

Influences in Ernest Chausson's Piano Quartet

Ching-Yueh Chen

A dissertation

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Musical Arts

University of Washington

2018

Reading Committee:

Craig Sheppard, Chair

Carole Terry

Patricia Shehan Campbell

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

School of Music

© Copyright 2018

Ching-Yueh Chen

University of Washington

Abstract

Influences in Ernest Chausson's Piano Quartet

Ching-Yueh Chen

Chair of the supervisory committee:

Craig Sheppard
School of Music

The purpose of this study is to examine Chausson's Piano Quartet and to demonstrate how it was influenced by Franck, Wagner, Debussy, and elements of Spanish music. In his Piano Quartet, Ernest Chausson merges cyclical form (which he learned from Franck), a chromatic harmonic language (influenced by Wagner), ideas such as pentatonicism (imparted upon him by his younger friend Debussy), and exotic elements of Spanish music. The combination of these elements together makes his Piano Quartet stand out from his other works. Chausson's biographical background, his interests in literature and art, his compositional style, and the background of his Piano Quartet are also provided.

For my parents

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 1 Chausson and his Piano Quartet	
Biographical Background.....	4
Background of Piano Quartet.....	9
CHAPTER 2 Influence from Franck	
Franck's style and influence in Chausson.....	11
Evidence of Franck's influence in Chausson's work.....	14
CHPATER 3 Influence from Wagner	
Wagner's influence in France and on Chausson.....	25
Evidence of Wagnerian influence in Piano Quartet.....	27
CHPATER 4 Debussy and Pentatonicism	
Friendship with Debussy.....	35
Pentatonicism.....	37
Use of Octatonic and whole tone.....	46
Modal materials.....	47
CHAPTER 5 Spanish Elements	
Spanish music in France.....	50
Chausson's connection with Spain.....	51
Spanish idiom.....	52
Examples in Piano Quartet.....	53
CONCLUSION.....	63
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	65

Introduction

Like many of the fin-de siècle composers, Ernest Chausson was greatly influenced by Franck and Wagner, as shown by the three major biographical books on Chausson by Barricelli and Weinstein, Ralph Scott Grover, and Jean Gallois. The intention of this study is to examine his Piano Quartet, which provides a clear example of how Chausson developed his own style. In this work, he merges cyclical form (which he learned from Franck), a chromatic harmonic language (influenced by Wagner), ideas such as pentatonicism (imparted upon him by his younger friend Debussy), and exotic elements of Spanish music. The combination of these elements together makes his Piano Quartet stand out from his other works.

The Piano Quartet is very different from that of Chausson's other works, both with regard to the process of composition and with regard to its public reception. My study will bring more understanding and attention to this wonderful composition, as well as to its underappreciated composer, Chausson. This study will begin with Chausson's biographical background, his interests in literature and art, his compositional style, and the background of his Piano Quartet. Following this introductory section will be a discussion of how Chausson's Piano Quartet was influenced by Franck, Wagner, Debussy, and elements of Spanish music. I will also compare Chausson's Piano Quartet with his earlier compositions to highlight his use of these aforementioned aspects.

Chausson studied with Franck, and as a result, he often composed traditionally German composition genres, such as symphonies, piano trios, and piano quartets. From Franck, Chausson also inherited the use of cyclical form. Chausson first applied cyclical form in his Piano Trio (1881), then further developed the technique in his Piano Quartet

(1897). His treatment of motivic ideas, thematic transformation, and sequential writing all reveal the extent of Franck's influence.

French composers at Chausson's time (such as Chabrier, Duparc, Faure, and d'Indy) journeyed to Bayreuth or Munich to see performances of Wagner's operas, and Chausson was no exception. It was Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* that led Chausson to pursue music professionally.¹ Chausson's use of the *Tristan* chord showed that he was drawn to Wagner's chromatic sonorities, and Chausson's use of Wagner's 'endless melody' concept is additional evidence of Wagner's influence on him.

In his biography of Debussy, Edward Lockspeiser notes Debussy's close friendship with Chausson, and the two composers gave each other compositional suggestions and critiques. Debussy once wrote to Chausson, "You don't let yourself go enough and in particular you don't seem to allow enough play to that mysterious force which guide us towards the true expression of a feeling...I am convinced you have within you all the expression you could want, so it worries me to see you exhausting yourself in deedless conflict."² From pentatonic passages and whole tone segments in Chausson's Piano Quartet, we can see that Debussy inspired Chausson to free himself from Wagner.

The final component which makes Chausson's Piano Quartet unique is his use of Spanish elements. From George Bizet's *Carmen* to Debussy's *Iberia*, Spanish culture caught the interest of many French composers. Chausson's friendship with Albeniz and symphony tour in Spain are evidence of Chausson's direct connection with the country.

¹Ralph Scott Grover, *Ernest Chausson: The Man and His Music*. (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1980), 15

² Claude Debussy, *Debussy letters*, ed. François Lesure and Roger Nichols, translated by Roger Nichols. (London:Faber, 1987), 65

As a result, Spanish idioms such as the Phrygian mode, use of dance rhythms, and imitations of guitar are found in Chausson's Piano Quartet.

Chapter 1

Chausson and his Piano Quartet

Biographical Background

Most known for his *Poem* for violin and orchestra, Ernest Chausson was born in 1855 to a wealthy family in Paris. Chausson's parents were very protective of Ernest due to the deaths of his two older siblings, and they hired a private tutor for him rather than sending him to school. Chausson's unusually isolated childhood may have resulted in his solitary and melancholy personality. Later in his life, Chausson expressed this in a letter: "This relative solitude, along with the reading of a few morbid books, caused me to acquire another fault: I was sad without quite knowing why but firmly convinced that I had the best reason in the world for it."³ Mme. de Rayssac (the wife of the poet Sain-Cyr de Rayssac) and her salon played an important role in Chausson's upbringing. It was Léon Brethous-Lafargue, the private tutor hired by Chausson's parents, who introduced the young Chausson to Mme de Rayssac. As described by Jean Gallois, one of the biographers for Chausson, Brethous- Lafargue was "a true educator . . . Explication of the great classical works, frequenting of literary and musical circles, long visit in Parisian museums thus contributed to developing very early in the child not only an acute perception but also the taste for beauty in all its forms."⁴ At the very same salon, Chausson met his lifelong friend, the painter Odilon Redon. The two performed many duets, particularly works of Beethoven and Schumann, with Redon on violin and

³ Jean-Pierre Barricelli and Leo Weinstein, *Ernest Chausson: The Composer's Life and Works* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955), 6

⁴ Jean Gallois, *Ernest Chausson: L'homme et son oeuvre* (Paris: Éditions Seghers, 1967), 7

Chausson on piano.⁵ Even though he was interested in arts and literature, Chausson did not really pursue a career in music until he had satisfied his father's wishes by obtaining his law degree in 1876. After a trip to Munich in 1879, where Chausson heard a performance of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, the young composer entered the Paris Conservatory, studying under Massenet and Franck. One year later, Chausson decided to study with Franck exclusively, and he completed his formal studies in 1883. As the biographers Barricelli and Weinstein pointed out, "The influence through which Cesar Franck gain the hearts and minds of his students never turned into tyranny. No teacher was ever more respectful of his students' personalities: he did not permit them to copy his manner: he looked for any germs of originality in order to cultivate them. One cannot think without surprise at the variety of talents he formed. Thus Ernest Chausson did not know the shackles of a school or the burden of limitation. In his first works he was himself and expressed without restraint, effortlessly, the reveries of his youth."⁶ Along with other important disciples of Franck such as Vincent d'Indy and Henri Duparc, they were known as "*la bande à Franck*."⁷ In 1886, Chausson was elected as secretary of Société Nationale de Musique, an organization which was founded by Saint-Saëns and Romain Bussie in 1871 to promote French composers' works. This important post shows that Chausson was very involved with the late Romantic musical Renaissance in the France. With his wealth and administrative influence, he was able to help younger composers such as Debussy, Ravel, and Albeniz. In 1899, Chausson tragically died in a bicycle accident at the age of forty-four.

⁵ Grover. *Ernest Chausson*, 14

⁶ Barricelli and Weinstein, 18-19

⁷ Ibid, 17

Literature and Art interests

Chausson was fortunate enough to have the luxury not to live on composing, and so when his perfectionism caused him to constantly refine his works, it did not harm him financially. Due to his solitary personality, Chausson preferred to spend time away from the city. Many of his compositions were written during trips, often vacations in the countryside during the spring and summer. In Paris, during the winter, Chausson would refine these pieces.⁸ His family fortune also contributed to his broad interest in literature and his fine taste in arts. His wide range of interest in literature is evident in *Melodies*, for which Chausson set text from poems by Maurice Maeterlinck, Paul Verlaine, Théophile Gautier, Leconte de Lisle, Maurice Bouchor, and Shakespeare. In addition, the décor in Chausson's house at 22 Boulevard de Courcelles in Paris also displayed his tastes and interests, which were described by his close friend, the symbolist writer Camille Mauclair:

His home was a marvel of taste and art, graced by Henri Lerolle with delicate decorations: a gallery where the Odilon Redons and the Degas were neighbors with the Besnard, the Puvis (de Chavannes) and the Carrières. He lived there among the high, closed drapes, the pianos, the sober furniture, the scores and the books . . . The Friends who came often to spend the evening were the premier artists of our time. In the spacious study, shadowed, withdrawn from the noise of life, some faces were faintly illuminated in the half-light of the shaded lamps. Above everyone, the large family portrait by Eugène Carrière reared its tall silhouettes, the man strong and gentle, a large white form of a woman bending down, the smiling likeness of children. This was a pictorial record of delightful moments around a score.⁹

Chausson's residence in Paris was an important meeting place at the time, with an impressive guest list. Important figures in arts (Renoir, Degas, Rodin), literature

⁸ Grover. *Ernest Chausson*, 19

⁹ Quoted by Gaston Carraud in "Ernest Chausson," *Le Ménestrel* 82(April 2, 1920): 137-38.

(Mallarmé, Baudelaire, Verlaine), and music (Franck, Faure, Saint-Saëns, Ravel, Debussy) would gather here from time to time. Grover noted, "...given his intellectual curiosity concerning the various artistic movements swirling around him—Symbolism and Naturalism in literature, Impressionism and the Nabi train of thought in art—it would be very disappointing to see him uninvolved. One cannot imagine that the brilliant guest list at 22 Boulevard de Courcelles could possibly leave him unaffected.¹⁰ Even Debussy may have benefitted from Chausson's collections, as Constantin Brailoiu suggested in his article *Pentatony in Debussy's Music*, "We may possibly also remember Debussy's erudite friend Chausson, proprietor of a library of folklore, whose books might have passed through the composer's hands."¹¹

Chausson's Style

New Grove gives the following description of Chausson's compositional style: "While Chausson's early works sometimes suffer from an excess of trills and arpeggios borrowed from Massenet, clumsy modulations, too many overlapping and half-cadences and brutal major-minor oppositions- the legacy of 'Père Franck' awkwardly used by a composer still unsure of his technique—his language rapidly gained in solidity and personality. One soon encounters numerous well-constructed three- and four-note chords, remote but effective modulations that turn easily about the 5th degree either chromatically or enharmonically, grace notes, appoggiaturas, anticipations, even certain rhythms (quarter+triplet) and 7th chords that became the composer's hallmark, as well as the 11th chords that blossom in the final string quartet. As early as the song *Nocturne* of 1886 he was experimenting with Fauré's iridescent sonorities, and 'Debussyan' 9th

¹⁰ Grover. *Ernest Chausson*, 218

¹¹ Constantin Brailoiu, "Pentatony in Debussy's Music," *Studia Memoriae Belae Bartók Sacra*, 3d ed., (London: Boosey and Hawkes, Ltd., 1959), 414

arrived in the song *Amour d'antan* 1882. There are anticipations also of Ravel in *Serre d'ennui*, a song of 1893, and Koechlin's *La prère du mort Oraison*, of 1895."¹²

Edward Hill wrote of Chausson, "Chausson had perhaps the most spontaneous melodic gift of all Franck's pupils. His was essentially a lyric temperament...His music is pervaded by a gentle melancholy, often intensified to tragic sentiment, and above all by indefinable affectionate grace. It is, moreover, music of atmosphere and fine shades of poetic emotion."¹³ Indeed, it is Chausson's melodies and the melancholy quality of his music that often connect with listeners.

