

# **STYLISTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF GABRIEL FAURÉ'S PIANO QUARTETS AND PIANO QUINTETS**

A minor dissertation in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Music  
This material has not previously been submitted for a  
degree at this or any other university

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## INTRODUCTION

Gabriel Fauré has been neglected as composer in terms of international recognition. It is indeed true that the art of his music is not revealed at first sight: one must take time to discover the beauty and authentic meaning concealed in the depths thereof. While it is relatively true that musicians recognize the originality of his *melodiés*, there seems to be a lack of appreciation of his contributions in the field of chamber music.

Owing to the fact that he had a life-span of eighty years, his work evolved in an interesting fashion and he had time to experiment in the different fields to establish his strengths as a composer. More than one author referred to three or four periods in his composition style, and one of the purposes of this dissertation is to look at the changes, influences and stylistic characteristics of his compositions.

The first part of the study is dedicated to an overview of his life and *oeuvre*, in order to provide the context for the more specialized exploration of the two piano quartets and two piano quintets. These works are widely regarded as among Fauré's most important contributions, spanning most of his creative career (from 1876 to 1921), and representing four of the most important works in each of the respective creative periods.

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## **CHAPTER I – SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF GABRIEL FAURÉ (1845-1924)**

Gabriel-Urbain Fauré, the youngest of six children, was born on 12 May 1845, in the town of Pamiers, France and died in Paris on November 4, 1924. He came from a family with no history of musicians. His father was a schoolmaster. An old blind lady heard him play on a harmonium at the age of eight while she was visiting a chapel for her private prayers. She convinced his parents that he was musically talented, and they sent him to the Niedermeyer School, where he was a pupil of Saint-Saëns, from whom he received thorough training in composition. In 1866 he went to Rennes as organist at the church of St. Sauveur. He was dismissed due to smoking in the church porch during sermons and for playing in black coat and tie after a night at a ball. He returned to Paris where he was appointed as organist at the Notre Dame de Clignancourt. In August 1870, the Franco-Prussian War broke out, and he volunteered in the light infantry. He was under fire at Champigny, and fought courageously. He heard of the armistice while on a mission as liaison officer, and, evading enlistment in the army of the Commune, he crossed the federal lines by means of a false passport, reaching Rambouillet, where he waited for the victory of the Versailles armies. Soon after the war he became organist at St. Honoré d'Elyau, and later he assisted his friend Widor at St. Sulpice. He was appointed as deputy organist to Saint-Saëns, and after the latter's resignation in 1877, Fauré was appointed *maitre de chapelle* at the Madeleine in Paris and as chief organist in 1896, the year in which he was appointed professor of composition at the Paris Conservatoire. He was an illustrious teacher; among his students were Ravel, Enesco, Koechlin, Roger-Ducasse, Florent Schmitt and Nadia Boulanger. In 1905 he succeeded Théodore Dubois as director and served until 1920.

The last twenty years of his life were marred by deafness, which became so acute in the end that he was unable to hear his own music. Distressed, he tried to conceal it, but was eventually forced to abandon his teaching position. From 1903 to 1921 he wrote occasional music reviews in *Le Figaro*. He was elected as a member of the *Académie des Beaux Arts* in 1909, and in 1910 was made a Commander of the *Legion d'honneur*.

As a composer he was one of the most original minds of his era. His stature as composer is undiminished by the passage of time. He developed a musical idiom that was all his own; by subtle application of old modes, he created a personal language of striking originality. He began as a Romantic, but the idioms of Schumann and Mendelssohn were clarified and refined in his hands till they took on an aspect that was typically French. He shunned virtuosity in favour of the Classical lucidity of the French masters of the *clavecin*. He was not at home with the orchestra, and a good deal of his orchestral music was scored by others.

His principal compositions are:

- Operas:

*Prométhée* (1900)

*Pénélope* (1913)

- Incidental music:

*Shylock*, op. 57 (1889)

*Pelléas et Melisande*, op. 80 (1898)

- Orchestral works:

*Pavane* (1887)

*Dolly suite* (1893-6)

*Allegro symphonique* (1875)

*Masques et bergamasque*, op. 112 (1920)

- Music for solo instruments and orchestra:

Concerto for violin and orchestra (1878, unpublished, unfinished)

*Ballade*, piano and orchestra, op. 19 (1881)

*Romance*, violin and orchestra (1882)

*Fantaisie*, piano and orchestra (1919).

- Chamber music:

Piano Quartet op. 15 in C minor (1879)

Piano Quartet op. 45 in G minor (1886)

Piano Quintet op. 89 in D minor (1906)

Piano Quintet op. 115 in C minor (1921)

Piano Trio op. 120 in D minor (1923)

String Quartet op. 121 in E minor (1924)

- Music for solo instrument and piano:

Violin Sonata op. 13 in A major (1876)

*Berceuse* for violin and piano (1880)

*Élégie* for cello and piano (1883)

*Petite Pièce* for cello and piano (1889, unpublished)

*Romance* for cello and piano (1895)

*Andante* for violin and piano (1898)

*Papillon* for cello and piano (1898)

*Sicilienne* for cello and piano (1898)  
*Fantaisie* for flute and piano (1898)  
*Sérénade* for cello and piano (1908)  
 Violin Sonata op. 108 in E minor (1917)  
*Une Châtelaine en sa tour* for harp (1918).  
 Cello Sonata op. 109 in D minor (1918)  
 Cello Sonata op. 117 in G minor (1922)

- Piano music:

Three sets of piano pieces: three *Romances sans paroles*, op. 17 (1863)  
   *Huit Pièces brèves*, op. 84  
   nine Preludes, op. 103 (1909-1910)  
*Thème et variations*, op. 73  
 five impromptus  
 four *Valses-caprices*  
 thirteen nocturnes  
 thirteen barcarolles

- Church music:

*Messe de requiem* (1887)

- Songs:

Three song cycles: *La Bonne Chanson* (1891-92)  
                                   *La Chanson d'Eve* (1907-10)  
                                   *Le Jardin clos* (1915-18)  
 Three sets: *Cinq Mélodies 'de Venise'* (5 songs, 1891)  
                   *Mirages* (4 songs, 1919)  
                   *L'Horizon chimérique* (4 songs, 1922)  
 Numerous single songs

## CHAPTER II – STYLISTIC INFLUENCES

As mentioned earlier, there is no trace of music in Fauré's ancestry. However, his training at the Niedermeyer School, which exposed him to singing and accompanying plainchant, sacred and secular Renaissance polyphony, Baroque keyboard and vocal music, a thorough grounding in the classics, an introduction to the most recent music of the day, and a very liberal system of harmonic practice, exposed him to nine centuries of Western music tradition.

“His musical language is a synthesis of elements derived from many sources. It remains essentially tonal, but it also incorporates modal allusions, Baroque-era contrapuntal techniques and textures and an advanced harmonic technique, one which permitted and even encouraged frequent, far-reaching and fleeting modulations” (James William Sobaskie: Notes, December 1992).

All the nineteenth-century composers who had an influence on Fauré were pianists.

### Mendelssohn

The intimate lyricism, transparent textures and simple forms of Mendelssohn's *Songs without Words* had a considerable influence on Fauré, visible not only in his *Romances sans Paroles*, but in many other works such as the barcarolles, which are in many ways closer to Mendelssohn's *Venetian Boat-songs* than to Chopin's Barcarolle.

### Chopin

Fauré worked along the lines of the Chopin tradition, and Chopin is considered by most experts to have been to all intents and purposes a French composer, especially in his nocturnes (Cooper, p. 84). After Chopin, Fauré is the most successful composer of the nocturne and he expanded and enriched the form to a remarkable degree. Like Chopin, Fauré's piano writing is centred around expansions of small forms with titles such as barcarolle or nocturne, with melodies floating above or within arpeggio-like accompaniments. Chopin's influence can be seen clearly in the chromatic counter-melody in the Fourth Barcarolle (bars 18 and 20), in his extremely delicate passagework, and in his use of atmospheric accompaniment figuration as an introductory gesture, as in the *Ballade*, the First Impromptu and the Fourth and Twelfth Barcarolles.

Fauré also took the idea of arpeggio writing from Chopin and developed it and extended it, frequently passing the figuration between the hands and/or changing into scalar writing in the upper register, as in the Fifth, Sixth and Thirteenth Nocturnes.

### Schumann

In the matter of smaller-scale vocal and pianoforte works, the only one of the exclusively German composers who made an impact upon native French music was, according to

Suckling (p. 50), Schumann, the best of them, whose sense of musical invention was far ahead of any other writer of Lieder and character pieces of his generation.

One of his stylistic features as a composer was the inner counterpoint and addition of inner voices that enhance the expressive tension and often imitate motifs from the melody. This influence on Fauré is noticeable in the Ballade (*Allegro moderato*), in the reprise of the First Nocturne and in the opening of the Second Nocturne. The marked tension between melody and bass, a feature of Schumann's style, and one which he probably inherited from Bach, is also salient in Fauré's music from the earliest works such as the Ballade, and reaches new levels of audacity in late works such as the Cello Sonatas.

### Saint-Saëns

In 1860, when Fauré was fifteen, the twenty-five year old Saint-Saëns joined the teaching staff at the École Niedermeyer. Fauré was very fortunate to be taught by Saint-Saëns, who had a sufficiently wide outlook not to treat the whole history of music as though it converged upon the figure of a single master (Suckling, p. 51). The two remained life-long friends. He introduced Fauré to the music of Bach and Liszt and generally helped to fill gaps in a musical education that was consciously weighted towards the ecclesiastical and designed to train church organists and choir masters. Bach's *Wohltemperierte Clavier* and Inventions formed the basis of Niedermeyer's piano teaching (Nectoux, p. 13). \*

The brilliance and lightness of Saint-Saëns can be heard in the sparkling *tarantella* rhythm of the Second Impromptu and in the toccata passage of the Second Nocturne. His influence is also to be found in the very manipulation of linguistic elements. Fauré inherited from his teacher the French ability of using a phrase of just a few notes to write whole pages of music, as, for example, in the echo motif of the First Nocturne and the Sanctus of the *Requiem*. Nectoux maintained that motivic technique is an essential element of Saint-Saëns' language, but with Fauré its use is sparse and secondary (Nectoux, p. 50). This viewpoint, while certainly true for most of Fauré's works, is not really applicable to his chamber music.

### Liszt

Fauré had been introduced by Saint-Saëns to Liszt at Weimar and improved the occasion by offering his Ballade to the old master in its original form as a piano solo. But Liszt never played it; he probably wanted to hear the composer play it himself. Fauré knew the finest compositions of this master, and his predilection for the middle register of the keyboard did not prevent him from exploiting the clarity of the upper registers, as done by Liszt. The cadenza-like links in some of the earlier works (Ballade, Fifth Nocturne) also owe much to Liszt.

\* All references to Nectoux apply to Gabriel Fauré: A musical life, 1992, unless otherwise indicated.

### CHAPTER III – THE THREE COMPOSITIONAL PERIODS

Fauré's gradual evolution as a composer took place primarily in harmony and, to a lesser degree in texture and form. He revitalized the tonal system by fusing it with modality, and in so doing he stretched enharmonic change to its farthest limits.

In order to analyse the stylistic characteristics of the piano quartets and piano quintets, it is useful to look at the three periods in his stylistic evolution as defined by Robert Orledge.

#### THE FIRST PERIOD: 1860-85

It is difficult to date Fauré's compositions of the first period, because of his indifference to chronology, and the haphazard approach of the publisher Hamelle. The early opus numbers were only assigned in 1896, when Fauré, applying for membership of the Institute in 1896, asked Hamelle to print a catalogue of his works (Orledge, p. 45).

#### THE ÉCOLE NIEDERMEYER: FIRST COMPOSITIONS (1861-65)

Louis Niedermeyer, a Swiss musician from Nyon on Lake Geneva, was a person of considerable distinction in Parisian musical life around the middle of the nineteenth century. In 1843 he founded the *Société de musique vocale religieuse et classique* for the performance of those sixteenth- and seventeenth-century works which were generally forgotten, and managed to arouse the interest of an influential section of Parisian society. The *Société* lasted only a few years, but left its mark in the form of eleven published volumes of its repertory.

Niedermeyer next turned his attention to the standard of music in churches. He decided to open a school for the training of organists, choirmasters and teachers of music. He canvassed the support of prominent social figures and even that of the state, so that in 1853 he was able to establish the *École de musique religieuse et classique* which came to be called familiarly by his name (Suckling, p. 11-12). Of Fauré's eight *mélodies* written whilst a pupil at the École Niedermeyer, seven are settings of minor verses by the prolific Victor Hugo: *Le Papillon et la fleur*, *Mai*, *Rêve d'amour*, *Dans les ruines d'une abbaye* and three unpublished songs. According to Orledge, these poems were unsuitable for several reasons: the wealth of lyric imagery in Hugo's poetry is more the demonstration of outward than inward sensitivity, and the overall impression is one of shallow prettiness. Secondly, Hugo was musically unsympathetic. It was Verlaine's musical sensitivity that made him Fauré's ideal poet in his second period. The remaining song from this period is a musically undistinguished setting of Théophile Gautier's *Les Matelots* (p. 46). Despite these factors, Fauré had the ability to write a supple vocal line which is a salient feature from op. 1 no. 1 (*Le Papillon et la fleur*) onwards.

The three *Romances sans paroles* op. 17 for piano, whose title and content recall Mendelssohn, also belong to this period. They soon became popular after their publication in 1880. The second Romance is particularly Mendelssohnian in its arpeggio

figuration divided between the hands. In the third, which shows the influence of Schumann and Chopin, the reprise of the opening theme is a canon at the octave at the distance of one crotchet, the first example of a technique to which Fauré returned increasingly in later years, as in *Tendresse* from the *Dolly Suite*.

In a superior category are the two Niedermeyer choral works. The first, a fluid Latin setting of Psalm 136, *Super flumina (Babylonis)*, gained the *proxime accessit* for the composition prize at the École in 1863. The orchestration by Fauré is light and practical throughout, with some interesting detail in the outer sections.

The *Cantique de Jean Racine*, which gained Fauré the first prize for composition in 1865, is the musical climax of the Niedermeyer years. It is a concise setting for four-part choir and organ that can take an equal place alongside Fauré's other religious choral works. In the *Cantique* we can see some of the first signs of the interaction between treble and bass lines, a feature which contributes substantially to the strength of Fauré's mature works. The final, more extended passage prior to the coda, with its faster-moving harmonies and its III to V7 to I Fauréan cadence, lends the piece a measure of distinction.

