality. Whereas Liszt, to whom Franck was greatly indebted, tended to attribute demonic and passionate qualities primarily to the pianoforte in opposition to the strings and the orchestra in general (*Malédiction*), Franck reverses the roles and gives the pianoforte the broad, sweeping, luminous arpeggios which symbolize the serenity of faith. The demonic, individualistic pride of the virtuosos is replaced by the single soul struggling with the vast forces of wickedness represented by the orchestra.' Cooper, *French Music: From the death of Berlioz to the death of Fauré*, 46.

[213] Armstrong, "The Catholic-Christian Masking of César Franck and Alternative Erotic Readings of his Piano Quintet, Violin Sonata, and Prelude, Chorale and Fugue", iii.

Op. 9 *Ballade,* possibly a reference to the almost hysterical diminished 7th nature of the ***E*** theme building to the surprise and release of the sudden ***B*** theme.

It is worth mentioning this contentious topic in the context of other elements of his style, as it is referenced with regards to many of the features found: *chromatic style* - 'eroticism'; *discreet down beats* - 'sighs'; *phrase pairs* - 'good vs. evil'; *the number three* - 'Christian symbolism'; *cyclic form*: 'Christ and Resurrection'.[214] These extra-musical descriptions, not always connected with a distinct element of Franck's musical language, are connected to musical features found in the Franckian style in this thesis.

Pianist/Organist

Because of Franck's strong association with the organ, the lens of *organist* has been frequently invoked with both his works and his life as an approach to further understand his modus operandi.[215] The argument made in this thesis is that the tendencies which seemed to be better suited to the organ were present before Franck's first meaningful encounter with the instrument. His works have frequently been studied through the organist lens; not just piano works,[216] but also his orchestral works[217] as well as works written before he was an organist. The question of whether Franck composed at a keyboard was broached in Chapter 2 *Franck's compositional method,* though, as has been seen, it cannot be sufficiently answered for the early period.

> With regards to Franck's earliest contact with the organ:
>
> He was associated, on a professional basis, with the church of Notre-Dame-de-Lorette from the early 1840s, but we know nothing of his duties except that he was "organiste accompagnateur."[218]

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[214] 'Placée dans la perspective du spiritualisme chrétien, cette interprétation symbolique du conflit thématique générateur d'unité formelle sera érigée en principe de composition par nombre de disciples de César Franck.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 132.
[215] 'Yet, as this article has endeavoured to indicate, any assessment of Franck's oeuvre which fails to take a proper account of the organ music is doomed to remain partial and incomplete.' Thomson, "César Franck: Mind, Flesh and Spirit", 641.
[216] '[on the triptychs] Even so, the mind and practice of the organist is still recognizable'. *Ibid.,*641.
[217] ''Réellement il jouait de l'orchestre comme de l'orgue, transposant là ses habitudes d'ici, pour l'instrumentation comme pour la composition générale'. Vallas*, La véritable histoire de César Franck, p.* 339.
[218] Smith, *Toward an Authentic Interpretation of the Organ Works of César Franck*, 11.

His organ works are critiqued for their *pianistic* elements,[219] while his orchestral works are critiqued for being *organistic*:

> César Franck was a great pianist. [...] The unfortunate thing is that, in 'thinking for the organ' and in creating some of the fine pieces of a repertoire whose development J.S. Bach made so formidable, Franck brought to it the habits and some of the formulas characteristic of the piano. He was more of a pianist than an organist, but even more of a musician than a technician. [...] There is a close kinship between Franck as an organist and Franck as a symphonist: he transferred to the orchestra the habits he had developed on his keyboards; his way of arranging instrumental groups is reminiscent of the means used by an organist. He has been criticised for this: his scores have been said to be heavy, "lumpy", and at times too rudimentary.[220]

Further to the prevailing notion in Franck literature where the biographical is used in tangent with the musicological, Vallas used the organist lens to critique Franck's rhythm:

> in general it marches along at a regular pace, building with a solid structure, without the unexpected due to the always identical repetitions; the movement remains a slave to the beat, whose bars it does not break; syncopation abounds, adding a little variety to an overly regular flow. Perhaps this particular weakness, which risks leading to monotony, is due to his constant use of the church instrument, as are the frequent "points d'orgue" or "temps d'arrêt", interrupting the development of the works, which obviously correspond to the interruptions necessary for the organist to modify or reinstall his registration.[221]

And if we decide to look at the piano works, we will be bombarded with the organ elements of his piano works. The voice of Cortot brings the organ works to the fore before his piano works:

> But it is above all through the study of the organ pieces, all imbued with thought and contemplation, that we come closest to that sort of ideal crucible in which the various elements that make up Franck's style are melted and amalgamated in the sacred fire of inspiration to their highest degree of meaning and character. It is these elements, first and

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[219] **'**Innocent-looking though it is, this music does present some performance problems. [….] having begun his career as a piano virtuoso and having come to the organ relatively late, he was always to write more or less pianistically for the organ.' César Franck, Preface by Carlton Russel, *L'organiste*. (New York: Kalmus, 1975).

[220] 'César Franck fut un grand pianiste. […] Le malheur est, - simple façon de parler, - qu'en « pensant pour l'orgue « et en créant quelques-unes des belles pièces d'un répertoire dont Jean Sébastien a rendu si redoutable l'accroissement, Franck y ait apporté les habitudes et quelques-unes des formules propres au piano. Il était plus pianiste qu'organiste ; mais encore plus musicien que technicien. […] II y a une étroite parenté entre Franck organiste et Franck symphoniste : il transporte à l'orchestre les habitudes que lui ont créées ses claviers ; sa façon de disposer les groupes instrumentaux rappelle les moyens dont un organiste fait usage. On le lui a reproché : on a dit ses partitions lourdes, « par paquets », et par instants trop rudimentaires.' Emmanuel, *César Franck: étude critique*, 101–2.

[221] 'en général la marche va d'un pas régulier, se développe avec une solide carrure, adoptant des mouvements pairs, sans imprévu, avec des répétitions toujours identiques ; le mouvement reste esclave de la mesure, dont il ne brise pas les barres ; la syncope abonde, apportant un peu de variété dans un débit trop régulier. Peut-être cette faiblesse particulière, qui risque d'engendrer la monotonie, est-elle due à la pratique constante de l'instrument d'église, comme le sont les fréquents points d'orgue ou temps d'arrêt, coupant le développement des œuvres, qui, de toute évidence, correspondent aux interruptions nécessaires à l'organiste pour modifier ou réinstaller sa registration.' Vallas, *La Véritable Histoire de César Franck,* 336–337.

> foremost, that must be examined by the musician wishing to convey their true spirit in the piano works that are their direct extension.[222]

This statement presents the authority that the organ works preside over our general perception of Franck's compositional output. Whether the late works are directly influenced by the organ works is impossible to deduce, but the resemblances between the early and late piano pieces featured in this thesis renders such a statement incomplete, especially considering Franck's highly effective pianistic writing found in the Piano Quintet (1879). William Raymond James identifies what he deems the qualities in Franck's piano writing which expose his allegiance to the organ and its idiosyncrasies:

> The piano writing of Franck exhibits an organ influence, evidenced by thick basses, widely spaced arpeggios, tremendous spans, and sustained sonorities[223]

Or, with the appellation of this thesis, *Franckian basses, large chord spreads* and *Cathedral of Sound,* not to mention that these features in isolation, which may remind a listener who is biased towards Franck's output of his ubiquitous organistic elements, cannot be said to be strictly of an *organ style.* Nevertheless, the general consensus is shared by that of Maurice Emmanuel: 'the master, at least at times, thought and wrote in an organ style'.[224]

Any in-depth look at Franck's œuvre will immediately be in contact with this critique of his style. However, it has not yet been addressed or approached with regards to the four early piano works in question in this thesis. This is particularly important when we have sentiments such as these:

> It was in 1872, his fiftieth year, that Franck succeeded Benoist as organ professor at the Conservatoire, and it was then that he for the first time reached artistic maturity. But he was almost completely unknown.[225]

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[222] Cortot, *La Musique Française de piano,* 67–8.
[223] James, "César Franck's works for piano and orchestra", 107.
[224] 'le maître, au moins par instants, pensait et écrivait en style organistique.' Emmanuel, *César Franck: étude critique*, 49.
[225] Cooper, *French Music: From the death of Berlioz to the death of Faure,* 27–8.

In the forth-coming examination we will see that this assumption is somewhat misleading; a look at the early works will prove that this soundworld of pauses and monotonous rhythm was already present in his early piano pieces, thereby at least allowing the prevailing notion of the overwhelming influence of the organ on his writing to be somewhat contended. There perhaps was sufficient reason for the transposition of instruments, and despite the pianistic elements found throughout Franck's organ works, there is even discourse as to which of the piano triptychs are more representative of Franck at the organ (surely *one* of them showcases Franck as a disoriented organist finding himself at the piano):

> The work in question [PCF] has become, in a practical sense, a "shield of faith" for followers of the *Pater Seraphicus* — while it has a counterpart triptych which is far more redolent of organ textures and churchly antiphony, this particular work has undoubtedly been seized upon because of its centerpiece, which happens to be a *Chorale*.[226]

An argument has been made in Chapter 1 *Franck the piano prodigy* that he was not comfortable writing in the early romantic piano virtuoso style unlike Kalkbrenner, Liszt or Alkan. With his controlling father as impresario, pushed to churn out showpieces, the switch to the organ allowed a respite. The late solo piano works have been noted for being 'free from the incubus of mere virtuoso',[227] and his two late piano works with orchestra, *Les Djinns* and *Variations symphoniques,* are no different. Indeed, it plays into the role of Franck as shying away from the limelight. In short, his piano works are not proto-romantic fireworks of pianistic devices; and despite many writers claiming the contrary,[228] the overall impression of the early piano works are no different in this sense.

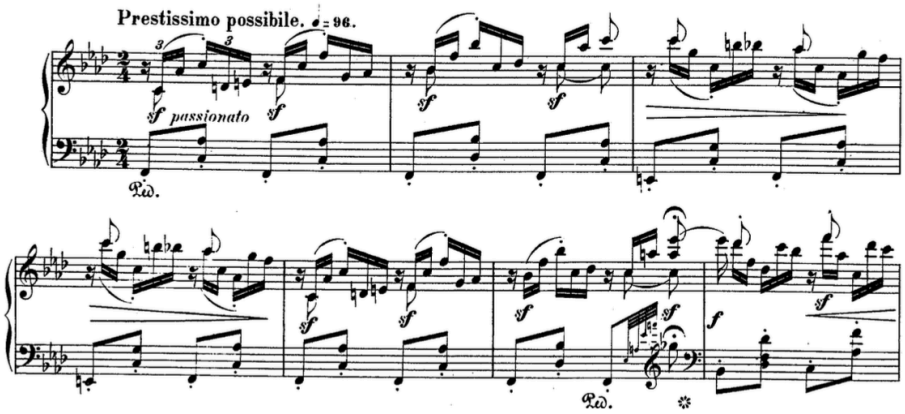
Armstrong, however, argues for the vocal quality of his piano music (if only to emphasise the erotic nature) due to what is classed in this thesis as *delays down beats*:

> This effect is, in fact, a device utilized by pianists from Cortot to Horowitz to Grimaud in the act of performance [...] Playing the melodic note *after* the accompaniment may give the

[226] Armstrong, "The Catholic-Christian Masking of César Franck and Alternative Erotic Readings of his Piano Quintet, Violin Sonata, and Prelude, Chorale and Fugue", 54.
[227] Thomson, "César Franck: Mind, Flesh and Spirit", 641.
[228] 'Intended for the career of a travelling virtuoso pianist whose programmes would be notable for their display of virtuosity rather than for the value of their musical content, Franck followed the prevailing fashion of writing virtuoso music for himself.' Demuth, *French Piano Music,* 41.

> impression of a *hesitant/intimate* voice, and *before*, a voice unable to contain itself, unable to wait because of excitement or urgency.[229]

The allusion made by Armstrong is convincing, especially considering this feature is particularly prevalent in Robert Schumann's piano output, a composer 'best remembered for his piano music and songs'.[230]



Example 35: Robert Schumann, Op. 14, *Grand Sonata No. 3*, (iv). Here is a typical example of the silent first beat in the right hand, found so often in Franck's music and what Armstrong refers to as a 'vocal' technique.

Perhaps Franck's compositional method is more separated from either keyboards than writers have proposed. In fact, they were interchangeable at times for Franck:

> Pupils and friends report that Franck played parts of the new works [*Trois Chorals*] to them during the process of composition. On 2 October 1890 they finally received a private performance at Franck's home. In the presence of Charles Tournemire and Louis Vierne the composer played the pieces on the piano with Guillaume Lekeu, who took the pedal part.[231]

This was much more common in the period, as opposed to the ever more focused specialisations in our own time, frequently elucidated by Orpha Osche in *Organists and Organ Playing in Nineteenth-Century France and Belgium,* for example: 'In 1817 the Conservatory administration stated that the person filling the post of organ professor should be "an excellent pianist, organist, good harmonist, and good composer".[232] This interchangeability of instruments, not just because

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[229] Armstrong, "The Catholic-Christian Masking of César Franck and Alternative Erotic Readings of his Piano Quintet, Violin Sonata, and Prelude, Chorale and Fugue", 61. This technique is often referred to as dislocation.
[230] John Daverio and Eric Sams, "Schumann, Robert"*, Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed November 12, 2023. www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/Schumann.
[231]César, edited by Friedemann Winklhofer, *Trois Chorals pour Grand Orgue.* (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 2013), vii–viii.
[232] Osche, *Organists and Organ Playing in Nineteenth-Century France and Belgium,* 148.

of practical necessities, could help explain the reason why his organ works are critiqued for being pianistic and vice versa.

And finally, it is important to note the significance of this character lens for this research question as many of the aforementioned features have been viewed as stemming from his contact with either the organ or piano, and often in conjunction with his other character lenses: 'Surely, the religious atmosphere of Franck's works was gained from the organ works.'[233] Two points are made when considering this lens: perhaps the three keyboard instruments — for the harmonium must be mentioned too[234] — were not as divisible to Franck as we would now consider them, and that Franck shied away from a brilliant display of technique throughout his compositional life. However, while many accomplished pianists were also organists in France at the time,[235] the career paths of either instrumentalist diverged – one for the concert platforms and salons, and the other being generally employed by churches with public recitals being a rarity at the start of the 19th century.[236] The musical culture of any keyboard instrument in France at this time, however, must be further explored in relation to their setting.

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[233] James, "César Franck's works for piano and orchestra", 59

[234] Verdin is the most vocal proponent of this: 'The virtuosity on the harmonium can almost be equated with a pianistic a-virtuosity. The piano is heroic, it externalises, the harmonium is seraphic, it internalises. The fact that Franck leaves the organ style of Lefébure more and more has to do with that: he played a lot of harmonium, even in the *Variations Symphoniques* for piano and orchestra we can notice that. The introduction is certainly composed or improvised on harmonium. And in the Quintet we can even see that Franck sometimes just makes the string quartet sound like a harmonium. We notice that also in the Trois Chorals, the actual seraphic chorale parts, Franck has certainly played on the harmonium.'/De virtuositeit op het harmonium kunnen we bijna gelijk stellen met een pianistieke a-virtuositeit. De piano is heroisch, hij veruiterlijkt, het harmonium is serafijns, het verinnerlijkt. Het feit dat Franck de orgelstijl van Lefébure meer en meer verlaat heeft daarmee te maken : hij speelde veel harmonium, zelfs tot in de *Variations Symphoniques* voor piano en orkest kunnen we dat merken. De inleiding is zeker op harmonium gekomponeerd, of geimproviseerd. En in het Kwintet zien we zelfs dat Franck het strijkkwartet soms gewoon als een harmonium laat klinken. We merken dat ook in de *Trois Chorals*, de eigenlijke serafijnse koraalgedeelten heeft Franck zeker op het harmonium gespeeld.' Verdin, "De invloed van get harmonium op César Franck's klaviertechniek", 207–208.
Fauquet also comments on this**:** 'l'écriture de ces suites pour harmonium [*L'organiste*] consacre une dernière fois l'hybridité comme un élément fondateur de l'esthétique franckienne : quand bien même Franck pense sa musique en fonction des ressources spécifiques de l'harmonium, certaines pièces paraissent conçues pour le piano, d'autres pour l'orgue.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 764.
Osche writes: 'Throughout the rest of the nineteenth century French organists freely transferred much of their repertoires from one instrument to the other. The designation "for organ or harmonium" on published music was not necessarily a publisher's way of attracting more customers: it was often a perfectly valid statement of an accepted performance practice.' Osche, *Organists and Organ Playing in Nineteenth-Century France and Belgium,* 27.

[235] Aside from the familiar, Franck's organ teacher Benoist received first prizes in harmony (1811), piano (1814), and composition (1815) — the *Prix de Rome.* Ochse, *Organists and Organ Playing in Nineteenth-Century France and Belgium,* 19.

[236] As described in Osche, *Organists and Organ Playing in Nineteenth-Century France and Belgium,* 15–18.

Salon/Improvisation

Whereas improvisation has been mentioned as a facet of Franck's compositional style, the lens of salon culture is referenced if only to prove that the adolescent (and sometimes early) piano works are generally uninspired and sycophantic virtuosic showpieces. There is, however, a stylistic gulf between the *adolescent* (pre–1842) and the *early* works, hence the reason for Franck restarting his opus numbers with the *Op. 1 Trois Trios* (1842). Many writers have lumped the adolescent and the early works together, finding no reason to separate the two groups of works, despite Franck's own biographical and personal reasons for distancing himself from them. Davies falls prey to this while giving a succinct overview of the piano culture of the time:

> These were hardly recitals as we know them today, but rather medleys of vocal and instrumental music amid which the odd piano fantasy generally found a grateful place. Only Liszt gave solo recitals, and even he was obliged to interlard them with transcriptions of popular airs of the day. In Franck's case the demand for transcriptions – or as often as not variations – of operatic material was constant and all-consuming. What pieces he played accordingly depended on what successes men like Hérold, Auber or Halévy might be having at the Opéra at the moment. These were the real musical heroes as far as the public were concerned, and they expected a concert to be a kind of warming-up process for the visit to the theatre they had been planning. The romantic age when pianists enthralled by virtue of their own talents was coming to a close in France, Chopin having retired ill to Nohant and Liszt having begun his stay in Weimar or his master-classes at the Villa d'Este. In the 1840s, therefore, the time was not propitious for the writing of pianistic masterpieces, and what we have to consider in Franck's early output is a series of *fantaisies* or *variations brillantes* in the style made popular by artists like Herz and Thalberg.[237]

It must be stressed, however, that there are inconsistencies in their accounts of these piano works - *Églogue* is incorrectly classed as being in E minor, *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle* is at times incorrectly titled and it is unlikely that Davies had access to the work, as well as dates - Davies classes all these works 'from the period when Franck was having lessons with Reicha, 1835–6'.[238] This has not, however, been rectified in recent years. Armstrong's paper from 2015 displays similar discrepancies:

> After Chopin's death in 1849, the composition of piano music for the *salon* as well as the budding *virtuoso* became predominant in France. One need look no further than at some of

[237] Davies, *César Franck,* 63.
[238] As found in the opening of the chapter *The Piano Works. Ibid.,* 63–65.

> the titles of Franck's own youthful efforts at composition for the piano — at the behest of his opportunistic father — which betray a Zeitgeist of effervescence: *Grand Caprice No. 1 pour piano*, *Grand* [*sic*] *Fantasie No. 1 pour piano, Souvenir[s] d'Aix-la-Chapelle*, etc.[239]

Unfortunately, again the adolescent and early works are grouped together, along with their erroneous titles.

'Salon' culture was part and parcel in Franck's life, as it was for any upcoming musician wanting to make a name for themselves in Paris. Although the resemblances are most noticeable in his adolescent works, there was still residue, most obviously in his second trio from Op. 1 which was subtitled "*Trio de salon*".[240] How could there not be, when so many of Franck's public appearances revolved around performing in the salons:

> Indeed, since 1837 César-Auguste had only played in Paris, where his virtuoso reputation was fixed. It was therefore necessary for him to seek to establish himself as a composer, which he began to do so by giving two recitals devoted to his own works at the salons of Pape and Érard, on the 27th of February and the 11th of March 1843.[241]

But wasn't Franck precisely trying to distance himself from his past by the restarting of the opus numbering? He was no longer a child prodigy, but a man in his twenties, with many compositions and prizes under his belt, along with public performances, as well as being a Paris Conservatoire star pupil.

Why is this distinction between the compositions important? The early piano works are almost ubiquitously designated 'salon' works and as such have been dismissed by musicologists, and consequently they have not been mined for any potential hidden gems within them regarding

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[239] Armstrong, "The Catholic-Christian Masking of César Franck and Alternative Erotic Readings of his Piano Quintet, Violin Sonata, and Prelude, Chorale and Fugue", 57.

[240] 'Après cette entrée en matière, les trois mouvement en réfèrent au code de la musique de salon en vigueur à l'époque : sérénade pastorale à 6/8 chantée tour à tour, à l'italienne, par le violon et le violoncelle (andantino) avec effets de guitare (stacatissimo du piano) ; tempo di minuetto (le seul de son espèce dans les trios) dont nous avons dit le caractère rétrospectif ; galop final, avec ses poursuites et ses tournures répétitives. Plus que le plan formel, plus que la thématique, c'est la recherche de couleur sonore qui attire ici l'attention.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 135–136.

[241] 'En effet, depuis 1837 César-Auguste n'a joué qu'à Paris où sa cote de virtuose est stationnaire. Il lui est donc nécessaire de chercher à s'imposer comme compositeur, ce qu'il a commencé à faire en donnant deux séances consacrées à ses œuvres chez Pape et chez Érard, les 27 février et 11 mars 1843.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 142. Performanced at the salones continued throughout this period of Franck's compositional life, including the premiere of *Ruth* (1845).

the Franckian idiom. Scherers depicts the salon culture of the time and how Franck's works would tesselate with such a musical structure:

> The aim of the educated bourgeoisie was aesthetic contemplation, not entertainment, and the adequate music was that of the autonomous work of art, a music whose meaning lay in itself and which was not oriented towards the public. Franck was only able to fulfil these demands in his early piano works in exceptional cases, for example with the Piano Trio op. 1/1 in F sharp performed in the above-mentioned concert. Otherwise, when selecting his own and other works for his concert programmes, he was guided by the wishes of the audience and almost without exception brought virtuoso trivialities to the fore. [242]

The works themselves are not as particularly 'virtuosic' as one would expect them to be, instead they are generally calmer and more introspective, if not a little mundane. This introverted contemplation is linked to the 'serene' aspect of the composer as seen previously.

The art of improvisation is often mentioned and sometimes linked with the salon culture and to his experience as an organist. It has been well documented by his students that Franck's position as an organ professor at the Paris Conservatoire was more on the art of composition and improvisation than in performing on the organ:

> [...] the curriculum remained unchanged until well into the present century so that Franck studied under Benoist exactly what he himself later taught when he succeeded Benoist as professor of organ. [Plainsong, organ pieces with pedal, improvisation of a fugue, improvisation in sonata form]. [...] Three-quarters of the studies of the class were devoted to improvisation. Indeed, the class served not to train virtuosi but as a workshop to develop skills in improvisation for those musicians who were already exceptional players. [...] The value of improvisation to exercise and stimulate the creative musical mind has always been stressed in France. Saint-Saëns speaks of its importance in the organist's art: [...] improvisation was the basis of the organist's talent [...] the practice of improvisation develops faculties of invention which, without it, would have remained latent. [243]

Franck's discomfort in a virtuoso setting — as seen in his early piano works, triptychs, piano works with orchestra — is described above, not necessarily solely stemming, as some commentators claim, from his personal lack of technique at the instruments. Nevertheless, the art of composing

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[242] 'Die Zielsetzung des Bildungsbürgertums war ästhetische Kontemplation, nicht Unterhaltung, und die adäquate Musik war die des autonomen Kunstwerks, eine Musik, deren Sinn in ihr selbst lag und die nicht publikumsorientiert war. Diesen Ansprüchen konnte Franck bei seinen frühen Klavierwerken nur im Ausnahmefall, zum Beispiel mit dem im oben genannten Konzert dargebotenen Klaviertrio op. 1/1 in fis, gerecht werden. Ansonsten richtete er sich bei der Auswahl eigener und fremder Werke für seine Konzertprogramme nach den Wünschen des Publikums und brachte fast ausnahmslos virtuose Nichtigkeiten zu Gehör'. Scherers, "César Francks Bearbeitung der vier Schubert-Lieder", 62.

[243] Smith, *Toward an Authentic Interpretation of the Organ Works of César Franck*, 4–5.

for Franck was bound up with improvisation and he was famed for his power as an improviser, as presented by his pupils:

> A brilliant improviser, he soon became a kind of French Bach in the nineteenth century until the eve of his death; from the top of his rostrum for more than thirty years he never ceased to spread the treasure of his sublime and inexhaustible harmonies.[244]

Along with the *serene* qualities mentioned above, improvisation has been linked to Franck's structural technique:

> Could we not, moreover, find a new explanation, obviously paradoxical, by suggesting that, like the rhythmic weakness indicated above or like the orchestral quality of which we shall say a few words, the involuntary or deliberate "cyclism" might have come from the practice of improvisation on the organ, which entails or requires frequent repetitions, a continuous filling in, making the main melodies and their many 'cousins' to occupy time, to wait for or incite the next inspiration? This seems all the more likely to us since, despite Vincent d'Indy's wishes to the contrary, Franck was above all an improviser. [245]

This is in contrast to d'Indy's promotion of Franck as a great constructor. Fortunately, there are some accounts of his improvisation, from which we can vicariously determine certain elements of his style:

> Cerebral flexibility, a quick glance at the "architect-poet", the colouring of ideas, improvisation on the organ develops these faculties. [...] He did not overuse the *fff*; he would willingly paraphrase the end of a service in the soft tint.[246]

Curiously, this quiet closing of a work has been suggested for the relative obscurity of *Les Djinns* and *Prélude, aria et final* over the more famous *Variations Symphoniques* and *Prélude, choral et fugue*.[247] Tournemire is the most prolific of Franck's students to write about his improvisations, but it is

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[244] 'Improvisateur génial, il devint bientôt comme une sorte de Bach français au XIXe siècle jusqu'à la veille de sa mort, pendant trente ans et plus, il ne cessa pas de répandre, du haut de sa tribune, le trésor de ses sublimes et inépuisables harmonies.' Tiersot, *César Franck,* 123.

[245] 'Ne pourrait-on d'ailleurs y trouver une explication nouvelle, évidemment paradoxale, en suggérant que, comme la faiblesse rythmique indiquée ci-dessus ou comme la qualité orchestrale dont nous allons écrire quelques mots, le cyclisme involontaire ou délibéré serait venu de la pratique de l'improvisation à l'orgue, qui entraîne ou exige des redites fréquentes, un remplissage continu, faisant paraître et reparaître, pour occuper le temps, pour attendre ou exciter la prochaine inspiration, les mélodies principales et leurs nombreuses « cousines » ? Cela nous semble probable d'autant plus que, en dépit de la volonté contraire de Vincent d'Indy, Franck fut surtout un improvisateur.' Vallas, *La Véritable Histoire de César Franck,* 338.

[246] Tournemire, *César Franck,* 54.

[247] 'Another possible reason for its neglect [*Les Djinns*] is the pianissimo ending, which makes the work less effective for both the pianist and the audience. The triumphant ending of the *Variations Symphoniques* is one reason for its greater degree of success. This is true also with Franck's *Prelude, Aria et Finale* and his *Prélude, Chorale et Fugue*, where the pianissimo ending of the former makes it less attractive in comparison with the big ending of the latter work.' James, "César Franck's works for piano and orchestra", 63.

difficult to gauge how much is relevant to his teacher's youthful compositions written almost ninety years prior to his own writings:

> Instead of cultivating improvisational skill in multiple styles, the modern pianist concentrated on exploiting the technological innovations in piano manufacture, and cultivating a degree of pianistic virtuosity that would help him compete in the marketplace. As a result there emerged a new style of highly virtuosic, public concert music in which the words "brilliant," "grand" and "*di bravura*" predominate.[248]

All of which is applicable to the early piano works. Franck's beloved piece from his days as a touring concert pianist, the Hummel *Fantasy* Op. 18, was described in an 1824 article as a model for younger pianists to refine their improvisations.[249] Mendelssohn, Chopin and Liszt, renowned public improvisors, would eventually abstain or totally refuse to improvise in public, considering it fruitless or unsatisfactory, the transition from extemporisation to the 'aura of the work' being fully realised by the time of completion of the four works in question.

Regarding Franck's youthful improvisations, we have very little information, generally commenting that it was 'a little vague and monotonous',[250] a term that will be used for much of the music from this period, another bemoaned that Franck 'did not end soon enough';[251] César Franck often lacked conciseness where needed.[252] If d'Indy's claim is correct that Franck as an adolescent would be comfortable with transposition since he engaged in daring transposition feats at a young age,[253] it is not improbable that he was not already an accomplished improviser, though there are no personal account or concert reviews that underpin this suggestion, as Rollin Smith notes: 'references to Franck as an improviser become plentiful and elaborate when we move from the concert settings to the subdued ecclesiastical atmosphere of Basilica of Sainte-

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[248] Dana Gooley, *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Improvisation Studies, Volume 2,* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2014), 188.
[249] *Ibid.,* 191.
[250] Smith, *Toward an Authentic Interpretation of the Organ Works of César Franck*, 4.
[251] *Ibid.,* 25.
[252] As d'Indy's infamous story recalls of the curé at St. Clotilde unable to stop Franck mid improvisation, even with the help of electric bells. D'Indy, "La Première Manière De César Franck", 6.
[253] D'Indy recounts Franck's exam from 1838: 'Après avoir exécuté de façon tout à fait supérieure le Concerto en la mineur de Hummel, morceau imposé, le jeune Franck ne s'avisa-t-il point, à l'épreuve de lecture à vue, de transposer à la tierce inférieure le morceau à déchiffrer et de le jouer ainsi sans une faute ni une hésitation ?' D'Indy, *César Franck,* 4.

Clotilde where he played the organ.'[254] And if we consider the early piano works as the outcome of salon culture, one could see the general lack of *trajectory towards climax* and a consequence of its unsuitability. The *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chaplle*, the black sheep of the early piano works, and perhaps the most 'Franckian' of the group, was already mentioned by Koch as being written without a performance in mind. As many writers have lamented, it is unfortunate that these improvisations are lost forever:

> Now, alas, all we have left are the testimonies of those who were able to judge as experts these transcendent moments of music. For Franck, improvisation was clearly an authentic compositional act. So much so that one might think that the musician constructed his true body of organ work by improvising. It remains to be seen whether the best of the written pieces result from the distillation of these moments of instantaneous creation that have been lost forever, sandcastles of sound.[255]

In conclusion, the only deductions we can make are that the loquacious tendencies in Franck's improvisations were all-too present in his early piano works.

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[254] Smith, *Toward an Authentic Interpretation of the Organ Works of César Franck*, 21.

[255] 'À présent, hélas, il ne nous reste plus que les témoignages de ceux qui ont pu juger en experts de ces transcendants moments de musique. L'improvisation était pour Franck, à l'évidence, un acte compositionnel authentique. À tel point qu'on peut penser que le musicien a bâti en improvisant sa véritable œuvre d'orgue. Reste à savoir si le meilleur des pièces écrites résulte de la distillation de ces moments de création instantanée à jamais perdus, châteaux de sable sonores.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 485.

Postlude

'Few people have written about Franck without agenda: to sanctify him or to berate the sanctifiers.'[256] Franck had, perhaps unwittingly, developed a cult of personality around him, resulting in bias and over-corrections from writers. As such, every musicologist studying Franck must wade through the intoxicating thick aura surrounding the *Pater Seraphicus* and determine the accuracy of his descriptions.

This chapter has approached the following research questions:

- What are some of the distinguishing stylistic characteristics of Franck's 'early' piano works?
- What are some of the distinguishing stylistic characteristics of Franck's 'late' piano works?
- It is possible to suggest a similar compositional process/idiomatic style in the two groups of compositions?

It has created the scaffolding for the upcoming examination in the following chapters, where the aforementioned features will be located in the early and late solo piano works in more precise detail. These characteristics, or stylistic compositional traits, will be cemented as Franckian qualities by their frequency and transparency in these works. This technique could be applied to any of Franck's genres in the hope of discovering more about his compositional process in an intelligible and systematic fashion, as well as introducing possible interpretive solutions. Fauquet finds in the Op. 6 *Andantino quietoso* (1843):

> This process, which consists in adorning the melody with shorter note values (quavers versus crotchets for example), will become one of the marks of Franck's writing. [...] we must also acknowledge that this method has allowed him to personalise the way in which the discourse is spread, to extend the development. What could simply be a salon piece is the hallmark of an intimate sweetness that French music was unaware of at the time. The *Andantino quietoso,* with its combination of melodic lines and harmony, is undoubtedly the first purely Franckian work of its kind, which, close to a murmur and in contrast to the noisy assaults of the prevailing virtuosity, imposes silence.[257]

[256] Swindells, "Tonality, functionality and Beethovenian form in the late instrumental works of César Franck", 16.
[257] 'Ce procédé, qui consiste à orner la mélodie avec des valeurs de notes plus brèves (croches contre noires, par exemple), deviendra une des marques de l'écriture de Franck. Si l'on peut estimer que ce dernier en a abusé, notamment dans quelques-unes de ses mélodies pour chant et piano, il faut reconnaître aussi que ce moyen lui a permis de personnaliser la manière d'étaler le discours, d'étendre le développement. Ce qui pourrait n'être qu'un

Or, in the lexicon of this thesis, the work features *note value diminution* and *silence* as its distinctly Franckian features. Across the piano-less gulf, we have Franck's other iteration in this genre with the similar *Mélancolie* from the last decade of his life, which bears many similarities with the *Andantino quietoso*.

The three character studies *spiritual/erotic/serene, pianist/organist,* and *salon/improvisation* have an implicit way of understanding several of the features found in Franck's works. The perceptions have been used by writers as a way of generalising the origins of some of these compositional processes, as well as describing the effect on the listener. They have also been used as a basis for invective or praise: as we have seen, the religious and organ side of Franck has become so prevalent for some that the *Prélude, chorale et fugue* is said to be more effective than the *Prélude, aria et final* because it is the 'religious' one compared to the secularism and 'sonata form' of the latter; while pianists claim the *Prélude, choral and fugue* is better and more 'natural' to Franck because it is more organ-like, as opposed to the *Prélude, aria et final*.

Another venue not explored, instead of looking at what was distinctly *Franckian,* was looking at works that are regarded as distinctly *non-Franckian*, for example:

> In this respect, [Debussy's] *La Mer* with its subtitle "symphonic sketches", has always seemed to be, par excellence, the anti-Franckian symphony insofar as it subverts as if for pleasure, some of the typically Franckian ingredients of which it is made up - see the theme with note-pivots of the third part, "Dialogue of wind and sea".[258]

The procedure in this thesis should return few results when applied to works such as Debussy's *La Mer* and other 'anti-Franckian' works. Nevertheless, one finds in the work frequent third-

morceau de salon est le blason d'une douceur intimiste que la musique française méconnaît à l'époque. L'Andantino quietoso, lignes et harmonie confondues, est assurément la première œuvre d'essence purement franckienne qui, proche du murmure et tranchant en cela sur les assauts bruyants de la virtuosité ambiante, impose silence.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 143.

[258] 'À cet égard, *La Mer* avec son sous-titre d' « esquisses symphoniques » nous a toujours semblé être, par excellence, la symphonie antifranckienne dans la mesure où, entre autres, elle subvertit, comme à plaisir, quelques ingrédients typiquement franckiens qui lui sont constitutifs – voir le thème avec notes-pivots du troisième volet « Dialogue du vent et de la mer ».' *Ibid.,* 732.

relations, though as described in Chapter 2 *The three parts,* this is part of the harmonic language of many romantic composers and his predecessors Chopin, Dussek and even Haydn.

The most commonly referenced features of Franck's style are the essence of calm and tranquillity, chromaticism and the opposition of generative themes, of which there will be hints in the four early piano works. A fruitful demonstration of some of the features in work from this period is found in Franck's symphonic poem *Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne* (1846) which embodies a *Cathedral of Sound* on a larger scale than the piano works from this period. Fauquet hints at this feature in his comments regarding the work:

> A vast meditation with a spectral sonority, sitting on a majestic sixteen-bar chorale, this ambitious piece seems to be constructed with time as much as with notes. It deliberately defies the duration and endurance of the listener to the point that today it is very rarely played: it bewilders. Decidedly, the paths of music can be quite steep. [...] a single stable tonality with "spatialised" sonority of the orchestral writing using a wide range of shading.[259]

This monumental 25-minute work, considered by some as the 'first symphonic poem in the history of music',[260] has a stability in tonality and rhythm that emerges as 'ageless', with the slow progressions having more weight and grander in nature. Apart from the more instantly recognisable features, it is Franck's most effective *Cathedral of Sound*. In the end, if Vallas is to be believed, one should search for these features in Franck's *Les Béatitudes*:

> He even confessed: "Deep down, when I want to find something good, I replay the *Les Béatitudes* to myself; it's still what works best for me".[261]

Judging by the body of literature on César Franck, we can see a supposed identity crisis in him that makes commentary on the composer so problematic. The diminutive appellation of 'organist' and 'pater seraphicus' has done much to destroy objectivity and his reputation. The

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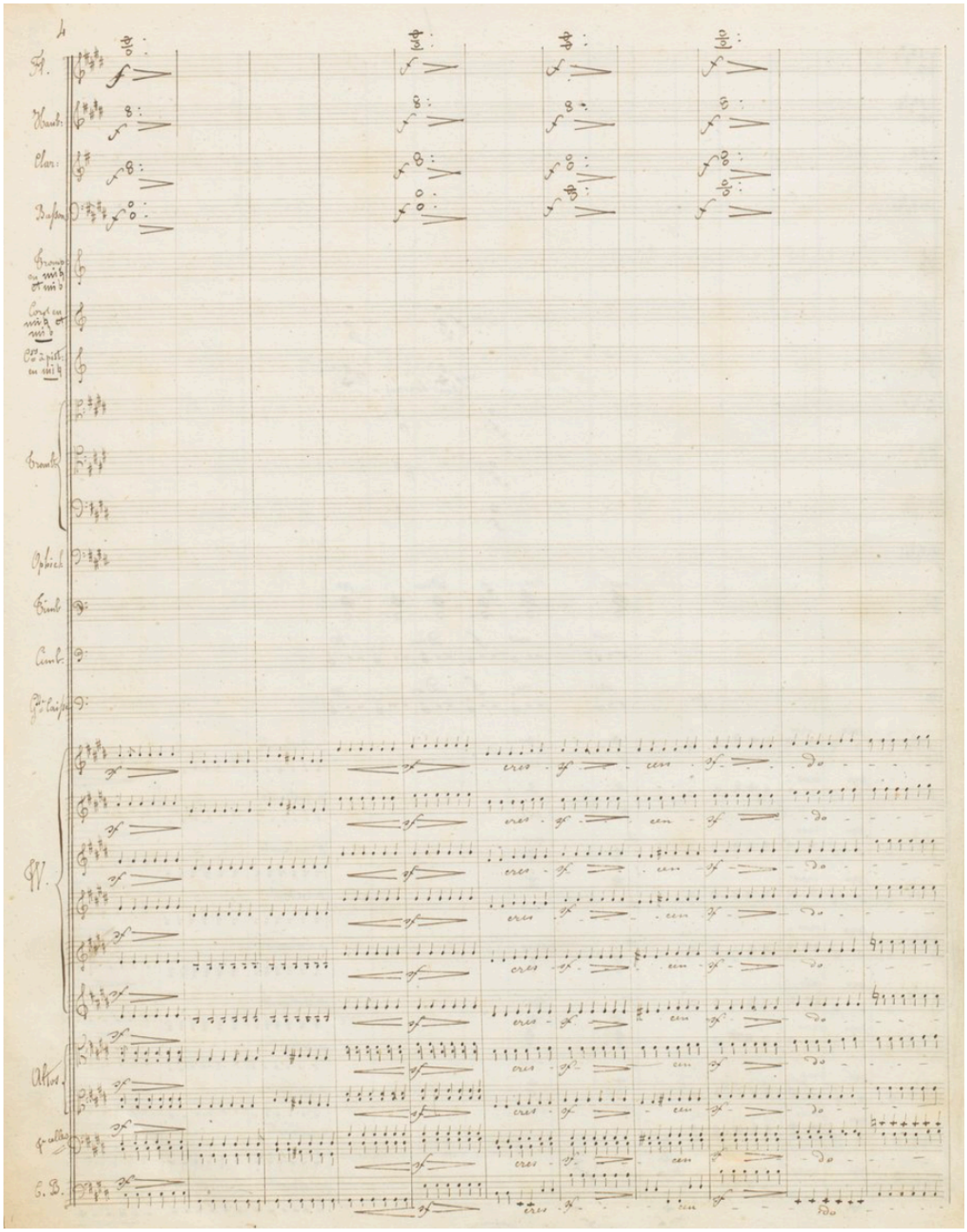
[259] 'Vaste méditation à la sonorité spectrale, prenant assise sur un majestueux choral de seize mesures, cette page ambitieuse semble construite avec du temps autant qu'avec des notes. Elle défie la durée et l'endurance de l'auditeur d'une façon délibérée au point qu'aujourd'hui elle est très rarement jouée : elle déroute. Décidément, les voies de la musique peuvent être bien escarpées. […] unité tonale stable sonorité « spatialisée » de l'écriture orchestrale usant d'une large échelle de nuances.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 212.

[260] Joël-Marie Fauquet, Orchestre Philharmonique Royal de Liège, *Complete Orchestral Works*, (2022), 13. The booklet also mentions the use of a 16-bar chorale.

[261] 'Il avoua même : « Au fond, quand je veux trouver quelque chose de bien, je me rejoue les Béatitudes; c'est encore ce qui me réussit le mieux. » Vallas, *La Véritable Histoire de César Franck,* 339.

frequency with which one encounters these superficial terms explains the confusing juxtaposition surrounding Franck.