Though he entered the Paris Conservatoire considerably late, Chausson showed a deep understanding of piano. The piano parts in his vocal music and other chamber compositions were technically challenging but pianistic, utilizing continuous extended chords, thick harmonies, and arpeggios. The expressive violin solos in both Chausson's *Poème* and *Concert* also displayed his understanding of strings. Songs from his early years in the Conservatoire already showed some promise. Davies complimented these songs: "Considered as specimens of the *mélodie*, they are fluent and accomplished, melodious in style..."¹⁴

Chausson's use of extended tertian harmonies resulted in rich sonorities and textures, and his constant modulations added a degree of uncertainty. His chromatic motives and transitions added sentimentality. As Barricelli and Weinstein wrote, "There is turbulence and vagueness in Chausson's scores, and an incompleteness that serves both

¹² Jean Gallois, "Chausson, (Amédée-)Ernest." *Grove Music Online*. 2018

¹³ Edward Hill, *Modern French Music*. (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1924), 138

¹⁴ Davies, *Cesar Franck and His circle*. (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1970), 179

to obfuscate his deep lyricism and to permit the listener at all times the gratifying intercalation of his personal emotions. “¹⁵

Background of Piano Quartet

Written in 1897, the Piano Quartet in A major, Op.30 was dedicated to pianist Auguste Pierret, who played the premiere in 1898 at the Société Nationale concert. Pierret had previously saved the premiere of Chausson’s *Concert*, when the selected pianist dropped out due to the difficulty of the part.¹⁶ As Barricelli and Weinstein mentioned, “Of all the works *premièred* during Chausson’s lifetime this was by far the best received, with most of the applause going to the second and third movements.”¹⁷ Unlike many earlier works which Chausson struggled to complete, the Piano Quartet was finished in record time. The first movement was dated September 17 and the finale was dated October 23. They were composed at Veyrier near Lac d’Annecy.¹⁸ D’Indy described how the work represented a change for Chausson:

[The Piano Quartet] was to mark a culminating point of his work; and here it is evident that he had made an immense stride forward, quite as much in the merit and charm of the ideas as in the novelty of the form, in which cyclic constituents, rhythmically modified, end by acquitting a double nature, which enriches and greatly strengthens the architecture of the work.

It is a curious thing, especially when one reflects that the quartet was written only two years before the composer’s death, that, in this work, sadness seems to have given place to confidence. In fact, although the second cyclic theme (which appears first in the opening of the slow movement and reappears in the finale) is always in the major key-yet retaining an undoubted melancholic character- one might say that Chausson, free at last from his doubt and his distress, thinks only of a flight to new and loftier regions of art, into which a way- hitherto

¹⁵ Barricelli and Weinstein , 114

¹⁶ Ibid, 54

¹⁷ Ibid, 94

¹⁸ Ibid, 94

unexplored- will open for him, a way so soon afterwards debarred to him by an unforeseen catastrophe.¹⁹

Most of the sources agreed that the Piano Quartet was evidence of Chausson's maturity and was different from his earlier works. Barricelli and Weinstein described the Piano Quartet as "a work of real depth, lofty inspiration, and pure form. With fresh ideas, such as the cyclic treatment of thematic material and its rhythmic modifications, the whole architecture is strengthened and enriched...the Piano Quartet seems to exude surprising confidence, the unmistakable sign of an artist's attained maturity."²⁰ Hill agreed that Chausson's Piano Quartet "belongs definitely to Chausson's maturity, and justifies a permanent place among the best chamber music works of its time. The slow movement in particular is constructed upon an expensive melody of great nobility of sentiment."²¹

The quartet is written in four movements. The stylistic marking and keys for each movement are as follows: I. Animé (in A major), II. Très Calme (starts in D \flat major and ends in C# minor), III. Simple et sans hâte (starts in D minor and ends in D major), IV. Animé (starts in A minor and ends in A major). The outer movements, especially the last movement, are a combination of Sonata and cyclic forms. The second and third movements both use songlike melodies, and d'Indy suggested that the third movement "takes the place of a scherzo, seems to be constructed, thematically, on some folk-song..."²²

¹⁹ Vincent d'Indy, "Ernest Chausson," *Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music*, I, 267.

²⁰ Barricelli and Weinstein, 148

²¹ Hill, 140

²² Vincent d'Indy, 268

Chapter 2

Influence from Franck

Franck's style and influence in Chausson

As scholar Martin Cooper pointed out, “Both Wagner and Franck, parallel and complementary influences in French music, deflected the interest of a whole generation away from plastic, pictorial, or architectural, interests towards that of emotional expression.”²³ Indeed, Chausson was a member of the generation that was highly influenced by Franck and Wagner. The upcoming section will detail Franck's influence on Chausson with particular focus on his early Piano Trio and on his Piano Quartet.

To know and understand what training and influences Chausson had with Franck, it is important to understand Franck's musical philosophy. Born in Belgium, Franck was a child prodigy with a controlling father who planned to imitate Liszt's virtuoso concert career for his son. The family moved to Paris in 1836, and later Franck entered the conservatoire. He studied piano and composition, earning a distinction for writing fugue. Franck was grounded in German composition genres: he was trained to write fugues, favored Bach as an organist, and studied with Anton Reicha (a contemporary and friend of Beethoven), who also taught Berlioz, Liszt, and Gounod. Franz Liszt also influenced Franck a great deal (not only because of his father's attempt to have him imitate Liszt's career). In fact, Liszt advised Franck to re-arrange the finale of his Piano Trio. Most of his compositions use Liszt's concepts of thematic transformation and cyclic structure. Though it could be traced back to Beethoven and Liszt, it is Franck's cyclical writing,

²³ Martin Cooper, *French Music: From the Death of Berlioz to the Death of Fauré*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), 3

thematic transformation, sequential writing, and harmonic colors that most directly influenced Chausson.

Martin Cooper also commented on the similarities between Franck and Liszt: “Franck shared with Liszt a passionate admiration for the great German classics, especially the later works of Beethoven, and this solid basis assured a generally high level of craftsmanship, a mastery—at least technical, if not always psychological—of fugal and symphonic structure which was rare in France outside his circle.”²⁴ Indeed, Franck’s originality can be found in the traditionally German musical genres: his String Quartet, Piano Quintet, Violin Sonata, and Symphony. Franck typically begins with a motive before developing the rest of the material. At a time when French music was dominated by salon music and opera, Franck continued to believe that one can still express their conviction for music through fugues, sonatas, symphonies, and variations.²⁵ He was also the earliest French composer to attempt to write a symphonic poem. It was because of Franck that Chausson stayed in touch with these German genres.

As d’Indy pointed out in his biography of Franck, Franck’s compositional process consisted of three stages: *the conception, the planning out, and the execution*.²⁶ The first step included general planning of the work, searching for inspiration, and deciding on the essential elements: the themes and musical ideas. Next came the process, where he mapped out how to use the elements that had been collected. Lastly, the *execution* referred to the writing process which concluded the final presentation of the work.

According to d’Indy, Franck would often play works by Bach, Beethoven, or Schumann,

²⁴ Cooper, 47

²⁵ Grover. *Ernest Chausson*, 43

²⁶ Vincent d’Indy, *Cesar Franck*. Translated by Rosa Newmarch. (London: The Bodley Head LTD., 1909), 97

searching for his inspiration through the excitement and the musical noise.²⁷ Vallas gave the following description of Franck's melodic characteristics:

Franck's abundant melodic vein is rich and fluid; his melodies are personal in their outline and in their inflexions, with a characteristic accentuation of their own. His melodic expression is usually couched in short phrases which do not extend over any great length, but repeat themselves—four-square symmetrical phrases that grow naturally, persist, revolve round themselves with a continual sinuous movement, often taking for a basis a single note as if it were a musical pivot, or forming an ornamental embroidery of mobile intervals sound one stable sound.²⁸

In extensive studies of Franck's influences on Chausson, Grover listed Franck's two ways of writing transitions: either as short, passing modulations amounting to colorful harmonic touches within the basic framework of a definite key, or as short but continuous passing modulations used as cumulative links in an extended passage. These extended passages may either begin and end in the same key or begin in one key and end in another. In the first instance, the transitions accomplish no permanent modulation, while in the second they do. The last two or three passing modulations were the deciding factors in the establishment of a new key.²⁹

Scholars attribute Franck's cyclic writing method as an influence on Chausson: starting with his earliest larger instrumental work, Piano Trio, Op.3, and realized fully in his Piano Quartet. The cyclic writing method was explained by d'Indy as "the idea of constructing an important work upon the basis of a single theme, concurrent with other melodies, which also reappear in the course of the work, thus creating a musical cycle."³⁰

Norman Demuth also provided the following explanation:

²⁷ Ibid, 100

²⁸ Léon Vallas, *César Franck*. Trans. By Hubert Foss. (London: Harp, 1951), 265-66

²⁹ Grover. *Ernest Chausson*, 59

³⁰ D'Indy. *Cesar Franck*, 88


The basic idea of this form is to weld the movements of a symphony or sonata into a homogeneous whole by the use of the initial material. This can be done in several ways. The most obvious is the introduction of or direct reference to the material in each successive movement...the principal theme of the first movement is often quote in extensor as a climax. Each movement has its own particular themes and the method is to base the entire material of each movement on the initial phrase or phrases...sometimes the basis may be a mere succession of notes which arise out of the progress of the work. These notes not being sounded thematically at any time, become apparent as the work progresses. A more abstruse way is to use mere fragments of separate melodies in the make-up of the successive subjects.³¹

Evidence of Franck's influence in Chausson's work

The following examples from Chausson's Piano Trio demonstrate how Chausson followed Franck's cyclical form during his early years. Traces of the first movement's motives can be found in the later movements. During the slow introduction in the first movement, the piano part has the melody (B \flat -A-B \flat -C-D-E \flat -D-F \sharp -D) embedded within broken chord figures in sixteenth notes, and this embedded motive later becomes the second theme in the second movement (m.98) in A major (C \sharp -B-C \sharp -A-B-C \sharp) and later in G-flat major (m.318).



(Trio, 1st mvt, opening, Piano)



(Trio, 2nd mvt, m.98, violin)

³¹ Norman Demuth, *Cesar Franck* (London: Dennis Dobson LTD, 1949), 53.

The cello breaks the silence with two quick thirty-second notes leading to a chromatic descending line followed by a response in the violin. That later becomes the opening theme for the third movement. The use of this rapid thirty-second note motive can be associated with Franck's piano Quintet, which was premiered in 1880, one year prior to Chausson's Trio. Both works begin with a slow introduction and having running sixteenth notes in the piano during the transition to the fast section.

a Tempo



(Trio, 1st mvt, m.3, cello)



(Trio, 1st mvt, m.7, violin)



(Trio, 3rd mvt, opening, piano)

The motive from m.7 in the first movement also returns in the last movement alongside the cello, which is playing the motive from m.32 in the first movement.