#### THE RENNES PERIOD (1866-70)

After Fauré finished at the École Niedermeyer in July 1865, Gustave Lefèvre arranged for his appointment as organist at the church of Saint-Sauveur in Rennes in January 1866. Fauré stayed with very religious, upright people and his lifestyle was very restricted. It was an unhappy period in his life.

This period produced only a handful of short piano pieces, together with the *Cantique a St. Vincent-de-Paul*, which was performed in Rennes, but has now unfortunately disappeared.

A few fugues were written during this period: two of them were published in 1902 as part of the *Pièces brèves*, op. 84. Whereas op. 84 no. 3 is contrapuntally undistinguished, no. 6, a four-part fugue in E minor, is noteworthy. Rich, contrapuntal writing is evident throughout the work, and the final page contains some characteristically Fauréan harmonies based on the chord of the augmented fifth.

From the Rennes period also comes the cadenza for the opening movement of Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto and for the opening movement of Mozart's Concerto in C minor K. 491. The Beethoven cadenza seems to be stylistically the more appropriate of the two, although even here the harmonies tell us more about Fauré than Beethoven. The Mozart version exceeds the five-octave range of Mozart's piano, and the harmonic language is far too advanced in places (Orledge, p. 50).

## THE LATTER PART OF THE FIRST PERIOD (1870-85)

### 1. Songs

Nothing at Rennes inspired Fauré to write *mélodies*. Fortunately, he moved to Paris at the beginning of 1870, and this coincides with his interest in the genre of the *mélodie*. In 1870 the French *mélodie* was still emerging. According to Nectoux (p. 67), Schubert's *lieder* captivated the French public with their originality and expressive power and stimulated the development of the French *mélodie*. Suckling's viewpoint is that the only *lieder* composer whose work has had much influence in France was Schumann, because he concentrated on musical features. He recognized, with his keen sense of musical texture, that a phrase of music may provide an apt translation of the mood of the poem without exactly fitting the outline of the words. This explains his sympathetic treatment of the piano part and his harmonic enterprise, as in *Frauenliebe und -Leben*, and his success with secondary melodies, which the voice echoes and transforms according to the limitations of the text. Fauré carried this through in songs like *Clair de lune* and *Arpège* (Suckling, p. 60). In general, Fauré's songs certainly owe more to Schumann than to Schubert.

Fauré's vocal works were cultivated in the artistic salon of the upper bourgeoisie. Nectoux feels (p. 67) that Fauré realized that his music would be appreciated only in a restricted circle where intimacy would tell. The singers, talented amateurs, were often as much interested in the visual arts and literature as they were in music, and would draw the composer's attention to a little book of poems that might interest him. The text was no longer a secondary support, with little or no effect on the music. To achieve success, the composer had to integrate the melodic line and the poetry.

The defeat of France in the 1870 Franco-Prussian War seems to have stirred the younger French composers to action. They began to write songs, piano pieces and chamber music that strove for the power and depth achieved by their German counterparts in these fields.

Fauré wrote numerous *mélodies* throughout the decade, beginning with another Hugo setting, *L'Aurore*, and Baudelaire's *Hymne*. *L'Aurore* is the subtlest of the Hugo songs and for the first time he uses an ABA form.

A breakthrough in Fauré's progress as a songwriter came with the creation of *Lydia* (op. 4 no. 2), around 1870. The song embraces many of the typically Fauréan features. The smooth vocal line consists of narrow intervals up to a perfect fourth and is exquisitely phrased. The chordal four-part accompaniment has a feeling of almost Hellenic restraint. The balance between tonality and modality that characterizes his best music, is already evident in the subtle mixture of F major and the lydian mode, which was intended as a gentle pun on the subject of the song. The *Lydia* theme with the raised fourth degree was a fortunate discovery that re-emerged on numerous occasions throughout his career.

Ex. 1 Fauré: *Lydia*, bar 4:

According to Orledge (p. 52), there is a successful group of Italianate songs from this period, two of which have rather similar descending scalar starts, stressing the flattened leading-note of the tonic key in the vocal part. The most outstanding work of this group is *Après un rêve*. It is an emotional, though restrained, masterpiece that maintains its high level of inspiration to the end. Fauré begins to show his mastery of harmonic phrasing here: tension is sustained until the very last note when both harmony and melody resolve together on a strong beat. *Après un rêve* has clear connections with the cello *Élégie* (op. 24) and maybe with the Massenet *Élégie* as well. Both works have similar chordal accompaniment, and a line of tension that stretches right to the end, combined with a soaring melodic contour and a typically French nobility of expression.

Nectoux (p. 72) holds a different view, and believes that Fauré was moving to the *bel canto* style. With the new emphasis on vocality went a slackening in attention to the text and to the prosody in particular. This was not a typically French approach and therefore perhaps not acceptable to Nectoux's point of view. Fauré's Italianate approach was probably the result of the influence of Pauline Viardot, the mother of his fiancée, who published a volume entitled *Poésies toscanes* in 1880.

Also in the Italian group of songs is a brilliant duet for two sopranos, *Tarantelle*, an example of Fauré's humour at work. The breaking off of his engagement to Marianne Viardot, youngest daughter of Pauline, brought this exploration of the Italian style to an abrupt end.

In 1878 Fauré found himself artistically stranded. In this experimental phase he relapsed into the style of the earlier *mélodies*. However, he soon recovered, producing gems such as *Nell*, the first song in the second of the three books (each containing twenty songs) published by Hamelle. *Nell* is characterized by fluid and continuously evolving harmonies and stepwise implied part-movement. Here is a striking demonstration that Fauré had at last found his own style of songwriting. He set Leconte de Lisle's perfect poetry on only five occasions: *Lydia*, *Nell*, *Les Roses d'Ispahan*, *La Rose* and *Le Parfum impérissable*, but Orledge (p. 55) considers each one a masterpiece in its own way.

His last song of this period, *Automne*, was a work of the most intense lyricism. The opening idea with its chromaticism and leaps in the bass is remarkable. Especially noteworthy are the syncopated bass octaves and the effect of ebb and flow in the accompaniment.

## 2. Piano music

The most important piano compositions of Fauré's first period seem to come from the years 1880-86 when he was building a reputation as a piano composer. During this period Fauré adopted from his main musical influence, Chopin, the romantic but non-programmatic formats of the nocturne, impromptu, ballade and barcarolle for piano solo. He used the mazurka and ballade once only, probably finding the first too slight and Polish and the second too Germanic and massive for his taste. The other form Fauré used, the *valse-caprice*, owes a lot to Chopin's more extended waltzes and to the brilliant salon style of Saint-Saëns. These early piano works also reflect the influence of Liszt and of the fashionable *soirées* in which Fauré's career developed, but include such mature works as the Ballade – preferably in its original form as a work for solo piano – and the Second and Fifth Nocturne. The first period is largely one of sensual and sonorous seduction; it is only with the Fifth Barcarolle and the Sixth Nocturne in the second period that we penetrate beneath the surface of Fauré's genius to more profound and personal statements (Orledge, p. 55).

Fauré was an accomplished pianist with a very individual style of playing. He respected the organ as an instrument possessing a classical repertoire, but he had no great love for it. For him it was something he had to play every day, not from choice, but from the necessity imposed by his job at the Madeleine. Despite commissions, he never wrote a piece for organ solo. He preferred the piano as being the instrument with the most advanced repertoire, including above all the music of Schumann. According to a contemporary witness mentioned by Nectoux (p. 43), he used to play Schumann's works better than any other pianist.

He was also ambidextrous, which explains why his figurations, themes and counter-melodies so often pass smoothly from one hand to the other, and why he likes to place his melodic material in the resonant centre of the keyboard. The First Barcarolle's opening provides a good example of his ambidextrous writing, and the Third Barcarolle demonstrates his use of textural layers. His piano writing can be very complex, although the actual sound is extremely clear. His thorough education in counterpoint led him to complicate his scores; to add extra parts. His early works achieve a mosaic writing that the eye sees as learned, but which strikes the ear as being quite spontaneous. This is undoubtedly one of the reasons why his piano works are not played that often. Virtuosi prefer to play Chopin and Liszt rather than Brahms or Fauré, because the process of note-learning is more challenging regarding the latter composers (Nectoux, p. 45-46).

Fauré usually composed at the table before trying each page on his Érard. He was primarily a composer, far more concerned with quality and originality than with making

his music comfortable to play. Although his piano music demands the highest virtuosity, it was secondary to his chief aim – expression. All his life he shunned picturesque titles, as he did programme music in general. According to Nectoux (p. 48), he would far rather have given his nocturnes, impromptus and even his barcarolles the simple title Piano Piece no. so-and-so, following the example of Schumann with his *Klavierstücke*.

From the beginning of the 1880's Fauré's piano music has an individual colour. His themes are phrased with subtlety and the tone is often reserved, but here and there is a touch of humour that could come only from him.

The first five Nocturnes belong to the first period, and apart from no. 4 are in ternary form. The influence of Chopin is clear, especially in no. 2 in B major which has close affinities with Chopin's Seventeenth Nocturne in the same key. Liszt's influence is most evident in the Fifth Nocturne with its improvisatory cadenzas, continuous passagework divided between the hands and recitative-like link to the reprise.

The Ballade, op. 19, dedicated to Saint-Saëns, was originally written for piano solo in 1879; the version for piano and orchestra dates from 1881. Liszt's influence is again evident in cadenza-like passages.

### 3. Chamber music

When Fauré entered the Parisian musical world in 1870, it was dominated by the stars of the operatic stage. Chamber music received little attention and was not much heard in public concerts, but it was popular with a small group of amateurs who played it regularly in private concerts. Fauré's most important creations in the first period in the field of chamber music, were the Violin Sonata of 1875-76, op. 13, and the First Piano Quartet in C minor, op. 15. The four minor chamber works of the early years include the *Romance* for violin and piano (op. 28) and the *Berceuse* (op. 16), both contemporary with the First Piano Quartet; the two works for cello and piano, the *Élégie* and *Papillon*, were given the opus numbers 24 and 77 respectively.

The four-movement Violin Sonata in A major, one of the first landmarks in the renaissance of French chamber music, was published ten years before Franck's celebrated Sonata in the same key and proved itself to be an astonishing anticipation of Franck's composition. Like the First Piano Quartet, it is constructed on the classical plan. There is no introduction, and, as in many of Fauré's early works, the music launches straight into the first theme which begins with an upbeat.

The Adagio of the First Piano Quartet is perhaps the zenith of Fauré's first period; it is pensive and beautiful, and demands full concentration of performer and audience alike. Fauré often made use of a rocking accompaniment, which we also encounter here. This movement has an extraordinary ending: the piano plays a tender theme in the high register against sustained string chords, creating a magical atmosphere.

#### 4. Secular choral music

Fauré's setting for choir and orchestra of Victor Hugo's Gothic text, *Les Djinns*, dates from around 1875. It is rather dramatic and atypical of Fauré's style.

*Le Ruisseau* for female chorus and piano on an anonymous text is a far subtler piece. *La Naissance de Venus* (op. 29, 1882), a mythological cantata for soloists, chorus and orchestra to words by Paul Collin, shows the influence of Wagner. *Madrigal* for vocal quartet or chorus with piano or orchestra is a successful work, lighter and more concise than the preceding.

#### 5. Religious vocal music

Fauré regarded his post as organist and choirmaster as a financially necessary chore, with the result that his religious music, with the exception of the *Requiem*, forms the least inspired part of his oeuvre.

The most important religious composition from his first period is the *Messe basse*. There are three versions of the work, but the definitive version consists of four movements: *Kyrie – Sanctus – Benedictus – Agnus Dei*. It was designed for amateurs and possesses a certain charm and freshness.

#### 6. Orchestral music

After the *Suite d'orchestre* or Symphony in F op. 20, the Violin Concerto op. 14 and the Symphony in D minor op. 40, Fauré came to realize that his strengths and talents lay elsewhere. He did attempt a Third Symphony in the late 1880s, but gave it up. Only the opening Allegros of the Symphony in F and the Violin Concerto remain.

The *Suite d'orchestre* was later published as the *Allegro symphonique* op. 68, in the form of a piano duet transcription by Léon Boëllmann. According to Orledge (p. 72), the level of musical interest in this work is not maintained, and the original manuscript reveals Fauré's struggle with orchestration in terms of balance and unnecessary doublings.

The Violin Concerto was planned as a three-movement work, but only the first two movements were performed in 1879. The Andante has since disappeared, or perhaps became the Andante for violin and piano op. 75, published in 1897.

#### 7. Music for theatre

The only theatre music that came out of the first period was for a one-act comic opera, probably entitled *Barnabé*, on a libretto by Jules Moineaux. It was written in a light musical style and offers proof that his talents were unsuited for symphonic writing.

## THE SECOND PERIOD: 1885-1906

The first years of the second period were difficult ones in Fauré's life and art. Teaching commitments, financial problems and the death of his parents caused acute depression. Each genre reflects, to a certain degree, Fauré's developing maturity as a composer, especially in the subtler cadences and sectional links and in the increasing use of modality. There is also evidence of an increasing poetic awareness, self-criticism and emotional depth.

### 1. Songs

The second period songs start with the song cycles *Cinq Mélodies 'de Venise'* (1891) and *La Bonne Chanson* (1892-4). Both are settings of the poetry of Verlaine and both are cyclic through recurring motifs and stylistic similarities. The five songs of 1891 were *Mandoline*, *En sourdine*, *Green*, *A Clymène* and *C'est l'extase*. There is a recurrent figure that incorporates either falling thirds or modal cadences with flattened leading notes. Accompaniment motifs appear in a similar manner in two of the songs.

In *La Bonne Chanson* Fauré set nine of the twenty-one poems Verlaine wrote in 1870. There are five main ideas that occur mostly in the piano accompaniment that is as important as the vocal line. The function of the themes is musical and not linked with images or ideas. This cycle can stand as an equal beside any song-cycle of the nineteenth century; in a sense it is Fauré's *Dichterliebe* or *Schöne Müllerin*. Fauré composed this when he was fifty, yet the composition is characterised by a freshness and youthful lyricism.

### 2. Piano music

Fauré composed the Fifth Barcarolle in F sharp minor op. 66, as well as the Sixth Nocturne op. 70, in 1894. The Nocturne is written in D flat, like so many of Fauré's best pieces, and Chopin's too. These two works represent the apex of Fauré's achievement in these two genres. The Nocturne creates space for the music to breathe freely. Nectoux (p. 55) describes the opening idea of the middle section as one of his finest inspirations and sees it as similar to the finale of Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht* in its mixture of lyricism and animation. A parallel can also be drawn with certain songs by Richard Strauss, such as *Wiegenlied* (1899) and especially *Ständchen* (1886).