Example 36: César Franck, *Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne* (1846), bars 52–62. In this work, in imposing the immensity of nature upon the listener, *Cathedral of Sound* is used to great meditative effect. Often there is no harmonic movement, just tremolandos that change in intensity, like the swells of an expression pedal on an organ, or even no movement at all, creating a work that does not sound as though it was written in 1846.

Chapter 3

Franck's Compositional Techniques in Practice

Form and Themes Terminology

D'Indy would be satisfied to know that Franck's Op. 7 *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle*, the contents of which he was unaware,[1] would ostensibly fit a model of three sections, though not quite as simply as 'an allegro interposed between two expositions of an identical theme, the whole preceded by a short introduction', but he would not have likely relished the subsequent dethroning of the number '3' in terms of significant early piano compositions.[2] An oversight now hoped to be addressed with an examination of these works, mined for compositional techniques that will hopefully provide insight into Franck's compositional style.

Such laconic remarks on form by d'Indy, an impression which is shared by consecutive writers apart from Fauquet,[3] may suit well to generalise these pieces but closer examination can extract some worthwhile insights. D'Indy mentions one theme — similarly to his analysis of the *Prélude, choral et fugue* — which we would generally now consider a thematic group, though it does become an interesting exercise to distinguish between the two modes of thought when analysing these piano pieces.[4]

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[1] Joël-Marie Fauquet wrote that before finding the publication of the work: 'Georges Franck kept the only known copy — the manuscript? — that he lent without being returned to him. The piece is lost. There remains no other trace than the announcement of a hypothetical publication at the price of 9F - the same as that of the *Ballade* opus 9 -, more expensive than the *Églogue* (7.50 F) and the *Andantino quietoso* (6 F), which gives an idea of the importance of the piece.' Franck, *César Franck,* 147–8.

[2] The number 3 had a religious significance for the 'fervent catholic' (Fauquet, *César Franck,* 19) and feature prominently throughout d'Indy's writing, such as dividing Franck's output into three, selecting 'The Three Earliest Pieces for the Piano', as well as picking three significant works from his 'early' period. D'Indy, *Selected Piano Compositions,* xxxi.

[3] For example, Cortot would repeat d'Indy's sentiment on the form of the 'early' works: 'La forme de ses compositions se renouvelle si peu, que M. d'Indy a pu en donner une définition applicable à l'ensemble des œuvres de la première période : un «allegro », encadré entre deux expositions d'un même thème, le tout précédé parfois d'une courte introduction.' Cortot, *La Musique Française de Piano,* 58.

[4] 'The Prélude is cast in the historic mould of the classical Suite. A simple theme is announced in the tonic, then in the dominant, and the piece concludes with a phrase that completes the exposition of the theme'. D'Indy, *Selected Piano Music,* xxxv. He does however refer to a 2nd theme in the 1st section of the *Églogue* (p. xxxii).

This chapter will explore the subtle interplay between at least two themes in each section, sometimes even in combination, as well displaying the ambiguous role of the introductions. The data will not be compiled into any pre-determined formal plan. Nevertheless, each piece is clearly divided into three, delineated by a key and tempo change. The categorisation 'ternary form' is still the most accurate and succinct term in the analytic arsenal.

Furthermore, there is also the assumption that Franck's compositional style is firmly rooted in the handling of thematic material. Nicholas Cook wrote on Liszt and Wagner:

> these composers relied heavily on brief, recurrent motifs; this is one of the most obvious things about their music – particularly Wagner's, the point of whose leitmotifs is that they must be immediately recognizable even when half buried in a complete texture. Just because it is so obvious, no special technique of analysis is necessary in order to discover this.[5]

As Franck equipped himself with a similar toolbox — in the case of these early works the usage of 'motifs' or 'themes' is in a drastically simpler fashion — they will also not require a sophisticated analytical method. As a result, the following chapter is not based on any particular method, but framed in a similar fashion to the now-forgotten H. A. Hardings's *Analysis of form as displayed in Beethoven's thirty-two pianoforte sonatas with a description of the form of each movement for the use of students.*[6] This is by all accounts an outdated source and only its layout is employed, an ideal format to display the easily intelligible uniform structures that are shared between piano works and allows for a quick reference to the descriptions of thematic material. It also would not be too unexpected that a Schenkerian analysis of these works would depart from the usual elegant portrayal of tonal structure and destination on a grander scale, resulting in a monotonous horizontal line exhibiting little to no interest.

Each of the four pieces have been found to be divisible into three distinct sections, in which thematic material and tonal centres have been indicated, along with their relationships to one another. A clear difference in the handling of material will be seen from the tables, with the

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[5] Nicholas Cook, *A Guide to Musical Analysis*, (London: Dent Paperbacks, 1992), 91.
[6] H. A. Harding, *Analysis of form as displayed in Beethoven's thirty-two pianoforte sonatas with a description of the form of each movement for the use of students,* (London: Novello, 1901).

first and last sections presenting identical themes in identical tonal centres. The central *Allegro* sections have tempo changes (in various aspects *Souvenirs* stands out from these works, in this case with a rapid alternation between *Vivace* and *Andantino*). There is room for variation in the section divisions, for example there is a strong case for creating another section in the *Églogue* for bars 157–217 as a sort of development; but for the purposes of this examination — which is to clearly locate the repetition and transformation of themes within the works — the three-division system serves the same purpose. The subsequent Chapter 4 *Techniques Commentary* will approach these works using the same features set out in Chapter 2 *Musical Style.*

The rough duration of each section is provided.[7] For tonal centres, a lower-case letter denotes minor key, for example e^{b}=E flat minor, while uppercase denotes major, for example $F^{\#}$=F sharp major. When a tonal centre (without hints for a major or minor mode) is implied through a strong dominant chord, '( )' is used for the implication. At particularly uninspired moments, certain themes are only composites of a diminished 7^{th} chord, where a tonal resolution is strongly implied, but its destination is not; this would not always be the case for Franck's treatment of this chord.[8] Because of their ambiguity, the capitalised letter denotes the first bass note. Below is a key and description of the nomenclature for the subsequent pages:

Duration ('minutes'."seconds")			*Duration*			*Duration*		
FIRST SECTION (*Bars*)			SECOND SECTION (*Bars*)			THIRD SECTION (*Bars*)		
Bars	*Theme*	*key(s)*	*Bars*	*Theme*	*key(s)*	*Bars*	*Theme*	*key(s)*

Below each table is a short description of each theme and its features like so:

SECTION

Theme name *Full title* - *Notable Features*

[7] The following recordings were used as templates:
Op. 3 *Églogue*: Ashley Wass, *FRANCK*, Naxos, 1999, 8.554484.
Op. 5 *Caprice*: Ashley Wass, *FRANCK*, Naxos, 1999, 8.554484
Op. 7 *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle*: Julia Severus, *Franck: Early Piano Music*, Naxos, 2014, 8.572901
Op. 9 *Ballade*: Julia Severus, *Franck: Early Piano Music*, Naxos, 2014, 8.572901

[8] Various spellings and resolutions of the *Prélude, choral et fugue* are mentioned in Cranford, "Harmonic and Contrapuntal Techniques in the Late Keyboard Works of César Franck", 88.

Grove Music Online describes a theme as:

> The musical material on which part or all of a work is based, usually having a recognizable melody and sometimes perceivable as a complete musical expression in itself, independent of the work to which it belongs. It gives a work its identity even when (as is frequently the case with a theme and variations) it is not original to the work.[9]

Drabkin's general definition needs to encompass all flavours of tonal writing. In this examination the distinction between *theme, motif, subject,* etc. has been dispensed with and each musical block has been assigned the label 'theme'[10] to eliminate bias and avoid tainting the investigation with known formal structures. While there are discrepancies between definitions,[11] *motif* implies a recurring musical block that is applied in various, fluctuating circumstances, something not seen in these works[12] whereas *cell*, which is commonly used for Franck's late works, is unnecessary as its association is with a short developing germ, from which much of the music sprouts; the *themes* discussed here generally do not have this effect as their transformations are transparent and minimal. Since the development of material is easily identifiable and usually clearly segregated, there is rarely ambiguity in its source material.

Finally, there appears to be no reason to divide a theme into two units if one part always appears after the other in an identical fashion and has no implication on the work outside of this relegated position. Themes are regularly put solely through textural elaboration, seldom altering key or duration. Subsequent variations of themes are denoted with an added ('), for example ***B''*** is the second variation of theme ***B***. As these are 'simple' works and their compositional processes well-defined, the aim is to have a correspondingly simple and clear examination. While

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[9] William Drabkin, "Theme", *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed April 17, 2019. www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/Theme.

[10] On which Cook's comments are applicable in this analysis: 'It is better to risk saying too little rather than too much in your choice of labels, because it is always easier to add to an analytical interpretation than to subtract from it'. Cook, *A Guide to Musical Analysis*, 280.

[11] 'In spite of all attempts to categorize, and in spite of the great increase in style-criticism, we can hardly think of a time when there were so many terms in use, while at the same time there was so much real confusion over basic musical conceptions.' Felix Salzer, *Structural Hearing Tonal Coherence in Music*, (New York: Dover Publishing Inc., 1992), 8.

[12] 'structure of the lyric piano piece, unlike the sonata, is determined by motives and not by themes. The hallmark of romantic piano music is the pregnant and telling motive; it is motive that sets in motion the musical development of this fundamentally lyrical art and, by remaining in the ear, imparts unity to a piece. Almost invariably the motive has a distinctive rhythm while the pitch content remains open and variable.' Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music,* 147.

descriptions of music often have a certain air of superfluous nature, the concise descriptions that follow should allow a clearer demonstration of Franck's compositional processes in this period, with an emphasis on what this thesis considers *Franckian*.

Op. 3 *Églogue* (1842)

0' – 6'40"			6'40 – 12'10"			12'10 – 16'46"		
FIRST SECTION (1–156)			SECOND SECTION (157–334)			THIRD SECTION (351–429)		
Bars	Theme	Key	Bars	Theme	Key	Bars	Theme	Key
1 - 25	*Intro*	E♭	157 - 193	*Intro"*	C-E-f-C-c	335 - 356	*Intro""*	C-E♭
26 - 57	*A*	E♭	194 - 209	*B"*	C-c-C-f	357 - 373	*A*	E♭
58 - 94	*B*	E♭-g	210 - 217	*Intro"'*	c	374 - 409	*B""*	E♭
95 - 99	*A'*	E♭	218 - 245	*C*	c-f-D♭	410 - 421	*A'*	E♭
100 - 136	*B'*	E♭-g	246 - 279	*D*	c-A♭-E♭	422 - 429	*Intro'*	E♭
137 - 149	*A'*	E♭	280	*Intro"'*	c			
150 - 156	*Intro'*	E♭	281 - 308	*C*	c-f-D♭			
			309 - 334	*B"'*	C			

Table 5: Themes found in Op. 3 *Églogue*

FIRST SECTION

Intro Introductory theme - Starts each section and finishes the piece, framing the work, in *quasi senza tempo* fashion. Many Franckian features at display here: *Cathedral of Sound, registral transfer* (repeated B♭s first in alto then in bass), as well as *Franckian pedals* (organ-like, syncopated basses), and crossing of hands. Lin divides the introduction into two themes at bar 20 and d'Indy refers to all of this as 'an introduction of twenty-six measures in E♭ major'.[13] The second of the phrase pair will frequently be used for introducing a theme. It is a conspicuously simple theme: a dominant pedal point in various registers and a tonic triad that focuses on the resolution from the fourth step to the fifth. The interest here lies predominantly in the rhythmic ambiguity of *ad libitum, quasi senza tempo*, with a bell-like quality introducing the first theme.

A 1st theme - Slight variations with each reiteration: different arpeggiation, addition of trills, modification of IV to iv, but never strays from E♭ major as a tonal centre. The second phrase pair starts at bar 34 with *semplice* and the second reiteration of the theme alters a IV chord to a iv chord, alters the arpeggiation and adds ornaments the second of the theme pair.

B 2nd theme - Like *A*, two consecutive iterations with unique pianistic textures. Features the often-mentioned *three hands piano technique* as a first variation of theme, almost an *Infinite Melody* variant, and touches on the key of g minor (a tertiary modulation) but still predominantly E♭.

A' 1st theme variation - Last five bars of the first of the phrase pair. The final bar is adjusted to resemble the ending of *Intro* (which is reminiscent of bar 38). The theme is accompanied by a pleasant, accented counter melody in the tenor, evocative of many places in the work, such as the phrase pair of the theme *A*, e.g. bars 34–37, or *B* bars 60–61, which falls by a third.

B' 2nd theme - Again a double iteration of the theme, the first being arpeggiated and the second with a lengthened ending.[14] A noticeable use of *Registral transfer*.

A' 1st theme variation - Like the previously heard *A'*, except this time with an effective entry with the fourth bar of the first theme, on a iv chord instead of the usual IV.

Intro' Introduction variation - Second phrase pair of the *Intro*, decorated with a rising chromatic figure and a conversion to two four-bar phrases.

SECOND SECTION

Intro" Introduction variation - Here we see the first true movement away from E♭. The *intro* has been reversed – the second phrase of introduction concludes the first section and the first phrase pair of *intro* starts the second section. Despite the double bar lines at the end of bars 197 and 217, bar 157 is considered the commencement of the next section because of its exploratory nature, moving to keys C, E,

[13] D'Indy, *Selected Piano Works,* xxxi. D'Indy most likely counted the anacrusis as a whole bar (there are no bar numbers in his edition).

[14] 'This kind of texture is characteristic of Franck's solo piano works during this period and continues to his late piano works. However, his *Deuxième Fantaisie,* op. 14, [Op. 014] provides evidence that Franck had already composed solo works with similar textures as early as 1836'. Lin, "From Virtuoso to Master: César Franck as a Composer of Solo Piano Music", 59.

A♭ and c,[15] each being tertiary modulations. In bar 166 the ear hears a *modal interchange* with a quick switch from e minor to E major as a consequence of the G♮'s in the preceding bar. Tension is created with the two pedal points (bars 183–187), C and D♭, an unusual dissonance for Franck at this time.

B" 2nd theme variation - A reiteration of ***B*** theme in a new texture, grandioso (*ff*) followed by *pp due corde* in tenor, in two phrase pairings. *Franckian pedals* covering a wide range of the piano. Included in this phrase are *Modal interchange* between the phrase pairs of c minor and C major, as well as between *due* and *tre corde*. *Cathedral of Sound* with fermatas. This type of left-hand-theme right-hand-coloratura which has *registral transfer* will be revisited in *Prélude, [aria] et final* in bars 278–280. There's even a brief flirtation back to E♭ in bars 208–209.

Intro'" Introductory theme - Built around the turn found in the ***intro*** theme in bars 11–15, this is a typical display of Franck's economic treatment of material within these works. This section's role is essentially preparing c minor and the *Allegro fuocoso* tempo with *poco a poco cresc. ed accelerando.*

C 3rd theme - Musically, the first true breaking from the pastoral climate. From here uninterrupted semi-quavers run until ***Intro".*** Second phrase pair melody is a scalic rising third.

D 4th theme - *Espress. ed agitato* and of a more Franckian character: contrasting phrase pairs; ascending scalic melody (the rising to a third step-wise could easily be related to ***B*** theme) against technically demanding *three hand writing* around *pivot notes* and a descending scale melody, also featuring a *registral transfer* in the repetition in the relative E♭ major.

Intro'" Introductory theme - While not substantial — lasting three-quarters of a bar — it is a re-use of the material found in the final bar of the preceding section, bar 217.

C 3rd theme - Almost exact replica of the previous ***C*** theme, with added adjustments to second phrase pair with scalic ascensions in the melody and a chromatic falling at the conclusion (reminiscent of the chromatic falling at the conclusion of the 1st section, which will also appear at the end of this section again. This chromatic falling is also found throughout ***C*** theme).

B'" 2nd theme variation - *Franckian pedal*: pedal point of the tones G+C for fourteen bars. Concludes the predominantly c minor second section in C major. Reminiscent of the ***C*** theme melody in the second of the pair.

THIRD SECTION

Intro'"' Introduction variation - Stabilises the tonality from C major to E♭ Major (tertiary modulation). In bars 347–350 the left hand repeats the *Franckian pedal* from ***B"***, connecting the two themes and giving the work unity.

A 1st theme - A single iteration of the theme once again, with the only variance occurring in the second pair in the arpeggiation.

B'"' 2nd theme variation - Also a single iteration, with an added tenor pedal 372–400 (almost throughout whole of this theme), each time accompanied with written *vibrant/vibrato* (written a total of seven times). See *Performance Indications* for more.

A' 1st theme variation - Identical to the 1st theme variation in 1st section, except the 1st phrase pair is accompanied with fermatas and the 2nd of the phrase pair once again alters the arpeggiation, a tediously systematic compositional approach.

Intro' Introduction variation - Like at the conclusion of the 1st section and 2nd section, a chromatic figure finishes the work, with the second of the *introduction* pair theme.

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[15] Lin describes the second section as starting with the *allegro fuocoso* marking at 218, and the bars preceding as a transition. In this analysis the transition is considered an introduction to the second section followed by a variation of the ***B*** theme, returning at the end of the second section (which Lin puts firmly still in the second section). Lin's conclusion is understandable, but in that mode of analysis, there should be more sections considered as transition passages.

***Églogue* Notes**

There are several points of interest.

There are four instances of tertiary modulations, as mentioned above, as well as *B* theme touching upon g minor in a tertiary step to the relative minor, but only briefly and always returns to E^{b}. Franck's unadventurous tone is extremely prevalent in these works, with the first accidental here found in bar 46: a commonplace alteration of the IV Major chord to iv minor chord.

Along with the somewhat pedestrian use of harmony, there is some homogeneity amongst the themes, being composed of three ascending/descending scalic steps spanning a third (major or minor), which is found in each section. A similar unifying feature such as that found in Rudolph Reti's analysis of Beethoven's Op. 13 *Pathetique*,[16] it is hard to establish to what extent this resemblance is intentional, or if it is an outcome of the compositional zeitgeist. Certainly, the various methods, such as those mentioned in Chapter 1 *Zeitgeist of 1842–1848,* highlight the third interval as a foundational building stone of the time. More will be discussed Chapter 4 *Melody and Thematic Material.* Nevertheless, throughout the work we see an interrelationship between the themes, a feature which is locked to Franck's musical idiom, with this unity between themes and movements creating a cohesive whole.[17]

The static tonal security of the preceding section results in the harmonic and thematic instability of bars 157–217 producing a similar psychological effect to that of a development in sonata form. The evocative preparation for the second section is the most effective part of the work: its tonal instability, compactness of material and modal interchanges stand out in the work, foreshadowing Franck's manipulation of material in the late works.

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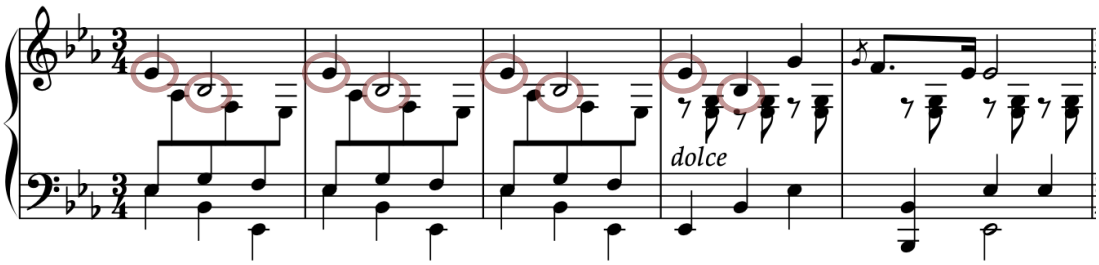
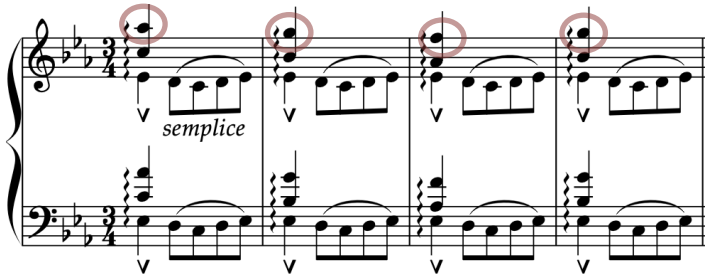
[16] Rudolph Reti, *Thematic Patterns in Sonatas of Beethoven,* (MacMillan Company: 1967).
[17] For example, regarding the *Prélude, Choral et Fugue*: 'The falling second, stated twice in the opening bar is a significant "germ" motive from which many ideas of the three-movement work are based.' Cranford, "Harmonic and Contrapuntal Techniques in the Late Keyboard Works of César Franck", 53.

***Églogue* Musical Examples**

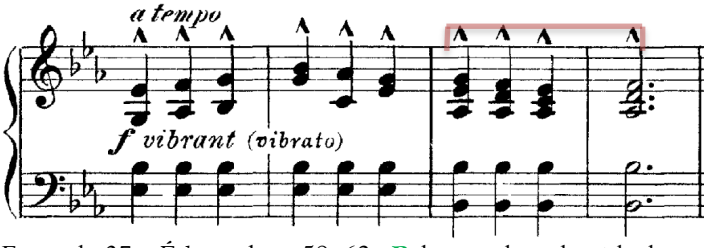


Example 37a: *Églogue*, bars 23–27. Note the preparation of the falling fourth before the *A* theme.

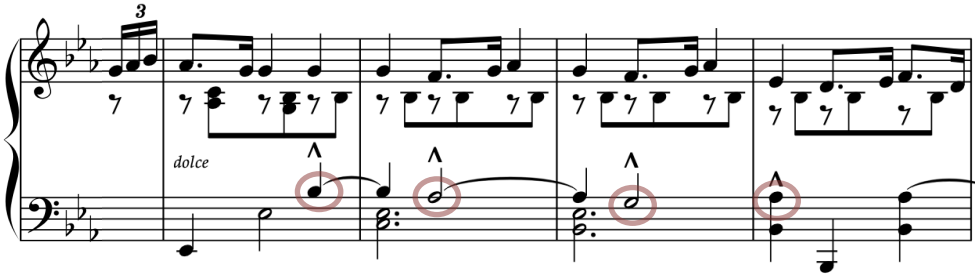
Third Movement



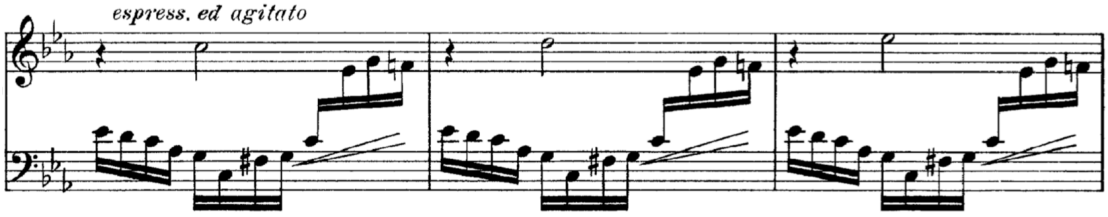
Example 37b: *Églogue*, bars 34–37. The second of the *A* phrase pair, the first instance of a motif that would consistently be found throughout the work



Example 37c: *Églogue*, bars 58–62. *B* theme, though with the same turn as we have seen in *A* theme above.]

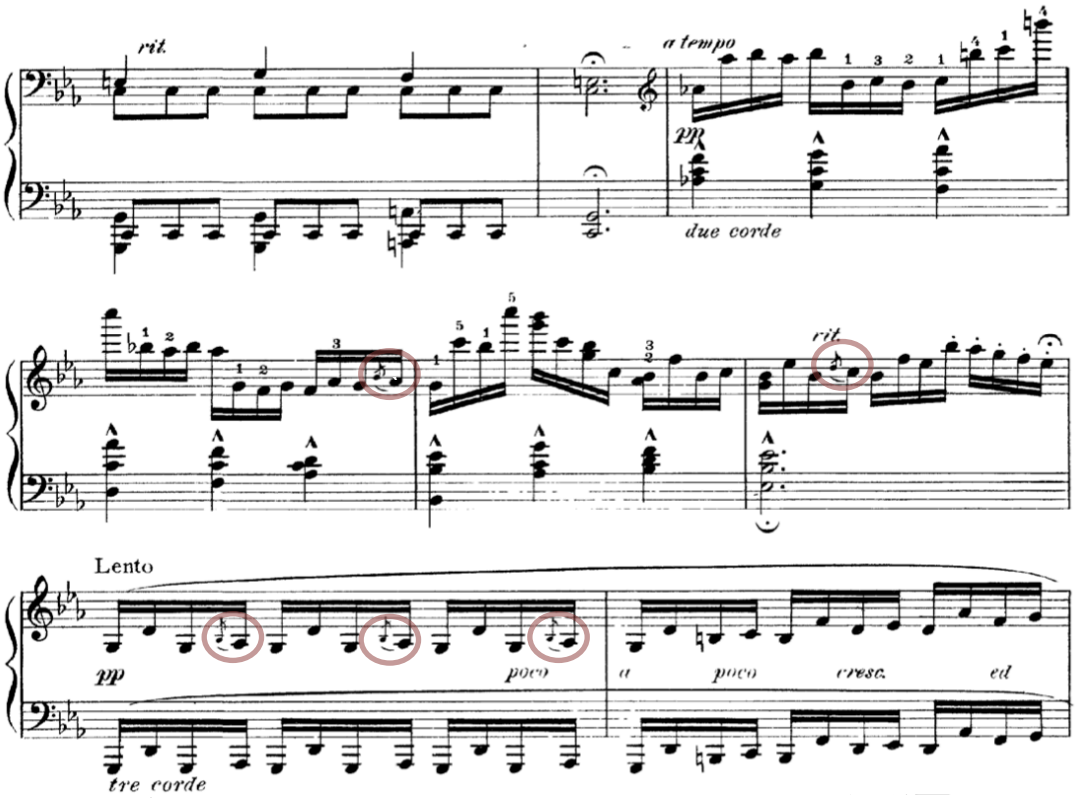


Example 37d: *Églogue*, bars 95–99. *A* theme first phrase. Note the weak beat tenor-line which moves across a third and is emphasised with the same accent.

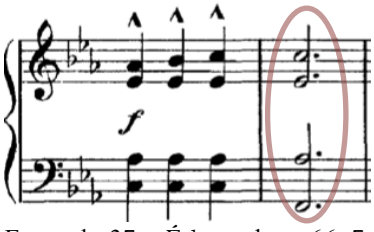


Example 37e: *Églogue*, bars 246–250, *D* theme. The above examples show the cohesion between themes achieved through this rising or falling by a third, which is present in all themes except *C*.

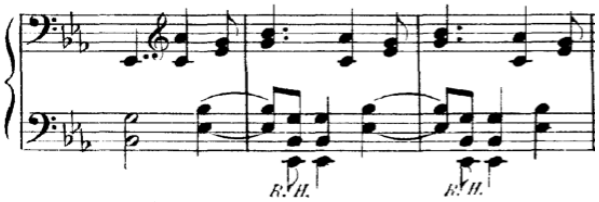
Miscellaneous:



Example 37f: *Églogue*, bars 204–211. ***B"*** followed by ***intro'"***. Note how the descending acciaccatura, first presented in the opening ***intro***, becomes used in ***B"*** to prepare ***intro'"*** which itself prepares the *Allegro*. This is the only instance of an acciaccatura in a ***B*** theme. This ***B*** theme moment resembles the three hands in *[Prélude], aria et final* shown in *Three hands technique*.



Example 37g: *Églogue*, bars 66–7. One instance of a ii7 chord. Franck liked to play with the modal ambiguity of this and the IV+6 chord.



Example 37h: *Églogue*, bars 344–6. The start of recap has the right hand over left, but not as a virtuosic trick; Franck's predilection for pedal points sometimes gives way to this, as in the three hands in *Cathedral of Sound*.

Op. 5 *Caprice* (1843)[18]

0' – 5'.55"			5'.55" – 9'.30"			9'.30" – 14'.11"		
FIRST SECTION (1-152)			SECOND SECTION (153-299)			THIRD SECTION (300-454)		
Bars	Theme	Key	Bars	Theme	Key	Bars	Theme	Key
1 - 6	*Intro*	C♯	153	*Intro'*	f♯	300 - 326	*A/C*	G♭
7 - 32	*A*	G♭	154 - 199	*D*	f♯-A-c♯-C♯-c♯	327 - 398	*B*	G♭-a♭-G♭
33 - 108	*B*	G♭-a♭-G♭	200 - 253	*B'*	c♯-f♯-C♯	399 - 424	*A'*	G♭
109 - 132	*A*	G♭	254 - 299	*D'*	f♯	425 - 444	*C'*	G♭
133 - 151	*C*	G♭				445 - 454	*Intro"*	G♭
152	*Cad*	G♭						

Table 6: Themes found in Op. 5 *Caprice*

FIRST SECTION

Intro Introductory theme - *Allegro ff a capriccio*; despite being written without bar-lines, it is still conspicuously in groups of four, which Lin describes as 'a wild, bizarre opening'.[19] Functions as a dominant to prepare D♭ and its rhythms and soundworld are also found in *D* theme,

A 1st theme - Theme always enters with at least four repeated D♭/C♯s.[20] Moderato *dolce teneramente*, strongly contrasting with the previous *fuocoso.* Extremely diatonic theme to the point of banality — solely comprised of V and I harmony — composed of scalic steps and broken chords. Slight variations with each reiteration: different arpeggiation, trills, alternating hands and changes of register. The two phrase pairs are separated with a *prestissimo* chromatic ascent both times the first section.

B 2nd theme - A virtuosic scherzo theme around a *pivot point* in 6/8. Along with the compound time signature, it switches to three-bar groupings. Semi-tonal movement in a stuttering style, with a clear *pivot point* around one note (D♭). A brief dominant modulation can be found in bars 57–68.

A 1st theme - As heard first time but in 'quasi-canonic fashion':[21] the tenor pre-empts the right-hand melody a quaver-note duration earlier.

C 3rd theme - Similar to his next work, Op. 7 *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle,* there is a third theme before the start of the second section, but here it will be repeated before the coda in the third section and become a distinguishing moment in the work. Distinct due to its combination of repeated notes, rising and falling fifths in the melody and its syncopated harmony, with a stuttering style on the D♭s.

Cad Cadenza - Diatonic and despite being written without bar-lines, it is visibly structured in groups of four. Lin emphatically calls attention to these cadenzas: 'What makes this piece unique are the long cadenza between the first and the second sections, as well as its compound structure'.[22]

SECOND SECTION

Intro' Introduction variation - Continues without bar-lines, though it is somewhat more metrically ambiguous here with the addition of fermatas, continuing in such as fashion until *D* theme, whereas bar-lines were introduced in the introduction at an earlier stage than seen here.

D 4th theme - Technically demanding *ff* passages in a 3/4 time signature. It provides a strong contrast to the first section with its strong rhythmic second beat and frequent chromatic runs. Chord pairs are a prominent feature in this theme - are they precursor to the chord pairs found in the violin sonata?[23] Similarly to the Op. 3 *Églogue,* the next theme is separated by a chromatic figure, which

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[18] It has come to my attention that there may be an edition that contains 354 bars instead of 454 as found in several editions. It is an edition of the Dover *Selected Piano Works,* where the third section is greatly reduced with an omission of *B* and *A'* themes. I, however, have not managed to track this edition down.

[19] Lin, "From Virtuoso to Master: César Franck as a Composer of Solo Piano Music", 59.

[20] This is a curious feature in this work. At times the repeated notes clearly belong to the previous theme (as enharmonic C♯s for instance) or signal the re-emergence of *A* theme (as in bar 300 with *Tempo I Moderato* marking). The most accurate description would be as an introduction to, but not part of, *A* theme. *B* has somewhat similar outings, with an emphasis on repeated D♭s pre-empting the theme, a surprise at the contrasting *B* theme entrances. This all makes for strong case for Franck's merging of themes.

[21] Lin, "From Virtuoso to Master: César Franck as a Composer of Solo Piano Music", 61.

[22] *Ibid.,* 60.

[23] For more detail, see *Franckian Themes.*

also intricately becomes a feature of *B'*. When moved to the keys c# minor and C# Major, Franck halves the harmonic rhythm. This, paired with triplets, has the effect of invoking the stretching out of time.

B' 2nd theme variation - *B* theme from first section is transformed into a *pp espress. e rubato* theme and from 6/8 time signature to 3/4 as well as extending the phrase lengths from 3 to 4 bars. One of the 'moments of genuine inspiration, particularly an early use of thematic transformation where the jaunty 6/8 prestissimo G flat major theme becomes the pulsating, pianissimo C# minor theme of the central section, with its swirls of impossibly awkward left-hand arpeggios'.[24] It is an effective *Cathedral of Sound* and, like the original *B* theme, it is introduced with a two-bar preparation and finishes with a four-bar step movement. Franck still has another trick up his sleeve as this preparation seems to want to tug back into either *A* or *B* theme, as heard previously, but effectively surprises us with return to *D'* theme.

D' 4th theme variation - The chromatic movement again inverts from descending into ascending. After the *fff* climax in C#, basses once again tying piece together preparing the next section and theme in a similar fashion as that found in the Op. 3 *Églogue* and Op. 9 *Ballade*.

THIRD SECTION

A/C 1st & 3rd theme - Includes hints of *C* theme in bars 310–317. Here another effective use of three-hand piano writing, it bears resemblance to later compositions with its effective counterpoint and clear four part writing.

B 2nd theme - Similar to first iteration but starts *staccatissimo* and features a stronger climax marked *ff con passione*. Introduced only with a single quaver anacrusis as opposed to two and a half bars in first section. This is the third strong climax in a short space of time.

A' 1st theme - Heavy, repeated block chords, altering the cloying character of the *A'* theme into a saturated, diatonic soundscape, just as will be seen at the end of Op. 9 *Ballade,* astutely observed by Lin: 'this kind of character transformation is similar to that of Liszt's *Vallée d'Obermann* in its first version of 1842',[25] written just a year prior. This section carries *ff* throughout and clearly references *intro* and *D* rhythm in bars 404, 408 and 412.

C' 3rd theme variation - Prominent and effective three hand piano writing. This is one of the most beautiful moments in the early piano works, resembling a similarly conclusive moment in the fugue of the *Prélude, choral et fugue*, as described in Chapter 4 *Franckian Themes.*

Intro" Coda - A coda similar in character to *intro*. Lin points out the coincidental instance in which the 'downbeats in the top notes of the right-hand outline a rising whole-tone scale'.[26]

Caprice Notes

While the *intro* in this work could be argued as holding more of a cadenza function, it still bears similarities to the introductions of the other early piano works; it features prominently throughout the work and is an important component of the second section. The ambiguity of the *intro* is further detailed in Chapter 4 *Role of Introduction.* Despite the purported rhythmical obscurity of the many barline-less 'cadenzas', they are in clear, regular groups of threes or fours.

[24] Hough, *César Franck Piano Music,* (Hyperion, 1997).
[25] Lin, "From Virtuoso to Master: César Franck as a Composer of Solo Piano Music", 63.
[26] Lin, "From Virtuoso to Master: César Franck as a Composer of Solo Piano Music", 63.

The second section in F♯ minor, 'one of his favourite keys',[27] frequently repeats low F♯ basses as comparably found in several of Franck's late works. Equally in the next piece, Op. 7 *Souvenirs,* this work has only one unique theme in the middle section.

The work is generally more adventurous in comparison with the previous Op. 3 *Églogue.* The emphasis on variation of musical material remains here — with his typical alternation of arpeggiation, syncopations, addition of tenor lines — but he also alternates the meter and phrase structures more frequently. Lin, along with others, references Liszt as a source of inspiration for Franck in this work: 'In addition, there are many Lisztian techniques and textures used in the *Caprice,* such as unmeasured cadenza-like passages, irregular beaming that crosses bar lines, repeated chords, and alternating octaves between the hands.'[28] Stephen Hough joins Demuth briefly in summoning the name of Brahms: 'There is a clear shadow of Liszt hovering over the piece, not surprisingly; but Alkan's chunky orchestral textures are there too, and even a prophetic hint of the Brahms F sharp minor Sonata, to be written ten years later.'[29] Is this *really* Franck's most individual work from this period as mentioned by both Cortot and Hough? It is certainly the piece that divides critics the most.

The *molto espressivo* phrase from bar 310 displays many idiosyncrasies: syncopated *Franckian pedals,* stuttering style, scalic melody, four-part texture and most importantly an amalgamation of themes. Throughout the work there is an emphasis on the tones D♭/C♯: themes ***A***, ***B*** and ***C*** all have frequent repetitions of this pitch as distinct qualities. As well as the effective transformation in ***B'***, the entrance of ***D'*** is particularly effective as a surprise, due to the *pp* staccato single note basses which prepare a quiet entrance of ***D'***, compared to its previous *ff* entry after an extensive cadenza.

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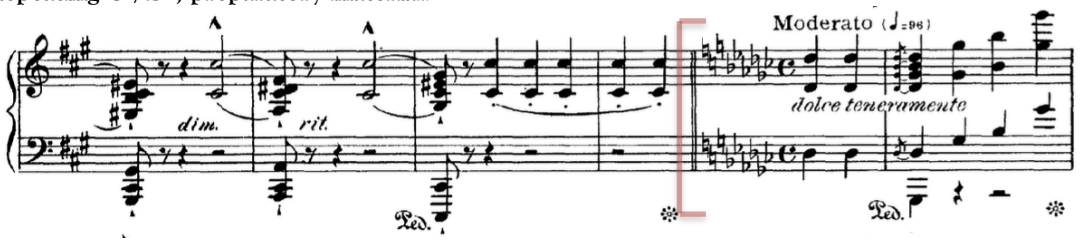
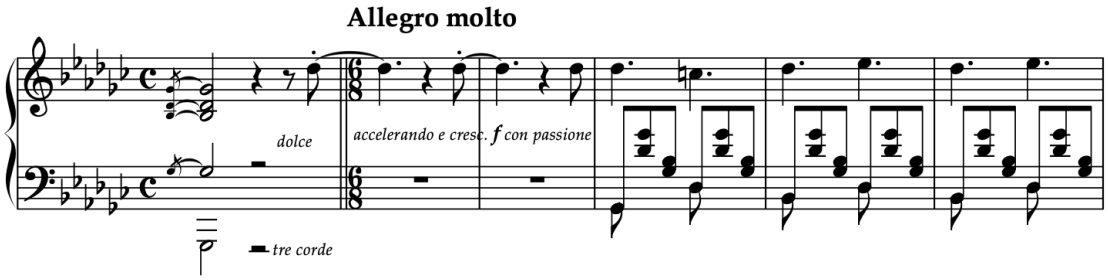
[27] Fauquet, *César Franck,* 149.
[28] Lin, "From Virtuoso to Master: César Franck as a Composer of Solo Piano Music", 64.
[29] Hough, *César Franck Piano Music,* (Hyperion, 1997).

Caprice Musical Examples

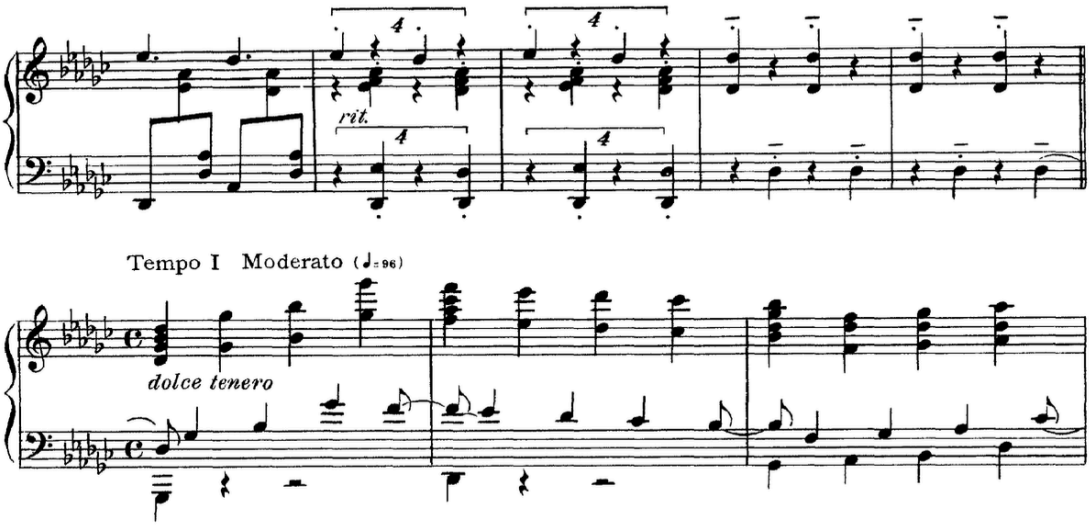
Repeating C♯/D♭, preparatory material:



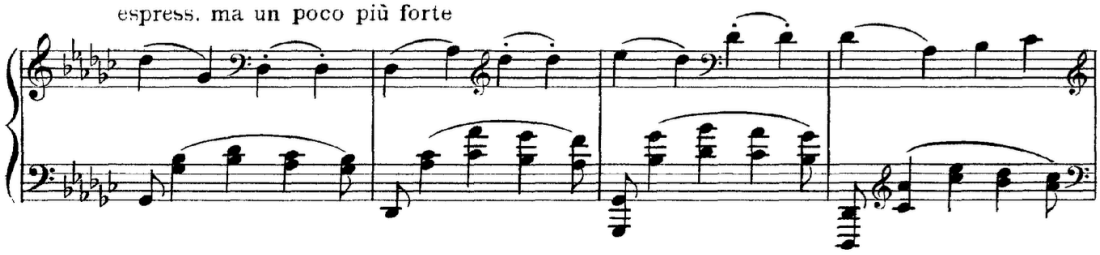
Example 38a: *Caprice*, bars 4–8. First entry of *A*.



Example 38b: *Caprice*, bars 33–38. Start of *B* theme. Note the typical Franckian *pivot point* around a single note for melodic material.