(Trio, 4th mvt, m.333)

After the slow intro, the Animé enters with the violin introducing a theme which reoccurs in the last movement in the piano while the strings play the other two motives from the first movement.



(Trio, 1st mvt, m.32, violin)



(Trio, 4th mvt, m.312, piano)



(Trio, 4th mvt, m.314)

In addition to using themes from earlier movements in later movements, Chausson also applied thematic transformation, which was passed on to him by Franck and can be traced even further back, to Franck's studies with Liszt.

The short violin motive in m.51 in the first movement later changes to a dotted rhythm in the last movement.



(Trio, 1st mvt, m.51, violin)



(Trio, 4th mvt, m.8, violin)

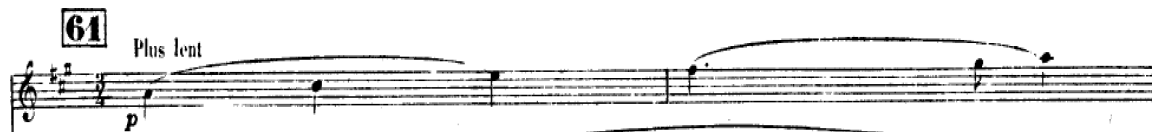
The motive at m.56 of the first movement, originally played by cello, later returns played by the piano in last movement.

(Trio, 1st mvt, m.56, cello)(Trio, 4th mvt, m.139, piano)

These examples from Chausson's Piano Trio serve to demonstrate how Chausson reuses motives and transforms themes. Chausson treated his Piano Quartet differently from the Piano Trio: in the Piano Quartet, he created an original theme for each movement, but also had motives from the earlier movements reoccur in the last movement as a way to tie themes together and conclude the work. Viewing the opening theme of each movement from the Piano Quartet side by side, we can see they are very different from each other, unlike in the Piano Trio, in which themes from earlier movements grew into themes in later movements.

(Piano Quartet, 1st mvt. Opening, piano)(Piano Quartet, 2nd mvt. Opening, viola)(Piano Quartet, 3rd mvt. Opening, cello)(Piano Quartet, 4th mvt. Opening, piano)

In Piano Quartet, Chausson applied cyclical form by reintroducing motives from the earlier movements in the final movement. The second movement returns in the key of A major as a slow section (Chausson marked 'plus lent') in the last movement starting in m.394. In sonata form, motives are often represented in the original key during their recapitulation. In this case, the motive returns in A major during the last movement (played by the violin) because the last movement (and the quartet as a whole) is in A major, even though the theme was written in D \flat major in the second movement (played by the viola).



(Piano Quartet, 4th mvt. M.394, violin)

Although the later movements' main themes were not derived from the motives in the earlier movements, many small segments did frequently recur. This embodies two of Franck's concepts: cyclical writing and thematic transformation. The following is a list of several examples:

1) The opening motive from the first movement (A-E-F#-C#) with the descending fourth figure starts to recur in m.368 (in the top voice of the piano, E-B-C#-G#), m.416 (piano, A-E-F#-C#), and in a dotted rhythm for the last four bars.



(Piano Quartet, 4th mvt. M.368, Piano)



(Piano Quartet, 4th mvt. M.374, Piano)

Another example (though in the opposite direction) is the second theme in the third movement (m.35), which opens with the interval of a fourth.



(Piano Quartet, 3rd mvt. M.35)

2) In m.89 of the first movement (C-B \flat -G-B \flat -C) the interval relations are similar to those in the final movement at m. 77(F-E \flat -C \flat -D \flat -E \flat).



(Piano Quartet 1st movement m.89, piano)



(Piano Quartet, 4th mvt. M.77, Piano)

3) It is possible to make the argument that the dance-like rhythmic pattern in m. 25 (in the piano part) of the last movement is similar to the opening measure of the third movement. Though the former is in 6/8 and the latter is in 3/4, the actual rhythmic timing is the same: two quarter notes followed by two eighth notes (in the last movement, the quarter notes are replaced by pairings of eighth notes and eighth rests).



... (Piano Quartet, 4th mvt. M.25)

In the coda which closes the final movement, Chausson simultaneously has the violin playing the main theme from the final movement, the viola and cello playing the opening theme of the second movement, and the piano playing the opening theme from the first movement.

(Piano Quartet, 4th mvt. M.415)

There are earlier examples of Chausson having multiple themes played at the same time:

1) In the first movement coda (m.450) when the top voice of the piano presents the opening theme interval sequence and the syncopated rhythm of the second theme motive.

(Piano Quartet, 1st mvt. M.450)

2) In m.86 of the final movement, the violin reminisces about the opening theme from the second movement (G \flat -B \flat -E \flat -F-G \flat) while the piano accompanies the violin with a motive transformation from the first movement (m.89) and answers with the first movement's opening theme (G \flat -D \flat -E \flat -B \flat) in m.93

(Piano Quartet, 4th mvt. M.86 violin)(Piano Quartet, 4th mvt. M.93)

Within each movement, Chausson develops certain motives through thematic transformation. The opening theme has a prominent descending fourth interval, and Chausson later builds several other ideas around the interval of a perfect fourth. In m. 147 the fourths occur sequentially with the whole notes F \sharp -C \sharp -D \sharp -A \sharp in the piano. The opening motive continues in m.159 it occurs as a decorative accompaniment figure in the piano part, in m.179 it is stretched into 5/4 meter with the melody in quarter notes before the original motive returns in E \flat major, and in m. 288 the piano part splits the melody by having both hands playing same notes in different octaves one after another (as will be discussed later, that technique is similar to the Spanish composer Albeniz's

writing). In m.318, the rhythm has changed but the interval between the notes in the melody (presented in viola) remains the same as the opening motive. More variations return, with a dotted rhythm in m.336 (violin), a quick decorative figure in the piano at m.424, and with the rhythm slightly modified to a quarter note followed by half note in m.450.



(Piano Quartet, 1st mvt. M159, piano)



(Piano Quartet, 1st mvt. M.318, viola)



(Piano Quartet, 1st mvt. M336, violin)



(Piano Quartet, 1st mvt. M.424)

In the motive from m.89 of the first movement, C steps down a major second then down a minor third before reversing symmetrically (C-B \flat -G-B \flat -C). This later becomes the development material from m.202 to m.248, which returns in various forms in m. 372 and in m. 386, where both the interval relationships and syncopation-like rhythmic patterns are similar.

(Piano Quartet, 1st mvt. M.89)(Piano Quartet, 1st mvt. M.212, violin)(Piano Quartet, 1st mvt. M.372, viola)

The second and third movement each have their own theme and motive, and they are not derived from the first movement. Though neither of the movements was written in theme and variation form, we can still see Chausson varied the motives as the movement progressed. For example, in m.111 of the second movement, before the opening theme (played by violin in C# minor), the theme exists in the piano part as the first note of each group in the accompaniment figure.

(Piano Quartet, 2nd mvt. M.111 Piano)

In the last movement, the opening fast sixteenth note figure later changes into an eighth note melody line (in 3/4 this time) which passes from one instrument to another in m.198, then later changes to a triplet figure in m.244. In m.350, the repeated notes are presented in different octaves in the piano (which will be discussed further in the Spanish

element portion), and lastly in the coda (starting m.402) the motive occurs as a double-dotted rhythm in the bass line of the piano.



(Piano Quartet 4th mvt. M.198 viola)



En pressant peu à peu

(Piano Quartet 4th mvt. M.244 cello)

Also noteworthy is Chausson's use of dotted rhythm sequences (with half steps). In earlier works such as the third movement of *Concert for Piano, Violin and String Quartet*, Chausson favors long sustained lines, and there is a resemblance to m.25 in the second movement of the Piano Quartet (and later in the double-dotted notes at m.68). In the last movement, the dotted rhythm combined with the syncopated motive in m.326 is also very striking. The double-dotted bass line also appears in m.402 of the final movement.

Chapter 3

Influence from Wagner

Wagner's influence in France and on Chausson

Richard Wagner was perhaps the greatest figure in the late romantic era. He influenced not just music, but also drama, visual art, and literature. Even with the growing nationalism in France after the Franco-Prussian war, many French artists in different fields were still greatly influenced by Wagner. In the literary world, as Martin Cooper stated, “Wagner had become the idol of the symbolist or ‘decadent’ school of poetry, the *avant-garde* of the literary world led by Stephane Mallarmé and proclaimed by Catulle Mendès in the epilogue to his *Richard Wagner*.”³² In addition, the *Revue Wagnérienne*, a group formed by French intellectuals including Édouard Dujardin and Villiers de l’Isle Adam, aimed to help the French public understand Wagner’s personality and non-musical works.³³ Musically, composers imitated Wagner’s harmony and orchestration.

Evidence showed that Wagner influenced many French composers: from Massenet’s use of leitmotif in his *Esclamonde* to Franck’s *Les Eolides* and d’Indy’s *Wallenstein*. Similar to Chausson’s opera *Le Roi Arthur*, Chabrier’s *Gwendoline* also had Wagnerian elements. Contrastingly, Saint-Saëns and Fauré chose not to follow in the Wagnerian style after attending performances of Wagner’s music in Bayreuth. Debussy

³² Cooper, 56

³³ Ibid.57

found his own stylistic innovations, but even so, influence from *Tristan* and *Parsifal* can be found in *La Mer*.³⁴

Records show that Chausson went to Bayreuth for performances of *Parsifal* in 1882 and 1889, as well as trips to Munich for *Tristan* in 1879 and 1880. In his letter to Mme. De Raysaac in 1880, Chausson showed his admiration for Wagner without any reservation: “I have heard *Tristan*, which is marvelous; I don’t know any other work which possesses such intenseness of feeling. As pure music it is splendid and of the highest order; as way of understanding the musical drama it is a revolution. Gluck already had a presentiment of it, but since then people have hardly thought about it. Wagner has taken up his work, has enlarged and transformed it, and created a new art which will inevitably overturn the old molds of the opera.”³⁵ From Wagner, Chausson took the thick and chromatic harmonic language, the orchestration, and the leitmotif technique.³⁶

As a listener and pianist, I found the sonority and harmonic layout of Chausson’s chamber music with piano to be quite similar to how Donald Grout describes Wagner’s harmonic procedure in *Tristan*:

Modulations induced by enharmonic changes in chromatically altered chord and forwarded by modulating sequences; the interchangeable use of major and minor modes and the frequency of the mediants and the flat supertonic as goals of modulation; the determination of chord sequences by chromatic progression of individual voices; the presence of ‘harmonic parentheses’ within a section, related to the tonality of the whole as auxiliary notes or appoggiaturas are related to the fundamental harmony of the chord with which they occur; the systematic treatment of sevenths (and even ninths) as consonant chords other than the

³⁴ Chen-Ju Chiang, “An Examination of the German Influence on Thematic Development, Development, Chromaticism and Instrumentation in Ernest Chausson’s Concert for Piano, Violin and String Quartet, Op.21” D.M.A. diss., (ProQuest Dissertations and These, 2006), 39

³⁵ Barricelli and Weinstein, 11

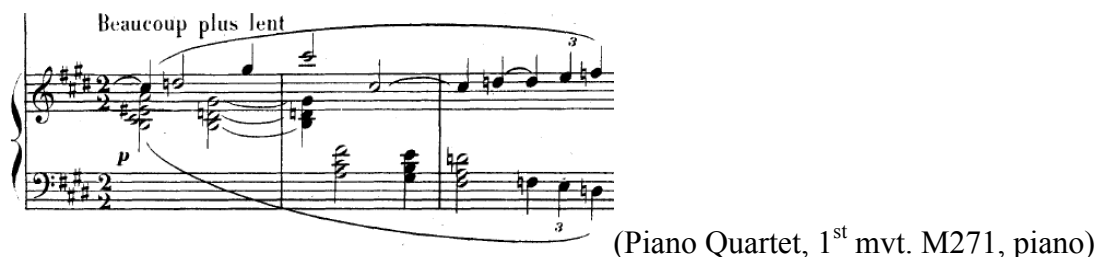
³⁶ Jean Gallois, “Chausson, (Amédée-)Ernest.” *Grove Music Online*. 2018

tonic; the combination of melodies in a contrapuntal tissue; and finally, the frequent suspensions and appoggiaturas in the various melodic lines, which contribute as much as any single factor to the peculiar romantic, Wagnerian, ‘longing’ quality of the harmony—a quality heard in perfection in the prelude to *Tristan und Isode*.³⁷

Evidence of Wagnerian influence in Piano Quartet

The following examples are provided as evidence of Wagner’s influence on Chausson’s Piano Quartet, such as chromatic lines, the endless melody, and the *Tristan* Chord.

