

César Franck – A New French Unity

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Abstract

César Franck (1826-1890), a Belgian who spent most of his life in Paris (before eventually taking French nationality in 1873), remains one of the most undervalued of all composers. Towards the end of his life, from the 1870s onwards, the French capital was a turbulent place to be a musician – after a long period of Austro-German musical dominance during much of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the outcome of the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71) inspired a great change in musical circles. Franck's contemporaries began to reject this music in favour of revitalising their native tradition that had been dormant since the Baroque period, as they endeavoured to create and promote a style of music that was distinctly French – and it was during this time that Franck would write a handful of works are considered to be his greatest achievements. But, whilst he did follow the nationalistic tendencies of his contemporaries to some extent in his late output, he always maintained a more personal and cosmopolitan approach to composition.

One of the main aspects of this cosmopolitanism was his deep admiration of the Baroque and Classical masters of Austro-Germany, as well as Liszt, and it is structural unity – a concept synonymous with this tradition – that forms the analytical focus here. The idea of a multi-movement work possessing the overarching effect of a singular musical journey is a fundamental aspect of Franck's compositional approach, and whilst his use of cyclic recurrence is already quite well documented, this thesis aims to demonstrate that his distinctly French harnessing of structural unity runs deeper than this relatively straightforward motivic technique. By taking into account such issues as Franck's innate spirituality and the nationalistic climate of late nineteenth century Paris, this dissertation aims to reveal what makes Franck's late style so personal and to redress the balance of critical neglect, through an investigation of how a French composer might adopt the Austro-German principle of structural unity in three particular late works:

- *Prelude, Chorale & Fugue* (1884)
- *Violin Sonata* (1886)
- *Prelude, Aria & Finale* (1887)

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Preface

I was introduced to the music of César Franck in 2011 in the Sir Jack Lyons Concert Hall, when Kathryn Stott included the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue* in a programme devoted to Parisian piano music. Appearing alongside works by composers such as Chopin, Ravel and Satie, this piece had a profound impact on me, with the emotional weight of the *Choral* resonating particularly deeply. I then endeavoured to discover the rest of his works, and, with such a limited amount of compositions – mostly produced in the last ten years of his life – this was a relatively easy and very rewarding task.

Soon after discovering Franck's late output, I was recommended David Epstein's *Beyond Orpheus*, and it was through reading this that a whole new analytical field was opened up to me – structural unity. After having grown up knowing and appreciating many works of the Austro-German masters, the emotional force and large-scale integration of their multi-movement instrumental works have always been apparent. Then after listening to Franck I noticed similar extra-musical implications, despite the fact his music seems unmistakably French. But it was not until reading Epstein that this concept of structural unity went from an abstract notion to something quantifiable. Resultantly, having been made aware of it from an analytical perspective, it became a preoccupation to determine just how it is achieved in Franck's output, and how this uniquely French take on structural unity became so important for future composers.

From a wider historical perspective, the process of research was straightforward: there are many sources regarding analysis of unity in Austro-German music, and similarly regarding the different French aesthetic and the heated cultural climate of late nineteenth-century Paris. This enabled an all-important historical context to be provided. However, whilst these more general musical and historical aspects are widely documented, sources specific to Franck were harder to come by. English-language biographical works are scarce, and any analytical writings on Franck remain almost entirely absent, hence the need for this current study. Even where bibliographical searches revealed apparently directly relevant studies (such as Rachel Swindells' Doctoral thesis *Tonality, Functionality and Beethovenian Form in the Late Instrumental Works of César Franck*), the particular approach I have taken, along with the individual selection of chosen repertoire, makes this dissertation distinctive from others in the field. Having said this, a search of the Paris Library archive demonstrates a far greater amount of French-language literature relating to Franck. However, after reviewing the titles and abstracts of many of these writings, it seemed that they are mostly either

biographical or devoted to his organ music or his symphony, and would therefore shed little new light on Franck regarding the goals of this investigation. In any case, the majority of this French-language literature was published in the first half of the twentieth century, which provides further confirmation of Franck's recent neglect.

The dissertation is structured in four sections. Part 1 introduces the issues mentioned above, before establishing the three pieces that are being investigated, and why this particular repertoire was chosen. Here it is important to note the implications of this relatively small-scale study – the resultant focus on just three works becomes something of a positive attribute rather than a limitation. Much of Franck's late output besides these three pieces – such as the String Quartet, the String Quintet, the *Variations Symphoniques* and the Symphony in D minor – uses similar techniques to create an overarching unity, but these, due to constraints of word count, have had to be set aside in order to provide a more comprehensive study of the three under consideration. It is hoped that by firmly establishing an understanding of the compositional method within a restricted number of works, a clearly focussed view of his late style can emerge. The notion of unity, as well as the characteristics from the widely disparate traditions of Austro-Germany (in Bach, Beethoven, Schubert and Liszt) and France (as found in Couperin and Rameau, Chabrier and Berlioz) that had the greatest impact on Franck's late style are further explored in Part 2.

To investigate unity in Franck, an appropriate analytical method first needed to be determined. There have been a number of analytical approaches since the early twentieth century – Schenker's *Ursatz*, Reti's thematicism & Schoenberg's *Grundgestalt*, for instance – that go some way to answering the question of how unity is created, but many of these are reductive, and privilege certain aspects of musical construction at the expense of others. To establish the presence of unity throughout a multi-movement work successfully, a mixed analytical method is therefore required. As mentioned above, an early example of such an approach is found in David Epstein's *Beyond Orpheus*, where Schenkerian methods are combined with Schoenberg's conceptual approach in an assessment of a number of Austro-German masterworks. Through a consideration of numerous musical domains – pitch, temporality, phrasing and nuance, harmony, tonality, key relations, motif – and the implications they have on the background structure, Epstein ultimately demonstrates how these multiple factors become responsible for creating unity. However, much like Schenkerian analysis, his investigations are limited to single movements alone. In a manner more relevant to this investigation, James Webster's analysis of Haydn's *Farewell Symphony* introduces a number of ideas, such as through-composition (a term used to signify the continuous linear nature of the symphony), instability promising a resolution, and an apotheosis Finale – each of which directly contributes to its multi-movement unification.

By incorporating a disparate range of analytical methods in relation to these concepts, the presence of unity in Haydn's symphonic output is clearly and effectively expounded.

A similarly mixed analytical method will therefore be applied in Part 3. This considers three domains: motivic continuity, tonal organisation and harmonic language, with an emphasis placed on the Finale as a means of completing the structural journey. Each of these will be addressed in terms of two abstract ways that unity can be created – the presence of a continuous cycle, and the sense of a departure followed by a return. However, unlike the two approaches in Epstein and Webster outlined above, it will not use any Schenkerian analysis, given the rather limited usefulness in relation to multi-movement unity, and the fact that tonal unification of individual sections is not the main focus in this study. To investigate unity in the three works in the terms outlined above, a mostly descriptive and abstract analytical approach proved not only to be necessary but also the most viable way forward.

Finally, Part 4 aims to build on the deductions made in Part 3 through determining how Franck's music conveys unity in a distinctly French way, and therefore departs from his Austro-German predecessors. By considering these conflicting ideologies that are reflected in Franck's music, as well as his personal motivations, this closing chapter reveals his significance in the development of the long-standing tradition of French music.

By dividing the dissertation into these four parts – introduction, historical overview, Franck's music, and his influence on future generations – his importance in the context of musical history is made clear. Hopefully this will redress the balance, given the lack of any critical and analytical in-depth study of this composer.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who supported me throughout the duration of this Masters course. I am deeply thankful for their criticism, advice and guidance in both the research and the writing stages, and for their honest and insightful views on a number of issues related to the preparation of this dissertation.

I express my warmest thanks to my supervisor Tim Howell for his patience, motivation and extreme dedication at each and every stage of the process. The way in which he has transmitted his incredibly wide range of knowledge to help me with such diligence has made this entire process as enjoyable as it has been challenging – and therefore very rewarding.

I would also like to thank Nicky Losseff, Keith Hester, Will Descrettes and Rich Powell for their invaluable assistance along the way.

Author's Declaration

I, Nicholas Hester, declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and that I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

Part 1 – César Franck

Chapter 1 – César Franck

On December 10th 1822, the very day upon which the giant of symphony, Ludwig van Beethoven, put the finishing touches to the manuscript of a work which he justly regarded as his most perfect masterpiece – the Mass in D major – a child was born into the world destined to become the true successor of the Master of Bonn...¹

Vincent d'Indy – a dedicated disciple of César Franck (1822-1890) towards the start of his musical career, as Franck himself was nearing death – opens the first chapter of his 1906 study of the composer with the above quote, audaciously placing him alongside the all-towering Beethoven in the pantheon of great composers. Describing him as a 'successor' evokes the image of a torch being passed directly from Beethoven to Franck, who is therefore providing a continuation of a particular musical lineage. However, the reality is more complicated than this, and whilst Beethoven did have a great impact on certain aspects of Franck's output, this idea of a direct continuation is not as straightforward as d'Indy suggests. In actual fact there were a number of influences that contributed to Franck's distinctly personal compositional method, with two having the most substantial impact on his late style: the Austro-German tradition, particularly their notion of structural unity; and the tradition of France, the country where he lived for the vast majority of his life.

Since Franck's death his works have received little attention, both in Anglophone academic circles and in the concert repertoire, and this in turn has led him to be described as the 'most underestimated and misunderstood of the nineteenth-century's musical masters'.² A selection of biographical volumes, not least the lengthy works of Norman Demuth and Robert Stove, have attempted to give an in-depth description of his career within the social contexts of the time, but even these hesitate to go into great analytical detail of the pieces themselves. Even after bibliographical searches revealed a small handful of analytical theses devoted to Franck,³ two things became immediately apparent: firstly, that none of these papers directly address the issue of structural unity, one of the fundamental

¹ d'Indy, V: *César Franck*, p.29 - The translation referenced here erroneously refers to the work as Beethoven's Mass in D *minor*, but d'Indy is clearly speaking of the Missa Solemnis in D major.

² Stove, R. J: *César Franck, his life and times*, p.vii

³ Rachel Swindells' *Tonality, Functionality and Beethovenian form in the Late Instrumental works of César Franck*, Meghan M. Naxer's *César Franck's Trois Chorals pour orgue no.3: A Schenkerian Perspective*, and Henri Peter van Alphen's *The Structure of Franck's D Minor Symphony and its historical antecedents* are just three examples.

characteristics of Franck's late style; and secondly, that his large-scale solo piano works have not been made subject to any in-depth analysis at all. It is for these reasons that the very particular goals and selected repertoire of this thesis have been chosen: to examine the distinctly French manner in which Franck incorporates the Austro-German idea of structural unity in three late works that incorporate the piano:

- *Prelude, Choral & Fugue* (1884) for solo piano
- Violin Sonata (1886)
- *Prelude, Aria & Finale* (1887) for solo piano

(At this point it is worth mentioning that two other pieces from Franck's 'late period' – the Piano Quintet and the *Variations Symphoniques* – also use the piano, but for the sake of providing a more in-depth analysis of the three works mentioned above, they will not be investigated in this thesis.)

It is certainly a great disservice to César Franck that literature addressing his music in any great detail is somewhat scarce. As a result, his position as a great revolutionary of French music has too often been dismissed, and he seems to have become something of an anomaly of the late Romantic period. This can be attributed to the many ways in which both Franck the man and Franck the musician defy any easy classification.

Franck the Man

The issue of national identity is the first which raises a dilemma. He was born in Liège, a small city in east Belgium, and a place whose history would have a great effect on Franck in his later life. No Belgian state existed before the year 1830, with the country being shared between the Flemish and Walloon provinces (and those attached to no sovereignty). Liège itself was found in the Walloon district, a place known for its pledge of allegiance to the French crown, and as a result there existed a close cultural affinity to France, with their language being commonly spoken by its inhabitants.⁴ With the Belgian Revolution of 1830 this link to its neighbour would diminish, but soon after this Franck's life would go down a different path anyway. Having shown a great aptitude for music from a very young age – he excelled at the Royal Liège Conservatoire – his father decided to move his family to Paris in 1835 with the intention of César pursuing a career in music.⁵ Franck would remain in the

⁴ Davies, L: *Franck*, p.1

⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 11-14

French capital for the rest of his life, and therein lies the first defiance of any easy classification – despite being Belgian by law, the nature of life in pre-revolutionary Liège coupled with his permanent emigration to Paris would make César Franck, by most definitions, a French composer. There are aspects of his music that contain Belgian elements, such as the main theme of the *Variations Symphoniques*, which has melodic and rhythmic connections to the *cramignon*, a dance native to Liege,⁶ but such relationships are subtle at best. Despite these gentle allusions to his country of birth, his final departure from Belgium would go on to be confirmed in 1873, when he somewhat inevitably became an officially naturalized Frenchman.⁷

As well as this national ambiguity, there was always a great disparity between Franck as a person and the music that flowed from his hand. Known for his humility, modesty and extreme kindness,⁸ as well as the ardently religious side of his character, his goals in life were simple: to serve music and God with the greatest dedication. Taking into account the stereotypical personality of a Romantic artist – temperamental, free-spirited, confident and impulsive – Franck again defies this, sharing more in common with the committed religious types of the medieval period than with his contemporaries. However, this impression we have of his personality must be viewed with hesitation, as ‘it is a fact that those who have written about him most vividly also happen to be those least likely to have resorted to impartiality.’⁹ Much of the literature about Franck was written by his reverential students (with d’Indy being the best example), so there is a strong chance of a bias in their critique.

Atmospheres of serenity and deep spirituality appropriate to his character are often found in his music, but much of it conveys quite the opposite. Moments of excitement and grandeur, along with a chromatic language so charged with emotion as to have been described as ‘erotic’,¹⁰ paint a different picture altogether. Squires highlights this assertion in describing the ‘passion and romanticism’¹¹ in much of Franck’s output, particularly the Violin Sonata. However, whilst this relationship between his character and his music is described as ‘paradoxical’¹² by Stove, there exists another interpretation that hinges around the inextricable link between spirituality and eroticism in Catholicism. As a result of their

⁶ Stove, R. J: *César Franck*, p.255

⁷ Demuth, N: *César Franck*, p.35

⁸ Swindells, R: *Tonality, Functionality and Beethovenian Form in the late instrumental works of César Franck*, pp. 6-8 – Swindells highlights this aspect of his personality with a selection of quotes about Franck from some of his students (d’Indy, Ropartz, Vierne, Mahaut and Tournimere).

⁹ Davies, L: *César Franck and his circle*, p.4

¹⁰ Stove, R. J: *César Franck*, p.ix

¹¹ Squires, P. C: ‘The creative psychology of César Franck’, p.48

¹² Stove, R. J: *César Franck*, p.ix

abstinence, many Medieval saints experienced ecstasy through religious enlightenment, and such occurrences contained certain sexual connotations.¹³ One could therefore say that the frequent moments of emotional intensity in Franck's music provide a further reflection of his faith. With his main purpose as a composer being to give thanks to God through his music, the coexistence of introverted spirituality and passionate outpouring provides an explicit demonstration of the divine nature of his late compositional output.

Franck the Musician

César Franck is unusual in that his reputation rests on a relatively small number of pieces he wrote towards the end of his life. He had already achieved fame as a performer, pedagogue and composer of some repute (some of his early organ pieces and piano trios, for instance, are still performed today), but it was not until the late 1870s where he would begin to produce what are now considered to be his masterworks. Starting with the publication of his Piano Quintet in F minor (1879), which was the first work to exhibit his novel experiments with cyclic form,¹⁴ these late compositions encompass multiple mediums: through large-scale orchestral music (his Symphony in D minor, the *Variations Symphoniques* for piano and orchestra and the symphonic poems *Les Chasseur Maudit* and *Les Djins*), chamber music (the aforementioned String Quintet, the Violin Sonata and his String Quartet), solo piano (the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue* and the *Prelude, Aria & Finale*), choral (the oratorio *Les Beatitudes*, the opera *Hulda* and the symphonic poem for chorus and orchestra *Psyché*) and the organ (his last compositions, *Les Trois Chorals*). Whilst almost all of the great composers produced many works in a variety of genres, Franck did not. Nevertheless his late output demonstrates a desire to contribute at least one work to a diverse range of instrumental resources and dramatic contexts.

Each of these was written during a period of great cultural and social upheaval, for in France at the time there existed a huge conflict with Germany, due mostly to the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71. And this tension would go on to be reflected in the musical life of Paris. Austro-Germanic composers dominated its concert halls up until 1870,¹⁵ but the negative

¹³ Saint Hildegard: *Symphonia: a critical edition of the Symphonia Armonie Celestium Revolutionum*, p.262 - These sexual connotations found in early Catholic scripture are well demonstrated in Saint Hildegard of Bingen's *Responsory to Saint Ursula*: 'A dripping honeycomb was Ursula, virgin, who yearned to lie with God's lamb, honey and milk beneath her tongue. For she gathered around her a flock of virgins, a fruit-bearing orchard, a garden in bloom.'

¹⁴ His Op. 1 Trios foreshadow certain cyclic techniques that would become more prominent in his maturity, but these early works are highly derivative of Beethoven, and contain less original thought than his later output.

¹⁵ Donnellon, D: 'French Music Since Berlioz: Issues and Debates', p.1

outcome of the war created a huge desire for national pride to be restored. The prevailing sentiment among composers became that they should be writing music that was quintessentially French. But again, César Franck was the anomaly of this revival. For whilst he was a Frenchman with similar nationalistic tendencies to his contemporaries,¹⁶ unlike them his mostly spiritual intentions lent themselves to a more cosmopolitan approach. Therefore, whilst displaying some unmistakably French characteristics, Franck's also drew from influences from further afield to achieve this highly personal goal.

Having moved to Paris at the young age of thirteen his musical outlook would go on to be moulded by a great number of factors, but none more than the Czech immigrant Antonin Reicha. César Franck was too young to enter the Paris Conservatoire when he first arrived, so he received private lessons from both Reicha and a Parisian named Pierre Zimmerman (both of a generation to have been friends of Beethoven).¹⁷ It was Reicha who would leave the most lasting effect on a young César Franck, who besides employing some (at the time) very outlandish teaching methods involving mysticism, extreme chromaticism and polytonality, always maintained the importance of academic exercises in counterpoint.¹⁸ Through many studies of Bach and Handel¹⁹ he developed an in-depth understanding of contrapuntal writing from the German Baroque period, and such techniques are apparent throughout his late works.

Reicha's close friendship with the 'Master of Bonn' would have surely been reflected in his lessons with Franck, and so it can be assumed that he was schooled in Beethovenian thematic coherence from an early age. As a result of Franck's exposure to such Austro-German masterworks he would have developed an awareness of a particular concept synonymous with this tradition – structural unity. The idea of a multi-movement work being integrated into a single entity was incorporated in much of Beethoven's music, who used a variety of techniques to unify his multi-movement instrumental works, and it would evolve throughout the nineteenth century in such Romantic composers as Schubert, Liszt and ultimately Franck. Additionally, it was through exposure to such works as Liszt's Piano Sonata that Franck was able to construct his cyclic approach to form by adopting and

¹⁶ Stove, R. J: *César Franck*, p.144 - Stove highlights Franck's dedicated involvement in the Société Nationale de Musique, a group founded in 1871 with the sole aim of promoting the performance of contemporary French music. Franck's prominence in such circles emphasises his nationalistic intentions. He would even go on to become its *de jure* president from 1886 until his death – although only as a result of Saint-Saëns' resignation, which itself came about as a result of Franck's (and his students') acceptance of Austro-German influences, which Saint-Saëns disagreed with. In fact a number of the more conservative members of the Société left for the same reason in 1886, causing a great split in the musical circles of Paris.

¹⁷ Stove, R. J: *César Franck*, p.21

¹⁸ Davies, L: *Franck*, p.6

¹⁹ Stove, R. J: *César Franck*, p.23

extending their unifying procedures. To this end, Franck's use of cyclic recurrence (restating themes unaltered in later movements to create an explicit thematic link) is already quite well documented, but this thesis aims to demonstrate that his harnessing of the concept of unity runs deeper than this rather obvious motivic technique.

In any case, by the end of his life Franck had developed a deep affinity with Bach, Beethoven and numerous other Austro-German masters, and it is the way that he combines aspects of this tradition with certain distinctly French characteristics that will form the basis of discussion here. The outcome of the Franco-Prussian war had a great impact on Parisian composers in the late nineteenth century, and the way in which Franck adopted certain Austro-German techniques during a time of great nationalistic sentiment will be explored. This thesis will investigate the ways that César Franck creates a unique sense of coherence in three of his late works, before determining how the music transcends its many influences to create a distinctly personal style governed by his deep spirituality and cosmopolitan approach. This will ultimately demonstrate the fact that, despite being such an anomaly of the late Romantic period, the importance of his late output should not be overlooked.

Chapter 2 – Franck and the Piano

The three works under consideration are each linked by their use of the piano, an instrument with a long and rich history in French music. Between the Baroque period and the turn of the twentieth century, keyboard writing was both the most fashionable and, possibly along with opera, the most artistically fruitful of all compositional mediums in France. A number of clavecin composers from the French Baroque were responsible for this: none more so than Jean-Phillipe Rameau, a man viewed as the true ancestor of modern French piano music.²⁰ Whilst his great contemporary Couperin's keyboard music often remained rooted in the crispness and tidiness of Baroque counterpoint, Rameau's was different altogether. He developed a more lyrical, melody-focused idiom, in which a 'tune and accompaniment was the rule rather than the exception',²¹ and therefore a florid style which was far more easily adapted to the modern day pianoforte. The qualities which had already long been synonymous with French music – logic, clarity, moderation and balance²² – are still present in his numerous Suites for the clavecin, but the breakthroughs in harmony and texture certainly forged a new path for French keyboard writing. In fact César Franck is known to have owned a copy of Rameau's complete works for the keyboard (Saint-Saëns' edition),²³ and so his awareness of this music and its importance cannot be ignored.

In the time between Rameau and Franck, one keyboard composer from the musical circles of the French capital stood out above the rest. Frederic Chopin, like Franck, had a widely disparate musical heritage, and this is set out by Roy Howat: 'half French by parentage, [he] formed his unique piano style in his native Poland from a blend of Italian *bel canto* and the pianism of an Irishman based in Russia (John Field), before making his home in Paris.'²⁴ These combined to form a unique style of pianism – one of delicate and flowing melodic lines, a feminine grace, and a sensuousness far detached from German classicism – that would leave its mark on all future French composers. Nevertheless this delicate lyricism, which was extremely popular in the salons of France where Chopin was so popular,²⁵ fell out of fashion with the aforementioned rise of Austro-German dominance within the country in the second half of the nineteenth century. However, from the 1870s onwards in Paris – for

²⁰ Demuth, N: *French Piano Music*, p.29

²¹ Ibid, p.26

²² Cooper, M: *French Music from the death of Berlioz to the death of Fauré*, p.2

²³ Stove, R. J: *César Franck, his life and times*. p.273

²⁴ Howat, R: *The Art of French Piano Music: Denussy, Ravel, Fauré, Chabrier*, p.63

²⁵ Ballstaetd, A: 'Chopin as 'salon composer' in nineteenth-century German criticism', p.23

many reasons an extremely turbulent period to live as a musician – French composers put it upon themselves to return their music to its roots. And with such a rich heritage of keyboard repertoire to draw from, it was in this medium that some of the greatest works of the time were written. Fauré, Dukas, Chabrier, Saint-Saëns and many others composed music for the instrument, each with their own personal voice and yet (almost) always endeavouring to break free from the shackles of Austro-German influence and remain distinctly French in style. Notable examples from each of these include Fauré's *Nocturnes*, Dukas' *Variations, Interludes and Finale on a theme by Rameau*, Chabrier's *Dix Pièces Pittoresques* and Saint-Saëns' *Album*.

Whilst his contemporaries produced a great amount for the solo piano, César Franck completed only two large-scale works²⁶ - the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue* and the *Prelude, Aria & Finale*. Despite this lack of prolificacy, Franck's contribution to the genre is not lost on Demuth who devotes two chapters of his book 'French Piano Music' to '*The Franck Tradition*'. But even this must be viewed with hesitation. The two works are addressed in some detail with numerous considerations of interpretive issues, but any analytical endeavour is absent. In fact there is more written about his pupils' outputs than there is his own. It would seem that here César Franck is being viewed first and foremost as an influential pedagogue,²⁷ and as a result his achievements as a composer are somewhat overshadowed.

Having said this, there is a clear acknowledgement of Franck's seminal importance to the French Romantic tradition from Demuth, who asserts that he introduced 'a romanticism and solidarity of thought hitherto unknown in French piano music',²⁸ but acknowledgement is all he provides. In this sense we are now picking up where Demuth left off – actually ascertaining *how* this 'solidarity of thought' is attained. To begin this investigation it is first necessary to introduce the three pieces under consideration, before establishing the formal plans of each of their movements, along with the main thematic material from which they are constructed.

²⁶ In fact the only other pieces he wrote for the solo piano were a series of derivative pieces produced from his pre-Conservatoire childhood days, and the short *Danse Lente* from 1885.

²⁷ Vallas, L: *César Franck*, p.194 – Vallas highlights this sentiment: 'Masters and pupil marched together towards the same objective, but the pupils led, the master followed.'

²⁸ Demuth, N: *French Piano Music* p.41

Prelude, Choral & Fugue

By 1884, César Franck was living the last chapter of his life. Having passed quickly through his career first as a child prodigy, then an organist of worldwide fame and much sought-after teacher, he finally joined the Paris Conservatoire as professor of organ in 1872, and it was in this profession that he would spend his final days. However his reputation as a composer was still uncertain – his notable output consisted of various showpieces (mostly for the organ), a handful of symphonic poems and various Choral pieces (not least his famous setting of the *Panis Angelicus* hymn). It was not until 1884, and the publication of the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue*, that César Franck would truly begin to develop his personal voice – innovative and ground-breaking whilst at the same time reverent to the greats of the past, and displaying a spirituality both introverted and extroverted within which one can find many parallels with the late works of Beethoven. And in a century of piano music dominated by such German masters as Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann and Brahms, this work can be arguably titled the most important addition to the French piano literature since the time of Rameau.²⁹

The origins of the piece can be traced back to an early rehearsal of Franck's tone poem for piano and orchestra, *Les Djinns*. After having been happy with the performance by the soloist, Louis Diémer, Franck is reported to have said "You played very well; to reward you, I'll write you a little something which I'll dedicate to you"³⁰ – which would turn out to be the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue*. The structure of each movement is mapped out in Table 2.1.1, and the corresponding thematic material is provided in Example 2.1.1.