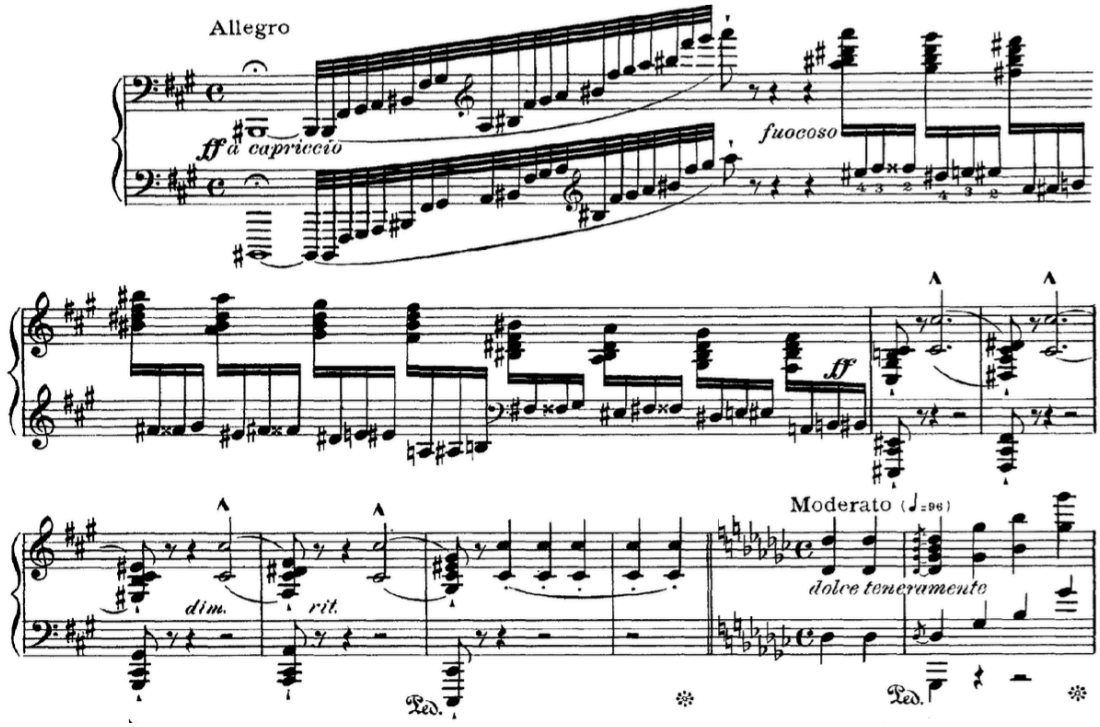


Example 38c: *Caprice*, bars 104–111. Transition from *B* to *A*.

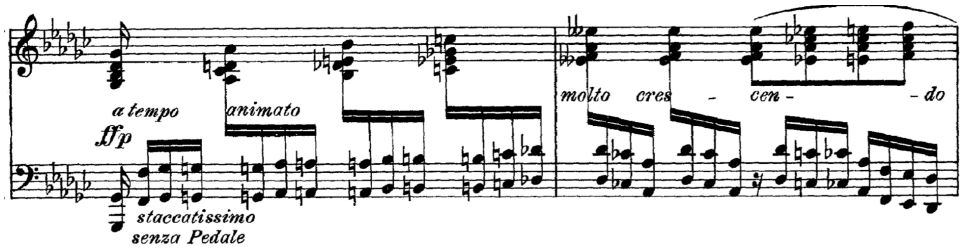


Example 38d: *Caprice*, bars 145–148, *C* theme. The repeating D♭s introduce both *A* and *B* themes, and feature prominently in the *C* theme, which also ties off the work in the final section of the composition.

Introduction/Coda:

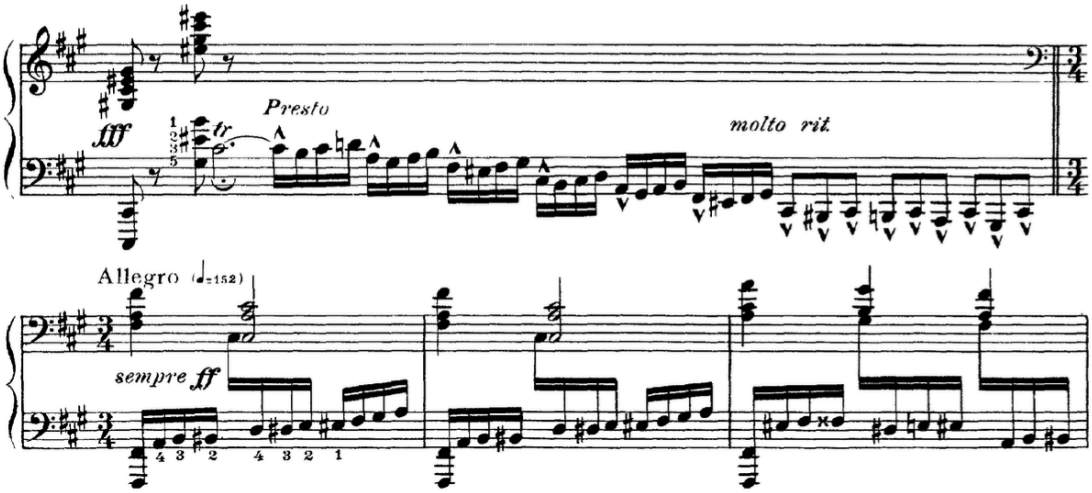


Example 38e: *Caprice*, bars 1–8, ***Intro*** followed by ***A*** theme at *Moderato* tempo marking.

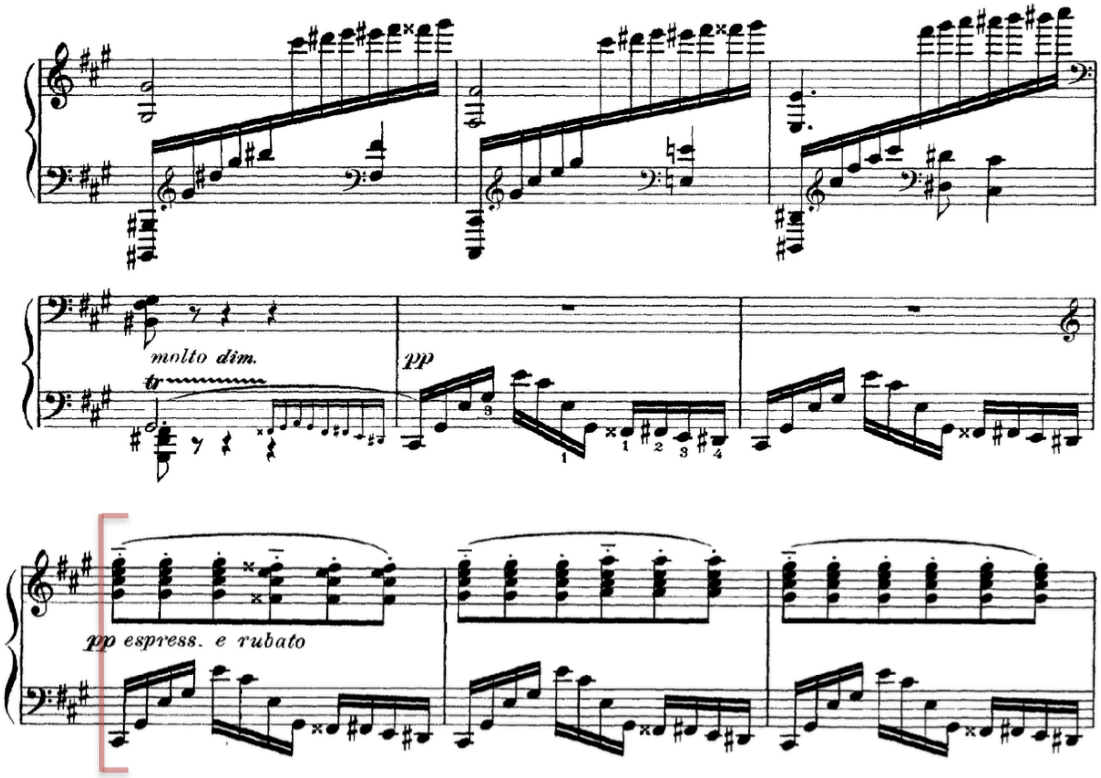


Example 38f: *Caprice*, bars 445–446, *Coda*. The transformation into *staccatissimo* was also seen with ***B*** theme with its subsequent reiteration.

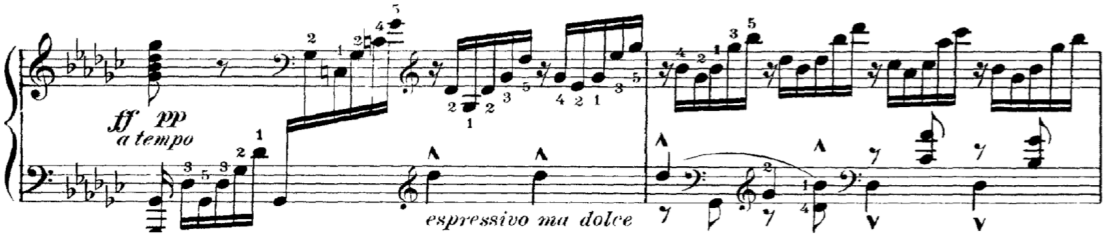
Low register chromatic movement:



Example 38g: *Caprice*, bars 153–156, ***Intro'*** as a cadenza flowing into ***D***. Note the continuation of the low rising chromatic figure.



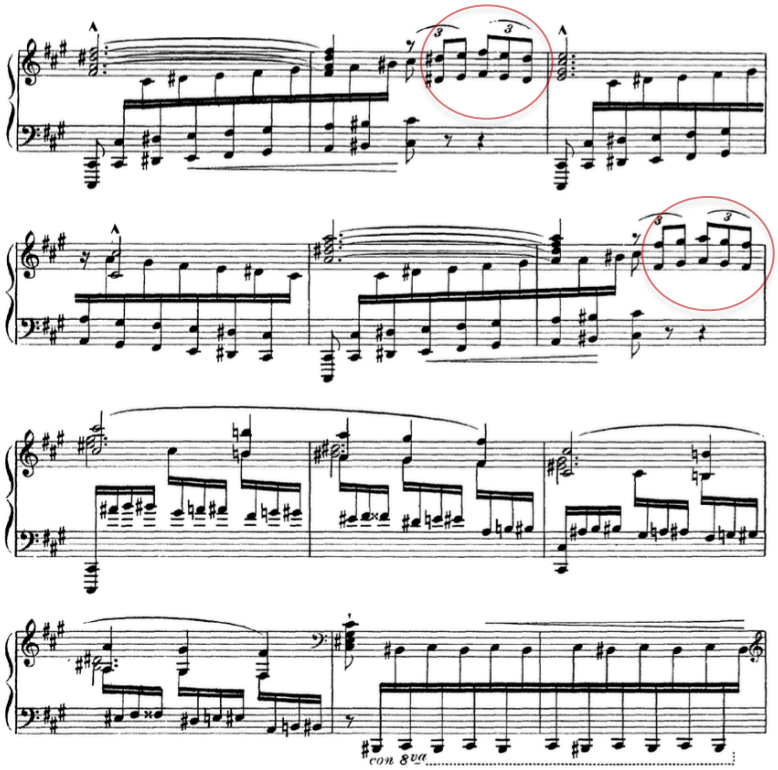
Example 38h: *Caprice*, bars 196–204, second section, conclusion of *D* theme, followed by *B'* (marked). Note the inverted chromatic movement in the final beat of the left hand. This is another of the techniques Franck uses to form a coherent whole, flowing from one theme to another through the continuation of figuration, heavily reminiscent of the fantasy style from Hummel. Note that the low register is particularly noticeable here in the dramatic shift from the theatrical *sempre* ***ff*** overlapping hands of the previous moment.



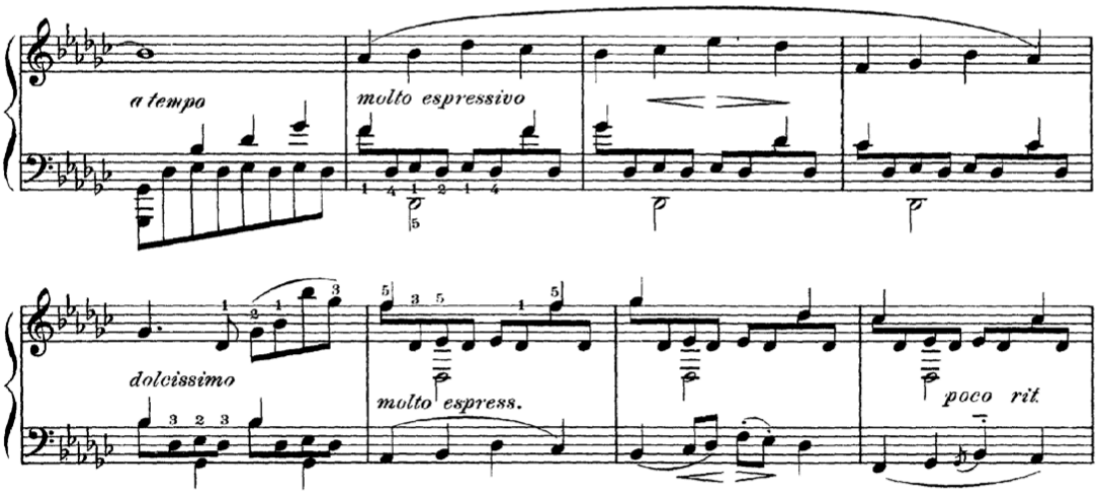
Example 38i: *Caprice*, bars 425–426. Particularly effective here in the climax of the work. The repeated $D^{\flat}$ notes in the melodic part would be referred to as an 'inner pedal' by Lenormand.[30]

[30] René Lenormand, *Étude sur l'Harmonie*, (Paris: Max Eschig & Co., 1912), 72.

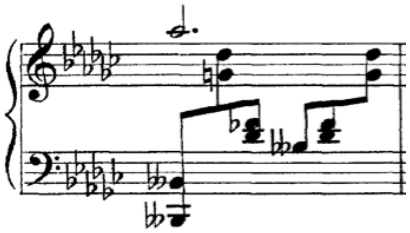
Miscellaneous:



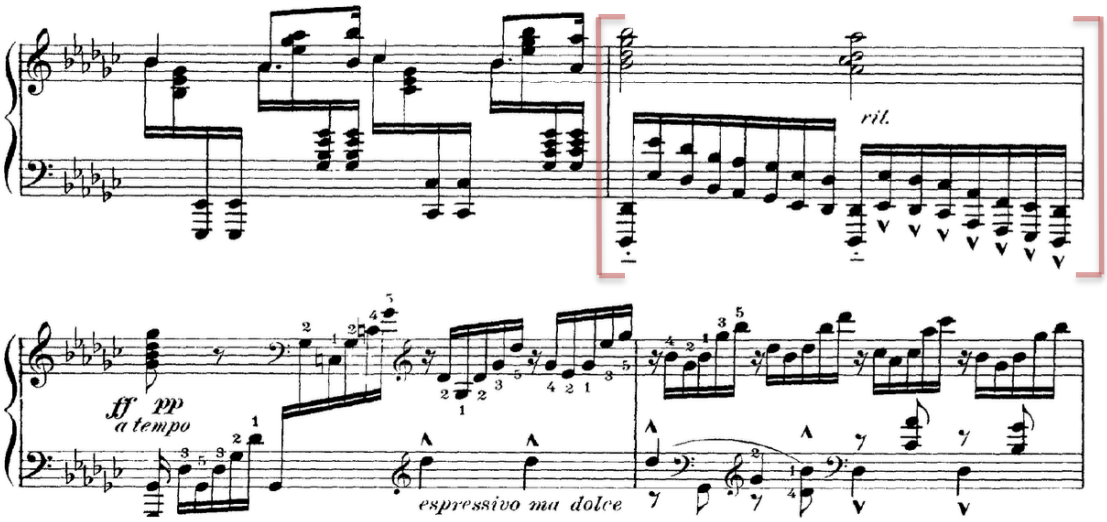
Example 38j: *Caprice*, bars 172–183. A rare instance of Franck writing across the barlines; while the harmony is still solely dominant to tonic, it does modulate to tonic major. Also note, as mentioned under *D*, the 'stretching out of time' in bars 173 & 177 through the highlighted isolated triplets.



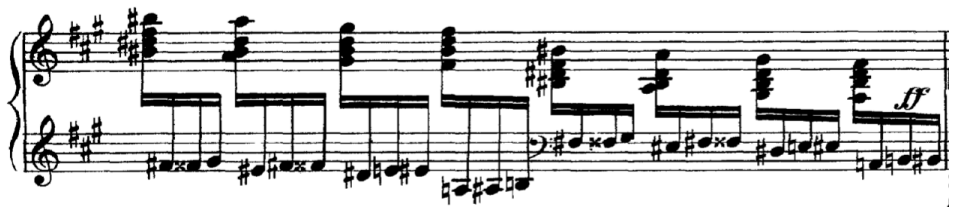
Example 38k: *Caprice*, bars 309–316. In this extract the many layers and syncopated tonic pedal – *Franckian pedal* with *registral transfer* – along with the wide spread of the voices would provide the idiosyncratic *Franckian* sound that audiences are accustomed to, had the harmony been more adventurous.



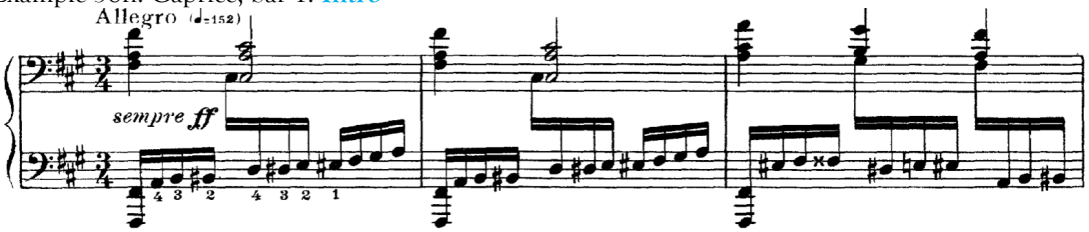
Example 38l: *Caprice*, bar 60. When modulating to the dominant, Franck used a German sixth chord to cement the modulation. The same moment in the third section, bar 361, creates another excessive climax with the return to tonic with *ff con passione* markings (as opposed to the *ppp staccatissimo*). The texture is adjusted to accommodate the culmination. A similar *ff* marking is used with ***A'***, the final appearance of ***A*** theme. Perhaps Franck's intention was to have all the themes finish with a dramatic climax so as to have a convincing conclusion to the work.



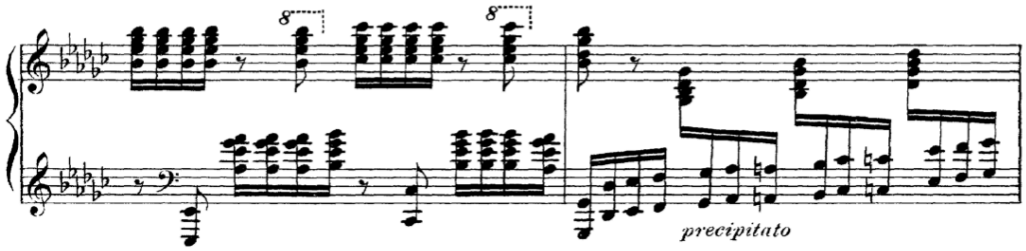
Example 38m: *Caprice*, bars 423–426. This cascading, descending octave transition appears again before the coda (bar 444), while remaining a component of the coda. This is part of the typical Romantic piano idiom, and holds a similar function to *Églogue* ***intro'''***, where it is used for transitions between themes, but there is no coda in Op. 3 *Églogue*.



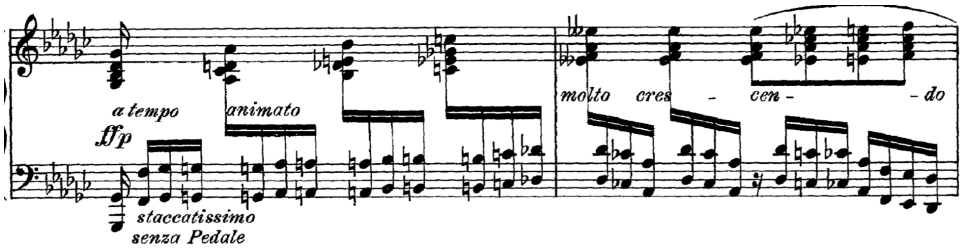
Example 38n: Caprice, bar 1. *Intro*



Example 38n continued: *Caprice*, bars 154–156. *D*



Example 38n continued: *Caprice*, bars 407–408. *A'*



Example 38n continued: *Caprice*, bars 445–446. *Intro"*

The above examples show how the opening rhythmic texture of right-hand chord followed by left hand semi-quavers seeps into several themes throughout the work.

Op. 7 *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle* (1844)

0' – 7'.59"			7'.59" – 11'.23"			11'.23" – 16'.09"		
FIRST SECTION (1-138)			SECOND SECTION (139-310)			THRID SECTION (311-411)		
Bars	Theme	Key	Bars	Theme	Key	Bars	Theme	Key
1 - 4	*Intro*	A^b	155 - 194	*D*	A^b-b^b-c	311 - 362	*Chor'*	A^b
5 - 14	*Chor*	a^b	195 - 200	*Chor*	c	363 - 370	*A"*	A^b
15 - 18	*Intro*	A^b	201 - 202	*D*	c	371 - 382	*B"*	f-b^b
19 - 34	*A*	A^b	203 - 204	*Chor*	c	383 - 396	*A"*	A^b
35 - 68	*B*	f-A^b-f-A^b	205 - 206	*D*	c	397 - 411	*Chor"*	A^b
69 - 76	*A*	A^b	207 - 208	*Chor*	c			
77 - 80	*Intro*	A^b	209 - 248	*D*	c-d-e			
81 - 96	*A'*	A^b	249 - 258	*Chor*	e			
97 - 130	*B'*	f-A^b-f-A^b	259 - 260	*D*	e			
131 - 138	*A*	A^b	261 - 262	*Chor*	e			
139 - 154	*C*	A^b	263 - 264	*D*	e			
			265 - 266	*Chor*	e			
			267 - 274	*D*	e-($f^\#$)			
			275 - 294	*Chor/D'*	($f^\#$)-a-(b^b)-(b)-(c)-a^b			
			295 - 310	*D'*	(a^b)			

Table 7: Themes found in Op. 7 *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle*

FIRST SECTION

Intro Introduction theme - Dominant pedal in alto, with crossing of hands and *vibrato* (see Chapter 4 *Performance Indications*). *Choral bells* in a *Cathedral of Sound*.[31]

Chor Choral theme[32] - A first iteration in A^b minor, curiously marked *sostenuto* and *senza ped.*

Intro Introduction theme - Identical to the first phrase but a *cresc.* instead of a *rall.* leading to first theme.[33]

A 1st theme - Two eight-bar phrase pairs, each finishing with fermata. Koch mentions dominant and tonic latent organ pedal points — *Franckian pedals* — throughout this theme.

B 2nd theme - Similar to theme *A*, though the first of the phrase pair is in the relative minor and a varied inversion of *A* theme. The second of the phrase pair dominates *B* theme, unique in Franck's early piano works, which provides a *ff* climax in bar 65.

A 1st theme - A single iteration of the first phrase pair of *A* theme in *pp, poco ritenuto il tempo* with fermata chords in the low register for the last two bars.

Intro Introduction theme - Identical to first iteration with an increased emphasis on the syncopated E^b pedal point.

A' 1st theme variation - Right-hand decorates the more or less identical left-hand theme with semiquaver flourishes, a texture foreshadowing the variation of *Prélude, fugue et variation*,[34] similar to the *Églogue* bar 198 *pp duo corde.*

B' 2nd theme variation - Semi-quaver movement is held in a more scalic 'Mozartian' fashion. Clear emphasis on tonic and dominant pedal points.

A 1st theme - Here even more fermatas are thrown into the mix, as preparation for the storm of the second section.

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[31] 'Suggesting a bell-like sound of the repeated e' flat'. Koch, *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle,* 6.

[32] Described by Koch as a "Choral theme". *Loc. cit.*

[33] Koch suggests bar 15 as the commencement of the 'First main part. This part, which may be regarded as an exposition with a varied repetition'. *Ibid., 7.* It makes sense as it flows smoothly into the *A* theme, but since the material is *intro*, in this analysis it is still placed as part of the introduction to the work.

[34] For more information, see Chapter 4 '*Franckian' themes.*

C 3rd theme - Similarly to Op. 5 *Caprice*, there is a *C* theme before the middle section, though in this work it does not return. Features rhythmically charged syncopated *Franckian pedals* and a *modal interchange* in bar 152.[35] This moment evokes a strongly Schubertian soundworld.

SECOND SECTION

D 4th theme - 3/4 *pp molto vivace* with a descending scale melody. Unstable tonality due to its emphasis on diminished seventh chords. The semi-tonal dissonances in bars 183–190 will later be also a feature of the *choral* theme (bars 359–363), all of which can be traced back to bar 10 of the *choral* theme – another instance of the interrelationships of Franck's themes. It stands out amongst Franck's themes as it is highly rhythmic.

Chor Choral theme - Each appearance is marked *Andantino sostenuto*, successively becoming more expressive and louder, varying in bar lengths. The *D* and *Chor* themes jostle successively for dominance.

Chor/D' 4th theme with choral - Final turn of the scale from *D* theme in conjunction with *choral* theme in common time, reaching a *ff* climax at bar 289 in the tonic minor.

D' 4th theme variation - Low register soundworld similar to the opening of the second movement from César Franck's Sonata for Violin and Piano. Here an ascending chromatic scale accompanied with $E^{\flat}$ (dominant pedal) basses, in preparation for *Chor*.

THIRD SECTION

Chor' Chorale theme variation- *Maestoso ff*, climax and centre of work with assimilated parts of *D* theme.[36] From now on incorporates *D* theme's final statement like that found in *Chor/D'*.

A'' 1st theme variation - Disguised theme in the syncopations in the right hand with alterations of harmony, perhaps due to the break-down of the perceived formal structure to this point.

B'' 2nd theme variation - Moves to the unexpected key of $b^{\flat}$ minor instead of $A^{\flat}$ major.

A'' 1st theme variation - Extended 1st theme variation, repeating the final phrase with a *poco a poco crescendo* until it reaches a *p* dominant which swells again for two bars into the *fff* choral theme.

Chor'' Choral theme variation - Large keyboard range with triplet octaves in bass, *poco ritenuto il tempo*. Finishes the work with an animato coda in octave triplets.

Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle Notes

While this work displays the same economy of material known in Franck's piano works, there are frequent variations of tempo, dynamics and even harmony for the same themes, unlike in other works from this period. For example, the slower *pp* iteration of *A* theme bars 69–76 prepares the soundworld of *intro* which enters later. Contrast is just as accentuated here as it is in the previous work, but not in the pastoral Op. 3 *Églogue*.

[35] Here Koch might include this theme as part of the middle section(s). In his preface he describes the 'first main part' as bars 15–138. Koch, *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle,* 7. Because the middle section is characterised by *ff molto vivace*, this theme occupies the soundworld of the first section. This theme also finishes on a semi-breve fermata preceding a double barline switch into triple time.

[36] Koch on this moment: 'The rather conventional effect of the choral theme being transmuted into the major key is not the most interesting aspect here. The hitherto distanced, quotation-like character of the choral is now primarily overcome by another two interreferences in the arrangement of the harmonies: the second bar already has very clearly stressed the subdominant, no longer weakened by a tonic organ point – an effect that the interpreter should emphasize. In addition, the hitherto harmonically open ending is now marked by an authentic cadence.' *Ibid.,* 6–7

The most interesting thematic elements are *Chor* and *D* themes and how they interconnect throughout the work. The pairings form two-bar phrase couplets in the second section, which modulate by steps of the whole-tone scale: $A^{\flat}$-$b^{\flat}$-c-d-e-$f^{\#}$.[37] *Chor'* also includes elements of *D'* theme: the descending scalic pattern and triplet/duple rhythm. However, unlike the other works, there is no strong contrast between *A* and *B* themes, but there is greater antagonism between themes —*Chor* and *D* in this case — in the second section than in the preceding works.

Whereas the Op. 3 *Églogue* recurrently featured the interval of a third as thematic material, the Op. 7 *Souvenirs* includes descending–second steps throughout the work and, not including the *intro*, feature prominently in all the themes. As expected, the coda takes as its springboard the most active theme, in this case the triplet figure descending by scale is strongly evocative of *D* theme.

Formally, it is the most complicated work of the four. Many of the subtleties of the thematic progressions could be missed on first hearing, such as the rhythmic continuity between themes or the effective, measured emergence of the chorale theme. In terms of rhythm, this work is far more varied than the Op. 3 *Églogue* and abstains from the sluggish *A* theme of the preceeding Op. 5 *Caprice*. The central section of the Op. 7 *Souvenirs* is itself very rhythmic and has a strong forward propulsion, rarely felt in these four piano works.

Nevertheless, as much praise as can be given for this work, it still has many of the elements one would expect from a composition of this period of Franck's output: the musical material is put through several transformations, in which the predominant interest seems to be pianistic colour. It is also lacking harmonic variety for a work of this length in the outer sections.

[37] Lin pointed out a similar serendipity on a smaller scale in the coda of the Op. 5 *Caprice*. See above.

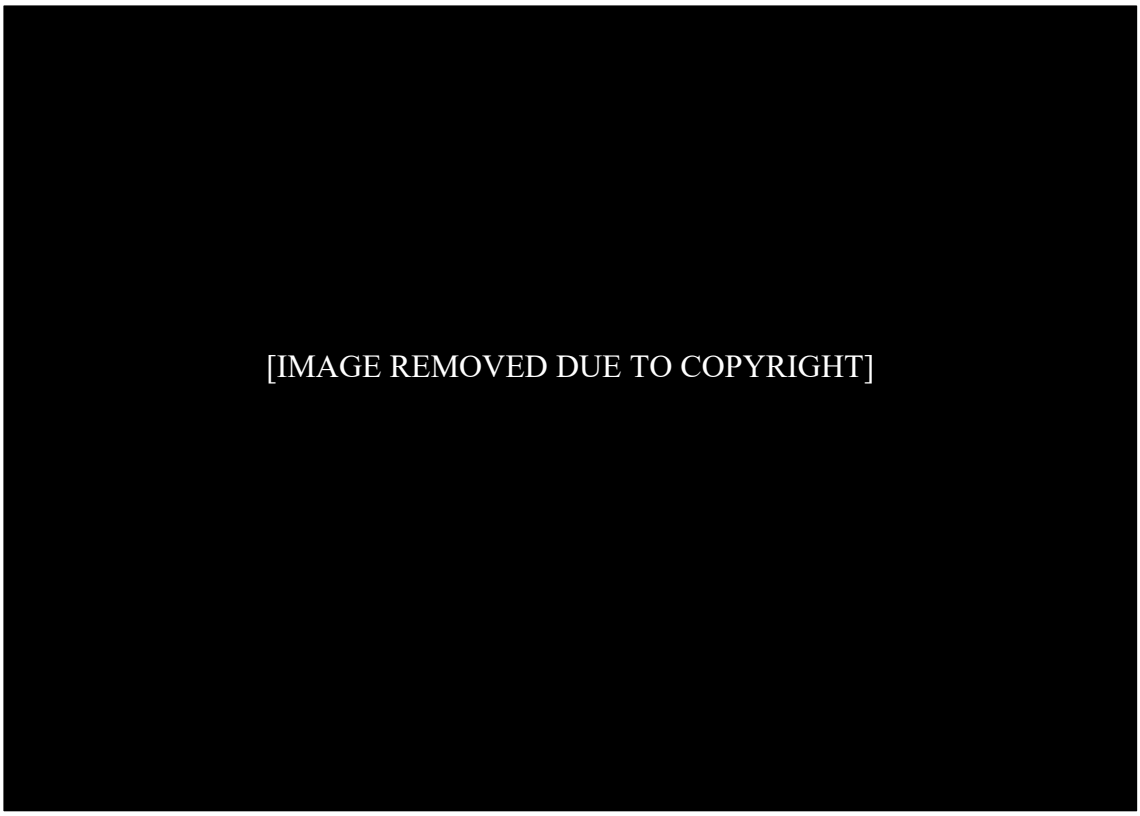
***Souvenirs* Musical Examples**

***'Cathedral of Sound'* Effects**

Example 39a: *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle*, bars 1–4, ***Intro***. Note the sustained dominant E^{b} with *vibrato*, a common feature from this period of Franck's output. The dominant pedal point is similar to that of the ***intro*** in Op. 3 *Églogue*.

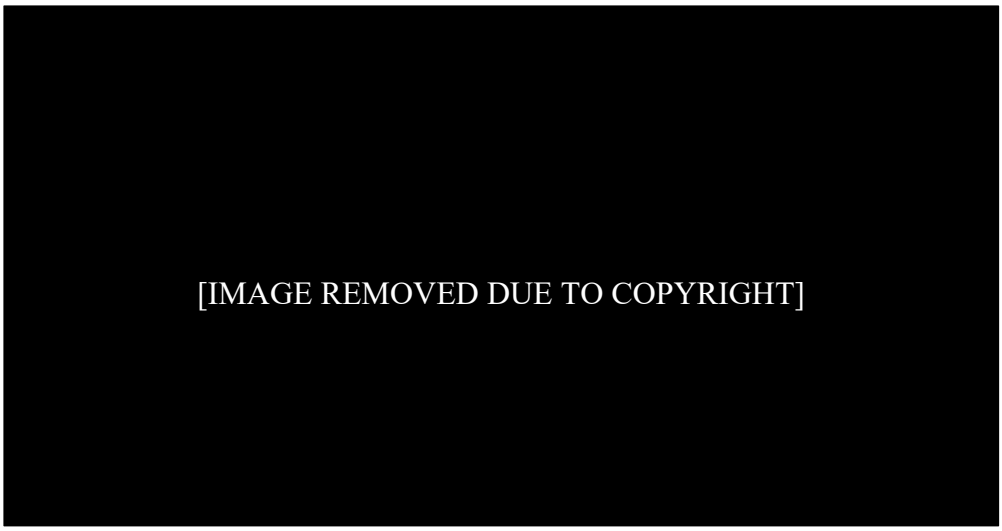
Transformation of the 'chorale' theme

Example 39b: *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle*, bars 5–14, first appearance of the *Chor* theme.



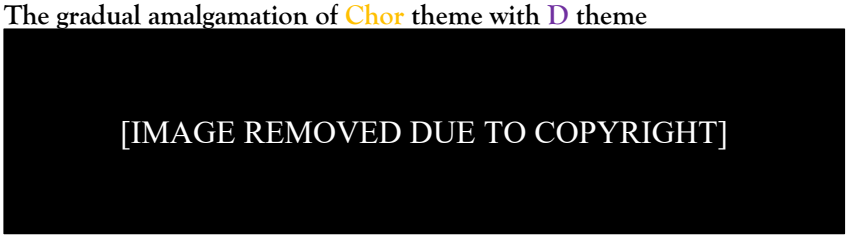
Example 39c: *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle,* bars 195–208, ***Chor*** theme interrupted by ***D*** theme. The ***Chor*** is similarly broken up in bars 248–267, with slight alterations in phrase length and harmony.

Example 39d: *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle*, bars 311–316, ***Chor*** at the start of the third and final section. Now emerged in its final *fff maestoso* form.



Example 39e: *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle*, bars 396–400, final iteration of *Chor* theme. This development of the *Chor* theme is the distinctive characteristic of the work. In this final *Chor* iteration, for nine bars, Franck heavily hammers the tonic pedal reinforced by the fifth in the bass with *fff*. However, any semblance of harmonic crunch is missing, only a single accidental (I^7 for a brief, temporary inflection of D^b Major) can be found on the last three pages of music (bars 382–411). Once again, another *fff* *Chor* theme which is now redundant and unnecessary to provide a more final 'destination' feeling, as if A^b tonality had not already been endlessly reinforced in the previous bars.

The gradual amalgamation of Chor theme with D theme

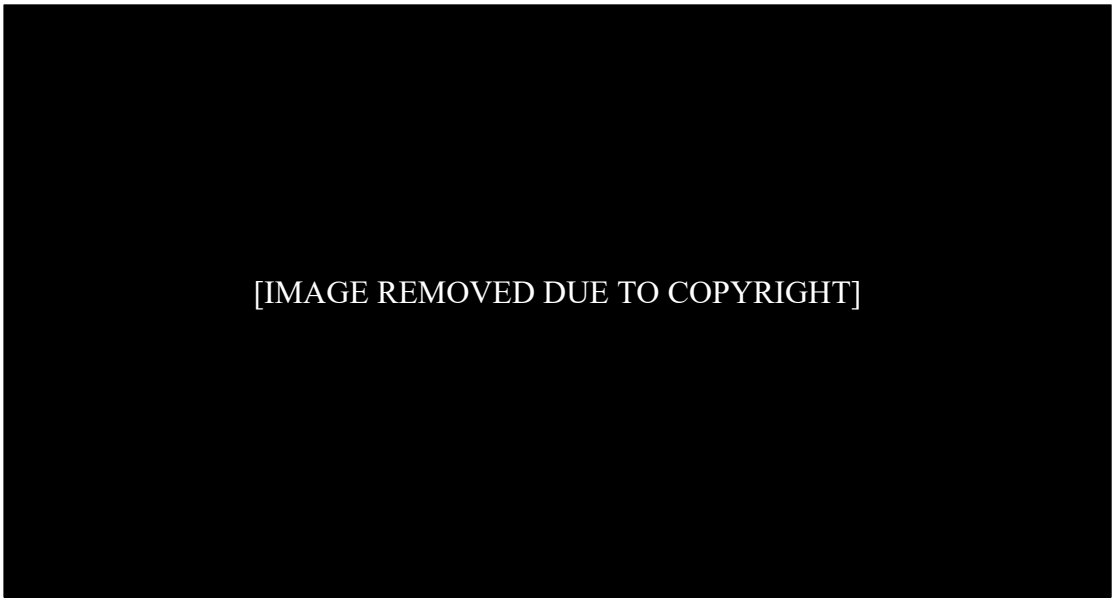


Example 39f: *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle*, bars 191–194, ending of *D* theme.

Example 39g: *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle*, bars 275–280, *Chor/D*. Note the descending scalic twist taken from theme *D*, along with the chorale texture of the *Chor* theme, now integrated to the common time of the chorale. This assimilation of thematic material between the *Chor* theme and elements of *D* theme with tumultuous low semi-quavers allow for a smooth formal transition.

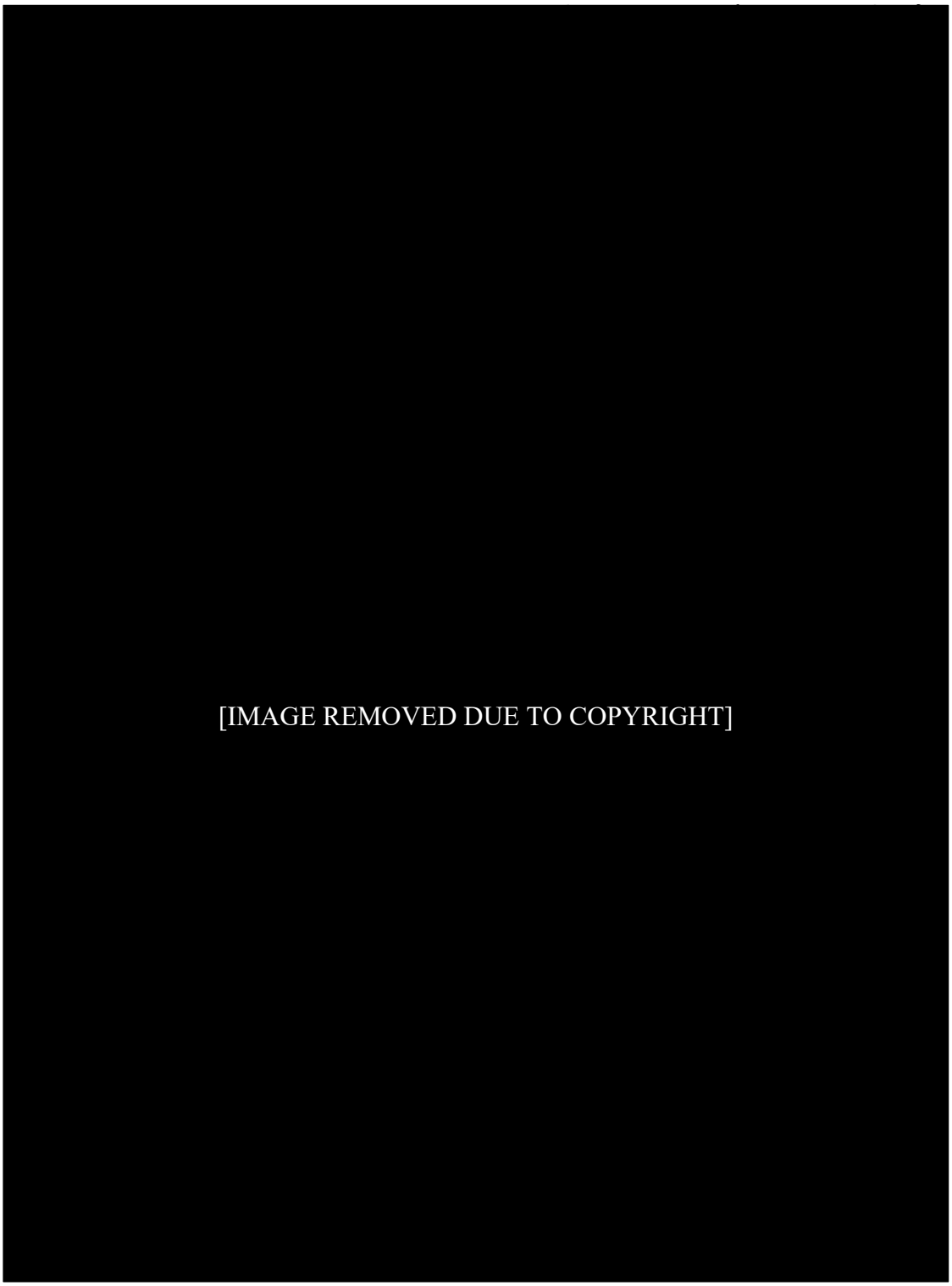
Example 39h: *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle*, bars 334–336, *Chor* variation. Elements of *D* – restless semi-quavers – have become an integral part of the theme.