In m.271 of the first movement of the Piano Quartet, the piano line uses the notes C#-D-G#-C#, with a half step followed by an augmented fourth, then a perfect fourth. Though this is a horizontal presentation rather than a vertical one, there are similarities to the Tristan chord (F-B-D#-G#). Though it is not the exact spelling, they share the characteristic of a perfect fourth and augmented fourth coexisting at the same time.



The Tristan chord can be respelled as a half-diminished seventh chord, and many evidences of half-diminished seventh chords are spotted in the Piano Quartet. It is worth discussing whether the usage of these chords is closer to that of the Tristan chord, or whether it is being used as an impressionist color. Beginning with mm.229-234 of the

³⁷ Donald Grout, *A short History of Opera*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947), 390-91

first movement, Chausson created a sequence of half-diminished chords followed by dominant seventh chords, and the continuous nature of this sequence caused the key center to be ambiguous. This is particularly noteworthy in m.229, where the G[#]-B-D-F[#] is followed by a C[#] dominant seventh chord. Chausson used chromatic motion, moving from E[#]-F^x-G[#] upon the arrival of the C[#] dominant seventh chord. This adds the illusion that the F[#] (seventh of the G[#] half-diminished seventh chord) did not resolve, and the ambiguity is quite similar to that of the Tristan Chord. In m.235, there is an E half-diminished seventh chord (E-G-B^b-D), in which the D (considered as the seventh) steps down to C natural in the next measure but leads to an F[#] minor chord in m.237. This passage is similarly unexpected, ambiguous, and not fully resolved, because Chausson continued on to another half-diminished seventh chord (G[#]-B-D-F[#]). The entire passage starting at m.229 features the top voice moving chromatically: this fits with Grout's description of the Tristan harmonic procedure which was referenced earlier.



(Piano Quartet, 1st mvt. M.229)

M.281 of the first movement is both preceded and followed by a C[#] major triad. In m. 281, Chausson writes a chord consisting of C[#]-D-G[#]-F[#]-B[#]: similar to *Tristan*, a perfect fourth and augmented fourth coexist without resolving, though the motion here is not as chromatic. In m.294 of the same movement (A-C-E^b-G), though also passing quickly, it is noteworthy that Chausson uses enharmonic spellings (D[#] to E^b, and [in m.297] G[#] in the violin but A^b in the piano) and the voice leading was more significant.

Here, the half-diminished seventh harmony also remains unresolved while the violin moves chromatically. In m.464 of the piano part in the first movement, Chausson writes a chord consisting of A-B \flat -E-G \sharp -D. This chord not only has perfect fourth and augmented fourth sonorities coexisting, but it also moves chromatically: B \flat moves to B \natural and F moves to E.



(Piano Quartet, 1st mvt. Mm.463-465)

There are other examples of this type of sonority that do not involve half-diminished seventh chords. In mm.70-72 in the last movement, Chausson writes a D \sharp minor triad in m.70 then presented the F dominant seventh chord in the order of E \flat -A-C-F in m.71. Here again, perfect fourths and augmented fourths coexist, followed by an F \sharp half-diminished seventh chord in the next measure. This results in a chromatic line during these three measures which moves from F \sharp -F \flat -E. Once again, Chausson writes a series of harmonies which move chromatically and evade a resolution.

Very similar to the *Tristan* opening, a melodic line consisting of four ascending half steps (G \sharp -A-A \sharp -B) happens in many of the transitions in Chausson's Piano Quartet, though in some cases the interval between the four notes in Chausson's melody is modified to half-whole-half (half of an octatonic scale) as opposed to Wagner's melody, which consists entirely of half steps. For example, m.201 in the first movement (D-E \flat -F-G \flat) and m.273 in the first movement (C \sharp -D-E-F), both can be interpreted as segments of

the octatonic scale. However, both examples have contrary motion in another voice, so the chromatic purpose is stronger here. In m.14 of the second movement, though the violin line of G \flat -F-E \flat -D \flat is not in all half steps, it is in contrary motion with the piano's line of B \flat -C \flat -C \sharp -D \flat . In m.139 of the second movement, the piano has D-E \flat -F-G \flat , then the violin joins the piano for the next two bars with F-F \sharp -G \sharp -A and A \flat -A \sharp -B-C, three little segments of the octatonic scale in sequence which lead to the all half-step two-bar phrase in m.142-143 (in violin C-C \sharp -D-E \flat -E \sharp -F). This all chromatic motion is a preparation for the grand moment in m.144 as the opening theme returns for the last time. These chromatic/octatonic passages occur elsewhere, including m.72 of the final movement (violin, C-B-A-G \sharp -A-A \flat -G \flat), m.325 (C \sharp -D-E-F), and mm.391-393 (D-D \sharp -E-E \sharp -F \sharp -F \sharp -G \sharp). Chausson places these chromatic phrases mostly in the transitions between sections, and even when some segments include whole steps, there is typically another voice in contrary motion, preserving the similarities to Wagner's *Tristan*.

In Dahlhaus's *Between Romanticism and Modernism*, Dahlhaus gives a thoughtful explanation of Wagner's *Zukunftsmusik* (Music of the Future) and the idea of Wagner's 'endless melody.' Dahlhaus says, "the primary meaning of the term, 'endless melody,' which is often misused and should by no means be treated exclusively as a technical expression, is not that the parts of a work flow into each other without caesuras but that every note has meaning, that the melody is language and not empty sound. The technical characteristic, the absence of formal cadences, is merely a consequence of the aesthetic

factor: cadences are regarded as formulas, syntactic but not semantic components—in short, they express nothing and are therefore to be avoided or concealed.”³⁸

Chausson’s constant modulation might be influenced by Franck, but his tonal planning is not exactly as logical as Franck’s. However, the way that Chausson builds a short motivic segment continuously from one instrument to another can be associated with Wagner’s ‘endless melody.’ The first example is from m.63 in the first movement, in which the strings play two bar phrase sequences while the piano provides the harmony. It moves from V7 of D \flat major, then V7 of D major, V7 of C major, V7 of E \flat major, V7 of G major, V7 of C major, an A minor 7th, then V7 of B \flat major. Though dominant 7ths may create the feeling of an incomplete cadence, the way that one key shifts to another can be seen to be accommodating the chromatic sequences of the melody. This is similar to what Grout mentions in *Tristan*, that the determination of chord sequences is made by chromatic progression of individual voices. This also occurs in m.261-273 and m.412 of the first movement. Chausson has a tendency to use secondary dominants and extended chords (9th, 11th) moving chromatically.

Another characteristic Grout points out in *Tristan* is the use of enharmonic changes for modulation, and we can also find Chausson using similar procedures. For example, in m.167 of the first movement, the piano part contains an F# tied to the enharmonic tone G-flat in the next bar. Additionally, the melodies are in a “contrapuntal tissue”, where they are played by different instruments, with one interrupting another with no clear cadential arrival until m.179 in B major. This can be considered as another example of ‘endless melody.’

³⁸ Carl Dahlhaus, *Between Romanticism and Modernism*. Trans. By Mary Whittall. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 56

7 En pressant un peu

7 En pressant un peu

Pressez

en - aug - men - tant

en - aug - men - tant

Pressez

en - aug - men - tant

(Piano Quartet, 1st mvt. M.167)

There is additional evidence of Chausson using enharmonic changes for modulation: In the second movement in mm.152-153, Chausson changes the key from D-flat major to E major, with an enharmonic modulation from D-flat to C-sharp (and the C-sharp returns back to D-flat in m.155-56). In m.84-85 of in third movement, a G-flat to F-sharp enharmonic modulation occurs with a ninth chord arpeggio underneath. However, the melody is rather whole-tone at this point, so this particular case might be closer to Debussy's harmonic language than Wagner's.

In m.61 of the second movement, the harmony moves from an E dominant seventh to an F dominant seventh for two measures, then a G dominant seventh and a D half-diminished seventh in second inversion, before arriving on an A half-diminished seventh in m.65. It is possible to consider m.61 a deceptive cadence, however the

passage at m.68 is even more clearly similar to Wagner's 'endless melody', both because of the several consecutive dominant sevenths and because the usage of enharmonic notes from mm.60-61 (A \flat -G \sharp), and mm.73-74 (F \sharp -G \flat).

In addition to the passage quote earlier, Grover also makes quite a thorough study on Wagner's influence on Chausson via melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic aspects. He claims that many of the similar sonorities between the two composers still function very differently. He also stated that Chausson's use of chromaticism, suspensions, appoggiaturas, voice-leading, and postponed cadences (elements which are considered among the most important characteristics of Wagner's music) are inconsistently utilized. Though the usage might be inconsistent on works that Grover examines, these works do not include Chausson's chamber pieces with piano. Many of Chausson's songs also contain the *Tristan* chord which prove that Wagner's influence played a big part in Chausson's music.

All through his lifetime and after, Chausson was criticized as too 'Wagnerian.' It was a struggle for Chausson, and he once expressed his frustration after learning Wagner's death in 1883, "I have done all could in order to avoid being too Wagnerian... the red specter of Wagner that does not let go of me. I reach the point of detesting him. Then I look through his pages, trying to find hidden vices in him and I find them."³⁹ With his frequent traveling, Chausson spent considerable time in Italy, Spain, Germany, and Belgium, which had exposed him to a wide variety of cultural influences. In fact, Chausson always had broad interests in music, dating back to 1874 when he heard Wagner's music. Chausson also mentioned in a letter to his friend Redon, "Voici bien du

³⁹ Barricelli & Weinstein, 27-28

dérangement, mais Schumann en vaut la peine et nous sommes tous des Schumannistes enragés.”⁴⁰(Here it is bothersome, but Schumann is worth the pain and we are all fervent Schumanists) In Chausson’s later life, he tried to ‘de-Wagner’ himself by actively seeking other influences. The best place to start is by discussing Debussy, his friendship with Chausson, Chausson’s approach with pentatonicism, and other similar Debussian characteristics that Chausson adopted in his Piano Quartet.