²⁹ This may seem a big claim, but the scarceness of French piano music in this period means there is little competition in this regard.

³⁰ Stove, R. J: *César Franck*, p.246

Table 2.1.1 – Formal plan of the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue*

Movement	Section	Bars	Key area	Principal motif(s)
Prelude	A	1-15	B minor (with transition to F#)	1,2
	A (transposed)	16-28	F# minor	1,2
	B	28-40	Modulatory to begin with, before the temporary key areas of E \flat major, then B major	3
	Coda (A')	41-57	Free moving and fantasia-like codetta, passing through various keys of B, E \flat and G# before finally returning to B minor	
Choral	B	58-68	E \flat major -> C minor	
	A	68-76	C minor	4
	C	76-81	C minor -> F minor	
	A	81-89	F minor	4 (with altered second half of phrase)
	D	89-103	F minor -> E \flat minor	
	A	103-115	E \flat minor	4 (with both second halves of previous soundings of 4)
Transition		116-157	Freely modulates, before reaching the home key of B minor for the Finale	
Fugue	Exposition	157-177	First entry in tonic, second in dominant, third in tonic, fourth in dominant	5 (fugal subject)
	Development	178-217	Freely modulates	
	Conclusion of fugue	218-286	Again freely modulates, but with important return of the subject in the tonic	
	<i>Come una cadenza</i>	287-361	Freely modulates	2, 4, 5 (cyclic return)
	Coda	362-end	B major	4

Example 2.1.1

1

2

3

4

5

This table demonstrates a number of things. Considering each movement individually, the *Prelude* gives the appearance of a modified ternary form – the first section A is alone repeated, albeit in the dominant minor, followed a section of new ideas (B), which precedes the final codetta section A' (so called due to its return to the accompanimental texture of A). However, this formal plan is very ambiguous – a characteristic present in many domains of Franck's compositional method. Even though a ternary-form is hinted at through the textures of the sections, this *Prelude* does not adhere to any traditional structural plan.

The *Choral* is a modified rondo form, only with it beginning on an episode (B) and the rondo theme appearing afterwards at bar 68. Each of the episodes B, C & D contain instances of 'Infinite Melody',³¹ a notion of a constantly flowing line with a lack of traditional cadence that one finds throughout the operas of Richard Wagner. And whilst the first two *pianissimo* soundings of the theme are sombre in mood, these serve to exaggerate the *fortissimo* of the final time the *Choral* theme is heard in E_b minor. This climactic moment of emotional outpouring is one of the best examples of Franck's music conveying a feeling of ecstasy.

³¹ Demuth, N: *French Piano Music*, p.45

Finally, the *Fugue* might be described as a 'modified' fugue, in that it does not entirely follow the fugal process in a traditional manner. The exposition proceeds as expected, with the entries of the three voices in the tonic and dominant, but the strict contrapuntal writing soon breaks down with the introduction of chords moving in parallel motion from bar 197 and even parallel octaves from bar 204. Admittedly the introduction of the subject in inversion from bar 217 and the climactic final subject entry in the tonic at bar 278 do provide a 'proper' conclusion, but by that point the virtuosic pianism that has appeared throughout makes it impossible for it to be described as a fugue in an entirely traditional sense. In fact, Saint-Saëns even famously criticised the work on the grounds that "the choral is not a choral, nor the fugue a fugue."³² For that reason alone it makes it difficult to break this movement down into more obvious sections than 'exposition', 'development' and 'conclusion'. Finally, the cadenza and coda conclude the *Fugue*, within which motifs from earlier movements return in various guises and textures. By this point it is already apparent that each of these movements shows an affinity to the musical structures of the past (ternary, rondo and fugue), in particular Bach with the presence of the movement titles *Prelude* and *Fugue*. In any case, they have been modified enough to rise above these 'labels' into something different altogether.

Prelude, Aria & Finale

Despite being performed far less frequently in concert than the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue*, this work is no less masterful in its construction, and with it being written in September 1887 it would be the last work he would write for the instrument. Whilst it may share many similarities with its solo piano counterpart, one distinct difference is identified by Stephen Hough: the *Prelude, Choral and Fugue* is distinctly religious in flavour, whereas the *Prelude, Aria & Finale* is a more secular take of this tripartite structural plan.³³ This is exemplified by the titles of the slow movements (a Choral is a divine song of spirituality, whilst the Aria, with its operatic connotations, is more human) and the last movements (fugues are strongly associated with church music,³⁴ whilst the Finale does not share this connection). The formal plans of the work's movements and its corresponding thematic material is shown in Table 2.2.1 and Example 2.2.1 respectively.

³² Stove, R. J: *César Franck*, p.248

³³ Hough, S: 'Franck's Piano Music', online

³⁴ Merrick, P: *Revolution and Religion in the Music of Liszt*, p.268 – when investigating Liszt's Mass settings, Merrick states that 'most nineteenth-century church music employs fugal technique in some shape or form. The Church was viewed as the natural home of counterpoint.' This tradition, partly inspired by the two fugues in Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, contributes to the deeply spiritual nature of the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue*.

Table 2.2.1 – Formal plan of the *Prelude, Aria & Finale*

Movement	Section	Bars	Main Key Area(s)	Principal motif(s)
Prelude	A	1-42	E major	1
	B	43-68	E Major/C# major	2
	A	69-83	C# minor	1
	C	84-146	C# minor	3
	A	147-189	E _b minor/A _b minor/ E major	1
Aria	Introduction	1-16		
	A	17-32	A _b major/A _b minor	4
	B	33-56	A _b minor	5
	A'	57-72	A _b major/A _b minor	4
	B'	73-92	A _b minor	5
	Coda	93-107	A _b major	Short gesture from introduction
Finale	Introduction	1-38	G# major, dominant of C# minor	Fragments of a descending chromatic scale
	A	39-80	C# minor, D major, A _b major	6,7
	Reprise of introduction	80-100	G# major, enharmonic dominant of D _b major	
	B	100-116	D _b major	4,5
	Reprise of introduction	116-148	B major, dominant of E Minor	
	A'	149-176	E minor/E major	6,7
	Coda	180-end	E major	1,4,5

The second movement meanwhile, after the extremely free *lento* introduction that introduces fragments of motif 4, is a compact double-variation form. Each of the two long themes, shown as 4 (consisting of two 'lines') and 5 (also being made up of two 'lines') in Example 2.2.1, are repeated after their respective first soundings. Then this entire opening section undergoes a process of variation, through introductions of cross-rhythms, new contrapuntal lines, and rhythmic diminution, which reaches a climax with a semiquaver-arpeggio accompaniment for the final sounding of 5. The metronomic crotchets in the four 'lines' remain constant, whilst the complexity of the surrounding textures in the varied repetitions creates much diversity in musical effect. Along with the coda, which revisits aspects of the introduction, the resultant effect is a transcendental yet tightly and symmetrically structured central movement.

The Finale on the other hand introduces various issues of classification. The presence of the A sections above, with its first appearance in remote keys of D/A, major before an eventual return in the home tonic, do suggest a self-containment of sorts, but what surrounds these two sections presents something different altogether. For besides these two very short examples of new motivic material (6 and 7), there exists only cyclic return from other movements, and what is described above as an introduction and its 'reprises' – these sections contain no discernible melody and serve only to create an ominous build-up of tension their ensuing sections.

It has already become apparent that the Finales – for both this and the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue* – possess an additional function in the context of the unified whole through their use of cyclic recurrence. They exist both as a separate movement, and as a conclusion to the unified whole. Vallas even goes so far as to assert that the *Prelude, Aria & Finale* is 'in truth a sonata in one movement',³⁵ but this is relating a structural technique uniquely developed by Franck to a mostly unrelated Germanic musical form. Yes, the themes return at the very end in the tonic key, but this one characteristic alone does not create a 'sonata'. It might function as 'one movement', but the framing of the unification is far removed from a traditional sonata-form, as will be investigated later.

The Violin Sonata

Franck composed a handful of other multi-movement works towards the end of his life that incorporated the piano into an ensemble (the *Variation Symphoniques* & the Piano Quintet in

³⁵ Vallas, L: *César Franck*, p.202

F minor for example), and his Violin Sonata in A major also falls into that category. The instrumental sonata did not become popular for French composers until relatively late. Whilst the Austro-Germanic tradition had long since mastered this medium – see the multitude by Mozart and Beethoven, not least their 36 and 10 for the violin respectively – it was not until the time of Saint-Saëns, Fauré and Franck that French composers began to contribute to the genre. After the horrors of the Franco-Prussian War, the increase in interest for chamber music seemed to demonstrate its ‘unexpected vitality by withstanding innumerable conflicts of art, temperament, and background, including those of national and [Wagnerian] tastes’,³⁶ and this reputation rests entirely on the three composers mentioned above. They used this genre – one that would normally be associated in France with simple galant-style dance pieces – as a vehicle for some of their boldest artistic statements, and one perfect for the limited financial resources of the Société Nationale de Musique, which often struggled to perform full orchestral works.³⁷

Saint-Saëns completed his first Cello Sonata in 1871, and Fauré his first Violin Sonata in 1876, but it was not until 1886 that Franck published his first and only Sonata for violin and piano. And it was with this work that Franck finally received the acclaim and admiration that had somehow evaded a man of his talents for so many years.³⁸ Whilst its initial successes lay in the phenomenal musical kinship that Franck shared with violinist Eugène Ysaÿe – it was written with his violin technique in mind, he was the dedicatee, he premiered the work, and his name has subsequently become synonymous with the sonata, not least as the first interpreter ‘worthy’ of a Franck masterpiece³⁹ – it has stood the test of time, being one of the few works by Franck to consistently appear on the concert platform. Again, much like in the previous two works addressed, he continued to frame his supreme handling of melody within an innovative formal plan: one which, unlike the pieces for solo piano, incorporates traditional sonata frameworks in its first two movements. The formal plans of the four movements are given below in Table 2.3.1, with its corresponding thematic material given in Example 2.3.1.

³⁶ Newman, W. S: *The Sonata since Beethoven*, p.514

³⁷ Donnellon, D: ‘French Music Since Berlioz: Issues and Debates’, p.3

³⁸ Vallas, L: *César Franck*, p.198 - Vallas speaks of its critical acclaim from a number of sources, its numerous performances, and even speaks refers to it as ‘the most generally accepted work in the whole repertoire of French chamber music’.

³⁹ Stove, R. J: *César Franck*, p.256-258

Table 2.3.1 – Formal plan of the Violin Sonata

Movement	Section		Bars	Key Area	Principal motif(s)
<i>Allegretto ben moderato</i>	Exposition	1 st subject	1-30	A major	1
		2 nd subject	31-38	E major	2
	Development		39-62		
	Recapitulation	1 st subject	63-89	A major	1
		2 nd subject	90-108	A Major	2
	Coda		109-end	Concludes in A major	1
<i>Allegro</i>	Exposition	1 st subject	1-43	D minor	3
		Transition	44-66		
		2 nd subject	67-79	F minor	4
	Development		80-137		3,4
	Recapitulation	1 st subject	138-167	D minor	3
		Transition	168-190		
		2 nd subject	191-201	D minor	4
Coda		202-end	D minor → major	Fragment of 4	
<i>Ben moderato</i>	Shared cadenza		1-52		Developments of 1
	<i>A tempo moderato</i>		53-end	F# minor	5,6
<i>Allegretto poco mosso</i>	A		1-36	A major	7
	B		37-51		5
	A		52-64	C# major	7
	C		65-79		5
	A		79-87	E major	7
	Codetta		87-98	E major	Fragment from 7
	D		99-184		Transitional gesture from second movement, 6, 5, parts of 7
	A		185-221	A major	7
	Coda		222-end	A major	Codetta in home key)

Example 2.3.1

The image displays a musical score for Example 2.3.1, consisting of seven staves of music. The notation is as follows:

- Staff 1:** Treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The melody begins with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, an eighth note F#4, a quarter note E4, a quarter note D4, and a half note C4.
- Staff 2:** Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. The melody starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, an eighth note F#4, a quarter note E4, a quarter note D4, and a half note C4.
- Staff 3:** Treble clef, key signature of one flat (Bb). The first measure is marked with a box containing the number '1' and the Roman numeral 'IV'. The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with sixteenth and thirty-second notes. Dynamics include *f* (forte) and *cresc.* (crescendo). The second measure has a fermata over the notes.
- Staff 4:** Treble clef, key signature of one flat. The melody continues with a similar rhythmic pattern. Dynamics include *sempre f* (sempre forte) and *f* (forte). There are triplets and a fourth-note group indicated.
- Staff 5:** Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. The melody consists of a series of quarter notes: G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3.
- Staff 6:** Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. The melody consists of a series of quarter notes: G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3.
- Staff 7:** Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. The melody begins with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, an eighth note F#4, a quarter note E4, a quarter note D4, and a half note C4.

Whilst a glance at the first movement would suggest a typical opening sonata-form, it actually functions as an extended slow introduction. The fantasia-like approach is present from the outset, with a string of dominant 9ths in various inversions creating an ethereal atmosphere that is only enhanced by an absence of a tonic chord for the first seven bars. Despite the fact all the signs of a sonata form are there – an exposition, development and recapitulation all in their expected tonalities – the overall very gentle nature, whether it is tightly structured or not, delays the appearance of the proper ‘sonata allegro first movement’ until afterwards. In this respect Franck is again taking a traditional model (sonata form) and

adapting it in practise (it becomes a fantasia introduction). This raises an important point about the opening movements of each of the three works. Whilst some may be more formally ambiguous than others (compare this clear sonata-form to either of the two Preludes), each of them ultimately serves the same purpose: to introduce certain features (tonal, motivic, atmosphere etc.) that will go on to become fundamental in the construction of the unified whole.

This second movement is reached via a seamless transition from the first, with the concluding A major chord quickly becoming a dominant minor 9th in D minor to begin the tumultuous allegro. The tempestuous first subject of this sonata-proper is juxtaposed by its otherworldly second subject, and the way these two atmospheres counteract each other at various points in the movement creates a remarkable effect throughout. Such parts of the opening two movements that portray a sense of fantasia, particularly in the opening of the development of the *Allegro*, serve to introduce the style of melodic writing that dominates the third movement. Seemingly free, it is split into two sections, the first of which consists of the two soloists answering each other with cadenza-like passages and some reappearances of the opening theme of the sonata, before the second section introduces two ideas (5 & 6) that become important in the construction of the final movement. A clear distinction is made between these two sections through the constant triplet accompaniment that begins in the piano part at bar 53, replacing the free melodies played mostly either unaccompanied, or with block chords in the piano part.

Franck's affinity with Bach, along with the long established tradition of a grand contrapuntal Finale that reached fruition with late-period Beethoven, is again explored in the final movement. Being framed in a modified-rondo form, the recurring section A is built upon idea 7, which is itself presented in a one-bar canon at the octave. Meanwhile the episodes in between modulate freely with a brisk harmonic rhythm (as with any 'section' where the key area is left blank), with their principal motifs being derived from other movements. Therefore, like with the Finales of the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue* and the *Prelude, Aria & Finale*, here is a movement with a self-contained structure that also subscribes to a larger unity by completing an overarching journey that exists throughout the temporal progression of the work.

Part 2 – A Musical Cosmopolitan

Chapter 3 – Unity

Unity in the Nineteenth Century

...the springing forth of a beautiful tree, buds and leaves, blossoms and fruits,
from a germinal seed...⁴⁰

For composers and analysts alike, unity has long been an important issue in the creation and investigation of large-scale musical forms. This rather general word has been the subject of much discourse since it was first identified, and it has gone on to refer to a range of particular issues in the analytical literature – a survey of which is given by van Geest.⁴¹ It can mean ‘similarity’, where two or more elements become unified simply if they share similar features; it can be synonymous with ‘coherence’, which refers to a logical connection between elements; a reference to an ‘aesthetic impression’, a subjective feeling or effect; or a sense of ‘predictability’, where the listener’s expectations are fulfilled. However it is another definition, one first explored in 1810 with the publication of E.T.A Hoffmann’s review of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony in C minor (1808), which would have the greatest impact on musical thought in the nineteenth century.

As a piece of creative writing the imagery present in this seminal piece of music criticism, both colourful and vivid, effectively describes the monumental grandeur of the work. But from an analytical perspective his identification of a ‘germinal seed’ was all the more groundbreaking, as up until this review was published there is very little evidence of eighteenth-century views on the multi-movement integration of instrumental works.⁴² With its abstract reference to the opening motivic cell (the ‘germinal seed’) being responsible for the derivation of numerous subsequent elements (the ‘buds, leaves, blossoms and fruits’), and the implications this has on the overarching structure (the ‘beautiful tree’), it was the first time structural unity had been identified as an explicit characteristic of a multi-movement work.

The recognition of the symphony as a ‘beautiful tree’, with its wide range of constituent musical factors contributing to the overarching unity, would introduce an issue that would go on to become hugely prevalent throughout the Romantic period and beyond – artistic organicism. This analytical notion, first explored by Hoffmann, is defined by Morgan as ‘an idea that has persisted with remarkable tenacity down to the present, [which] maintains that

⁴⁰ Hoffmann, E. T. A: *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, 12, pp.633-634

⁴¹ van Geest, W: ‘The Concept of Unity in Musical Analysis’, p. 2

⁴² Webster, J: *Haydn’s “Farewell Symphony”*, p.179

the artwork resembles a natural organism: it responds to internal mechanisms that engender the whole through the generation of functionally distinct parts...linked with all others within a transcendent whole.⁴³ Such a metaphorical approach to unity would go on to become the predominant model of nineteenth-century musical composition, with theorists such as Adolf Marx continuing this organicist line of thought. It was Marx's belief that 'the supreme organic structure in music was the sonata, as exemplified by Beethoven...organicist music emerged with Viennese classical music to replace extra-musical references with an internal system of relations.'⁴⁴ Having become the prevailing philosophy regarding Western classical music in the nineteenth century, this non-scientific and altogether abstract approach – where the music intuitively responds to these natural laws to create the impression of a self-sufficient living organism – would have resonated deeply with Franck, whose spiritual intentions were reflected by this contemporary analytical interpretation. Its metaphysical implications, coupled with the long-standing tradition of using music as a means to give thanks to God, could generate the belief that unified compositions provide a metaphor for the unity of God's creation. Franck's Catholic faith was always extremely important to, and from the age of thirteen (when he moved to Paris) it would have developed in conjunction with his education in Austro-Germanic compositional methods. Therefore, as he reached maturity as a composer and sought to establish a deep spirituality in his late instrumental works, the concept of structural unity provided the perfect vehicle for achieving this.

Unity Today

After becoming a desired ideal during the Romantic period, in more recent years many analytical studies have demonstrated that unity exists in compositions from well before 1808. By retroactively imposing the notion of structural unity on earlier music, analysts have demonstrated it to have been an innately desired characteristic from long before it was first recognised by Hoffmann. Webster's investigation of Haydn's *Farewell Symphony*, showing a through-composed style always pointing us towards and psychologically preparing us for an 'apotheosis ending'⁴⁵, and Beach's probing analysis of unifying methods in Bach's Partitas & Suites⁴⁶ are just two specific examples of this. In fact it has also been identified in music from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, where certain French three-part chansons by composers such as Pierre Attaignant would employ repeated melodic patterns for a

⁴³ Morgan, R: 'The Concept of Unity and Musical Analysis', p.24

⁴⁴ Neubauer, J: 'Organicism and Modernism/Music and Literature', p.8

⁴⁵ Webster, J: *Haydn's "Farewell Symphony"*, p. 3

⁴⁶ Beach, D. W: *Aspects of Unity in Bach's Partitas & Suites: An Analytical Study*

unifying effect.⁴⁷ These in turn greatly impacted the Renaissance sacred vocal tradition of cyclic masses, where a common musical theme, usually a *cantus firmus*, appears in each of the five movements through processes of free melodic variation. Finally, some even earlier music, from as far back as the fourteenth century, has been shown to possess this overarching characteristic. Isorhythmic motets, for instance – a medieval musical form of which Phillipe de Vitry wrote several – have been shown to demonstrate motivic cohesion through ‘shifting the relative positions of [repeated] rhythmic and melodic patterns...to create unity and variety simultaneously.’⁴⁸

A common opinion has certainly arisen amongst musicologists: that a work containing this element of unity, or an ‘expression of *one* inner idea of the spirit’, is of higher artistic value than one that does not.⁴⁹ But why is this? The psychological effect of a single journey occurring throughout the duration of a multi-movement work allows it to transcend a series of unrelated sections⁵⁰ to become a unified whole that is bound together by an overarching sense of narrative. In this respect the scope of compositional ambition is widened, as operation on various structural levels is required. Whilst diversity and contrast is demanded at a surface level to maintain interest, each element must also subscribe to both the formal outline of the stand-alone movement to which it belongs, and a progression through the unified whole. It is the same thing that separates Dostoevsky’s *Crime & Punishment* from his *Diary* short stories, or the Sistine Chapel’s ceiling from Michelangelo’s black chalk sketches: whilst elements of these great artists’ genius are still apparent in the shorter/smaller works, the larger forms are distinctly set apart by their far wider scale of artistic achievement. And the equivalent can be said to be true in music.

However, recent discourse regarding an alternative to unity, or more specifically whether or not unified works *ought to be* seen as better than others, has thrown this commonly held view into dispute. This different line of thought was first brought to light by Alan Street, who posed the question: ‘should the priority of unity over disunity forever be accepted so assuredly?’⁵¹ Addressing this issue of disunity fourteen years after the publication of Street’s article, Robert Morgan published his own paper criticising five analysts (Kofi Agawu, Daniel Chua, Joseph Dubiel, Kevin Korsyn and Jonathan Kramer) that he deemed to be representative of this new anti-unitarian movement – one that he strongly disagreed with.

⁴⁷ Cazeaux, I: *French Music in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, p.165

⁴⁸ Paxman, J: *Classical Music 1600-2000: A Chronology*, p.21

⁴⁹ Webster, J: *Haydn’s “Farewell Symphony”*, p.180

⁵⁰ This point is highlighted by the fact that it was common practise in the Baroque period (with Vivaldi for example) to vary the order of movements in different performances.

⁵¹ Street, A: ‘Superior Myths, Dogmatic Allegories: The Resistance to Musical Unity’, p.79

This in turn prompted these five musicologists to respond to Morgan in defence of their respective analyses, and within this prolonged exchange an important issue arose regarding the relationship between unity and disunity. Morgan claims that by identifying moments of disunity, these analyses 'have nothing more to say of an analytical nature' and are strongly discrediting the works in question – he believes that unity is the only important analytical conclusion to reach in these contexts, and that anything on the contrary is not worth mentioning.

However, the responses reveal that this is certainly not the case. Each of them ultimately claim that these instances of 'disorder',⁵² or 'chaos',⁵³ or 'historical contradictions',⁵⁴ do not have to detract from the overall coherence of the works. In fact, whilst they must be considered as important in their own right – 'disunity needs to be appreciated not only as the absence of unity, but also as a musical experience in and of itself'⁵⁵ – they can even serve to supplement the unity. This view is best surmised by Kramer, who 'readily admits that musical unity can be powerful, but it is not the only way music can be powerful...the interplay of the experiences of unity and disunity can be among the richest of musical experiences.'⁵⁶ It is this overarching view that disunified moments can raise interest through variety, and thus the expectation for a return to unity, that will become prevalent in the investigation of Franck's music. By combining traditionally Austro-German techniques of structural unity with distinctly French elements that create disunity through a departure from its Austro-German models, as well as other issues that create instability, the overall coherence and musical experience is enhanced.

Analysing Unity in Franck

But just how will these traditionally Austro-German techniques be addressed in this thesis? The analysis of multi-movement unification in Franck will centre around two abstract ways that unity can be attained throughout the course of an extended instrumental work: the presence of a continuous cycle, which is achieved by making each part connected to each other through motivic, harmonic and temporal relationships, to create the ultimate impression of a single path of musical direction; and an overarching sense of departure followed by a return, which is achieved via harmonic and tonal instability as well as other issues that

⁵² Kramer, J: 'The Concept of Disunity and Musical Analysis', p.370

⁵³ Chua, D: 'Rethinking Unity', p.354

⁵⁴ Korsyn, K: 'The Death of Musical Analysis? The Concept of Unity Revisited', p.345

⁵⁵ Kramer, J: 'The Concept of Disunity and Musical Analysis', p.362

⁵⁶ Ibid, pp.368-369

ultimately experience resolution. Here, in light of Hoffmann’s seminal quote identifying the organicist construction of the Fifth Symphony, Beethoven’s music will be used to demonstrate the issues the investigation of Franck will focus on.

Firstly, motivic continuity, for which Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony will be used as an example. The opening bars introduce a 4-note motif, and in each of the four movements developments of this motif are incorporated in a variety of moods and contexts. This creates a rhythmic link (the repeated notes) and henceforth a unifying connection throughout the work as a whole. This idea of a motivic connection is obviously not limited to a rhythmic idea – an interval, a melodic contour, or a short phrase consisting of any of these aspects can also form the basis of later developments. This symphony demonstrates continuity at a motivic level, which is juxtaposed by the diversity in dramatic contexts and structural functions of the repeated-note motif’s numerous developments. The reappearances of this 4-note motif, along with a brief description of their structural function is shown in Table 3.1.1

Table 3.1.1 – Developments of the four-note motif in Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony

	<p>The motif introduced in the opening bars, and developed throughout the first movement</p>
	<p>The repeated-note motif is heard in the violas of bars 76-77 of the second movement – an accompanimental gesture as opposed to a main thematic idea</p>
	<p>The main theme of the third movement, with the repeated Gs and C minor tonality, is heavily reminiscent of the opening cell</p>
	<p>A quiet reprise of the "horn theme" of the scherzo movement appears before the recapitulation in the Allegro Finale – an early example of a cyclic technique</p>
	<p>The repeated-note motif forms cadential figures that help to bring the piece to its triumphant conclusion in the coda of the Finale. A sense of symmetry is created by the similarities with the opening cell’s rhythmic structure</p>

Another method to make a work feel like a continuous cycle, but with harmonic and temporal relationships, is by using *attacca* movements, as in Beethoven's String Quartet op.131. This effect is achieved via two different harmonic techniques: the first involves a modulation to the tonic of its subsequent movement in the concluding bars (such as the brief third movement in B minor which ends on E major, the dominant of A, thus providing a perfect cadence into the fourth movement in A major); the second involves a transformation of the harmonic context of particular held pitches (such as the first movement in C# minor, that concludes with the tonic in octaves. However, its function changes to that of the leading note of the second movement, in D major.) In fact, throughout the course of this seven-movement quartet, only one transition doesn't incorporate these techniques: the vast fourth movement ends on a tranquil cadence in A major, and the lack of any seamless transition into the E major *Presto* only serves to exemplify the rhythmic vitality and relentless energy of this movement. Despite this deliberately dramatic instance, the effect of a seamless harmonic progression throughout the rest of the work establishes a sense of continuity, and this is further encapsulated by other inter-movement connections.⁵⁷

Tonal organisation and harmonic language also play an important role as, along with the obvious and plentiful examples of starting and ending a work in the tonic, more specific key relations between movements and overarching sections can help to tie the music together. Such works are governed by a sense of departure from the initial tonic, before a final return to the home key that cements the experience of finality and closure. In addition to this, music can also exhibit a cyclic nature in its tonal plans. A relationship of this sort is found in Beethoven's set of Op. 126 Bagatelles, in which the tonic keys of each of the short pieces follow a cycle of descending major thirds (G major → G minor → E \flat major → B minor → G minor → E \flat major). This is a particularly interesting instance because on the surface they appear to be a set of unrelated miniatures; the definition of bagatelle, a 'short unpretentious instrumental composition' adds weight to the apparent lack of seriousness. But the fact they were published as a 'cycle'⁵⁸ suggests otherwise. This shows that the set should be viewed as one, and so they are bound together by the intervallic consistency in the progression of tonalities.