Miscellaneous:

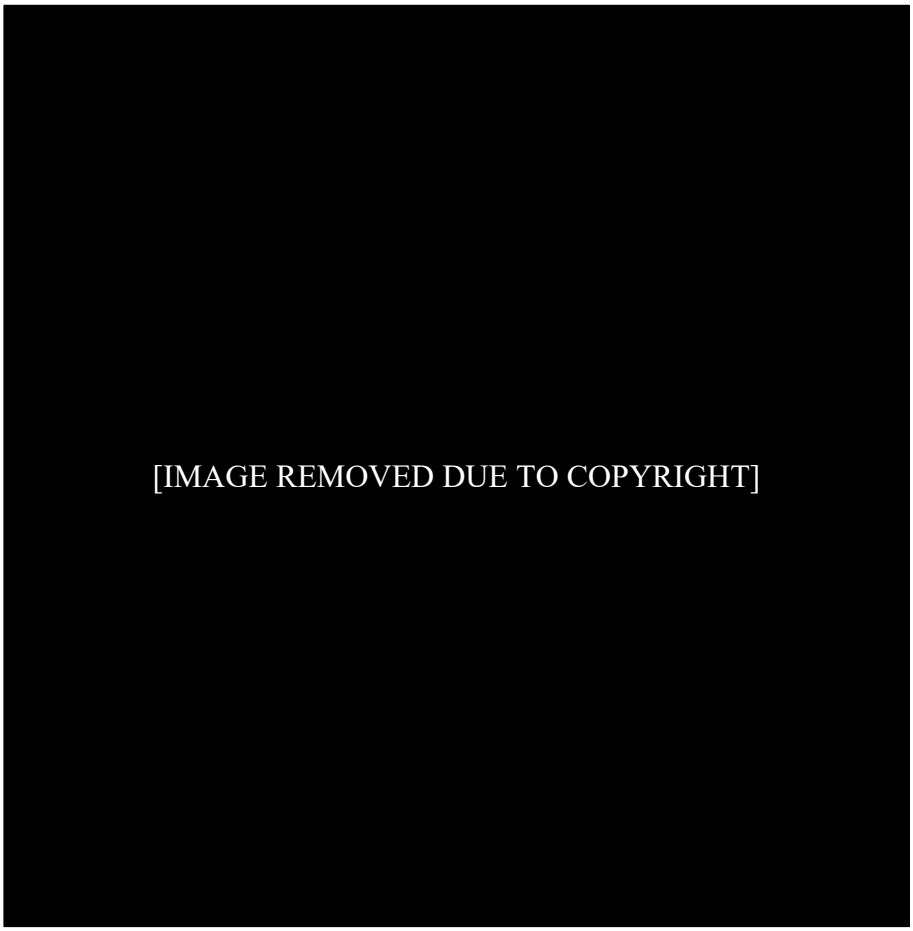


Example 39i: *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle*, bars 155–164, *D* theme. This *molto vivace* theme is characterised above all by its rhythmic interest.

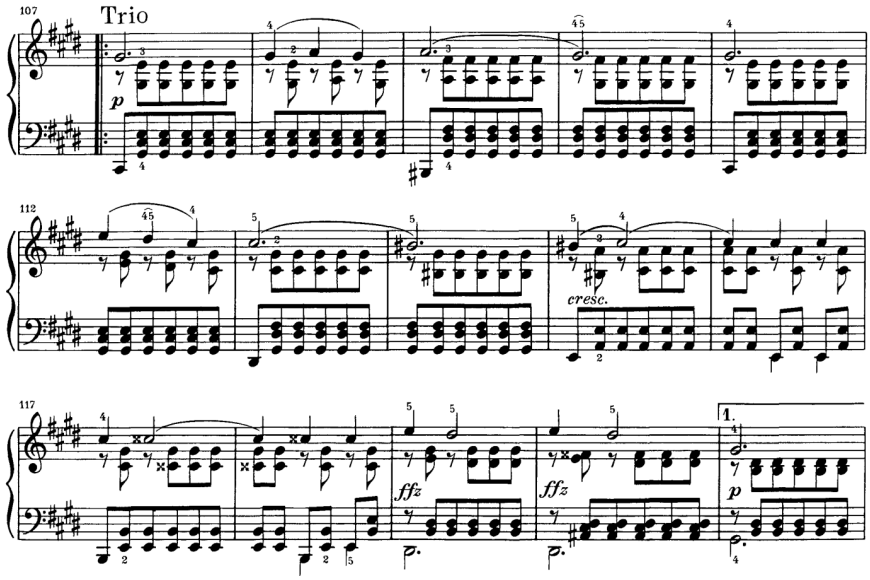
Example 39j: *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle*, bars 339–342, *Chor'*. Note the syncopated basses as *Franckian pedals* which also form some basic counterpoint by ascending in a scalic steps.



Example 39k: *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle*, bars 350–361, *Chor'*. This whole page has a tonic pedal, apart from the IV chord in bar 355 (highlighted), along with a perceived modal interchange (it is the conventional IV-iv chord) at bars 357–358. Any sense of an unexpected key change here is ultimately unfruitful as it remains in A^{b} Major.



Example 39l: *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle,* bars 139–154. The solitary unique theme ***C***.



Example 39m: Schubert Op. 90, Impromptu No. 4, bars 107–121. The two above extracts exhibit resemblances. We see that the Schubertian sound-world draws out Franck's melodic touch: the first non-functional dissonances, that is to say, purely for colour. This theme is followed by the violent outburst of the ***D*** theme. As mentioned in Chapter 1 *Stylistic Interactions,* we know Franck had a copy of the music in his personal library, and considering both works are in the same key, it is not difficult to imagine one having a direct influence on the other.[38]

[38] Fauquet, *César Franck,* 946.

Op. 9 *Ballade* (1844)

0' – 7'.08"				7'.08" – 13'.13"				13'.13" – 16'.27"			
FIRST SECTION (1-181)				SECOND SECTION (182-404)				THIRD SECTION (404-474)			
Bars			Theme / Key	Bars			Theme / Key	Bars			Theme / Key
1	-	49	*A'* B	182	-	207	*C* b	405	-	443	*B'''* B
50	-	89	*B* B	208	-	253	*D* b	444	-	474	*A''* B
90	-	116	*A* B	254	-	261	*C'* b-($f^{\#}$)				
117	-	155	*B'* B	262	-	276	*D'* $f^{\#}$				
156	-	181	*A* B	277	-	292	*E* $f^{\#}$- C^{Dim7}				
				293	-	296	*B''* $F^{\#}$				
				297	-	311	*E* $f^{\#}$- E^{Dim7}				
				312	-	315	*B''* $C^{\#}$				
				316	-	324	*E* $c^{\#}$				
				325	-	376	*D'* $c^{\#\#}$-$f^{\#}$-G				
				377	-	404	*C''*/*A'* $f^{\#}$-$F^{\#}$				

Table 8: Themes found in Op. 9 *Ballade*

FIRST SECTION

A' 1st theme variation - Introductory in character, bearing many of the hallmarks of Franck's introductions: *Cathedral of Sound*, $F^{\#}$ *Franckian basses*, expansive chords and *registral transfer*. However, this is actually the first theme in an *andantino* introductory style and not distinct 'intro' thematic material. As the other works repeat *A* theme before the second section, it is appropriate to call this theme *A*, and consider this placement of *A* theme before the second section as a standard compositional device of Franck. Hints of the future transformations are presented with the *animato* bars. The silent bars foreshadow the *B* theme.

B 2nd theme - A distinct feature of this theme is the silent bars that separate each phrase. The phrase pairs are repeated individually, unlike in the previous works where the pairs would usually be repeated as a duo. The first phrase of the pair is a five-bar *pp semplice armonioso*, followed by a silent bar. The second of the pair is a fourteen-bar phrase marked *pp express.*, also separated with a silent bar. Throughout *B* theme, apart from the last two bars of the second of the phrase pair, which reaches the tonic and falls silent for the last bar, there is a *franckian bass* $F^{\#}$ pedal.

A 1st theme - This previously heard 'introduction' switches from *Cathedral of Sound* to a scherzo with *staccatissimo* quavers. D'Indy suggests the same tempo marking as the *Andantino* introduction — in this examination marked *A'* — suggesting the *poco animato* is in reference to the previously heard *Andante B* theme. Considering this is how the theme is presented throughout the work, it is intuitive to make the introduction a foreshadowing variation of this *A* theme.

B' 2nd theme variation - As expected, the transformations here are generally of a purely pianistic nature. Each of the phrase pairs are heard twice again, with the silent bars fulfilling the role as cadential points and the texture using a greater range of the keyboard. The second of the phrase pairs elaborates on the harmony previously heard with some of the more adventurous harmony found in Franck's early solo piano period, an early foretelling of Franck's later propensity for adding the 6th and 7th tones to chords.

A' 1st theme - Identical to original *A'* with an octaved tonic bass in the final bars.

SECOND SECTION

C 3rd theme - Introducing character *ff Allegro molto*, launching into B minor while retaining some staccato elements from the previously heard *A'*. Second phrase lasts 5 bars and, like almost all other phrases throughout this work including the next and preceding phrases, is repeated almost identically.

D 4th theme - A scalic melody which arpeggiates the triad in the reiteration. It progresses to a downward third, an inversion of the corresponding *D* theme from *Églogue*, both of which also share the similarity of a melody on weak beats supported by an arpeggiated accompaniment. Similarly to *Églogue*, the second of the phrase pair features a *pivot note* in the form of a drawn out turn. The second of the phrasal pair, starting at bar 226, switches to centre around the dominant chord. Here we see an emphasis on descending minor seconds and a beautiful *Infinite Melody*.

C' 3rd theme variation - Similarly to other Franckian introductory material, the theme is split into parts. Here only the first of the phrasal pair is used and this time leads into f♯ minor.

D' 4th theme variation - Like *C'*, *D'* is also condensed, while being in f♯ minor.

E 5th theme - Dramatic, pianistic theme with chromatic, alternating octaves, followed by 8 bars of the same diminished 7th chord for the second of the phrase pair.[39] Possibly the weakest part of the work.

B'' 2nd theme variation - A recall of the delicate 2nd theme from the first section, switching from *pp semplice armonioso* to *fff grandioso*, taking a centrepiece of the section and also the work.

E 5th theme - A copy and paste, but this time leads into C♯ major.

B'' 2nd theme variation - Almost identical to the previously heard *B''* in C♯ major.

E 5th theme - The last *E* outing drops the second of the phrase pair — the diminished 7th drama — and leads back to *D*. The conflicting themes between *D* and *E* here are similar to the central section drama seen in the previous Op. 7 *Souvenirs*.

D 4th theme - *Pivot note* phrase descends into the bass. The second *Infinite Melody* is prolonged with additional harmonies, the final being ostensibly a Neapolitan (G major leading to F# dominant of B minor).

C''/A' 3rd theme variation - Interspersed between F♯ basses, a recall of the opening introductory *A'* theme, forming structural integrity between both the introduction of the first section and the introduction of the third section.

THIRD SECTION

B''' 2nd theme variation - Consistent repeated static semiquaver chords with crossing of hands followed by alternating hands.

A'' 1st theme variation - Slight alteration, mainly continuing the implementation of pianistic techniques from earlier.

Ballade Notes

This work ostensibly feels most similar to the *Églogue*, with most of the emotional weight coming in the central section. While one could potentially follow d'Indy's suggestion that with each reiteration of the theme we should pursue an identical tempo, we have already seen in the recently discovered *Souvenirs* Franck's ability to alter thematic material with regard to tempo. This entire central section is one of the more complicated forms found in Franck's early piano works, flanked by his most simple bi-thematic sections. One can consider this dramatic 2nd section a miniature of Franck's ternary form, bearing resemblances to the large three-part forms found in these four early piano works. While it is the most intricate and well-developed, we also see the most frequent use of his idiosyncratic Franckian features. However, the 1st and 3rd sections are themselves the most rudimentary compared to the other works, with very little done to disguise

[39] 'Suit un allegro en si mineur qui s'élève de façon toute lisztéenne vers un « grandioso » éclatant.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 149. This *precipitato ff* diminished 7th unsurprisingly caused commentators to find the voice of Liszt in this section.

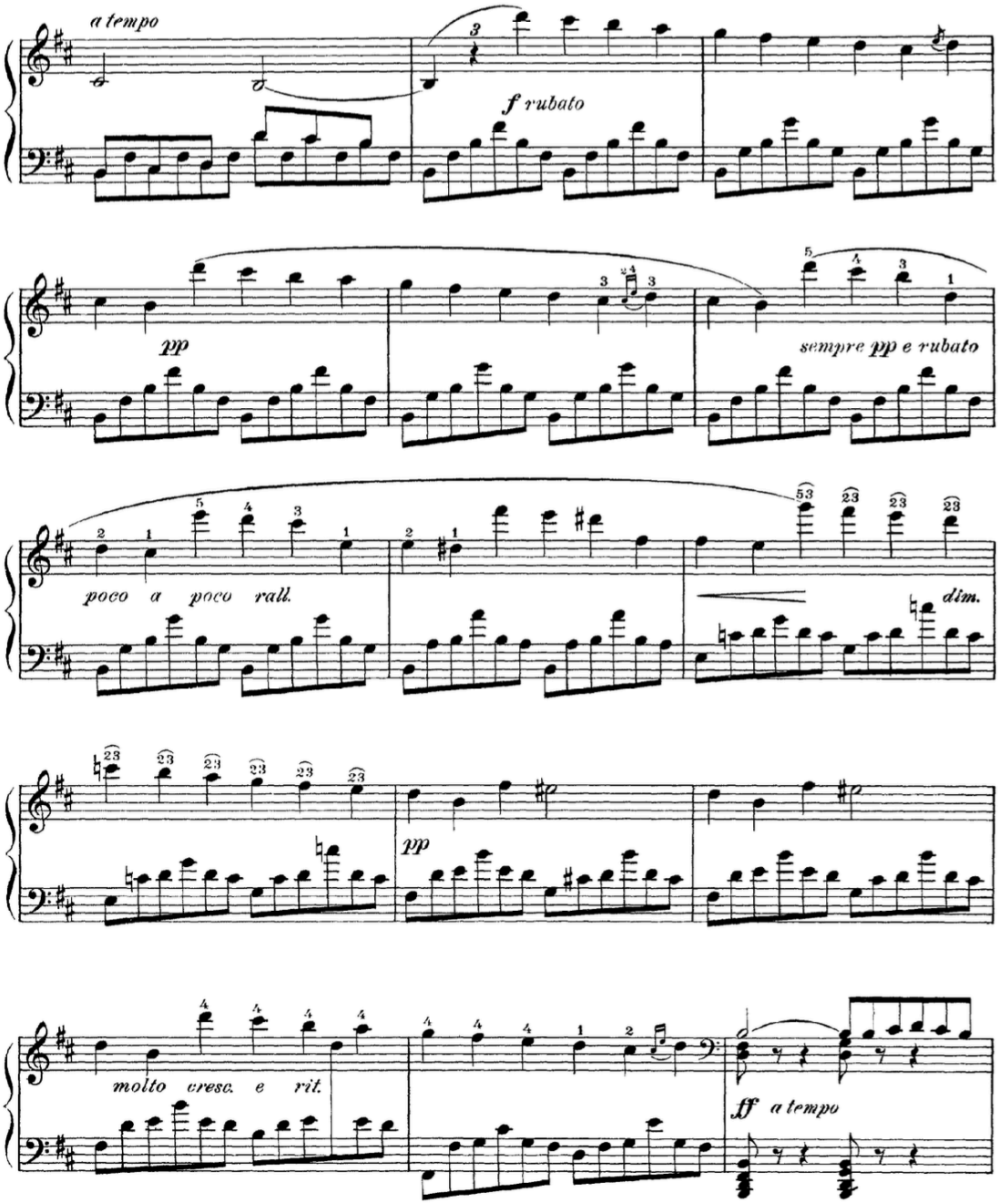
or develop the *A* and *B* theme pairing, leaving, like in many moments in these works, a very thematically terraced impression. The work also features numerous instances of thematic interplay. The melodic turn at bar 185 from *C* resembles bars 206–207 and 214–215, and subsequent *D* themes. Similarly to *C''/A'* (bar 377), this is a preparation of the next upcoming theme, enabling a more inconspicuous flow from one formal subdivision to another, a technique often missing in the outer sections in Franck's early piano works. The *C''/A'* is a curious section that amalgamates both introductory-style themes of the work to prepare the final third section.

Almost throughout the whole of the first section there is either a tonic or dominant pedal point (B or $F^{\#}$). Alongside the Op. 1 Trios this work, more than any other piano work from Franck's early piano output, reveals his fixation on $F^{\#}$ basses. In this Op. 9 *Ballade*, even more so than in the preceding Op. 7 *Souvenirs*, the basses tie together the formal structure, though considering Franck's compositional style of the period in the case of this work it gives the impression of actually inhibiting tonal movement or instability, despite frequent modal interchanges.

Franck's favourite structural surprise is also found in this work, regarded in this thesis as a precursor to his deepening interest in cyclic form: the sudden emergence of *B* theme in the second section. And if we consider theme *A* fulfilling Franck's need for an *intro*, many of the functions for this thematic material mirrors that of the others – it opens the work and is the last of the theme pairs heard before the second section. *C* almost has the function of an *intro* in the 2nd section, cementing the tonality and flanking the *allegro*. Regarding thematic division and pairings, there is a case for dividing *D* into two (originally this was the case in this examination). However, it is a clearer reading to have it combined as one, otherwise the dissection results in an unnecessarily convoluted understanding just as in previous research regarding this work.

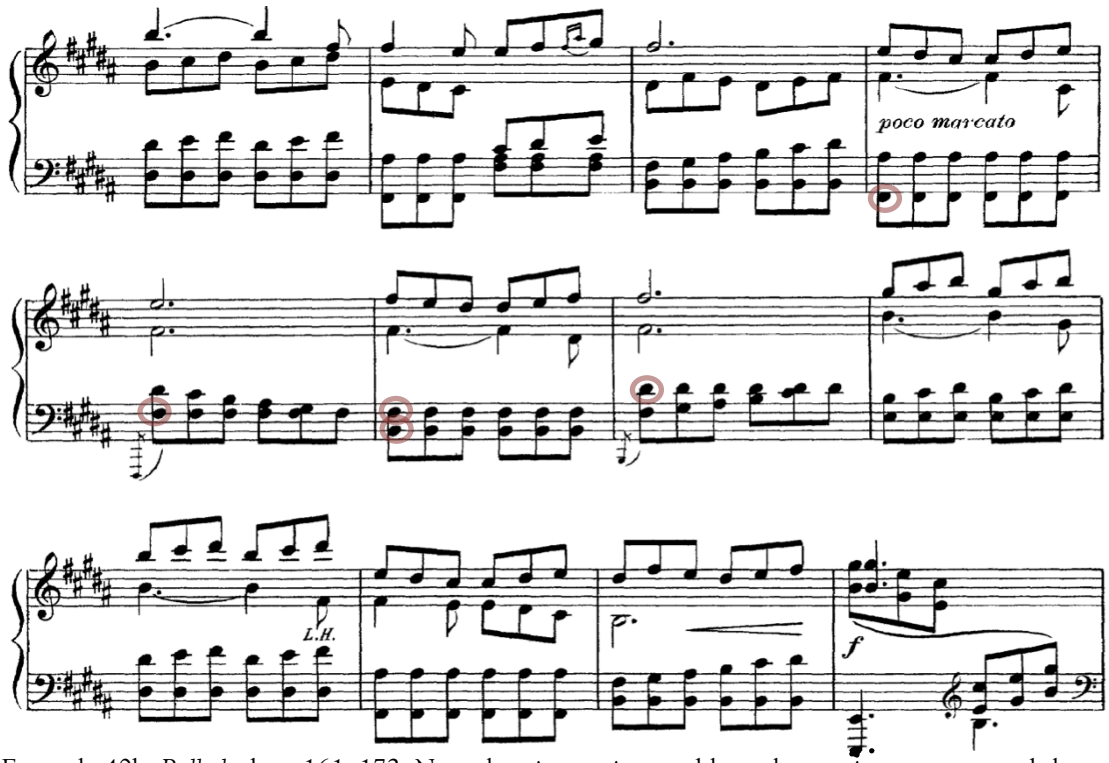
***Ballade* Musical Examples**

Infinite Melody:

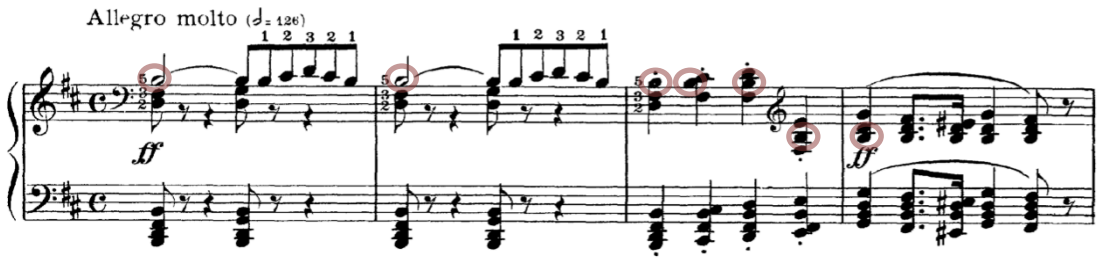


Example 40a: *Ballade*, bars 240–254, *D* theme. The *Infinite Melody* impression is a product of the scalic melody, the wide arpeggios in the left hand of a static harmony, and the phrase tied over the bar lines, an effect similar to the *choral* in the *Prélude, choral et fugue*. This instance is particularly effective coupled with the *Infinite Melody* from the previous page of almost solely dominant harmonies, without a strong resolution.

Franckian pedals and pivot points:

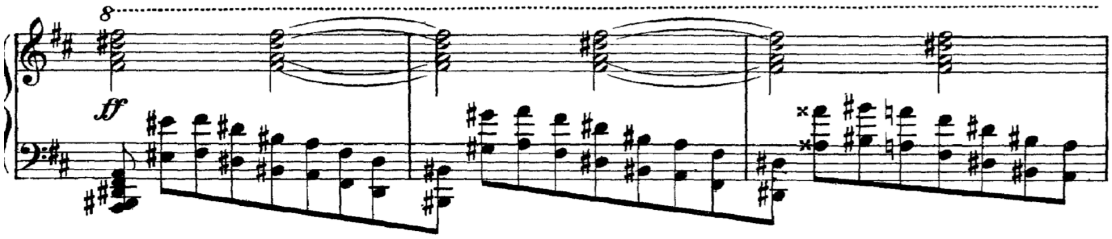


Example 40b: *Ballade*, bars 161–172. Note the pivot points and how the music moves around them. It highlights the link between *pivot note* and *Franckian pedals*, as it is also a physical pivot for the performer.

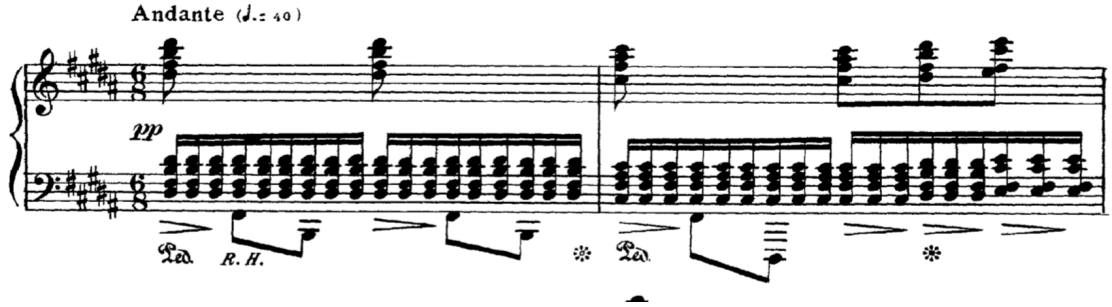


Example 40c: *Ballade*, bars 182–185, *C* theme. Here we can clearly see the blurred lines between Franck's use of a pivot and a pedal, as one transforms and merges into the other – at first we see Franck revolving around a single note as described in *pivot points*, then the note becomes common note, almost a support, of the following rising chords.

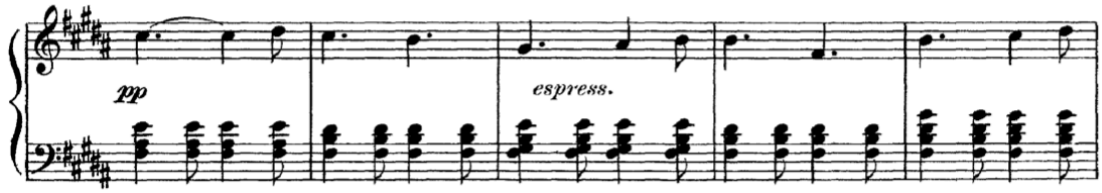
Miscellaneous:



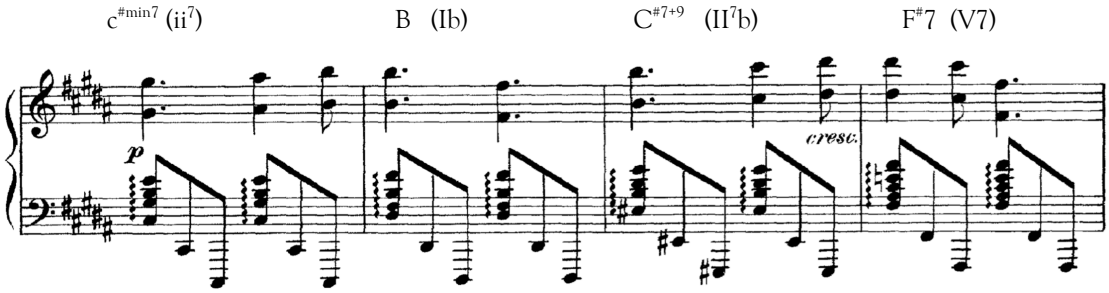
Example 40d: *Ballade,* bars 285–287, ***E*** theme. A particularly uninteresting section in Franck's piano works, where a single diminished seventh prevails for 8 bars, as preparation for the sudden return of the first section's ***B'*** theme in the second section. The only interest is the somewhat rhythmic ambiguity, as it approaches *Cathedral of Sound* territory. Franck is clearly content with prolonging a single diminished chord just as with his other tonal treatment, though its projected drama becomes monotonous. Its structural purpose is to contrast the unexpected calm ***B*** theme with the minor key and the general tumultuous atmosphere of the 2nd section.



Example 40e: *Ballade,* bars 405–406. Recapitulation, potential *three hands technique*.

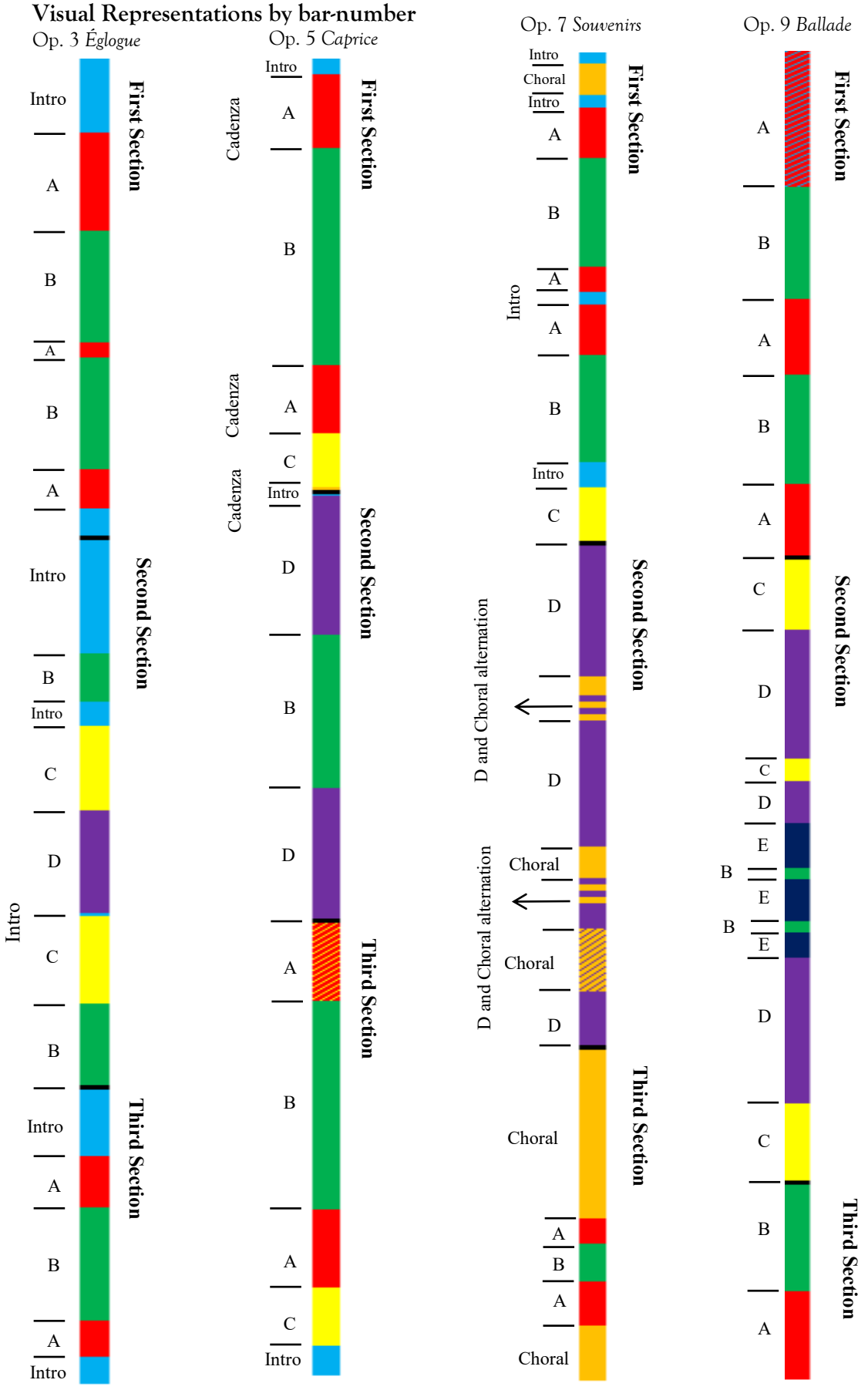


Example 40f: *Ballade,* bars 64–68. After 65 bars of I, IV and V7 chords we have this more interesting theme, which d'Indy labelled *naïve*. However, the harmony is still quite basic, but the *Franckian pedal* gives an interesting colour.



Example 40g: *Ballade,* bars 132–135. An example of some of the slightly more adventurous harmony which necessitates tones outside of the key found in the *Ballade,* with the chords written above. Franck's use of secondary dominants appears to be a result from the rising bass line, with the surprising major chord of the second degree soliciting an E# in the bass in bar 134.

Visual Representations by bar-number



Legend		
Intro	-	Blue
A	-	Red
B	-	Green
C	-	Yellow
D	-	Purple
E	-	Navy
Choral/Cadenza	-	Orange
New Section	**-**	**Black line**

The aim of the visual representations is to show the appearance and re-use of thematic material bar by bar in an alternative format to the tables above. As the pieces are of varying bar lengths (ranging from 429 bars in the Op. 7 *Souvenirs* to 474 bars in the Op. 9 *Ballade*) they have been re-sized to more or less identical lengths for a better comparison.

The ***Intro*** material returns at least two more times in each case. This is not visible in the Op. 5 *Caprice* as the return of the introduction material at the commencement of the second section is two pages of music interjected with a single bar line; this will be visible in the following *Visual Representations by Duration*. In the case of the Op. 9 *Ballade* the introduction is theme ***A*** in an introductory style, so it can still be considered to return.

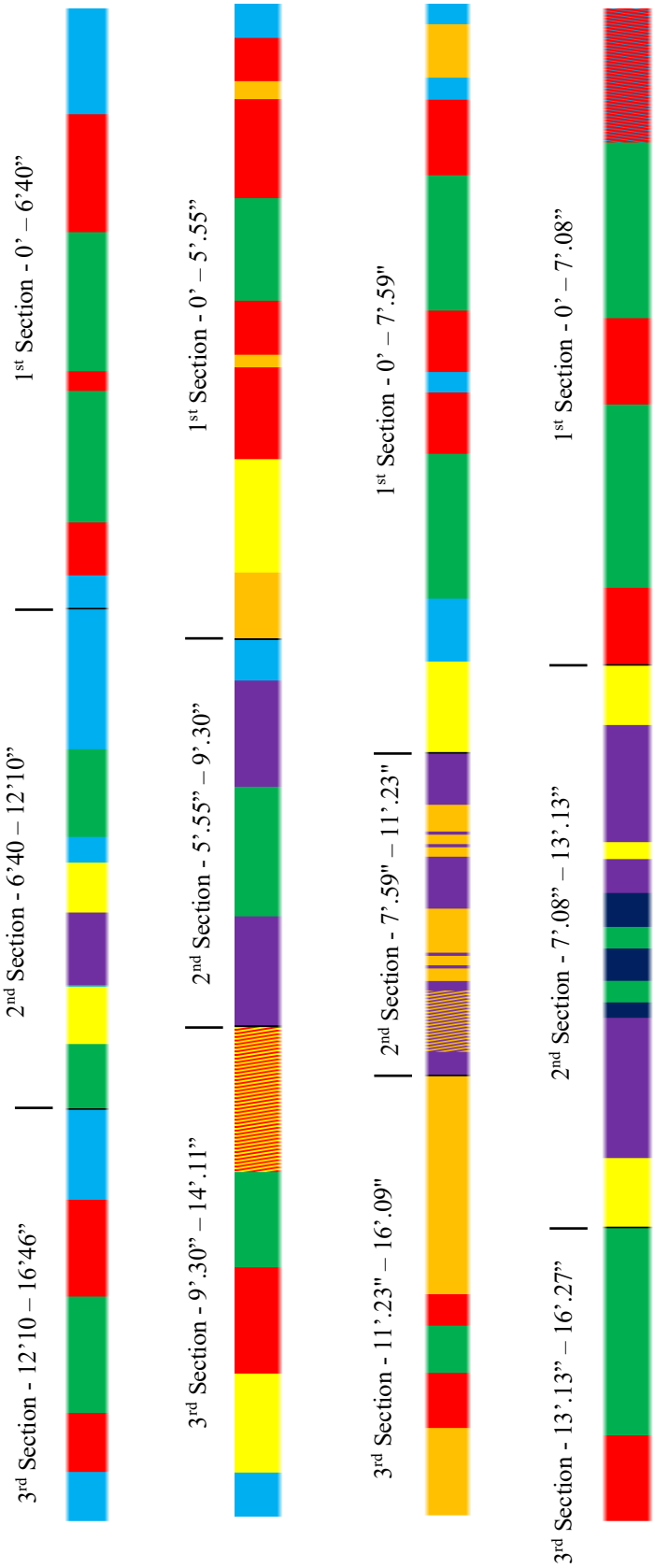
We can also see the at first innocuous *choral* theme introducing the Op. 7 *Souvenirs* gradually becoming more dominant towards the end of the work, even climaxing the piece.

In each of the works, once again excluding the *Souvenirs* which returns the ***Chor***, we see the ***B*** theme return in the second section at least once–twice in the case of the *Églogue* and the *Ballade*; the second section's drive in the *Souvenirs* seems to be to establish the dominance of the choral theme, which serendipitously is the second theme that we hear in the work.

However, this is not a perfect representation of the action taking place as the bars obviously alternate in duration between the 2nd section *allegros* and the generally ambulatory pace of the outer sections. This means that the second sections, as well as the ***B*** theme in the Op. 5 *Caprice* which is marked *allegro molto*, would be significantly shorter in each work if they were represented by duration, as we shall see.

Visual Representations by Duration

Op. 3 *Églogue* Op. 5 *Caprice* Op. 7 *Souvenirs* Op. 9 *Ballade*



Above is a representation of the four works based on duration.[40] Here we can see more clearly see the cadenzas in Op. 5 *Caprice* (coded ***cad***) and the somewhat simple nature of its structure is more visible. The violent interjections of ***D*** in the second section of the Op. 7 *Souvenirs* can be seen more effectively here, as well as a more accurate representation of the duration of the ***choral*** for the listener.

Generally, the faster and more pianistic themes are less represented in the timelines by duration, reinforcing the idea that their nature is more ambulatory than virtuosic, as emphasised throughout this thesis. Nevertheless, the central sections are more complex both structurally and pianistically. It is worth noting that the most 'virtuosic' of the early piano works also has the shortest dramatic central sections where most of the dramatic pianistic textures and display can be found.

An obvious drawback to this representation is its fluidity in interpretation, but performances of these works will generally not fluctuate too greatly in terms of relative durations of themes and should show a more accurate picture of the psychological process in the listener as compared to the above data based on bars.

[40] The recordings used are mentioned on page 156 footnote 7.

Chapter 4

Techniques Commentary

This chapter will look at some of the nomenclature created in the *Musical Style* chapter and see how these distinct features apply to the early piano works. It will be divided into similar sub-chapters: texture, harmony and tonality, etc. The search for César Franck's hallmarks in these works culminates here, with an emphasis on finding his compositional technique in these works and extrapolating them to the late works if necessary.

Texture

We will find that Franck devoted more attention to texture than to the other elements decribed in the previous chapters. As can be seen from the above examination, there are many moments in these works that classify as *Cathedral of Sound*. They are generally found in the openings: the Op. 3 *Églogue,* Op. 7 *Souvenirs* and the Op. 9 *Ballade* all have such introduction; whereas the material that binds together the Op. 5 *Caprice* structurally is of a cadenza-like nature. The use of *Franckian pedals* is particularly noticeable: often creating a dominant or tonic point, as Franck's early compositional technique in tonality is reluctant to stray from the tonic. We have moments of immobile structural underpinnings that make predictable movements (to the fifth and back). The compositional activity at times seems solely insistent on achieving some pianistic colour, though often not in a virtuosic setting, nor providing an increasing layer of intensity as there would be in *trajectory towards climax*. There is a heavy reliance on variance through *registral transfer*, often in a *Cathedral of Sound* setting (a perfect example being the opening of *Ballade)*.

Nevertheless, the texture is in general not what one would expect from a young virtuoso trying to make his mark. If we compare them to Alkan's gargantuan *Études*, or Mendelssohn's *Variations Sérieuses*, it is surprising that Franck's early piano textures, while frequently utilising

much of the keyboard range as he would do throughout his life,[41] are far more sparse and do not emphasise overloading the senses with ostentatious pianism that have the performers' fingers act out a ballet across the keyboard; that is not to say that he was not seduced at times to somewhat empty effects in the central sections , such as the monotonous cascading diminished arpeggios in the *Ballade,* or in climaxes such as the heaving chordal jumps at the finale of the Op. 7 *Souvenirs.*

The slow–moving, tenor dominating textures of the outer sections adumbrate Franck's personal flavour of chromaticism found in the late works and future piano compositions with their emphasis on concealed melodic lines in the middle register. No clearer examples exist for exemplifying Franck's predilection for certain pianistic textures from this period than his Op. 8 transcriptions of Schubert songs, which as we have seen even garnered praise from Henri Blanchard. Compared to Liszt's venture in transcribing these lieder, Franck's emphasis is drawn away from pianistic intensity, and more on exploration of texture: 'they somehow dematerialise the melody by dispersing it into different registers and varying it subtly, creating thus a particular expressive intensity.'[42]

The dwelling on pedal points instead of allowing transitory modulations, as would usually be the case, strangles and suffocates the tonic, where it cannot break away in any way that would not be jarring, accentuating the harmonic poverty. Schubert's melodic inventiveness and conciseness are not present in the early works, but Franck's use of the entire keyboard range serves to emphasise the scale of the works. Franck's late miniature *Danse Lente* (1885) exhibits a more effective use of Franck's textural techniques seen in these works through its structurally unifying pedal, along with a wide keyboard range which successfully highlights thematic differences in a more concise manner. Nevertheless, if we are to believe Fauquet's insistence that

[41] 'La variété - la variabilité aussi - des textures sonores du Quintette ne s'étendra plus jamais, chez Franck, sur un si large registre. Á cet égard, l'écriture pianistique de l'œuvre est moins éloignée qu'on ne pense de celle des pièces pour piano de jeunesse, quand bien même, c'est évident, un travail d'épuration s'est effectué avec le temps.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 528.
[42] Severus, Julia, *César Franck, Early Piano Works,* (Naxos, 2014), 3.

Franck was fascinated with the voice and Lenormand's claim of pedals being a 'naïve procedure for sustaining the voice',[43] the vocal quality of his melodic writing in conjunction with his reliance on pedal points explain the ubiquity of this technique in his early piano works; essentially, it is a compositional tool that allowed Franck to focus his attention on the melodic vocal part without the interference of harmonic movement.

Harmony and Tonality

The tonal function of these pieces are separated from other works at the time in their endless tonic emphasis – while the zeitgeist encouraged études and miniatures, their smaller scale and inner harmonic reflections allowed the works to remain fresh. The entire first section of the Op. 3 *Églogue* does not stray far from E^{b}, with the first accidental appearing in bar 46. D'Indy was aware of these shortcomings: 'In this piece Franck, who later became one of the most expert technicians that ever lived, seems to have been afraid to modulate, and the tonality of E^{b} grows much too insistent'.[44] We saw in the examination some of Franck's modulations in the second section, including some modal interchange.