⁴⁰ Chausson, Ernest. *Écrits Inédits: journaux intimes, roman de jeunesse, correspondance*. Edited by Jean Gallois. (Monaco: Editions du Rocher, 1999), p.10

Chapter 4

Debussy and Pentatonicism

Friendship with Debussy

Debussy and Chausson were introduced through their mutual friend, Raymond Bonheur. The friendship developed after a Société concert that premiered Debussy's *La Damoiselle élue* in 1893. As Paul Roberts pointed out, "The friendship between Debussy, Chausson, and Lerolle was a meeting of minds, a rediscovery of youth, and a celebration of an essentially male companionship."⁴¹ It was Chausson who welcomed and helped Debussy through his difficult time, not only providing him with jobs playing piano versions of Wagnerian operas, but also paying for the first deluxe edition of Debussy's *Poèmes de Baudelaire* and *La Damoiselle élue*.⁴² "It is a mark of Chausson's character that he was not offended that the promotion of Debussy's music should be at the expense of his own: one review of the concert in April 1893, which had also included work by Chausson, savaged his music and everything the Société Nationale stood for, with the sole exception of its discovery of Monsieur Claude Debussy."⁴³ Debussy wrote in 1893, "As for your sermons, they are always very dear to me; you somewhat like a big, older brother in whom one has complete confidence and from whom one even accepts an occasional scolding; and forgive me if until now I have not succeeded in satisfying you, but rest assured nevertheless that any reproach from you would grieve me so much that it is impossible for me not to do all in my power so as never to deserve any."⁴⁴ Though

⁴¹ Paul Roberts, *Claude Debussy*. (London;New York: Phaidon, 2008), 118

⁴² Barricelli & Weinstein, 37

⁴³ Ibid, 116

⁴⁴ Ibid, 64

trying to minimize Wagner's influence for quite some time, it was through close interaction with Debussy that Chausson lightened up his music and experimented with a new harmonic language (even though Wagnerian harmony played a big role in Debussy's development as well).

Grover points out that Debussy's influences on Chausson's quartet were: usage of segments of the whole tone scale, tritone relationships, and usage of cross rhythms.⁴⁵ These new elements added an impressionist flavor to Chausson's music. Of course, it is the context of a harmonic language that makes it sound new and refreshing to listeners: Debussy referred to it as 'mise en place,' the rigorous choice of what precedes and what follows.⁴⁶ In Chausson's Piano Quartet, the extended tertian harmonies, half-diminished seventh chords, and dissonance in the melody are all ambiguous enough on their own that they can lean toward either the Wagnerian side or toward the Debussy side depending on the context. It is worth discussing and examining how Chausson handles the same material with different contexts. Grover uses Debussy's string quartet as a comparison for many of the examples, because it was the only chamber piece that Debussy composed during Chausson's lifetime. Grover points out the second theme in the third movement (mm.35-41) generally resembles the opening of Debussy's *Clair de lune* from *Suite Bergamesque* with regard to the melodic contour, rhythmic pattern, and the suspensions. Another example, also in third movement (m.95-96), is the unresolved parallel chords, which are similar to *Pelléas* (III, p.129, m.5-6).⁴⁷ There is a cross rhythm between piano (eighth notes) and the strings (continuous sixteenth notes) in the last movement that is in the same spirit as the second movement of Debussy's string quartet. Though it can be

⁴⁵Grover, 296

⁴⁶ Jann Pasler, "Impressionism." *Grove Music Online*. 2018

⁴⁷ Ibid, 297

argued that it was not exclusively used by Debussy, Grover notes that having each hand playing the same material in different octaves was characteristic to Debussy's writing.⁴⁸ Chausson writes a similar passage in mm. 77-79 of the last movement of the Piano Quartet. Chausson's late work "Forlane" from *Quelque Danse* also has both hands playing in unison in a Debussian manner.

In Grover's analysis, he also associates the use of tritone in m.25 of the third movement (D-A \flat) with Debussy,⁴⁹ and there are additional similar examples in mm.47-48 (G \flat -C), mm.50-51, and mm.140-141 (B \flat -E).

Chausson's use of cross rhythm is also noteworthy, and there is evidence of his usage in previous works as well. In his Piano Quartet, though Chausson does not mark a new time signature, the rhythmic grouping in the piano versus the strings can be considered 6/8 vs. 3/4. In last movement mm.103-122, the piano part is grouped in 2, though the big beats make sense in 6/8. The dotted sixteenths create a feeling of 4 against 3, and more cross rhythms occur during m.298-324. In the last movement, the piano and strings are 2 against 3 starting at m.198, and in m.244 this becomes 3 against 4.

Pentatonicism

The chromatic harmony and constant modulation in Chausson's music perhaps distracts from the first sprouts of pentatonic material in his melodies. Edward Lockspeiser calls attention to a letter written by Renoir in 1882, in which he describes his meeting with Richard Wagner. He says: "We spoke of the Impressionists of music." Lockspeiser speculates that Renoir may have been attempting to describe to Wagner the

⁴⁸ Grover, 286-305

⁴⁹ Ibid, 296

works of Fauré, Duparc, Chabrier, and Chausson.⁵⁰ Grover also points out Chausson's association with pentatonicism, "It may very well be that Chausson was not consciously creating a pentatonic atmosphere in *La Pluie*, although in the very next year—1889—he did include an all 'black note' pentatonic melody (with the single exception of the final note) in the first movement of his symphony in B-flat major, a circumstance that does not appear to be accidental...the Exposition Universelle of 1889 that fascinated Debussy with its Gamelan orchestra and groups of Oriental performers, and to which he returned again and again. In contrast to Debussy's curiosity and fascination, it is a little disappointing to find that only reference to a Chausson visit indicates that it was short..."⁵¹ In Jeremy Day-O'Connell's catalogue, *Pentatonicism from the Eighteenth Century to Debussy*, Day-O'Connell included examples of Chausson's *Les Papillons*, *Réveil*, and *Ballade*.

New Grove defines the term pentatonic as "a musical style or system that is characterized by the use of five pitches or pitch-classes. The term is used more strictly to describe the so-called anhemitonic pentatonic collection, which is typified by the set C-D-E-G-A... One may further refine the notion of the pentatonic by recognizing the distinctiveness of the scale's minor third 'steps'; hence, the motif G-A-C is more characteristically pentatonic than C-D-E, even though both belong to the same pentatonic scale."⁵²

Before examining the usage of pentatonic material in Chausson's Piano Quartet, it is necessary to have a general understanding of how pentatonicism came to exist in the late Romantic era. Day-O'Connell stated in his *Pentatonicism from the Eighteenth*

⁵⁰ Ronald Byrnside, "Musical Impressionism: The Early History of the Term" *The Musical Quarterly*, 66, no.4 (1980): 523

⁵¹ Grover. *Ernest Chausson*, 95

⁵² Jeremy Day-O'Connell, "Pentatonic." Grove Music Online. 2018

Century to Debussy, "...the pentatonicism of the nineteenth century largely referenced 'lost' aspects of human culture, the perceived utopias of a pastoral and spiritual past no longer possible with the encroachment of urban, industrial lifestyles on the one hand and Enlightenment humanism on the other."⁵³

As Brailoiu compiled in his article, *Pentatony in Debussy's Music*, "The two trichords, whole tone + minor third and minor third + whole tone ("trichordal incipits" 1 and 2), known from psalmodic recitation and recurring, especially the second, continuously in Debussy's oeuvre, seem to have particular importance."⁵⁴ To clarify, when Brailoiu wrote "whole tone", he was referring to a "whole step". Grover comments on the opening theme of Chausson's Piano Quartet, "This theme shows traces of pentatonicism to at least the same degree as the majority of examples included in Brailoiu's study of this characteristic in Debussy. Its descending fourths are identical with those of the latter's *mélodie*, *Chevaux de boi*, or *Ariettes oubliées*, cited by Brailoiu in his article. Of more interest than the pentatonic traits of each theme, however, are the reminiscences of *Parsifal* that Brailoiu and Gallois claim for their respective composers' fourth..."⁵⁵ Indeed, as discussed in the cyclical form section, the interval of a fourth is a key element of how Chausson makes his motives cohesive. Though the pentatonic scale is generally identified by the starting note in the melody, each one out of the five notes in the scale is significant depending on the different orders and rotations of the intervals. As discussed in Brailoiu's article, at least in the case with Debussy, the most commonly used

⁵³ Jeremy Day O'Connell, *Pentatonicism from the Eighteenth Century to Debussy*. (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2007), 6

⁵⁴ Brailoiu, 400

⁵⁵ Grover, *Ernest Chausson*, 195

are the first (in diatonic C major as example spelling C-D-E-G-A) and fifth (A-C-D-E-G) collections.

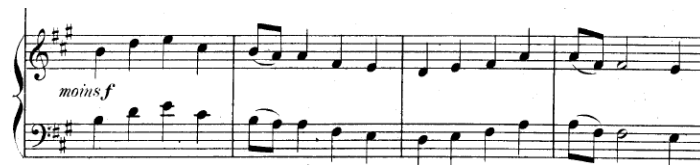
I am dividing Chausson's use of pentatonic elements in the Piano Quartet into two different categories: melodies, and decorative function (which can be further divided into fragments and arpeggios). It is not possible to know Chausson's intentions regarding pentatonic elements, and many examples might not necessarily fit the strict definition of the scale but still leave the listener with the impression of pentatonicism. Brailoiu stated "Debussy was, to all appearances, perfectly aware of his own devices even if he did not like to exhibit them or let anybody into the secret of handling them. Pentatonic in his composition is not an unconscious or reflex-like reminiscence. He proves it himself by referring to it whenever he wants to evoke something 'not from here'."⁵⁶ Chausson may have treated his usage of pentatonicism similarly.

There are several pentatonic areas in Chausson's Piano Quartet. The opening theme in the first movement (played by piano, example on page 20), leaps from A to E, F# to C#, and E to A, then moves stepwise to B and C# before dropping a third to A. It drops another third to F#, steps down to E, then back up to F#. After the piano finishes the statement, the strings join the entire ensemble, arriving on an E major chord which is considered the V of A major. The melody alone has no half-steps, is full of open fourths and fifths, and finishes with the whole step/minor third trichord mentioned by Brailoiu. It fits all of the characteristic of the pentatonic scale. The five notes that the melody consists of are A-B-C#-E-F#. The first note is A, and the last note before all the strings join in is also A: therefore the opening motive is an A pentatonic scale. The same theme

⁵⁶ Brailoiu, 378

is presented later in different keys in m.129 with the C pentatonic scale (C-D-E-G-A), in m.179 with the B pentatonic scale (B-C#-D#-F#-G#), and in m.185 with the E \flat pentatonic scale (E \flat -F-G-B \flat -C), all in the form of the first collection.

Similarly but not exactly the same, in m.7 of the first movement, Chausson uses a B pentatonic fifth collection (B-D-E-F#-A with one passing C-sharp) as an answer to the opening motive. This melody is without a wide interval leap like the opening statement, but it alternates between the two trichords—minor third/whole step and whole step/minor third.



(Piano Quartet 1st mvt. M7, Piano)

As mentioned earlier, some cases don't fit every rule of pentatonicism, but a pentatonic effect is still created. For example, in m.49 of the first movement, the top voice in the piano part plays C#-D#-C#-A#-G#. They are all on black keys, but an E natural also exists, creating a pitch set of C#-D#- E- G#- A#. It can be treated as a C# pentatonic scale (first collection): even though D-sharp to E is a half step, the majority of the melody outlines the pentatonic color quite strongly. In addition, the responding phrase in m.59 presented by viola is in C pentatonic fifth collection (C-D-F-G-A).