These factors ultimately contribute to the impression of a journey: one that occurs throughout the course of an extended work, and often encapsulates the sense of a departure followed by an eventual return. In this respect the establishment of unity hinges

⁵⁷ Winter, R: 'Plans for the Structure of the String Quartet in C# minor, op.131', p.121 - two are identified here: 'the growth of the Allegro out of the first movement'; and the C#/D \flat juxtaposition that is prevalent throughout.

⁵⁸ Lockwood, L: *Beethoven: the music and the life*, p.398

around the sense of an achievement of a larger goal throughout the work, which invariably results in the Finale providing a culmination and resolution of earlier tensions. This can again be found in Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, where the relentless rhythmic activity and stormy C minor tonality of the opening movement provides the initial 'departure' that is ultimately resolved by the triumphant Finale in C major. This feeling of a struggle gradually being overcome is therefore achieved by the events up to and including the work's emphatic conclusion, and the numerous motivic inter-movement connections and instances of cyclic recurrence only exemplify this effect.

Beethoven explores the greatest extremes of an 'expression of *one* inner idea of the spirit' in his Ninth Symphony, where the relentless tumult of the opening two movements (both in the tonic minor) and lyrical double variations movement (with the first theme in the submediant major, and the second in the tonic major) precede the immense last movement. In this vast Finale – a multi-movement piece in itself - tonal stasis is finally achieved after a large-scale transformation from D minor to D major (a key area pre-empted by the second theme of the third movement). Thus begins the process of good triumphing over bad, of light triumphing over darkness, which is made all the more poignant by the unbridled and universal optimism of Friedrich Schiller's poem in the choral sections. This psychological journey is further accentuated by the instances of cyclic recurrence that occur towards the start of the fourth movement, where small fragments of motivic ideas from each of the first three movements are heard one by one. Yet this serves a deeper purpose than merely reminding the listener what's gone before: it reasserts the previously heard 'problems' (of tonal instability and tempestuous minor-key prevalence) which the Finale then overcomes in the extended rejoice of the ensuing choral sections. The two-fold function of the introduction to the Finale is lucidly described by Kinderman, who goes into great detail regarding the impact these cyclic recurrences have on the temporal progression of this vast symphony. On the one hand they 'underscore the role of the choral Finale as a transcendence of the previous movements', and on the other they also serve 'immanently, to affirm the continuing, valid presence of earlier modalities at the threshold of the Finale',⁵⁹ and therein lies the dramatic effect of unity. By operating on two structural levels, a conflict arises between the surface level tension and diversity and the ever-present singularity.

Together these relatively abstract principles combine to create an all-encompassing sense of unity, and it is this characteristic that will be investigated in Franck. Despite the fact his music remains quintessentially French in many respects it still conveys this overarching principle. It is this distinctly Austro-German notion that some analysts – Schenker,

⁵⁹ Kinderman W: *Beethoven*, p.313

Schoenberg and Reti, for example – used to fuel their ideological belief that Austro-German music was superior to all others. The analytical conclusion that the great composers from this school (and only this school) employ structural unity apparently proved their superiority. This rather biased critical view of Austro-German music initially came about from its general dominance throughout much of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe – one that a group of French composers (including Franck) so self-consciously sought to overcome after 1871.

Chapter 4 - A Different French Approach

The second half of the nineteenth century was a period of great upheaval throughout the nation of France, with their humiliating defeat at the hands of the North German Confederation (led by the Kingdom of Prussia) in the Franco-Prussian War having a particularly far-reaching effect. Besides the political change it brought about – the collapse of the Second French Republic and the subsequent rise of the Third – its impact was equally significant in cultural and musical circles, especially in Paris. Above all, it was the ease with which France lost the war that had the greatest psychological effect, and this provoked a very strong reaction in certain groups. Filled with a nationalistic desire to regenerate the artistic climate of their country – one which had been left so embarrassed by the conclusion of the conflict with the North German Confederation – many composers, such as Camille Saint-Saëns, César Franck, Gabriel Fauré and Henri Duparc, saw 1870 as a great turning point in the ‘renewal’ of their native music.⁶⁰ They began to compose music that was quintessentially French, which was achieved by looking back to the French Baroque – the period before a century of Austro-German dominance.

Up until 1870, in the concert halls of Paris, works by Beethoven, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Haydn and Weber accounted for half of all music performed. This massive prevalence of Austro-German composers had lasted because of the commonly held view that the composition of dramatic music was the true measure of a musician’s talent,⁶¹ and the Austro-Germanic tradition had long displayed complete mastery of these extended forms. However, the Franco-Prussian War completely changed this. The renewed nationalistic pride of the French, coupled with the fact that anti-German feelings were running very high, caused people to review the musical climate of France. Realising that French composers had long been dismissed in favour of what were now seen as the ‘over-indulgent excesses of the German romantic style’,⁶² certain circles sought to provide a platform for home-grown talent through devoting all their time and efforts towards the performance of new French music. The most important of these was the Société Nationale de Musique – founded in 1871 by Saint-Saëns and the singer Romain Bussine – with which Franck was always very closely associated, even becoming its *de jure* president from 1886 until his death.⁶³ This nationalistic concert-giving society involved all major French composers of the time in some

⁶⁰ Kelly, B: *French music, culture and national identity, 1870-1939* p.6

⁶¹ Donnellon, D: ‘French Music Since Berlioz: Issues and Debates’, p.1

⁶² *Ibid*, p.2

⁶³ Stove, R. J: *César Franck*, p.261

shape or form, and its basic purpose was to perform new French music regardless of its school or origin. It is said that the leading musicians of Paris at the time 'received their baptism of fire and hisses at its concerts',⁶⁴ and it certainly became an important part of Franck's later career with his works often appearing at such gatherings.

However, for this group of composers to break successfully from the shackles of Austro-German dominance, there must have existed a particular and unique identity of French music to which it could turn. Writing in 1872, Armande de Montgarde spoke of the inherent contrasts between the music of France and the music of Germany:

Values identified as typically French included clarity of expression, form and technique; emphasis on melody; elegance, refinement and wit; lightness of texture; expressive decorum; and a classic sense of genre... German music, on the other hand, was usually characterised by an obscurity (of expression, form and technique) essentially related to 'excessive' chromaticism; dense motivic work and 'difficult' counterpoint; textural heaviness; lack of decorum in its emphasis on expressive extremes; and the mixing of different generic traits.⁶⁵

Present here is the general impression that late Romantic German music is of a grandiose nature, with a reliance on tightly knit motivic processes, dense in texture, and a sense of ambition in its form on a large scale that can be traced back to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, and before to the supremely crafted contrapuntal masterworks of Bach and Handel. French music on the other hand is considered altogether different. Techniques of motivic development and coherence were not found in their treatments of melody: this was defined by short, simple and elegant instrumental lines with a flowing vocal style. Formal plans of a far smaller scale and of far more clearly defined proportions were used, such as 'clarity of expression', 'elegance, refinement' and 'lightness'. Whilst German composers sought to make an immense statement with whatever means necessary, their French counterparts preferred to voice their emotions in a less overwrought manner, with delicacy and subtlety. But where did these vastly different generalisations about French music come from, and how was this identity then moulded by the 1870s? To establish how these very particular characteristics came into being – those which many composers sought to revive and reuse in their own works – one needs to look back to the Baroque period.

⁶⁴ Demuth, N: *César Franck*, p.32

⁶⁵ Jones, T: 'Nineteenth-century Orchestral and Chamber Music', pp.59-60

An Emphasis on Melody

During the seventeenth century, a new philosophical ideology surfaced in Western Europe which would have a great effect on the direction of French music. During the Italian Renaissance the works of Aristotle were rediscovered, within which lay the assertion that art and music represented a 'direct imitation of nature', as opposed to a 'second-hand reflection of a distant divine truth'.⁶⁶ However, with the development of Cartesian philosophy in the seventeenth century and its central tenet of *raison*, French composers were given a rational and descriptive grounding with which they could portray emotion and the passions in music. The direct imitation and 'appeal to the ear' that was found in Italian music now had its counterpart in the 'sensuous beauty' and 'expressivity' of the French.⁶⁷ Furthermore, the 'rational' approach to conveying these ideas resulted in the 'refinement' of French music: no notes are wasted on overblown sentiments; everything is there for a reason.

One way in which these ideologies have materialised in particular compositional techniques has been put forward by Edward Higginbottom, who asserts that as far as expressing a certain sensation, or even imitation of an aspect of nature, the most successful means of achieving this was through vocal music – the text. Within the confines of instrumental music, where such straightforward means of expressivity were not available, French composers achieved this by demanding that the instrumental writing should mirror the vocal style as much as possible.⁶⁸ Example 4.1.1 shows bars 1-8 of the *Premiere Entrée* of Lully's *L'Amour Malade*, written in 1665. Here one finds an elaborate upper line melody, with plenty of ornamentation, large falls and scale figures. This is accompanied by a basic contrapuntal texture, with limited examples of imitation, which serves to give further prominence to the upper voice and cement its position as a 'vocal line' above the accompaniment. What has also become apparent by this point is the fact that in striving to recreate the abstract nature of 'sensuous beauty', the French tradition had dismissed the idea of music being held together via rigorous motivic, contrapuntal and textural techniques. On the contrary, the spontaneity of a freely flowing vocal melody was the most important thing.

⁶⁶ Cowart, G: *French musical thought, 1600-1800*, p.1

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p.2

⁶⁸ Higginbottom, E: "Sonate, que me veux-tu?" – Classical French music and the theory of imitation', p.14

Example 4.1.1

PREMIÈRE ENTRÉE

Le divertissement fait la première entrée, accompagné de quelques uns de ses suivants, qui composent une musique d'instruments.

Jean-Phillipe Rameau would take this particular French approach to melodic construction to new heights. He developed a distinct style: one more compatible with modern French taste, and renowned for its bold melodies, complex textures, virtuosity and abrupt modulations.⁶⁹ And it was then towards the end of the Baroque period where there first grew a great disparity between the French and German schools of composition. For whilst composers such as J. S. Bach were producing works of great contrapuntal complexity and motivic integration, composers in France were still continuing the ideologies they had established in the previous century. Contrary to the grand scale of much of the German Baroque, the French, as Higginbottom puts it, '[wrote] in a way which calls attention to musical gestures made in the short term, a falling melodic phrase, a pointed rhythm, and not to the musical relationship of these gestures over the course of the piece'.⁷⁰ To demonstrate this, one could consider the keyboard works of Bach and Rameau. Whilst many of Bach's, for instance the Art of Fugue, contain highly integrated examples of contrapuntal writing and motivic manipulation, with a series of complex fugues each derived from the same initial subject,

⁶⁹ Cowart, G: *French musical thought*, p.4

⁷⁰ Higginbottom, E: "Sonate, que me veux-tu?" – *Classical French music and the theory of imitation*, p.20

Rameau's *Pieces de Clavecin*, a handful of suites comprising of multiple short pieces linked only by tonality, are altogether different. Considering the *Sarabande* from the Suite in A minor from *Nouvelles Suites de Pièces de Clavecin*, shown in Example 4.1.2, the musical progression is articulated by a highly ornamented melodic line, understated cadences, and free contrapuntal writing governed by no rigid set of rules. Furthermore, the harp-like arpeggio figures often used to confirm a preceding (mostly tonic, sometimes subdominant) chord with added major 7^{ths} or major 9^{ths}, whilst being examples of the fleetingness of 'musical gestures made in the short term', are also a precursor to the ethereal harmonies built upon dominant extensions that would become synonymous with French music in later years.

Example 4.1.2

Nouvelles Suites de Pièces de Clavecin (v. 1728)

Quatrième Suite
Sarabande

Jean-Philippe Rameau
(1683-1763)

The musical score for the Sarabande is presented in six systems, each consisting of a treble and bass staff. The key signature is A minor (one sharp, F#) and the time signature is 3/8. The piece is characterized by its highly ornamented melodic line in the right hand and a harp-like arpeggiated accompaniment in the left hand. The notation includes various ornaments, slurs, and dynamic markings such as 'p' and 'f'. The piece is divided into six systems of two staves each, with measure numbers 6, 11, 15, 18, and 23 indicated at the start of their respective systems. The word 'harpégé' is written in the left hand of the first system.

Clarity of Expression, Form & Technique

The reign of Louis XIV brought with it a huge rise in popularity of the galant style, with French composers tending to avoid emotionally charged moments of violence and dissonance in favour of principles of pleasure and 'superficial love'.⁷¹ With this generally more pleasant and 'elegant' musical idiom came a refinement in formal scale: these short and simple sentiments could only be framed in short and simple structures. This would continue to surface in the Baroque period, with the prevalence of brief character pieces and fleeting dance suites, and an example of this reduced scale of structure can be found in the four volumes of harpsichord music published throughout the lifetime of François Couperin. Considering a piece from these – *Le tic-toc-choc ou les maillotins*, from the 18th Ordre of the Third Book – this is a brief rondo that passes by in a flash of toccata-like arpeggio figures, in an unusual evocation of its rhythmic and comical yet mysterious title. The fundamentally self-contained nature of these small character pieces means that they do not hang together as a complete cycle, and despite the fact they are published as a group there is no integration or unification from a motivic or tonal perspective. However, the programmatic nature of these short works does create a very particular effect, where the compression of length serves to heighten the dramatic impact of the abstract narrative provided by the titles.

These sorts of light and impulsive miniatures are far removed from the rigid contrapuntal nature of keyboard works coming out Germany at the time, and also serve to display the 'wit' that Montgarde mentions in his earlier quote. Furthermore the general favouring of miniatures over large-scale works served to cement a particular characteristic of French music: steering clear of over-excessiveness, they endeavoured to frame their musical sentiments in the shortest and most concise means possible. From this philosophy, the notion of a 'large-scale' work was achieved through the composition of cycles of miniatures, a structural make-up within which rapid changes in texture and mood are inherent, much like the suites of the French Baroque, and one which was adopted by many late nineteenth-century French composers with nationalistic intentions.

Franck creates clarity of form, expression and technique through his use of texture and silence. Within the unified structural plans of the three works, parts of their stand-alone movements with different textures are often separated by a period of silence. Creating such an explicit distinction between particular sections highlights their structural function, as well as juxtaposing clarity through explicit separation at the most local level with the continuity that is apparent across the broadest - an example of disunity supplementing a surrounding

⁷¹ Cowart, G: *French musical thought*, p. 2

unity. The *Prelude, Choral & Fugue* and the *Prelude, Aria & Finale* employ the same structural technique incorporating silence within their first movements. Each consists of a short opening section, before a brief period of rest separates it from the next passage. This moment from bars 9-10 of the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue* is shown in Example 4.2.1.

Example 4.2.1



The first eleven bars of the *Prelude* introduce the four-note motif in various guises whilst the upper part plays a string of demisemiquaver arpeggio figures in almost perpetual motion – this section concludes with a continuation of these toccata-like figures outlining the tonic of B minor. But the mood immediately changes in the *a capriccio* section. By using a greatly augmented rhythm, the initial feeling of agitation is replaced by the grandiose nature of the stately parallel-motion chords. Introducing this dramatic new texture so suddenly places extra emphasis on the climactic statement of the new theme that occurs two bars later.

The equivalent section in the first movement of the *Prelude, Aria & Finale* is somewhat longer – 42 bars developing the main thematic idea, with constant chordal motion and octaves in the bass. And with its emphatic concluding cadence in E major this section also experiences a resolution of its own. A period of silence again separates it from the introduction of a new atmosphere – a far lighter three-part counterpoint, with the next thematic idea in the upper voice. The effect created is, however, the opposite from the *Prelude, Choral Fugue*. Following the ceremonious opening section with a more stripped-back texture drastically reduces the tension, heralding a long passage before the next climax at bar 70.

Despite the differences in musical effect, both of these opening sections perform the same function – stand-alone entities that serve to introduce the single thematic idea from which the rest of the works are derived. Then, after the ensuing periods of silence, a new texture underpins the next new thematic idea that immediately carries on the developmental process. By creating this explicit boundary between certain sections, the formal scheme and the textural techniques are clearly delineated. This might suggest disruption, but there is continuity on either side – fluidity around clarity.

There are numerous other instances throughout the works where the music undergoes immediate changes in texture, both separated by silence and not. Much like the instances just described, this technique is usually employed to signal an entry (or re-entry) of a different thematic idea, to create an explicit distinction between the various stages of motivic development. Whilst this aspect of Franck's compositional method might be somewhat reminiscent of the French notion of clarity, there is another factor that cannot be ignored. As one of the finest composers and performers of organ music in the nineteenth century, the limitations of this instrument can also be said to have had an impact on his more general compositional method. The piano, being dependent on touch, is capable of gradual changes in sonority and timbre. The organ on the other hand, being dependent on stops, is only capable of immediate alterations, and it is this aspect of Franck's musicianship that compelled him to use such immediate changes in registration and texture. In any case, the effect of these moments remains the same. The emphasis that they place on the thematic process and the excitement that is created by such sudden changes in mood creates a counterpoint to the ever-present continuity.

Therefore Franck's music harnesses this French characteristic, but within the context of a wider unity. His use of silence and immediate textural changes to separate sections of longer, more expansive movements creates the effect of miniatures being integrated into the unified whole. However, whilst this demonstrates an aspect of the French aesthetic within a larger structural framework reminiscent of the Austro-German school, his contemporaries maintained a more explicit adherence to this aspect of this older French style by writing cycles of miniatures. The first such work to be written in late nineteenth-century Paris was the *Dix Pièces Pittoresques* by Emmanuel Chabrier.

Emmanuel Chabrier

We have just heard something quite extraordinary. This music is a link between our own epoch and that of Couperin and Rameau...⁷²

To return again to the period of the start of this chapter, by 1871 contemporary French composers were seeking to draw upon their own national tradition and write music that was typically 'French', and this involved harnessing the characteristics identified by Montgarde. One of the main exponents of this revival was Emmanuel Chabrier. Born in 1841 in Ambert, a small town in central France, his father was determined for the young Emmanuel to follow

⁷² Stove, R. J: *César Franck*, p.251

his footsteps into a career in law, even moving the family to Paris in 1857 so he could continue his studies. However, his passion for music was unquenchable, and he devoted all his spare time to studying and composing.⁷³ Largely self-taught, he quickly developed a distinctly personal style: one which would forge a path for future French composers would follow.

The *Dix Pièces Pittoresques* was written in 1880 while Chabrier was on holiday in Saint-Par, and upon its publication in 1881 it would send ripples around musical circles in Paris. César Franck stated the above quote after having heard the premiere of the work at a Société Nationale de Musique concert, and its sentiment represents what every French composer was trying to achieve at the time. A series of ten programmatic miniatures, they are spoken of extremely enthusiastically by Francis Poulenc in his book about the life and works of Chabrier, linking it to both the past (its echoes of Couperin in the *Mauresque*) and the future (the *Idyll* '[opening up] a whole universe of harmony' and the *Menuet pompeux* 'which is the master-key that unlocks many pages of Ravel and Debussy').⁷⁴ This is a ground-breaking work that uses the structure of a series of programmatic miniatures as a vehicle for a great variety of atmospheres and textures as well as numerous innovations in harmony. The nature of these ambiguously programmatic miniatures, coupled with a more explicit presence of older French influences in the traditionally dance-like *Menuet pompeux*, made it an ideal starting point for his contemporaries who were too seeking to encapsulate the same nationalistic sensibilities. Each of the miniatures conveys a concise yet exciting programmatic journey.

Hector Berlioz

Whilst Berlioz remained unappreciated in the musical world of France during his lifetime,⁷⁵ his influence in the realm of motivic treatment after 1870, particularly on Wagner, would have a lasting effect. Elaine Brody writes that 'Berlioz freed French music for the future, untying the bonds of classicism and academicism that shackled the imagination of so many French composers',⁷⁶ and this colourful imagery can certainly be used to describe his *Symphonie Fantastique*, written in 1830. In the first movement, after a long introduction, the principal theme appears (which is known as the *idée fixe*, shown in Example 4.4.1). Then throughout

⁷³ Myers, R. H: *Emmanuel Chabrier and his Circle*, p.3

⁷⁴ Poulenc, F: *Emmanuel Chabrier*, pp.38-39

⁷⁵ Just a short sentence announcing his passing appeared in the necrology column of the *Guide Musicale* that was published 3 days after his death.

⁷⁶ Brody, E: *Paris: the musical kaleidoscope, 1870-1925*, p. 5

the remainder of this vast work, he harnesses what was then a novel means of musical unification: taking the long and extended musical line and restating it in each of the five movements, but each time in a new dramatic context. The *idée fixe* is introduced by the violins in the opening Allegro, and returns in varied forms throughout, with the Example 4.4.2 showing the first clarinet part from the final movement from Rehearsal letter 63.

Example 4.4.1

Example 4.4.1 is a musical score consisting of six staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a common time signature. The music features a long, flowing melodic line with various intervals and rests. The second staff starts at measure 9, the third at measure 16, the fourth at measure 23, the fifth at measure 30, and the sixth at measure 36. The score includes several trills and triplets, indicated by '3' and '3' with a slur above them. The final measure of the sixth staff ends with a double bar line.

Example 4.4.2

Example 4.4.2 is a musical score for a clarinet part, starting at rehearsal mark 63. The tempo is marked 'Allegro.' and the performance instruction is 'solo'. The score begins with a treble clef and a 6/8 time signature. The music is characterized by a more complex and rhythmic melody than Example 4.4.1, featuring many trills and decorative notes. The dynamics are marked 'poco f' and 'cresc.', with 'sempre cresc.' appearing later in the piece. The score includes several trills, indicated by 'tr' above the notes. The piece concludes at rehearsal mark 64 with a double bar line.

Here the long melody is almost unaltered in contour, but is presented in a different metre, a different key (an E_b clarinet), and with many additional decorative notes. These recurrences of the *idée fixe* occur remain almost unaltered from the original sounding, but they are framed in vastly different contexts, thus creating greatly disparate dramatic effects. However

one thing remains apparent: these methods of motivic integration across a large-scale multi-movement work are extremely far removed from the more concise and refined nature of his native musical traditions. The vast multi-movement structural plans of Franck's works, as shown in the tables in Chapter 2, also demonstrate Austro-German sensibilities in this respect

César Franck shares much in common Hector Berlioz, who also lived in Paris. To the casual observer they seem almost polar opposites: Berlioz the archetypal Romantic personality; Franck, the deep and fervently spiritual man, is seemingly his antithesis. Regarding their techniques of motivic integration as well, Berlioz frames his in a purely programmatic context, with the *idée fixe* adapting to the appropriate atmospheres of the titled movements. Franck's thematic recurrences however – whilst possessing no less dramatic effect – are framed in the context of absolute music, thus articulating an abstract narrative of unity. Nevertheless both possessed the same cosmopolitan approach to composition. Berlioz, active half a century beforehand, sought to create a new French form of unified dramatism by extending Beethovenian procedures – at a time when his native country was a barren land for composition – on an entirely self-centred and personal artistic quest. César Franck's situation differed greatly in that he was writing during a climate of great compositional endeavour, but his desire to maintain Austro-German structural elements in his music to achieve a higher goal is much like Berlioz's. However, whilst Berlioz's motives were dramatic, Franck's were spiritual.

Chapter 5 - Franck's Ideals

He lived in the late works of Beethoven, the quartets and sonatas. His lack of concern over key relationships has the authority of the Op. 110. Méhul, Bach, Beethoven and Schubert were his ideals... Of his contemporaries, Liszt held the highest place.⁷⁷

Whilst many of his contemporaries in late nineteenth century Paris made a pointed effort to abandon any traces of Austro-German influence in their music, this quote demonstrates the extent to which Franck did not. His deep admiration of this tradition is reflected in records of his personal collection of sheet music,⁷⁸ where numerous works by Bach, Handel, Gluck, Mozart, Hummel, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann and Wagner underline this affinity. He also owned much of Liszt's music, who despite being Hungarian was a chief exponent of the Austro-German school, being based in Vienna almost his entire working life. However, it is the small handful of composers mentioned in Demuth's quote – Bach, Beethoven, Schubert, Liszt and Méhul – that would have had the greatest impact on Franck's compositional approach. Certain works by these 'ideals' contain particular interpretations of the concept of structural unity that are reflected in the three pieces under consideration.

Bach's 'Prelude'

After having been introduced to the contrapuntal techniques of Bach by his teacher Reicha, Franck had developed both a vast knowledge and a deep appreciation of the German Baroque master from a young age. As a result, somewhat unsurprisingly, these teachings would go on to manifest themselves in many aspects of his late compositional output. The most explicit demonstration of this influence is in the movement plan of the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue*, which clearly uses Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* – two books containing 48 Preludes and Fugues – as its starting point. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Franck's initial intention in writing this piece was to compose a Prelude & Fugue in the style of Bach. He was clearly of the opinion that this traditional formal scheme – one that had remained almost entirely dormant since Bach's death – had enough dramatic potential to frame his own distinct late Romantic style. But why was this? To answer this question it is necessary to

⁷⁷ Demuth, N: *César Franck*, p.52

⁷⁸ Stove, R. J: *César Franck*, p.273

establish the function of the Preludes from Bach's *Well Tempered Clavier* in relation to their accompanying Fugues.

