ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: GABRIEL FAURÉ (1845-1924):
INNOVATOR OF THE FRENCH MODERN STYLE
AS SEEN IN HIS WORKS FOR CELLO AND PIANO

Jooeun Oh, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2003

Dissertation directed by: Professor Evelyn Elsing, School of Music

Gabriel Fauré was a deeply influential leader in establishing modern trends in early twentieth-century French music. His individualistic compositions include both traditional and modern aspects incorporated into his own distinctive style. This doctoral project is a study of Fauré's contributions to French chamber-music and explores especially his works for cello.

In the first chapter of this dissertation, a brief biography of Fauré is presented, and Fauré's personal relationships with several influential contemporaries, including Camille Saint-Saëns, are discussed. The second chapter describes Fauré's highly effective career as Professor and then Director and reformer at the Paris Conservatoire. In the third chapter, Fauré's chamber music is discussed, with emphasis on his works for cello. His works can be divided into three time periods, each representative of the composer's unique musical style and illustrative of Fauré's stylistic development

throughout his career. The fourth and final chapter examines the evolution of Fauré's musical approach, while his complete works for the cello are analyzed and compared. Diverse reactions of his contemporary critics to Fauré's late-period chamber works are also presented.

As part of this doctoral project two recitals of works by Fauré and his contemporaries were performed at the University of Maryland School of Music. The works performed in the first recital include Camille Saint-Saëns' *Romance for Violoncello and Piano, Opus 36* (1877); Maurice Ravel's *Sonata for Violoncello and Violin* (1920-22); Claude Debussy's *Sonata for Violoncello and Piano* (1915); and Fauré's *Violoncello Sonata No. 1 in d minor, Opus 109* (1917). The second recital incorporated selections from all three of Fauré's compositional periods: *Elégie for Violoncello and Piano, Opus 24* (1880); *Papillion for Violoncello and Piano, Opus 77* (1885), *Romance for Violoncello and Piano, Opus 69* (1894), *Sicilienne for Violoncello and Piano, Opus 78* (1898, originally 1893); *Violoncello Sonata No. 2 in g minor, Opus 117* (1921); and *Piano Trio in d minor, Opus 120* (1922-1923).

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By

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PREFACE

As a first year doctoral student working on Claude Debussy's *Cello Sonata* (1915) and Maurice Ravel's *Piano Trio* (1914), I developed a deep affinity for the unique sonority of early modern French music. While I have always been very fond of French music, these two pieces took me on a breathtaking journey to a fantastic musical world of evocative, colorful sound and wonderfully fluent rhythm. I found this style fascinating and immediately began to research other early modern French composers, tentatively deciding on this topic as the foundation of my doctoral dissertation. I was thrilled when this endeavor led me to the discovery of a gem of a recording entitled *Complete Works for Cello by Gabriel Fauré.*

Since Fauré is known mainly for his beautiful songs and piano works, my personal discovery of his cello works came as a pleasant surprise. Marvelously performed by Steven Isserlis, a brilliant English cellist, this compact disc contains Fauré's two sonatas and several short pieces for the cello. Filled with inner significance and graced with indescribable beauty, Fauré's contribution to the cello repertoire is tremendous. His pure, original melodies are perfectly suited for the singing sound of the cello, and I found myself especially looking forward to learning his unusual, modern cello sonatas. With my newfound enthusiasm and affection for the music of Fauré, my doctoral dissertation, *Gabriel Fauré: Innovator of the French Modern Style as Seen in His Works for Cello and Piano,* was conceived.

In addition to my personal enjoyment of the music of Fauré and his contemporaries, the artistic and technical challenges that Fauré's compositions

offer—those of the sonatas in particular—have allowed me to grow as a cellist and also have contributed to my understanding of the development of Fauré's harmonic and rhythmic language. It has been a great privilege and a pleasure to study and write about Fauré, a pioneer of the modern musical renaissance in France.

INTRODUCTION

In the nineteenth century, the chamber-music genre had apparent roots in Germanic absolute music. The chamber works of Johannes Brahms and Robert Schumann, however, were neither well-known nor well-received in France until the second half of the nineteenth century. In fact, the French composers of this period were not interested in looking to their German contemporaries for inspiration.