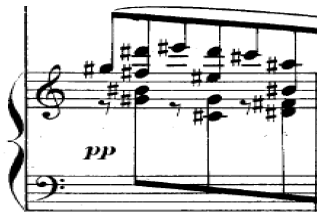


(Piano Quartet 1st movement m.49, piano)

(Piano Quartet 1st mvt. M.59, viola)

Due to the chromaticism in Chausson's harmonic and melodic language, half steps often disrupt what could otherwise be considered a standard pentatonic collection. However, as Brailoiu and Grover mention, fragments are sufficient provide a pentatonic character (particularly when they incorporate whole step/minor third patterns). The following excerpts provide examples of Chausson using fragments of the pentatonic scale:

- 1) In m.63, the violin plays E \flat -F-A \flat -F-E \flat , then the same sequence a half step higher (E \sharp -A-F \sharp -E) and then slightly altered in m.67 (G-A-D-A-G) all three have pentatonic character, and although they are not examples of the complete scale, the interval relations of whole step/minor third (or later perfect fourth) make it relatively clear.
- 2) In m.105 of the third movement, when the piano plays G \sharp -D \sharp -E \sharp -D \sharp -C \sharp -A \sharp , which is a pentatonic fourth collection (G \sharp -A \sharp -C \sharp -D \sharp -E \sharp).

(Piano Quartet 3rd mvt. M.105 Piano)

- 3) In m.116 of the third movement, there is a pattern of whole steps and minor thirds in the piano part (E-F \sharp -A-F \sharp). This pattern returns in m.121, transposed up a major 6th to (C \sharp -D \sharp -F \sharp -D \sharp), which then moves to C \sharp -D \sharp -C \sharp -B-G \sharp -E, restates the E-F \sharp -A-F \sharp pattern, before finally reaching a complete pentatonic scale (E-F \sharp -E-C \sharp -B-A).

There are several places where Chausson used pentatonic arpeggios for decorative purposes. In m.143 of the first movement, the violin line B-D-E-B-D-G-A-B is the third collection of the pentatonic scale (B-D-E-G-A). Additionally, Chausson writes D-E-F#-G-A-B in the piano part, and these six notes rotate without the leading tone, C#.

Chausson writes this four-bar phrase as a decorative transition to the next section. In fact, both Gallois and Grover pointed out the similarity of this passage to Debussy's string quartet. Brailoiu comments on Debussy's quartet, "The pseudo-decorative nature of such melodic expressions renders them suitable for various adaptations, whenever an opportunity arises."⁵⁷



(Piano Quartet 1st mvt. M.143 violin and viola)



(Debussy String Quartet 1st mvt. M.185)

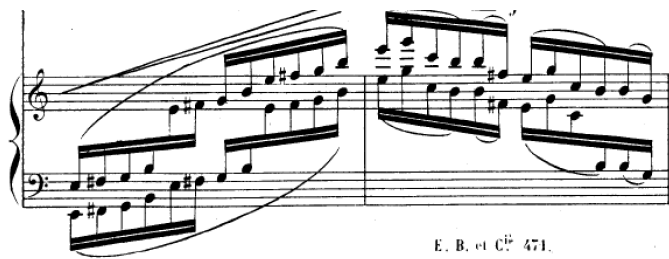
Another similarity occurs with the decorative, accompanying figures during the introduction of Debussy's piano prelude *Les collines d'Anacapri*.⁵⁸

Chausson used another arpeggio figure in mm.3-4 and mm.7-8 of the last movement. The piano runs consist of a pair of four-note cells: the first cell consists of two ascending diatonic seconds and an ascending major third (A-B-C-E, E-F#-G-B), and the second cell

⁵⁷ Brailoiu, 386

⁵⁸ Ibid, 386

consists of an ascending minor third, a descending perfect fifth, and then a descending half step (A-C-F-E, E-G-C-B).



E. B. et C[♯] 471.

(Piano Quartet 4th mvt. M.7 Piano)

There is less evidence of pentatonicism in the second and third movements, though many themes consist of six notes. Many of them include a half step, which would not exist within a pentatonic scale, and the usage of modal scales might be a more accurate explanation. For example, during the second theme in the second movement in m. 41 the viola melody only uses A-B \flat -C-E \flat -F, but from A to B \flat is a half step. A similar case is the opening theme of the third movement, which only uses D-E \flat -G-A-B \flat . However, there are two half steps (D to E \flat and A to B \flat) which makes it reminiscent of Phrygian mode. The second theme in the third movement is also very ambiguous, as the notes first presented are B \flat -C-E \flat -F. Neither G nor A \flat are part of the melody, and D \flat appears twice. However, when the same theme moves to violin in m.41-47, it fits into a D \flat pentatonic collection (D \flat -E \flat -F-A \flat -B \flat), and when it returns again in m.125 it is in a pentatonic collection (A-C-D-F-G), as well as in m.137 (E-G-A-C-D) and in m.157 of the third movement (A-B-D-E-F \sharp).



(Piano Quartet 3rd mvt. M.41 violin)

It is interesting that Chausson used many ninth chords and half-diminished seventh chords, and that depending on the melodic contour, some sounded more like Wagner and some more like Debussy. For example, in the third movement, the E half-diminished seventh arpeggio in m.140 can be considered more Wagnerian, but the leading melody in the piano part from B-flat to the next measure's E is a tritone, which is then followed by a ninth chord in the next measure, making the passage as a whole sound more impressionistic than Wagnerian.

(Piano Quartet 3rd mvt. M.137-144)

Having parallel lines of perfect fourth motion is also characteristic of Debussy's *La Mer*⁵⁹ and in his Piano Trio. A similar sonority with the use of pentatonicism can be found in Chausson's Piano Quartet. The example in m.49 of the first movement has the

⁵⁹ Brailoiu, 389

top voice of the piano part playing C#-D#-C#-A#-G#. These are all black keys, and the voice directly underneath moves in parallel perfect fourths, creating a bright effect. In m.89 of the same movement (also in the piano part), the parallel fourth motion is very characteristic of Debussy, and the melodic contour has a whole step followed by a minor 3rd.

(Debussy Piano Trio, opening)

(Piano Quartet 1st movement m.89, piano)

Use of Octatonic, whole tone

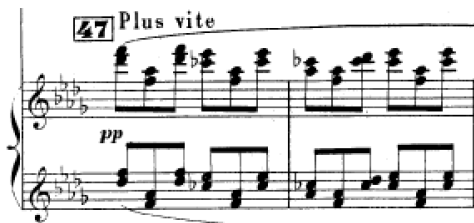
In addition to the whole tone, pentatonic, and modal passages, there are also a few short examples of passages outlining the octatonic scale (alternating half and whole steps). The first example can be found in m.45 of the second movement, when the violin plays B \flat -A-A \flat -G \flat -F-E \flat -D \flat . Later on in m.61, Chausson's melody consists of the notes G#-A-B-C-D-E \flat , and there are octatonic fragments in the piano starting at m.139 (D-E \flat -F-G \flat , then F-F#-G#-A, then A \flat -A \natural -B-C in m.141). All of these examples are found in the second movement.

(Piano Quartet, 2nd mvt. M.45, violin)



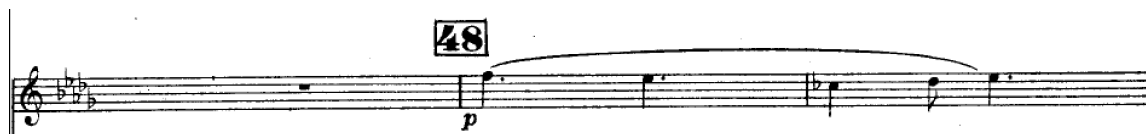
(Piano Quartet, 2nd mvt. M.61, violin)

In mm.77-79 of the last movement, if Chausson's continuous eighth notes in the piano are removed, the melody notes (F-E \flat -C \flat -D \flat -E \flat -F), are members of the whole tone scale, though with the 5-flat signature it could also be interpreted as Phrygian mode.



(Piano Quartet, 4th mvt. M.77, Piano)

That same melody is played again by the violin in m.103-107⁶⁰, and this time the rhythm reveals a possible relation to the motive in the first movement (m.386 melody in the violin: F-E \flat -C-E \flat -D \flat -B \flat). The sequence continues in m.109-110, and the violin line is G \sharp -F-D \flat -E \flat -F. In m.150 of the last movement, the top voice in the piano (C \sharp -D \sharp -E-F \sharp -G \sharp -A \sharp -C \sharp) also has elements of the whole tone scale.



(Piano Quartet 4th mvt. M103, Violin)

Modal materials

Besides pentatonicism, another reason that Chausson's Piano Quartet is somewhat reminiscent of folk music is his usage of modality. In m.47 of the first movement,

⁶⁰ Grover, 301

Chausson uses the C mixolydian scale (C-D-E-F-G-A-B \flat). This is directly followed by F \sharp in the bass, then a C \sharp major triad in first inversion, then a D \sharp major triad also in first inversion. Within two measures, the tonality moves a 48riton away, from F major to B major.



(Piano Quartet 1st mvt. M.47 Piano)

The use of mixolydian mode continues later in m.89 of the first movement (also in C mixolydian mode). The parallel perfect fourth motion is also similar to the opening of Debussy's Piano Trio, and in both cases, it is played by the piano. The same melody is later played by viola in m.372, and it has changed to F mixolydian (F-G-A-B \flat -C-D-E \flat). As noted earlier, m.143 in the first movement can also be thought of as D mixolydian because the C \sharp was absent until m.147, when Chausson modulated to F \sharp major.



(Piano Quartet 1st mvt. M143)

The opening theme of the 3rd movement, played by cello, is in D Phrygian mode (D-E \flat -F-G-A-B \flat -C). At the very end, after the D major chord in m.154, Chausson writes an E \flat (the flat 2nd scale degree) which implied a return to the Phrygian-like sound. This Phrygian mode color is one of the Spanish elements in Chausson's Piano Quartet. Grover writes that in the opening of the last movement's theme, the piano's use of the flat

2nd (in this case B \flat) and the strings joining in on that B \flat implies elements of Phrygian mode.⁶¹

⁶¹ Grover, 300

Chapter 5

Spanish Elements

Spanish music in France

Spanish influence was common among composers of Chausson's era. The existence of Spanish culture in nineteenth century France was quite strong. From 1808 to 1813, Napoléon's invasion and occupation of Spain led to interaction between the two countries, and many Spaniards immigrated to France in the first half of the century. In the 1820s and 1830s, Romantic writers such as Victor Hugo and Alfred de Musset created a vivid image of oriental Spain, a land of passion and eroticism. Their writing inspired other artists and musicians.⁶² Andalusians, Gypsies, and Moors were all associated with Spain in music and theater, because the elite in Spain started to imitate Madrid's lower class (the 'majos' and 'majas' portrayed by Goya), and the aristocrats welcomed forms of popular entertainment (such as flamenco and bullfighting) which had Andalusians and Gypsies as performers.⁶³ From Mérimée's novella *Carmen* to George Bizet's opera, the depiction of gypsies remained popular in France for many years. As José Colmeiro stated, "Spanish fin-de-siècle artists and composers were not immune to this orientalist trend. It was in the fine arts where the nationalist sentiment found its most clear expression through internalized orientalism. The modern Spanish school that helped create a national musical idiom of international renown was born in large parts as its result. Pedrell, Falla, Granados, and Albéniz all resorted to the use of Gypsies and

⁶² Kerry Murphy, "Carmen: Couleur locale or the real thing?" in *Music Theater and Cultural transfer*. Edited by Annegret Fauser and Mark Everist (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 295

⁶³ José F. Colmeiro, "Exorcising Exoticism: Carmen and the Construction of Oriental Spain," *Comparative Literature*, 43, no.2 (2002):130

Andalusians as tropes of Spanishness in their works, and, not coincidentally, they all studied or became successful as composers in Paris.”⁶⁴