In the seventeenth-century German tradition, around a hundred years before Bach would start to write the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, it was common practise to use a Praeludium to introduce in an extended work. These would consist of chords, runs and elaborate improvisatory figures, and would serve to prepare the performer for the more 'premeditated type of piece' that would follow (a motet or fugue) by giving the singers their pitch and allowing instrumentalists to check their tuning.⁷⁹ However, whilst the more functional purposes just mentioned had ceased to be necessary by Bach's time, many of his Preludes – B \flat major from Book 1, for instance – are free and improvisatory both in form and pianistic figuration. Placing this type of Prelude before a Fugue gives more weight of importance to the second movement, and the first movement becomes a minor introduction. Franck would adopt a part of this principle with the constant presence of toccata-like arpeggio figures in the opening movement of the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue* (Example 5.1.1).

Example 5.1.1



But it is another characteristic of Bach's *Well Tempered Clavier* that would have appealed the most to Franck, and that is the presence of a more concrete interconnection between many of the Preludes and their Fugues. Herman Keller identifies two ways (besides tonality) by which some of them are linked: by a 'concluding dramatic passage, which leads directly to the Fugue'; or through motivic connections.⁸⁰ Here the role of a Prelude has been extended beyond merely introducing the later fugue: the thematic and harmonic links they provide, as well as using the final bars to articulate a seamless progression into the ensuing Fugue, mean they become important in the creation of the impression of a unified musical journey, even if this journey is only in two stages. The Prelude, whilst being masterfully

⁷⁹ Ledbetter, D: *Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier: the 48 Preludes and Fugues*, p.54

⁸⁰ Keller, H: *The Well-Tempered Clavier by Johann Sebastian Bach*, p.28 – Seventeen Preludes & Fugues from Book 1 are said to possess a connecting passage between the two movements, whilst fourteen contain motivic connections. In fact, Keller goes on to say that Johann Nepomuk David found a motivic link in all 48 (although this attempt was 'fairly generally rejected', despite containing some 'previously unforeseen relationships').

crafted in its own right, is in effect a preparation for the Fugue, and in this respect one cannot exist without the other.

Later on in the compositional process, Bach's influence would again become important in the establishment of the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue's* movement plan. It has been alleged that after initially setting out to write a Prelude & Fugue in the style of the Baroque master, Franck felt unhappy with the transition between the two and decided an additional slower movement was required – the Choral.⁸¹ This is a term synonymous with the Lutheran tradition, and Bach wrote many in his lifetime (although unlike the integrated formal scheme of a Prelude and a Fugue, it refers to a vocal texture).

However, whilst in the *Well-Tempered Clavier* the Preludes are generally smaller in scale, in Franck's compositions they are far longer and more complex movements. He adopts the same principles of introducing elements that reappear throughout the remainder of the work, but places it in a vast, multi-movement, Romantic framework. And after realising the effectiveness of this movement plan in the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue*, he would go on to use a similar tripartite structural layout – with a first movement Prelude – three years later in his next (and last) extended work for solo piano, the *Prelude, Aria & Finale*. Again in this piece the functional role of the Prelude remains fundamentally the same, providing the first stage of the single extended journey that passes through each of the movements. Much like the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue*, whilst it may transcend the miniature nature of most of the 48, the connotations of the title 'Prelude' are maintained.

Therefore the movement plan of the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue*, as well as the introductory nature of the *Prelude* and the contrapuntal writing in the *Fugue*, provide an explicit demonstration of Bach's influence on Franck. Additionally though, the textural framing of the opening of the *Prelude*, with its rolling arpeggio figures around a short, conjunct inner melody, has an improvisatory quality reminiscent of pre-Classical French organ music. Plainsong played a great role in Franck's early tuition, with a large part of his organ training at the Paris Conservatoire consisting of free improvisation around chant melodies⁸² – this demonstrates a direct harnessing of seventeenth-century compositional practises, with Le Jeune's *Fantaisie* no.3 based on the Gregorian melody *Benedicta est coelorum Regina*⁸³ being just one example. Franck and his fellow students, including Saint-Saëns, were therefore made aware of this aspect of their native tradition very early on in their careers,

⁸¹ Davies, L: *Franck*, p.56

⁸² Smith, R: *Towards an Authentic Interpretation of the Organ Works of César Franck*, p.40

⁸³ Anthony, J. R: *French Baroque Music*, p.326

and it went on to be reflected in the opening of the *Prelude*. By incorporating French organistic procedures into a work for piano, a unique atmosphere is created.

Beethoven's *Hammerklavier Sonata*

Since his death in 1827, the compositions Beethoven produced in his final years⁸⁴ have reached almost mythical status. Now referred to as his 'late period', this body of works is unique in the canon of Western Classical music, and one reason for this is the rather particular nature of Beethoven's musical direction. This is well summed up by Lewis Lockwood who speaks of him 'deepening the channels that connected him to Bach and Handel yet without losing sight of his debt to Haydn and Mozart and his own impulse toward innovation,'⁸⁵ and this idea of drawing from the past and the present whilst never losing sight of the future is a fundamental characteristic of Beethoven's late period. One of the most innovative aspects of Beethoven's late style was his experimentation with the concept of structural unity, and it is this that left the greatest impression on Franck. A number of Beethoven's late compositions exhibit this overarching principle,⁸⁶ but one in particular would go on to impact certain techniques found in Franck's Violin Sonata – the *Hammerklavier Sonata* Op. 106.

Initially conceived during a moment of nationalistic fervour (with Beethoven's decision to assign the German translation of 'pianoforte' to both this Sonata and its predecessor, Op. 101), upon its publication in 1819 this work would rewrite the rulebook of the solo piano literature. Its range of expressive content, sheer scale (most performances are about 45 minutes) and the extremes of its technical demands were hitherto unheard of in a sonata, and with this in mind along with the numerous appearances of complex fugal textures, the *Hammerklavier* can be said to demonstrate the complex nature of Beethoven's late period perfectly. Nevertheless despite its vastness it remains one of his most tightly-knit creations. But how is this achieved, and what relevance is it to César Franck's own late output? To establish this Schoenberg's idea of a *Grundgestalt*⁸⁷ will be harnessed to determine how a

⁸⁴ These include the Op. 96 Violin Sonata, the song cycle *An die ferne Geliebte*, the Cello Sonatas Op. 102, the 9th Symphony, the *Missa Solemnis*, his last five Piano Sonatas, the *Diabelli Variations*, the Op. 119 & 126 Bagatelles, his last six String Quartets & the *Grosse Fuge*.

⁸⁵ Lockwood, L: *Beethoven: the music and the life*, p.374

⁸⁶ See the earlier chapter on 'Unity', where the unifying techniques in his String Quartet Op. 130 & his 9th Symphony are explored.

⁸⁷ Schoenberg A: *The musical idea and the logic, technique and art of its presentation*, p. 28 – this 'basic shape', a short idea consisting of intervals and rhythms which can themselves be considered motifs, is used to derive the music on both its own structural level and others, by a process of 'developing variations'.

particular basic shape – the descending third – is responsible for the construction of the entire work, and how this in turn serves to unify the sonata. By starting with the broadest structural level and gradually increasing the focus, the prevalence and subsequent importance of this short gesture will gradually be revealed.

Inter-movement relationships:

After the interpretation of the work as a singular entity in the key of B \flat major, the next level of increased focus considers the sonata as a series of four separate movements (with a transitional section between the third and the fourth). Table 5.2.1 presents the overall keys of each respective movement.

Table 5.2.1 – Overall keys of the movements of Beethoven's *Hammerklavier Sonata*

Movement	Key
<i>Allegro</i>	B \flat major
<i>Assai vivace</i>	B \flat major
<i>Adagio sostenuto</i>	F \sharp minor
<i>Allegro risoluto</i>	B \flat major

Of the four movements, only one departs from the home key of B \flat major: the slow movement in the remote key of F \sharp minor. This occurs immediately after the Scherzo in B \flat , provides an explicit manifestation of the importance of the descending third at this broad structural level.

Inter-sectional relationships (within single movements):

The next level of increased focus is the tonal organisation of particular sections within each movement. The first and third movements both follow a sonata form framework, and again the descending third plays a pivotal role in the respective second subject groups of their expositions. Beethoven, from very early on in his compositional career, had often sought to find a replacement for the dominant in a traditionally 'tonic-dominant polar relation',⁸⁸ and in the *Hammerklavier* the descending third – or the submediant – takes on the role of this substitution. The first movement, in B \flat major, uses the submediant major (G) for its second

⁸⁸ Rosen, C: *The Classical Style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven*, p.382

subject group, and the third movement, in F# minor, similarly uses the submediant major (D). Both of these instances demonstrate a continuation of the descending third's role in the piece's broader-scale construction, but the presence of G major in the first movement, with the third degree of its triad being B₂, creates a particularly interesting effect.

The juxtaposition of B₂ and B₁ is another key element in the construction of the *Hammerklavier*. Its importance is first realised with the presence of G major in the first movement's exposition, and it continues to appear throughout the first two movements, for example the unexpected return of the first subject in B minor at bar 266 of the first movement, and the repeated B₂ octaves at the conclusion of the B₂ major Scherzo. Amongst the tight-knit integration provided by the omnipresence of the descending third and the continuity that arises as a result of its reappearances, the appearances of this semitone clash create a distinctly jarring effect. The semitonal clash continues to play an important role in the third movement in F# minor, in which the first subject incorporates a particularly remarkable phrase in G major. This creates a brief moment of tranquil release amongst the surrounding minor tonality – a different sort of 'clash' altogether. And again, it is an example of a thematic gesture also being apparent at the broader level of tonal organisation.

Returning to the tonal organisation of the first movement, its dependence on the descending third can be extended beyond just the exposition. Table 5.2.2 – which presents the instances of tonal stability in the movement (i.e. ignoring moments of transition/modulatory passages) – demonstrates a clear sequence of descending thirds. This sequence comes to an unexpected conclusion at the end of the development section with a startlingly abrupt return to B₂ major, but it temporarily starts again with the unexpected modulation down a major third to G₂ major that arrives soon after the recapitulation.

Table 5.2.2 – Tonal organisation of the first movement of the *Hammerklavier Sonata*

<i>Section</i>	<i>Key area</i>
Exposition – first subject group	B ₂ major
Exposition – second subject group	G major
Development – fugato on fragment of first subject	E ₂ major
Development – part of second subject group	B minor
Recapitulation – first subject group	B ₂ major
Recapitulation – first subject group	G ₂ major
Recapitulation – second subject group	B ₂ major

Small-scale harmonic relationships:

Within particular sections there exist harmonic progressions that are governed by strings of descending thirds. In the opening bars of the transition between the slow movement and the fugal Finale this is seen explicitly in the sparse and ethereal symmetrical sequence of held chords that moves through $F \rightarrow D_b \rightarrow B_b \text{ minor} \rightarrow G_b$, shown in Example 5.2.1.

Example 5.2.1

Per la misura si conti nel Largo sempre quattro semicrome cio è
Largo. (♩ = 76)

p dolce

This motion down a series of thirds with its end-point being a semitone up from its starting point (F/G_b) is, in effect, a microcosm of the large-scale tonal organisation of the exposition and development of the first movement. Additionally, Beethoven's choice between moving down a major 3rd or a minor 3rd has a substantial effect on the atmosphere of this short improvisatory section. Earlier on, in the exposition of the first movement, Beethoven's decision to move down a minor third to the submediant major was certainly a conscious one, as it exposes the B_b/B_b clash that goes on to become so important in the construction of the sonata.

Later on in the recapitulation, the movement down a major third instead at a similar structural point, from B_b to G_b major, whilst being a fairly remote modulation, actually seems closer to the initial tonic due to the fact a B_b exists in the triad of this new temporary tonic. In this respect, the lack of a semitonal clash has as much effect as the presence of one. And here, in this ethereal harmonic progression from the transition into the fugal Finale, the choice between a major or a minor 3rd plays a similarly important role in governing the mood and atmosphere of the movement. Each chord change in this progression – octaves on $F \rightarrow D_b$ major $\rightarrow B_b$ minor $\rightarrow G_b$ major – maintains at least one note from the previous chord's triad, as shown in Example 5.2.2. These chord pairings exhibit substantial functional equivalence as a result of these pivot tones. Additionally the fact the entire progression results in a remote movement up a semitone ($F \rightarrow G_b$) only serves to exaggerate the ethereal nature of this section. In effect, the choice between descending a major 3rd or a minor 3rd is governed by the need of a functional clash or functional equivalence at any particular moment.

Example 5.2.2



Implicit thirds:

The final levels of focus (i.e. the events at the smallest scale) concern motif. There are numerous instances in the work where small-scale harmonic progressions of a descending third are disguised (or, to be more precise, filled in) by certain ornamental figures. The fugato of the development, whilst appearing on the surface to be built around a series of descending scales, is actually a 'complete exposition of sequence of falling thirds',⁸⁹ but with each connected by a passing note. Rosen's reductive analysis of this section demonstrates this idea - the first page of which is shown in Example 5.2.3.

⁸⁹ Rosen, C: *The Classical Style*, p.409

Example 5.2.3



Musical score system 1, measures 138-142. The system consists of three staves: a single treble staff at the top and a grand staff (treble and bass) below. The key signature has one flat. Measure 138 is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. Measure 140 is marked with *sempre p*. The music features a melodic line in the upper staff and a rhythmic accompaniment in the lower staves.



Musical score system 2, measures 143-147. The system consists of three staves: a single treble staff at the top and a grand staff below. Measure 143 is marked with *cresc.*. Measure 147 is marked with *più cresc.*. The music continues with the melodic and accompaniment lines from the previous system.



Musical score system 3, measures 148-152. The system consists of three staves: a single treble staff at the top and a grand staff below. Measure 148 is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The music continues with the melodic and accompaniment lines.



Musical score system 4, measures 153-157. The system consists of three staves: a single treble staff at the top and a grand staff below. Measure 153 is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. Measure 155 is marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The music concludes with the melodic and accompaniment lines.

Example 5.2.4: a similar deduction can be made when considering the fugal subject of the fourth movement, albeit with a more elaborate filling in of the descending sequence.

Example 5.2.4



Example 5.2.5: during moments of tonal stasis this technique of disguising chains of descending thirds with repeated ornamental figures appears far more frequently, such as in bars 53-57 of the exposition of the first movement.

Example 5.2.5



However, due to the nature of 'tonal stasis' these instances do not possess the same structural importance as the two previously mentioned. A melody outlining a static chord will consist of the notes of the triad, which by definition lie a third apart. Admittedly the cascading motion of this section of the first movement does add weight to the extreme prevalence of descending thirds, but perhaps in these instances the identification of thirds, descending or not, is a somewhat pointless exercise.

Explicit thirds:

Two of the most important thematic ideas of the *Hammerklavier* are constructed by descending thirds at the smallest scale – those which are seen explicitly at a motivic level. The first of these is the main theme of the Scherzo (Example 5.2.6), with the second being the main theme from the third movement *Adagio*.

Example 5.2.6



Example 5.2.7



The opening bars of the *Adagio sostenuto*, whilst containing numerous instances of descending thirds (in both hands) use this gesture to outline a triad during a brief period of tonal stasis, much like Example 5.2.4. The start of the Scherzo, on the other hand, is an example of a phrase entirely constructed from the descending third, both horizontally and vertically. The melody consists of a descending sequence of a short gesture (that concludes with a descending third), and outlines the chord progression 'B_b → G minor → E_b → (F) → B_b. Even the final cadential figure, which moves upwards by step in the melody, has a descending third in the bass. In many ways Beethoven's overarching philosophy of a single gesture governing each and every aspect of musical construction is encapsulated by these four bars.

Inversion → cyclic form?

The opening figure of the first movement – an upward leap of a tenth, closely followed by a descending third – serves a unique purpose in relation to the work as a whole. The leap of a tenth is arguably an extended inversion of the descending third, and the prevalence of this first subject idea throughout the movement, coupled with the all-encompassing presence of the third, does establish its important functional role in unifying the sonata. However, the full significance of this heroic fanfare (Example 5.2.8) is not felt until the fugal fourth movement.

The upward leap of a tenth from the opening goes on to become the first gesture of the fugal subject, and henceforth it creates an explicit motivic link between the first and last movements. In the closing bars of the Finale (Example 5.2.9), where this leap followed by a trill proceeds to be repeated in an extended ascending sequence, the *Hammerklavier* achieves closure in an extraordinarily dramatic manner.

Example 5.2.8



Example 5.2.9



Beethoven's cunning use of the opening material to articulate the closing bars of this vast work provides a clear sense of return to the first bars of the sonata – one that truly encapsulates the tightly-knit integration of each of the preceding movements. In this respect the means by which unity is created are twofold: firstly, the omnipresence of the descending third creates a sense of singularity; secondly, the cyclic return of the fanfare's interval relates the start to the end in such a way that it feels like a journey has been completed.

The *Hammerklavier* Sonata is a remarkable composition for many reasons. Its length and technical demands are well known, but it is the unprecedented levels of integration and unification that allow it to stand apart. Even the aspect that has been said to create a jarring effect to counteract the surrounding continuity – the semitonal clash – appears enough across the movements to be considered a unifying presence in itself. In any case, it is the descending third that is of most importance here. Rosen speaks lucidly about the all-encompassing integration provided by the incorporation of this gesture, where he states that 'not only the discursive melodic shape but the large harmonic forms as well have become

thematic, and derive from a central and unifying idea',⁹⁰ and it is this that had the greatest influence on Franck. The manner in which one interval – the *Grundgestalt* – can become responsible for the horizontal and vertical construction of a piece at each and every structural level, and the subsequent implications this has on the unified nature of the multi-movement sonata, were ground-breaking for their time. The bar-by-bar events become representative, almost a microcosm, of the piece as a whole, and this intrinsic correlation between the different levels of focus is what allows the sense of unity to be created: every aspect of its construction is built from this same gesture, and therefore the impression of singularity is created.

It is ultimately this – along with Beethoven's numerous experiments with mediant relationships that can be found in many of his works besides the *Hammerklavier* – that allowed the work to resonate so deeply with Franck as he sought to create his own form of unity in his late compositions. The Violin Sonata in particular would demonstrate this multi-level harnessing of a musical gesture – an ascending third – in a similar way, but whilst the *Hammerklavier* uses the semitonal relationship as a secondary unifying gesture to function alongside the descending third, Franck maintains just one motivic link (and harmonic), along with extended moments of ambiguity to raise the surface-level interest.

Schubert's *Wanderer Fantasy*

Regarding motivic construction, the most extreme method of creating a unifying effect in a multi-movement instrumental work is through the use and subsequent development of only one thematic idea throughout. This technique – commonly referred to as monothematicism – has its origins in the early Renaissance period, when it was common practise to compose masses which contained the same *cantus firmus* in each of the movements. And yet for some reason this more explicit technique of unification fell out of fashion immediately after the Renaissance period, with composers favouring a complete distinction between the motifs of each movement. Elements of monothematicism began to return at the height of the Classical period, and numerous instances can be found in the works of Haydn, who often used monothematic expositions in his sonata-form movements. Additionally, even though Mozart mostly favoured more unrelated and contrasting themes, he still employed monothematic elements in a handful of works, such as his Piano Sonata No.17 in B \flat major, and his Symphony no.40 in G minor. But these composers relied on drastically different

⁹⁰ Rosen, C: *The Classical Style*, p.407

ideas in between to serve a transitional purpose and to create the senses of variety and interest – this explicit method of thematic recycling would never be apparent across more than one movement, nor would it be overly saturated in any particular movement.

However, in the next century the first such work was composed in 1822 by Franz Schubert (1797-1828). Renowned for taking the pre-established norms of classical music, and applying them to his unequalled penchant for melody, his formal innovations and exotic harmonies, Schubert's output is certainly unique. And at the age of only 25 he would write a piece for solo piano that would have an incomparable effect on many future composers, particularly regarding motivic development and form – the *Wanderer Fantasy*. The origins of this piece lie in a song he wrote six years earlier, entitled 'Der Wanderer'. A central section of this early Lied (from the third bar of Example 5.3.1) evolved to become the main theme for the slow variations second movement of the *Wanderer Fantasy* – however, this short melody in C# minor presented a number of features which would be manipulated by Schubert throughout not just the one 'movement', but the entire piece, and to perform numerous different functions. It is this technique of using one motif to derive the entire work and function across the broadest structural level that would go on to resurface in Franck's late period.

Example 5.3.1

fragt der Seuf - zer wo? im - mer wo? Die Son - ne dünkt mich hier so — kalt, die
Blü - the welk, das Le - ben alt, und was sie re - den lee - rerSchall, ich bin ein Fremdling
Etwas geschwinder.
ü - berall. Wo bist du, wo bist du, mein ge - lieb - tes Land? ge.

The entirety of the *Wanderer Fantasy* is derived from the first bar of this melody (Example 5.3.2) – the repeated notes (bar 1) and the rise of a semitone (bar 3).⁹¹

Example 5.3.2

ff *mf*

These two elements would go on to form each of the main thematic ideas of the work, as a result of their developments evolving throughout the four movements in a constant chain.

⁹¹ In the Lied this is decorated with an ornamentation, the B \flat , but in the *Wanderer's* slow movement this is removed, creating solely semitonal movement in this quoted bar.

Each idea is derived from, and can be related back to, this single source, and this continuous chain of development is one aspect that serves to unify the work.

Movement 1:

After the opening section, which is entirely built upon these two elements through techniques of transposition, repetition and fragmentation, a virtuosic semiquaver passage leads into the next main thematic idea (Example 5.3.3), following an unprepared slip from G major down to E major. This second idea, from bar 47, repeats the opening to begin with, but removes the rising arpeggio, and decorates the rise of a semitone with an upper auxiliary note.

Example 5.3.3



Then, following a long section consisting mainly of fragments of the second bar of Example 5.3.2, these fragments' incessant rising upwards from bar 108 brings the piece to a fortissimo passage outlining an imperfect cadence in E_b major, and the introduction of the next 'new' thematic idea (Example 5.3.4). Beginning on bar 112 (bar 3 of Example 5.3.4), this is derived from the upper auxiliary note figure from Example 5.3.3, thus continuing the chain.

Example 5.3.4



Movement 2:

This movement begins with a very slow theme, built from four 2-bar phrases (the first of which is shown in Example 5.3.5), and consisting of the repeated notes and semitone figure in its first bar. A number of variations follow, with the theme sounded in C# major/minor and E minor a number of times respectively, and with altered accompanimental textures that never stray far from the norm of a classical variations movement.

Example 5.3.5



After the thematic stasis of the variations, the chain is subtly continued on the last page of the *Adagio*). In the final variation, the hemidemisemiquaver accompaniment in the left hand introduces a figure which reappears almost immediately afterwards, in the main subject of the scherzo (Example 5.3.6). This theme consists of four main 'sections': first, the accompanimental gesture from the previous movement; second, the two bars of repeated notes; third, the arpeggio flourish taken from the opening; finally, the rise of a semitone.

Movement 3:

Example 5.3.6

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece, labeled "Presto". It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature has three flats (Bb, Eb, Ab) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo marking "Presto" is written above the treble staff. The first bar of the treble staff begins with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic marking. The music features a melodic line in the treble and a rhythmic accompaniment in the bass, primarily using chords and eighth notes. A *dim.* (diminuendo) marking is present in the treble staff. An arrow points from the *dim.* marking in the upper staff to the first bar of the lower staff.

These four aspects are developed until the introduction of a new ('trio') section from bar 179 (Example 5.3.7). This is constructed from the upper auxiliary fragment from the first movement and the repeated-note idea, and is the final continuation of the chain before the final movement in C major.

Example 5.3.7



Movement 4:

The final movement is an aggressive fugato: the opening bars are shown in Example 5.3.8, which consists of the subject and the entry of the second voice. This subject returns to the idea of the opening, with each original component appearing unaltered apart from the decorative arpeggio figure, which is omitted. This creates a resolution of the thematic process that is mirrored by the large-scale harmonic return to the home key.

Example 5.3.8



From a very simple beginning Schubert creates the subject areas of each movement through developments of the opening, developments of the developments, and so on. This creates a multi-movement work that is explicitly bound together coherently on a motivic level. Franck himself never employed total monothematicism, but the presence of chains of development

from a short opening motif passing through multiple movements would become particularly important for him as he composed his *Prelude, Choral & Fugue*.

However, it is a particular overarching formal characteristic of this *Fantasy* – one that is created in part by its monothematic construction – that would go on to be greatly influential throughout the nineteenth century. Although a prototype of sorts exists in the vast Finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, the *Wanderer Fantasy* was the first work to consist of multiple movements that each subscribe to a clearly defined single-movement plan. Its marked sections (*Allegro con fuoco ma non troppo, Adagio, Presto & Allegro*), whilst being constituent movements themselves, become parts of a single entity by adhering to an overarching sonata form. This impression of a sonata structure is created by the monothematic construction and the use of tonality, more specifically an overarching departure from and return to the home key. The first movement presents the theme in C major, before further developments of this theme in E major and E_b major give the impression of a monothematic exposition. The next two movements, which pass through a number of tonalities, textures and atmospheres, make up the extended development section.⁹² Then the triumphant return to (and settlement in) the home key, coupled with the common technique of creating a grand Finale with a contrapuntal texture,⁹³ creates a tumultuous yet satisfying sense of completion in the recapitulation. The large-scale sonata form is successfully resolved. The sections that are separated by their tempi and mood are united by the motivic process and the subsequent creation of an overarching sonata framework.

Liszt's Sonata in B minor

Whilst the *Wanderer Fantasy* demonstrated the dramatic potential of a single musical idea binding together a multi-movement work into a unified structure, it was not until 1854 and the publication of Franz Liszt's Sonata in B minor that this formal characteristic was extended to utilise multiple themes. This extended piece for solo piano was revolutionary for a number of

⁹² Vande Moortele, *S: Two-Dimensional Sonata Form*, p.37 – Moortele presents a different interpretation, where the third movement Scherzo creates a sort of formal contradiction: whilst providing a 'thematic recapitulation' (with its closer similarities to the opening of the work), it still remains in a remote key from the home tonic. In this respect the overarching sonata-form does not contain the same powerful recapitulation as other, later works that utilised the same abstract technique (i.e. Liszt's Sonata in B Minor).