The Barcarolle is a vigorous work, with drama, passion and jagged rhythms interrupting the musical flow.

The Germanic *Thème et variations* (op. 73), dating from 1897, is one of Fauré's most powerful creations. It compares well with the great sets of variations of the Nineteenth Century, and Fauré must surely have had Schumann's *Études symphoniques* (op. 13) in mind when he wrote his sixth and tenth variations. It is in C sharp minor, the same key as Schumann's work. That suggestion does nothing to diminish the success of this work nor its radical originality; it stands clearly on the same level with the previous mentioned

piano pieces, especially with the Fifth Barcarolle, with which it shares a predilection for writing in the bass register, often in octaves, dotted rhythms and off-beat accompaniment figures. Especially noteworthy are the contrapuntal textures evident in several of the variations and the important role assigned to the note D natural, producing the neapolitan sixth progression that Fauré was so fond of in this period, which helped to create a modal atmosphere.

It is followed by the great Seventh Nocturne op. 74, which, like the Variations, moves from C sharp minor to the tonic major (or its enharmonic equivalent, D flat major).

The last piano work to be considered in this period is the suite *Dolly* op. 56 for piano duet, which Fauré wrote between 1893-96 for Emma Bardac's daughter Héléne, known as Dolly. Here Fauré shows himself as capable of portraying the child's world as Schumann did in *Kinderscenen* and *Album for the Young*, or Debussy in *Children's Corner*. Although the language of the suite is relatively simple, the work is not very easy for amateur pianists. It was first performed by Alfred Cortot and Edouard Risler and soon became popular. It was orchestrated by Henri Rabaud, who won the *Prix de Rome* and was to succeed Fauré as director of the Conservatoire in 1920. The work was later staged.

### 3. Chamber music

The Second Piano Quartet in G minor op. 45 announces Fauré's full artistic maturity and the beginning of his second period (1885-1906). In the force of its expression, the greater rhythmic drive and the complexity of its themes, it marks a significant advance on the First Quartet. It is his most overtly Romantic work and has a wide scope of dynamic form. The work is considered by Robert Orledge (p. 101) as one of the most successful nineteenth-century chamber works, as the climaxes always lead somewhere, continuity is never marred by pauses and his harmonic fluency as well as original approach to cadences and modulation give flowing sectional joins.

Certain authors recognize a transitional phase between the second and third periods. It might have been a time for reflection for Fauré, a time to look back and then decide how to approach the future in terms of composition style and standard. It was, according to Suckling (p. 192), as though for the first time in his life Fauré consciously compared his own stature with German music.

"Often enough Fauré had been called the French Schumann, by pairing the two quartets with Schumann's chamber music and the *Bonne Chanson* with the *Dichterliebe*, and certainly the Variations...are to some extent a homage to *Études symphoniques*" (Suckling, p. 192).

Perhaps Fauré felt intimidated by the imposing presence of Wagner and deliberately tried to avoid imitating his style, although he was exposed to his music as a youth and had never before been influenced by Wagner musically. Towards Brahms Fauré was very critical and he was apparently immune to his influence, although Suckling feels (p. 193)

that the German influence was unavoidable and that Fauré's First Piano Quintet was inspired "by the less happy promptings of Beethoven."

The transition years to the third period are entirely dominated by the rarely heard First Piano Quintet, op. 89. The later pattern of three-movement chamber works without a scherzo is established by this work and only broken by the Second Piano Quintet.

According to Orledge (p. 109), Op. 89 stands at a vital midway point in Fauré's chamber music and both renews the powerful message of the piano quartets in its outer movements, and looks forward to the third period in the intensity, phrasing and chromaticism of the extended Adagio. Due to rarity of scores and parts this work is neglected, but Orledge holds the view that the other reason for this neglect might be the quality of its finale. Apparently Fauré feared that the finale would seem to be inspired by Beethoven's *Ode to Joy* from the Ninth Symphony: both works have a diatonic marching theme and appear in the key of D major. Suckling writes, rather contentiously, that this was a type of theme "even less calculated to draw the best from Fauré than it was from Beethoven" (p. 106). It is perhaps closer in mood and construction to the canonic theme of the finale of Franck's A major Violin Sonata. As in the latter case, the fairly playful nature of the theme soon yields to a more serious contrapuntal treatment.

Nectoux's viewpoint (p. 98) is that the formal strength of this last movement suggests that Fauré had inherited from his teacher Saint-Saëns his sense of proportion and shape. He is only reminded of Beethoven in Fauré's skilful application of variation and amplification.

"Everything is in its rightful place and the logic of the argument is unshakeable...The effect is ...that of a game well played; there is liveliness and fun which we may well interpret as the pleasure of a creative mind in at last reaching the end of a laborious task."

#### 4. Secular choral music

This genre includes only the well-known *Pavane* in F sharp minor op. 50, written for orchestra. The opening flute melody is extraordinarily memorable and the mood of the work is one of light seductiveness. Fauré added a chorus part on trivial verses by Robert de Montesquiou, but it is better omitted. Debussy greatly admired this work and modelled a *Pavane* of his own on it in 1890, now known as the *Passepied* from the *Suite bergamasque*.

#### 5. Religious vocal music

The *Requiem* was written during a period of dejection after Fauré had lost both his parents. It is simple and straightforward in every respect. The first version of the *Requiem* op. 48, performed in the Madeleine in 1888, consisted of the *Introit et Kyrie*, *Sanctus*, *Pie Jesu*, *Agnus Dei* and *In Paradisum*. The *Offertoire* and *Libera me* were added later and the first complete performance took place at the Madeleine on 21 January

1893. A third and final version of the *Requiem* was performed at the Trocadéro in Paris in 1900.

Fauré's selective choice of text has often been criticized, because it is suited for liturgical use, like the *Messe basse*, and was not intended primarily for the concert hall or opera house as so many other nineteenth-century masses were. Suckling's view (p. 175) is that the deviation from the standard text is unusual, but not unprecedented - Verdi's *Requiem*, for example, ends with the *Libera me*. As Fauré did not follow the conventional text, the Mass for the Dead has no Last Judgement, and with the responsory *Libera me* and *In Paradisum* the Mass for the Dead becomes the Order of Burial (Orledge, p. 114). The atmosphere of the work is serene, tranquil and peaceful and does not include the drama and fervent hope of comparative works.

The question has been asked whether the *Requiem* was intended to be pagan rather than Christian. Fauré himself argued that he wanted to write something different, after all the years of accompanying burial services on the organ. He also saw death as a happy deliverance rather than as a painful experience (Orledge, p. 115). Each composer in writing a *Requiem* naturally emphasizes one aspect of death, and this fact can be used more profitably to discover the composer's temperament rather than his theological beliefs (Cooper, p. 84). Fauré was not an orthodox Catholic in his beliefs; neither was Berlioz nor Verdi, nor perhaps Mozart – who was also known to belong to the Freemasonry – by the time he wrote his *Requiem*.

According to Cooper (p. 84), piety (in the Latin sense of dutifulness) and resignation are the chief characteristics of Fauré's *Requiem*. He feels that Christian devotion can be detected in *Pie Jesu* and in the anticipation of heaven in the final *In Paradisum*.

“The whole work is within the Christian framework and the absence of the *Dies Irae* is as easily explained on aesthetic as on religious grounds. Fauré, with his knowledge of plainsong, may well have realized that it was difficult to improve on the original sequence and that in any case he was not the man to write what in every modern *Requiem* is a highly dramatic setting.”

“Rest, eternal rest” seems to be the message of this work. Therefore the word *requiem* itself is used as the first and last word in the work. The choice of instruments and register contributes to the mysterious beauty of the work.

## 6. Fauré and the theatre

There were a few abandoned projects during this time, probably owing to Fauré's fear of a full-scale theatrical work, both from a musical point of view and because of the time it would involve (Orledge, p. 120). His heart was not in it. Incidental music gave him the opportunity to write for the theatre, and to continue using smaller musical forms in which he knew his talents lay. Fauré was asked to provide incidental music for a revival of Alexandre Dumas' tragedy, *Caligula*. After this work, Fauré composed *Shylock* –

incidental music for *The Merchant of Venice*. The most beautiful single movement in Fauré's theatrical music, the *Nocturne*, comes from this work, and the same haunting theme in varied form was also used in the *Romance* for cello op. 69, *Soir* op. 83/2 and in *Exaucement* from *Le Jardin clos* op. 106.

## THE THIRD PERIOD: 1906-1924

According to Orledge, the third period contains three distinct subdivisions. The first, 1906-14, is bordered by the song-cycles *La Chanson d'Eve* and *Le Jardin clos*. During the second, 1915-18, Fauré's music reflected the atrocities and trauma of war in works of power and even aggression (at least in terms of Fauré's style), such as the Second Violin Sonata, the First Cello Sonata and the *Fantaisie* (op. 111). In the final years of the third period, 1919-1924, the music – apart from such important exceptions as the Thirteenth Nocturne – reflects philosophical wisdom conveyed in serene beauty and inner peace, coupled with a linear strength and classical restraint. Although Fauré slowed down in the composition process, the quality of his work improved.

### 1906-14

#### 1. Songs

*La Chanson d'Eve* and *Le Jardin clos* both deal with gardens. Both cycles utilise poetry by the Belgian Symbolist Charles van Lerberghe (1861-1907). According to Orledge, there was an imprecision in Van Lerberghe's verses that allowed Fauré to break free from the tyranny of the printed word.

*La Chanson d'Eve* offers us a *mystic participation* in the creation of the world; its message is "Beware, lest thou mightst break anything...for life is sweet to all." (Orledge, p. 140).

This is Fauré's longest song-cycle, consisting of ten songs. Eve's character gradually deepens as she uncovers alone more and more of the secrets of God's universe.

The eight songs of *Le Jardin clos* were written within six months. They form a cycle through style and content rather than thematic links. The mood is one of contemplation, tenderness and inner peace. The cycle differs from *La Chanson d'Eve* in that 'mystic love gives place to human love' (Nectoux, p. 132).

#### 2. Piano music

The piano music of the third period is relatively little known, especially the Nine Preludes op. 103, perhaps because there is a certain gravity, almost a sombreness to the set. They were all written within a year. Fauré used only their keys as titles, and they are extremely diverse. As a group of nine, the Preludes are of a consistently high quality and merit a place alongside the Preludes of Chopin and Debussy both in esteem and in the pianistic repertoire. They retain an improvised quality, and as a collection they represent one of Fauré's most remarkable achievements.

This is also true of Barcarolles nos. 8 – 11 and the Ninth and Tenth Nocturnes. Most of the pieces are heavily accented and are prone to dramatic outbursts and intense climaxes rather than sustained lyricism. The Eleventh Nocturne, op. 104 no. 1 of 1913, was

written as a deeply moving elegy for Noémi Lalo, wife of the critic Pierre Lalo. It is a reflection of Fauré's increasing interiority and depth of spiritual focus and it constitutes one of Fauré's most advanced studies in modal exploration.

### 3. Chamber music

The *Sérénade* op. 98 for cello and piano in B minor, written for and dedicated to Pablo Casals, is the only chamber work in the first part of the third period. It was composed in 1908 and is in ternary form with archaic devices such as turns and mordents in the lyrical B section.

### 4. Fauré and the theatre: *Pénélope*

Fauré's Hellenism is most obvious in the third period and in the opera *Pénélope* it finds its classical expression. The world of Fauré's *Pénélope* is the primitive and instinctive world of Homer's epics, but as viewed through the somewhat nostalgic eyes of a sophisticated, later civilization.

The bond with classical antiquity was stronger in France than in other European civilizations: the French considered themselves to be descendants of the Greek philosophers in the clarity, logic and refinement of their art, as well as in a certain classical restraint which distinguishes French Romanticism, when compared to its German and Italian counterparts. These qualities are perhaps most perfectly represented by the music of Fauré.

Fauré orchestrated most of this work himself, only entrusting the parts that interested him least to Ferdinand Pécoud, a composer and violinist, as he ran short of time.

## 1915-18

### 1. Songs

This constitutes the only period in Fauré's creative life in which he produced no songs.

### 2. Piano music

There are only two very different piano compositions in the war years: the Twelfth Barcarolle (op. 106) and the Twelfth Nocturne (op. 107), both composed in 1915. The Twelfth Nocturne is restless and sombre throughout. Its constant major/minor ambiguity recalls the Tenth Nocturne and the Tenth Barcarolle.

### 3. Chamber music

There was a long interval of years between the composition of the First Violin Sonata of 1875 and the Second Violin Sonata of 1916. The Second Violin Sonata in E minor op. 108, and the First Cello Sonata op. 109, were Fauré's wartime chamber works. Both of

these works are contrapuntal, using close canon between the outer parts, both use syncopation extensively and both are harmonically audacious. Fauré leaves the classical sonata form plan to experiment with more complex structures. The three-part division of sonata form is still discernible, but the recapitulation of the Second Violin Sonata is written in 12/8 time instead of the original 9/8, and the main theme is repeated in E major instead of the traditional tonic minor (Nectoux, p. 407). Although Orledge considers the Second Violin Sonata superior to the First, it is seldom played. It was dedicated to Queen Elisabeth of Belgium who was one of Fauré's greatest admirers and herself a violinist. She played the second violin part in the D minor Piano Quintet at a private performance (Nectoux, p. 277).

The First Cello Sonata was composed in the darkest period of the war. It is full-blooded and powerful like the Second Violin Sonata, but more compact and straightforward in form. This work exploits the rugged side of the cello, completely in contrast with the *Élégie*, and is therefore the least played of all his cello pieces. It is overshadowed by the more accessible Second Cello Sonata of 1921.

#### 4. Orchestral music

The *Fantaisie* for piano and orchestra was dedicated to Alfred Cortot who revised the piano part to make it more accessible. This work is seldom performed as it offers few opportunities for virtuoso display and is perhaps too intimate in style for the concert hall.

### 1919-24

#### 1. Songs

The two sets of songs of the final years, *Mirages* and *L'Horizon chimérique*, are shorter than the set and cycles that preceded them. The vocal part becomes more like a recitative; the wider melodic intervals disappear. The songs of *Mirages* op. 113 are all in major keys, except for the last. The first two songs, *Cygne sur l'eau* and *Reflets dans l'eau*, deal with images of water, and the third, *Jardin nocturne*, describes a moonlit garden. As a cycle, Orledge considers *Mirages* too veiled and reserved, although the cycle is characterised by beautifully expressive use of harmony, featuring long chains of major and minor quartads, especially in the first song. The last song, *Danseuse*, is less restrained, written in remarkable simplicity with a dotted falling figure persisting from beginning to end as the singer exhorts a mysterious being to dance.