If the Op. 5 *Caprice*, as Cortot and Stephen Hough claim, is Franck's most individual work from this period, this certainly cannot be seen with regards to its tonality, as its format is much in the same vein as the solo piano work preceding it. The harmony is functionally so transparent that the occasional III and ii^{7} amongst heavily triadic music stand out. The outer sections see slightly more variation in tonal centres, but they too appear only in passing. Most of the harmonic interest arises from voice leading through the predominantly I, IV, V chords, usually diatonically and rarely clashing. There are however some interesting contrapuntal moments that merge some thematic material together.

[43] Lenormand, *Étude sur l'Harmonie*, 72.
[44] D'Indy, *Select Piano Compositions*, xxxii.

The Op. 7 *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle* clearly stands out from the set with regards to its treatment of tonality. Conversely, Severus regards this as his most personal work.[45] As can be seen from the table of harmonic deconstruction, there are a far wider range of tonalities, but with a customary reliance on diminished chords for the dramatic motif ***D***, though not as insistent as analogous moments in the Op. 9 *Ballade.* Nevertheless, still here, one would not find any semblance of the typical Franckian chromatic style.

The Op. 9 *Ballade* is cut from the same cloth as the first two from the set. The outer sections also indolently rest in B major; the first accidental appears here in bar 134! The entire first section, which lasts roughly 7 minutes, has only 2 pitch classes outside of the key signature - see example 40g. We see the middle section is more adventurous harmonically than previous outings, though in this last major solo piano work of this period, the tonality is still reluctant to modulate, a curious feature that is contradictory to the chromatic style of Franck's late works.[46] If we look at example 40g, we see the ***B*** theme which has the first and only altered diatonic notes in the 1st section (the accidentals are repeated with the theme's return).

That they each move to the minor mode — tonic or relative — in the 2nd section is never surprising, though the journey there sometimes contains Franck's most effective harmonic devices; nevertheless the general attitude of functional diatonicism within a restricted tonal structure will bore many audiences. Harmonically, the pivot points create the most interesting moments, with chords moving around these obstinate pillars. Despite the predictable bass notes

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[45] 'In some ways the piece suggests his later *Prélude, Choral et Fugue* and *Prélude, Aria et Finale*, with a spiritual element finding its way into his piano music. Unlike the *Ballade*, it does not open up into a landscape but rather into the spiritual space of a cathedral. Polyphonic structures, organ sounds and contrasts of light and darkness are essential elements of the work. […] This is one of Franck's most personal works.' Severus, *César Franck, Early Piano Works,* (Naxos, 2014), 5.

[46] Though these pieces may not be of interest with regards to their treatment of tonality, other works of this period have attracted attention for their key, such as the Trio Op. 1/1 (1842): 'Obnubilés par la forme cyclique, les commentateurs ont passé sous silence la beauté de cette mélodie un peu éplorée dans laquelle l'âme chantante de Franck est déjà inscrite, pour vanter de façon un peu trop exclusive les mérites séraphiques, moindres, du second thème cyclique construit en pyramide de noires conjointes, dans la pureté du ton de *fa* dièse majeur.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 135. However, John R. Clevenger's chapter 'Debussy's Conservatoire training' in *Debussy and His World* (Princeton University Press, 2001) strongly suggests took no active part in the class. Thomson agrees and comments: 'After about six months the young radical had seen enough and dropped out, concluding that Franck was merely *une machine à modulation* - a maliciously clever epigram but a total misrepresentation of his rigorous teaching that key changes must only be made with full awareness of their function in the musical structure.' Thomson, "Fixing Franck", 115.

there are noted moments for the tenor voice in *Églogue* or counterpoint in *Caprice* *C* theme and Souvenirs *C* theme.

We return to the definitions of the Franckian chromaticism and the characteristics from the *Musical Style* chapter, with specific reference to the early piano works:

(1) Classical in its grander assessment.

(2) Importance of the fifth degree of the scale.

(3) Ambiguity of major/minor mode.

(4) Preference for sharp tonal centres, specifically $F^{\#}$.

(5) Persistent modulations.

1. If the tonality was predetermined, it followed a standard, saturated procedure. The pieces conspicuously commence in the major and have an emphatic climax in the minor in the 2nd section.

2. The fifth degree is ever present, just like in the late works; however, the harmonic tricks are seldom seen: generally, the fifth sustains the harmonic triads, which arise from stubborn pedal points that have the effect of emphasising the already unmistakeable chords instead of creating ambiguity, such as facilitating the frequent appearance of ii^7 chords.

3. There are several instances of modal interchange. Generally, however, these are alterations of the subdominant (IV/iv).

4. There is a noticeable emphasis on $F^{\#}$ in the *Ballade* and $G^{\flat}$ in the *Caprice*, the dominant and tonic tones respectively.[47]

[47] It is worth remembering that another organist would feel the same about this key: ''tonal architectural' terms implemented by an identification of psychological states with specific keys (as with Messiaen a kind of cosmic joy is attributed to F♯ major)'. John Trevitt and Joël-Marie Fauquet, "Franck, César(-Auguste-Jean-Guillaume-Hubert)".

5. Modulations are rare and usually to the dominant, or relative major/minor, with seldom even tonal inflections. However, we still see some tertiary modulations: most noticeably in the *Églogue*'s 'development'.

> His Op. 1 Trios have also come under fire for the same treatment:
>
> > [On the Op. 1/1 lack of modulation between themes] Should this scheme, whose simplicity is intentional, be accused of poverty of invention? I think not, for the composer subsequently is well able to show that he knew — or, at any rate, suspected — the richness which the symphonic structure owes to modulatory development.[48]

Davies commented on the late works: 'he never wished to remain in one key for long enough to establish a fixed sense of tonality.'[49] The polar opposite is the case in these early piano works. Later in life, Franck advised his student:

> '(2) your key must *never* be in any way doubtful.'

This was certainly exhibited in his early piano works. If the lack of modulation is to be understood not to stem from a lack of capability on the part of Franck, which is understandable considering his talent at a young age for transposition and lessons with Reicha, we can agree with Koch on the *Souvenirs* and claim that Franck was indeed fascinated by this static soundworld. Indeed, there are even works that are praised precisely for this reason:

> [writing on Franck's mélodie *L'ange et l'enfant*] This piece, which borrows no help from strange chords or even modulations, is truly a little masterpiece of expressive melody, the likes of which one would hope to find in many musical works. It dates from 1846.[50]

We can draw a parallel with the young Chopin:

> The sonata's [op. 4] monothematic first movement, with its unusual (possibly Reicha-inspired) formal and tonal organization – the exposition is monotonal[51]

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[48] Tiersot, "César Franck", 40.

[49] Davies, *César Franck and His Circle,* 163–164.
D'Indy quotes his teacher as saying: « La structure tonale est le principe fondamental et vital de toute œuvre de musique. » /"Tonal structure is the fundamental and vital principle of all musical works". D'Indy, *Cours de composition musicale,* 261.

[50] D'Indy, *César Franck,* 90. 'Cette pièce, qui n'emprunte le secours d'aucun accord étrange et même d'aucune modulation, est bien réellement un petit chef-d'œuvre de mélodie expressive comme on désirerait en rencontrer beaucoup dans la production musicale. Elle date de 1846.'

[51] Samson, "Chopin, Fryderyk Franciszek".

Franck, also linked to Reicha through his own lessons as an adolescent, produced works with similar monotonal sections at a young age. Chromatic movement and modulations not being present, Franck relied on other devices for musical expression. The tension — if it can be called that — and harmonic interest in the slow outer sections come from pedal points, which always exist on the tonic or dominant, sometimes lead to chords such as V7+9 or vi6, but because the tones are so rarely foreign to the tonic, they do not particularly stand out. This motionless tonal centre is not only indigenous in the early period, but also later: [on *Les Sept Paroles du Christ sur la Croix*] Polyphonic techniques are completely ruled out, not, as we know, out of incompetence, but probably for inner reasons.[52] It is a curious stylistic feature of Franck's compositional style from this period that pivot points — often 'fundamental to the concept of modulation'[53] — are ubiquitously used in combination with an immobile tonality. Perhaps the disappointment for the listener after the frequent use of a technique with which one expects a transition lends itself to the cloying effect found in these works.

Despite the works lasting around 15 minutes, it is a curious sensation that one does not feel like the listener has travelled far, so the effect is more of a single, overextended scene than a grand drama with multiple characters. After one of his much shorter mélodies, such as *Robin Gray* (1842), or his much later *Le vase brisé* (1879), the listener is left with a feeling of having undertaken a true musical journey. Nowhere is this better represented than in the fact that *Souvenance* (1842) from this period starts in F# minor and finishes in G major.

Regarding mélodies from this period, Franck was not always at his most striking in climaxes. A relevant quote by Lenormand:

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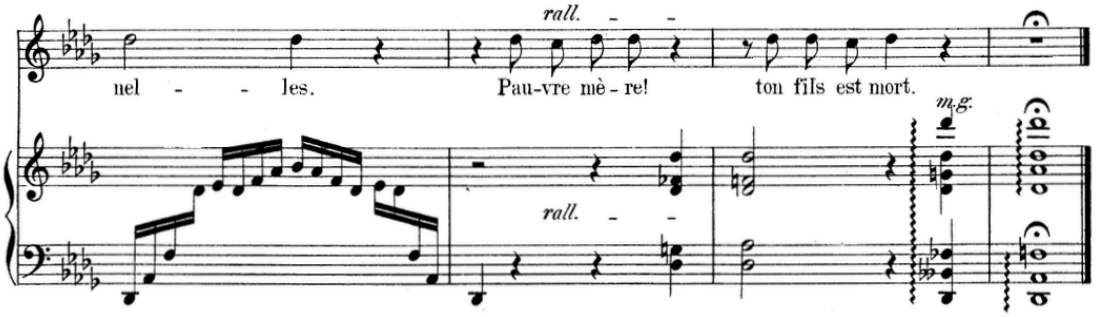
[52] 'Manuskript erhaltene Partitur, die seit 1955 hier in der Bibliothek der Universitat von Liege aufbewahrt wird, tragt auf der letzten Seite die Unterschrift C. Francks und das Datum des 14. August 1859. […] Polyphone Techniken scheiden ganz aus, dies nicht, wie man weiss, aus Unfähigkeit, sondern wohl aus inneren Grunden.' Landgraf, "César Franck und die Musik für den Gottesdienst", 156–157.

[53] 'A chord (or a note) having different harmonic (or melodic) functions in two different keys, this property being used to effect a smooth transition from one key to the other. Pivot chords are therefore fundamental to the concept of modulation'. William Drabkin, "Theme*", Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online,* Oxford University Press, accessed April 17, 2019. www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/Theme.

> Everyone knows Schubert's admirable *Erlkönig*, in which the composer showed such dramatic and poignant feeling! At the final moment, when the father realises that all he has left in his arms is the corpse of his son, Schubert submits to the inexorable custom of ending the piece with the most banal of perfect cadenzas.[54]

The parallel instant in Franck's output would be his early *L'Ange et l'Enfant* (1846), a heart-wrenching dramatic mélodie which bizarrely finishes with the words *'Pauvre mère! Ton fils est mort.'*:



Example 41: César Franck, *L'Ange et l'Enfant,* final bars. Just like Schubert's *Erlkönig,* it concludes an emotionally intense song with an anticlimactic cadence.

While, apart from the *Caprice,* the early piano works refrain from such a dramatic character they generally feel lacklustre and uninspired in their climaxes, relying on textural alterations and emphasis on pianism to create an unnecessary superficial climax without the fundamental need for harmonic resolution.

Melody and Thematic Material

> Like Schubert, of whom he was at times a continuator, he shared a gift for melody and a capacity for error with which artists of genius are sometimes endowed.[55]

Generally, we find standard eight-bar phrases used in conjunction with phrasal pairings. As to be expected, the emphasis in the music is often solely placed on the beauty of the melodic phrases, which are enriched in subsequent repetitions with slight variations and transformations, though never morphing into unrecognisable material, making it easy to identify the source material in

[54] 'Tout le monde connaît l'admirable Roi des Aulnes de Schubert, dans lequel l'auteur a montré un sentiment si dramatique et si poignant ! Arrivé à la situation finale, celle où le père s'aperçoit qu'il n'a plus dans les bras que le cadavre de son fils, Schubert se soumettant à l'inexorable usage–il fallait bien finir–termine par la plus banale des cadences parfaites.' Lenormand, *Étude sur l'Harmonie*, 83.

[55] 'Comme Schubert, dont il a, par instants, été un continuateur, il a reçu en partage le don mélodique et aussi une capacité d'erreur dont les artistes de génie sont quelquefois pourvus.' Emmanuel, *César Franck: étude critique,* 96.

all cases on the first listen. For example, the Op. 3 *Églogue*, the most pastoral and calm of the set, presents its charming melodies in soft whispers; even the dramatic 2nd section has at many moments expressivity as its sole objective. It is often forgotten just how intertwined the voice was with the piano in this period.[56]

The same cannot be said of the Op. 5 *Caprice*, which contains the blandest theme – ***A*** – of the set. The simplicity of this theme enables transformations, usually textural and rhythmic, though the lack of harmonic interest in it in the most tedious theme out of all the early piano works. However, it also allowed Franck to combine it with other themes, a foreshadowing of things to come.

Op. 7 *Souvenirs* centres on a ***chorale*** theme as its eventual principal focus, an unexpected transformation where it evolves and progresses with larger and larger sonorities as well as traversing through a variety of keys, resulting in a more effective material transformation, one that welcomes the *fff* climax as a conclusion rather than the overloaded sonorities and pianistic fireworks of the Op. 5 *Caprice*.

The Op. 9 *Ballade* contains some of the most attractive themes of the set: its ***B*** theme avoids the cloying nature of the *Caprice's* ***A*** theme and is welcomed in the dramatic middle section as a contrast to the saturated diminished seventh atmosphere, which contains moments of particularly successful *Infinite Melody*. Unfortunately the young César Franck, whether by desire or conformity, too often transformed the thematic material eventually into *ff* climaxes, ineffective due to the lack of tonal tension and a formal architecture that does not facilitate it as a natural inevitability or needed closure. The tonality is never 'vulnerable';[57] we never venture far from the tonic, marking the *ff* climaxes perfunctory and unnecessary.

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[56] 'In 1853 Friedrich Wieck, whose daughter Clara (1819–96) had already established herself as one of the finest nineteenth-century pianists, entitled his *magnum opus* on piano teaching *Piano and song*, while Sigismund Thalberg published *The art of singing applied to the piano* around the same time.' Hamilton, "The virtuoso tradition", 70–71.

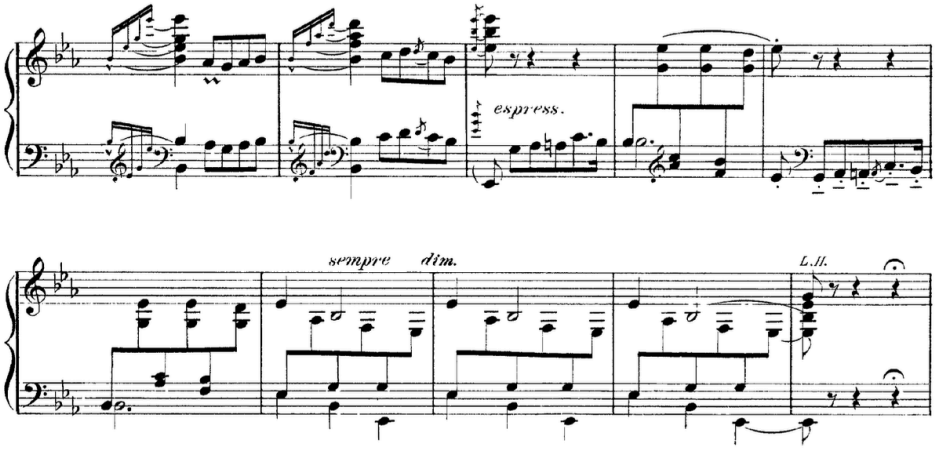
[57] '[speaking of the late works] In this we sense the late Beethoven tactic of making the tonic vulnerable in order to rescue it'. Swindells, "Tonality, functionality and Beethovenian form in the late instrumental works of César Franck", 222.

'Franckian' Themes

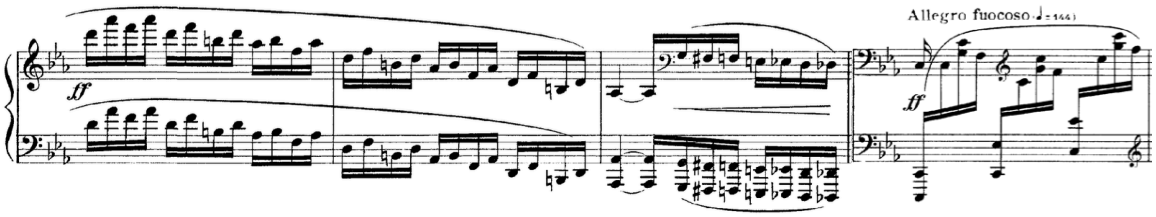
There are some characteristic tools that Franck uses in his treatment of thematic material. The first is his propensity to create and prepare themes which descend at their termination allowing the subsequent to emerge from the low registers:

Built from the ground up:

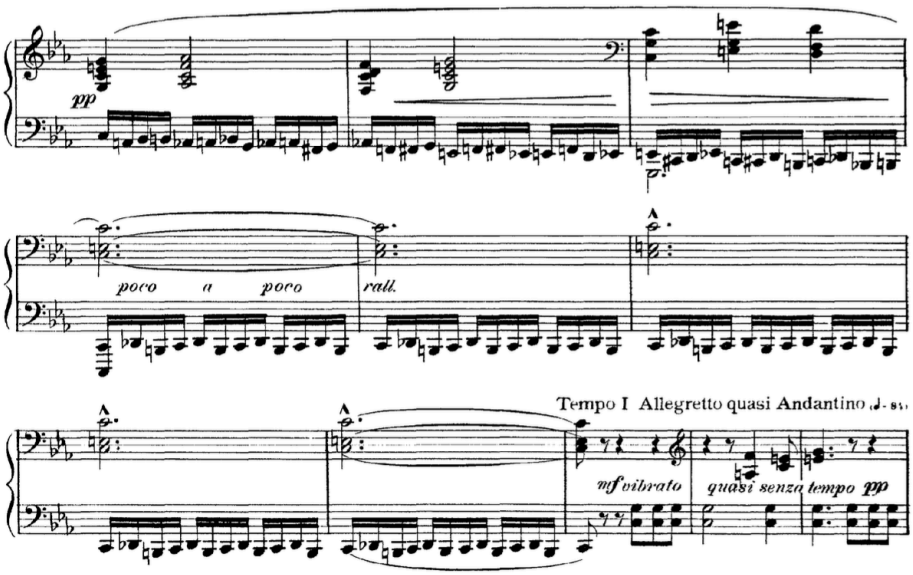
Op. 3 *Églogue*



Example 42a: *Églogue*, bars. 147–156, before the 'development'.

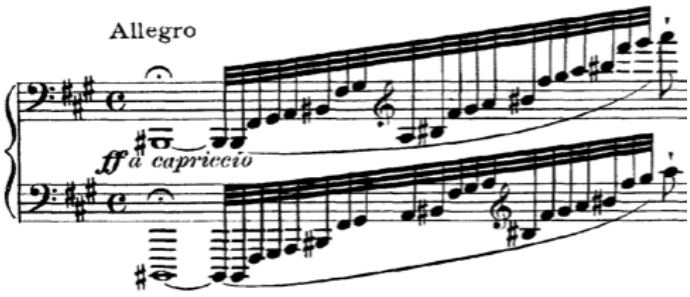


Example 42b: *Églogue*, bars 217–218 before the *Allegro C* theme.

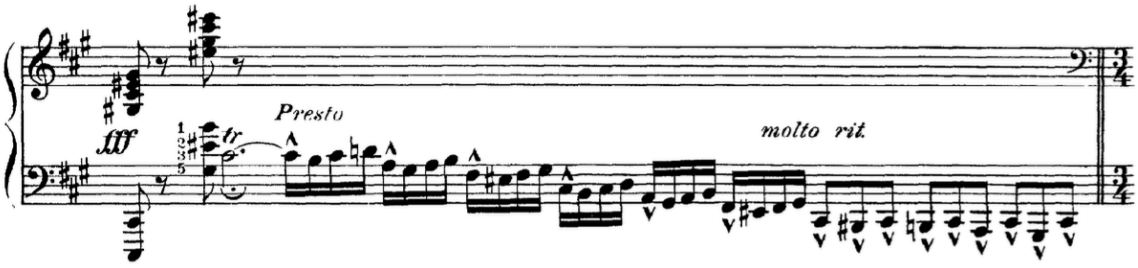


Example 42c: *Églogue*, bars 327–337, which announces the return to the third section.

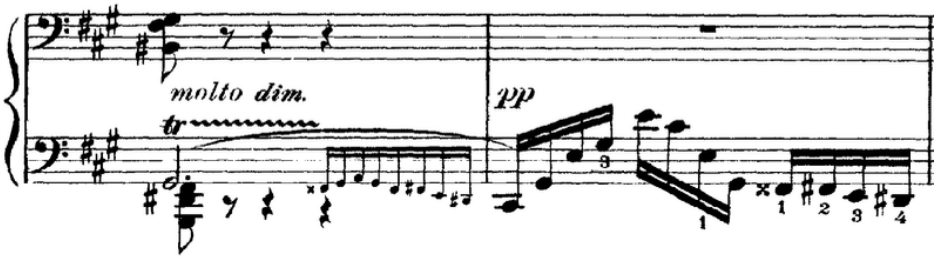
Op. 5 *Caprice* themes build from the ground up:



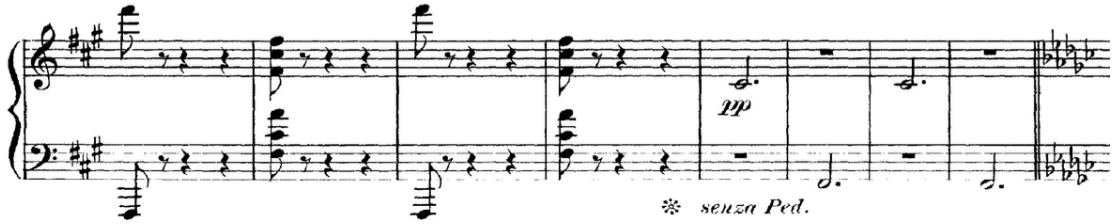
Example 43a: *Caprice*, bar 1, introducing the work.



Example 43b: *Caprice*, bar 153, preparation for 2nd theme *Allegro*.



Example 43c: *Caprice*, bars 199–200, preparation for return of ***B*** theme in the second section.

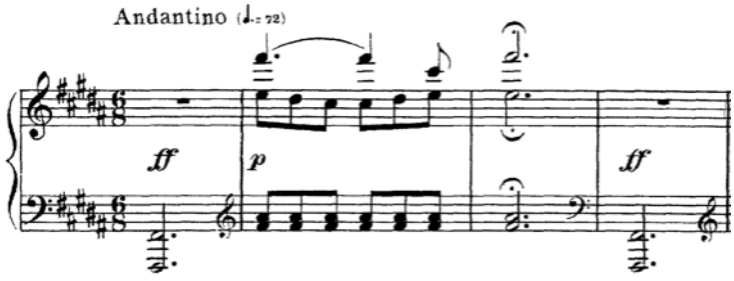


Example 43d: *Caprice*, bars 292–299, preparing the third section.

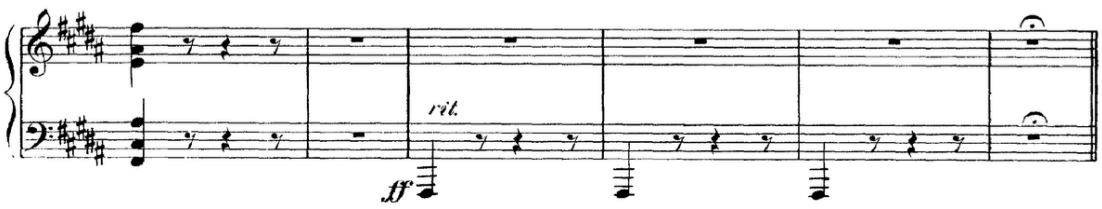
Op. 7 *Souvenirs* themes build from the ground up:

Example 44: *Souvenirs*, bars 295–310, preparation for the third section.

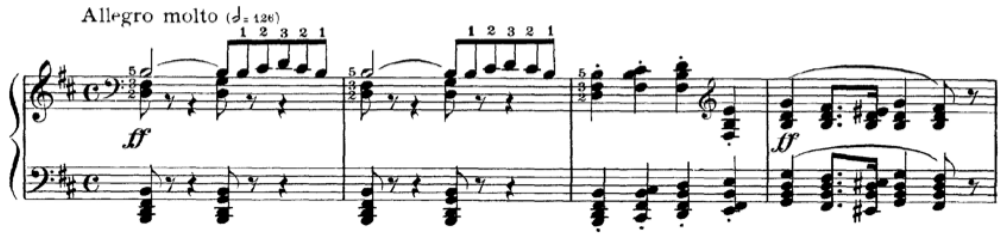
Op. 9 *Ballade* themes build from the ground up:



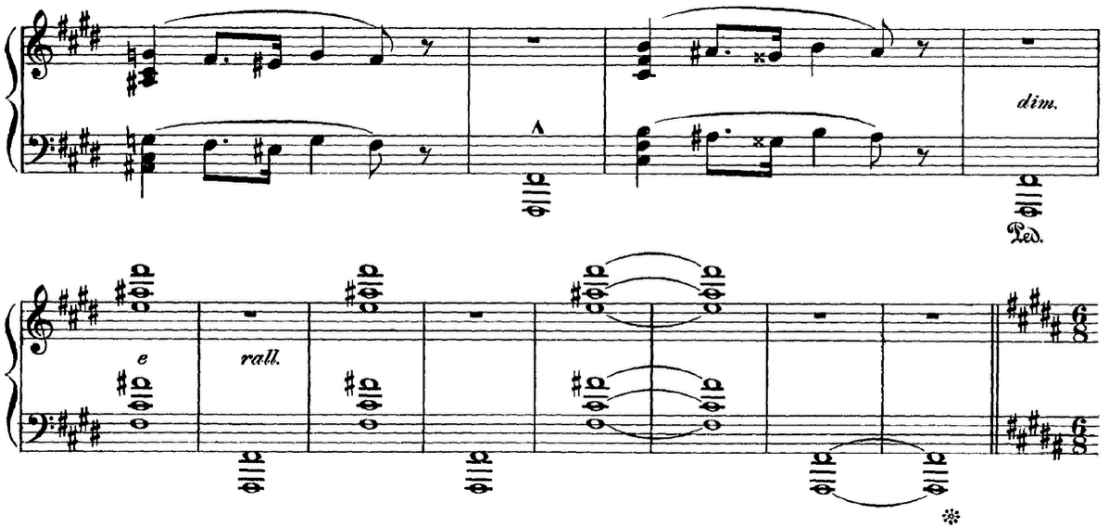
Example 45a: *Ballade*, bars 1–4.



Example 45b: *Ballade*, bars 46–49, preparation for theme *A*.

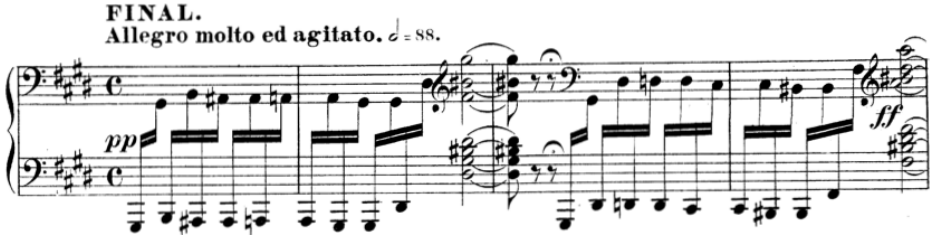


Example 45c: *Ballade,* bars 182–185 commence the second section.



Example 45d: *Ballade,* bars 393–404 prepares the third section.

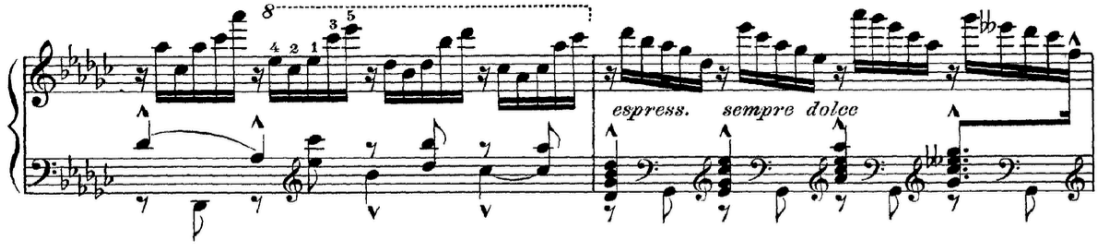
Prélude, aria et final themes build from the ground up:



Example 46: *Prélude, aria et* [*final*], bars 1–4.

The above sonic waves, presented above in each of the works, usually in the form of a chromatic descending movement, give the impression of Franck first laying the foundation before erecting the themes from the ground. This is typically seen before a section change or the entrance of structurally integral themes. The above examples help demonstrate the fundamental role *Franckian basses* play in his music.

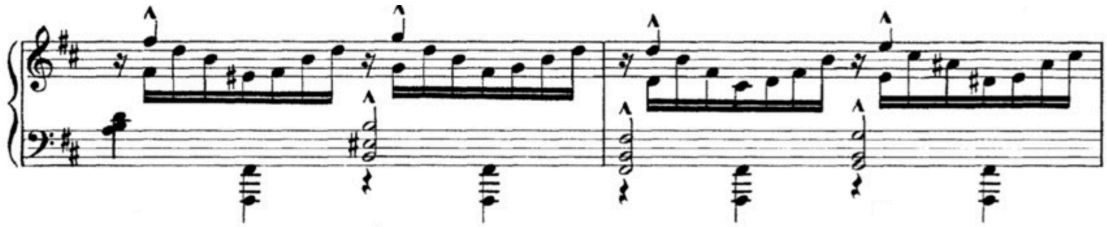
Textures



Example 47a: *Caprice,* bars 430–1.

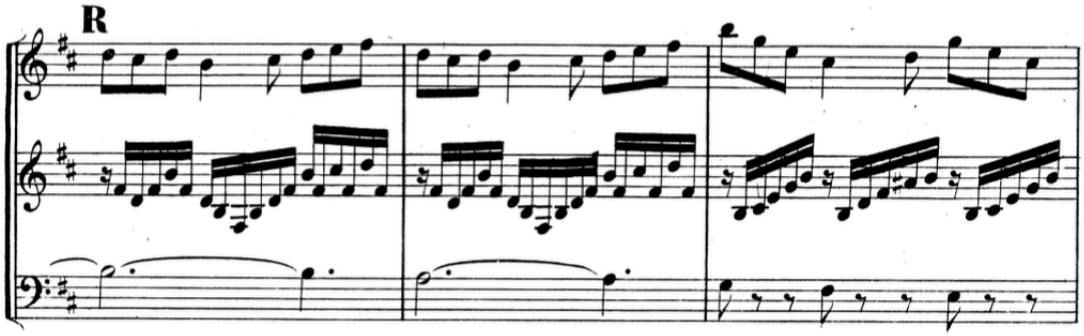
[IMAGE REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT]

Example 47b: *Souvenirs,* bars 334–338. Along with Brahms, Franck also showed early signs of a penchant for duplet/triplet rhythm combinations.



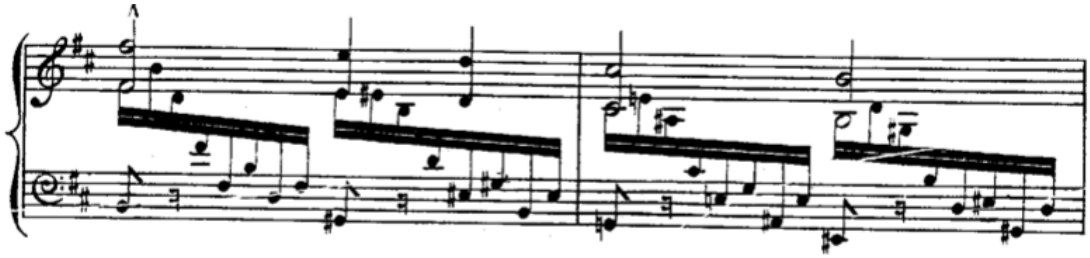
Example 47c: *Prélude, choral et* [*fugue*], bars 332–333.

As we can see from the examples above, Franck was fond of the pianistic texture whereby the left-hand jumps to the basses on syncopations or weak beats and the right hand plays semi-quavers after a strong beat chord. This also appears in his organ writing:



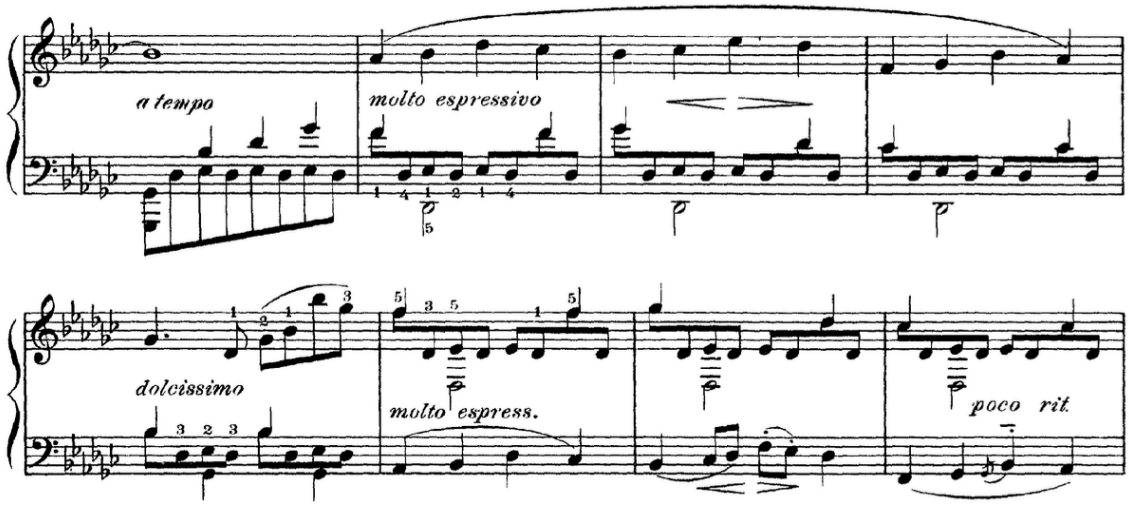
Example 48: Op. 18, *Prélude, Fugue et* [*Variation*] for organ, bars 148–150.

In all instances, this is very much a concluding/climaxing statement. It is worth noting, however, that this pianistic texture also appears in Henselt's études — a master of three-hands technique — from 1838:

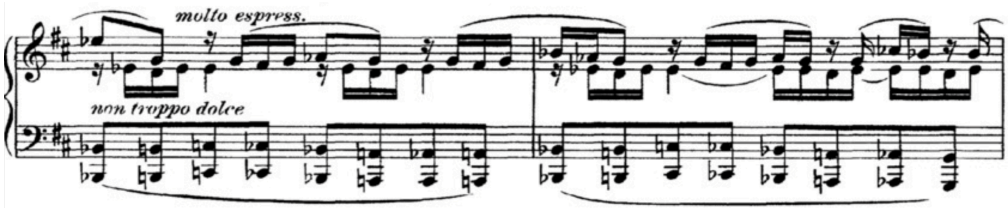


Example 49: Adolf von Henselt, Op. 2, 12 *Études caractéristiques de concert pour le piano*, No. 3 *Exauce mes vœux !* Also in B minor, one could be forgiven for thinking it is simply a different edition of Franck's *Prélude, choral et fugue*.

Again, in his most pianistically driven early piano work the *Caprice*, we see another similarity in texture with a late work in the two examples below:

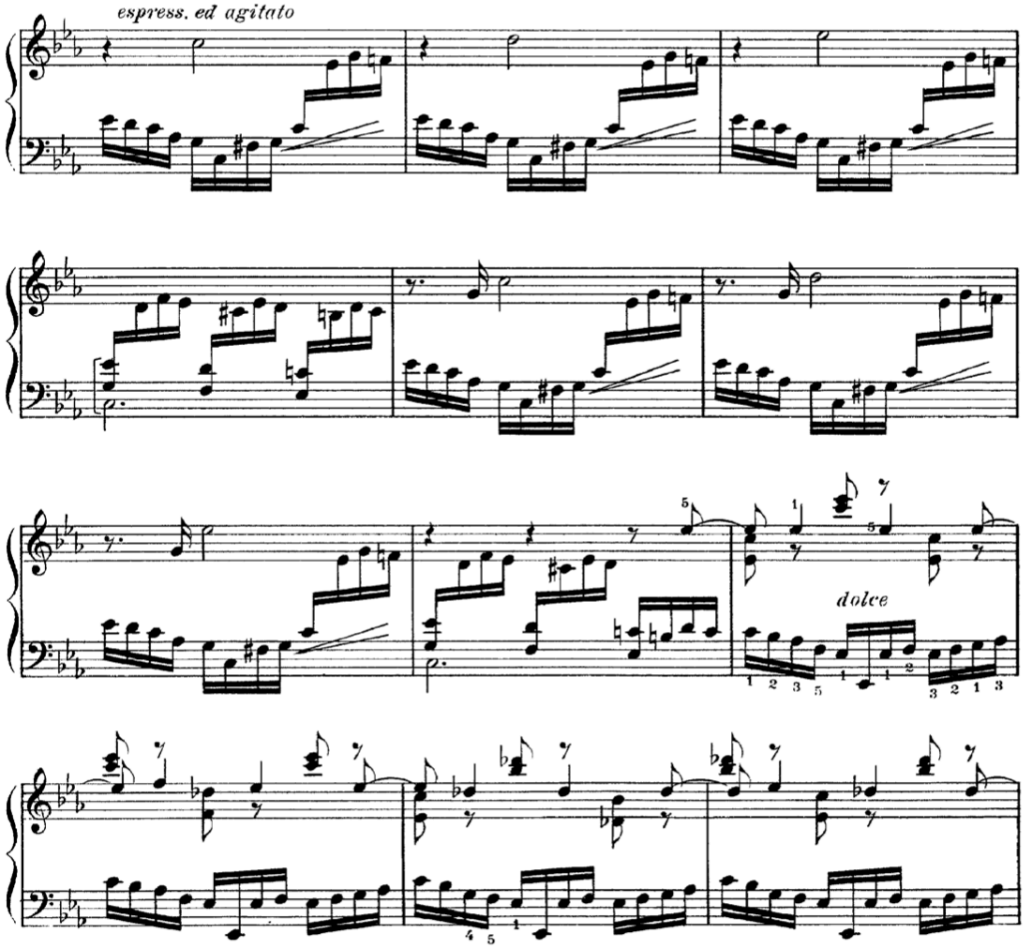


Example 50a: Op. 5 *Caprice*, bars 311–318.

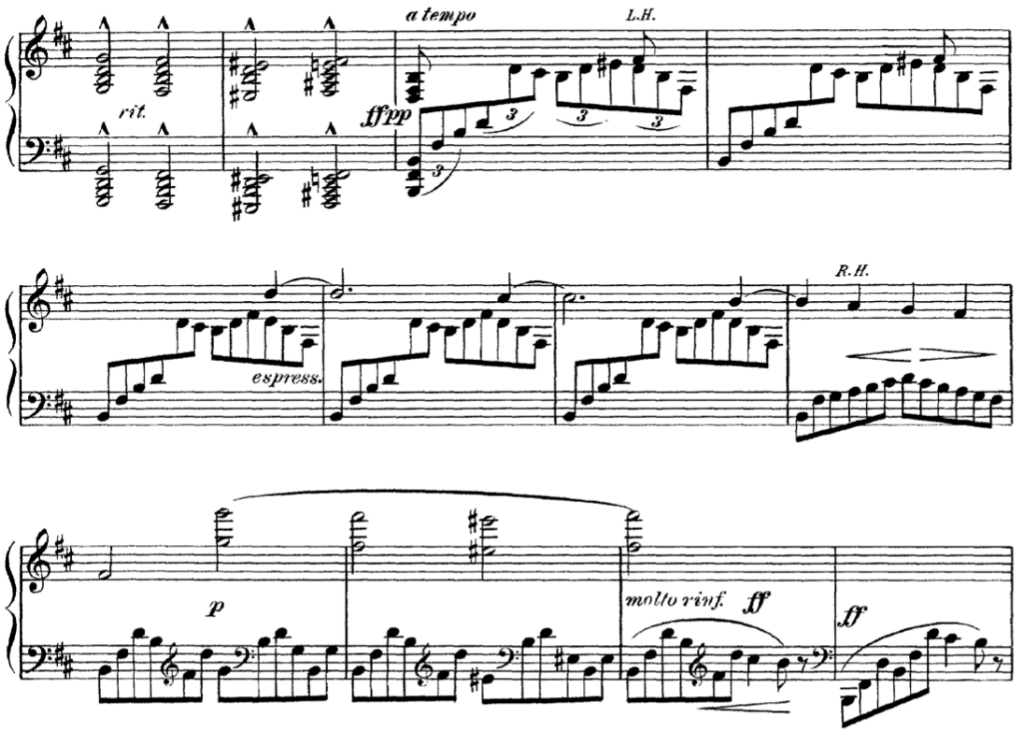


Example 50b: [*Prélude*], *choral et fugue*, bars 35–36. Both above extracts are marked *molto espressivo* and with similar voicing texture. The similarity in piano texture extends to the chromatic central voice. The *Caprice* has delayed basses — *Franckian basses.*

The examples above show some of the moments where Franck avoids the strong beats — *emphatic weak beats* – in combination with his *Franckian basses* to create a typically Franckian texture.



Example 51a: Op. 3 *Églogue*, bars 246–257, *D* theme.



Example 51b: Op. 9 *Ballade*, bars 206–217, *D* theme.

The two *D* themes above share typical Franckian features: a melody that is on a weak beat/off-beat, rising/falling by a third, and then the answering second of the phrase pair is a slow written out ornamental turn.