⁹³ This was a hallmark of Beethoven's late style, in such works as the Piano Sonata Op. 110, the *Hammerklavier Sonata*, the Ninth Symphony, and the Cello Sonata Op. 102 no.2, and it would go on to resurface in two of the works under consideration here – the fugal Finale of the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue*, and the canonic Finale of the Violin Sonata.

reasons, not least in its sheer scale and virtuosity, and the extremes of technique required for a successful performance (much like the *Hammerklavier* Sonata). But it was the incorporation of a technique known as thematic transformation – a term used to ‘define the process of modifying a theme so that in a next context it is different but yet manifestly made of the same elements’⁹⁴ – and the subsequent implications on the formal plan of the piece, that would go on to have the most far-reaching effect on composers of instrumental music. This motivic device is essentially a technique of variation, but with an important difference from the variation forms of the classical period. Within these earlier frameworks a theme is varied under particular constraints of length and structure, but with thematic transformation these constraints disappear. The technique of variation moves away from the rigid formal plan into a more dramatic role. A theme retains its melodic contour but is transformed into something with a new identity as a result of alterations of metre, rhythm, texture and harmony – this creates a different atmosphere altogether, despite the explicit gestural link.

An early example of this can be found in the Finale of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony where the main *Ode to Joy* theme is transformed via changes in rhythm, harmony and meter, into a 6/8 Turkish March in B_♭. Berlioz also employs a similar technique with his use of the *idée fixe* in the *Symphonie Fantastique*, as discussed in Chapter 4. However, whilst in these instances the transformations are surface techniques that underline and decorate unrelated structural outlines, Liszt’s Sonata in B minor was the first to let the transformation of a limited amount of themes govern the formal plan of a piece almost entirely. It is this motivic technique that had a substantial influence on Franck’s approach to cyclic form. By utilising an identical thematic idea in a drastically different dramatic context, continuity and diversity can coexist. This method of thematic transformation permeates Liszt’s Sonata in B minor, with one instance demonstrated below. The agitated theme introduced in bar 13 that exhibits great instability through its underpinning of various diminished chords (Example 5.4.1), is transformed to become a lyrical *cantabile* melody in bar 153 (Example 5.4.2). However, it was the innovative formal plan of the piece (much inspired by Schubert), and the way the thematic transformations are used to create an overarching unity, that would have left the greatest impact on Franck’s cyclical approach.

⁹⁴ Macdonald, M: *Transformation, Thematic*

Example 5.4.1



Example 5.4.2



Franz Liszt (1811-1886) had experimented with cyclic procedures earlier on in his career, such as the innovative one-movement plan found in his *Dante Sonata* and the cyclic two-movement Piano Concerto no.1. But it was with the Sonata in B minor that he built upon Schubert's achievements and created the first of his truly ground-breaking masterworks. The *Wanderer Fantasy* was always a favourite of Liszt's – being one of the main pieces in his performance repertoire,⁹⁵ and he would even go on to arrange it for piano and orchestra in 1851. Therefore throughout the composition of his Piano Sonata, which was completed in 1853, Schubert's work would have been fresh in his mind, and its influence becomes apparent when you consider the formal plan of the two pieces. Schubert uses a monothematic approach to link together four separate movements (through metre and tonality) of an overall sonata-form; but what he does using just one theme, Liszt achieves with multiple.

Through the transformation of five separate ideas he creates a structure that can be reduced to a series of separate movements, whilst the constant flow of music subscribes to an overarching sonata-framework. It successfully reconciles the compositional approach of Schubert with the complex harmonies and dramatic intensity of the Romantic period. However, unlike the *Wanderer Fantasy*, the distinct movements are not separated by a strong boundary of silence. These structural points are blurred, and this leads to a sense of formal ambiguity, which has resulted in numerous different interpretations of its multiple

⁹⁵ Hamilton, K: *The Cambridge Companion to Liszt*, p.77

inner movements being offered since its publication,⁹⁶ and the innovative formal plan of this work has become the subject of much discussion since its publication. For many years the framework was commonly known as a 'double-function form',⁹⁷ until Steven Vande Moortele proposed a more insightful interpretation. He considered Newman's perspective a 'problematic one, because it implies that each unit in the form [has to have] a double function',⁹⁸ and Newman's analysis slots neatly into this view, even where it is not the case in the Piano Sonata. However, Vande Moortele's notion of a 'two-dimensional sonata form' accommodates for this complex aspect of the work. In actuality 'the levels of the form's hierarchy do not correspond to those of the cycle's: every formal unit in a two-dimensional sonata form simultaneously functions at two *different* levels, one in the complete and one in the incomplete hierarchy.'⁹⁹ The inner cycle and the overarching form are still, in effect, both always functioning, but with varying degrees of relative importance at different times. Vande Moortele provides an in-depth formal investigation of the B Minor Sonata in these terms, but as Franck did not use an overarching sonata-framework in his late works, much of this theory – particularly its reliance on the notion of sonata deformation – is not of immediate importance here. However, the general principle of a work containing both an inner cycle and an overarching singular plan, and the innovative way in which they function together as a result of thematic transformation, would go on to leave a great mark on Franck, and so this section will only go as far as addressing these points.

Whilst it is difficult to identify exactly where the boundaries between the inner movements lie, the same abstract adherence to a larger unity still exists as a result of an overarching sonata framework. It is obvious where the exposition of this sonata-form starts (first subject in B minor from bar 32, second subject in D major from bar 105, third subject from bar 153) as well as the equivalent moments in the recapitulation (first subject from bar 535, second subject from bar 602, third subject from bar 618), but the structural positioning of the inner development section and its correspondence with the cycle remains unclear. Liszt constructs this ambiguous formal plan from five short motivic ideas. The vast majority of the material is derived from four of these, each extremely memorable in their own right due to their striking yet simple nature. The tonally ambiguous opening section introduces the first three one-by-one, and separated by silence (Example 5.4.3). The presence of such simple and

⁹⁶ Arnold, B: 'Piano Music: 1835-1861', p.120 – this essay states that whilst the sonata can easily be split into three movements (with breaks at bar 331 and bar 460), other interpretations from analysts such as Newman and Walker suggest four inner movements.

⁹⁷ Newman, W. S: *Sonata Since Beethoven*, p.376

⁹⁸ Vande Moortele S: 'Beyond Sonata Deformation: Liszt's Symphonic Poem *Tasso* and the Concept of Two-Dimensional Sonata Form', p.49

⁹⁹ Vande Moortele, S: *Two-Dimensional Sonata Form*, p.21

methodical presentations of the thematic material at the start only heightens the impact of the extreme complexities of motivic development and integration that follow – a technique highly reminiscent of Beethoven’s *Große Fuge*.

Example 5.4.3

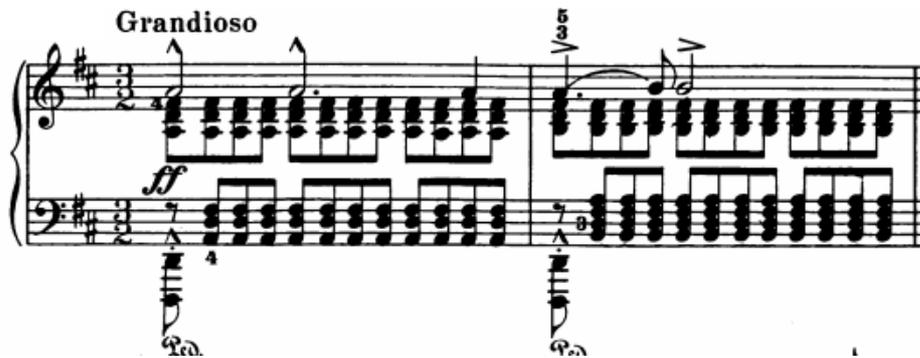
The image displays a musical score for piano, divided into four systems. The first system is marked *Lento assai* and *p sotto voce*. It features a treble and bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music consists of slow-moving chords and simple melodic lines. The second system is marked *Allegro energico* and *f*. It shows a more rhythmic and energetic passage with a right-hand section marked *r.h.* and *f marcato*. The third system continues the *Allegro energico* tempo and *f marcato* dynamic, featuring more complex rhythmic patterns and a left-hand section marked *f marcato*. The fourth system is marked *p agitato* and *p*, showing a shift in dynamics and tempo, with more intricate melodic and harmonic development. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

The fourth idea – based on the chant *Crux fidelis*.¹⁰⁰ – is first heard in D major from bar 105 (Example 5.4.4) as the second subject. Then, through numerous techniques of combination, development and transformation, the majority of the work is derived from these four motifs.

¹⁰⁰ Hamilton, K: *The Cambridge Companion to Liszt*, p.41

Creating this dense motivic web from such limited source material, and its operation on two structural levels, demonstrates the high amount of integration in the work. Still, this continuity is counteracted by the diversity of thematic treatment and the widely disparate atmospheres that arise from these processes.

Example 5.4.4



Whilst the framing might be more ambiguous, and the thematic processes might be more complicated, this general adherence to an overarching sonata-form is much the same as in the *Wanderer Fantasy*. Liszt's use of the fifth theme, however, transcends this more traditional framework entirely. Whilst this extended theme is only used twice it plays a huge role in cementing the cyclic nature of the sonata. Its first appearance is in the development section of the overarching sonata-form, in F# major from bar 335 (bars 330-341 are shown in Example 5.4.5), where it functions as part of the inner slow movement. Despite the fact this slow movement was earlier described as part of the development section, in reality it seems unrelated to the tightly-knit 'exposition', due to the wealth of transformations used to construct the material that precedes it. Additionally, its first appearance at the centre-point of the work counteracts the serenity of the winding *Andante sostenuto* theme with a climax of harmonic tension – F# major being the dominant of B.

Example 5.4.5

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece, Example 5.4.5, titled "Andante sostenuto". The score is written for piano and includes the following details:

- Tempo and Dynamics:** The tempo is "Andante sostenuto". The dynamics include "una corda" (piano), "ppp" (pianissimo), and "dolce" (soft).
- Key Signature:** The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#).
- Time Signature:** The time signature is 4/4.
- Structure:** The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains measures 45 through 54. The second system contains measures 55 through 64. The music features complex harmonic textures with many chords and some chromaticism.
- Performance Indications:** There are various performance markings such as "una corda", "ppp", and "dolce".

After the extended development, the earlier large-scale exposition is recapitulated in a mostly traditional manner, which successfully rounds off the sonata-form. However, two main features of the overall structural plan still remain unresolved at this point: the tonally ambiguous introduction and theme 5. After the triumphant coda, these remaining issues go on to be resolved in the concluding two sections of the piece, with theme 5 being presented in the key of B major from bar 713 (bars 711-723 are shown in Example 5.4.6): the last one to do so. Here the stand-alone structural function of this element that had earlier on conveyed a sense of harmonic instability is being resolved, to provide a satisfying conclusion to the work. Whilst this theme's first appearance came across as unrelated and separate, subscribing only to the inner slow movement, here its importance is fully realised regarding the unified whole. It works on a different plane to the otherwise densely-integrated overarching sonata-form, and it is this cyclic use of thematic recycling to contribute to a more abstract unity that would have left the greatest mark on Franck.

Example 5.4.6

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece, Example 5.4.6, titled "Andante sostenuto". The score is written for piano and includes the following details:

- Tempo and Dynamics:** The tempo is "Andante sostenuto". The dynamics include "sf" (sforzando) and "p" (piano).
- Key Signature:** The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#).
- Time Signature:** The time signature is 4/4.
- Structure:** The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains measures 711 through 719. The second system contains measures 720 through 723. The music features a recapitulation of a theme, with various performance markings such as "sf" and "p".
- Performance Indications:** There are various performance markings such as "sf" and "p".

Everything then comes full circle, with the final section becoming a mirror image of the introduction: each of themes 1-3 are presented one after another, in reverse order to create a sense of symmetry, and despite containing some elements of modal and chromatic harmony, it always outlines a B major tonality. The ethereal quality of this conclusion, along with the systematic manner in which the material is recycled and the way this is used to provide such a satisfying conclusion to the unified whole, would be hugely influential on Franck's *Prelude, Aria & Finale*. Liszt's use of thematic transformation and the implications had on the sonata's structure demonstrated the dramatic potential of cyclic form – processes that were hugely important for Franck throughout his late period. He would apply the more general aspects apparent in Liszt's Sonata in B minor – thematic transformation and an almost systematic approach to cyclic recurrence – to an overarching structural plan yet further removed from Schubert's clearer sonata framework. The same abstract principles behind a two-dimensional form exist in Franck's output, but they are exhibited in an entirely novel manner.

Étienne Méhul (1763-1817)

The four 'ideals' addressed up to now have each been, in their own way, some of the most important composers in the long-established Austro-Germanic tradition. Étienne Méhul on the other does not fall into this category, having been born in Givet, France, and spending most of his working life in Paris. Nevertheless he presents a particularly interesting case regarding the conflict between the musical traditions of France and Austro-Germany – and one that would have greatly appealed to Franck. Active at the height of Western classicism, Méhul is little-known now. Whilst his contributions to opera might be what he has become most remembered for – Elizabeth Bartlet describes him as 'the most important opera composer in France during the Revolution'¹⁰¹ – it is his symphonic output that would have had the greatest impact on Franck's approach to structural unity.

His Fourth Symphony is of particular interest. Composed in 1810, at the same time as Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, it had remained unheard for around two hundred years, until 1979 when prominent musicologist David Charlton began the long process of reconstructing the score from Méhul's wealth of manuscripts.

Finally, as he got towards the end of it, Charlton saw a four-note motif from the first movement returning. "I'll never forget the feeling as it was taking shape

¹⁰¹ Bartlet, E: *Stratonice: Introduction to the edition by M. Ezlizabeth C. Barlet*, p.vii

under my pen, coming into focus bar by bar, part by part," he said. "I nearly hit the roof when I saw the theme for the first movement returning in the Finale. I realised then that this was a prototype of immense importance."¹⁰²

It is therefore apparent that Méhul, in a different country and one with a greatly different musical tradition from that of Beethoven – who actually admired much French dramatic music, even ‘praising an opera by Méhul and lamenting the composer’s recent death’ in 1824¹⁰³ – had also begun to experiment with cyclic form at this very early stage. Unfortunately, over the years his achievements have been forgotten, and as a result his symphonic scores are very difficult to find, as well as any source material on his life and works. However, whilst the specific musical influences on Franck remain open to speculation, one can find many parallels in their cosmopolitan approach to composition. Méhul, unlike his national contemporaries, endeavoured to create vast multi-movement instrumental music much in the Austro-Germanic style, and again this is open to speculation, but one must assume that it was mostly dismissed and therefore forgotten as a result of this. Nevertheless the audacity of attempting to follow this long-established tradition as a French composer working in Paris would have resonated deeply with Franck. He would do something very similar in the late nineteenth century as he wrote the small handful of works towards the end of his life – apply the Austro-German concept of structural unity to his own distinctly French late compositional output.

¹⁰² Brown, Mark. ‘Étienne Méhul's lost masterpiece to be heard for first time in 200 years’, *The Guardian* (8 November 2010)

¹⁰³ Lockwood, L: *Beethoven: the music and the life*, p.129

Part 3 – Unity in Franck

Chapter 6 - Motivic Continuity

Each of the three works under consideration exhibit motivic continuity across their separate movements, and the connection between the thematic process and the overarching structural plan of a multi-movement work is a concept that Reti calls 'architectural planning'.¹⁰⁴ This is defined as 'the method of shaping the motifs and themes from the beginning in such a way that, by transforming them in an appropriate manner as the work progresses, and finally leading them to a resolution, a kind of story or "architectural plot" is evolved which makes all the shapes of a composition a part and expression of one higher unity'.¹⁰⁵ In his analytical process the thematic level is supported by other aspects such as tonal organisation in creating this unity, but it is the explicit surface-level motivic characteristics that have the most immediate impact for the listener. By establishing gestural links that occur throughout, the impression of a continuous cycle is created, and Franck uses a variety of developmental and variational techniques to integrate the music at this surface-level motivic domain.

Chain of Development

Much like Schubert's *Wanderer Fantasy*, the *Prelude, Choral, & Fugue* consists of a constant organic development of a single thematic idea throughout the temporal progression of the work. This four-note motif (Example 6.1.1) becomes the source of numerous developmental threads, from which the main thematic material within the three movements and their transitional passages are constructed.

Example 6.1.1



This motif is then subject to a variety of techniques of development. Many characteristics fundamental in its construction, such as the cruciform contour, the interval of a minor 2nd, and yet shorter fragments of this already brief figure, are harnessed for the creation of new

¹⁰⁴ Reti, R: *Thematic Patterns of Sonatas in Beethoven*, p.141

¹⁰⁵ Cook, N: *A guide to musical analysis*, p.106

ideas, and the entire work is ultimately held together by a continuation of various developmental chains throughout each of the movements. Initially placed between a tonic pedal and a string of toccata-like arpeggio figures in the first bar, the inner voice possesses a simple cruciform melody - four pitches, which first ascend or descend by step, then skips below or above the first note, before the final pitch returns to the starting note, thus creating a loose image of a cross – which is an explicit realisation of the spiritual nature of the work.¹⁰⁶ Additionally, Franck's devotion to J.S. Bach is here exemplified by this idea's clear resemblance to the BACH motif – four notes spelling out Bach with the German pitch values – B \flat (B), A, C, B \natural (H). This is found in *Contrapunctus XIV* of Bach's *Art of Fugue*, and has been used as a source of inspiration for many future composers.¹⁰⁷

Chain 1:

Table 6.1.1 – Chain 1 of the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue*

Motif	Development	Structural role	First appearance
		Initial motif	Bar 1
	Fragmentation through omission of the first note	Second main thematic idea	Bar 11
	First note is raised, creating a repeated note followed by a lower semitone	Transitional bars preceding the <i>non troppo dolce</i> theme	Bar 32
	Extension – after repeating the above development, its final interval is extended into a descending chromatic scale	Fugal subject of the third movement, the <i>Fugue</i>	

¹⁰⁶ Merrick, P: *Revolution and Religion in the Music of Liszt*, p. 268 – Merrick addresses the programmatic significance of this motif, asserting that it 'symbolises redemption... [and] represents the path to God.'

¹⁰⁷ Such as Schumann's *Sechs Fugen über den Namen: Bach*, and Liszt's *Fantasy and Fugue on the theme B-A-C-H*.

The first development, to create the second main thematic idea, is shown in Example 6.1.2. The upper melody line, as shown here, possesses the same shape as the initial motif but with the first note omitted (this 'omission' is shown as an appoggiatura in the example). This two-part phrase is then repeated but with semitone passing notes inserted between the final two notes of the motif (the second instance of which even creates a turn figure of its own – a development by decorative addition).

Example 6.1.2



The subtle integration of motivic continuity into seemingly less important contrapuntal lines is also demonstrated here: the inner voice, as is extracted and shown in Example 6.1.3, reveals an inversion of the initial motif.

Example 6.1.3



This chain continues in the transitional bars (allowing a modulation from the F# minor of the previous section, to E♭ major) preceding the *non troppo dolce* theme of bar 35, with a further alteration of the first development shown in Example 6.1.4 – the starting note is raised, to create an opening pair of repeated pitches, before the maintained fragment of a lowered semitone concludes the idea. Of further significance here is the upper voice moving down the chromatic scale throughout this modulatory passage. In this respect it foreshadows both aspects of the fugal subject of the final movement: the first half with its continuation of Chain 1, and the second half with its descending chromatic scale.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ Bartel, D: *Musica Poetica*, pp.357-358 – descending chromatic scales were frequently used in Baroque compositions as expressive devices to supplement a text (and also in textless contexts). Franck harnesses the musical-rhetorical connotations of the descending chromatic scale to create the impression of a 'harsh passage' of great intensity throughout both the final movement of the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue* and the rest of his output. Its appearance here in a fugal context only exemplifies this relationship to Baroque practises.

Example 6.1.4



Chain 2:

Table 6.1.2 – Chain 2 of the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue*

Motif	Development	Structural role	First appearance
		Initial motif	Bar 1
	Inversion of the pitch contour, plus an expansion of the leaps – importance of the semitone apparent in F#/G	The transitional bars preceding the first main thematic idea	Bar 9
	Compression of the above semi-quaver theme, into the stately crotchet rhythm of the initial motif	Main theme of the <i>Choral</i>	Bars 68-76

Bar 9 of the *Prelude*, following a dotted crotchet of rests, introduces a completely new texture. Now having firmly settled in B minor, the figure that immediately precedes the main thematic idea of bar 11 is a series of octave semi-quavers gradually moving downwards through transposed repetition. This transitional section provides both an inversion of the initial turn figure – albeit with an expansion of pitch range – and a foreshadowing of the main theme of the *Choral* (it is reduced in the following movement to a straightforward series of

crotchets). In this respect the transitional figure is here starting a new chain of development, just before another one is continued in bar 11.

In many ways this theme stands apart from the rest of the motivic content of the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue*. Whilst others have asserted that its inspiration stems from elsewhere – Vallas¹⁰⁹ and Lutoslawski¹¹⁰ note its similarities with Wagner's Bell motif from *Parsifal* – it is still derived in part from the initial motif. However, whilst being distinctive in character the *Choral* theme is still intrinsically linked to the thematic process of the unified whole. This makes the inner slow movement the emotional climax of the work, and having such tight integration in the movements surrounding the altogether different *Choral* creates a remarkable effect, despite the subtle connections at a thematic level. The first sounding of the *Choral* theme, in C minor, is repeated before an extension of the already long and flowing melody finally concludes the initial appearance of the rondo subject with a plagal cadence. Later this theme is repeated in minor, albeit with a different extension, before its final sounding E_b minor at bar 103 (the upper line is shown in Example 6.1.5), in a breathtaking moment of *fortissimo* climax, combines a repetition of the main idea with the two extensions of the previous two soundings.

Example 6.1.5

The image displays three staves of musical notation in C minor. The first staff contains the initial motif, consisting of a sequence of notes that fall in pitch and then rise. The second staff shows an extension of this motif, continuing the melodic line. The third staff shows a further extension, ending with a plagal cadence. The notation includes treble clefs, a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and various note values and rests.

Throughout these three separate phrases lie traces of the initial motif, yet only in the basic shape of the melodic contour, as is apparent throughout this chain – a fall in pitch, followed by a rise in pitch, and finally a fall in pitch. The last phrase, shown in the final system of Example 6.1.5, exhibits a further extension of the initial motif that could be described as a continuation of Chain 1. It might be said that the *Choral* theme seems too different in

¹⁰⁹ Vallas, L: *César Franck*, p.184

¹¹⁰ Lutosławski, W: *Lutosławski on music*, p.262

character from the surrounding movements to demonstrate an explicit connection but this central movement is still subtly related at a thematic level, and thus still subscribes to the unity of the whole.

Chain 3:

Table 6.1.3 – Chain 3 of the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue*

Motif	Development	Structural role	First appearance
		Initial motif	Bar 1
	Inversion of the first change in pitch, as well as rhythmic diminution, with semi-quavers as opposed to quavers	Transitional bars modulating to F# minor, for a transposed repetition of first section	Bar 14
	Continuation of the rhythmic diminution, but the melodic contour has returned to that of the initial motif, but with a decorative addition (circled)	Second main idea – <i>non troppo dolce</i> theme	Bar 35
	Dramatic transformation – the melodic contour of the first development in this chain is returned to, but its dramatic context is altered	Opening episode of the <i>Choral</i>	Bar 62

The importance of this chain is confirmed through its derivation of the *non troppo dolce* theme, one of the two main ideas of the *Prelude*. This *non troppo dolce* theme (Example

6.1.6) is of a different mood altogether from the preceding moments of climax and unrest, with the imitative nature of the inner voice and the subtle chromaticism in the tune (an augmented 2nd as a lower neighbouring note) resulting in a serene and tranquil atmosphere.

Example 6.1.6



The importance of this thread in the construction of opening bars of the *Choral* confirms its pivotal role in the integration of the different movements. The majority of the *Choral* is constructed from unrelated material with an adoption of the Infinite Melody¹¹¹ approach in the upper line. A good example of this is found in the second episode (bars 76-79, shown in Example 6.1.7), where the turn motif – from which most of the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue* is derived – is absent in this long melodic line that progresses almost entirely by conjunct motion. These instances of freer melodicism, which bear no relation to the initial turn motif, provide a dramatic counterpart to the surrounding tight integration.

Example 6.1.7



However, earlier in the *Choral* (bars 63-64, shown in Example 6.1.8) contain a restatement of the earlier transitional passage from the *Prelude*, and thus continue the development of Chain 3. Whilst previously this idea was used in a moment of transition in the *Prelude*, here it is found during an instance of temporary tonal stability in the first episode of the *Choral*, where the music briefly settles in B_b major. By using the same material in a different, tempo, key and context, Franck establishes both continuity and diversity.

¹¹¹ The free, Wagnerian approach to melodic construction, where emotional content is most important.

Example 6.1.8



Chain 4:

Table 6.1.4 – Chain 4 of the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue*

Motif	Development	Structural role	First appearance
		Initial motif	Bar 1
	Inversion of contour between the final two pitches (a rise instead of a fall), then an extension of this ascent	The transitional bars preceding the first perfect cadence in B minor	Bar 5
	A direct mirror image of the contour of the previous development in the chain	Final cadential gesture of the <i>Prelude</i>	Bar 54
	A return to the initial development of the chain, but with an expanded leap preceding the final pitch	A transitional passage – the third episode of the <i>Choral</i>	Bar 96

The first two developments in this chain serve to unify the *Prelude* movement alone. After the slow harmonic rhythm of the opening four bars (each sustaining a chord: B minor, Dim 7th (on D#), G major, Dim 7th (on E#)), the second half of the motif is developed by inversion, and then extension with its continued movement up the chromatic scale. Whereas in the first

bar the final note of the four-note melody shifts downwards by step and back to the starting note, here it continues upwards, ultimately moving up a semitone to G \sharp , to create the harmony of a Dim 7th on E \sharp . This change in melodic contour (rising as opposed to falling) creates a surging momentum with the sudden increase of harmonic rhythm and chromatic saturation.

In the final bars of the movement, Franck devises an ingenious way to permeate a sense of return from this early harmonic and motivic departure. Whilst in bar 5 the gesture moved upwards chromatically, progressing away from the tonic to underlie a remote diminished 7th, in bar 54 the whole process is mirrored. The final four notes move down the last four degrees of the B minor scale, creating a peaceful conclusion in the home key. Contrary to the surging movement away from the starting, the final perfect cadence provides the perfect resolution with an inversion of the first development of Chain 4.

The reappearance of this thread in the *Choral* is, like its first development, during a bar of harmonic flux. With version appearing in the inner voice of the first bar of Example 6.1.8, Franck immediately resolves the chromaticism of the diminished chords with a movement to a second inversion E \flat major chord – the temporary tonic. This fleeting sense of tonal return is articulated by the resurfacing of another chain, where in the upper voice of bars 98-99 the *non troppo dolce* theme – Chain 3 – subtly reappears in the third episode of the *Choral*. Bars 97-99 are shown in Example 6.1.9.