*L'Horizon chimérique* consists of four poems by Jean de La Ville de Mirmout who had been tragically killed in the war. The cycle is unified by its rich harmonic style and its subject matter. *La Mer est infinie*, *Je me suis embarqué* and *Vaisseaux, nous vous aurons aimés* are varied seascapes characterised by a rocking accompaniment. The third song, *Diane, Séléné*, is a contemplative hymn to the moon with chordal accompaniment.

## 2. Piano music

Fauré wrote his last Barcarolle and last Nocturne in 1921. The neo-classical Thirteenth Barcarolle op. 116, is in ternary form. The deeply introspective Thirteenth Nocturne op. 119, begins like an austere Bach chorale and builds up in the tragically passionate middle section to a searingly intense transformation of the opening theme. Both pieces close in the minor mode in which they began.

## 3. Chamber music

The Second Quintet, Second Cello Sonata, Piano Trio and String Quartet belong to this mature and conclusive post-war period.

Fauré was commissioned by the State to compose the *Chant funéraire* for the commemoration of the centenary of the death of Napoleon on 5 May 1921. Fauré used this elegy as the basis around which to build his Second Cello Sonata, op. 117. The successful first performance of the latter work by Gérard Hekking (cello) and Alfred Cortot (piano) took place on 13 May the following year.

One of the characteristics of the third period is the use of canonic imitation, and this aspect is evident in the Second Cello Sonata, more than in the Second Quintet. The Second Cello Sonata is simpler and more accessible than the First. All its movements pass from major into tonic minor, and the central Funeral Elegy makes it a memorable work. Similar to the Piano Trio and the String Quartet, this work has only three movements: the first movement was written in sonata form; the second movement is of a meditative and noble quality, and has great contrapuntal strength; the finale is a light and joyous Scherzo, inventive like the Scherzo of the Second Quintet. Whole-tone inflections are also present in the descending scales on the cello.

Fauré's publisher Jacques Durand suggested the idea of a piano trio. The first movement of the Piano Trio illustrates Fauré's modified classical plan as it appears in the most important chamber works of this period. After each idea has been exposed and initially developed, the proper development begins, in which themes are juxtaposed, or more often canonically or imitatively treated. This development usually begins with a re-exposition of all, or part of the first theme, in the tonic key.

According to Orledge (p. 188), this was Fauré's way of stabilizing the tonality and providing the listener with a sense of security, for already in the exposition harmonic development went along with thematic development. The start of the development section proper could therefore sound deceptively like a premature recapitulation.

The long slow movement of the Piano Trio must be one of Fauré's most inspired, and takes the form of an effortless contrapuntal duet, sometimes a trio. Just before the recapitulation, Fauré makes use of one of his very rare indications of *poco ritenuto*.

The finale has an atmosphere of violence that comes as a complete shock. It starts with a *fortissimo* string announcement, reminiscent of the climactic phrase (*Ridi pagliaccio*) in the aria *Vesti la giubba* from Leoncavallo's *I pagliacci*. The finale is in fact a scherzo and its forceful conclusion contrasts strongly with the quiet endings that dominate the late piano music (Orledge, p. 191).

The Trio was first performed on 12 May 1923 by Tatiana de Sansévitch (piano), Robert Krettly (violin) and Jacques Pathé (cello). The second performance on 29 June 1923 by the celebrated Cortot-Thibaud-Casals Trio was considered to be outstanding.

With the String Quartet Fauré feared comparison with Beethoven and he also remembered the fear Saint-Saëns had of the medium, which he tried only towards the end of his life and then without the success he achieved in other genres. The number of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century composers who completed only one string quartet is interesting: Fauré joined the ranks of Verdi, Grieg, Franck, Debussy and Ravel. He kept the composition of the Quartet secret even from his wife until four days before he finished the central Andante (Orledge, p. 215).

The String Quartet was Fauré's last chamber work, but his first without piano. It starts with a thematic dialogue between violin and viola. The first movement is in straightforward sonata form. Chains of unresolved discords, typical of Fauré's late style, characterize the Andante. The finale is again a scherzo with the main theme consisting of small arched phrases on cello with a pizzicato accompaniment. His contrapuntal writing is once again of a sophisticated quality.

#### 4. Fauré and the theatre: *Masques et bergamasques*

*Masques et bergamasques*, op. 112, is a one-act lyric divertissement to a text adapted from Verlaine by René Fauchois for which Fauré produced eight musical extracts. The orchestrations were by Fauré himself, though he was helped by Marcel Samuel-Rousseau. This work has become one of his best-loved creations.

## CHAPTER IV – THE PIANO QUARTETS AND PIANO QUINTETS

### Introduction

Florent Schmitt, one of the few authors who recognizes the importance of Fauré's chamber music, considering it "certainly more important than the piano works, and even than the collection of songs, which are, nevertheless, regarded by a superficial public as Fauré's principal work" (Schmitt, p. 386).

The choice of an unusual medium like the piano quartet showed Fauré's desire to break new ground and be his own man. He was more modest than Ravel and Debussy and was cautious not to attempt the supreme form of chamber music – the string quartet – until the end of his working life, being in awe of Beethoven's masterpieces in this field. The piano quartet, on the other hand, offered an area in which masterpieces were few.

The piano quartets are probably Fauré's most popular instrumental works outside France. They are similar in general structure and even in some points of detail. In both, the opening theme of the first movement appears in the recapitulation in a new light, not restated so much as remembered. Nectoux describes Fauré as the creator of the French scherzo. He gave a new dimension to this movement, and in both quartets it appears as the second rather than the third movement. According to Cooper (p. 83), the most successful movements are the scherzi and slow movements that emphasize his gifts of lyricism and a gift for the unexpected in terms of modulations and excursions. The finale is, in both cases, considered by authors like Cooper to be the weakest movement as it does not convey enough strength to summarize the work. This viewpoint is not to be shared by authors such as Roger-Ducasse (Phillips, p. 321).

Jean Roger-Ducasse declared in *La Revue musicale* of October 1922 that, compared to Schumann and Chopin, Fauré's genius was better suited to the subtleties of chamber music, which demands greater skill than orchestral compositions. He wrote that Fauré has solved the "problem" of the finale which, in the author's view, must be a unifying and summarizing movement (Phillips, p. 321).

Suckling's viewpoint (p. 109) regarding Fauré's treatment of the finale is that he presented this movement's successive themes not as a contrast or a balance, but rather as a complement or extension of each other, as in the finale of the Second Violin Sonata.

### First Piano Quartet in C Minor, op. 15

The first three movements of the First Piano Quartet work were written from 1876 to 1879, while the finale was written in 1883. The work thus falls within the first period (1860-85). This was an eventful time in his life. He broke off his engagement to Marianne Viardot and visited Germany twice where he heard Wagner's tetralogy. Although greatly impressed, he apparently never came under Wagner's influence musically. This work forms, together with the Violin Sonata in A major, one of the first

fruits of Fauré's artistic maturity, and combines agility of writing and youthful high spirits with a new forcefulness and drive. The C minor key evidently held for Fauré something of the sternness that Beethoven found in it. The work was published by Hamelle and was dedicated to the great violinist Hubert Leonard. It was first performed at the *Société Nationale*, a society whose aim was to encourage native composers, on 14 February 1880. It is based upon a classical plan and follows the traditional four-movement form, with the slight difference that the Andante follows the Scherzo and immediately precedes the finale.

It is comparatively rare in Beethoven for the scherzi to precede the slow movement, but it happens in the String Quartet op. 59 in F major (where the scherzo is in sonata form), also in the "Archduke" Trio and the Ninth Symphony. Haydn chooses this order in four of his six "Russian" Quartets op. 33, but thereafter only four times in thirty-three works. Mozart chooses this order in three of the six quartets avowedly influenced by Haydn's "Russian" set, and only once after that (Fiske, p. 120). Most significantly, in terms of Fauré's models, it is also evident in Schumann's Piano Quartet op. 47 in E flat major (Ulrich, p. 310) where the scherzo is a substantial movement with two contrasting trios. Other precedents are Brahms' first chamber-music composition, the Trio in B major op. 8, in the second version of the work, as well as the Trio in E flat major, op. 40.

There is, however, nothing traditional about the quartet's opening phrase, which starts with an upbeat without an introduction and is boldly modal in character. It establishes a rhythmic motif that is carried throughout the work; a vigorous yet dignified rhythm reminiscent of the French *courante*. (Harry Halbreich, CD notes, 1970).

The formal structure of the first movement, sonata form, follows the traditional route. The exposition concludes with an extended codetta in which the first theme appears in the new tonic. After this the various themes are developed with skill and elegance creating a sense of continuous renewal. In the recapitulation, each theme appears in its original form, the second theme in the tonic major, C major, according to tradition (Schmitt, p. 388).

The Scherzo is of entrancing lightness with *pizzicato* string chords and plays between E flat major and C minor. It is in adapted rondo form: ABACA, of which C is the trio. The form is somewhat reminiscent of the Scherzo in Schumann's Piano Quartet with its two trios.

The Adagio is perhaps the zenith of Fauré's first period, and starts with a rising scale idea that is also extended as the theme of the finale against the background of piano arpeggios. The finale is full of power and energy and in sonata form, like the first movement.

### Second Piano Quartet in G Minor, Op. 45

The Second Piano Quartet was written seven years after Op. 15 in 1886, a year that was a milestone in nineteenth-century French music. Major works like the Violin Sonata by Franck, the *Symphonie avec orgue* by Saint-Saëns and Lalo's Symphony in G minor were

produced. The first performance of the quartet took place at the *Société Nationale* where Fauré himself played the piano part. It was published a year later and Fauré wrote to Hans von Bülow to notify him that the work was dedicated to him. Since the first quartet, Fauré's development as a composer was considerable. Since Op. 15, he had written some thirty works. This work demonstrates the considerable development that has taken place in Fauré's style since the writing of Op. 15. By this time, he had already composed the Ballade for piano, the first five nocturnes, four barcarolles and his first masterpieces in the field of the *mélodie*.

Apart from the Scherzo, all the movements are in sonata form. The subtle thematic relationships between movements make of this work the only instance, together with the Second Violin Sonata, of Fauré's adoption of the cyclic principle in his chamber works.

The evolution which began with the First Violin Sonata has continued. This is the definitive Fauré: the ideas are grander, the harmony bolder and individuality is more apparent. His firm control over his medium and material is immediately evident in the long opening theme. Fauré integrates modal thinking in the opening phrase that begins in the transposed phrygian mode and attains the original key again in bar 11.

"Never was phrase more impulsive than the impassioned opening of the Allegro molto moderato; this phrase alone would have assured immortality to its composer" (Schmitt, p. 389).

The piano part is "volcanic" in texture and harmonies, thus forming a powerful contrast to the more gentle and sensitive style of Fauré as seen in works like the Fourth Barcarolle.

Generally speaking, the G minor bears a close resemblance to its predecessor in the powerful but clear part-writing, the general layout of the movements and even in the nature of its material. Although we find the same almost symphonic breadth and contrast between the two main themes in the opening movement, a delicate scherzo, a meditative Adagio and a finale that is interrupted by a chordal theme on the piano, the interplay between instruments is now of a different kind, with piano and strings frequently in opposition.

The atmosphere of the Scherzo is also different: where the Scherzo of the C minor Quartet offered charm, that of the G minor casts a spell. This time the Scherzo has no trio, and everything is *forte* or *fortissimo* with rhythmic accents and a "violent" streak that is entirely new. Interestingly, both Scherzi open with a tonally ambiguous passage, hovering between E flat major and C minor.

Fauré's thorough knowledge of idiomatic string writing is evident in the marvellous viola solo at the beginning of the slow movement. It is as if the viola was made for this opening theme. It seems to arise meditatively from the rhythmically ambiguous opening figure on piano, which Fauré himself likened to the sound of distant bells.

“The slow movement of my second Quartet is one of the few places where I realise that, without really meaning to, I recall a peal of bells we used to hear of at evening, drifting over to Montgauzy from a village called Cadirac whenever the wind blew from the West. Their sound gives rise to a vague reverie, which, like all reveries, is not translatable into words. It often happens, doesn't it, that some external thing plunges us into thoughts that are so imprecise, they're not really thoughts at all, though the mind finds them pleasurable. Perhaps it's a desire for something beyond what really exists; and there music is very much at home...”  
(Letter from Fauré to his wife, 11 September 1906 – Nectoux, p. 92).

The rocking motion of the accompaniment in the slow movement is reminiscent of similar effects in the Adagio of the First Piano Quartet, in the Berceuse from the *Dolly Suite* and in some of the barcarolles.

The finale is in the form of a relentless waltz and completes this brilliant work in a suitably exciting manner.

After the Second Piano Quartet, he seems to have moved away from chamber music for a while, perhaps because he was very active in other fields.

#### First Piano Quintet in D Minor, op. 89

Little is known about this work, the first of his works to be written against the menacing background of growing deafness. It seems as though the composition process was slow, because three difficult years would be needed before it was finally finished, whilst he made some further changes to the first movement even thirteen years later. According to Ferguson, it was finished in 1906 – fifteen years before the Second Quintet, but it had been begun as early as 1890. According to Koechlin (p. 42), the First Piano Quintet was promised as Op. 60 (between the *Mémoires 'de Venise'*, op. 58, and *La Bonne Chanson*, op. 61) and he sees the first movement as the culmination of this period. He notes that the Adagio was written slightly later. It is the only work of Fauré that was published by Shirmer.

The first performance, given by the Ysaÿe Quartet in Brussels in March 1906, was evidently a disappointment to the audience. Fauré attributed this mainly to a resemblance he had detected between the principal theme of his finale and the *Ode to Joy* melody in Beethoven's *Choral Symphony* (Suckling, p. 106). Even today it remains his most misunderstood work. The opening movement is, however, one of Fauré's best, “...radiant with life and intensity” (Orledge, p. 109). It starts with one of Fauré's greatest themes: a broad melodic line, announced by the second violin, rises over rapid arpeggios on the piano like an Aeolian harp. This movement is in sonata form, and there is not merely a recapitulation but a further development which continues to the end (Ferguson, p. 240).

For the very first time in his chamber works with piano, the announcement of a theme is entrusted to the unaccompanied strings: the second subject of the first movement. It is

also interesting that, after the final appearance of the initial theme in D major, the second subject follows. Now stripped of its harshness, expressing tenderness, the second subject ends this movement.