The renaissance of chamber music in France during the second half of the nineteenth century involved several contrasting aspects. In 1871, a group of French composers founded the Société Nationale de Musique (SNM) for the purpose of encouraging French composers. Some of them were overtly nationalistic; they only accepted French music written in the French tradition and were totally opposed to any German influence. At the same time there was a revival of interest in music of the past. Some SNM composers, including Vincent d'Indy and Charles Bordes became intrigued by the classical French heritage of François Couperin and Jean Philippe Rameau. Other SNM composers, on the other hand, developed a fascination for the German composer Richard Wagner[1]. César Franck was the leader of this pro-Wagnerian movement.

The SNM composers in general reacted to established traditions, developing contrasting pro-German and anti-German factions. Meanwhile, one Gabriel Fauré quietly and confidently developed his own French modern style of composition initially founded upon Classical forms and the traditional French virtues of moderation, elegance and clarity, yet continually evolving into his own increasingly distinctive, personal, and profound musical approach.

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[1] Michael Strasser, "Ars Gallica: The Société nationale de musique and its Role in French Musical Life, 1871-1891" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois, 1997).

In Fauré's late-period music, his use of harmony involves a delicate combination of expanded tonality and modality. Always retaining some sense of tonality, he further develops his harmonic language with colorful layering of modal and chromatic elements. Fauré's harmonic richness is matched by his melodic invention; his melody is often the linear expression of his harmony. Fauré's use of rhythm imitates the French language in its fluidity. His association of duple and triple time and his subtle use of syncopation both characterize Fauré's late musical style.

In contrast with the music of Fauré's contemporary Claude Debussy, Fauré's innovative use of harmony, melody and rhythm did not startle Classically minded listeners. However, Fauré's inventive modern style had considerable influence on the evolution of early twentieth-century French music and the establishment of new French traditions. Greatly influenced, also, was the next generation of composers, including Maurice Ravel, Charles Koechlin, Darius Milhaud, and Arthur Honegger.

CHAPTER 1

Fauré's Musical Life

A Brief Biography

Gabriel Fauré, the youngest son of Toussaint-Honoré Fauré, was born on May 12, 1845 in the southern French town of Pamiers, which lies in a section of Ariège. The composer's ancestors do not seem to have been exceptionally musically inclined; his grandfather and great-grandfather were butchers, and his father was a schoolteacher.

When Gabriel was four years old, his father was appointed Director of the Ecole Normale. Fauré later recalled the beautiful garden and the chapel that adjoined the school building. The main attraction of the place was evidently its music, and the child Gabriel spent a good deal of his time there; he adored the music of the church. Being able to improvise on the church harmonium and the piano, his exceptional musical ability was apparent from an early age. At the age of nine, his father took him to Paris and placed him in the Ecole Niedermeyer, a school of religious music.

Louis Niedermeyer, the director of l'Ecole Niedermeyer, had students concentrate only on religious music. The pupils learned to play the pianoforte and the organ, along with studying harmony and counterpoint, with a view primarily to becoming church musicians. In particular, they were taught a thorough grounding in Gregorian plainchant and how to accompany it. Fauré himself remarked in later

years, "though bad music is every day becoming more and more the exception, about the middle of last century it was almost the general rule."[2]

In 1860, Camille Saint-Saëns, then a young man of twenty-five, came to teach at the Ecole Niedermeyer. Providing great inspiration to Fauré, Saint-Saëns became the young pupil's lifelong friend. After completing his studies in 1865, Fauré obtained his first professional post as organist at Saint-Sauveur at Rennes, the capital city of Brittany. Following his return to Paris, he subsequently held organist appointments at St-Honoré-d'Eylau, St-Sulpice, and the Madeleine, respectively. During this period, he composed a number of songs and chamber-music works. He also taught at the Ecole Niedermeyer, where one of his earliest pupils was Andre Messager, the comic-opera composer and the first conductor of Claude Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1895).