Despite a different title for each work – from the pastoral connotation of the *Églogue* to the large quasi-improvisatory form of a *Ballade* – the first two themes bear resemblances in all four of these piano works:

- *A* themes are generally slow, incorporate a wide register and include silence/fermatas (because of the inversion of structure with *intro* in the *Ballade*, this is applicable to its B theme). These either fulfill all the definitions or at least approach a *Cathedral of Sound.*
- *B* themes, as expected, generally act as a counter to the first, either increasing tempo (Op. 5 *Caprice* & Op. 9 *Ballade*), or inverting the melodic material (Op. 7 *Souvenirs*).

The preparation for the second section includes some of Franck's most unique and interesting moments in the pieces, such as the *Églogue* 'development', *Caprice* and *Souvenirs* *C* themes (unfortunately there is no transitory section in the *Ballade*).

The second section themes highlight some of Franck's compositional techniques with regards to rhythm:

- First themes in the 2nd sections – *Églogue* ***C***, *Caprice* ***D***, *Souvenirs* ***D***, *Ballade* ***C*** – have the widest registers and are marked at least *ff*. Franck wanted to make the emergence of the dramatic middle section as contrasting as possible.
- The similarities of the second section 2nd theme – *Églogue* ***D*** and *Ballade* ***D*** – are presented on the previous page.
- *Ballade*'s ***E*** theme sole function is the preparation of the return and contrast of the ***B*** theme in the central section.

The similarities between respective themes indicate the young Franck's reliance on similar structures and functions of thematic material. However, the early piano work favours long, lyrical themes that are frequently repeated in their entirety several times throughout the work, in contrary to the triptychs which interweave musical cells that are expanded upon or reduced to their purest essence. Frequent appearance of *Franckian basses, pivot points, chord and phrase pairs,* and *registral transfer* in all his piano works, including the short *Danse lente* (1885) and *Les plaintes d'une poupée* (1865) spawn comments such as: 'simple in style and technique, they show, none the less the unmistakable stamp of Franckian melody.'[58] However, what Fauquet described as 'continuous modulation' in place of continuous melody[59] is absent in these works, one of the more crucial ingredients of could be considered a 'Franckian flavour'.

[58] Patrick Dheur, *César Franck, Les Œuvres pour Piano,* (Stradivarius, 2022), CD 8011570372222, pg. 6.
[59] Fauquet, *César Franck,* 816.

Rhythm

Discretion and restraint are considered signs of musical maturity, so it is curious to encounter them in abundance in the young Franck, especially considering the circumstances of a young upcoming virtuoso in the mid 19th century. As was explained in Chapter 2 *Silence* and *Organist*, critics have rationalised the stops and starts in Franck's music as having sprouted from his employment at the organ; though this has been presented in this thesis as germinating already in his early piano works, dating before his first serious contact with the organ (his first organ composition was in 1846 and his first organ post was in 1847). In a general overview of the four early piano works, features described in *Rhythmic Qualities* apply as follows:

- *Note value diminution* – this standard variation technique is surprisingly not as methodical in his early piano works as in his later works. Although the effect seems to arise out of a structural procedure for unity across large scale works is not as clearly fleshed out in his early piano works as in his mélodies or triptychs.
- *Silence* – its noticeable use is even more present in the early piano pieces than in his late works, both as a component of thematic material and as a separator of themes.
- *Discreet/delayed down beats & emphatic weak beats* – there are a few themes that have a distinctive usage of *discreet downbeats,* e.g. *Églogue* ***B*** theme, *Caprice* ***A*** theme and *Souvenirs* bars 362–367. However, the young Franck was more interested in creating an atmosphere of silence with empty bars and fermatas than concealing the metre with rhythmic tricks.

Unsurprisingly, the contrast found in the central sections is also achieved with a change in time signature. At the outset of each piece, Franck employs a fantasy-like technique of making the listener unaware of the metre through fermatas, silence or a cadenza, suppressing the clarity of the rhythmic impulse. Hence, Koch notes that the tempo alterations can be also linked to a grand structural architecture:

> Franck's indications on tempo nuances prove to be worked out very carefully in order to clarify the formal structure. This is most evident when seemingly identical bars are to be played differently, according to their function within the musical form[60]

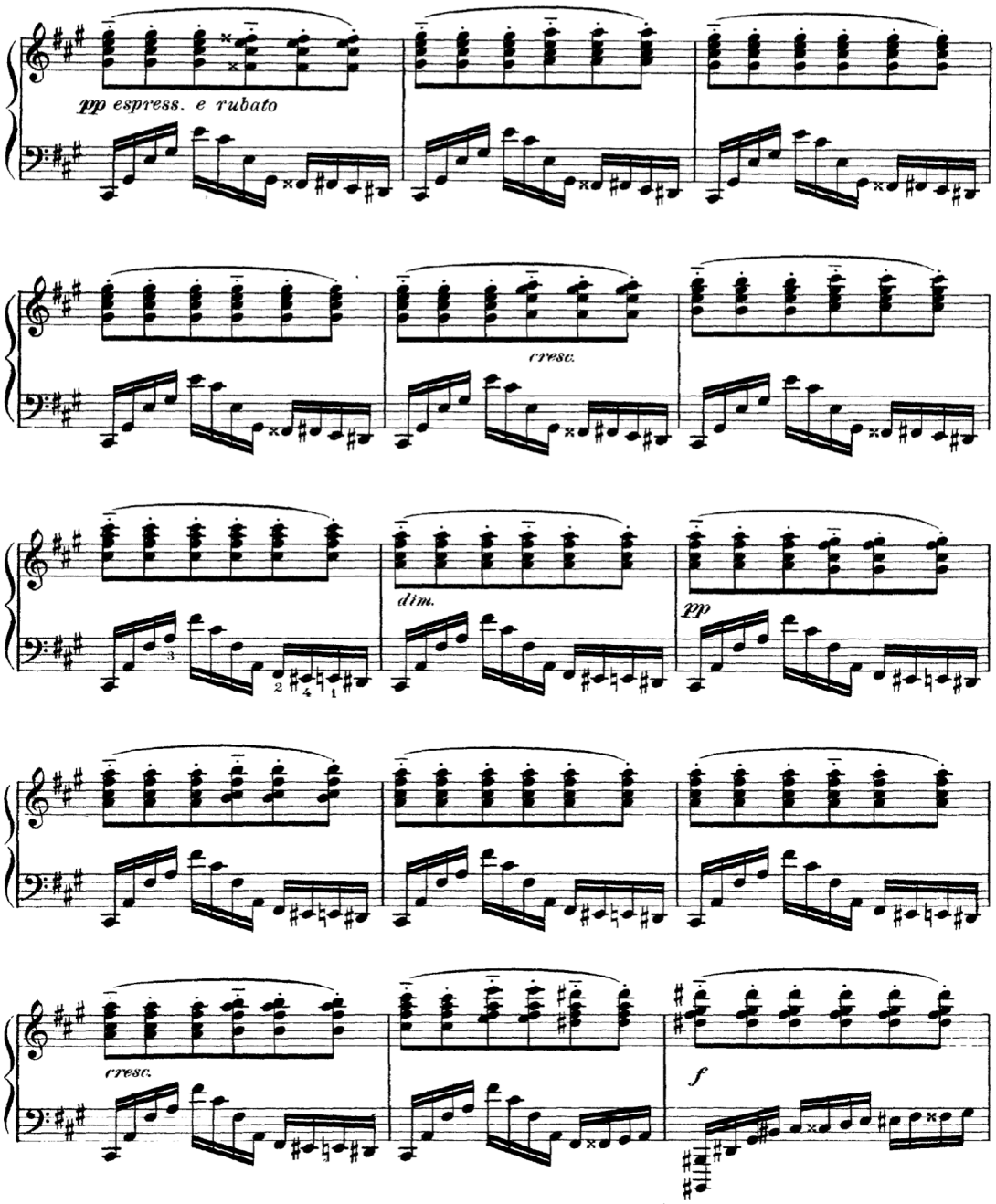
In fact, *Souvenirs* ***D*** theme has the most driving rhythmic momentum out of all the early piano works.

Many of Franck's tempi can be seen as derivations of *Andante*:

- Op. 3 *Églogue* is marked *Allegretto, quasi Andantino.*
- Op. 5 *Caprice* has no *Andante* but theme ***A***, though marked as *Moderato,* approaches *andante* tempo, often played around ♩ = 90.
- Op. 7 *Souvenirs'* ***choral*** theme starts in *Poco più lento* in relation to *Allegretto commodo,* is marked *Andantino sostenuto* in the second section, and *Maestoso* in the third section.
- Op. 9 *Ballade* opens *Andantino* before moving onto *Andante*. It features the most derivations of *Andante* tempo markings.

A rhythmic moment of note is found in the *Caprice,* with the surprising entry of the theme ***B*** in the second section:

[60] Koch, *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle,* 7.



Example 52: *Caprice,* bars 202–216, revival of ***B*** theme in the 2nd section. This climactic moment is interesting rhythmically: the left hand fills the bars with semi-quaver in 3/4 groupings in a manner similar to the rest of the second section, while the right hand plays the ***B*** theme in its original 6/8, to the extent that the penultimate bar here sounds like a hemiola.

The rhythms are rarely punctuated, Franck preferring a more flowing nature. Exceptions can be found in the 2nd sections, but even then, the unbroken semiquavers ensure a steady pulse.

When Salzer wrote: 'music *is* motion',[61] he emphasised that motion is felt through harmony and counterpoint; a lack of motion could explain why these works are felt to be unrhythmic at times, though the argument here is made that the missing forward drive in these works is due to lack of harmonic tension and the lack of a clear trajectory due to tonal stagnation.

Pianism

The most prominent disparity in the consensus on these early piano works is whether or not they are uninspired virtuoso works – specifically, works written for Franck as a travelling virtuoso intended as a vehicle for technical display. This fits biographically as the works were written after the adolescent showpieces and the young César Franck's sudden departure from the Paris Conservatoire. In d'Indy's biography we receive an interesting angle on the circumstances of production of these works:

> However, in spite of this 'forced labour' to which Franck was condemned by his father's authority, he could not help seeking and finding, even in the most insignificant productions, new forms, not yet the aesthetic forms of refined composition known to him later, but combinations of original fingering, hitherto unused techniques, and harmonic arrangements giving the piano a new sound not yet heard; In this respect, some of his earliest piano works, such as *Églogue*, Op. 3 (1842), [62] and the *Ballade*, Op. 9 (1844), offer special innovations that may tempt musicians, especially pianists. [63]

Of the four early piano works, this *Églogue* is the only piece that could be considered as having dazzling showmanship confined solely to the central section, though it does feature a subtle three-hand effect variations of ***B*** theme, the novel experiments as d'Indy had pointed out possibly also refer to the *pivot note* texture in bars 254–261 and analogous moments.

Nevertheless, the Op. 5 *Caprice* holds a curious position among the four pieces with commenters. Fauquet's comprehensive study has little to say, dismissing it as 'loyally sacrificed to

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[61] Salzer, *Structural Hearing Tonal Coherence in Music*, 51.
[62] The Rosa Newmarch English translation from 1909 incorrectly dates the publication of *Églogue* as 1848.
[63] 'Cependant, malgré ces « travaux forcés » auxquels Franck se voyait condamné de par l'autorité paternelle, il ne pouvait s'empêcher, en sincère et digne artiste qu'il était, de chercher et de trouver, même dans les plus insignifiantes productions, des formes nouvelles, non point encore des formes esthétiques de haute composition connue cela lui arrivera plus tard, mais des combinaisons de doigtés originaux, de dessins encore inemployés, de dispositions harmoniques donnant au piano une sonorité non encore entendue ; c'est ainsi qu'à ce point de vue, certaines des premières œuvres pour piano, comme *Églogue*, op. 3 (1842), et la *Ballade*, op. 9 (1844), offrent de spéciales innovations dont l'élude peut tenter des musiciens et surtout des pianistes.' D'Indy, *César Franck,* 8–9.

virtuosity'.[64] D'Indy was similarly indifferent to the work: 'The *Premier Grand Caprice* (Op. 5) is too exclusively brilliant in style, with frequent highlights of pure virtuosity'.[65] In contrast, Cortot writes that the Op. 5 is 'in my opinion the most individual work of this series of piano pieces',[66] and more recently Steven Hough goes even further by writing: 'It is clearly the best of his early piano pieces',[67] though it is worth remembering at this point that access to the Op. 7 *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle* was non-existent. All the themes, apart from the saccharine ***A*** theme, rely heavily on pianistic devices for effects and as a work it would certainly pose the greatest difficulties for a performer.

Conversely, the Op. 7 *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle* employs the least overtly ostentatious piano techniques. Like all the pieces in this thesis examined under the microscope, the harmony is solidly rooted in 'triad-based motives and themes'.[68] Considering Franck 'probably never played the piece in public', could it be that this led to its modest keyboard display and possibly a more personal expression?[69] Certainly, when compared to the previous two piano works, it is more colourful with its harmony and its careful elaboration of the chorale theme encourages the listener to associate the composition with that of Franck's final compositions. The drama of the ***D*** theme has less of a focal point than what one would expect in an early romantic piano work.

Certainly, with the Op. 9 *Ballade* we return to more familiar territory, though at times the piano pyrotechnics are subtler. When the dramatic 2nd section erupts, we receive the usual

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[64] 'Le *Premier Grand Caprice* opus 5 en *sol* bémol dédié à une élève, Elodie Cordier Moraquini, est loyalement sacrifié à la virtuosité. Coupé en trois parties comme l'*Églogue*, il se caractérise par la double exposition de deux thèmes à la métrique différenciée. Franck poursuit en *fa* dièse mineur, une de ses tonalités préférées, avant de revenir sagement à la réexposition dans le ton principal.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 149.

[65] 'Le Premier grand caprice en sol bémol (op. 5) est d'un style trop exclusivement brillant, avec de fréquents points d'orgue de pure virtuosité.' D'Indy, "La Première Manière de César Franck", 5.

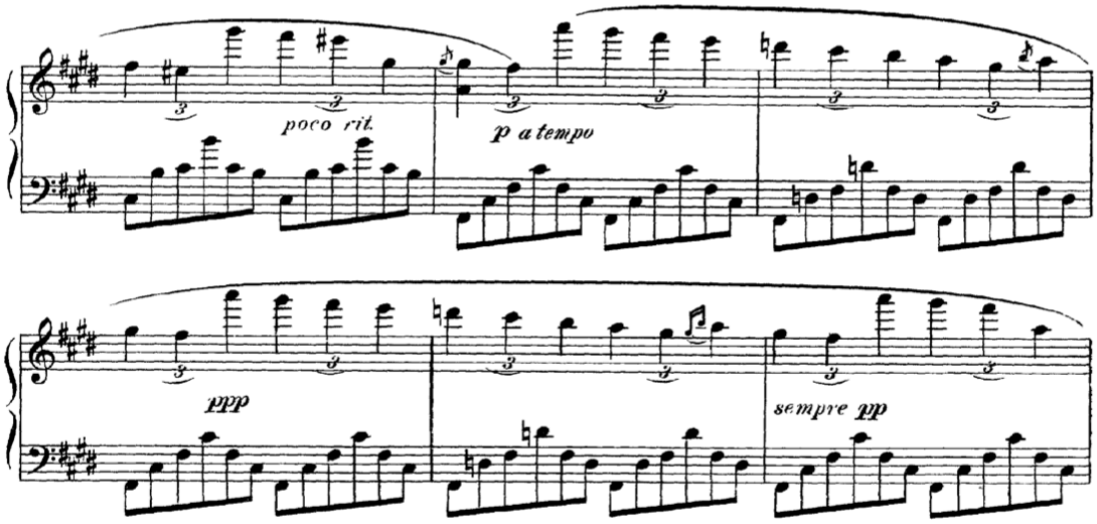
[66] 'à notre gré l'œuvre la plus caractéristique des compositions pianistiques de cette série'. Cortot, *La Musique Française de Piano,* 52.

[67] Hough, *César Franck Piano Music,* (Hyperion, 1997).

[68] 'In light of this earlier development, [studying polyphonic forms with Reicha] it can be assumed for the present work that the simplicity of the often triad-based motives and themes and the corresponding simple harmonisation as well as the formal construction rich in repetitions are by no means an expression of a possible incapability of the young composer to develop more complex structures. They rather seem to be an expression of personal aesthetic and creative preferences and intentions. The interpreter thus has to adjust to this fact by trying to trace the elementary sonic appeal of simple triad motives, which obviously was felt by Franck.' Koch, *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle,* 6.

[69] *Ibid.,* 5.

flair from a young pianist/composer,[70] but at times we clearly see Franck's search for a personal pianistic style, which often results in an austere musical manner.



Example 53: *Ballade,* bars 362–367, ***D*** theme. A delicate blossoming of the theme, evocative of the soundworld created in Chopin's Op. 25 Étude No. 1 "*Aeolian Harp*".

It is worth reiterating that Liszt's name is found to be inextricably linked with these works and his influence inseparable, even as recently as 2019,[71] though we rarely see Liszt's perpetual and restless innovation in these early piano works.[72] The association through its virtuosity is for some indivisibly associated with Liszt,[73] understandable considering the over-saturation of virtuosic pieces at the time and Franck's friendship with Liszt. Cortot openly views the pieces through a retrospective lenses: 'Like the *Églogue*, the *Caprice* is in keeping with the most convinced Lisztian

[70] 'Late nineteenth-century composers, however, did not innovate technically within the tradition of pianistic style inherited from Liszt and Chopin […] Most concert pianists of the time were expected to be able to make their own arrangements of songs, opera arias, and Strauss waltzes, transcriptions which exploited their individual abilities.' Rosen, *Piano Notes: the hidden world of the pianist,* 211.

[71] 'During the decade of the 1840s, Franck continued to compose virtuoso works for his performance as a pianist which betray a Lisztean influence. […] it is no wonder that the early piano pieces […] show a degree of indebtedness to Liszt's style and techniques.' Flynn, *César Franck: An Annotated Bibliography,* 2.

[72] Each of the pieces have similar descriptions, to illuminate a few:

Églogue: 'Les trois pièces de Franck sont placées de façon évidente sous l'influence de Liszt. […] L'*Églogue* de Liszt est une évocation paysagère que traverse une danse rustique. Celle de Franck, moins simplement champêtre, est surtout plus difficile du point de l'exécution.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 148.

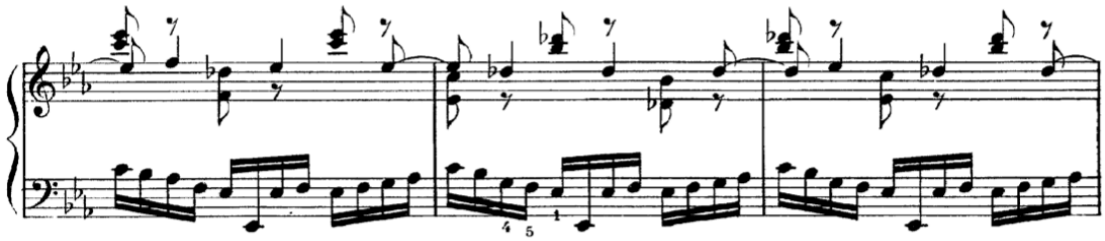
Caprice: 'There is the clear shadow of Liszt hovering over the piece, not surprisingly; but Alkan's chunky orchestral textures are there too, and even a prophetic hint of the Brahms F sharp minor Sonata, to be written ten years later.' Hough, *César Franck Piano Music,* (Hyperion, 1997).

Ballade: 'Ici l'imitation de Liszt est tout à fait flagrante et même perceptible à l'œil : en ouvrant le cahier, on se croirait transporté en pleines *« Années de pèlerinage »'.* D'Indy, *La Première Manière de César Franck,* 5.

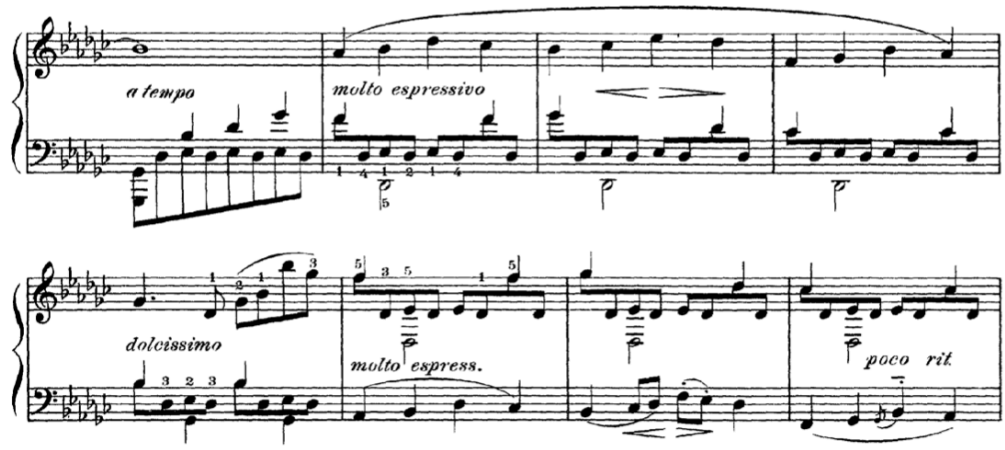
[73] On Franck's Op. 019 *Fantaisie* (1838) 'The repeating chords, the octave chromatic scales, the octaves alternating between the hands, and the contrary motion between both hands in octaves are hallmarks of Liszt's piano works'. Lin, "From Virtuoso to Master: César Franck as a Composer of Solo Piano Music", 54.

aesthetic: alternating octave effects, division of the melody between the two hands, imitation of the organ's 'voix céleste' - in short, the use of a full-blown virtuosity is in every respect in keeping with the traditions of the time.'[74] However, if we approach them holistically, their attention in most circumstances seems to be creating a soundworld far apart from Liszt and Thalberg, as presented in Chapter 3 *Visual representations by duration*, in which the 'virtuosic' themes last far shorter than the delicate *Andantes*.

The greatest difficulties in performing these works lie in the *three hands technique*, sometimes inevitably with some *pivot note* thrown in the mix:



Example 54a: Op. 3 *Églogue*, bars 255–257, marked *dolce*.



Example 54b: Op. 5 *Caprice*, bars 309–316.

[74] 'De même que L'*Églogue*, le *Caprice* relève de l'esthétique lisztienne la plus convaincue: effets d'octaves alternées, division de la mélodie entre les deux mains, imitation de la « voix céleste » de l'orgue, bref, mise en œuvre d'un véritable appareil de virtuosité, en tous points conforme aux traditions du moment.' Cortot, *La Musique Française de Piano,* 50.

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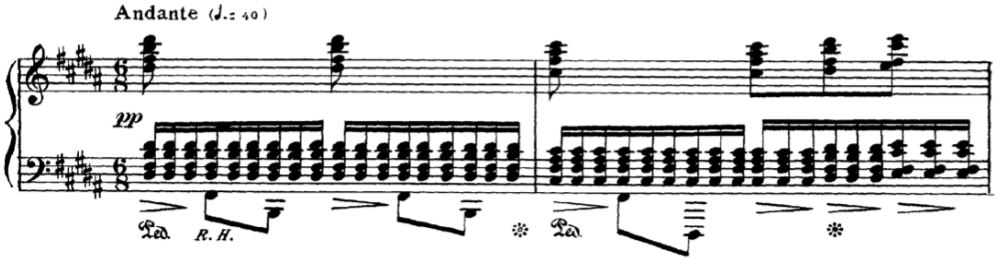
Example 54c: Op. 7 *Souvenirs,* bars 343–344.



Example 54d: Op. 9 *Ballade,* bars 405–406. The repeated chords in the examples here and in the *Caprice* draw a parallel with *Les Djinns*. This is a technique that never left him and sounds somewhat archaic against the backdrop of the uprising revolutionaries as such as Fauré, Debussy and others. The climax of the *Caprice* bears a strong resemblance to the then very popular Thalberg Op. 33 *Fantaise sur Moses de Rossini* (1833).

These extracts are not *loud*; they are generally tender moments that as seen aboveare often marked *dolcissimo,* and it is unlikely that many audience members would appreciate the difficulty that lies in their execution.

One thing is certain: they unsurprisingly failed to win over the attention of the public at a time when the masterpieces of Chopin and Mendelssohn were surfacing, a level of refinement that Franck did not achieve with the early piano works. It seems the legacy of the sweeping left-hand arpeggios of Field and Chopin, the rapid thirds of Thalberg's generation, or the light passage work of Mendelssohn, generally eluded Franck's pianistic style, and despite some writers claiming the contrary, one would be disappointed if approaching these works with this 'virtuosity' in mind.[75]

[75] 'He used the piano pianistically and never showily. A virtuoso out for applause will find few openings in Franck because it was always the music which lay pre-eminent in his mind. No one has written for piano in this manner since Franck.' Demuth, *César Franck,* 51.

Finally, as mentioned before, Franck's own performance of these works did not help his popularity:

> A few months later, on 10 January 1845, it was the turn of two young virtuosos from Liège, César-Auguste and Joseph Franck, to perform. They performed the Duo on motifs from Gulistan by the first named, who then played his *Caprice* and Weber's *Pièce de salon*. Once again César-Auguste had astonished more than he had moved. The performance was "quite brilliant"; but we did not find in him, as in his brother, that musical feeling which is communicated intuitively to all listeners. Perhaps, moreover, we are less kind to M. César Franck, because we still remember the harmonies of Litz [*sic*] and Thalberg.[76]

A Note on Virtuosity

Comments have been made throughout this thesis referencing the lack of virtuosity found in these works, particularly in comparison to other pieces produced and performed by Franck's contemporaries:

> This, after all, was the age of the conservatory, the tutor, the textbook, the classroom; the age, too, when pianist-composers (the grands pedagogues), virtually without exception, had their systems, their Lehrbucher, and their coteries of pupils; the age, in brief, of the etude and the exercise.[77]

Virtuosity is a contentious term, understood to be the performer presenting their skill at the instrument as a quality worthy of attention in and of itself, with music that puts speed, agility and accuracy on full display, often conflated with the 'most visible sign of genius'.[78] The technical demands of these works on the performer are slight compared to the études and fantasies being produced at the time. Why are they then not virtuosic? One argument, made frequently by commentators and his students, is that Franck was himself uncomfortable as the performer in the spotlight, perhaps the refuge of the organ loft against prying eyes allowed Franck to

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[76] 'Quelques mois plus tard, le 10 janvier 1845, c'était au tour de deux jeunes virtuoses liégeois, César-Auguste et Joseph Franck de se produire. Ils exécutaient le *Duo sur des motifs de Gulistan* du premier nommé, lequel jouait ensuite son *Caprice* et le *Morceau de salon* de Weber. Une fois encore César-Auguste avait étonné plus qu'il n'avait ému. Exécution « assez brillante ; mais nous n'avons pas trouvé chez lui, comme chez son frère, ce sentiment musical qui se communique par intuition à tous les auditeurs. Peut-être, du reste, ne sommes-nous moins bienveillants pour M. César Franck, que parce que nous avons encore dans nos souvenirs les harmonies de Litz [*sic*] et de Thalberg. »' Le Foyer du Loiret, 12 I 1845, as read in Fauquet's *Cesar Franck*, 245

[77] Samson, *Virtuosity and the Musical Work: The Transcendental Studies of Liszt*, 14.

[78] *Loc. cit.*

comfortably express himself. No doubt Franck could write in the 'modern' style, such as the bravura figuration which is in full display in his adolescent works such as his very 'Hummelian' Piano Concerto No. 2 (1836) written around the age of fourteen.

Franck would have to wait for the end of the prevailing virtuosic zeitgeist, itself coming to a close soon, before he could be accepted as a keyboard composer. One does get the impression that Franck was not comfortable with the keyboard idiom of the time, with a distinct lack of dazzling figurations, broken chords, wide sweeping arpeggios and doubled notes, all of which would be expected and was found littering the pages of his contemporaries. His triptychs have a unique corporal feel for the pianist due to his personal idiomatic style.[79] No comments were made in his career as a pianist that he lacked technical skill; in fact, his abilities were frequently accentuated and it was his personal expression that was the cause for criticism, either for his excessive warm or his dryness at the instrument.

If three of the four works do not concede to virtuosity, what was their aim? It would be clearer to one who had not yet encountered these works to propose that they are closer to the antiquated *Sturm und Drang,* in free fantasy form and with a storm as the middle section, and in the *Caprice* and *Souvenirs* a pianistically difficult coda so as to leave in an impression at the climax.

Franck was far more effective in writing virtuoso piano music in his op. 1 Trios than in the solo piano works from this period. Perhaps standing in the shadow of Beethoven's Op. 1 Trios inspired Franck to attain a higher level of refinement: the *Églogue*'s repetitive pastoral charm and lack of fireworks can bore an audience, his *Caprice* lacks the effective lightness of Mendelssohn to avoid a saturation of sound, the *Ballade* lacks the breadth of ideas next to Chopin to hold the audience's attention for 15 minutes. The impression is that Franck struggled with

[79] 'Compared with Franz Liszt's religious tone-painting for the piano, Franck's compositions are equally modern in harmonic terms; they are, however, formally and technically much more strictly regulated and, although they place great demands upon the pianist, they renounce any purely superficial virtuosity… [*Prélude, aria et final*] is generally regarded by pianists as ungrateful on account of its extended lyrical passages and its tender, dolcissimo conclusion.' Yukie Nagai, *César Franck* (2001, BISCD1056), 3. The same could be said for the Op. 3 *Églogue*.

creating drama over long periods when writing for solo piano in this period, and unlike in his chamber works written around the same time, he was unable to keep both the tension and line of musical thought at the same time. The piano writing is far more effective in the *mélodies* where the piano can be relegated to providing colour and interesting counterpoint — such as *Robin Gray* (1842–3) or *Souvenance* (1846) — or in his Piano Trios where the pianist provides the drama with the usual cascading octaves or arpeggios while the strings can effectively continue the melodic material over this backdrop.

The curiosity of the virtuosity in these works is heightened when we know that Franck was an accomplished and esteemed pianist, as established earlier:

> Throughout his life, as we have just said, he remained a pianist of the first rank. Not only did he maintain his skills as a virtuoso, but he always held some of his early compositions in high esteem, [...] The piano, in equal if not greater measure than the organ, remained his laboratory. [...] An organist for a large audience, Franck remained — let us repeat — a sought-after pianist in private life.[80]

So we have to return once again to the assumption that Franck was content with this outpouring of piano music in this style; not due to an absence of skill but a preference for these sound-worlds.

Form

If we remind ourselves again of some points from Franck's didactic letter to Pierre de Bréville:

> (3) your formal plan should be definite. Stick to the classical mould.
> (4) don't be overlong.[81]

we can judge that, due to the lack of modulation, the monotony leads to the works erring on the side of 'overlong', considering how much more thematic transformation occurs in a work like *Prélude, aria et final* compared to these early piano works, which are not much shorter.

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[80] 'Toute sa vie, on vient de le dire, le musicien resta un pianiste de première grandeur. Non seulement il entretint l'acquis de son métier de virtuose […] Le piano, autant sinon plus que l'orgue, restait son laboratoire. […] Organiste pour un large public, Franck était dans le privé répétons-le, un pianiste recherché.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 599–600.

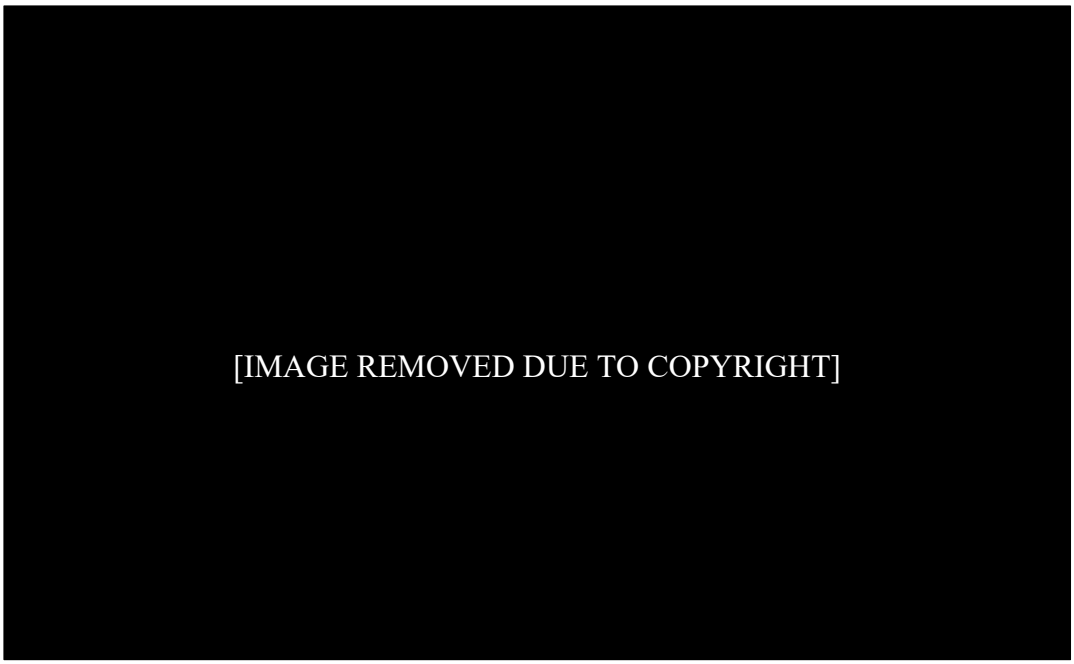
[81] Fauquet, *Correspondance,* 142.

The *B* themes from three of the four works can be found in the central sections, although one could argue, and not without merit, that this inclination is also present in the Op. 7 *Souvenirs* if we regard the *intro* as *A* and the *chor* as *B*, as Franck also abstained from unique material for *intro* in the subsequent Op. 9 *Ballade*. Repetitions of themes are usually developed in terms of alterations in texture, dynamics and pianistic technique; not through modulation, variation in harmony or any structural changes. The resulting effect is that when one hears the entry of a theme, it will be generally carried through without surprises in formal structure.

The middle sections in these works are the centre of the drama and the most elaborated segments. Fauquet states, regarding the *Églogue*, that 'giving into a romantic impulse, César-Auguste had initially developed the storm'[82] and one could potentially view three of the four works above with such a pretext - though once again the newly-found *Souvenirs* remains the black sheep, in which the central section's drive seems to be the metamorphosis of the *Chor* theme as the unexpected dominant theme for the final section. In general, the themes flow more freely between one another in the dramatic middle section and the themes are sometimes reformed to irregular bar lengths, a procedure which gives most importantly a much-desired unpredictability that the first sections lack.

Excluding the *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chappelle*, the last sections see repetitions of themes from the first section arranged in a new pianistic format, with an effective virtuosic coda in the case of *Op. 5 Caprice* closing the work. This does not apply as simply to *Souvenirs* as the closing of the work is with a grandiloquent final expression of the *Chor* theme. This piece develops more organically than its siblings through the shifting of importance of themes, bringing a seemingly understated chorale theme to the forefront, emerging from an effective and necessary development in the middle section between the dramatic *D* theme and the *Chor* theme.

[82] 'Cédant à un élan romantique, César-Auguste avait initialement développé l'orage.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 149.



Example 55: *Souvenirs,* bars 407–411. The loud and very characteristically early romantic coda to his Op. 7.

In Jo-Chi Lin's analyses of some of the early piano works, the themes are broken up into too small segments, this fragmentation being a catalyst for overseeing the similarities and progression between works in thematic treatment. There are some interesting formal procedures in each of the works:

The Op. 3 *Églogue*'s use of introduction is perhaps its most interesting structural quality. Its role appears as a pause or separator between themes and sections. Its usage in the 'development' before the 2nd section proper is some of Franck's most inventive writing from the early piano works, creating an air of uncertainty before the explosive *allegro.* Aside from this section, however, much of the formal process appears to be perfunctory.

On the other hand, the central section of the Op. 5 *Caprice* does feel essential to the structure of the work as a whole, with the caprice element insinuated from the outset and in the connections between different thematic groups. The generation of themes is also clearest in the *Caprice;* we can see from the musical examples that the repetitive stuttering style, which precedes *A* and *B* themes, becomes a feature of *C* theme, so the final *C* theme, which the work seems to

be geared towards, effectively rounds off the work and logically climaxes the piece. We can see from the timelines and description that the *Caprice* is perhaps simplest in form, with the fewest interchanges of thematic groups, but while it seems the most standardised, its thematic material has been realised to flow well from one to another. However, the cumulative variations creating the end-weighted structure results in, despite its structural trajectory towards the climax, too many *ff* culminations before the end to be considered truly effective. Later Franck would often include a crescendo towards a sudden *pp* section which would itself build quickly towards the climax for a more effective ending – such as in the final mélodie *La Procession* (1889),[83] several of *Les Béatitudes* and the cadenza leading to the dramatic climax of *Prélude, choral et fugue.*

The central section in the Op. 7 *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle* is formally the most intricately constructed, with the use of thematic opposition necessary to cement the dominance of the choral theme. Franck's organ *Chorale* No. 1 is described by Stove not as a theme and variations, but rather a "theme *from* variations".[84] As mentioned previously, Franck saved the full statement of the principal melody for the end and hinted as much to his friends and student;[85] similarly, this is also certainly the most striking feature of the Op. 7 *Souvenirs*: the ***Chor*** theme seems to have to *break through* ***D*** theme in the central section, resistant to its aggressions, after which it can flower fully in the final *Maestoso* moments, emerging victorious. The metamorphosis from A^{b} minor to A^{b} major further accentuates this, with an assimilation of ***D*** theme, which in turn was influenced by the original opening statement of the ***Chor*** theme.

The *Ballade* is the least interesting in terms of structure due to its plain, bi-thematic 1st and 3rd sections while also restricting most of its themes to the central section. There are effective moments in this central storm, and in all, it contains the most attractive themes from the set.

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[83] And found to a lesser extent in his earlier *mélodie Aimer* (1849).
[84] Stove, *César Franck: His Life and Times,* 281.
[85] 'Ces chorals, chacun avec son plan nouveau, posent des problèmes de composition et les résolvent avec un art suprême. Pour le premier, l'auteur aurait averti Vincent d'Indy de la confusion que peut provoquer la recherche du thème : « Vous verrez, le vrai choral, ce n'est pas le choral ; il se fait au cours du morceau. »' Vallas, *La Véritable Histoire de César Franck,* 291.

Though as regards form, the individual themes are not developed in a way that an older, more mature Franck would. The central section commences in a jarring, terraced manner, more ineffectively than any of the previous works in this set: Op. 3 *Églogue* has the 'development'; Op. 5 *Caprice* precedes with a capriccio cadenza; Op. 7 *Souvenirs* has unique musical material in the form of the Schubertian ***C*** theme. Here in the Op. 9 *Ballade* the second section simply *starts*, after a repetition of ***A*** and ***B*** thematic pairs, lacking any structural integrity or meaning.

Criticism of these works could be applied to a far more 'mature' Franck:

> The *Fantaisie* [from *Six Pieces*] is in three sections, with a central episode in *Allegretto* tempo flanked by two outer episodes. The initial *Lento* is rather too long to be part of such a simple structure and contains little modulation.[86]

The general uniform structure of the works is a criticism that would also be applied to *Les Béatitudes*:

> This form is beautiful, justly proportioned, striking and logical. The difficulty is that it reproduces itself too exactly. It is like a series of triptychs placed side by side. [...] This is admirable once, twice, even three times. But eight successive triptychs'!- they threaten to become monotonous, and Franck's music has not been able to escape this danger altogether.[87]

The conclusiveness of the chord pairs/phrasal pairs are far too definitive; the ubiquitous perfect cadences mean the lulling music tugs and stops, smothering the melodic line from flowing and rendering the listener a little sea-sick, and despite lasting not much less than the triptychs, we feel like we have barely left port by the time we finish the work.

Considering the frequent allusions to organisation in Franck's works, one cannot resist mentioning the notebooks of Franck's youth, in which he meticulously and accurately worked through sums and multiplication:[88]

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[86] Davies, *César Franck,* 75.
[87] Tierost, *César Franck,* 45.
[88] I was lucky enough to see first-hand these note-books which are housed in the *Bibliothèque nationale de France.*

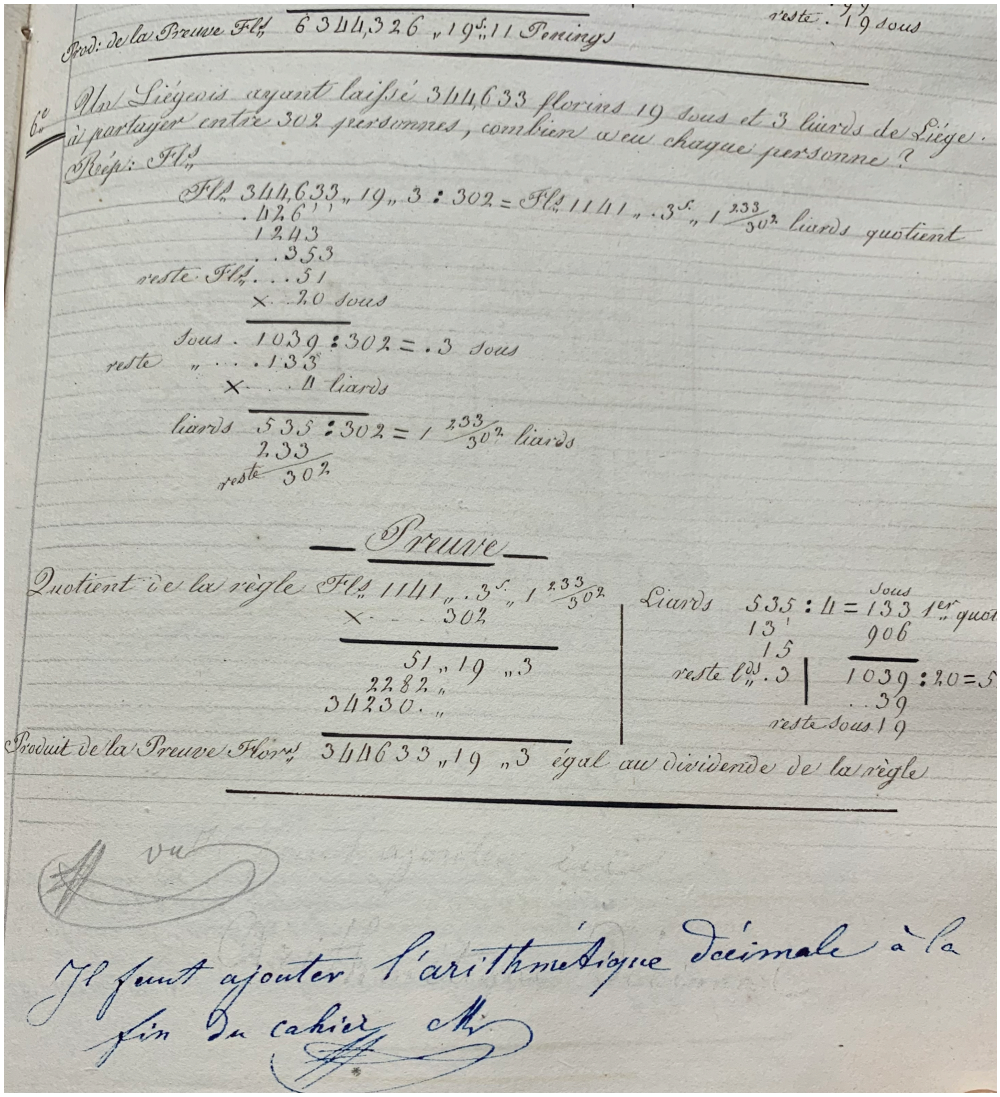

Illustration 1: One of the reams of pages in Franck's notebook from his youth, immaculately laid out and marked and signed by his father. I was kindly allowed access at the *Bibliothèque nationale de France*.