Fauré had briefly thought of making it a four-movement work, but settled on three movements only, "...like the marvellous Quintet by Franck" (Nectoux p. 96). The Scherzo is omitted, therefore there is not a big contrast of atmosphere between the first movement's gentle, dreamy coda and the beginning of the Adagio.

It is clear that Fauré eliminated the Scherzo deliberately, for the rest of his chamber works, with the exception of the Second Piano Quintet, were treated in similar fashion, consisting of three movements only. Suckling (p. 108) feels strongly that it contributed to the lack of success at the first performance:

"This seems to have disconcerted his hearers when the work first appeared, and his biographers are inclined to attribute its doubtful reception rather to this frustrated expectation of another movement than to any shortcomings in the finale itself."

According to Koechlin (p. 43), the finale "...is sustained with no weakness, strongly contrapuntal and rhythmic." On the same page, in the footnote, he remarks:

"It is strange that at the first performance this Finale did not command the admiration of the audience; but if our memory is correct the work gave the impression of stopping abruptly. Was it perhaps that people expected four movements, instead of three? Or was it perhaps that the opening of the movement was too quick and the development insufficiently powerful?"

This modified plan was bound to affect his treatment of concluding movements, since in a three-movement form the finale is so comparatively close to the opening movement that to treat it on the same lines, with balanced themes, might make it too similar to the first movement. In a three-movement form the finale also has to provide the contrast that would otherwise be provided by the scherzo. The slow movement of this quintet has a much more important role therefore than its counterparts in the piano quartets; its form is more complex and it carries on the intensity and continuous development begun in the first movement. The finale has a lot to match up to and perhaps Fauré's intention with the buoyant opening theme was to provide an absolute contrast with the slow movement and to compensate for the missing scherzo (Orledge, p. 111).

In most sonata form works the first movement remains the centre of gravity, although Beethoven in works such as the Ninth Symphony and the original version of the B flat Quartet with the *Grosse Fuge* as finale, inverted this tendency, and his example would be followed by several composers in the nineteenth century. Usually, however, in works based on cyclic principles, the finale acts as a grand summary of earlier material. Fauré made little use of cyclic principles, and it is therefore understandable that the finale-centered sonata form held fewer attractions for him.

In working with four movements, it is possible to end with a burst of high spirits (typical of classical composers like Haydn), or with a vigorous movement of more spacious proportions as Beethoven did in the B flat Quartet op. 130 with the *Grosse Fuge* at the end, or Franck in his Violin Sonata in A major. According to Suckling (p. 108), Fauré treated his finales like Haydn. The evolution of Beethoven's chamber music led to another path – towards a modification of traditionally existing forms by elements borrowed from the music-drama. Fauré was more drawn to unity than to diversity, and in the finales he has presented his successive themes not as a contrast or a balance, but rather as the complement or the extension of one another.

As mentioned before, Jean Roger-Ducasse declared in *La Revue musicale* of October 1922 that, compared to Schumann and Chopin, Fauré's genius was better suited to the subtleties of chamber music. He declares that Fauré has solved the "problem" of the finale which, in the author's view, must be a unifying and summarizing movement (Phillips, p. 321). This is in strong contrast to the reservations other authors such as Orledge, Cooper and Suckling have expressed regarding some of his finales.

It is interesting that Fauré made use of the sonata rondo form for the first time in this three-movement work, a form he was to use often in the chamber music of his third period, as in the Second Violin Sonata, with the first theme forming the refrain.

#### Second Piano Quintet in C Minor, op. 115

The Second Quintet is a monumental work within this difficult genre in which masterpieces such as those by Schumann (1842), Brahms (1864), Dvorak (1887) and Franck (1879) are rare. Fauré's C minor Quintet is something of an isolated example in early twentieth-century music. This work, written some years later than the First Quintet, when Fauré was seventy-six, is dedicated to Paul Dukas.

The Second Quintet enjoyed an overwhelming success at its first performance at the *Société Nationale* on 21 May 1921 by a distinguished group of Fauréans including Robert Lortat (piano), Victor Gentil (second violin) and Gérard Hekking (cello). Fauré could only hear the applause properly and appeared extremely frail.

Although the composition process became slower for the ageing Fauré, it is a full-blooded work, "singing throughout almost as if its life depended on it" (Orledge, p. 182).

In this work Fauré reintroduces the scherzo, which had disappeared after Op. 45. As with all his post-war works, Fauré composed the middle movements first, and this is his last four-movement work, with the Scherzo coming second as in the piano quartets.

The extroverted endings of the outer movements of the Second Quintet (and the later Piano Trio) contrast strongly with the quiet endings that dominate the late piano works.

The opening theme seems to look back to the First Piano Quartet as there are similarities of form and texture between the two: the opening theme is presented by successive entries on strings over a regular piano figuration. It is also similar to the First Piano Quintet as the strings enter one by one over a pulsating accompaniment from the outset, and an intense second theme is announced by the strings alone, all playing in their lowest strings. In the First Piano Quintet the first theme is announced by the second violin; in the Second Piano Quintet this role is taken by the viola.

According to Halbreich (CD notes) the sonata form of the first movement is expanded to include a second development section after the recapitulation, and in the subsequent chamber works (Second Cello Sonata, Piano Trio and String Quartet) this was to be Fauré's structural norm. Robert Orledge (p. 169) refers to a second exposition (already in the Second Violin Sonata), as was used earlier by Schumann in his E flat Piano Quintet's finale (Ulrich, p. 310). Both authors are striving to define Fauré's very free treatment of sonata form in ways that are perhaps too rigid. The outlines of sonata form are increasingly obscured by the music's ceaseless flow and the continuous development of motifs, which lead to a kind of through-composed form.

The Second Piano Quintet extends Fauré's experiments in the field of continuous development into the four sections of its opening movement, and into the rondo form in its finale. There is no cyclic recalling of themes as in the Second Violin Sonata.

Fauré's deliberate avoidance of the lowest bass register is most noticeable in this work out of all the chamber music of the last years. A deep-lying passage in the slow movement is therefore all the more effective and sounds like a new departure.

The opening theme of the first movement on viola is confident and self-contained; the bare fourths and fifths in the accompaniment of the first two bars give an elemental feeling (Orledge, p. 251).

The lightning scherzo is one of Fauré's most miraculous inventions. We are confronted with an unexpected youthful, joyous piece, with half-chromatic/half-diatonic scales on piano and cross-rhythms on the strings in what almost amounts to the foretaste of the scherzo of Bartók's Fourth String Quartet. There is no real trio, but a more lyrical theme is extended melodically and rhythmically alongside developments of the opening idea.

The slow movement is one of the composer's finest achievements, based on three ideas. The first, a questioning, chromatic phrase on strings, is answered by a tender modulating theme for strings and piano in dialogue. The third idea, in the form of a slow chorale, is first heard on piano only, then on strings.

The final movement with its dance-like, playful character, reminds us of the same movement in the First Piano Quintet and is once again in sonata rondo form.

## CHAPTER V – STYLISTIC CHARACTERISTICS

### Introduction

Whereas Debussy creates chord progressions outside the tonal system, Fauré remains within it, but enriches it through modal procedures. From a tonal perspective, alterations that resolve by minor second (in the direction of the alteration) tend to strengthen the sense of tonal direction, while alterations that resolve by major second (in the direction opposite to the alteration) tend to create a modal inflection.

For Fauré, harmony is the central factor, rather than an element dependent on rhythm or melody, as it can be in Debussy. With Fauré harmony is never used purely for colour and remains strongly functional. The music always ends with the tonic established at the outset, although he often proceeds from minor to tonic major, a favourite device of the Romantic era. It has also been written that he would bring a work of minor tonality to a major conclusion for the same reason as Purcell or Bach would employ a *tierce de Picardi* – for primarily acoustic reasons (Suckling, p. 111). In his approach to harmony in general, Fauré is an evolutionary, rather than a revolutionary composer, developing and expanding his inheritance from within, assimilating and transforming elements from the music of Mendelssohn, Schumann, Chopin, Liszt and Saint-Saëns in his own refined and original style. Fauré created no new chords. Apart from the occasional use of quartal harmony based on the dominant eleventh, he relied on the third-based tradition of Rameau. His innovations lay within chord progressions.

Suckling writes that Debussy approached compound sonorities as the primary material of his art, while Fauré's harmonic enterprise always has a linear reference. This was probably due to his training at the Niedermeyer under Saint-Saëns, who shared the admiration of the school for Bach: "...for it is this distinguishing mark of Bach's music that his skill in the interweaving of linear parts helped him to his position in the forefront of harmonic originality" (Suckling, p. 102).

According to Nectoux (p. 231), Fauré's musical language was essentially melodic rather than harmonic. Many of his melodies are constructed from falling scales, from the *Sérénade toscane* through to the Twelfth Barcarolle and the Second Violin Sonata. Many of his most memorable creations, like *Clair de lune* or the *Sicilienne* from *Pelléas et Melisande* have scalar or arpeggio components, but this is perhaps true of most composers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Fauré's skill lay in abstracting suitable motifs for development from his themes. His approach to melody in the instrumental works was generally wide-ranging and expansive.

Fauré preferred multiple-flat to multiple-sharp keys. In the early and late periods simpler keys take precedence, whereas many of the masterpieces of the middle periods have several flats. D flat major seemed an especially favourite in the middle period, as can be seen in the Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Nocturnes, all of which are in D flat or proceed from C-sharp minor to D flat major. Fauré was careful about tonal unity within pieces, and always cast his scherzi and slow movements in closely-related keys such as the

subdominant (second movements: opp. 45, 89, 108, 117) the dominant (slow movement, op. 115) or the relative major (second movements: opp. 15, 115, 120).

## 1. FAURÉ'S APPROACH TO RHYTHM

Orledge (p. 258) maintains that rhythm was of less importance to Fauré than to Debussy and Stravinsky. His main concern was consistency and continuity, and a theme of a distinctive rhythm that enabled it to be conspicuous in the development. It is a fact that rhythmic incisiveness played an important role in some of his works, such as the song *Mandoline*, in which we find rhythmic vitality in the imitation of the plucked instrument. Other examples would include the tenth Variation from the *Thème et variations* and the late cello sonatas which are also characterised by great rhythmic vitality in the dialogue between the instruments. Fauré used sophisticated cross-rhythms and subtle complexities in seemingly flowing textures in many of his chamber works.

Unusual metric schemes are rare in Fauré's music, but include such interesting instances as the 3/2 (really 9/4 over 18/8) of the Sixth Nocturne, the 18/8 of the Seventh Nocturne and the 5/4 of the C sharp minor Prelude. The fluctuation between 3/4 and 4/4 in the finale of the First Piano Quartet and between 9/8 and 12/8 in the Adagio of the First Quintet are also fairly unusual.

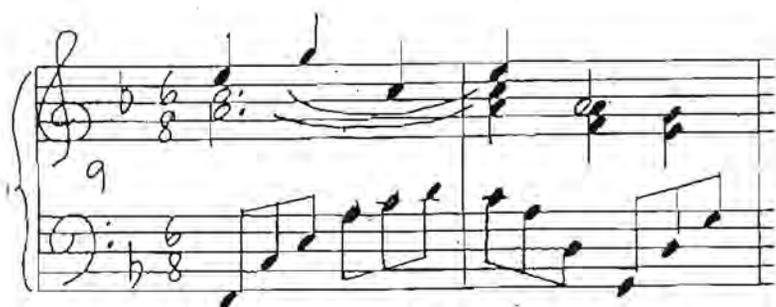
Rhythmic variety became important to Fauré in his third period, and his desire to avoid stressing the bar in common time recalls the rhythmic flexibility of the sixteenth century.

Fauré is also regarded as the inventor of the French scherzo, and in his scherzi the cross-rhythms play an important role; in the First Piano Quartet's Scherzo the metre often oscillates between 6/8 and 2/4 time.

Nectoux (p. 242) notes that the regularity in Fauré's music is one of pulses. They provide the strict framework for his diversification of rhythms and accents. He describes it as the *art of displacement*, especially in his piano music and in late works where it often takes the form of expressive delays in the counterpoint, as in the Ninth Barcarolle. A further aspect is his habit of sounding the bass on weak beats, either delaying or prolonging it to create a cross-rhythm or a syncopation. Avoidance of strong beats reached its height when these syncopated rhythms were transferred to the bass-line as well, in combination with an off-beat accompaniment (Orledge, p. 258).

He is fond of superimposing binary and ternary rhythm, as in the Second Impromptu, bar 9 and 10 as shown below, and in the above-mentioned Scherzo of the First Piano Quartet. This was a favourite device in Viennese and French waltz music.

Ex. 2 Second Impromptu, bar 9-10:



From a rhythmic point of view Fauré, according to Nectoux (p. 246), shows himself a worthy successor to Renaissance composers such as Le Jeune and Janequin. His concern for bringing about change inside an overall continuity shows how he was influenced by his studies of Renaissance music.

Harmonic rhythm is of great importance in Fauré's music, and one of his ways of achieving metric irregularity within a conservative framework lay in prolongation of chords across bar-lines, and in the prolongation of chords between the end of one melodic phrase and the start of the next. Fauré never abandoned the bar line altogether as Satie did, and preferred to use it to his advantage in cross-phrasing and irregular musical sentences (Orledge, p. 258).

## 2. RHYTHMIC AMBIGUITY (HEMIOLA)

A hemiola refers to time values that are in the relationship 3:2, particularly three minims instead of two dotted minims. This change from 6/4 to 3/2 or vice versa is found frequently in the works of Dunstable, Dufay and other fifteenth-century composers, as well as in music of the Baroque. It is a typical trait of the *courante* of the Baroque suite, especially at cadence points. In the nineteenth century it was utilised by composers such as Beethoven (*Eroica* Symphony, first movement, bars 250-279), Schubert ("Unfinished" Symphony, first movement, bars 36-37) and more frequently by Schumann (*Spanische Liebeslieder*, op. 138 no. 6), and Brahms (Second Symphony).

Fauré used hemiolas frequently, especially in his scherzi. Examples occur in the First Piano Quartet throughout the Scherzo. In the fourth movement it is evident from bars 166-203, where 3/4 time is converted to 3/2 time.

A more complex example appears in the opening idea of the third movement of the Second Piano Quartet. Here we find the metre disguised as simple time although it is notated as 9/8 time (bars 1-2 and 6-7), creating a *sesquitertia* that puts the motif and beat in the relationship 4:3. The *sesquitertia* relationship is applied most strikingly in bars 95-100, where the same motif is heard alternatingly in 12/8 and a hypothetical 3/2.