Example 6.1.9

The image shows a musical score for Example 6.1.9, consisting of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature is B minor (two flats). The treble staff features a melodic line with several slurs and fingering numbers (5, 5, 3, 4, 5, 4, 5, 4). The bass staff provides harmonic support with chords and single notes. Dynamic markings include 'pp' (pianissimo) and 'cres' (crescendo). There are also markings 'Ped.' and '*' below the bass staff. The score is set in a 2/4 time signature.

The presence of multiple developmental threads throughout each of the three movements demonstrates continuity in the motivic process at a surface level, as well as an inherent integration at a broader structural level that arises from the monothematic nature of the piece. The appearance of these chains in the construction of transitional passages as well as main thematic ideas only serves to further highlight the fundamental importance of this initial motif throughout the temporal unfolding of both the separate movements, and the *Prelude, Chorale & Fugue* as a unified whole.

Continuity amongst Diversity

Whilst its solo piano counterpart displays a monothematic approach in the way the entire piece is constructed from a melody from the opening bar, the *Prelude, Aria & Finale* is more diverse in this respect. This sense of thematic diversity is demonstrated in a consideration of two ideas from the Prelude: the motif in bars 1-4 (Example 6.2.1), and the motif of the third section in bars 84-95 (Example 6.2.2).

Example 6.2.1



Example 6.2.2

The differences between these two ideas are as obvious as they are extreme. Whilst the first operates in a diatonic framework (around both the temporary tonic of G# minor, and the home key of E major) via mostly conjunct motion, the second is heavily saturated with chromaticism (the second phrase consists of a descending chromatic scale for instance) and a disjunct melodic contour. It is clear that the two bear no relation to each other whatsoever, and the prevalence of new and unrelated ideas across the three movements creates a different effect from the tightly-knit integration of the *Prelude, Chorale & Fugue*.

Nevertheless there is still an element of motivic continuity between each of the three movements, but it appears in an altogether more subtle manner. And again, much as in the *Prelude, Chorale & Fugue*, it stems from the opening motif of the *Prelude*. Particular

fragments are harnessed in the creation of many subsequent ideas from each of the three movements, as shown in Example 6.2.3.

Example 6.2.3

The image displays seven staves of musical notation in treble clef, illustrating thematic connections between different parts of a work. The first staff, in D major, is labeled 'First thematic idea from the *Prelude*, from opening bars' and contains fragments 'a', 'b', and 'c'. The second staff, also in D major, is labeled 'Second thematic idea from the *Prelude*' and contains fragments 's', 'c', 'b', 'b', and 'c'. The third staff, in D major, is labeled 'First gesture in the introduction to the *Aria*' and contains fragment 'a'. The fourth staff, in B minor, is labeled 'First 'line' from the *Aria*' and contains fragments 'b' and 'c'. The fifth staff, in B minor, is labeled 'Third 'line' from the *Aria*' and contains fragment 'b'. The sixth staff, in B minor, is labeled 'Fourth 'line' from the *Aria*' and contains fragments 'b', 'c', 'a', and 'c'. The seventh staff, in D major, is labeled 'Second thematic idea from the *Finale*' and contains fragment 'a'. Brackets and labels 'a', 'b', 'c', and 's' are used to identify specific melodic segments within the staves.

Despite this presence of shorter gestures from the opening in many of the subsequent motifs, they do not appear to be explicitly related to each other on the surface, and this is due to their respective phrase lengths. They are each relatively long melodies of at least four bars, and the labelled fragments therefore constitute a small proportion of the entire theme. As a result of this, whilst a subtle reference point to the opening is provided by these shorter gestures, the overall feeling is one of a new idea altogether, and it is through this that Franck creates both continuity and diversity. It is worth also pointing out that the first and fourth 'lines' from the *Aria*, by harnessing 'b' and 'c' in succession, demonstrate a far closer connection to the opening theme of the *Prelude*. In this respect the sense of integration and continuity is only heightened in this otherwise unrelated movement.

Premonition

Another technique is used in the *Prelude, Aria & Finale* to create a further relationship between the movements at a motivic level. It has already been stated that all of the motivic material in the three movements, whilst being loosely related to each other via certain instances of fragmentation from the *Prelude's* opening bars, seems on the surface to be diverse in their effect and inspiration (if not necessarily their construction). However, there is a short gesture from the *Prelude* that, with its subsequent treatments in both the *Aria* and the *Finale*, presents a far more explicit link between the movements (thus extending the motivic relationship that had previously been described as 'subtle'). This gesture, which appears in the moment of transition between sections C and A' of the *Prelude* (see Table 2.2.1), is first heard in the upper line of bars 124-126 (Example 6.3.1), before being repeated numerous times in various transpositions up to bar 140.

Example 6.3.1



Considering the *Prelude* alone, this idea and its subsequent transpositions serve a particular purpose. After the chromatic nature of the previous section (despite the implied tonic of C# minor), these transpositions occur over an extensive chain of modulations, as the music progresses towards E \flat minor in bar 147 and a restatement of the opening theme. The brisk harmonic rhythm and constant refusal to settle in any particular key gives this idea a transitional function, as it articulates the chromaticism of section C, gradually giving way to a more diatonic language with the return of the first motif. But in the context of the entire work the idea is shown to serve a different function altogether in the *Aria* and the *Finale*. Certain aspects of it are used to construct the first main thematic elements in both the subsequent movements, as shown in Table 6.3.1.

Table 6.3.1 – Premonition in the *Prelude, Aria & Finale*

	Function	Relationship to <i>Prelude</i> idea
	Transitional gesture in <i>Prelude</i>	
	First 'line' in the <i>Aria</i>	Near identical rhythm, which highlights the similarities in contour, as well as the closing fragment
	First main theme of the <i>Finale</i>	Incorporates the series of descending thirds

The table demonstrates a presence of this gesture in the first themes of both the *Aria* and the *Finale*, and in doing so it exhibits development on two structural levels throughout the temporal progression of the work. Firstly on a motivic level, the incorporation and development of certain musical aspects such as rhythm, contour and harmonic context creates continuity between the movements. Secondly on a functional level, the role of the idea is transformed as the piece progresses. What begins as a gesture used to articulate a transition between two main thematic areas ends up becoming the basis of inspiration for other main thematic areas in later movements. In this respect its structural importance increases as time passes – things get clearer over time.

To refer back briefly to the *Prelude, Chorale & Fugue*, Chain 2 also incorporates premonition to create the same twofold effect. What had previously been a transitional figure from bar 9 leading to the first grandiose perfect cadence of the motif at bar 11, undergoes techniques of motivic development (such as rhythmic augmentation) to construct the *Choral* theme. In addition, the transformation from transitional gesture in the *Prelude* to the main subject of the rondo-form *Choral* highlights the transformation of the function of the idea as the piece progresses. It is this particular ordering of events that creates the impression of a premonition: by starting as a transitional gesture and becoming a main theme, the idea assumes greater structural importance the second time it is heard. It provides a subtle foreshadowing of a more pivotal moment in the future, as opposed to an explicit developmental continuation.

The Third as Basic Cell

Using a particular aspect of the first thematic idea of the first movement to find coherence throughout the entire work has by now shown itself to be a common technique of Franck's, and it is similarly apparent in the Violin Sonata. In this work it is the interval of a major third from which much of the thematic material of its four movements is derived, and a particular instance will now be considered from each.

Allegretto ben moderato:

The first subject of the sonata-form opening movement immediately marks the importance of this interval. The piano introduces it in the first gesture of the opening bar, which serves as a small-scale, fragmentary premonition of the violin's entry with the first subject in bar 8. The first ten bars of the work are shown in Example 6.4.1.

Example 6.4.1

The image displays a musical score for the first ten bars of the Violin Sonata. It consists of two staves: Violin and Piano. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 3/4. The Piano part begins in the first bar with a piano introduction marked 'pp'. The Violin part enters in bar 8 with the first subject, marked 'molto dolce'. The score includes fingering and articulation markings such as 'Tea' and '*'.

This theme is built around a succession of thirds, and in this respect it serves as an explicit presentation of the most fundamental musical characteristic of this work. It continues to form the basis for development throughout the opening sonata movement, but for the sake of focussing on multi-movement unification that will not be addressed here.

Allegro:

After the tumultuous first subject and transitional section of the sonata-form second movement, the remarkable sense of ethereality in the second subject that enters at bar 57 (bars 56-65 are shown in Example 6.4.2) provides the perfect counterpoint. This is achieved via numerous means. The vast extremes of range, the sparse piano accompaniment, the oscillation between major and minor modes and the appearances of the flattened supertonic all contribute to this atmosphere. Whilst the interval of a third may not appear explicitly in the horizontal progression of the melody (which moves exclusively by step or with octave leaps), it remains fundamentally important in its construction.

Example 6.4.2

The musical score for Example 6.4.2 is presented in three systems. Each system consists of a treble staff and a bass staff. The tempo is marked 'poco più lento' and the mood is 'molto dolce'. The music is in 4/4 time and has a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody in the treble staff is characterized by stepwise motion and occasional octave leaps. The piano accompaniment in the bass staff is sparse, often consisting of single notes or dyads. The overall texture is ethereal and delicate.

This subject is built around four one-bar phrases, that are then repeated with certain variations in register (instead of dropping an octave at the end of each phrase the melody continually rises). The importance of the major third is shown by a reduction of this repetition (Example 6.4.3), where a string of these intervals are apparent in the construction of the motif, albeit at a slightly broader level.

Example 6.4.3



Ben moderato:

The third returns at the start of the *Recitativo-Fantasia* movement (Example 6.4.4), functioning as a fragmentary reference to the first movement. This is achieved as much by its similar entry on the quaver upbeat to the second pulse as it is its motivic content.

Example 6.4.4



These short fragments permeate the movement in various harmonic contexts, and they serve to articulate a particular technique of cyclic recurrence that will be addressed in Chapter 8.

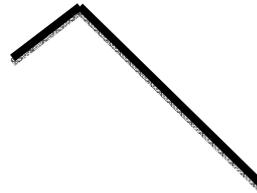
Allegretto poco mosso:

The construction of the main rondo theme to this final movement recalls a technique that has already been identified in the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue*: transforming aspects such as harmonic context, rhythm and conjunct/disjunct motion, whilst maintaining the melodic contour. The relationship between the first subject of the opening movement and the main theme of the Finale is shown in Example 6.4.5.

Example 6.4.5



Shared Contour



But it is not only the similarities in contour that creates this connection to the opening movement: the third again returns to the fore in this rondo melody. Its importance is accentuated by its presence as the only interval to appear in a melody that is otherwise entirely conjunct, and with its role as the main theme of a rondo framework it goes on to appear throughout the Finale.

Chapter 7 - Tonal Organisation & Harmonic Language

The two concepts addressed earlier that contribute to unity – a continuous cycle, and an overarching departure followed by a return – are both created by Franck through his use of tonal organisation and harmonic language in the three works. To assess this element of his compositional method, a similar approach will be adopted as in the earlier chapter on Beethoven's *Hammerklavier Sonata*. By starting on the broadest scale and increasingly focussing in, the tonal and harmonic progressions that are shared between each structural level will be established. Relationships such as this – where the constituent parts are representative of and reflected in the singular entity that they make up – are a fundamental characteristic of unified compositions (as identified in the writings of Schoenberg, whose notion of a *Grundgestalt* is highly reminiscent of this sentiment, as is the concept of organicism, the prevailing line of analytical thought throughout the nineteenth century). However, it is the tonal drama that arises from these progressions that is the most important. By establishing a sense of harmonic and tonal instability that is then resolved, a journey is completed, and in this respect the use of tonality provides a structural function in unifying the works.

This idea of tonal drama in relation to eighteenth-century sonata forms is explored in great depth by Charles Rosen, who states that 'the emotional force of the classical style is clearly bound up with this contrast between dramatic tension and stability.'¹¹² To this end the diatonic language of the late eighteenth century consisted of tonal areas that either raised the tension (the dominant)¹¹³ or reduced it (the subdominant¹¹⁴ and the tonic)¹¹⁵, and by exploiting these (and other) relationships, composers articulated a tonal narrative throughout a piece. Starting from the tonic, instability is created via a departure to the dominant, which is then resolved by a return to the tonic (often via the subdominant). More remote tonal areas are incorporated, but always in relation to this fundamental tonic-dominant polarity. In some Haydn, Mozart and early Beethoven for instance mediant relationships are exploited, but only 'as parts of middleground progressions involving the dominant...and are thus [still] secondary to it.'¹¹⁶

¹¹² Rosen, C: *The Classical Style*, p.72

¹¹³ A 'sharp key', often at the end of a sonata form exposition (towards the centre of the work)

¹¹⁴ A 'flat key', often in a sonata form coda

¹¹⁵ The home key – a return

¹¹⁶ Kopp, D: *Chromatic transformations in nineteenth-century music*, p.130

This would change with the advent of Romanticism towards the start of the nineteenth century, where chromatic mediant relationships were used to replace the expected tonic-dominant polarity. Such relationships began to appear with increased regularity and with greater structural importance, with one early example being Beethoven's *Waldstein Sonata* in C major Op. 53 (1804) that has its second subject group in E major. Here the traditional dominant is substituted by the mediant for the larger tonal area of increased tension in the exposition: tonic-dominant polarity is replaced by tonic-mediator polarity. Then, at the equivalent moment in the recapitulation, the senses of symmetry and overarching resolution are created, again through the use of a mediant relationship. Whereas the exposition moves away from the tonic via a movement up a third, the recapitulation returns to the tonic via a similar progression: from A minor to the home key of C major. After that seminal work, the use of such remote substitutions (i.e. mediant relationships that are not relative major/minor) became more and more prevalent in Beethoven's output, and after his death other composers would continue in the same vein, in particular Franz Schubert.¹¹⁷

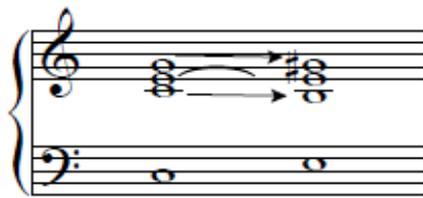
This use of chromatic mediant relationships in place of a more traditional tonic-dominant polarity would go on to become commonplace in Romantic practices, especially in the music of Wagner, whose experiments with chromaticism would influence composers throughout Western Europe. The importance of semitonal voice-leading and chromatic third relations in this new musical language is highlighted by Robert Bailey. Speaking in reference to Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* – a work well-known for its groundbreaking harmonies – he identifies this new principle where 'linear considerations (with either diatonic or semitone voice-leading, or both in alteration) more and more take precedence over harmonic ones...if a given voice moves or "resolves" at all, it moves by semitone.'¹¹⁸ The influence of this new approach to harmony – the principle of semitonal harmonic proximity (and common notes) causing chromatic mediant relationships to assume as much importance as diatonic ones – would go on to be profound in the music of the late nineteenth century. Subsequently there has been much discourse surrounding the theory of late nineteenth-century chromaticism, which has recently led to Neo-Riemannian theory being formulated towards the end of the twentieth century. This branch of musical thought 'arose in response to analytical problems posed by chromatic music that is triadic but not altogether tonally unified... [and although] music of this type uses the harmonic structures and, often, the conventional cadences of diatonic tonality, it lures the attentions of analytical models designed for diatonic music...

¹¹⁷ Much of Kopp's *Chromatic Transformations in Nineteenth Century Music* is devoted to mediant relationships in Schubert's Lieder and late piano sonatas.

¹¹⁸ Bailey, R: *Wagner: Prelude and Transfiguration from Tristan and Isolde*, p.117

[however] it is also notoriously unresponsive to such attentions.¹¹⁹ Broadly speaking, this theory, found in the writings of such musicologists as David Lewin and Richard Cohn, is bound by the notion that all harmonies/triads can be directly related to each other without necessarily referring to a tonic. Additionally, the notion of harmonic proximity is gauged by efficiency of voice-leading, so for instance C Major and E Major are close by virtue of one common note and two semitonal shifts. Example 7.0.1 introduces the notation that will be used in this investigation, with common notes shown with ties and semitonal progressions shown with arrows.

Example 7.0.1



An extension of this theoretical framework is found in David Kopp's *Chromatic Transformations in Nineteenth-Century Music*, where a 'well-ordered harmonic system including both diatonic and chromatic relations'¹²⁰ is established. To demonstrate that chromatic third relationships play just as important a role as diatonic relationships in providing tonal drama, Kopp uses the notion of common-tone tonality to show that such harmonies require their own system of chromatic function. The transformational system he subsequently proposes, from the perspective of common-tone tonality, 'conceives of every type of fifth relation, and every type of third relation, as unary harmonic processes... It replaces some of the other systems' compound transformations with direct transformations and allows for transformations identified with harmonic quality. The result is a set of six transformation types arranged as three pairs,¹²¹ and it is these which make up his system of common-tone tonality that is demonstrated to have been so fundamental in nineteenth-century practices. These transformation pairs in relation to a C major triad are described in Tables 7.0.1, 7.0.2 and 7.0.3.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Cohn, R: 'Introduction to Neo-Riemannian Theory: A Survey and a Historical Perspective', pp.167-168

¹²⁰ Kopp, D: *Chromatic transformations in nineteenth-century music*, p.263

¹²¹ Ibid, p.164

¹²² Ibid, pp.165-191 – Chapter 7 of *Chromatic transformations in nineteenth-century music* explains this transformational system in great depth, with brief analyses of three short passages helping to demonstrate the advantages of thinking in terms of these transformations.

Table 7.0.1 – Prime transformations

Transformation	Outcome	Common tones	Semitone shifts	Harmony
I (identity)	C major	3	0	-
P (parallel)	C minor	2	1	Chromatic

Table 7.0.2 – Third transformations

Transformation	Outcome	Common tones	Semitone shifts	Harmony
R (relative)	E minor	2	1	Diatonic
R	A minor	2	0	
M (mediant) (major third)	A _b major	1	2	Chromatic
M(-1)	E major	1	2	
m (mediant) (minor third)	A major	1	1	
m(-1)	E _b major	1	1	

Table 7.0.3 – Fifth transformations

Transformation	Outcome	Common tones	Semitone shifts	Harmony
D (dominant)	F major	1	1	Diatonic
D(-1)	G major	1	1	
F (fifth-change)	F minor	1	1	Diatonic
F(-1)	G minor	1	0	

This Romantic characteristic of a work being constructed from both diatonic and chromatic tonal structures is a hallmark of Franck's late style, and thus to investigate the ways he uses tonality as a unifying force, an approach based (at least in part) on this approach could prove fruitful. In any case its shorthand representation of transformation types will allow for a concise demonstration of the most important tonal and harmonic relationships that are used to construct the three works in question. With an emphasis on the sharing of such relationships between structural levels of varying focus, this will ultimately demonstrate the manner in which Franck uses tonality and harmony as a unifying force to create the two abstract effects that contribute to an overarching unity.

Tonal Organisation at a Background Level

The overall keys of the separate movements within these works already show signs of Franck's use of tonal organisation to articulate a unified journey. The *Prelude, Choral & Fugue* consists of an **M** oscillation shown in Table 7.1.1: the home key moves up a major third for the middle movement, before returning for the Finale:

B minor → **M(-1)** → E_b major/minor → **M** → B minor/major

Table 7.1.1 – Tonal organisation of the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue*

Prelude	B minor
Choral	E _b major → minor
Fugue	B minor → major

Between the *Prelude* and *Choral* the initial **M(-1)** transformation from B minor to E_b contributes to the instability via the remoteness of this chromatic progression. The remote distance of E_b major from the home key creates a marked increase in harmonic tension at the centre point of the work – one that demands resolution as the work progresses. In the initial progression from the *Prelude* into the *Choral*, its remoteness is highlighted by Franck's use of an *attacca* (Example 7.1.1). In the closing bars of the first movement, after settling in the tonic of B minor with the final perfect cadence, the chord quickly changes to B major 7th. Here one might be forgiven for expecting a **D** transformation with the next movement to starting in E, but instead Franck unexpectedly moves up a major 3rd enharmonically to E_b major. To create an explicit link, the F_♯ from the final chord of the *Prelude* is tied across - becoming a chromatic appoggiatura to the first melodic note (G) of the *Choral*.

Example 7.1.1



The jarring effect of the F# above an E \flat major chord highlights the remoteness of the two tonalities, and despite the fact it immediately resolves upwards to G, this creates a particularly unsettled atmosphere in the meditative introduction to the *Choral*. Despite this, Franck's use of a D# picardie is important in maintaining a harmonic connection between the movements. By introducing this common note (D#/E \flat) the progression between B major 7th and E \flat major, whilst being remote on the surface, appears seamless due to its voice-leading potential (Example 7.1.2).

Example 7.1.2



Contrary to the immediacy of this progression, Franck articulates the return from E \flat minor at the end of the *Choral* back to B minor for the Finale across a far larger time-scale – the *Interlude*. The opening of the *Interlude* (Example 7.1.3) is also connected to the previous movement by the common note E \flat – here however its function is transformed from the tonic of E \flat to an upper suspension over a dominant-implying diminished 7th, thus introducing this section with a moment of great harmonic instability.

Example 7.1.3



In any case, this short transitory section prepares the home key with twenty bars of dominant harmony (mostly arpeggio figures outlining the diminished 7th on A \sharp , the quasi-dominant of B minor) before the *Fugue* – a far more conventional method than the movement from the *Prelude* into the *Choral*. Nevertheless this still generates much tension, demanding resolution to the tonic that is eventually provided by the first entry of the fugal subject. However, immediately before this Franck employs another *attacca* to introduce the final movement in a unique way. The three bars immediately preceding the Fugue, as shown in Example 7.1.4, reintroduce the dominant in the bass, which underpin two fragmented false entries in the upper voice – these articulate the final perfect cadence into the home key for the Finale. The way these two fragments segue directly into the first subject entry (by, in effect, foreshadowing the descending chromatic sequence that opens the subject), along with the grand release of twenty bars worth of dominant tension, gives the opening of the final movement an immediate sense of urgency, along with a direct continuation from the preceding *Interlude*.

Example 7.1.4

The image displays two staves of musical notation. The upper staff is a grand staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features a melodic line with a descending chromatic sequence and a final cadence. The lower staff is a grand staff with a bass clef and the same key signature. It contains arpeggiated figures and a bass line that underpins the dominant harmony. The score includes performance markings such as *rit.*, *scmpre ff*, *I*, *largamente*, *dim.*, *l.h.*, and *mf*. The title "FUGUE a quatro partes" and "Tempo 19" are centered between the staves. Roman numerals "I" and "II" are placed above the lower staff to indicate section divisions. There are also asterisks and "Ped." markings below the lower staff.

The resultant overarching effect is a short-scale departure from the home key to its chromatic mediant, followed by a large-scale return. The way that these tonal areas are connected provides evidence of one of the most explicit ways unity can be attained – creating the impression of a continuous journey. An important point made earlier was the fact that unified compositions transcend what appear to be a series of separate sections into a single whole. Traditionally multi-movement instrumental works are separated by what can only be described as a strong boundary – a period of silence separating two different tonalities and tempi. One of the most explicit ways to create the sense of singularity

throughout a work is to break down these boundaries, which the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue* does entirely with its use of *attacca*. The other two works, whilst not employing such an explicit technique, still articulate a sense of unity through the tonal organisation of their movements via this element of continuity.

Franck also employs an **M(-1)** transformation to connect the first two movements of the *Prelude, Aria & Finale* (Table 7.1.2) Again the remoteness of this upper chromatic mediant relationship is juxtaposed by the harmonic stability that arises from the common note G#/A_b.

Table 7.1.2 – Tonal organisation of the *Prelude, Aria & Finale*

Prelude	E major
Aria	A _b major
Finale	C# minor → E major

Between the *Aria* and *Finale* however, a **D** transformation occurs, which, as stated before, would usually articulate a decrease in tension. However whilst a sense of tonal resolution is attained from the dominant→tonic motion of A_b major (G# major) to C# minor, this stability is immediately undermined by the altogether unstable atmosphere of the fast minor-mode third movement. Again, a seamless transition is created by an enharmonic change of chord function at the start of the *Finale* (Example 7.1.5). The A_b major of the *Aria* is immediately reframed in bar 2 of the final movement: as a dominant 7th in the new key of C# minor.

Example 7.1.5



The last progression – an **r** transformation between the relative keys of C# minor and E major – demonstrates a more conventional diatonic mediant relationship that provides the desired resolution into the final coda. The entirety of the piece thus demonstrates a combination of transformations to depart from and return to the home key:

E major → **M(-1)** → A_b major → **D** → C# minor → **r** → E Major

Franck uses the same type of subdominant relationship (a **D** transformation) between the slow first movement and the more tumultuous second movement of the Violin Sonata (Table 7.1.3). Much like in the opening bars of the *Finale*, this progression is highlighted by three bars of dominant harmony, where the tonic A major becomes the dominant of D Minor via a transformation of harmonic context. In both instances, a continual change from tranquil to agitated is created.

Table 7.1.3 – Tonal organisation of the Violin Sonata

<i>Allegretto ben moderato</i>	A major
<i>Allegro</i>	D minor → major
<i>Recitativo-Fantasia</i>	F# minor
<i>Alegretto poco mosso</i>	A major

A series of rising thirds is also present between the latter three movements, and once more these transitions are harmonically feasible due to the sharing of common notes between them. This instance of large-scale structural planning demonstrates how a cycle of solely diatonic transformations (including two mediant progressions) can articulate a large-scale departure from and return to the tonic:

A major → **D** → D minor/major → **R** → F# minor → **r** → A major

Much like in the *Prelude, Aria & Finale*, the final transformation is a relative mediant: from F# minor to A major. This is the only modulation that permeates a sense of reduced tension, via the high functional equivalence and the change from minor to major. In this respect the overall tonal resolution to the home key of the sonata is provided by the opening bars of the *Finale*, and this progression supplements the sense of release at this important structural moment. Additionally there is an intrinsic relationship between the broadest level and the most focused (motivic) with their use of rising thirds. This is first signposted in the melodic gesture from the opening bar, and it goes on to have great implications on the tonal organisation and harmonic language. Therefore this 'cell', as well as being the motivic manifestation of the *Grundgestalt*, is similarly important in the construction of other domains of the Violin Sonata.

These elements of background tonal organisation in the three works demonstrate three particular relationships, which are each fundamental parts of Kopp's transformational theory: relative mediant (**R/r**), chromatic mediant (**M/m**) and tonic-dominant (**D**). Whilst at this broad

structural level they are used to create both a continuous cycle as well as a departure followed by a return, at a more focused level they serve a particular function. Franck incorporates these three sorts of relationships into each work to create the conflicting senses of instability and stability – the former promises resolution, which is provided by the latter. Relative keys are closely connected, more so than the polarity inherent in tonic-dominant progressions: Franck uses both of these diatonic progressions to create tonal drama, albeit in an unconventional manner. At the same time he also incorporates more remote and chromatic mediant relationships to make the music yet more unstable. By using a combination of diatonic and chromatic relationships, each in a variety of ways, the works are permeated by particular effects of harmonic instability that, together with the coherence inherent in this system of common-tone tonality, in the end contributes to the overarching unity.