Chausson’s connection with Spain

When discussing Chausson’s association with Spain, one cannot miss his friendship with the Spanish composer Isaac Albéniz, who played a major role in improving Chausson’s confidence as a composer. Back then, the publisher Breitkopf criticized Chausson’s *Poème* as “too modern to please and sell”, but Albéniz persuaded and personally paid Breitkopf so that Chausson’s *Poème* would be published.⁶⁵ In addition, in 1897, Albéniz suggested that Arthur Nikisch, the famed conductor of Berlin Philharmonic, should include emerging French composers’ work on their concerts in France. Chausson’s *Symphony in B flat* was performed in Paris by the Berlin Philharmonic, which encouraged Chausson.⁶⁶ All these favors were a grand gesture by Albéniz as a way to repay Chausson’s generosity: Chausson connected Albéniz to Parisian musical society, and he programmed Albéniz’s *Rapsodia española* in a concert by Société Nationale de Musique.⁶⁷

The year before the *Piano Quartet* was composed, Chausson was in Spain for the performance of his *Symphony*. The performance went fairly well, the Spanish critics agreed that it was well received, with strong applause. As Chausson wrote to d’Indy, “What an amazing public! Nothing but applause or whistling. At least they have got life in them...”⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Colmeiro, 142

⁶⁵ Barricelli & Weinstein, 85

⁶⁶ Clark, Walter Aaron. *Isaac Albéniz: Portrait of a Romantic*. 165

⁶⁷ Ibid, 196

⁶⁸ Barricelli & Weinstein, 84

Spanish idiom

New Grove's discussion about the general features of Spanish music states that the 'Spanish idiom' was used not only by Spanish composers like Falla, Granados, Albéniz and Turina, but also foreign composers like Glinka, Debussy, and Ravel. Interestingly, Debussy received high praise from Spanish composers like Falla for portraying the essence of Spanish music. Due to his close relationships with Debussy and Albéniz, it is not difficult to see why Chausson was interested in composing in the Spanish idiom.

What are the qualities associated with the Spanish idiom? One of the most salient aspects is the striking use of rhythm. As Bellman stated, "It is defined, in fact, not so much by Chabrier's collecting as by as analysis: it is in effect a study of the rhythmic phenomenon of two within threes, in all the richness that he found in Spanish music."⁶⁹ The rhythms from various dances, including *jota*, *fandango*, *polo*, and *habanera*, add an exotic flavor into the music. In addition to the rhythmic characteristics, it is essential to recognize the influence of the instrument that is often associated with Spain: the guitar. As Gilbert Chase wrote, "The natural musical feeling of the Spaniard is based on the technique of the guitar, and this has been so ever since the beginning of Spanish instrumental music."⁷⁰ Powell also addressed the topic of guitar influence in keyboard music: "...with Albéniz, Granados, Falla, and Turina, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there was a revival of Spanish keyboard music. Guitar effects permeate the piano works of these composers and reflect the Spanish nationalistic

⁶⁹ James Parakilas, "How Spain Got a Soul," in *The Exotic in Western Music*, Edited by Jonathan Bellman (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), 169

⁷⁰ Gilbert Chase, "Falla's Music for Piano Solo," *The Chesterian*, 21(1940): 43

spirit.”⁷¹ Lastly, use of the Phrygian mode is also an element to be considered. In Peter Manuel’s article “Flamenco in Focus” he stated, “Much flamenco is based not on common-practice Western tonality, but on what musicologists call Andalusian or Phrygian tonality. In this system, the chordal vocabulary derives not from Western major or minor scales, but primarily from the Phrygian or ‘E’ mode...”⁷² Clark also addressed Albéniz’s use of the Phrygian mode (and his imitation of guitar music): “Albéniz frequently evokes the *punteado* (plucking) and *rasgueado* (strumming) of the guitar, and his pieces often begin with the suggestion of a guitar accompaniment before the entrance of the actual melody... Modality is common, especially the Phrygian mode...”⁷³ Therefore, although it is not exclusively Spanish, the use of the Phrygian mode can be associated with Spain.

From the sources which have been compiled and referenced above, three characteristics associated with Spanish music will be explored with regard to Chausson’s Piano Quartet: use of characteristically Spanish rhythms, use of Phrygian mode, and imitation of guitar music

Examples in Piano Quartet

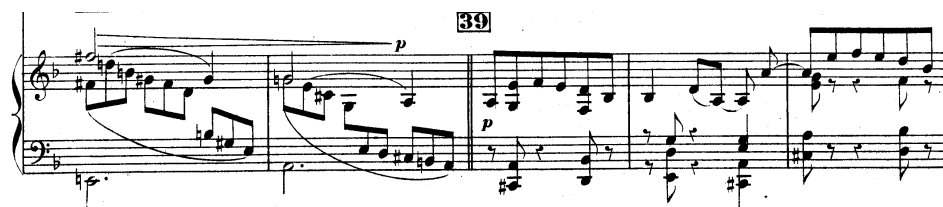
Though major and minor keys are more common, the opening melody of the third movement is in D Phrygian. (Example on page 20) The melody contains D-E \flat -F-G-A-B \flat -C-D: the B \flat is written in the key signature (for D minor), while the E \flat is added in as an accidental. The use of a flattened second such as this one is also characteristic of

⁷¹ Linton Powell, *A History of Spanish Piano Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 150

⁷² Peter Manuel. “Flamenco in Focus: An Analysis of a Performance Soleares,” in *Analytical Studies in World Music*, Edited by Michael Tenzer (Oxford University Press, 2006), 5

⁷³ Clark, 64

Spanish music. Because the tonic is D and both B \flat and E \flat are used, the Phrygian color is present. Later in the same movement (m.87), the melody is: A-E-F-E-D-B \flat -D-A. With the inclusion of the lowered 2nd scale degree (B \flat) and the relationship of F to A, this melody can be considered to be in A Phrygian. These uses of Phrygian mode impart a Spanish flavor. Though Chausson does not mark meter changes, the shifts between 3/4 and 6/8 resemble two possible Spanish dance types. One of these dances is the Spanish-Cuban *Guajira*, and the other is the *Rondeña*. Both dances shift between 3/4 and 6/8 time. The interval relationships in m.87 are the same as in the opening of the movement, which indicates both are in Phrygian mode.

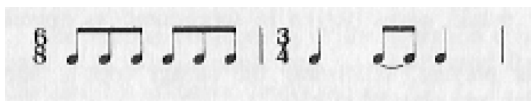


E. B. et C.^o 471.

(Piano Quartet, 3rd mvt. Mm.85-89, Piano)



(Rondeña rhythmic pattern)



(Guajira rhythmic pattern)

There are many strong rhythmic patterns in the Piano Quartet. Though the actual rhythmic patterns do not perfectly align with any particular dances, the strong dance-like pulse, especially in the last movement, is reminiscent of Spanish music. In addition, some sections of Chausson's Piano Quartet were stylistically similar to works by Albeniz, so it is possible that Spanish folk idioms were part of Chausson's consciousness. The rhythmic pattern in the piano starting in m.25 in the last movement is dance-like. It

doesn't match any particular dance rhythms, but m.25 to m.64 is similar to dance forms in its use of four bar phrases, something that Chausson does not always do. The strings are playing sixteenth notes with a feeling of 6/8 time, while the piano is playing eighth notes with a feeling of 3/4 time. The result is a hemiola, and as Grover states, it can also be linked to Debussy's use of cross rhythms.

(Piano Quartet 4th mvt. M.25)

The section starting m.41 in second movement is similar to a *malagueña*, one of the flamenco genres that Albeniz liked to use, and a genre which was popular in Spain during the late 1880s.⁷⁴ This analysis is based on the following reasons: 1) There is a rhythmic similarity: though it is not an exact match, a *malagueña* is in 3/4 and is often interpreted as free form, with no regular pattern. 2) Starting at m.57, the accompaniment pattern in the piano rotates between sevenths and thirds in triplets, which is idiomatic of guitar writing.

⁷⁴ It is a regional variant of the *fandango* as Clark explained in p.64, and 70.

(Piano Quartet 2nd mvt. M.57)

(Malagueña rhythmic pattern)

In the last movement, beginning at m.170, the strong rhythmic pulse continues, this time with the third beat tied over to the fourth beat. With two eighth notes followed by two quarter notes, the rhythm is quite similar to the rhythm of Spanish dance *Polo* (also in *Carmen*). By m.176 Chausson adds in a dotted rhythm, which is characteristic of the *habanera*. A similar rhythmic pattern from Albeniz's *Cataluna* is provided here.

(Piano Quartet, 4th mvt. M.176, violin)

(Albeniz, *Cataluna*)

Chausson creates different rhythmic divisions for different parts of the ensemble. Listed below are several examples:

1) At m.159 in the first movement, the strings and the right hand of the piano part are marked in 6/4, but the left hand part of the piano part is in 2/2.

(Piano Quartet, 1st mvt. m.159)

2) At m.176 in the last movement, the strings are playing in 3, while the piano is in two (it can also be thought of as 3/4 vs 6/8).

(Piano Quartet, 4th mvt. M.176)

3) In m.224 of the last movement, Chausson changes the viola to 3/2 while all the other instruments are in 3/4: this means that one measure of the viola equals two measures of the other instruments. The division of three against two happens here as well: the hemiola is just happening over 6 beats. Chausson writes similar cross rhythms in earlier works as well. In m.200 of the last movement of *Concert for Violin, Piano and String Quartet*, Chausson writes the violin solo in 2/4, the piano in 3/2, and the string quartet in 6/8.

(Piano Quartet, 4th mvt. M.224)

(Concert, 4th mvt. M.200)

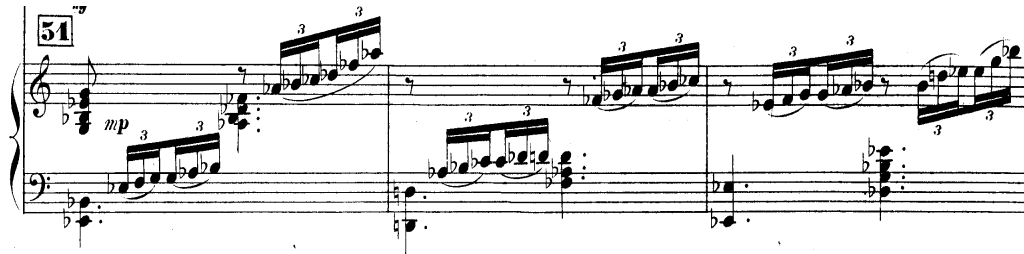
In much Spanish piano music, the composer either notates arpeggios or calls for rolled chords in order to imitate the playing style of a guitar. The intervals utilized in the arpeggio or in the chords are frequently in fourths or fifths, which can be associated with the intervals commonly used when strumming a guitar (*rasgueado*). In m.61 of the fourth movement, the arpeggio E-B then G[#]-E in piano is a similar spacing to that of guitar strumming.

(Piano Quartet, 4th mvt. M.61, piano)

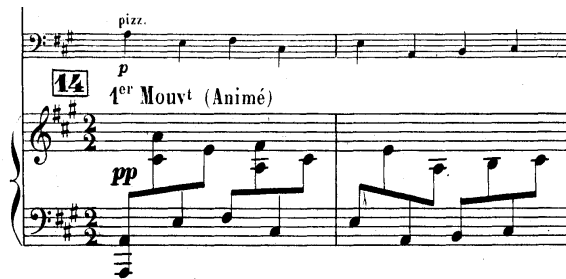
In m.61 of the second movement, the inner voice of the piano repeats stepwise motion (D-E) in triplets, which is characteristic of guitar plucking. In addition, there is an interesting harmony: it begins with a E dominant seventh which moves up stepwise to F, acting as a deceptive cadence (V-VI). The parallel motion and unresolved chord progression are similar to Debussy's harmonic language, even as the dissonances in the melody (presented in violin) resemble Wagner's harmonic language.