Ex. 3 Second Piano Quartet: Third movement, bars 95-96:

In the Second Quintet a hemiola once again affects the opening idea of the fourth movement. The piano part starts with the hemiola idea against the regular metre of the strings. This relationship is later inverted.

### 3. HARMONIC PRACTICES

#### 3.1 Use of the second inversion as an independent consonance

Second inversion triads only occur in cadential or passing context in Fauré's early works. Later they became chords in their own right to be freely used, either to start a recapitulation (op. 108) or in an almost dominant function (Orledge, p. 251).

In his deliberate use of inversions he removed in particular the "...absurd suspicion which weighed upon the second inversion" (Koechlin, p. 65). This emancipation of the second inversion is already foreshadowed in certain works by Liszt.

Free use of the second inversion is obvious in the Second Piano Quartet, first movement, bar 50. Here is not the traditional cadential or passing six-four movement, but an independent chord, the Neapolitan sixth, in inverted form. It is followed by the same chord in quartad form. Hereafter follows the dominant quartad of E flat major (bar 51). This leads to the recapitulation.

In the First Piano Quintet's opening movement Fauré uses a second inversion chord at the climactic point in bar 62, marked *fortissimo*, and resolves it unconventionally to a major quartad.

Surprisingly, Fauré opens the Second Piano Quintet's first movement with piano accompaniment built on the second inversion of the tonic (bar 1 and 2), which is also outlined by the opening theme.

Ex. 4 Second Piano Quintet: First movement, bar 2:

C minor  $I_4^6$

### 3.2 Use of the augmented triad

In the First Piano Quartet's first movement the augmented triad is used as enharmonic pivot. The multiple possibilities of resolution of this chord are exploited by Fauré in such passages as in bars 182 – 191 where the same augmented triad on F is used to resolve first to D major and then to D flat major; in the Second Piano Quartet's first movement the same augmented triad is approached from E flat major in bar 52 and 54, but resolved respectively to the dominants of C minor and E minor.

Ex. 5 Second Piano Quartet: First movement, bar 52–55:

bar 52  
 $E_b: I$   $C: \bar{V} 6-5$   $E_b: I$   $e: \bar{V} 6-5$

Although inexplicably forbidden by the harmony books, the augmented triad was already used by Bach and Rameau and is used quite frequently by Fauré, but, according to Koechlin (p. 64), always tonally and never derived from the whole-tone scale. In the C sharp minor Prelude Fauré uses the augmented triad in combination with the whole-tone scale in bar 8, but still in the context of tonal harmonic movement.

The striking use of the augmented triad in the third movement of the Second Piano Quartet contributes to the mysterious and impressionistic quality of the work (see ex. 3).

### 3.3. Unprepared quartads /Irregular use of quartads especially 4/2

Suckling (p. 184) stresses the fact that Fauré's innovations lay in the "...fresh ways of passing from one harmony to another" and, combined with long-stretching melodic lines, were so integrated with the subtle harmonies that one could not be considered without the other. The syntax of music as inherited by Fauré was governed by fairly restrictive rules, such as the obligatory resolution of the leading note in dominant and diminished quartads or the occasional augmented sixth chord. Other quartads and quintads were treated as dissonant compounds requiring resolution.

The leading-note quartad was the first of these chords to be liberated from archaic, rigid progressions. Wagner based some of his passages on original motions to or from a leading-note quartad or one of its inversions. Fauré brought about the same deliverance for especially the major and minor quartads and often used them unprepared.

His unconventional use of quartads is most strikingly evident in the last period, as in the third movement of the Second Piano Quintet, bars 40, 131 and 139, each time unresolved.

Ex. 6 Second Piano Quintet, Third movement, bar 40 and 131:

D: IV<sup>4</sup> V<sup>4</sup> VI<sup>4</sup> VII<sup>7</sup>      G: III<sup>7</sup> IV<sup>7</sup>

### 3.4 Ambiguous chords

Like most late Romantic composers, Fauré makes abundant use of harmonic ambiguity, employing altered chromatic chords that sound like diatonic chords foreign to the key. The most frequently used of these is probably the doubly-augmented chord, which is often used against a diatonic melody proper to the key to which the chord itself seems to belong. This is exploited by Fauré to create modal excursions. (See Integration of modality and tonality 5.3.)

## 4. CADENTIAL TREATMENT

### 4.1 Avoidance of the leading note

Fauré frequently finds ways to circumvent the leading-note's emphatic pointing towards the tonic of a scale, either by resolving the dominant quartad irregularly, or by replacing the leading-note with a subtonic or tonic (as in the dominant eleventh).

Fauré often avoids the leading note to tonic movement by replacing the third of the dominant chord by a fourth to create a dominant eleventh, which can also be construed as quartal harmony. A good example occurs at the end of the first movement of the Second Piano Quintet.

Ex. 7 Second Piano Quintet: First movement, final cadence:

C:  $V_{2/2}$  —  $V^{11}$  I  $V_7 - V_{11}$

#### 4.2 Avoidance of the dominant quartad

A striking instance of Fauré's deliberate avoidance of the dominant quartad at a final cadence is formed by the III to I ending of the Second Piano Quartet.

Ex. 8

G:  $III^6$  I

#### 4.3 Modal cadences

Modal cadences are fairly common in Fauré's works, and this was one of his ways of avoiding the traditional perfect cadence. This means that perfect cadences tend to be replaced (or followed, in the coda) by cadences with a plagal feeling; with either straightforward IV – I progressions, or plagal by nature, remembering that dominants in Gregorian modes are sometimes also found on the *sixth* degree above the finalis. Thus we also get VI – I cadences, IV<sup>6</sup> – I cadences or II<sup>7</sup> – I. Fauré often used the resolution of the chord of the doubly augmented fourth to the tonic as final cadence, and this chord, based on the raised supertonic, also belongs to the subdominant class.

##### 4.3.1 Plagal cadence

In the Second Piano Quintet's opening movement, bar 8, the cadence II <sup>6</sup>/<sub>5</sub> – I in E flat major appears. The falling bass of a fourth gives a plagal feeling.

Ex. 9 *Second Piano Quintet. First movement, bars 8-9:*

$E_b: \text{II} \frac{6}{5} \text{ I}$

#### 4.3.2 Lydian cadence

The lydian cadence occurs when the raised fourth degree, giving a lydian modal flavour, is used before the tonic. A good example appears in the First Piano Quintet, first movement, bar 10 (see ex. 24), while one of the most striking examples forms the final cadence of the first movement of the Second Piano Quartet (ex. 10).

Ex. 10 *Second Piano Quartet. First movement, bars 215-216:*

$G: \text{I} \frac{4}{2} \text{ VI} \text{ VII}^{\#} \text{ II} \text{ I}$

An extreme instance, going far beyond diatonic modality, forms the final cadence of the Scherzo of the Second Piano Quintet. Here Fauré resolves a major triad on the lydian fourth directly to the tonic.

Ex. 11 *Second Piano Quintet: Scherzo, bars 210-211:*

$E_b: \text{b III} \frac{6}{4} \text{ II} \frac{4}{4} \text{ IV} \frac{6}{4} \text{ I}$

## 4.3 Resolution of the dominant to the mediant a third lower (as in ex. 8).

See integration of modality and tonality 5.1.

## 5. THE INTEGRATION OF MODALITY AND TONALITY

Fauré's omnitonic approach is evident in the progression from minor to tonic major, a characteristic that dominates his chamber music, as for example in the Adagio of his First Piano Quartet, but also forms the basis of his integration of modality into tonal thinking. Nectoux (p. 227) refers to a catalogue by Françoise Gervais of the characteristic harmonic habits to be found in Fauré's music. She drew attention to Gustave Lefèvre's *Traité d'harmonie*, a resumé of the music theory taught at the École Niedermeyer. Lefèvre refers to the teaching he received from Pierre de Laleden, who passed on to him and to Saint-Saëns a very flexible conception of harmony deriving from the Abbé Vogler. Lefèvre adopted Vogler's system of figuring, which is concerned with the degree of the scale on which the chord is placed, not with the intervals in relation to the bass notes. This system favours the interpretation of altered notes as modal inflections of the home key, rather than as an indication of a shift in tonality (even if of a momentary nature as in the secondary dominant function). For example, a D major triad in C major is thus not seen as dominant of the dominant, but merely as a major triad on the supertonic with lydian implications. This introduced a concept of harmony that is linear and modal, and that focuses on alteration within the key, rather than on modulation, as a means of chromatic expression. This links Fauré's thinking to that of earlier experimenters in the integration of modalism and chromaticism such as Carlo Gesualdo (ca. 1560-1613).

In the following extract from Gesualdo's *Moro lasso*, for example, alteration is introduced as a means of achieving expressive contrast in harmonic colour and not for modulatory purposes.

Ex. 12 Gesualdo: *Moro lasso*, bars 13-19

The image shows a handwritten musical score for Ex. 12, Gesualdo's *Moro lasso*, bars 13-19. The score is written on two staves (treble and bass clef) in common time (C). The music features complex chromaticism and altered notes, characteristic of Gesualdo's style. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor). The score shows a progression of chords and melodic lines with various accidentals (sharps, flats, naturals) and a final cadence.

One of the first exercises Lefèvre gave to his students was to draw up a table of perfect triads on each degree of the scale and in all the keys and to then consider each chord as a possible tonic/finalis. They were also taught that they should explore the directions in which each note of the chord can move, either diatonically, chromatically or enharmonically, in order to form a new aggregation. This was in sharp contrast to the rigid approach at the Conservatoire. Fauré's personal musical expression and language had its source in Lefèvre's approach.

In the works of his maturity he pushed his tonal explorations to the limit, as for example in the Scherzo of the Second Piano Quintet or the introduction to the finale of the Second Cello Sonata where tonal signposts are few and far between (Nectoux, p. 231).

Fauré's modal approach is already evident in relatively early works, such as the First Piano Quartet, as can be seen from the following examples:

5.1 The first phrase with its bold modal flavour already bears the powerful imprint of Fauré's musical personality. The unison line of the main theme in the strings is coloured by the use of the subtonic B flat instead of the conventional B natural. The fact that the subtonic resolves upwards to the tonic gives the phrase an aeolian inflection. The piano accompaniment sustains the modal feeling, for the B flat is harmonized by the mediant major. The leading note is only introduced briefly at the end of the fifth bar, and is not resolved to the tonic, as the dominant chord moves to the mediant major.

Ex. 13 First Piano Quartet: First movement, bars 1-6:

Handwritten Roman numerals for the first system (bars 1-4):  
 c: I III<sup>5/4</sup> VI III<sup>6/3</sup> IV I IV<sup>6</sup> (V<sup>5</sup> of VI) VI<sup>6-5</sup>

Handwritten Roman numerals for the second system (bars 5-6):  
 I II<sup>7/#</sup> V<sup>Eb</sup>: I (V<sup>7</sup> of IV)

This progression is typical of Fauré. He often avoids the cliché of the perfect cadence, either by replacing the dominant or by letting it move to an alternative solution, for

example the mediant. The tendency to resolve to the mediant is also evident in many of his other works, such as the Second Piano Quartet (opening bars of the Adagio), or the song *En sourdine*.

5.2 The use of the D flat in what appears to be subdominant of the subdominant in the E flat major phrase that starts in bar 6 again acquires modal significance through the fact that Fauré is careful to avoid “cancelling” it by a D natural in the successive two bars. Even the dominant seventh in bar 9 resolves to a tonic coloured by a mixolydian seventh. The latter is promptly reinterpreted as a C sharp in the bass, resolving to a D natural in the dominant quartad, in a typical instance of Fauré’s sophisticated use of enharmonic ambiguity.

Ex. 14 First Piano Quartet: First movement, bars 6–10:

Handwritten musical score for Ex. 14, First Piano Quartet: First movement, bars 6–10. The score is in E-flat major (two flats). The bass line contains several chords with figured bass notation. The chords are: Eb: I, II,  $bVII$  ( $IV$  of  $IV$ ),  $IV$ , II, VI,  $IV$  7 5, VI 7,  $IV$   $\frac{6}{5}$ ,  $VII$   $\frac{6}{5}$ ,  $I$   $b7$ ,  $\#VI$   $\frac{6-7}{7\ 3}$ ,  $V$   $\frac{6}{5}$ , and  $(\#II$  7  $\frac{6-7}{7\ 3}$  of  $V)$ .

5.3 The mixolydian mode is again suggested in bars 62–64 where the opening modal idea is transposed. As can be seen from the example in bars 62–64, the D flat is not introduced in order to modulate: the phrase starts and ends in E flat major, and contains no cadences in any other key. Alteration is employed to suggest a variety of modal inflections ranging from the mixolydian (bar 62) to the aeolian (bar 63) and to the mode on the submediant of G flat minor-major (bar 64). \*

For an in-depth discussion of Fauré’s extensions of modal usage in Fauré’s piano music, see Hofmeyr pp. 66–80.

## Ex. 15 First Piano Quartet: First movement, bars 62-66:

Handwritten annotations for Ex. 15:

System 1 (bars 62-64): Eb: I  $bVII^6$  I  $bVII^6$   $bVI^6/4b$   $bVII^6$   $IV^6/4$   $bVII$   $bVI^b5$

System 2 (bars 65-66): II  $6/4$   $\#IV^b5(Gr6)$  V $7$  I

A lengthy exploration of this mode occurs in the Scherzo of Op. 15 from bar 193–214 over an oscillation between the tonic (E flat major) and the doubly-augmented fourth chord, where the melody seems to imply the aeolian mode. Fauré uses the spelling B, D sharp, F sharp, A for the latter chord to simplify the notation, but the auditory perception is that of a modal excursion to the flat side of the key. It is noteworthy that most of Fauré's modal excursions involve a flattening of the key. This is related to the fact that five of the six diatonic modes lie on the "flat" side of the major. Excursions from the minor key also tend to be to "flatter" modes, viz. the aeolian, phrygian and locrian. The above excursion is an instance of the use of modes on the degrees of non-diatonic tonal scales, such as the minor-major, that represents one of Fauré's greatest (and least known) contributions to modal thinking. He uses the same progression in the last part of the coda of the Impromptu in E flat major. \* (Hofmeyr p. 90.)

## Ex. 16 First Piano Quartet: Scherzo, bar 193-196

Handwritten annotations for Ex. 16:

System 1 (bars 193-195): Eb:  $\#IV^b5$   $7/43$

System 2 (bar 196): Inversion of doubly-augmented 4th

5.4 Even in the final reference to the main theme at the end of the movement the mixolydian inflection is maintained up to the tonal cadence, although the B flat can be regarded as part of the V of IV function. The introduction of a leading note at the cadence point is of course a typical feature of traditional modal music as well.