It is not unreasonable that the strict vigour in the household under his father's watch overflowed into the compositional side of Franck's life, as seen by the rigorous and methodical formal treatment.

Role of Introduction

The ***intro*** to each piece fulfils a different role, but always holds a function outside of the introduction. It is the most interesting structural tool in Franck's compositional arsenal in this period, always having an element of duality that functions differently in each of the early piano pieces.

In the Op. 3 *Églogue* the introductory theme appears five times, notably introducing each section and finishing the work. Its role is preparatory as well as establishing tonal centres, including the ***intro'*** at the start of the second section which passes through 4 different keys in a 'development' of sorts.

The introduction in the Op. 5 *Caprice* is heard once in each section, but again has a more fundamental function. It provides contrast in the first section, a 'caprice' element to the slow, diatonic ***A*** theme. It also concludes the work in an *animato staccatissimo* coda, approaching a sort of end-orientated structure and a prevailing unifying element throughout the work, one which gives the impression of needing to be resolved.

In the Op. 7 *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle* the introduction appears ostensibly in two complimentary phrases, an *Allegretto commodo* with an E^{b} pedal in the top voice, followed by the *Poco piú lento* 'chorale theme'. As seen in the examination they later separate, with the chorale response in the introduction becoming the dominant theme in the third section after a contrasting clash in the 2nd section with the *molto vivace* ***D*** theme. That the introduction contains within it the seed that will sprout to dominate the piece is one of the work's most remarkable features.

The material in the introduction to the Op. 9 *Ballade* returns as a *poco animato* and *staccatissimo* theme three times. Hints of this character are present in the *animato* phrases of the introduction. The introduction therefore is also the first theme, disguised as an introduction with a slow tempo, fermatas and sparse texture.

There are also similarities concerning the introductions, as pointed out by Lin: 'The presentation of contrasting dynamics and textures within a short pattern is a typical characteristic in many introductions in Franck's early solo works.'[89] We can add to Lin's comments the usage

[89] Lin, "From Virtuoso to Master: César Franck as a Composer of Solo Piano Music", 80.

of features such as wide range of the keyboard, frequent fermatas for rhythmic ambiguity, a clear tonal centre, and in each case with an emphatic prominence of a dominant pedal. Lin was the first to notice the importance of introductions in Franck's music and called attention to it.[90] Preparatory introductions can be found in Franck's two late triptychs too: the *Poco Allegro* found between the *choral* and *fugue*, and the introduction before the *aria*, material which is similarly replicated at the quiet conclusion of the *Prélude, aria et final.* Franck's use of introductions is idiosyncratic as it not just established the tonality but commonly disguises thematic material,– the fugue in the case of the *poco allegro* in the *Prélude, choral et fugue*. Both triptychs, however, could be considered as starting *in media res*, without an introduction to the preludes.

In each of these early piano works the introduction returns in all three sections, unifying the large 15-minute works. Along with the return to the ***B*** theme in the dramatic central sections, whether by chance or through conscious organisation, this compositional technique of returning to the introductory material is clearly a characteristic of Franck's piano writing of this period.[91] It is distinct from the usage by other composers in that instead of creating a fantasy element, as in the case of Mendelssohn, or preparing the tonality, as in the case of Chopin, they have a predominantly formal function of coalescing the various themes and sections together as a sort of musical bookmark used to denote important sectional divides of the music.[92]

Cyclic Form?

Cyclical form is an often-contested term, with a variety of definitions. Robert Jardillier in 1929 writes 'cyclical form is that of a work resulting from a main theme or a few main themes in very

[90] Lin critiqued d'Indy's analysis (56) but overlooked the significance of the introduction in the Caprice (60).
[91] Schoenberg elucidates the composer's decision to whether or not to include one: 'Fortunately a composer knows when it is not advisable to begin a piece directly with the subject matter, and when he needs preliminaries. It does not matter whether or not a theorist finds such preparatory sections to be justified. In most cases they are imponderables, and one could scarcely contend that the introduction to Beethoven's Fourth Symphony or *Sonata Pathétique* could be omitted. Of course, even such things as the first two measures of the Eroica or the first two phrases of the Fifth Symphony would be, strictly speaking, superfluous, were there not such imponderables as a composer's sense of form and expression.' Schoenberg*, Structural functions of harmony*, 166.
[92] Nevertheless, there are similarities with the style at the time: 'The return of the introduction prior to this reprise, incidentally, is common in Liszt, and is also a feature of late Chopin (the Fourth Ballade and Polonaise-Fantasy), and more generally of the Fantasy as a genre.' Samson, *Virtuosity and the Musical Work: The Transcendental Studies of Liszt,* 155–156.

small numbers; they give rise to divergent developments, and the whole work is dominated by them';[93] Charles Rosen described cyclical form as 'an ambiguous as well as a vague term',[94] and more recently Benedict Taylor's *Mendelssohn, Time and Memory* (2011) created several distinct differences between the types of cyclic form. Regardless of discrepancies in definitions, Franck's name is bound to this term.[95]

Franck's compositional procedure was already responsive to some form of callback in his music. One work from this *early* period ubiquitously branded 'cyclic' is the Piano Trio in F♯ minor:

> It's true: the new structure of the 1st Trio, Op. 1, gives us a straightforward, obvious, almost forceful access to what is known as cyclical form, or at least to the form that Franck was to employ more widely. It remains to be seen what significance, at a given time, in a twenty-year-old composer, in relation to the historical evolution of music, the need to develop a work according to the principle of the recurrence of themes has. The idea of a cycle implies that of return and nostalgia. The unity it guarantees appeals to the listener's emotional memory, giving him or her the delights of a reassuring anamnesis.[96]

William Cole's description that 'the 'cycle' is completed when the opening themes come again to an end',[97] could be applied as a label to these four-piano works with their frequent return of the introductory theme, though the question of whether or not they are 'large-scale works' is difficult despite having a performance time normally only a few minutes shorter than the *Prélude, choral et fugue*. However, because of their lack of tonal progression and their uniformity, the short

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[93] 'La forme cyclique est celle d'une œuvre issue d'un thème principal ou de quelques thèmes principaux en très petit nombre ; ils donnent lieu à des développements qui divergent, et tout l'ouvrage s'en trouve dominé'. Robert Jardillier*, César Franck : La Musique de Chambre*, (Paris : Librairie Mellottée, 1929), 38.

[94] Rosen, *The Romantic Generation,* 88.

[95] 'Its primary dissemination, however, seems to have arisen through César Franck and his pupils. While Franck himself was fairly reticent about the cyclic qualities of his compositions, Vincent d'Indy in particular was a keen activist for the Franck school and the 'principle of cyclic composition' which it espoused.' Taylor, *Mendelssohn, time and memory: the romantic conception of cyclic form*, 9.

[96] 'Il est vrai : la structure neuve du 1er Trio op. 1 nous fait accéder de plain-pied, de façon évidente, presque appuyée, à ce qu'il est convenu d'appeler la forme cyclique*, du moins celle dont Franck généralisera l'usage. Reste à savoir quelle signification revêt, à une époque donnée, chez un compositeur de vingt ans, par rapport à l'évolution historique de la musique, le besoin d'élaborer une œuvre suivant le principe de la récurrence des thèmes. L'idée de cycle implique celle de retour et de nostalgie. L'unité dont elle se porte garante sollicite la mémoire affective de l'auditeur, livrant celui-ci aux délices d'une sécurisante anamnèse.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 131. Taylor places this trio under both 'End-orientated (circular) cyclic forms' and 'Non-end-orientated cyclic forms'. Taylor, *Mendelssohn, time and memory: the romantic conception of cyclic form*, 12–13.

[97] William Cole, *The Form of Music,* (London: The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, 1969), 55.

musical journey means the 'nostalgic' return was never too far away, unlike the *mélodies* for example.

Nevertheless, applying this term to these piano works would be somewhere between facetious and erroneous.[98] Taylor's outlines all contain an element of multi-movement procedure, which cannot be seen in these four piano works. Each one is nominally a single movement piece and, despite their long duration, they are not of the grand gestures usually associated with such a label. It adds nothing to public knowledge to label them as such, only serving to confuse the definition of an already convoluted and frequently applied musical term. Unless there is a grand overhaul of the definition of cyclic form, these works are certainly not cyclic form; however, one may see in the demonstrated economic reuse of material, the recall of earlier themes in contrasting sections as a precursor to Taylor's *Coda apotheosis* and *Synthetic or integrative* definitions.[99] We find the recall of the major key *B* themes in the minor central sections as a *Reminiscence* under *non-end orientated cyclic forms*, in which:

> often a lyrical second subject or slow-movement theme which had seemed to offer some temporary respite or a vision of potential happiness – is recalled as a passing reminiscence within the piece's finale, often as a nostalgic interlude before the final section.[100]

However, their position in the absolute centre of the work really gives the impression of being the dramatic crowning moment, along with the fact that they are not generally strongly end-orientated structures.

Some other works have been referenced as early explorations of cyclic form: *Variations brillantes*,[101] *Grande Pièce Symphonique*[102] and most importantly his Piano Trio Op. 1 No. 1.[103]

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[98] 'If every time a composer makes reference to previous material during the course of a movement we are invited to consider its whole form 'cyclic', every work ever written must be cyclic, which is absurd. It is only when reference appears constantly and consistently throughout that we can feel safe in so describing it.' Demuth, *César Franck,* 55.
[99] Taylor, *Mendelssohn, time and memory: the romantic conception of cyclic form*, 12–13.
[100] *Ibid.,* 14.
[101] Demuth, *César Franck*, 144.
[102] Fauquet, *César Franck,* 361.
[103] 'C'était semble-t-il l'un des rares points qui éveillaient la susceptibilité de Franck. Ainsi, au lendemain de son exécution au cours de la première séance de la S.N.M., le 8 I 1887, le *Trio* op. 1 n°1 en *fa* dièse était considéré par

There are also combinations of themes, such as the climax of Op. 5 *Caprice*, the second section in Op. 7 *Souvenirs* and that found in Op. 9 *Ballade's* introduction. His scarcity of melodic material and latent monothematicsm in these works — though more noticeable in his Piano Trio Op. 1 No. 2 — which required re-use and call-backs in unexpected moments, can also be seen as origins of the cyclical procedure. Demuth posited regarding the formation of such a form:

> The advantage of the system is, as has been stated, that the work is one organic whole and the movements cannot be separated. This is perfectly logical if one is prepared to consider a symphony or sonata in several movements as one continuous work, with breaks, as it were.[104]

The organic process of thematic evolution is not as present here as in the late works – the thematic material is not made up of small cells which are then expanded and transformed in a dramatic denouement, 'transformation denotes progress' as Swindells succinctly put it,[105] but complete phrases are reproduced in their entirety. What is the reason behind the return of the *B* theme? Is the effect one that encourages nostalgia? Or is it purely a compositional technique that Franck employed as standard practice? They are marked *grandioso* in the *Églogue* and *Ballade*, *pp* growing until *ff con passione* in the *Caprice,* and if we consider the *chor* theme as functioning on a similar level, it climaxes the work with *fff poco ritenuto il tempo.* Clearly, Franck wanted us to sit up and pay attention when this moment happens, and it was of special importance to the young Franck himself.

In general, the situations do not exploit the motifs, the transformations too slight to belie some tensions or deep expression. But they are also not ostentatious, forcing drama onto a listener where it does not exist.

J. (Jennius, alias Joncières ?) comme une « œuvre d'autant plus intéressante que, datant de la première jeunesse du compositeur, elle marque déjà les tendances élevées et avancées qui caractérisent ses œuvres d'aujourd'hui ».' (*Mén*., 16 I 1887, p. 55), as read in Fauquet, *César Franck,* 718.

[104] Demuth, *César Franck,* 53-4.

[105] Swindells, "Tonality, functionality and Beethovenian form in the late instrumental works of César Franck", 278.

Performance Indications

There are two indications that stand out throughout Franck's entire output – *andante* or its derivations as a tempo indication; and *dolce*.

As mentioned before, *Andante* is frequently used as a tempo marking, from the adolescent works such as the *2ième Fantaisie*, to the early piano works: Op. 3 *Églogue* starts with *Allegretto, quasi Andantino*, a tempo for the majority of the work; Op. 5 *Caprice* ***A*** theme, however, is marked *moderato*, not far from an *andantino*, but should not be attempted any slower due to its cloying nature and harmonic poverty; Op. 7 *Souvenirs* is marked *Allegretto commodo* with the chorale theme *poco più lento* (later *Andantino sostenuto* when it returns), so the dominant theme is a derivation of *Andante*; Op. 9 *Ballade* starts *Andante* and continues at such a tempo, with the return of ***B*** theme in the dramatic central section also marked as such.

Dolce, less individual than *andante*, has a curious frequency in Franck's works, from the recurrent *dolcissimo* to the peculiar alternation from *non troppo dolce* to *più dolce* in a sequence in the *Prélude, choral et fugue* (bars 35 & 37 respectively), followed by a *sempre espress. e dolce* (bar 42) and in the frequent alterations between the former and latter in the *Prélude, [aria] et final.* It is not a marking commonly associated with what we consider a *Franckian* style; nevertheless, we find it in the majority of his works – from the regularity in the *3ième Grande Fantaisie* from his adolescent period to his early piano pieces and his late works. The *Églogue* is filled with *dolce* and *semplice* markings, often superfluously – who would consider playing the music anything in any other way than simple and sweet? – with each iteration of 1st theme and at points throughout the whole work. There is an abundance of *dolce/sempre dolce/dolcissimo* markings (bars 1, 26, 42, 74, 95, 100, 137, 254, 357, 389, 410, 415) for a total of twelve times. This is extended to the most difficult three-hands moment in the 2nd section when its technical difficulty should be performed *dolce*

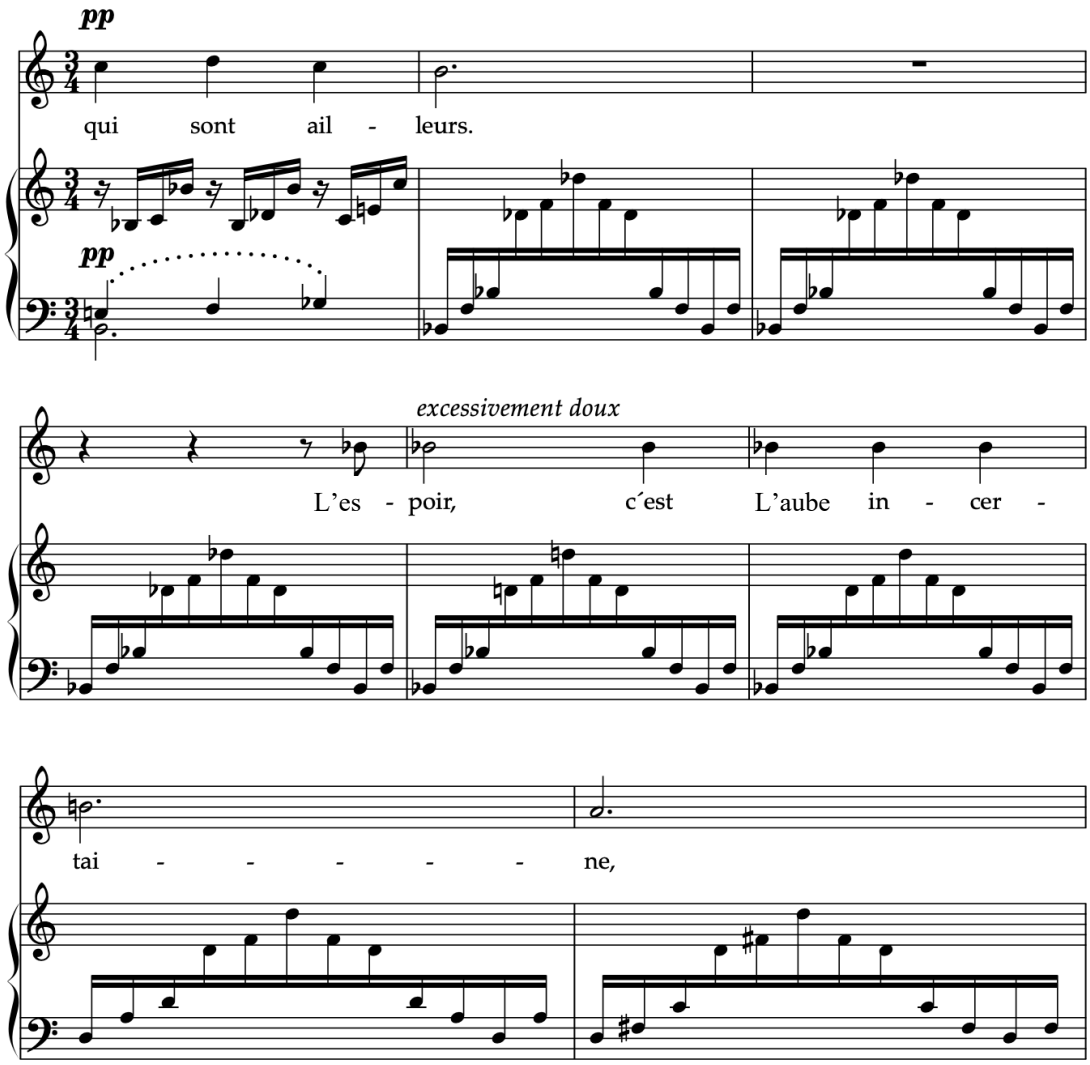
and then *p. espress.* in its sequence (bars 254–261 & 270–279 respectively). Franck considered the two markings almost interchangeable.[106]

The most technically demanding moment in the *Caprice*, also a three-hands climactic moment, is similarly marked *pp* & *espressivo ma dolce* from bar 425, causing immense problems for the pianist willing to perform with Franckian intention. The *Souvenirs* has replaced *dolce* with *espressivo,* but as a whole, it is a work where Franck was more reticent with performance markings. We still nevertheless have *Sempre dolce* (bar 335) and *dolcissimo* (bar 343). Despite the works' generally denser pianistic texture and more fleshed out triads, it has markings such as *delicato* (bar 81) and *leggierissimo* (bar 367), restraining the performer and reminding them of his *cantabile* intentions. The *Ballade* continues the sparser Franckian markings, this time replacing *dolce* with an abundance of *espressivo* markings (bars 66, 126, 142, 262, 269, 325, 333 & 343).

The conflicting ideas mentioned earlier — when Franck utilises his most thick and dramatic textures which often employ *three-hands technique* – are marked with a *dolce* indication, perhaps to restrain the performer (though this is not always the case, such as the heavy-handed *ff* return to ***A*** theme). Franck's most effective and personal moments, judging from the marking such as those found in bars 310–316, *molto espressivo, dolcissimo* and *molto espress.*, utilise some form of three-hands technique. These moments use *Franckian basses, discreet strong beats* and counterpoint, with a strong tenor voice: *Églogue* bars 254–261 & 270–279; *Caprice* bars 310–316 & 425–435; *Souvenirs* bars 343–346; no analogous moment in the *Ballade.* They always appear in the 2nd and 3rd sections, once the thematic material has been sufficiently developed, and often as a culmination of the theme.

[106] Armstrong comments on their interchangeability: '[American pianist James Giles] left it up to the student to decide whether to take one or the other marker as indicative of saccharine sweetness or intimate, warm confiding; but further, this exchange suggested to the author both the obvious futility of adopting *concrete* ways of expression and of relying on a particular point of emotional resonance to be universally communicated at any given moment in any given score.' Armstrong, "The Catholic-Christian Masking of César Franck and Alternative Erotic Readings of his Piano Quintet, Violin Sonata, and Prelude, Chorale and Fugue", 130-1.

The *mélodies* from this period are similarly marked with curious indications. *À cette terre où l'on ploie sa tente* features many indications in French, starting with *doux avec calme*, the *soft/sweet/gentle* indication repeated many times, with a central section played *excessivement doux*:



Example 56: César Franck, *À cette terre où l'on ploie sa tente* (1847), bars 70–77. A setting of Victor Hugo's *Les Rayons et les Ombres*. This *excessivement doux* comes at a moment of *modal interchange*, and a few bars later he writes *toujours excessivement doux* with *ppp* (82). This is not the first *modal interchange* in the mélodie — earlier in bar 30, marked *ppp* – and also certainly not the only modal interchange in the early mélodies. It is not always major to minor either – in *L'Ange et l'enfant* and *Ninon* we also have effective moments of minor to major, bars 43 and 72 respectively.

In fact, *doux/dolce* opens *L'Émir de Bengador* (1843), *Robin Gray* (1843), *Souvenance* (1846), *À cette terre où l'on ploie sa tente* (1847) and *Aimer* (1849). This is 5 out of 6 *mélodies* from this period,[107]

[107] This is not including the *Les trois exilés* (1848), considered a *chant national* to the words of Colonel Bernard Delfosse), and *Le Sylphe* (1843) for piano, voice and cello, which is exceptionally sparse in performance indications.

the only missing is *L'Ange et l'Enfant* (1846), with the mournful words by *Jean Reboul* (1796–1864) on the death of a child. Of the works not in this period, 8 out of 10 start with *doux/dolce* marking as an opening.[108] These markings are most commonly found above the voice as it enters, explicitly linking the *doux/dolce* with the singer's voice. *Andante* markings are just as ubiquitous:[109] 4 of 6 are marked some form of *andante*, the other 2 marked *assez lent*; 6 of the 10 later in life have *andante*, with an expected slowing down of tempo in late style to more *lent*.

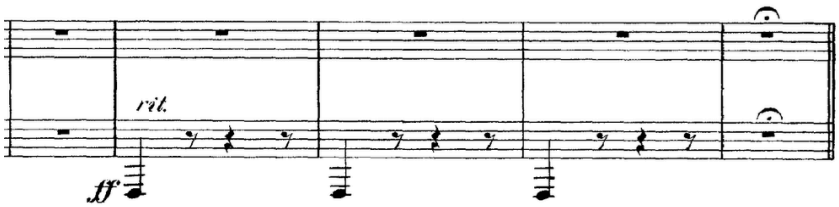
It is little known that Franck was always interested in the voice and the *mélodie* was his most consistent genre, writing at least one in every decade of his life, to not mention his large operas and oratorios *Stradella* (1841), *Ruth* (1843–6), *Le valet de ferme* (1851–3), *Les Béatitudes* (1869–1879), *Hulda* (1879–85) and *Ghiselle* (1888–90). It is not a stretch to say that Franck was greatly influenced by the allure of the voice, which resulted in often writing music which he considered *doux* or *dolce*.

It is clear from these works that Franck was very comfortable with *dolce andante* in a chamber music setting. We saw in the visual representations by duration, that the 4 works sit in their walking speed for an excessive amount of time. How could Franck assimilate and facilitate the need to compose in the zeitgeist of the time, with colourful etudes and virtuosic fantasies, when his inclination was to compose works in a walking speed with an emphasis on melodic lines?

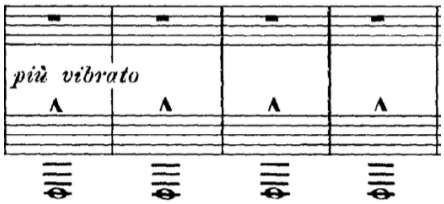
Another curious marking is his use of *vibrato/vibrant*, spoken about earlier regarding *Cathedral of Sound* and tied to the introductory material while accompanying the basses. As an example, *vibrant* can be seen in the *Églogue* in bars 1, 58, 335, 373, 376, 380, 392, 396, 398, 400, generally confined to the basses and emerging tenor voices. The ***intro*** material, as opposed to the

[108] The delicate *Roses et papillons* (between 1857 and 1860) and the grand *La Procession* (1889), his final venture, are the *mélodies* missing *dolce/doux* markings.
[109] Andante was a mainstay in his teaching too: [Widor on Franck] 'He was satisfied to give instruction in free improvisation on an immutable plan of andante' As found in Osche, *Organists and Organ Playing in Nineteenth-Century France and Belgium,* 183–184.

opening ***chor***, is always accompanied in the opening with *vibrato*, for a total of 4 times before the entrance of ***A***. The only instances in the *Ballade* are solo *più vibrato* basses before the commencement of 3rd section.



Example 57a: *Ballade* bars 45–49, just before 1st section proper. In this first appearance it is presented with shorter note values and is not accompanied by vibrato.



Example 57b: *Ballade* bars 385–388, analogous moment preparing the 3rd section proper. Later accompanied middle and upper register chords to emphasise F#7.

The indication helps create a *Cathedral of Sound*, as mentioned, like the vibrating air in a cathedral, applied usually to long, resonant notes, as seen in example 56b, almost always occurring with repetitive tones reverberating with the use of the pedal. Finally, also of note, there is a curious *mystérieux* marking in his early *Souvenance* (1846) at bar 29 at a moment of tertiary modulation.

These works in Performance

Throughout writing this thesis, the works have been, in essence, examined almost exclusively in their written format. Jim Samson wrote in detail, particularly regarding works from this period, how reducing a work in such a way

> strips it of a sense of authorship or ownership, a sense that someone worked to produce it. It dehumanises and neutralises the work. [...] A performance, on the other hand, is itself an activity; it is time-specific, singular and expressive, asserting the work, but at the same time instantiating it in a unique and particular way.[110]

[110] Samson, *Virtuosity and the Musical Work: The Transcendental Studies of Liszt*, 67.

What do these works in performance tell us that an analytical thesis fails to? It is impossible to accurately transmit in words the calmness that extends for long periods of time in all four works, typically in their ***A*** themes (both themes ***A*** and ***B*** in the case of the *Églogue*). This will be a point of strife depending on the state of the mind of the audience and performer; many will find the permeating *andante* tempos and heavy reliance on the tonic dull to the point of vacating the performance hall, while others may find the experience broaching on a spiritual serenity.[111]

It is also no surprise that these works in general do not particularly impress – the *Caprice* notwithstanding. Understandably, during my entrance exam for my master's degree in performance the *Églogue* and *Ballade* left the adjudicators unimpressed with the work's lack of display of the ability of the pianist, who were then later glad to have heard the central section for a showcase of the performer's skill.[112] There is no reason to not transfer this experience on an audience. The question remains on the performer – do they commit to the sometimes cloying *dolce* and pervasive *andante* speed or, with a conscientious intention, try to push through the simple triadic harmony with the hope not to encumber the audience with a stale atmosphere. The former accentuates their meditative quality and calmness, while the latter would focus on presenting an unknown musical curiosity which they had undoubtedly not heard before. Regardless, it is difficult to imagine a situation where, despite their length, they are the centrepieces in a program.

Their repetitive nature can cause problems for performers – do repetitions require great contrast or, as Rosen describes Scarlatti,[113] should the effect come from their insistence? Franck's contrast comes from differences in distinct musical material, which are often in opposition to

[111] I have performed in public and spent time recording two of the works in question – the Op. 3 *Églogue* and the Op. 9 *Ballade.* The *Églogue* was particularly divisive amongst my piano professors.
[112] As mentioned earlier, the three-hands section of the ***B*** theme is far more difficult than it at first appears to be. It is easy to imagine that most pianists would be more comfortable in most of the central semi-quavers sections (barring the other three-hands section) than this moment.
[113] '[A Scarlatti phrase] is made up of short passages played twice or even three times in a row; to play these repetitions as loud-soft echoes is to betray the music, for much of the effect should come from its insistence. The belief that everything that appears twice should be differentiated is an unconscious and sometimes noxious principle in the mind of almost every performer today.' Rosen, *The Classical Style*, 63.

one another, whereas when themes are repeated, they are almost always with the same dynamic and tempo markings. However much it may irk the performer and the audience, Franck *insists* on an ambulatory speed with a *dolce* atmosphere. The lack of architectural weight at the end of the works leads to a certain redundancy in the last section in two of the works – *Églogue* and *Ballade*.

Several of the early piano works in succession would also not be successful – their constructions are ostensibly very similar, with audience members undoubtedly relieved in the dramatic central sections. And while a uniform structure does not inhibit a successful performance (an entire set of Chopin etudes will likely always be a staple of concert programs) their lack of other variety — textural qualities, keyboard elements, strong rhythmic drive — would undoubtedly not be efficacious. In essence there is just not enough variance – within themselves, and between themselves. For this reason, the trios and the mélodies from this period are far more effective in a concert setting.

In part, it is precisely these defects that drew me to these works, because there is no pretension nor perfunctory crowd-pleasing nature in them. It is unlikely that a pianist can render as masterpieces, but the performer may envelope themselves in an atmosphere that Franck created outside of the norm of the period. It is my impression that *dolce* is marked for long expressive lines with a *semplice* atmosphere, whereas *espressivo* is marked to accentuate single notes in a line where otherwise they may get lost in the texture,[114] though the dispute of the practical differences in implementation of the terms is likely to continue.

[114] The ever practical and elucidating Rosen commented on the marking regarding Beethoven: 'He [Beethoven] often directs a passage to be played *espressivo*, a term never found in Mozart, and it is clear that he meant by that term a free interpretation of the tempo: at two points of the *Prestissimo* movement of the Sonata in E Major, op. 109, the indication *un poco espressivo* is followed eight bars later by the direction *a tempo*. Pianists often interpret this direction of *un poco espressivo* (when they pay attention to it) as a slight but gradual slowing-down or *ritardando*, but it should be an immediate but not exaggerated change or *ritenuto*.* [Every *espressivo* in the Sonata in C minor, op. 111 is accompanied by *rit.*– that is *ritenuto* or *ritenente.*]' Rosen, *Piano Notes*, 207.

Finally, the question of their value is directly related to performance culture. We have already encountered how in 1846 Franck was deemed 'naive, excessively naive, and this simplicity served him well in the composition of his oratorio of *Ruth*'.[115] It was precisely this 'simplicity' that charmed audiences in its resurgence in the early 1870's.[116] The question of the early piano works and their place on the concert platform hinges on what audiences in their various contexts expect and what pianists are willing to use as a vehicle of presentation. Their naïve, simplistic charm can be seen as suited to a more personal space, such as a chamber setting — indeed, this was the atmosphere in which they were produced — but their repetitive nature discourages their representation in competitions and large concert hall settings, where performers prioritise the emphasis of their skill and exceptional abilities at the instrument. Nevertheless, while none of these four piano works will make it into the standard 'canon',[117] their charm has seduced the author of this thesis to perform and study these works in depth and will most likely continue to do so for others too due to the uniqueness of their soundworld. Only with a monumental shift away from standard programming, say for example towards a predilection for concerts consisting of solely one composer and their stylistic development, or if performers shift the expectation of a piano concert away from the 'canon' and virtuosity to highlight more of a live meditative experience, could it be conceived that these works would have a stable place in the standard repertory. Perhaps their place has been, and always will be, as unknown musical curiosities from a well-known composer.

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[115] Henri Blanchard, *Revue et gazette musicale*, (1846), 12–13.
[116] Joël-Marie Fauquet, "Les deux versions de Ruth (1845/1871). Essai d'interprétation d'un double succès" in *César Franck et son temps : actes du colloque de l'Université de Liège*. Bruxelles : Soc. Belge de Musicologie (1991): 97–108.
[117] 'For us "canon" is more or less equivalent with "standard repertoire". We can think of it as a loosely codified organism, broadly accepted, with some degree of flexibility on small exchanges or new member'. Marcia J. Citron "Gender, Professionalism and the Musical Canon" in The Journal of Musicology, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Winter, 1990): 102.

Last Remarks on Franckian Features in these Four Works

The characteristics discussed in Chapter 2 *Musical style*, many of which are not solely localised in Franck's works, produce when in combination what is suspected to be found by writers as that elusive 'Franckian' sound.

The *Cathedral of Sound* moments in these works produce an effect outside of the zeitgeist of the early romantic virtuoso and, in combination with the abundance of *Franckian pedals* and *registral transfer*, textural details lace these works with the usual Franckian flavour; an exemplary work from this period is the effective *Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne* (1846), full of *Cathedral of Sound* and stasis. The *Infinite Melodies,* particularly those found in the Op. 9 *Ballade*, are among Franck's most inspired moments from these early piano works, and each work is abounded with *pivot points*. If not for the recent discovery of the Op. 7 *Souvenirs*, there would not be a convincing instance of *choral bells* as a Franckian feature in the early piano works looked at in this thesis. If we are to regard Franck as a grand architect of music, the structural attention and economy of material is present in these works, however methodically repetitive they appear at times due to their sometimes dull thematic material. The usage of *discreet down beats* immediately presents itself on the page, but they often seem more a consequence of variation than an intrinsic element of a theme as they are with later works, and Franck's use of *silence* and fermatas can be even more criticised in these works than elsewhere, as their pervasive presence often brings the piece to a standstill before the music really takes off.

If not for their stagnant tonality, would they be seen more often on the concert platform? And would Franck have broken through in the 1840s to become a fashionable composer? Despite the oft–noted detail that Franck studied under Reicha in his youth,[118] the harmonic qualities in

[118] For example, almost a purely Germanic perspective can be found in Gouin's analysis of *the Prélude, choral et fugue*, a work which Franck wrote at the age of 62 considered as stemming from several months of tutelage at the age of 13: 'the composer's esteem for German repertoire, alongside some early counterpoint training within the German tradition under Reicha, likely played a role in forming Franck's style.' Gouin, "Teleology in César Franck's Prélude, Choral et Fugue", 110.

general are what distances these works furthest from his late productions. The monotonality and repetitive rhythmic nature result in a cathartic meditative quality broken by the occasional proto-early *ff* outburst.

It has been ascertained that many of the features found as stemming from his organ practice were already present in these early productions, confirmed also with a quick glance at his large early oratorio *Ruth* (1843–6) and other works from this period, meaning that these compositional qualities can be with confidence seen as Franck's style and not a direct outcome of his study of the organ.[119] The critique of these works as *salon pieces* or the importance of improvisation has yet to be addressed and is outside of the scope of this thesis to truly be answered. However elusive such terms may be, the fantasy element within a large scale form with an emphasis on variation is present. Nevertheless, the spiritual nature of the early piano works as a consequence of the earlier mentioned *serene* features stands out in these compositions.

The nature of the quality of these works is difficult to assess; they seem to teeter precariously for the contemporary listener: balanced on a fine line between insipid and naïve, and the innocent and charming. The works give an impression of structural building blocks of thematic material that are neatly chiselled out and placed together in generally uniform and predictable schemes, playing mainly with minor textural changes rather than intricate pianistic qualities. Franck himself was aware of the simple charm of some his early compositions:

> In 1861, he [Liszt] would consider performing *Ruth* [published in 1845]. At this announcement Franck, coming out of his shell, suddenly became eloquent, as he rarely would be for one of his own works:

[119] 'À vrai dire, la *Ballade*, comme le *Caprice* et, dans une moindre mesure, l'*Églogue* sont des œuvres de démonstration un peu uniformes à une époque où les métamorphoses organiques du piano s'achèvent. Elles marquent la volonté de Franck d'exploiter avec une écriture expansive et admirablement maitrisée les ressources colorées, l'étendue - pourquoi ne pas dire l'espace, tant l'écriture polyphonique s'y déploie largement - offertes par le piano à huit octaves que Pape avait présenté l'année précédente et que Franck avait su faire sonner avec une dextérité qui avait ravi tout le monde. À cet effet, il multiplie dans ses morceaux les indications de nuances et d'expression, se fait un jeu d'opposer les registres extrêmes, de soustraire la mélodie au scintillement de l'aigu pour la plonger dans la sonorité pleine et chaude du grave. Il y a déjà là, d'une certaine manière, registration. Fétis n'écrira-t-il pas du piano à huit octaves, en 1844, que « c'est l'étendue que l'orgue le plus complet a dans son grand développement, depuis sa note la plus basse jusqu'à la plus élevée du son le plus aigu » ?.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 149–150.

> 'You tell me, dear Sir, about a project that smiles at me and appeals to me in a special way: the performance of my oratorio *Ruth* in Dresden. This work is not too extensive; it lasts about an hour and a half; it is not difficult to assemble and easy to execute.... This work will surprise you: it is impossible to recognise the hand that wrote the trios: it is very simple. However, I am particularly fond of it, because of the ideas themselves and the particular colour of the whole work.'[120]

Criticism of *Ruth* could well be interchangeable with the early piano works in question here.[121] In fact, Andrew Thomson finds similar elements in his first early piano work: 'the Eclogue for piano, which already achieves a sublime serenity'.[122] The impression of monotony and stasis, as that found in *Cathedral of Sound*, is one that carried through to his late orchestral works too. In a review of Franck's *Les Éolides* from 1874, Hyacinthe Kirsch writes:

> M. César Franck's *Éolides*: a skilfully written composition, but one which is maintained from one end to the other in a cloudy and monotonous penumbra. It sounds like an accompaniment with suppressed vocals. This song that the ear tries in vain to disentangle through the harmonic meanderings of the orchestra is, once again, the IDEA".[123]

The continuity of compositional elements and the endurance of similar criticism for his works throughout his life demonstrate a connection that ties across his creative periods that until now had not been fully addressed.

Franck's style and Evolution

This narrow study has been confined to a select few works from a limited period, generally referring on the authorities of others for Franck's other genres. However, even with the focus on the few original piano works by Franck, we can see a sense of stylistic uniformity that bridges the

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[120] 'En 1861 celui-ci songera à jouer Ruth. À cette annonce Franck, sortant de sa réserve, deviendra éloquent tout à coup comme il le sera rarement pour une de ses œuvres: Vous me parlez, cher Monsieur, d'un projet qui me sourit et me tente singulièrement : l'exécution de mon oratorio Ruth à Dresde. Cet ouvrage n'est pas trop considérable ; il dure une heure et demie environ ; il n'est pas lourd à monter et d'une exécution facile [...]. Cet ouvrage vous surprendra : il est impossible d'y reconnaître la main qui a écrit les trios : il est d'une très grande simplicité. Je l'affectionne cependant singulièrement, à cause des idées elles-mêmes et de la couleur particulière de toute l'œuvre.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 188–189.

[121] 'Aujourd'hui, Ruth est injustement réduite au silence, prisonnière de la réputation de mièvrerie que lui font les bons sentiments qu'elle exprime, victime aussi des préjugés qui s'attachent à la jeunesse de l'auteur, à son inexpérience prétendue, à l'éveil réputé tardif de sa personnalité.' *Ibid.,* 171.

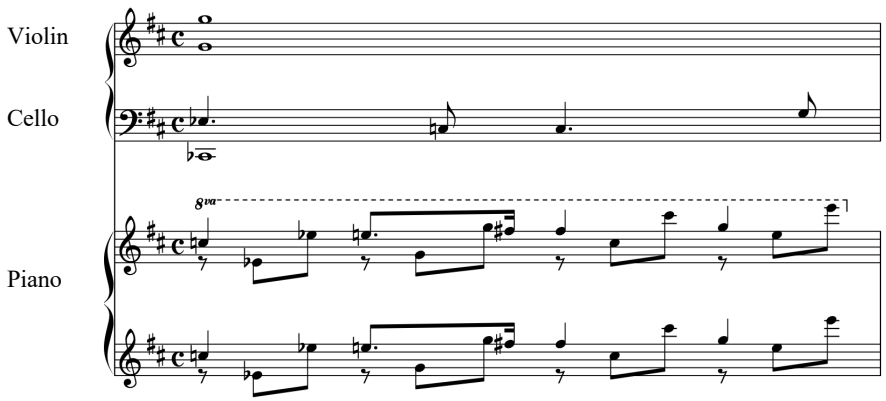
[122] Thomson, "Fixing Franck", 112.

[123] « La plupart de ces considérations s'appliquent aux Éolides de M. César Franck : composition habilement écrite, mais qui se maintient d'un bout à l'autre dans une pénombre nuageuse et monotone. On croirait entendre un accompagnement dont le chant est supprimé. Ce chant que l'oreille cherche en vain à démêler à travers les méandres harmoniques de l'orchestre, c'est, encore une fois, l'IDEE ». As found in José Quintin, "Le retour de Franck à Liège", *César Franck et son temps : actes du colloque de l'Université de Liège* (Bruxelles : Soc. Belge de Musicologie, 1991), 87.