Relative Mediant Relationships

Due to their sharing of the same key signature and subsequent functional equivalence, progressions between relative keys are commonplace in tonal music. Whereas tonic-dominant relationships consist of a polarity created by their different key signatures, relatives share a greater connection. Franck takes this conventional arrangement and frames it in different ways to help establish a sense of instability. The second movement of the Violin Sonata, a sonata-form architecture in D minor, would traditionally have its second subject group in the relative major. Here, it is the relative, but minor, resulting in an ***m(-1)*** transformation to F minor (this is a chromatic relationship, but due to the significance of the relative root note (F) in Classical sonata second subjects, it merits inclusion in this section). The use of this tonal scheme is not without precedent, with Beethoven's *Appassionata Sonata* Op. 57 being one such example. In this work, after the altogether unstable first subject group in F minor (an impression created by the string of unresolved cadences and the prevalence of Neapolitan harmonies), the second subject group in A \flat minor is prepared first by a passage in A \flat major, and then by a long scale figure outlining the dominant harmony – E \flat . Despite the remoteness of this tonal area to the tonic of F minor, it is still prepared in the proper fashion by a period of dominant harmony. In the Violin Sonata, however, Franck slightly alters this technique to introduce the second subject group in from bars 56-57 (bars 54-57 are shown in Example 7.2.1).

Example 7.2.1

The image shows a musical score for a piano and violin. The piano part is in the lower staves, and the violin part is in the upper staff. The score includes various dynamic markings and performance instructions. The bass line features a chromatic variation with a G_b, and the piano part includes a Neapolitan 2nd chord. The score is marked with 'rall.', 'poco più lento', 'molto dolce', and 'pp'.

The leading-note in the violin and the right hand of the piano in the bar immediately preceding the second subject both suggest the expected dominant → tonic progression into this new tonality. However, the G_b in the bass (the Neapolitan 2nd of the new key area) creates an otherworldly effect at this important structural point. The presence of this chromatic variation in both the preceding cadence and the second subject itself, as well as the oscillation between the major and minor modes, mean that a tonic is never firmly established. It is also important to note the resultant effect that is created at the equivalent moment in the recapitulation – the ethereal nature of the second subject group denies the sense of a true resolution that would normally be felt at this point.

The overall tonal plan of the first movement of the *Prelude, Aria & Finale* is constructed from an *r* oscillation. Whilst the previous example incorporates a slightly altered progression into a traditional structure, here a straightforward relative progression is incorporated into an unusual formal plan. There are only three instances in the *Prelude* where a tonic is firmly established, by both duration and emphatic cadences: E major → C# minor → final cadence in E major. Here Franck uses the relative minor to articulate the point of greatest departure from the home key, and therefore the moment of greatest harmonic tension. After having confirmed E major as the home key, the first thematic idea reappears at bar 69 in C# minor. This prepares the next new piece of motivic material (bars 84-95, shown in Example 7.2.2) that occurs after an emphatic cadence at bar 83.

Example 7.2.2



Franck removes most of the functional equivalence C# minor shares with the home key of E major by drastically increasing the chromatic saturation in this new motif. Whilst a movement from a tonic major to its relative minor is often used to raise intensity,¹²³ its connection to the home key is always close due to the two common notes. Despite the fact C# minor is always implied as the home key in this section, the 'connection' to E major is eliminated by the extreme chromaticism that underpins by this thematic idea. With what appears to be a conventional relative mediant progression, Franck exaggerates the instability at this structural moment of greatest harmonic tension.

The significance of this progression is made apparent when viewing the work as a unified whole. The tonal organisation of the *Prelude* (Table 7.2.1) is a microcosm of the three movements together, and both of these structural levels exhibit a departure followed by a return via the same relative mediant relationship.

Table 7.2.1 – Tonal organisation of the *Prelude* from the *Prelude, Aria & Finale*

Bars 1-42	E major	<i>Prelude</i>	E major
Bar 68	Cadence on G# major	<i>Aria</i>	A \flat major
Bars 69-123	C# minor	<i>Finale</i>	C# minor
Bars 159-end	E major	Coda	E major

(The bars omitted consist of transitory passages, with no discernible key centre)

¹²³ See Mozart's Piano Sonata in F major, for instance, which has a remarkable second section in D minor that perfectly encapsulates the *Sturm & Drang* method that prevailed in the late eighteenth century.

There is an instance of particular interest, in the second section of the first movement of the *Prelude, Aria & Finale*, where Franck uses a relative relationship to articulate a more remote progression (bars 43-50 are shown in Example 7.2.3). After initially being presented in E major, this new thematic idea is then repeated from bar 46. However, half a bar into this restatement a modulation to the tonic minor occurs (a **P** transformation). From there the movement to G major becomes straightforward, as it is a basic **r** transformation to the relative major of the tonic minor. As a result of this, two remote tonalities – G major and E major – become seamlessly connected. Franck is here using a combination of straightforward transformations to articulate a remote chromatic progression: $P \rightarrow r = m(-1)$. The instability of the tonal organisation is here counteracted by the stability of the modulatory passage, by way of a fairly simple chromatic alteration (the **P** transformation).

Example 7.2.3



The last instance to be mentioned concerns the opening bars of the *Prelude, Aria & Finale*. This two-bar unit (Example 7.2.4) provides a perfect representation of the importance of **R** transformations, and the way in which a pair of conventional diatonic progressions can still provide a juxtaposition between instability and stability. Despite the fact the first chord is E major, the opening bar articulates a plagal cadence in G# minor – the tonic is initially heard as a submediant. E major is not firmly established as the home key until the end of the second bar, where the same plagal cadence is transposed down a major third to the actual tonic.

Example 7.2.4



This immediate progression away from the tonic to a seemingly distant key creates the initial sense of instability, which is subsequently resolved with a return to the tonic (Example 7.2.5). A movement to this remote key area is made possible by the close harmonic connection between E major and G# minor triads, and the return is articulated by the even closer connection between C# minor and its relative major, and these three transformations ultimately articulate the departure from and resolution to the tonic:

E major → **R** → G# minor → **D** → C# minor → **r** → E major

Example 7.2.5



Tonic-Dominant Polarity

Many of Franck's structures make use of apparently more traditional tonic-dominant relationships in their broad-scale tonal organisation. One example – the first movement of the Violin Sonata, a sonata-form in A major – does this in a conventional manner. The second subject of the exposition is in the dominant, and this rise in harmonic tension is subsequently resolved by the recapitulation in the tonic. However, there are numerous instances where Franck plays with convention, and utilises an overarching tonic-dominant polarity to create an altogether different effect.

The modified rondo Finale of the Violin Sonata uses a string of rising thirds to articulate a movement to the dominant. The areas of tonal stasis - the soundings of the theme – are A major (the tonic), C# major, E major and finally A major again. This progression creates an

increase of tension via its systematic departure from the tonic, and this reaches a harmonic climax with the sounding in the dominant of the home key, E major. The importance of this structural point is exaggerated by the grand codetta from bar 87 after the appearance of the subject in the dominant, which uses a short fragment from the rondo theme to accentuate and confirm this moment of harmonic climax. Bars 87-91 are shown in Example 7.3.1.

Example 7.3.1

The image shows a musical score for Example 7.3.1, consisting of a piano part (left hand and right hand) and a violin part (top staff). The key signature is E major (two sharps). The piano part is marked with *f brillante* and *sempre creso.*. The violin part is also marked with *f brillante* and *sempre creso.*. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and fingering numbers (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) for both hands. The piano part features a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth notes and rests, while the violin part has a more melodic line with some grace notes.

Franck first uses a pair of chromatic transformations to create an overarching movement to the dominant, the point of greatest tension:

A major $\rightarrow M(-1) \rightarrow C\#$ major $\rightarrow m(-1) \rightarrow E$ major

The extended final episode then becomes concerned with the process of resolution. This is eventually achieved with the final sounding of the theme in the tonic and the coda that quotes the earlier codetta to round off the work. Here Franck is using the cyclic potential of mediant relationships to supplement an overarching tonic-dominant polarity: $M(-1) \rightarrow m(-1) = D(-1)$. It is the ultimate resolution of this polarity in the context of a rondo-form that provides a satisfying and triumphant ending to the entire piece.

In fact a similar technique can be found towards the start of the first movement, where Franck employs an identical chain of transformations to carry out the conventional tonic \rightarrow dominant progression of the opening sonata form. Here, after presenting the first subject in A major, Franck immediately makes the initial transformation to C# major at bar 13 in the form of a transposed repetition of bars 9-12, before making the expected move to the dominant which is reached with the entry of the second subject at bar 31 (a transition made possible with frequent use of secondary dominants, thus quoting the harmonic device found in bars 6-8 of first subject). This is yet another example of chromatic transformations being used to articulate more traditional diatonic progressions. Example 7.3.2 shows bars 11-20, with the progression to C# major occurring between the second and third bars of this example.

Example 7.3.2

The image shows two systems of musical notation. The first system consists of a vocal line (top) and a piano accompaniment (bottom). The vocal line features a melodic phrase with a slur and the instruction "sempre dolce". The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines. The second system continues the piece, with both vocal and piano parts. The instruction "poco cresc." appears in both parts, indicating a gradual increase in volume. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings.

The final movement of the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue* uses traditional fugal methods that are governed by the relationship between the tonic and the dominant. After the first statement in the tonic, the second subject entry is in the dominant, which creates an initial rise in tension (Example 7.3.3).

Example 7.3.3

The image displays a musical score for a four-part fugue. The title is "FUGUE a quatro partes" and the tempo is "Tempo 1º". The score is divided into two systems. The first system shows the vocal line (top) and piano accompaniment (bottom). The vocal line starts with a rest, followed by a melodic entry. The piano accompaniment features a bass line with a "Ped." marking. Dynamic markings include "sempre ff", "largamente", "dim. l.h.", and "mf". The second system continues the fugue, showing more entries in the vocal and piano parts. Fingering numbers (1-5) are indicated for the piano part, and "Ped." markings are present. The score concludes with a double bar line and a Roman numeral "II".

This departure from the tonic is then resolved by the third entry in the upper voice. Bars 192-217 also exploit an alternation between D major and A major entries, which has a similar effect. However, the chromatic nature of the subject results in its entries in the tonic not providing the expected sense of resolution. In fact, the whole of the *Fugue* permeates a

constant instability that even the emphatic final entry of the subject in the tonic cannot remove.

Even the *Choral*, which for the most part exhibits a freeness of modulation and length of phrase much akin to Wagner, uses a transitory modulation to the dominant (a **D(-1)** transformation) to articulate the first moment of climax – the final bar of the first system of Example 7.3.4.

Example 7.3.4

Poco più lento. Choral.

The musical score for 'Choral' is presented in two systems. The first system is marked 'Poco più lento.' and 'molto cantabile, non troppo dolce'. The second system features a triplet in the bass line and a 'cresc.' (crescendo) leading to a fortissimo 'f' dynamic. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 3/4.

Here the increase in harmonic tension is highlighted by both the highest note and greatest level of dynamics up to that point of the movement. However, the prevalence of subdominant relationships at important structural points of the *Choral* (notably the plagal cadence concluding the main theme) results in E_b not being resolved via the dominant at any point - one of the many things that contribute to its unique character.

The *Prelude* also incorporates a tonic-dominant polarity into the tonal organisation of its innovative formal plan (Table 7.3.1). Again, intensity is raised by the first departure from the tonic, which reaches an emphatic resolution in the third transitional section.

Table 7.3.1 – Tonal organisation of the *Prelude* from the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue*

Bars	Overall key area
1-15	B minor
16-28	F# minor
29-40	Transition section
41- 54	B minor 'coda'
55-end	Perfect cadence in B minor

Franck highlights this overarching progression in the second section in F# minor, which is a complete transposition of the first 15 bars. This direct repetition of material places extra emphasis on its harmonic connection with earlier events, and thus highlights this extended creation of dominant tension, which is finally resolved with a perfect cadence in the home key in bar 41. The tonal plan of this movement demonstrates a **D** oscillation, a common feature of much pre-1850 tonal music that is constructed from a tonic-dominant polarity.

Chromatic Mediant Relationships

During his time as a teacher at the Paris Conservatoire, Franck was often heard telling his students to “Modulate, modulate, modulate!”,¹²⁴ and this sentiment is certainly reflected in his own compositions. Each of his works consists of a brisk harmonic rhythm throughout, and it is at this most local structural level where he incorporates chromatic mediant relationships (**M/m** transformations) to create an almost constant state of instability. This in turn counteracts the more stable and organised tonal organisation that is found on broader structural levels, which for the most part incorporate less remote progressions to articulate a cyclic journey from and back to the tonic. More local instability is contained within the clearer broad structural frameworks. In fact, even the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue*, whose three movements articulate a large-scale chromatic mediant movement from B minor → E_b → B minor, still conveys the desired effect of departure and return. At the surface-level however, such progressions create an altogether different effect.

The rising third again plays a pivotal role in the harmonic construction of the second movement of the Violin Sonata. After the exposition concludes in F minor, the development proceeds to modulate to A minor (an **M(-1)** transformation) for a transposition of the second

¹²⁴ Stove, R. J: *César Franck, his life and times*, p.209

subject. The mood and texture of this restatement is almost identical to its first sounding. Immediately after, though, the music modulates to C# minor (another $M(-1)$ transformation), for a more dramatically varied repetition of the second subject, with a sense of extreme climax being created by the dynamics and the accompanimental texture of the piano. This passage, found in bars 78-95 is shown in Example 7.4.1.

Example 7.4.1

The musical score for Example 7.4.1 consists of four systems of staves. The first system features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with the dynamic marking *pp animando* and includes a *rall.* marking. The piano accompaniment starts with *pp animando* and also includes a *rall.* marking, with a *PPP* dynamic marking appearing later. The second system is marked *Tempo I^o (Allegro)* and includes the instruction *mf molto cresc.* leading to a *ff* dynamic. The third system features a *ff* dynamic and the instruction *forte con passione*. The fourth system continues with the *forte con passione* instruction. The piano accompaniment in the first system includes a sequence of chords marked *Rea* with asterisks. The piano accompaniment in the second system includes a sequence of chords marked *Rea* with asterisks. The piano accompaniment in the third system includes a sequence of chords marked *Rea* with asterisks. The piano accompaniment in the fourth system includes a sequence of chords marked *Rea* with asterisks. The piano accompaniment in the fourth system includes a sequence of chords marked *Rea* with asterisks. The piano accompaniment in the fourth system includes a sequence of chords marked *Rea* with asterisks.

The three remote tonal areas of this passage are connected by a series of ascending major thirds, and the instability of this progression is balanced by the equivalence created by the common notes shared between the triads (Example 7.4.2)

Example 7.4.2



Here the cyclic nature of equidistant mediant shifts is implied. However, having started on F minor, a minor third above the tonic, this sequence of ascending major thirds results in a climax on C# minor instead – a semitone below the home key. Despite the spatial closeness between these two tonalities, C# minor and D minor are very remote harmonically. This remoteness creates a climax of harmonic instability, which is exemplified by the dramatic increase in tempo, dynamic and textural complexity. Again, this is reached by the same gesture which has been shown to unify events on each structural level – the rising third, and this coexistence of continuity and instability is one of the most fundamental parts of Franck's late compositional method.

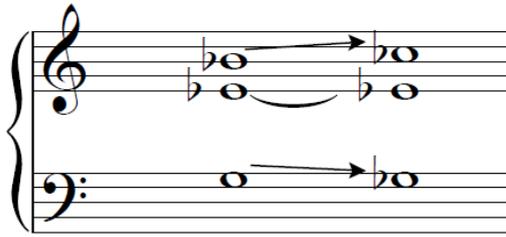
In bars 35-38 of the first movement of the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue*, a chromatic mediant relationship is employed to hint at the possibility of resolution. The theme from bars 35-36, after having been sounded in a (firmly established) E \flat major, is immediately transposed down a third to B major (Example 7.4.3) via an *M* transformation. Coming after a long transitional passage with a brisk harmonic rhythm (bars 29-34), this instance of motivic repetition in two areas of tonal stasis provides a brief moment of respite.

Example 7.4.3

A piano score for two systems. The first system is marked 'molto espress.' and 'non troppo dolce'. The second system is marked 'più dolce'. The music shows a chromatic mediant relationship between E-flat major and B major. The first system features a melodic line in the right hand and a harmonic accompaniment in the left hand. The second system continues the melodic line and accompaniment, showing a seamless transition between the two keys.

Franck creates a seamless transition between these two remote keys by exploiting the voice-leading potential of this mediant relationship in a three-part texture – one common note, two resolutions by semitone. This progression is demonstrated in Example 7.4.4, with B major presented as its enharmonic equivalent C \flat major to keep accidentals consistent.

Example 7.4.4



However, the bass-line still manages to maintain a sense of unrest through both its chromatic motion and the lack of any root-position tonic chords – only second inversions. Such chords are often found just before a perfect cadence, as a preparation for the final dominant – here Franck delays this significant structural point for a further three bars. By demanding a resolution to the tonic, yet prolonging the wait for its arrival, this passage becomes very unstable. This counteracts the brief harmonic stability felt by the temporary return to the tonic. In any case, this instance places an explicit emphasis on the E \flat major \rightarrow M \rightarrow B major relationship – one that is pivotal both in creating instability at the most local structural level, and establishing the same broad-scale effect through the shared connection between the *Choral* and its surrounding movements.

The importance of second inversion chords in Franck's tonal plans is highlighted just a few bars later in the coda of the *Prelude*, where he carries out another lower mediant modulation from G major to E \flat minor (bars 44-45, shown in Example 7.4.5). After the temporary resolution that is provided by the perfect cadence in the home key at bar 41, these remote progressions in the coda serve to re-establish the sense of instability.

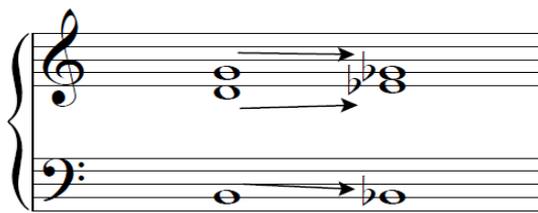
Example 7.4.5



However, this modulation seems all the more unexpected due to the fact there are no common notes shared between the two, and this sudden chord change dramatically increases the excitement towards the end of the *Prelude*. It is an instance of an entirely chromatic mediant progression, which occurs between a major triad and a minor triad

separated by a third.¹²⁵ In any, this striking harmonic relationship is still made harmonically feasible from a voice-leading perspective (highlighted by the root progression) by the semitone relationships (Example 7.4.6) – in effect three lead-notes resolving at the same time. Additionally, this unexpected progression is highlighted by the lack of thematic activity. In bar 44 the theme has been reduced to its smallest component part – the semitone, surrounding by repeated Gs. The mostly static motion on the motivic level places extra emphasis on the remoteness of the harmonic progression – a chromatic third relationship that is not a part of Kopp's system based on common-tone tonality.

Example 7.4.6



These chromatic relationships create instability through their apparent remoteness, yet an application of the idea of common-tone (and semitone) tonality demonstrates a near constant harmonic proximity. This effect is supplemented by his unusual use of *R* transformations at certain points, and also his use of tonic-dominant polarity for areas of increased tension. However, it is worth mentioning that this investigation does not address each and every one of the chromatic/diatonic transformations in the three works: indeed, at the surface level there are many more instances to be cited (as some are in the next chapter concerning the Finales). Nevertheless, a selective incorporation of the idea of common-tone tonality to a limited amount of examples has revealed some important conclusions regarding the unification of Franck's late works. By using a balance of chromatic and (often unconventional) diatonic transformations, usually in conjunction with each other, an oscillation between stability and instability exists throughout the works, and by adhering to this system of common-tone tonality the music always flows coherently. Tonality becomes a unifying force. Additionally, the fact that many elements of tonal organisation are shared between various structural levels certainly contributes to establishing the impression of a singular and unified entity. This is ultimately created by the implications the tonal organisation and harmonic language have upon the creation of continuous cycles, as well as a departure followed by a return – to and from the tonic, instability to stability.

¹²⁵ Tischler, H: 'Chromatic Mediants – A Facet of Musical Romanticism', pp.94-95 – such relationships fall under the 'third-degree chromatic mediant class'.

In each case this return is delayed until the concluding section of the work: it is the Finales that provide complete resolution of the previous issues that have been raised at both a tonal and motivic level. These closing sections are made all the more effective by the instability that is established in the previous movements, as they create a particular psychological effect, or a 'special kind of musical world – a world in which all the events point *beyond*: beyond any cadences yet heard, towards different music, towards stability and resolution – in a word, towards the end...' ¹²⁶

¹²⁶ Webster, J: *Haydn's "Farewell Symphony"*, p.72

Chapter 8 - Cyclic Recurrence

A journey, by definition, has an end. Whilst the events throughout the course of its progression are important, an arrival at a particular destination or a return to a starting point is its most fundamental characteristic. A huge amount of importance is therefore attached to the journey's conclusion – the Finale of a multi-movement work. Loosely speaking, there are two ways that the final movement can contribute to this overarching unification, and these align with the two concepts addressed earlier: the continuation of the cycle; and a return after an initial departure. The first of these has, in part, already been addressed: the main thematic material from each of the three Finales contains gestural connections to earlier movements; they continue and resolve certain schemes of tonal organisation; they are directly linked to their previous movement either without break or via the use of common notes.

However, in the concluding sections of the three works, Franck employs cyclic recurrences in such a way as to combine these two broad ideas. The continuation of the cycle is further enhanced by the integration of thematic material from earlier movements into the Finales in their unaltered forms. Whilst the accompanying texture, tempo and underlying harmony might adapt according to its new context, the motif itself remains a direct quote, and therefore demonstrates an explicit gestural link. In addition, these cyclic restatements have wider implications on the creation of a resolution to the unified whole – the ways in which they are incorporated become pivotal in establishing the overarching sense of return.

Preparing the Finale

In the Violin Sonata, unlike the other two works under consideration, Franck incorporates a cyclic restatement from the opening into the *Recitativo-Fantasia* – the movement preceding the Finale. Its appearance at this structural point creates a very particular effect, and a precedent can be found in Beethoven's Piano Sonata in A major Op. 101. That monumental work, like many others from his late period, possesses the impression of a singular musical journey, which is achieved by initially creating a strong sense of ambiguity – one that promises resolution. This process is begun in the first movement, where a root position tonic chord remains almost entirely absent until bar 76 (there is one in bar 3). Example 8.1.1 shows the opening bars, and whilst a home key of A major is implied from the outset, the almost complete lack of a root-position tonic chord (there is one in bar 3) or any affirmative

cadence in the home key throughout the first subject group heightens the listeners' expectations for the eventual resolution in A major.

Example 8.1.1

*Etwas lebhaft, und mit der innigsten Empfindung.
Allegretto, ma non troppo.*

Sonate N°28

poco ritardando *Tempo I.* *crescendo* *mezzo f*

This resolution finally occurs in the recapitulation, but the extremely tranquil nature of the movement results in no triumphant sense of closure. The instability that is created by the harmonic ambiguity here is continued by the disjointed rhythmic activity of the Scherzo and the prevalence of diminished 7th chords in the ensuing slow movement. However, this is resolved by (what was at the time a ground-breaking incorporation of cyclic recurrence immediately before the Finale. After the short slow movement ends on a sustained E major chord (the dominant of A), the opening of the first movement is restated to form a transition into the Finale (Example 8.1.2).

Example 8.1.2

Alle Saiten.

p dolce

stringendo *Presto.* *cresc.* *f* *p* *cresc.*

*Geschwind, doch nicht zu sehr, und mit Entschlossenheit.
Allegro.*

What had before heralded 75 bars of ambiguity is now resolved almost immediately with the *forte* introduction to the final *Allegro*. By restating the opening Beethoven both provides an explicit thematic link to the opening, and a more implicit resolution of the previous moment of extended ambiguity. This is ultimately achieved with the perfect cadence into the home key of A major for the last movement, creating a final tonal resolution over a very long time-scale.

Franck uses a similar technique in the Violin Sonata, where the first theme from the opening movement – one that creates a sense of ambiguity with its absence of a tonic harmony for the first seven bars - is restated in the section preceding the Finale. The *Recitativo-Fantasia* has a densely chromatic opening, and after briefly confirming G minor the first of two recurrences is introduced in bar 11 (bars 7-16 are shown in Example 8.1.3). First outlining the dominant 9th of D major it eventually settles on the supertonic E minor, and then immediately after it outlines the dominant 9th of B major before settling on the supertonic C# minor. This already ambiguous thematic idea serves to increase the harmonic instability with the remoteness of this chromatic progression: D major → *m* → B major.

Example 8.1.3

The image displays two systems of musical notation. The first system consists of a piano part (left) and a violin part (right). The piano part begins with a treble clef and contains a melodic line with various ornaments and dynamics. The violin part is mostly silent, with a few notes appearing later. The second system continues the piano part with a bass clef, showing a chromatic progression. Both systems include performance markings such as 'molto dim.', 'poco stretto', 'dolce', 'poco rall.', and 'a tempo'. There are also some symbols like 'Ra.' and asterisks at the bottom of each system.

However, whilst Beethoven's Piano Sonata uses cyclic recurrence to articulate the final perfect cadence into the home key of the Finale, Franck hesitates at this point. Whereas the first time this idea is heard it was resolved after 8 bars, here the same sense of ambiguity is prolonged by both the remote transitions and then for the rest of the free and improvisatory

third movement. This delay exaggerates the sense of return that is provided by the triumphant canonic Finale in the home key of A major.

This highlights a fundamental characteristic of Franck's use of cyclic form: the juxtaposition that is created between stability and instability, or unity and disunity, and the way that material alters its structural function in later movements. Whilst a thematic restatement might create stability by way of a gestural link to an earlier movement, it is placed in a surface-level context of instability, and with a different structural function altogether. The dramatic effect that is created by this co-existence of old and new becomes an important feature in the Finales of all three works, where Franck uses cyclic recurrences in distinctive ways to achieve resolution of the unified whole. The final movements can therefore remain diverse and exciting, whilst still subscribing to an overarching unity.