Ex. 17 First Piano Quartet: First movement, bars 241–244:

C: I  $\begin{matrix} 9-8 \\ b7 \\ 4-3 \end{matrix}$  IV V<sup>4</sup> — 3 I

(V  $\begin{matrix} 9-8 \\ b7 \\ 4-3 \end{matrix}$  of IV)

5.5 In the opening of the Scherzo of the First Piano Quartet the tonality seems to hover between E flat major and C minor. There is a similar ambiguity about the opening of the Scherzo of the Second Piano Quartet. The opening on piano seems to imply E flat major, but is “converted” to C minor by the string chords. The combination of triplet figuration in the piano part with *pizzicato* chords on the strings is again reminiscent of the Scherzo of the First Piano Quartet. Even the tendency to interrupt the flow on the last quaver of the beat is shared by both themes.

Ex. 18

First Piano Quartet: Scherzo, bars 7–9:

E $\flat$ : I VI IV I

## Ex. 19

## Second Piano Quartet: Scherzo, bars 11–14:

C: I

5.6 The remarkable Adagio of the First Quartet starts off in C minor. According to Suckling (p. 186) the music has a phrygian modal flavour owing to the use of the lowered second degree (D flat) as well as the lowered seventh, although it is necessary to qualify this statement, as both are used in terms that can be explained tonally.

## Ex. 20 First Piano Quartet: Adagio, bars 3–8:

C: I    II<sup>bb</sup>    I<sup>4</sup><sub>2</sub>    VI    V<sup>11</sup> in inversion    III<sup>b3</sup>    II<sup>bb</sup>    F: VI<sup>b</sup>    V<sup>b5</sup>

5.7 The first movement of the Second Piano Quartet starts off in G minor. Already in the second bar, the subtonic F is used. The use of a subtonic does create a modal flavour, but in this case it is used in a tonal “permissible” way (melodic minor descending) as opposed to the way it was used in the First Piano Quartet, first movement, where the subtonic resolving upwards becomes modally defining.

## Ex. 21 Second Piano Quartet: First movement, bars 1–3:

5.8 In the Second Piano Quartet, first movement, bar 45, we find E flat dominant quartad with a major ninth as appoggiatura that implies A flat major. However, instead of resolving to the tonic, it moves to the triad on the fifth degree of A flat locrian (E double flat major, notated enharmonically as D major), creating an advanced modal excursion in which the chord of the finalis/tonic is entirely absent. What renders this passage even

more original, is the fact that Fauré uses the “sharper” major scale descending, and the “flatter” locrian ascending. In traditional tonal thinking, the reverse would be far more conventional (as in the melodic minor for instance).

Ex. 22 Second Piano Quartet: First movement, bars 45-47:

Ab:  $\underline{V} \frac{7}{7} - 8$  Ab locrian:  $\underline{VI} \frac{6-3}{2} \underline{V} \frac{6}{5} \underline{II} \frac{7-8}{6/4} \text{Ab: } \underline{V} \frac{9-8}{7}$

5.9 In the fourth movement of the Second Piano Quartet Fauré again adds a modal inflection to the key of G minor by using the phrygian supertonic in a conspicuous manner in bar 8. The A flat, which forms the climax of the first phrase, is written with an accent and sounds for the length of one bar.

Ex. 23 Second Piano Quartet: Fourth movement, bars 3-8:

g: I b II

5.10 The B natural in bar 9 of the First Quintet's opening movement is regarded by Suckling as the dorian scale on D, but the cadence which follows is on F and therefore the B natural indicates use of the lydian mode on F.

Ex. 24 First Piano Quintet: First movement, bars 6-10:

d:  $\underline{VI} \frac{7-6}{4}$   $\underline{VI} \frac{7-6}{4} \underline{VI} \frac{6-4-3}{4} \text{F: } \underline{II} \frac{4}{2} \text{I}$

5.11 In the last movement of the First Piano Quintet, bar 10, Fauré uses the mixolydian subtonic to avoid the augmented fourth G to C sharp in the melodic line.

Ex. 25 First Piano Quintet: Third movement, bar 5-10:

The image shows a single staff of music in treble clef, 2/2 time signature, with a key signature of two sharps (D major). The melody starts in bar 5, marked 'bar 5 D:I'. It consists of a series of eighth notes: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. A slur covers the entire line. In bar 10, the melody continues with a mixolydian subtonic: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C#4. This C#4 is marked with a 'b VII' below it, indicating a lowered seventh degree.

## 6. CHARACTERISTIC MELODIC FORMULAE

### 6.1 Lydian appoggiatura

The lydian appoggiatura appears where the augmented fourth resolves stepwise to the major third interval. According to Nectoux (p. 231), this is based on the whole-tone scale for which Fauré had a strong preference, but this appears doubtful as the lydian appoggiatura ornaments a major triad which would be impossible in the whole-tone scale, and Fauré's use of the lydian appoggiatura predate by many years his adoption of the whole-tone scale. It occurs in the Second Piano Quartet's third movement in bar 62 (see reduction of string parts in ex. 26) and a bar later in the piano part.

Ex. 26 Second Piano Quartet: Third movement, bar 62:

The image shows a piano reduction of string parts for bar 62. It features two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff, both in a key signature of two flats (B-flat major). The treble staff shows a melodic line with a dotted quarter note on G4, followed by an eighth note on F#4, and then a quarter note on E4. The bass staff shows a similar line: a dotted quarter note on B2, followed by an eighth note on A2, and then a quarter note on G2. The interval between G4 and F#4 is marked as 'bp.' (augmented fourth), and the interval between F#4 and E4 is marked as 'qp.' (quarter). Below the bass staff, the chord is identified as 'Ab: IV 4-3 II6', indicating a second inversion F# major chord in the key of A-flat major.

In the first movement of the First Piano Quintet the lydian appoggiatura forms an important feature in the first theme in bar 8, E to D (see ex. 24). It also appears at the climax of the movement in all the strings in bar 58 (see ex. 27) with a delayed resolution in second violin and cello.

Ex. 27 First Piano Quintet: First movement, bars 58-59:

Ab:  $\text{IV } \overset{b}{5}-4$  (5  $\rightarrow$  4)  $\text{I } 7$   $\text{IV } \overset{b}{3}$   $\text{VII } \overset{b}{7}$   $\text{d: VII } \overset{b}{4}$   $\text{I } \overset{b}{6}$

In the First Piano Quintet's third movement the lydian appoggiatura occurs over a D major chord in F sharp minor in bar 137. The resolution of the appoggiatura is delayed until the chord itself has changed to augmented. Soon hereafter another lydian fourth appears in sequence in bar 144, this time over a G major chord (functioning as Neapolitan sixth in F sharp minor) preceded by its own dominant quartad, which greatly increases the harmonic tension created by the lydian C-sharp.

Ex. 28 First Piano Quintet: Third movement, bars 136-138; 143-145:

f#:  $\text{V } \overset{4}{2}$   $\text{VI } \overset{7}{4}$  ( $\overset{b}{6}$ )  $\# \text{VI } \overset{7-6}{4}$  (g min: III) f#:  $\text{V } \overset{4}{2}$   $\text{V } \overset{4}{3}$   $\text{bII } \overset{9}{6}$  of Nb

In the song *Dans la forêt de Septembre*, op. 85 no. 1, sequential chains of lydian appoggiaturas appear in bars 12-16.

## 6.2 Melodic formulae: second plus seventh/octave

Nectoux (p. 251) notes that Fauré was haunted by melodic formulae. The combination of rising octave and major second is, with Fauré, a sign of tragedy and grandeur. It is found in the solemn opening of the Adagio of the First Piano Quartet, and is then developed in the years 1907-18 with Ulysses' royal theme in *Pénélope*, the second theme of the *Fantaisie* for piano and orchestra (1918), the Pastorale from *Masques et bergamasques*, and the second subject from the first movement of the Second Piano Quintet. It also

occurs in the important accompaniment figure in the middle section and coda of the Twelfth Barcarolle.

Ex. 26

The image displays three staves of musical notation. The first staff is labeled 'Adagio: First Piano Quartet' and 'Pénélope', showing a melodic line in 2/4 time with a key signature of two flats. The second staff is labeled 'Fantaisie' and 'Second Piano Quintet', showing a melodic line in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp. The third staff is labeled 'Masque et bergamasque' and 'Twelfth Barcarolle', showing a melodic line in 6/4 time with a key signature of two sharps, transitioning to a bass clef and 8/7 time signature.

## 7. CANONIC IMITATION

According to Nectoux (p. 245), while some of Fauré's contemporaries used imitative writing to compensate for some compositional difficulty, his own use of canonic writing was so natural that the ear has to make an effort to detect it. His predilection for canonic writing became more pronounced with age; it is employed most frequently in the finales of his chamber works.

Free imitation represents a favourite means of motivic development and instrumental dialogue in all his chamber works, from the earliest onwards. Points of imitation occur in the second subject of the First Piano Quartet's opening movement (bars 38 – 47) between the various strings and a stretto occurs later in bars 52–55. The development section teems with points of imitation, including imitation by inversion in bars 112–115. The figure used in the point of imitation in bars 138–142 is varied in bars 148–151 where Fauré starts with the same figure in the bass, but then displaces the rhythm in a point of imitation between the upper voices.

In the First Piano Quintet, first movement, bars 54–57, two-part imitation occurs between the paired strings (second violin and cello against first violin and viola). A more complex example takes place further in the same movement, bars 98–106. He uses inverted diminution in bar 102, and even metrical displacement. Koechlin refers to

“...the canonic second subject, so perfectly worked out that one forgets to admire the skill and mastery of style where each note seems to fall into place quite

naturally, without heed to the rules of imitative counterpoint, which nevertheless are obeyed perfectly" (p. 43).

In the second movement there is an example of free imitation from bar 47, at first between piano and viola, later between violin and cello.

In the Second Piano Quintet's third movement free imitation occurs between piano and first violin in bars 35–42 and strict imitation in bars 78–86, where second violin and viola are imitated by first violin, and then first violin and cello are imitated by second violin and viola.

Ex. 27

Second Piano Quintet: 3rd movement, bars 78–82:

The image shows a handwritten musical score for two staves, labeled 'Vn I' (top) and 'Vn II' (bottom). The music is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The second staff also begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The notation shows a melodic line in the first violin part and a corresponding line in the second violin part, illustrating imitative counterpoint. The score is marked with '78' at the beginning of the first staff.

## 8. TENSION BETWEEN SOPRANO AND BASS

Many authors compare the polarity between Fauré's outer parts to that of the high Baroque and to Bach in particular. Furthermore, Orledge (p. 262) maintains quite correctly that Fauré's basses, like those of Couperin, are linearly conceived – as a melodic part.

Contrary motion creating tension between the highest and lowest parts, as, for example, in the Second Piano Quartet, fourth movement, bars 68–85, is a common occurrence. This was one of the ways Fauré built the climaxes or prepared recapitulations (see later). This tension is further enhanced by canonic imitation between melody and bass in especially the later chamber music such as the Second Violin Sonata, Second Cello Sonata and Second Piano Quintet.

## 9. SOPHISTICATED DEVELOPMENT OF THE MOTIF

Evidence of Fauré's sophisticated development of the motif appears in all his chamber works, but the First Piano Quintet can serve as a good example.

Ex. 28 First Piano Quintet: First movement, bar 45:



In the First Piano Quintet's first movement a secondary motif in the piano accompaniment (ex. 28) emerges later as a third subject, written in imitation (bar 54 in the second violin, bar 55 in the first violin, bar 56 in the cello), and becomes the source of lengthy later developments. The motif returns in bar 98 in the piano and subsequently in the strings. The motif appears in inversion and with metrical displacement in the viola (bar 102-103). It is also interesting that a new melodic idea in the development section is soon combined with the first subject on the viola; the two elements of the second subject now follow in succession and are developed in an extraordinary passage that is contrapuntal in style. In the recapitulation the first subject is combined with the main motif from the second subject. The movement's coda is dominated by the second subject – rather an unusual procedure in terms of traditional sonata form.

Ex. 29 First Piano Quintet, First movement, bars 102-103:

## 10. THEMATIC TRANSFORMATION

In the First Piano Quartet's opening movement the surprise at the outset of the development section is that the dynamic theme becomes a gentle and lyrical melody from bar 73 in the piano part (see ex. 30).

Ex. 30 First Piano Quartet, First movement, bars 73–75:

This happens in the Second Quartet's first movement as well – a “masculine” theme is modified to a quieter mood, with the piano accompaniment in augmentation (Suckling, p. 93).

A more complex adaptation of the opening motif is used to create a new theme as well (bar 20–22) which is later subjected to free rhythmic diminution (bars 32–33).

Ex. 31 Second Piano Quartet, First movement, bars 20–22; 32–33:

This modification of a theme with a view to changing its personality was a nineteenth-century device that differs from earlier, more technical methods of modification as in augmentation or ornamentation of a theme. A characteristic example is the *idée fixe* in Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*. Liszt also exploited this transformation in his symphonic poems, and Wagner applied it to the *leitmotiv* of his operas. The constant evolution of thematic material even in the exposition was also a stylistic trait of Brahms.

## 11. CYCLIC FORM

The term “cyclic” is applied here to compositions in which related thematic material is used in all or in some of the movements. Cyclic form was characteristic of many nineteenth-century composers influenced by Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. Fauré was less influenced by Beethoven than many of his contemporaries; according to Orledge (p. 101), Fauré’s only instrumental music in cyclic form are the Second Violin Sonata in E minor and the Second Piano Quartet in G minor.

The structural outline of the Second Violin Sonata shows clearly the freedom with which Fauré approaches his formal models: he uses sonata form, but takes some liberties in the recapitulation, using 12/8 time instead of the original 9/8, and repeating the third theme not in the expected E minor, but in E major. It is noteworthy that Fauré already experimented with a third subject in the exposition when composing the First Violin Sonata in 1875, as Brahms was also doing at that time. The Andante’s principal theme is borrowed from the A major *Molto moderato* of the Symphony in D minor, op. 40, written more than thirty years earlier and long since withdrawn. The finale in E major is in sonata rondo, a form that Fauré was fond of using in his late chamber music. At the end of this movement there is a surprising return of the two themes from the opening movement of the work. Nectoux (p. 81) notes that some months later Debussy also introduced a repeat of his initial idea of the first movement in his Violin Sonata. Fauré’s model was probably Schumann’s First Violin Sonata in A minor in which the opening theme reappears at the end of the last movement. In bringing back *two* themes of his own first movement, Fauré took this idea a step further.