(Quartet, 2nd mvt. M.61, piano)

In m.170 of the last movement, the rapid sixteenth note triplets in the piano are similar to the ornamental flourishes in Spanish music. There is another example of sixteenth note triplets in m.416 of the last movement, where the left hand of the piano represents the opening theme (A-E-F#-C#-E) of the first movement, while the right hand rapidly repeats the same note in different octaves. (Example provided on p.16)

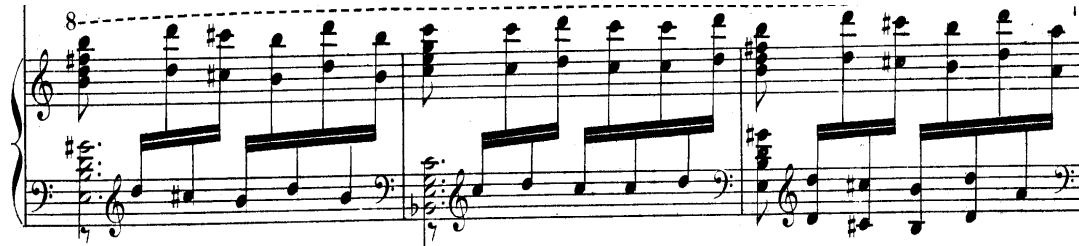
(Piano Quartet, 4th mvt. M.170, piano)

In some of Albeniz's compositions, for example *Leyenda* from his suite *Española*, his melodies use repeated notes (in either different octaves or the same octave) played between two hands. This texture imitates guitar plucking (*punteado*). Similar cases exist in the first movement of Chausson's Piano Quartet: when the opening melody returns, it is comprised of repeated notes (in different octaves) played by two hands in the piano part, with the strings playing pizzicato.

(Piano Quartet, 1st mvt. M.288)(Albeniz, *Leyenda*)

A similar example can be found at m.153 of the second movement in the piano accompaniment, which repeats the same notes in different octaves in a syncopated rhythm. An even more obvious case occurs in m.350 of the last movement. The piano plays a full chord, then repeats notes in different octaves, which resemble the strumming

of the guitar on the downbeat and the plucking of different strings. Albeniz wrote a similar passage, which has chords on the downbeats and repeated notes in different octaves in the rest of the measure.

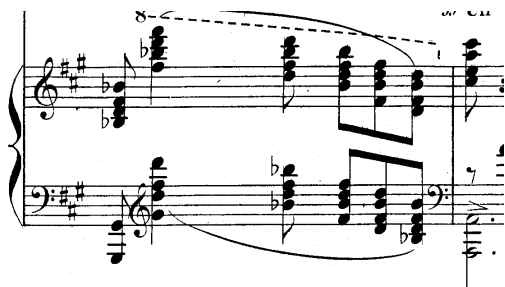


(Piano Quartet, 4th mvt. M.350)



(Albeniz, *Leyenda*)

Coincident or not, in last movement m.415 the whole-black keys on the outer octaves in the piano certainly strike us very exotic flavor, and let us not forget that Chausson writes similar phrases (all black keys) in his symphony in B \flat and some of the whole tone scale passage in Piano Quartet we look at earlier.



(Piano Quartet, 4th mvt. M.415, piano)

Studies of Albeniz note his use of syncopation as well as his imitation of guitar strumming.⁷⁵ At m.33 in the second movement of Chausson's Piano Quartet, the piano accompaniment repeats the same chord each measure with a syncopated rhythm, and there is also similar writing later in the movement (from m.168 to the end).

The examples provided serve to demonstrate that strong rhythmic patterns, use of Phrygian mode and imitation of guitar music are all present in Chausson's Piano Quartet, and, additionally, that they resemble passages written by Albéniz. Chausson's trip to Spain in 1896 appears likely to have inspired him to incorporate these elements into his Piano Quartet.

⁷⁵ Clark, 64

Conclusion

An examination of Chausson's influences (notably Franck, Wagner, Debussy, and Spanish music) exhibits the ways in which Chausson merged these contrasting styles in his Piano Quartet.

The Piano Quartet displays how Chausson retained Franck's ideas of cyclic form, and thematic transformation: each movement has its own motive that is developed over the course of the movement. Chausson ties the work together by using the theme from the second movement in the slow section of the last movement. In the last movement, Chausson combines different motives from different movements as a way to conclude the work.

The harmonic language and sonority in this work shows Wagnerian color. When examining Chausson's Piano Quartet alongside Grout's description of harmonic characteristics from *Tristan*, there are similar uses of half-diminished seventh sonorities, enharmonic modulations, and chromatic melodies. Chausson also applied Wagner's concept of 'endless melody' by using continuous extended sequences of motivic fragments.

The use of pentatonicism reveals the influence of Debussy. In the first movement, Chausson uses a pentatonic melody. Additionally, similar to Debussy, there were several motive fragments in Chausson's Piano Quartet that use pentatonic fragments as decorative material. This use of pentatonicism and modality is one way that Chausson tried to distance his writing from that of Wagner. In addition, Chausson experiments

with whole tone and octatonic colors, which are other concepts often associated with Debussy.

Characteristics of Spanish music include the strong rhythmic pulse, the use of Phrygian mode, and the imitation of guitar plucking or strumming. All of these characteristics can be found in Chausson's Piano Quartet. Though there are not any exact quotations of dance rhythms, the 3/4 vs 6/8 hemiola, the use of dotted "habanera" rhythms, and syncopated accompaniment patterns are all evidence of the influence of Spanish music.

Chausson skillfully applies all of these influences into his Piano Quartet, with no one influence stronger than the other. All his characteristic elements, such as thick harmony through extended tertian chords are present. However, there is a greater balance achieved by the inclusion of these new influences. The ways in which Chausson chooses to incorporate all of these new concepts highlights his creativity and originality. As Debussy once stated, Chausson became "one of the most delicate artists of our time", and in his Piano Quartet, Chausson "manages to free himself and pursues a path that is entirely his own."⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Léon Vallas, *Theories of Claude Debussy*, translated by Marie O'Brien, (London: Oxford University Press, 1929), 46-47

Bibliography:

- Barricelli, Jean-Pierre, and Leo Weinstein. *Ernest Chausson: The Composer's Life and Works*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955.
- Brailoïu, Constantin. "Pentatony in Debussy's Music," *Studia Memoriae Belae Bartók Sacra*, 3d ed., London: Boosey and Hawkes, Ltd., 1959, 377-417
- Byrnside, Ronald. "Musical Impressionism: The Early History of the Term" *The Musical Quarterly*, 66, no.4 (1980):522-537
- Carraud, Gaston. "Ernest Chausson," *Le Ménestrel* 82 (April 2, 1920):137-39.
- Chausson, Ernest. *Écrits Inédits: journaux intimes, roman de jeunesse, correspondance*. Edited by Jean Gallois. Monaco: Editions du Rocher, 1999.
- Chase, Gilbert. "Falla's Music for Piano Solo," *The Chesterian*, 21(1940):41-46.
- Chiang, Chen-Ju. "An Examination of the German Influence on Thematic Development, Development, Chromaticism and Intrumentation in Ernest Chausson's Concert for Piano , Violin and String Quartet, Op.21" D.M.A. diss., ProQuest Dissertations and These, 2006.
- Clark, Walter Aaron. *Isaac Albéniz:Portrait of a Romantic*. New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 1999.
- Colmerio, J. "Exorcising Exoticism:Carmen and the Construction of Oriental Spain." *Comparative Literature*, 54, no.2 (2002):127-144
- Cooper, Martin. *French Music: From the Death of Berlioz to the Death of Fauré*. London: Oxford University Press, 1951.
- _____. "The Ninteenth Century Musical Renaissance in France (1870-1895)." *Proceeding of the Royal Musical Association*, 74th Sess. (1947-1948): 11-23.
- Dahlhaus, Carl. *Between Romanticism and Modernism*. Translated by Mary Whittall. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980.
- Davies, Laurence. *César Franck and His Circle*. London: Barrie& Jenkins, 1970.
- Day O'Connell, Jeremy. *Pentatonicism from the Eighteenth Century to Debussy*. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2007.
- _____. "Pentatonic." Grove Music Online. 2018

- Debussy, Claude. *Debussy Letters*. Edited by François Lesure and Roger Nichols, translated by Roger Nichols. London: Faber, 1987.
- Demuth, Norman. *César Franck*. London: Dennis Dobson, LTD., 1949
- Gallois, Jean. *Ernest Chausson*. Paris: Fayard, 1994.
- _____. "Chausson, (Amédée-)Ernest." *Grove Music Online*. 2018
- Grout, Donald Jay. *A History of Opera*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1947.
- Grover, Ralph Scott. *Ernest Chausson: The Man and His Music*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1980.
- _____. "The Influence of Franck, Wagner, and Debussy on Representative Works of Ernest Chausson." Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1967.
- Hill, Edward Burlingame. *Modern French Music*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1924.
- Indy, Vincent d'. *César Franck*. Translated by Rosa Newmarch. London: The Bodley Head LTD., 1909.
- _____. "Ernest Chausson," *Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music*. 2 vols. London: Oxford University Press, 1929-30.
- Lin, Yea Shih. "The Piano Trio in France, ca. 1880-1920: Debussy, Chausson, Fauré, Ravel." D.M.A. diss., University of Cincinnati, 1998.
- Lockspeiser, Edward. *Debussy: His Life and Mind*. New York: Macmillan, 1962.
- Manuel, Peter. "Flamenco in Focus: An Analysis of a Performance Soleares," in *Analytical Studies in World Music*, Edited by Michael Tenzer, Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Murphy, Kerry. "Carmen: Couleur locale or the real thing?" *Music Theater and Cultural Transfer*, edited by Annegret Fauser and Mark Everist, 293-315. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.
- Parakilas, James. "How Spain Got a Soul," in *The Exotic in Western Music*, Edited by Jonathan Bellman, 137-193. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998.
- Pasler, Jann. "Impressionism." *Grove Music Online*. 2018
- Powell, Linton E. *A History of Spanish Piano Music*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980.

Roberts, Paul. *Claude Debussy*. London;New York:Phaidon, 2008.

Vallas, Léon. *César Franck*. Translated by Hubert Foss. London: Harrap, 1951.

_____. *The Theories of Claude Debussy*. Translated by Marie O'Brien. London: Oxford University Press, 1929.

Youens, Susan. "Le Soleil des Morts: A 'Fin-de-siècle' Portrait Gallery." *19th-Century Music*, vol. 11, No.1. (Summer, 1987): 43-58.

Musical Scores

Albéniz, Isaac. *Suite Española*. New York: Kalmus Edition.

Chausson, Ernest. *Concert in D major, Op.21 for Violin, Piano and String Quartet*. New York: International Music, 1965.

_____. *Piano Quartet in A major*. Paris: A. Rouart & Cie. n.d.

_____. *Trio en Sol mineur, Op.3 pour Piano, Violin , et Violoncello*. Paris: Salabert, 1988.

Debussy, Claude. *String Quartet*. Paris: Durand et Fils, 1904.

_____. *Trio in G dur für Klavier, Violine und Violoncello*. Munich: G. Henle, 1986.

Wagner, Richard. *Tristan und Isolde*. New York: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1909.