Integration into Pre-determined Constraints

The Finale of the Violin Sonata is a modified rondo (see Table 2.3.1), and it is in the episodes of this traditional formal plan that Franck incorporates three separate motivic ideas from the previous two movements. Example 8.2.1 (bars 36-40) shows a short motif from the *Recitativo-Fantasia* that is recycled in the piano part of the first episode in bar 38 (before going on to reappear in the second and third episodes also).

Example 8.2.1

The image shows a musical score for Example 8.2.1, consisting of two staves: a violin staff (top) and a piano staff (bottom). The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 3/4. The violin part begins with a melodic line marked 'delicato' and 'p subito'. The piano part features a bass line with chords and a melodic line marked 'dolce cantabile'. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings. There are also some symbols at the bottom of the piano staff, possibly indicating fingerings or performance instructions.

Example 8.2.2 (bars 97-100) shows a gesture first seen in the transition between the first and second subjects of the second movement, before being restated in the violin part of the third episode of the Finale numerous times from bar 99. This is a particularly important instance as it further highlights the importance of the rising third at a motivic level.

Example 8.2.2

Musical score for Example 8.2.2, showing piano and violin parts. The piano part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with a 'p subito' marking. The violin part features a melodic line with a 'p subito' marking. The score is in 3/4 time and includes a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#).

Example 8.2.3 (bars 43-52) shows a long theme taken from the closing section of the *Recitativo-Fantasia* movement that is recycled in the violin part of the extended third episode from bar 43.

Example 8.2.3

Musical score for Example 8.2.3, showing piano and violin parts. The piano part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with a 'ff' marking. The violin part features a melodic line with a '8va ad lib.' marking. The score is in 3/4 time and includes a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#).

Each of these – and the numerous other times they appear within the episodes of this rondo form – provides a thematic link, and subsequently a continuation of the cycle that has become apparent throughout the sonata. However, the function of an episode (to provide dramatic tension by departing from the harmonic stability of the subject) denies the attainment of closure and return from these cyclic recurrences, as they always articulate

moments of harmonic flux. The conflict between the instability of the harmonic function and the stability of the thematic process maintains the sense of excitement here, whilst still subscribing to the unified structural plan. There are two instances where one of the thematic restatements does begin to articulate a return by firmly establishing the home tonic in preparation for an entry of the subject, but even these are presented in the minor mode instead. Example 8.2.4 (bars 172-179) shows the passage preceding the final subject entry, in which one of the *Fantasia* gestures is restated to underpin a progression to A minor, which immediately heralds the ultimate return to the tonic major.

Example 8.2.4

The image displays a musical score for Example 8.2.4, consisting of two systems of music. Each system includes a violin part (top staff) and a piano accompaniment (bottom staff). The first system is marked 'poco a' in the violin part and 'poco' in the piano part. The second system is marked 'poco dim.' in the violin part and 'a poco dim.' in the piano part. Below the piano accompaniment in both systems, there are rhythmic markings '♩a' and asterisks, indicating specific rhythmic patterns or accents.

In the Violin Sonata, Franck uses cyclic recurrence to supplement the satisfying return that is attained by the numerous soundings of the free-flowing canonic rondo subject, and confirmed by the emphatic coda in the tonic major. In addition, there is a clear logic regarding the particular motifs he chose to restate in the Finale. The three shapes – taken from the turbulent second half of the third movement and the tumultuous transition between the first and second subjects of the second movement – each articulate moments of instability and harmonic flux in their earlier contexts. It is for this reason that they were chosen for such corresponding moments in the episodes of the rondo Finale. The explicit structural function might have been altered, but their use to create harmonic instability remains consistent.

In any case the instances of cyclic recurrence are here functioning on two structural levels: firstly, to provide drama within the formal constraints of the Finale; secondly, to create an additional thematic link to earlier movements, and thus an extension of the continuous cycle. The unstable nature of the episodes is counteracted by the stability that is established by

these links, and as a result the whole *Finale* contributes to the completion of the Sonata's journey.

There is a similar instance – albeit a far more ambiguous one - of an earlier motif being integrated into the formal plan of the final movement in the *Prelude, Aria & Finale*. Before the final sounding of the two main *Finale* themes in E minor and E major (the home key of the piece) the main idea of the *Aria* is presented in the key of D_b major from bar 100 (bars 99-107 are shown in Example 8.2.5).

Example 8.2.5

The image displays three systems of musical notation for piano accompaniment. The first system begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (D-flat major), and a 4/4 time signature. It features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The second system continues the piece, showing a similar melodic and bass structure. The third system concludes the excerpt with a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic marking. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and phrasing slurs.

The choice of key at this structural point is very important regarding the relationship between the closing movement and the unified whole. The *Finale* (which firmly establishes C_# minor as the home key in the first two sections), is unstable throughout with its agitated introduction, brisk harmonic rhythm and numerous transpositions of the two main thematic ideas. Having the tranquil and almost harmonically static *Aria* theme in the same key (albeit the major mode equivalent) as the opening of the *Finale* therefore allows a sense of temporary resolution to be established. This is confirmed by the fact it concludes with a peaceful cadence in D_b minor, the enharmonic equivalent of C_# minor. Additionally, being placed in this context exemplifies its function of resolving this self-contained section. The continuation of the final movement's tempo as well the short fragments of the *Finale*'s frantic octave in the bass highlight this point. The remainder of the piece becomes concerned with the unified whole, and therefore a return to the tonic of E major – again via an *r* transformation, a relationship that has already been shown to be pivotal in the tonal construction of both earlier movements and the unified whole.

The first stage of this occurs immediately afterwards, where each of the *Finale* themes are heard in the home key of E for the first time (bars 149-157 are shown in Example 8.2.6).

Example 8.2.6

The image shows a musical score for piano, consisting of two staves: a treble staff and a bass staff. The tempo is marked 'Animato' with a quarter note equal to 108 (♩ = 108). The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score is divided into two systems. The first system (bars 149-157) features a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a rhythmic accompaniment of chords. Dynamics include *ffp* (fortissimo piano) in both staves. The second system (bars 158-165) continues the melodic and harmonic development. The treble staff has a *p* (piano) dynamic, while the bass staff has a *molto cresc.* (molto crescendo) marking, leading to a *ff* (fortissimo) dynamic. The score ends with a final chord in the bass staff.

It is this ordering of events that creates the ambiguity in the formal plan of the movement. If the first appearance of the *Aria* theme's function is to provide harmonic resolution to the opening of the final movement, then the ensuing statements of the *Finale* themes can be interpreted as cyclic restatements from a previous movement that has only just finished. In effect they are starting the methodical process of presenting each of the themes from the work in the home key. In any case, it provides a seamless transition into what can unequivocally be described as the final rounding-off section, which starts at bar 180 after an extended period of *fortissimo* dominant tension that ultimately resolves to E major.

Resolution Denied

By now the *Finale*s of the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue* and the *Prelude, Aria & Finale* have been concluded in the context of self-contained sections, the *Fugue* with its final statement of the subject in the tonic at bar 278 and the *Finale* with the ambiguous series of events described above. After this they each segue directly into a grand coda – with the purpose of resolving the work in the context of a unified whole. Whilst the explicit instances of cyclic recurrence throughout these sections do make this function very clear, Franck employs certain techniques to maintain the sense of unrest and delay a final resolution. These instances further highlight the juxtaposition between the continuity of the motivic process and the instability of other surface-level events. Even though their reappearances create an explicit gestural link, the alterations in texture, tempo and sometimes key extend the unstable atmosphere.

This section of the *Prelude, Aria & Finale* begins with the first twelve bars of the *Prelude* being restated from bar 180 with a grandiose octave accompaniment in the bass (bars 177-184 are shown in Example 8.3.1).

Example 8.3.1



The texture here is highly reminiscent of bars 116-120 of the first movement, where it is used to underpin the densely-chromatic third main thematic idea – creating the same relentless rhythmic vitality (as opposed to the stately chordal texture of its original guise). This, along with the harmonically unstable nature of the theme itself, maintains an overriding instability, despite the sense of climax created by this emphatic restatement of the *Prelude*'s opening. This is emphasised at bar 226. After repeating the *Prelude* theme with a stripped-back arpeggio accompaniment, Franck modulates to the tonic minor in bar 226 (bars 224-228 are shown in Example 8.3.2).

Example 8.3.2



Even after the climactic return to the home key, this altogether more tranquil atmosphere continues to prolong the wait for a resolution with this unexpected modulation. Here the return offered by the *Prelude* theme is denied - something else is needed to round off the work.

In the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue* a similar sensation is created immediately after the *Fugue* reaches its climactic conclusion with the final subject entry in the tonic. After coming to rest

on a dominant chord at bar 286 a new section begins, marked *come una cadenza*. Here the sense of harmonic instability that has been present throughout the *Fugue* is continued with twenty-four bars of freely-modulating, toccata-like arpeggio figures. At bar 300 the first instance of cyclic recurrence occurs, but not with a motif – instead with the accompanimental texture from the *Prelude*. Then at bar 311 the *Choral* theme is restated, for the first time in the tonic of B minor – the home key (bars 309-315 are shown in Example 8.3.3). And in contrast to ethereal harp-like texture and tonal stasis of previous appearances in the second movement, here the faster tempo and continuous semiquaver motion of the accompaniment places the *Choral* theme in an altogether more unstable context.

Example 8.3.3

The image displays a musical score for Example 8.3.3, consisting of three systems of piano accompaniment and a vocal line. The first system is marked 'a tempo' and 'ppp' (pianissimo), with the word 'CHORAL' written above the vocal line. The piano accompaniment features arpeggiated figures in both hands. The second and third systems continue the piano accompaniment with similar arpeggiated textures. The vocal line is present in the first system and reappears in the third system. The score includes dynamic markings like 'ppp' and 'pp', and performance instructions such as 'a tempo' and 'CHORAL'. There are also some editorial markings like asterisks and 'Ped.' (pedal) at the bottom of the piano staves.

The use of B minor for this first recurrence might hint at a resolution of sorts, but Franck again continues to delay a sense of resolution by immediately departing from the home key and repeating the theme in an ascending series of minor 6ths (creating the harmonic progression B minor → *M* → G minor → *M* → E_b minor → *M* → B minor). In addition this demonstrates an interesting harmonic technique that provides a further juxtaposition between instability and stability: using a cycle of thirds to create the illusion of a continuous modulatory passage, but nevertheless ending up in the home key again: *M* → *M* → *M* = *I*. By modulating so frequently the music seems unstable, but the continuity of the cycle creates a

stable outcome.¹²⁷ This is underlined by the thematic link to the *Choral* and the emphasis placed on the home tonic.

However, soon after it returns to B minor the sense of instability is yet heightened by the insertion of the fugal subject into the texture from bars 334-339 (Example 8.3.4).

Example 8.3.4

The image displays three systems of musical notation for piano accompaniment. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature is B minor (two flats). The first system shows a diatonic Choral theme in the right hand and a chromatic fugal subject in the left hand. A first ending bracket is present in the right hand, leading to a first ending sign. The second system continues the texture, with a second ending bracket and sign. The third system includes the instruction 'con molto fuoco' and a second ending sign. The score is marked with various performance instructions such as accents, slurs, and repeat signs.

Here the gradual saturation of cyclic recurrences has resulted in ideas from all three movements being used at the same time in contrapuntal combination, and despite this coalescence it is paradoxically one of the most unstable moments in the entire work. This is due to the extremely jarring effect created by the diatonic *Choral* theme and the chromatic fugal subject working in conjunction with each other, as well as the relentless activity of the accompaniment. Again, something else is needed for this Finale to be truly resolved.

¹²⁷ Schubert's Piano Sonata in A major D959 demonstrates a similar technique – between bars 28-36 of the first movement, he modulates from A major → C major → A_b major → E major → C major → A minor. This is a seemingly complicated modulatory passage actually articulates a straightforward progression: from tonic major to tonic minor.

Resolution Attained

To conclude the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue* and the *Prelude, Aria & Finale* Franck employs the same principle as can be found in Liszt's Piano Sonata – the thematic ideas that had thus far not been heard in the stable harmonic context of the home key, are now heard in the tonic in these final bars.

In the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue* it is the *Choral* theme. After having been heard in the firmly established key areas of C minor, F minor and E \flat minor in the second movement, it reappears in the 'cadenza' section but here, despite the soundings in the tonic minor, the surrounding harmonic instability means this theme remains unresolved. From bar 369 however (bars 367-end are shown in Example 8.4.1), for the final *fortississimo* flourish, it is sounded, repeated and then fragmented to bring the piece to its frantic conclusion.

Example 8.4.1

The image displays a musical score for piano, consisting of four systems of music. The first system begins with a treble clef and a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). It starts with a *molto rit.* marking, followed by a *Vivo* tempo change. The music features complex chordal textures and rhythmic patterns. A *simile* marking is present below the first system. The second system continues the texture with similar chordal structures. The third system includes a *sempre fff* marking, indicating a sustained fortissimo dynamic. The fourth system concludes with a fermata over a final chord, marked with an asterisk (*). The score is written in a grand staff format, with treble and bass clefs.

The relentless momentum that is created by this motif's incorporation into brisk tremolo semiquaver figures, coupled with the rapid *vivo* tempo of its presentation, creates a joyous sense of unbridled energy. In addition, the fact it is being heard in the tonic major for the first time (this harmony is maintained for the last eleven bars, a point exemplified by the constant inner tonic pedal) results in a conclusion that successfully rounds off the structure of the piece work on both a motivic and tonal level – thus completing the journey.

The same method is harnessed at the end of the *Prelude, Aria & Finale*, but an altogether different effect is created. After having settled in the tonic minor at bar 226, the second half of the second phrase of the *Aria* theme (also in the minor mode) is restated, replicating the calming nature of its original appearance. Then, from bar 240, the tonic major is reintroduced, and for the remainder of the piece a gentle tonic pedal underpins numerous fragments from the long *Aria* theme. This concluding passage (bars 241-end) is shown in Example 8.4.2.

Example 8.4.2

The image displays three systems of musical notation for piano. The key signature is G major (one sharp). The first system shows a melodic line in the right hand and a tremolo semiquaver figure in the left hand. The second system continues the melodic line with some rests. The third system features a 'dolcissimo' marking, a 'L.H.' marking, and a 'poco rall.' marking, showing a more relaxed and harmonic texture.

Again, this is the only thematic idea that had not yet been heard in the tonic key, so the delayed senses of motivic closure and harmonic resolution are created. Finally, the way in which the texture is gradually stripped back until all that is left is a simple canon of the

opening fragment of the *Aria* creates a uniquely meditative mood. The same calm atmosphere of the slow movement is incorporated, but by changing the structural function of the theme to round off the entire work, it gives the *Prelude, Aria & Finale* a remarkably introspective and transcendental conclusion – an ‘apotheosis of ethereality’.¹²⁸

¹²⁸ Webster, J: *Haydn's "Farewell Symphony"*, p.110 – this term is used to denote the way in which the *Farewell Symphony* ‘completes an aesthetic progression towards ethereality’ by gradually removing instruments from the texture in a particular order. A very similar effect is created in the closing bars of the *Prelude, Aria & Finale*.

Part 4 – A New French Unity

Chapter 9 – A New French Unity

The particular nature of Beethoven's musical direction during his late period, as discussed in Chapter 6, is also seen in these three works by Franck. By drawing from certain techniques of the past and the present, whilst at the same time forging a new path, a unique sound-world is created in the late outputs of these composers. Beethoven led an extremely troubled life, especially in the years preceding his death,¹²⁹ but in response to these personal issues composition became his means of escape. Each of his late works, despite differing in particular aspects of construction, permeates a sense of transcendence and ethereality – the introspection that was forced on Beethoven by his premature deafness and tumultuous personal life is reflected in his compositions. These more abstract characteristics, along with the unprecedented combination of Baroque-period contrapuntal techniques, the classicism of his contemporaries, and his numerous innovations in form, tonal organisation and motivic continuity, are all hallmarks of Beethoven's late style. This idea of his music reaching a higher plane,¹³⁰ or serving a higher purpose, resonated profoundly with Franck, as his 'mature passion for Beethoven led him to conceive all music as primarily an expression of soul, a philosophy of life, in his case half-Christian, half-Romantic but wholly emotional.'¹³¹ However, whilst the expression of Beethoven's soul involved the overcoming of his inner troubles, Franck's conceptual intentions involved conveying his deep religiousness. For Franck therefore, structural unity – through its organicist connotations and its metaphorical implications for the unity of God's creation – effectively reflected his deeply important faith, and due to the complex and cosmopolitan nature of Franck's musical direction, this overarching principle is conveyed in a distinctly personal manner.

Drawing from the Past

In keeping with the nationalistic sentiments of his Parisian contemporaries, Franck does draw from the Baroque tradition regarding form, but only to a certain extent. This aesthetic, as is found in the keyboard music of Rameau and Couperin, is synonymous with clarity and the composition of miniatures, which became clearly manifested in such works as Chabrier's

¹²⁹ By the time of Beethoven's late period, he was profoundly deaf, was involved in a bitter dispute over the custody of his nephew Karl, and was plagued by numerous illnesses.

¹³⁰ Lockwood, L: *Beethoven: the music and the life*, p.391, the finale of Op. 111 is described as an 'incomparable musical experience...that strives towards the heavens...'

¹³¹ Cooper, M: *French Music: From the Death of Berlioz to the Death of Fauré*, p.47

Dix Pièces Pittoresques and Fauré's *Nocturnes*. Franck's music also harnesses this characteristic, but within the context of a larger unity. Sections of long, expansive movements, which themselves are modified Beethovenian and Baroque forms, are clearly delineated by moments of silence, creating the effect of a series of miniatures being integrated into the unified whole – fluidity around clarity, unity around disunity.

However, the fact that this French attribute still subscribes to an overarching unity demonstrates the extent to which Franck draws from the older Austro-German tradition. Whilst it was inevitable his music would align itself with his contemporaries to a certain extent given the nationalistic climate of the time, it is this cosmopolitan influence that would leave the greatest impact on Franck's compositional approach. Through the harnessing of certain methods from his 'ideals', these three late works successfully establish a strong sense of coherence and an overarching unity. He uses many techniques to achieve this: inter-movement motivic continuity; the use of tonal organisation to form a continuous path of musical direction and an overarching sense of departure and return; harmonic language, incorporating both chromaticism and unconventional diatonic relationships, which have been shown to adhere to a coherent framework according to common-tone and semitonal harmonic proximity as well as creating instability that promises resolution; cyclic recurrences that help complete the journey; and the ultimate sense of reaching a goal in the closing bars with the final firm return to the home key. Each of these aspects function on various structural levels, and it is the co-existence of diversity at a surface-level and continuity on a broader level that allows Franck to convey unity so effectively. By incorporating and greatly modifying the formal, tonal and motivic procedures of his Austro-German predecessors, as well as the chromaticism and extensive use of mediant relationships of his contemporaries, this is made possible in each of these late compositions. Additionally, like Beethoven, Franck felt a close affinity to the music of Bach, and in the canonic Finale of the Violin Sonata and the outer movements of the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue* this is demonstrated explicitly. By harnessing certain textural techniques of Baroque Preludes, the unified nature implied by the Preludes and Fugues of the *Well-Tempered Clavier* (and modifying it to create a novel tripartite formal plan), and the long-standing tradition of a grand contrapuntal Finale, the overarching sense of unity is further articulated.

Forging a New Path

Certain aspects of Franck's compositional method would go on to be hugely influential on the next generation of French composers after his death in 1890. Elements of cyclic form, for

instance, are found in the String Quartets of Debussy and Ravel,¹³² both composed in 1893. These works convey motivic continuity across the movements in a cyclic structure, with Ravel's even incorporating more explicit instances of cyclic recurrence in the Finale – both composers, with this approach to thematic construction, are greatly indebted to Franck. Nevertheless both of these early works depart from Franck's idiom through their relative lack of functional harmony, with both Ravel and Debussy suggesting a new direction for French music with their exotic harmonies, extended chords and tonal ambiguity.

This departure was confirmed in 1894, when a work by Debussy was first performed that would prove to be a watershed moment in the development of modern music. The *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*, inspired by Mallarmé's poem of the same name, was revolutionary in its abandonment of traditional formal structures and functional tonality. By '[overthrowing]...the very concept of form itself...freed from the impersonal constraints of the scheme, giving wings to a supple, mobile expressiveness, demanding a technique of perfect instantaneous adequacy,'¹³³ Debussy created a new idiom altogether – one defined by a strong sense of formal and tonal ambiguity, and a lack of conventional harmonic function. However, the work is still tightly integrated at a thematic level, as it is constructed from a complex web of motivic cells, and from a structural perspective it is a 'miracle of proportion, balance and transparency'.¹³⁴ This co-existence of ambiguity and organisation, and the unifying force it provides, is pre-empted by Franck in his own late compositional output.

The best example of surface-level ambiguity in the three works of this study is found in the opening bars of the Violin Sonata (Example 9.2.1), where the tonic chord of A major is not firmly established until bar 8. From bars 1-5 a gentle series of inversions of dominant 9th chords are stated, before the instability is heightened by the introduction of a B minor harmony in bar 6 (although the upper line of the piano part outlines this triad from the start). This oscillation between a dominant extension and a more remote harmony serves to heighten the impact in the eighth bar, where the dominant 9th resolves to A major. Here the tonic is firmly established, and the ambiguity subsides.

¹³² Both of these composers were students at the Conservatoire in the years immediately preceding Franck's death, and being active musicians in Paris they would have been exposed to much (if not all) of his music from an early age.

¹³³ Boulez, P: 'Debussy', p.267

¹³⁴ Ibid

whose works are saturated with such chords. However, the opening of the Violin Sonata uses a very similar harmonic language, and as it was written two years before *Le Roi Malgré Lui*, surely it is Franck who 'changed the course of French harmony'? He also takes the technique a step further than Chabrier with the ethereal and ambiguous prolonged delay of a tonic key area – thus sharing more in common with future French composers who would depart from tonality entirely. The Prelude to *Le Roi Malgré Lui* on the other hand immediately introduces the tonic with the first chord of the first bar, and the presence of a firmly established home key remains despite the prevalence of harmonic extensions. In any case, the use of such chords in both of these works introduced a new preoccupation for French composers – the colour of harmonic extensions. Whilst in Chabrier's opera (and Franck's Violin Sonata, to a lesser extent) a distinctive effect is created by these additive chords in the context of a functional tonic key area, Debussy and others would emphasise the colouristic element of these sonorities by employing them in contexts that eschew conventional tonality, and this new and impressionistic sound-world would become synonymous with French music at the turn of the twentieth century.

Another way that Franck creates ambiguity is by establishing a conflict between harmonic function and the thematic process. Roy Howat speaks of this idea of misaligned structural levels in his analysis of Debussy's *Reflets dans l'eau*: 'what blurs [its] form is that the tonal plan and dynamic shape, especially in the later part of the piece, follow a course quite independent of the thematic sequence, marking a series of separate musical turning points'.¹³⁷ This same principle is harnessed in the three works under consideration here through the structural positioning and harmonic contexts of their cyclic recurrences. Whilst such instances of motivic recycling suggest a return and a completion of a cycle, they are placed in contexts of harmonic instability that delay the final resolution. Instances of this technique include: the numerous transpositions of the *Choral* theme in the coda of the *Prelude, Choral & Fugue* where the home key is continually returned to and departed from again; and the reappearance of the *Aria* theme in D₆ major in the last movement – the first cyclic restatement, and the only one not to appear in E major, the home key of the *Prelude, Aria & Finale*.

There is a particular moment in the Violin Sonata that provides the best example of this. The first section of Chapter 8 investigates an instance of cyclic recurrence in the third movement in relation to Beethoven's Piano Sonata Op. 101, and whilst there may be similarities in motivic treatment, the Violin Sonata exhibits a significant difference regarding structural function. In this work by Beethoven, the Finale is prepared with a short fragment from the

¹³⁷ Howat, R: *Debussy in Proportion*, p.24

start of the piece, which almost immediately resolves to the tonic for the start of the last movement. Here the structural levels are perfectly aligned: the harmonic return occurs at the same time as the motivic return. In the Violin Sonata however, this does not happen. When the opening theme is restated at the start of the third movement, it is presented in two remote key areas, before heralding almost an entire movement of harmonic instability. Whereas earlier the ambiguity is resolved after seven bars, here it takes a lot longer, and as a result the structural levels are not aligned. The tonal plan is following an independent course from the thematic sequence. Whilst the motivic process 'returns' at the start of the third movement, the tonal process does not resolve until the start of the Finale with the grand return of A major. This conflict creates the broad-scale ambiguity: whilst certain structural levels suggest resolution, others deny it, creating a feeling of disunity, despite the unified nature of the thematic process. However, this incorporation of formal, tonal and harmonic ambiguity only heightens the effect of the ultimate tonal resolution that occurs in the final bars of each work. The expectation of a return created by these disunifying aspects serves to increase the impact when the journey is eventually completed. It is this extended opposition of clarity and ambiguity at each structural level (where disrupting elements both counteract the surrounding coherence as well as supplement the overall unification of the works) that separates Franck's music from his Austro-German predecessors – A New French Unity.

It has therefore become apparent that Franck's late output exhibits certain contradictions in particular contexts of music history. He continues the evolutionary path of structural unity in classical forms laid down by Beethoven, Schubert and Liszt, but his works are too French to fall within this category. He was part of a school devoted to renewing French music and breaking from the shackles of Austro-German dominance throughout the nineteenth century, but his cosmopolitan approach often alienated him from his contemporaries. Using such colourful harmonies, as well as formal and tonal ambiguity to counteract the coherence of his unified formal plans was a significant starting point in the development of future French music, but the separation of Franck's work from the impressionistic sound-world of Debussy et al, means this connection is often overlooked. It is this defiance of any easy classification that makes Franck such an anomaly of the late Romantic period, and this stems from the complex nature of his musical direction. The way he draws upon a wide range of influences from the past (structural unity from the Austro-German masterworks, Liszt's cyclic incorporation of thematic transformations, contrapuntal writing from the German Baroque and some techniques from the French Baroque and earlier French organ music, as well as some unconventional diatonicism), the present (chromaticism and a frequent use of third relationships), whilst at the same time pre-empting the future (innovative use of cyclic

recurrences, ambiguity and the colouristic French approach to harmony), has made it difficult to view him as part of any tradition.

But whilst it is possible to make these broader generalisations about his late style after analysing the three works, considering them separately they are each ground-breaking and diverse examples of Franck's uniquely French take on structural unity. The remarkable effects created by the emotional intensity, deep spirituality, and formal, tonal, harmonic and thematic innovations allow his music to transcend the lack of any concrete adherence to a particular school, or to the nationalistic sensibilities of his contemporaries. This does make Franck an anomaly of the late Romantic period – but in its most positive connotation.

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