The structural outline of the Second Piano Quartet corresponds to traditional four-movement sonata form. According to Suckling (p. 94), Fauré was content to take this form as he found it, except that during the final period he either eliminated the Scherzo or fused it with the finale.

Owing to a variety of transformations in mood, note values and quality of the intervals of the motifs, it is indeed difficult to pinpoint Fauré’s intentions with the subtle links between the various movements. At first glance, it seems as if some of them simply share a descending scalar line or an interval of a fourth. Yet it becomes clear to the patient observer that Fauré made use of an organic process to integrate material from the opening movement throughout the work.

It is interesting that Suckling (p. 94) acknowledges thematic transference only in the *Scherzo*, while Orledge (p. 105) notes that the first movement provides material for the *Scherzo* and the finale; only the *Adagio* is absent from the cyclic plan. He sees the subtle and natural part of thematic transformation played in the three outer movements, and notes that “...the cyclic references are never forced, as they can be in Franck” with themes lining up for assimilation in the finale. In contrast to Orledge, Nectoux (p. 93) finds the subtle links between the *Adagio* and other movements. He sees a similarity between the *Scherzo* and the *Adagio* where the latter opens with an E flat-G oscillation low on the piano while the descending melody on the viola takes six notes from the

opening theme of the whole work. Nectoux, however, refers to the cyclic plan as "...a formal necessity, with Fauré being the slave and not its master." He regards the work as a homage to Franck.

The motivic links are perhaps more complex than these authors suggest. The opening motif  $x$  consists in its most basic form of a descending scale of four notes (often with some internal decoration) and has a compass of a fourth; it is followed by a free inversion ( $xI$ ) containing a chromatic step. Combined, motif  $x$  and  $xI$  form a V-shaped contour, theme A in ex. 32. Other important motifs are  $y$  (up a third and down a second) and a three-note ascending scale ( $x-I$ ). The theme concludes with a gapped version of the opening motif ( $xI$ ). Theme A evolves into theme B in which both  $x$  and  $xI$  appear, with the added characteristic of an interval of an ascending fourth, called motif  $z$  which is also followed by its own inversion,  $zI$ , creating an inverted V-shape. This interrelation of the first and second subjects is an unusual procedure, as they are normally juxtaposed as contrasting ideas, but strengthens the inter-thematic cohesion of the work as a whole.

Theme B appears in the Scherzo as B1, and in the trio section we find a free adaptation (A1) of the opening theme (A), conflated with the chromatic ending of B1 based on  $xI$ , now in retrograde form. The compass of  $x$  is now a diminished fourth.

As said before, Suckling mentions thematic transference only in the Scherzo of Op. 45, stating that both subjects of the first movement are quoted, modified in their transition from 4/4 to 6/8 time and forming the entire thematic material of the movement except for the opening "*lezghinka*"-like motif (D). This motif, however, can be linked to the new theme (C) that starts the development section of the first movement. At first glance this motif (D) bears little resemblance to C. However, if one regards the opening theme of the Scherzo (D) as a "filled-in" version of I (the derivative of C that occurs in the finale) the relationship becomes apparent. In fact, D can be regarded as a conflation of A (V-shape scalar contour) and C (V-shape delineating a quartad).

The opening theme of the slow movement (E) is based on the inversion of the V-shape of B1, but uses  $z$  uninverted. The subsidiary motifs F and G also include V-shapes. F (which can be seen as the retrograde inversion of the last five notes of E) contains  $x$ ,  $yR$ ,  $yI$  and  $z$  and G is built on  $x$ ,  $x-I$  and  $xI$ .

In the opening scalar theme of the finale, the inverted V-shape again appears. This time the scale passage is extended to the interval of a ninth (see H). The internal turning motif ( $y$ ) appears in retrograde. The V-shape is again followed (as in B, B1 and E) by an ascending fourth ( $z$ ). The  $x$ -motif is recalled at H1 with four descending notes forming a diminished fourth (as in A1). At the same time H1 also develops  $y$  in its original form.

Another chromatic descending scalar motif recalling  $x$  appears in J, the third theme, which again opens with a V shape (D-B-D), and incorporates sequential statements of the motif  $x-I$ .

The C theme of the first movement also forms a free V-shape, but consists of larger intervals outlining a minor quartad. The only clear cyclic reference to this theme appears in the second theme of the finale (I), which also forms a free V-shape consisting of larger intervals spelling two minor quartads.

Ex. 32 Second Piano Quartet

The musical score consists of six staves, each with specific annotations and interval markings:

- Staff I A:** Treble clef, key signature of one flat, common time. Annotations include  $x$ ,  $xI$ ,  $x_1$ ,  $y$ ,  $x-I$ ,  $x_1I$ , and  $x_1I$ .
- Staff B:** Treble clef, key signature of one flat. Annotations include  $x$ ,  $xI$ ,  $z$ , and  $zI$ .
- Staff II B1:** Treble clef, key signature of one flat, 3/4 time. Annotations include  $x$ ,  $xI$ ,  $z$ ,  $zI$ , and  $x_1$ .
- Staff A:** Treble clef, key signature of one flat, 4/4 time. Annotations include  $x$ ,  $x-I$ ,  $x-I$ ,  $x-I$ ,  $x_1I$ , and  $yI$ . The word "TRIO" is written above the first measure.
- Staff III E:** Treble clef, key signature of one flat, 9/8 time. Annotation: "V-shape inverted".
- Staff F:** Treble clef, key signature of one flat, 12/8 time. Annotations include  $yR$ ,  $z$ ,  $x$ ,  $xI$ ,  $x_1I$ ,  $x$ ,  $yI$ , and "end of E in RI".

## Ex. 32 continued

Handwritten musical score for Ex. 32 continued, featuring guitar notation with fret numbers, accidentals, and technical markings.

The score is organized into four systems, each with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The time signature is 3/4.

- System 1:**
  - Staff 1: Treble clef, 3/4 time. Contains two measures of music. The first measure has a whole note with a flat (B-flat) and a triplet of eighth notes. The second measure has a whole note with a flat (E-flat) and a triplet of eighth notes. Above the staff, two brackets labeled "YR" span the first and second measures.
  - Staff 2: Treble clef, 3/4 time. Contains two measures of music. The first measure has a whole note with a flat (B-flat) and a triplet of eighth notes. The second measure has a whole note with a flat (E-flat) and a triplet of eighth notes. Above the staff, two brackets labeled "YR" span the first and second measures.
- System 2:**
  - Staff 1: Treble clef, 3/4 time. Contains two measures of music. The first measure has a whole note with a flat (B-flat) and a triplet of eighth notes. The second measure has a whole note with a flat (E-flat) and a triplet of eighth notes. Above the staff, a bracket labeled "x" spans the first and second measures. Below the staff, a bracket labeled "y" spans the first measure, and a bracket labeled "yRI" spans the second measure.
- System 3:**
  - Staff 1: Treble clef, 3/4 time. Contains two measures of music. The first measure has a whole note with a flat (B-flat) and a triplet of eighth notes. The second measure has a whole note with a flat (E-flat) and a triplet of eighth notes. Above the staff, a bracket labeled "minor quartad / minor quartad" spans the first and second measures. Below the staff, a bracket labeled "yI" spans the first measure.
- System 4:**
  - Staff 1: Treble clef, 3/4 time. Contains two measures of music. The first measure has a whole note with a flat (B-flat) and a triplet of eighth notes. The second measure has a whole note with a flat (E-flat) and a triplet of eighth notes. Above the staff, a bracket labeled "x" spans the first and second measures. Below the staff, a bracket labeled "xI" spans the first measure, and a bracket labeled "x-1 I" spans the second measure.
  - Staff 2: Treble clef, 3/4 time. Contains two measures of music. The first measure has a whole note with a flat (B-flat) and a triplet of eighth notes. The second measure has a whole note with a flat (E-flat) and a triplet of eighth notes. Above the staff, a bracket labeled "xI" spans the first and second measures. Below the staff, a bracket labeled "xI" spans the first measure, and a bracket labeled "x-1 I" spans the second measure.

Ex. 32 continued

## Ex. 32 continued

I SECOND SUBJECT

C

minor quartad

II

I

minor quartad minor quartad

y I

D

Scherzo

quartad

x y I x I y R I x

Schematically the cyclic plan can be represented as follows:

CYCLIC PLAN

Movement	I			II			III			IV			
Theme	A	B	C	D	B <sub>1</sub>	A <sub>1</sub>	E	F	G	H	H <sub>1</sub>	I	J
Shape	V	V	V	V	V	V	∧	∧	V	∧	∨	V	V
Links													

Motifs

A	B	C	D	B <sub>1</sub>	A <sub>1</sub>	E	F	G	H	H <sub>1</sub>	I	J
x xI x <sub>1</sub> y x <sub>-1</sub> I x <sub>1</sub> I	x xI z zI	minor quartad yI	x xI yI yRI quartad	x xI z zI	x x <sub>-1</sub> I x <sub>1</sub> I yI	z	yR yI z x	x <sub>1</sub> x <sub>1</sub> I x	yR z	x y yRI	yI minor quartad	x xI zI x <sub>-1</sub> I xI

## 12. BUILD-UP TO CLIMAXES

In the first movement of the First Piano Quartet there is a build-up to the recapitulation in the form of double octaves (bars 153–158). Although the use of double octaves is not typical of Fauré, he uses the same device to prepare the recapitulation in the fourth movement of the Second Piano Quartet (bars 175–181).

In the first movement of the First Piano Quintet the contrary movement of the outer parts (the bass of the piano against the violin parts) in bars 24–27 creates a taut line that leads to a climactic point in bar 28.

Fauré uses another way of building to a climax in the Second Piano Quintet, first movement, bars 161–176: the stepwise sequential treatment of a melody that moves by small chromatic intervals creates a tense atmosphere which leads to the recapitulation in bar 177.

## 13. INSTRUMENTATION

### 13.1 Use of the strings

In the First Piano Quartet the strings often play in octaves in *forte* passages and share thematic material with the piano, often in imitation, as in the first and fourth movement. In the Second Piano Quartet we find that. In addition to these practices, the strings and piano often play in opposition. According to Nectoux (p. 91), the two blocks of sound at times drive each other to a fury. In the quintets the strings sometimes play independently, as in the second subject of the First Quintet's opening movement and in the opening of the Second Quintet's third movement.

In the Second Quintet the almost orchestral amplitude of sound is achieved by the use not of massed but of varied textures. Fauré uses various combinations of two or three string instruments with piano, and is fond of reinforcing melodic lines with a combination of first violin, cello and piano, or first violin, viola and piano (Nectoux, p. 418).

### 13.2 Use of the viola

The viola deserves to be mentioned separately, because Fauré treats the viola in a special way, beginning with the announcement of the second subject in the First Piano Quartet's opening movement, as well the first and second subjects of the fourth movement. In the Second Piano Quartet he gives the viola a prominent place in the haunting melody of the third movement.

“The Andante of the Second Quartet opens with a mysterious sound of bells in the bass; the reply to this is a beautiful recitative on the viola for which, if it did not already exist, it would have been necessary to invent this noble instrument, so complete is the unity between its timbre and the very nature of its subject matter” (Koechlin, p. 42).

In the Scherzo the viola is once again the first string instrument to announce the main idea when the initial roles are reversed and the piano plays the accompaniment.

The viola also announces the first theme of three of the four movements of the Second Piano Quintet (I, III and IV), and the relative pre-eminence of the first violin and viola forms a link between this quintet and the Second Piano Quartet (Nectoux, p. 419).

### 13.3 Use of the piano

Being an accomplished pianist, Fauré felt at ease with the piano (see page 10). He never treated the piano as a percussive instrument, but rather continued the development of the many expressive and textural capacities of the instrument as exploited by the great Romantic pianist-composers such as Mendelssohn, Chopin, Schumann and Liszt. In the chamber works, the piano writing is sometimes more extrovert than in the solo pieces, where, for example, he never uses double octaves. Thematic material is shared equally with the strings, and then often in imitative writing. Due to Fauré's sensitivity to balance, the power of piano arpeggios would often be countered by strings in octaves, as for example in the First and Second Piano Quartet's opening movements. The flexibility of the piano writing with arpeggios, broken figures and long lines interweaving with tightly woven and homogeneous strings produces a remarkable rich texture in the piano quartets, while the opening of the First Piano Quintet with its ethereal arpeggio textures constitutes one of Fauré's most memorable creations.

The piano tends to provide the real bass more often than the cello. Only after 1900 do the strings announce important thematic material independently from the piano (as we find in the quintets).

Nectoux (p. 418) maintains that few composers succeeded in maintaining the momentum or balance between piano and strings as well as Fauré did. He made use of varied textures to create an almost orchestral amplitude of sound.

In the Second Quintet the piano writing is different from the piano quartets and even the First Piano Quintet: it is light and mostly in the centre of the keyboard. There are few bass octaves and often arpeggio figuration is used to support the melodic and contrapuntal outline of the strings (Nectoux, p. 418). The fantastical interplay of string and piano timbres and textures in the Scherzo of the Second Quintet is especially striking.

During his later musical evolution, Fauré reduces the number of notes in his chords to a minimum in his quest for clarity and luminosity, as in the opening theme of the Second Quintet.

## CONCLUSION

Fauré opened a door to the world of tonality and modality integrated in a creative manner. The use of modal inflections created an interesting and unusual spectrum of colour. His compositions might have sounded different if his path had not led to the Niedermeyer School with their leaning towards pre-tonal sources. He took a new direction in the field of chamber music and managed to establish his own unique idiom without a true French predecessor in this field.

The study of Bach's style left a profound imprint on Fauré's music: the tension between the bass line and melody and his brilliant treatment of imitation, strict and free, are reminiscent of the nobility of the Baroque era.

Fauré's approach to rhythm creates interesting interplay between the instruments, with abundant use of hemiolas and cross rhythms. The consistency of rhythmic patterns led to the impetus that gave his works dynamic power.

The new way in which he treated existing harmonic practices, like the second inversion which now became an independent chord, and his original manner of treating cadences, contributed to his unique and personal style.

Although he did not revolutionize the sonata form, he gave a new angle to the shape of the piano quartet and piano quintet. In his hands motifs evolved continuously, enriching the musical interest of his works. The unconventional combination of registers and instrumental colour, and his prominent use of the viola, established a pure and sensitive balance of sound.

Hopefully more musicians will be exposed to Fauré's chamber works in the future and will feel compelled to perform them and bring them to life once more. If this dissertation were to contribute in some way to the exploration and the understanding of his works, it would have achieved its main purpose.

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