40-year gulf. While the most striking and conspicuous features lead to a noticeable perception that 'many features of Franck's style were established during the early years at Ste Clotilde',[124] the aim of this thesis was to collate and categorise them into one group. Maurice Ravel famously tapped into one aspect of the Franckian style with his criticism:

> At most, the Liège-born composer makes an attempt at structure: groups of bars, even entire pages, are repeated, transposed verbatim; he clumsily abuses outdated school formulas.[125]

This critique is not unfounded, and the endless repetition is something critics, as mentioned previously, observed in his early works. Nevertheless, recall of themes, that has become associated with the cyclic compositional style of César Franck, and the strength of the *introduction* as a theme, especially with its numerous transformations, which itself can be associated with his 'germ' technique,[126] heavily hints at the thematic and structural qualities of the two late piano triptychs. Demuth, who looked briefly and critically at all genres, finds in Op. 2 Trio No. 4 the first instance of pianism in his 'Franckian individuality' – though he precedes the extract with 'The next quotation might almost come from any chamber work by Brahms. The pianism shows its first Franckian individuality:'[127]



Example 58: Reconstruction from Demuth, *César Franck,* page 129, of *César Franck* Op. 2 Piano Trio No. 4.

[124] John Trevitt and Joël-Marie Fauquet, "Franck, César(-Auguste-Jean-Guillaume-Hubert)".
[125] 'Il y a tout au plus, chez le Liégeois, une tentative de construction : des groupes de mesures, jusqu'à des pages entières se répètent, transposées textuellement; il abuse maladroitement des formules d'école surannées.' M. Ravel, *Lettres, écrits, entretiens,* ed. by Arbie Ornstein, (Paris, Flammarion, 1989), 297.
[126] 'The entire theme is quoted because it is another instance of the first use of a feature which became part and parcel of the Franck technique, namely, letting a theme grow out of itself.' Demuth, *César Franck,* 128.
[127] Demuth, *César Franck,* 129.

It is difficult to see what exactly in the above example made Demuth comment as such. We can see cross-rhythms as shown in *Rhythmic Qualities*, as well as his dissatisfaction with individual sonorities, perhaps also a strong central voice-leading, but it is a good distance away from the first instance of presentation of Franckian style; the three Op. 1 Trios, particularly Trio No. 1, which is strewn with the features outlined in this study. This is particularly important since the lack of a 'Franckian' stamp is often enough to discredit the works: 'The fact that the musician's "signature" is not always found in works prior to 1860 [his appointment at Ste. Clotilde and *Six Pièces*] will discredit part of the youthful production.'[128]

Most of the features in this thesis, which denote a *Franckian style,* can be described as originating at least from the early period and continuing through to the late works: the open and calm atmosphere of *Cathedral of Sound*; his unique use of *Franckian pedals*; the long flowing phrases and sequences in *Infinite Melody*; the obsessive melodic and rhythmic technique found in *pivot points,* as well as preparation of new material/movements with single notes;[129] combinations of the above points that result in *Franck and the choral bells*;[130] and of course, Franck's idiosyncratic rhythm through the use of *silence* and *discreet/delayed down beats & emphatic weak beats*; and finally the noticeable structural quality of his *chord and phrase pairs*.

Some of the qualities in the *Musical Style* chapter are less noticeable as a constituent of the typical Franckian style, whether because of their existence in contemporaneous composers or their general presence in compositional processes: Franck's *registral transfer* sometimes appears archaic in the late works compared to his early pieces, as opposed to his more subtle *note value*

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[128] Demuth, *César Franck,* 119.

[129] This single note preparation is noticeable in almost every early piano work – the single notes in *Églogue's* ***intro*** material, *Caprice's* ***A*** theme preparation, *Ballade's* ***intro*** before the 1st & 3rd sections proper. This can also be said of the bass preparing the *choral* in *Prélude, choral et fugue* and the quietly held C's in *Danse lente* (bars 12 & 32) that demarcate or prepare the thematic material. D'Indy had already noticed this: 'La *Ballade* commence, après une introduction de 49 mesures, par une série d'expositions mono- tonales d'un thème dont on pourra retrouver la saveur naïve dans les œuvres de maturité'. D'Indy, *César Franck*, 96–97.

[130] Mention must be made of Franck's penultimate *mélodie*: *Les cloches du soir* (1889). It is Franck's most beautifully simple pianistically, with an isolated emphasis on the melody and harmony, without any trace of virtuosity or pianistic devices. The representation of the *bell* can be heard in the piano part in the third section, a weak-beat bell ringing throughout the rest of the work, very much along the lines of the distinction made in *Franck and the choral bells* definition.

diminution; his keyboard style, consisting of *large chord spreads*, *rapid alternating hands,* and *three hands technique* are not solely indigenous to Franck, but are noticeable throughout his output;[131] and his use of counterpoint is noticeable throughout his output (though less so in the early piano works) by his preference for the tenor voice, whereas his tertiary modulations, while sometimes accentuated, are infrequent.

Certain dominant qualities of Franck's late compositions that are deemed as a necessary component of Franck's late style are not found in the early piano works: particularly the intricacy and suppleness of his chromaticism and, despite elements of which and foundations which were described as emanating earlier, the prevalence of cyclic form.

Are we to assume these works to be typical of Franck's style? Are these Franck's 'natural' style without intervention - his personal expression? How strongly are elements of his late style related to his encounters, as has been frequently documented, with Beethoven (structural elements as with Swindells), Schubert (his cyclic tendencies as described in the Taylor and Fauquet), Liszt (his pianistic textures as documented in the Grove dictionary)? Improvisation in the church seems to have led Franck to develop some elements of the contrapuntal, structural and harmonic qualities in his late works, but most necessary of all 'at least writing for the church forced the musician to acquire a quality that was not natural to him: conciseness'.[132] This thesis has hopefully provided some tools to equip an analyst attempting to disseminate the spirit of the Franckian style.

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[131] The ever-contentious Demuth commented: **'**Franck indulges in some regrettable chop-stick pianism [in the Fugue of the PCF] (this can also be found in the last movement of the Violin Sonata), but it may be said that he formed a virtue out of a vice by turning it into part of his normal pianistic style.' Demuth, *French Piano Music,* 45. Though Demuth unwittingly links early-to-late with this description: **'**[On Op. 1/3] An appalling piano figure of the chop-stick variety mars many pages and a long stretch of chordal trills completely spoils some impassioned string writing.' Demuth, *César Franck*, 127. Earlier commenting: 'the pianistic tradition was entirely his own and it represents the first stage in a great tradition. In many of its qualities it was entirely Gallic but in general it lacked elegance and lightness.' *Ibid.,* 48.

[132] 'Du moins écrire pour l'église a-t-il contraint le musicien à acquérir une qualité qui ne lui est pas naturelle : la concision.' Fauquet, *César Franck,* 316–317.

What's in a name?

Regarding the question of genre, context was glanced upon in Chapters 1 *Franck the piano prodigy* and *Zeitgeist of 1842–1848.* This chapter will frequently reference Chopin, the most important piano composer of the period, a particularly pertinent case in the study of genre of this period.

The initial question of genre arises when we consider the similarities of the thematic material in César Franck's early piano works. Did Franck's application of terms such as *Ballade* or *Églogue* stimulate inspiration or were they applied superfluously after their conception and perhaps even composition? Following Chopin's example, the *ballade* as a genre was in vogue; Liszt's *Églogue* from *Années de Pèlerinage I: Suisse* comes to mind for Franck's own, but despite their pastoral connotations they inhabit vastly different soundworlds; *Caprices* beckon Mendelssohn's name, but even his lengthy 3 *Caprices* Op. 33 (1835) are more succinct and of a smaller scale. We are left with the *Souvenirs* as a title, which would come become a trend later with Tchaikovsky, Albeniz and even his own student d'Indy. Just as the *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle* seems more original as a title for a piano work — despite the lack of observable local melodies as conferred by Koch — it also seems the most individual in form (structure being the factor with the most uniformity between these works). The aggressive antithesis found in the central section certainly comes across as passionate, if not also personal.

The coupling of genre and César Franck immediately calls to mind Saint-Saën's comments on the *Prélude, choral et fugue*:

> Sometimes it is the construction that leaves something to be desired, as in *Prélude, Choral et Fugue*, [...] a piece of ungainly and awkward execution, where the Choral is not a Choral, where the Fugue is not a Fugue, for it loses heart as soon as its exposition is over and continues with interminable digressions, which bear no more resemblance to a Fugue than a zoophyte to a mammal, and which make a brilliant peroration pay dearly. This is certainly not the place to learn what can and should still be expected of the age-old and venerable Fugue.[133]

[133] 'Tantôt c'est la construction qui laisse à désirer comme dans *Prélude, Choral et Fugue,* […] morceau d'une exécution disgracieuse et incommode, où le Choral n'est pas un Choral, où la Fugue n'est pas une Fugue, car elle perd courage, dès que son exposition est terminée et se continue par d'interminables digressions, qui ne ressemblent

César Franck was surely well aware of the construction of a chorale and of the fugal procedure, probably conscious that these two movements would be assessed in such a manner - luckily the Prélude is such a loose term that it escaped Saint-Saëns's vitriol.

Returning to the early piano works: they are not strictly radical in their genre treatment — though other works produced at this time by the young César Franck are innovative such as *Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne* and the Piano Trios — though they encompass a similar atmosphere and simplicity of other works from this period, particularly his oratorio *Ruth* (1845), which we have seen he was particularly fond of. Where Chopin was 'Champion of the miniature at a time when many around him gravitated toward ever grander musical colossi',[134] Franck aimed, perhaps unsuccessfully, at a middle-ground between the two. Not quite the *grand fantaisie* that one sees being produced for the piano in the years 1842–1848, and not quite the inventive and charming miniatures there were starting to seduce audiences in Paris.

Nevertheless, the titles remain forever attached to these works. The closest relatives to these works are the large-scale variations or fantasies, though even they modulate more frequently. Do their titles help us understand the work or are they a distraction from Franck's intentions? His musical idiom, *Cathedral of Sounds* and *Infinite Melodies* are strewn across the works and underpinned with tenacious basses, is found in each of the four works. Kallberg questions the motives behind the naming of a piece: 'Genre and idiosyncrasy might seem antithetical: the one apparently emphasizes norms, the other singularity. [...] Unless the title was arbitrary or cynical, the concept of genre must have meant something to Chopin and his audience'.[135] It is hard to imagine them as a consequence of cynicism on Franck's part; one remembers that, at first, the titles were bloated with the typical descriptors: *Première Églogue, Premier Grand Caprice,*

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pas plus à une Fugue qu'un zoophyte à un mammifère, et qui font payer bien cher une brillante péroraison. Ce n'est pas là certes qu'on apprendra ce qu'on peut et doit attendre encore aujourd'hui de la séculaire et vénérable Fugue.' Camille Saint–Saëns, *Les idées de M. Vincent d'Indy,* (Paris: Éditions Pierre Lafitte, 1919), 39.

[134] Jeffery Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries: Sex, History and Musical Genre,* (London: Harvard University Press, 1996), ix

[135] Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries: Sex, History and Musical Genre,* 4.

and *Première Ballade*, with the implication that this was the inauguration of a future substantial body of work, which we know now would not be fruitful and would be reverted to the humbler *Églogue*, *Caprice*, and *Ballade* by Franck in his 1876 re-numeration. Perhaps the simplification of titles (the *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle* remained unchanged) was not necessarily a consequence of a more appropriate label but a further reflection of Franck's adjustment to expectations of the audience at the time. Kallberg reflects upon the "generic contract": 'The contract may be signalled to the listener in a number of ways: title, meter, tempo, and characteristic opening gestures are some of the common means.'[136] It is difficult to determine what was not permissible in Franck's mind in the allocation of some of the titles: perhaps the pastoral element expected from an *Églogue* had to retain its dominance in his opus 3, or the insistence of contrast in close proximity in the *Caprice*. The young Franck did not specifically reject the genres, as Chopin did with his Scherzos, only perhaps shying away from the expectations from the audience of the romantic 'ego' as described earlier. This expectation can be further witnessed in the lack of insight or detail on the compositions themselves found in the reviews of the time but instead opting to focus on Franck's pianism. However, since there is no reference to their affect, one can assume that the works fit their title, without contest from their publishers (Schlesinger, Schuberth and Richault), not to mention the inseparability of the performer and the composer.

The search of meaning in 'genre' is essentially similar to the musicological quest to find Franck's idiomatic style – it is retrospectively applied as understood. An audience's interpretation of a work will be with reference to earlier exemplars and Franck's decision, or 'invitation' in Kallberg's definition,[137] to apply these titles was not in his case to challenge their attributes, but to demonstrate his allegiance to them, albeit in a personal manner. Franck was not comfortable allowing instability to lead on almost any level; neither on the structural, harmonic nor rhythmic layer, resulting in the common consensus that he had not yet reached maturity — 'confidence' —

[136] *Ibid.,* 5.
[137] Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries: Sex, History and Musical Genre,* 6.

in his writing. But we do see an unorthodox approach to structural, harmonic and even rhythmic qualities in his Op. 1 and Op 2 Piano Trios, which are full of ambiguity and abstain from the often perfunctory level seen in the early piano works. Regarding the more general question of genre — Franck alone at the piano with only his ten fingers at his disposal — perhaps felt that conventional semi-programmatic terms inhibited him in some ways being unwilling to conform and adjust his grand three part structures.

Franck's early outings for the solo piano in his adolescent years are adorned with grand titles: *Première Grande Sonate* (1836), *Deuxième Sonate* (1838) and 3 *Grande Fantaisies* (1836–1838). One wonders why Franck did not return to the sonata, considering his earlier venture contained streaks of inspired outpouring, though a review from 1846 hints at the intimidating public perception of such a title:

> The form of the sonata maintains its authority amid the countless small forms of salon pieces occasioned by the taste of fashion. Because it traverses in its three or four movements a whole scale of sentiments, it offers the composer not merely occasion to verify his richer and persistent ingenuity, rather it also demands great mastery in the accomplishment of extended forms.[138]

Just as Chopin's "late style" 'coalesced in the Polonaise-Fantasy',[139] so too would Franck find the need later in life to create his own genres, from pre-conceived expectations from preceding archetypes. 'When the word "form" appeared in journalistic criticism from Chopin's day, it usually meant genre or kind.'[140]

Jim Samson provides a systematic approach to classification, providing 5 categories: 1: conventional titles, conventionally defined. 2: conventional titles, conventionally defined, but with a new status. 3: conventional titles, newly defined. 4: conventional titles defined clearly for the first time. 5: new titles.[141] The four early piano works would most likely fall in category 2:

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[138] A review of Sonata in B minor, op. 58, *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung,* 4 February 1846, col. 74, as found in Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries: Sex, History and Musical Genre,* 140.
[139] Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries: Sex, History and Musical Genre,* 9.
[140] *Ibid.,* 140.
[141] Samson, "Chopin and Genre", 216

'conventional titles, conventionally defined, but with a new status'. These works are not genre defining – they did not spawn imitators and their contents are not substantial enough for creating delineated processes for assigning a new form. Even Franck's later works would not be genre-defining as their titles emerge not necessarily from a formal structure, such as sonata, or a soundworld, as in the case of a nocturne, but from the musical germs which grow and take on a life of their own and proceed to develop into specific forms, like material poured into a malleable mould. The content interacts with the formal process and adapts, one on the other, creating a uniqueness that cannot be replicated, save for the more general 'triptych' idea or his personal use of 'cyclic' procedure, elements of which can be detected in the early piano works through their emphasis on tri-part form. Samson later writes regarding Chopin: 'Without the title we might have difficulty classifying even some of the nocturnes. It is the interaction between title and content which is important.'[142]

We can deduce some idea of the genres that were created around this time solely through searching by title and their derivations — *Églogue/Eclogue*; *Caprice/Capriccio*; *Souvenir*; *Ballade*:

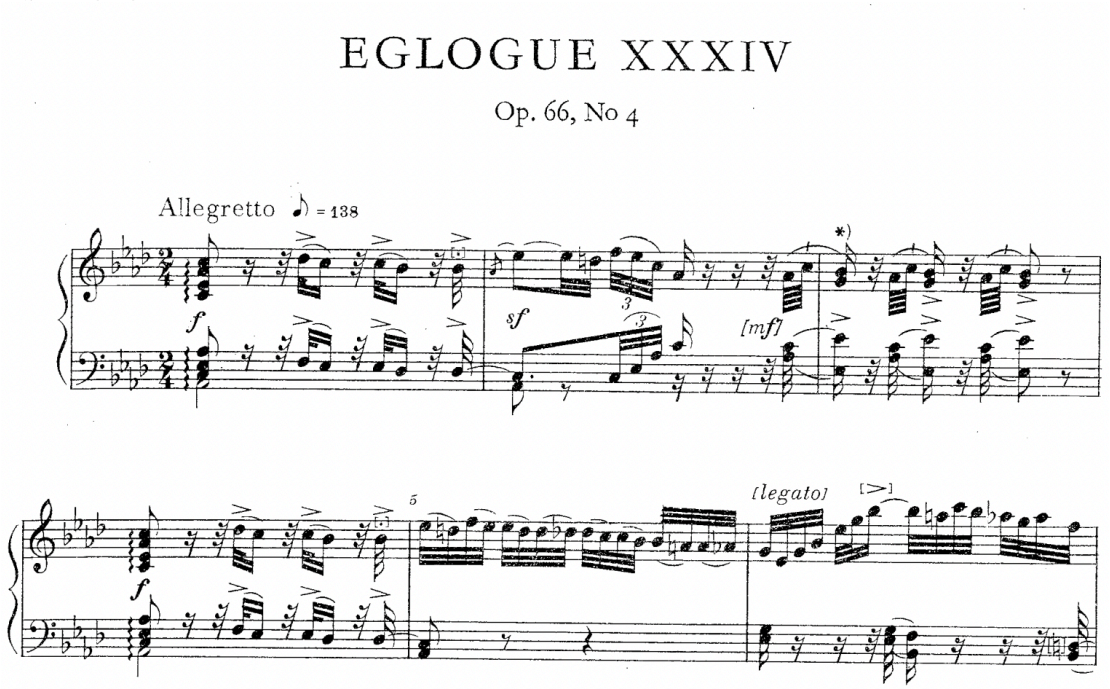
[142] *Ibid.,* 216

Table 9: Genres written 1842–1844

Works Written in 1842	
Title	**Composer**
Caprice brillant, Op. 27	Stephen Heller
Fantaisie-caprice, Op. 11	Henri Vieuxtemps
Grand caprice sur des motifs de 'La sonnambula', Op. 46	Sigismond Thalberg
Grand caprice sur le Stabat de Rossini, Op. 65	Édouard Wolff
Scherzo capriccioso, Op. 5	Julius Rietz
Valse à capriccio sur deux motifs de Lucia et Parisina, S. 401	Franz Liszt
Souvenir de Weber, Op. 668	Carl Czerny
Souvenir d'Auber, Op. 39	Charles-Auguste de Bériot
Souvenirs d'Italie, Op. 44	Édouard Wolff
Un souvenir d'Italie, Op. 51	Camille Schubert
Ballade, Op. 41	Theodor Döhler
Works Written in 1843	
Title	**Composer**
3 Caprices, Op. 6	Jean Henri Ravina
Souvenir de Weber – Pot-pourri sur les motifs d'Oberon de Weber, Op. 5	Julian Fontana
Ballade No. 4, Op 52	Frédéric Chopin
Works Written in 1844	
Title	**Composer**
Capriccio über ein Süddeutsches Post-Signal, Op. 18	Carl Evers
Caprice sur des motifs de l'opéra 'Le comte Ory', Op. 3	Adrien-François Servais
4 Galop-caprices, Op. 5	Joachim Raff
Introduction, Caprices et finale de 'Il Pirate', Op. 19	Henrich Wilhelm Ernst
Souvenir d'Ole Bull, Op. 40	John Conrad Viereck
Souvenir de Spa, Op. 2	Adrien-François
Souvenir du 'Stabat mater' de Rossini, Op. 32	Jacques Gregoir
Souvenirs de Boulogne, Op. 48	Charles-Auguste de Bériot
Souvenirs et regrets, Op. 56	Jacques François Gallay
2 Souvenirs, Op. 46	Theodor Döhler
3 Balladen, Op. 97 & *4 Balladen*, Op. 99	Carl Loewe
Romanzen und Balladen, Vol. II, Op. 49	Robert Schumann

The above works are dated according to date of publication, according to the *International Music Score Library Project*. If one searches in databases for 'grand', around 20 entries are returned every year with no sign of slowing down yet. The above are not solely confined to solo piano as a genre, with the *ballade* genre associated with the voice in these entries for 1844. There are no 'églogues' nor 'eclogues' in any of the years, save for César Franck's own. We will now quickly glance over each work regarding their nominative designation.

Op. 3 *Églogue*



Example 59: Václav Jan Křtitel Tomášek, *Eglogue 34* Op. 66, No. 4, bars 1–6.

Václav Jan Křtitel Tomášek (Czech composer, 1774–1850), now generally forgotten, was the most prolific exponent of the piano Eclogue, numbering 42 in total, most of them written between 1807–1823.[143] In terms of style, they are much smaller in scale, an exercise in short character pieces more than grand architectural procedure, [144] covering many guises and atmospheres, though generally in an *allegro* tempo. Well known in his time, in the 1830s and 1840s he became 'the figurehead of musical life in Prague, visited by Clara Schumann, Wagner, Berlioz, Paganini and Ole Bull',[145] with an emphasis on his evening salon concerts. It is unclear whether Franck was aware of his music. Liszt's venture into the genre, *Eglogue* (No. 7 from *Première année: Suisse*, 1855), followed Tomášek's example, being a more light-hearted short character piece. Even No. 3 from Liszt's set, the *Pastorale*, is livelier than Franck's *Églogue,* denoted with a *vivace* tempo marking and a strong emphasis on rhythmic qualities.

[143] Adrienne Simpson and Kenneth DeLong, "Tomášek, Václav Jan Křtitel", *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online,* Oxford University Press, accessed April 19, 2024. www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/Tomasek.
[144] As a curious sidenote, the online Grove entry for "eclogue" writes that 'most are in binary form' regarding Tomášek's eclogues, whereas the "Tomášek" Grove entry comment that the 'eclogues are ternary in form', accentuating the ambiguity of such terms, particularly rounded binary.
[145] Adrienne Simpson and Kenneth DeLong, "Tomášek, Václav Jan Křtitel".

It is difficult to establish common ground in this genre between the aforementioned composers and subsequent Czech musicians and Franck's own work, since they encompass a different sound world – short moments of playful reflection in some variant of allegro tempo contrasts strongly with Franck's exploration in a calm meditative atmosphere. The former's display of lyrical ornamentation is richer in variation, emphasised by a rhapsodic element more analogous to the various character pieces designated for a salon setting than Franck's endeavour in the genre, whose creation was more reserved – in all, more pastoral in nature, at least in the modern association of the term. In terms of progression, more contrast will be seen in Franck's successive works, most noticeably in the following Op. 5 *Caprice*.

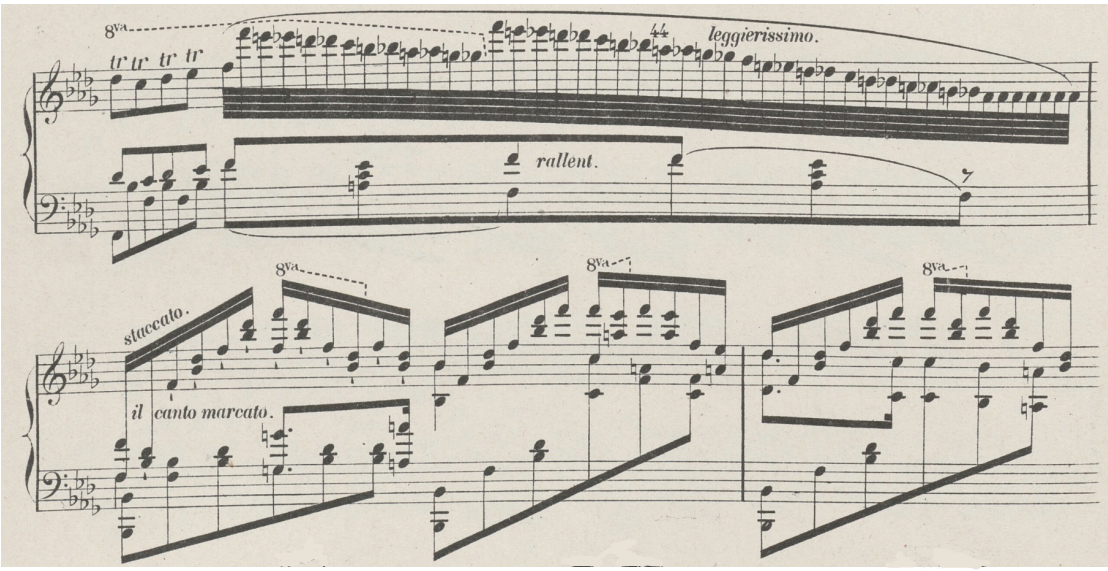
Op. 5 *Caprice*

More so than perhaps any other title in Franck's early piano works, the *Caprice* as a nomenclature is more clearly defined while also open to free interpretations. Erich Schwandt writes that the *Capriccio* as a term has 'been used in a bewildering variety of ways',[146] though there will be scarcely an audience member who does not have some sort of expectation from the work, perhaps even formed by extra-musical familiarities. Already in the year 1590 keyboard capriccios exhibited 'sudden and violent changes of mood and style',[147] an expectation that would still apply today over 3 centuries later. Less than 10 years prior to the writing of Franck's Op. 5 *Caprice*, 'Schumann defined the capriccio as 'a genre of music which is different from the "low-comedy" burlesque in that it blends the sentimental with the witty. Often there is something étude-like about it'.'[148]

If we take Thalberg's *Grand caprice sur des motifs de 'La sonnambula'* Op. 46 (1842) as an example of the genre, written around the same time as César Franck's *Caprice* Op. 5, we see many of the expected pianistic textures from a pianist-composer in Paris: rapid alternating hands, fast

[146] Erich Schwandt, "Capriccio", *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed April 20, 2023. www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/Capriccio.
[147] *Ibid.*
[148] As read in Erich Schwandt, "Capriccio".

arpeggiated broken chords, *ff* climaxes, three-hands textures, repeated chords; all techniques explored and utilised by the young César Franck but here there is scarcely a moment for the audience to reflect in a meditative mood as in Franck's *Caprice's* ***A*** theme. Whereas Thalberg finds Bellini's theme a perfect vehicle to display his capacity to make the piano sing, Franck's introspective theme allows for greater contrast with other thematic material.



Example 60: Thalberg's *Grand caprice sure des motifs de 'La sonnambula'*, Op. 46, bars 80–82. Note the difficult polyrhythms, particularly in the left hand of bar 80, ornamental melodic display and three hands technique.

If we refer to the Online Grove entry on genre: '[on music in the 19th century] Musical works, in other words, were less concerned to exemplify genres than to make their own statement',[149] then we see how the identity, or at least the now collective perception of these composers, is exemplified in these two works, in the framework of the *Caprice* genre.

Particularly in this work and the Op. 9 *Ballade* is it possible to consider the genre titles assigned by Franck as being already codified on some level, ascribing a contract between the audience, reader and performer? Regarding the social application of genre,

[149] Jim Samson, "Genre", *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed April 5, 2024. www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/Genre.

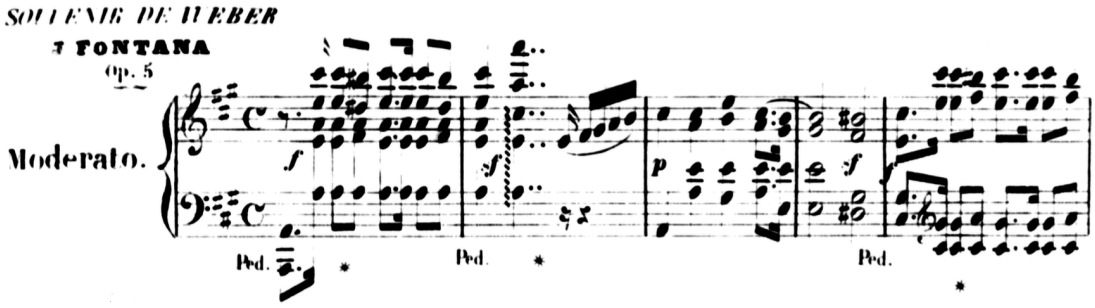
it is noticeable that the 'contract' between the performer and audience centres around the pianistic style of the composer. We can see this in the critical reviews, which revolve around the young César Franck's proficient performing faculty, or in contemporaneous piano works which have the composer's aptitude at the instrument in full display.

Op. 7 *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle*

Moving on to the Op. 7 *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle*, we are in perhaps less common, if only possibly less clearly defined territory. Inherently linked to the *fantasy* — though all these genre terms are on some level — elements of Franck's style came from this period: 'The true opera fantasy, however, came into existence when composers selected two or more melodies from an opera and fashioned them into multi-sectional works, using a variety of titles (fantasy, caprice, potpourri, souvenirs, reminiscences etc.)'.[150] This is particularly applicable to César Franck's 'adolescent' works, which include this nomenclature in works such as his Op. 5 *Variations brillantes sur l'air du Pré aux Clercs « Souvenirs du jeune age »* for piano and orchestra, dated by Fauquet as from 1834.[151]

An exemplary work is Julian Fonatana's *Souvenir de Weber – Pot-pourri sur les motifs d'Oberon de Weber,* Op. 5, from the same year as Franck's own Op. 5 *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle.* Fontana (1810–1865), born in Warsaw the same year as Chopin, opts for a segregated four part structure, loosely interlinked with a graceful pianistic style reminiscent of his compatriot. Franck's own outing elects a prominence on structural metamorphosis enabling a grander reading.

[150] Charles Suttoni, "Piano fantasies and transcriptions", *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed April 10, 2024.www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/PianoFantasies
[151] Fauquet, *César Franck*, 880.



Example 61: Julian Fonata, Op. 5, *Souvenir de Weber – Pot-pourri sur les motifs d'Oberon de Weber.*

In the above example we see the attention-grabbing introduction, much like Beethoven's Hammerklavier Sonata, which later subsides into a Chopin-like gracefulness. The introductions serve an observably practical purpose – reminiscent of the brief improvisatory preludes before launching into a large scale work such as Mendelssohn in his Op. 28 *Fantaisie* or his Op. 33 *3 Caprices*. But whereas composers 'frequently deployed block chords, rapid scalar or arpeggiated figuration, and sudden deflections towards other keys',[152] Franck, ever the utilitarian, would establish thematic material for a cohesive whole as well, as opposed to separate scenes as felt in Fontana's *Souvenir de Weber* or the other *Souvenir* works from this period.

If we consider that 'Genres are based on the principle of repetition. They codify past repetitions, and they invite future repetitions',[153] Franck in his later compositions as in these early piano works sought to establish self-contained genres in his piano pieces, works that, however unsuccessful we perceive them to be, do not imitate past genres but search in their quest for purely musical reasons; works which do not continue the contemporaneous tradition but establish an expression uniquely felt by Franck and not the Chopin and Thalberg imitators. We will see how he approaches possibly the most archetypal Romantic piano form, the *Ballade.*

[152] Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries: Sex, History and Musical Genre,* 147.
[153] Samson, "Genre".

Op. 9 *Ballade*

In 1836, Czerny commented on introductions to piano works so prevalent at the time:

> It is akin to a crown of distinction for a keyboardist, particularly in private circles at the performance of solo works, if he does not begin directly with the composition itself, but is capable by means of a suitable prelude of preparing the listeners, setting the mood, and also hereby ascertaining the qualities of the pianoforte, perhaps unfamiliar to him, in an appropriate fashion.[154]

Franck's performances, as we have seen, were often in these private circle settings. The pragmatic nature of the assessment of the instrument and surroundings transferred into a substantial written introduction to the piano works, as noted in each of the early piano works. The two late triptychs would abstain from such introductions, instead opting for a strong first theme to start the large-scale works, eliciting introductions for the other movements (choral and fugue in *Prélude, choral et fugue,* and the aria and final in *Prélude, aria et final*). For some reason, Franck found it redundant to prepare his structurally intricate late works but acquiesced to the fashion of the time in the early piano works while not resisting assigning them a more integral formal function than the practical essence expressed by Czerny.

The *Ballade* form will always be intrinsically linked to Chopin. Kallberg comments on the general outlook of his works that mirror Franck's own:

> Chopin's œuvre resists rigid segmentation into periods; many stylistic traits appear in his earliest mature works and remain throughout his career. Nevertheless, reasons both documentary and musical suggest that a significant shift in his artistic direction began in 1842.[155]

1842 would see the completion of Chopin's final *Ballade,* two years before Franck's own outing with Op. 9 *Ballade* (1844), followed by Liszt's in D♭ (1845–8) and B minor (1853). These works are vastly different – Chopin is at the peak of his creative powers while the young César Franck unfortunately continues groping his way around the perfunctory development of musical material in an arbitrary structure. While ballade form is routinely connected to some extra-

[154] As seen in Hamilton, "The virtuoso tradition", 63–64
[155] Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries: Sex, History and Musical Genre,* 89.

musical sources, just as Adam Mickiewicz's poetry is to Chopin's ballades, there are no comments nor letters that suggest any literary inspiration for the young César Franck in his opus 9.

Chopin's 4 ballades, though inimitable, are firmly grounded in their genre; it is difficult to imagine them with another title, just like his 4 scherzos, or the 4 opus groups of polonaises published in his lifetime. While the polonaises are recognisable through distinct rhythmic elements, the ballades and scherzos occupy soundworlds that mark them as distinct from others, with the former's long melodic lines against the agitation of the latter. The consideration of the nomenclature of Franck's own early piano works continues the prompt: *they had to be named something.* Could all four early piano works looked at in this thesis have just as easily been named 4 ballades? Or souvenirs? It would be a difficult task to convince listeners that they could all be appropriately engendered as caprices or églogues. In essence, they bear far more similarities with each other than differences; even across these four works their resemblances are more palpable than any two of Chopin's ballades. It would have been a terrible misstep if they had each been generically named Fantasies (the free-form spirit of works and not the species based on popular numbers form fashionable operas), though perhaps Franck felt that the era of fantasies was passing, and with his new opus numeration, he considered forging a new path, away from the baggage of the previous generation of pianist-composers.

Nevertheless, this begs the question: would anything have been lost if their titles were altered? Each of these works mark a single venture by Franck into the genre, despite the anticipation of more to follow in the case of the *Première Églogue, Premier Grand Caprice* and *Première Ballade,* though that very well may have been due to the trend of over-loaded early romantic titles. Thus, due to their singularity and their contents belonging outside of their nominative distinctions, it is impossible to assign a tradition. Franck's compositional toolset was limited, as we have seen in the examination which left little room for interpretation, leaving the young Franck perhaps unable yet to graft his own genres in a distinct manner (unlike Chopin

who sustained generic integrity throughout his life). In his aim to create a coherent whole, instability is absent from his thematic material, unlike the jarring *a capriccio* element from bar 9 in the beginning of his *Prélude, choral et fugue*, or the completeness of thematic groups in the *Prélude, aria et final* which allowed for material to be dissected and explored on various levels throughout the work.

If the four early piano works are more synonymous than distinct, do we nonetheless see an advancement of compositional procedure between the four works? In essence, the Op. 3 *Églogue* may remind us more of a traditional form, where every section is distinct through strong contrast and conscientiously prepared. By the Op. 9 *Ballade*, the structure is laid bare with outer sections that are emphasised only by thematic material and not formal processes, such as those found in the preceding Op. 5 *Caprice* and Op. 7 *Souvenirs*. With each successive work, Franck seemed to apply a more end-orientated structure, with an organic development culminated in a satisfying climax, typified by the *Souvenirs* and exemplified in his late triptychs. Unfortunately, his Op. 9 *Ballade*, while containing some of his most inspired thematic material, also sees highly segregated themes and the final section seems to be carried out dutifully and without particular inspiration. But all this takes place over such a short period of Franck's compositional career and over such few works that it is difficult to propose any of this as an advancement and not just a temporary impulse of compositional creativity in the moment.

Ultimately – what's in a name? The young César-Auguste did not seem too preoccupied by this question, as the congruency of themes, similar soundworlds, reappearance of ***B*** theme in the fast central section and similar durations of the works imply that César Franck was still unsure of how to express a distinct entry into these genres. Franck's categorisation of these works, as seen in the examination, was essentially verging on the arbitrary –the *Églogue* is generally calm in its outer sections (but as do the other 3 works); the *Caprice* has capriccio elements with a dramatic central section for contrast (as in all 4 works); the *Souvenirs d'Aix-la-Chapelle* encourages us to

imagine a cathedral with its bells and choirs; and the *Ballade* features the most various themes which facilitate a long journey (though at 2 more short themes it is scarcely noticeable); the titles border on the superfluous, almost solely as vehicles of presentation for the Franckian style.[156] Curiously, it was through clearly established terms such as the Piano Trios from his early period or the Violin Sonata from his late style that his creativity flourished. It is perhaps the age-old conundrum that restriction breeds imagination, no clearer than in these four works. Unfortunately, in the case of these piano pieces, we cannot see his embodiment of a specific tradition, nor his rejection of it. In the curious transition, or limbo, that Franck was in, along with other composers and indeed even the political outlook in Europe, during and post the 1842–1848 years, he did indeed appear to be probing his compositional style, at times creating works that were highly unique and individual such as his *Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne* or several of his *mélodies* from this period. Samson commented that the 'major changes brought about by Chopin were in the nature and above all the *role* of bravura figuration and of ornamental melody'.[157] These works by Franck had neither. While Franck rejected, though only in part, the 'brilliant' variations and rondos of this period, he also refrained from the ornamental melody or rich harmonic setting for which that Chopin paved the way. Franck essentially remained faithful to himself and his need for formal organisation against a backdrop of economy of material, though the compositional processes are held back by a pedestrian approach to harmonic variation and an underuse of the various pianistic techniques which would have been at his disposal, which we know from his late period he was not insensitive to due to their textural variation. It is not entirely clear on what level Franck rejected the culture of the time, but the abstention of recognisable devices to create a dramatic effect on the audience reveals to us that even the young César Franck was perhaps searching for his own original voice, as suspected by d'Indy, Fauquet and others.

[156] Nevertheless, the short Online Grove articles for both Églogue and ballade both make reference to Franck's homonymous compositions. So in reality, these two works form at least part of a definition of their respective genres.
[157] Samson, "Chopin and Genre", 216

Concluding Thoughts

The purpose of this thesis was never to attempt the impossible endeavour of proposing that Franck's early piano works are worthy of the concert platform. They are not sufficiently original nor striking enough to warrant a permanent place in the repertoire for pianists and audiences. In tackling the research question 'how can we describe these 'purely musical' ideas and can we find something that links them to the more commonly heard 'late' works?' a method was created through a meta-analysis of Franckian examinations and writings, collated into a system that included some of my own descriptors, *Cathedral of Sound, Infinite Melody, Franckian basses etc.*, which were then applied to the early piano works. Most of the elements expounded on in *Musical Style* can be applied to each of the early piano works, and many are found throughout the two late triptychs.

In the hope of a focused examination and detailed commentary, this study was limited to four of the early piano works. Many other works from this period were consulted: particularly the chamber music (Trios, *Andantino quietoso*), *Mélodies*, and *Ruth*. This last work, an oratorio, is of certain interest since Franck was himself particularly fond of it and reworked it at a later stage, a work which is particularly dear to and analysed by the preeminent Franck scholar Joël-Marie Fauquet. There are clear instances of features in these works which lend themselves to the particular Franckian flavour referred to by many writers.

The adolescent works include some inspired and original ideas, such as his multi-form treatment and a more bravura treatment of the piano. They nevertheless more often succumb to the style of the time, such as his Piano Concerto No. 2 being derivative of Hummel or the keyboard writing being heavily reminiscent of the Weber's piano pieces or Hummel's *Fantaisie* Op. 18 that he frequently played in public.

The early piano works themselves seem much more rooted in a classical tradition than in the outwardly expressive romanticism one would expect, as conferred by his students and

scholars such as Fauquet. The 'Lisztean ego', as elucidated by Samson, is entirely missing, in so far an examination of the manuscripts and a potential performance. Franck remained, unknown to many but clarified by Fauquet in his seminal *César Franck* (1999), loyal to 18th & 19th century music, far more than his contemporaries, through his interest in the operatic music of this period and his own persistent ventures in the related mediums. We see this even in the works not directly associated with this period, as opposed to the numerous fantasies and variations on the operas of Dalayrac and Grétry, or even late in life with his interest in old noels and Philidor's vocal music, particularly the early piano works analysed in this thesis. We can observe this through the pervasive classical models, heavily organised 8-bar phrasal structures, antiquated pianistic style, reliance on sequences and triadic harmony, and a general trepidation of the prevalent bravura style. It is for this reason that the violent outbursts in his Op. 7 *Souvenirs* stand out in Franck's œuvre, unique and approachable, though not quite as otherworldly as his Op. 2 Trio No. 4 (1843) from this period.

Now that César Franck is outside of the limelight of the 1920s and the taint of nationalism does not weigh as heavily on our judgement perhaps we can be more impartial. There is no doubt that Franck's treatment of the piano became far more refined in the last decade of his life. The 40 year gap understandably altered his style in innumerable ways; but are the late piano works so distant from the four Piano Trios he wrote in his early 20s? They contain the unpredictable harmony, instances of the intense piano writing found the piano quintet, and cyclic form. But for whatever reason, Franck seemed inhibited in these early solo piano works, perhaps due to the difficulty of attempting to win over a saturated Parisian audience already in contact with the masterpieces of Chopin and dazzling young piano prodigies, or whether it was due to the pressure from his father that somehow subdued the young César-Auguste; it is not surprising that the works are not more ubiquitous. The question of why *late style*, as explored by Theodore Adorno, Edward Said and more recently Christopher Dingle, is not broached in this thesis; the objective of this thesis was always a systematic and clear evaluation of the early piano

works and seeing what can be transposed to the late works. In the end, there are many validations for the analyst that these works were written by the same pen and highlight a continuity between the first opus numbers of César Franck in his renewed opus numbering in 1842 and the celebrated late works of the 1880s.

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