In 1877, Fauré traveled with Saint-Saëns to Weimar, where Fauré was introduced to Franz Liszt. A few years later, Fauré made the acquaintance of Richard Wagner, whose music overwhelmed him with its enormous volume of sound and exaggerated drama. Fauré, however, felt that Wagner's "overemphasis" showed lack of taste and preferred the clear and quiet measures of his own music. Fauré's maxim was, "Make little noise, but say a lot."[3]

In 1896, Fauré was appointed professor of the advanced composition class at the Paris Conservatoire, and in 1905, he became director of that institution. At this time a great tragedy began in Fauré's life. As had Ludwig von Beethoven and Friedrich Smetana, Fauré discovered that he was losing his hearing. Although his deafness was never absolutely complete, it was a severe and complicated condition. In his later years, a pitch distortion added to Fauré's distress; the lower tones of music

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[2] Norman Suckling, Fauré (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1946), 11.
[3] Madeleine Goss, Bolero: The life of Maurice Ravel (New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1945), 50.

came to him a third higher, while the upper notes sounded a third lower. He endured his affliction without complaint, but eventually, Fauré was asked to resign from the Conservatoire, for which he probably felt humiliated. In spite of his misfortune, Fauré continued to compose. The last work of his career, the *String Quartet in e minor, Opus 121* (1923-1924), written when he was seventy-nine years old and completed only a few weeks before his death, is one of Fauré's finest compositions.

Fauré was the most gentle and unpretentious of men. As his deafness increased, his music reached new horizons and greater depths. Throughout his life, he was true to his ideal, "Never to write for pleasure, facility, or cleverness. To write only what is insistent, what is heard within oneself."[4]

The Influence of Fauré's Mentor, Camille Saint-Saëns

Fauré's most important mentor and teacher, and his closest lifelong friend, was Camille Saint-Saëns. A virtuoso pianist, versatile composer, writer, astronomer, scientist, and eager traveler, Saint-Saëns was a sophisticated gentleman. On the other hand, Fauré, a church musician, creator of tender and intimate music, and stubbornly self-reliant musician, was a simple man. Fauré's restraint and introversion contrasted with his mentor's passionate self-expression. Though he was utterly different from Fauré in character, Saint-Saëns' musical encouragement and sincere friendship supported Fauré's musical career, and thus the artistic world, enormously.

At the Ecole Niedermeyer

Fauré's teacher Niedermeyer had become a father figure to the young composer, and sadly, it must have been a terrible loss for Gabriel when Niedermeyer died suddenly in 1861. However, this event also proved fateful, for it allowed

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[4]Philippe Fauré-Fremiet, Gabriel Fauré (Paris: Rieder, 1929), 2nd ed. Paris: Albin Michel, 1957.

Saint-Saëns to step in as the senior piano teacher. Saint-Saëns possessed phenomenal pianistic facility, great enthusiasm, and a thoroughly modern outlook. Although he was only ten years older than Fauré (then fifteen years old), Saint-Saëns had already launched a brilliant career as a concert pianist and composer. This was the beginning of a lifelong friendship.

Saint-Saëns became Fauré's most important teacher. With his keen intellectual powers and varied abilities for this position, Saint-Saëns was not only an instructor but also an enthusiastic friend to his pupils. His teaching was radical and progressive. He did not restrict his role to that of professor of piano. Opening the door to the whole of music, he introduced students to the new works of such composers as Robert Schumann, Liszt and Wagner. Moreover, Saint-Saëns was eager to know the works of his pupils. He encouraged his students to bring along their own compositions, reading them through with curiosity and giving the anxious young composers constructive criticism and much encouragement: "he read them with as much curiosity and care as if they were all masterpieces."[5]

The first song Fauré composed, *Le Papillon et la fleur, Opus 1, No 1* (1885), is a delightful song and the first of six romances he composed to words by Victor Hugo. "It was in fact my very first song," Fauré remembered, "written in the school refectory surrounded by smells from the kitchen... and my first interpreter was Saint-Saëns."[6] The master must have played his favorite student's first song with much interest, and given him sincere advice. Saint-Saëns' honest criticism could only have come from a very close and trusting friendship.

In the summer of 1862, when Fauré was seventeen, Saint-Saëns came to stay with Fauré's family, who had now moved to the College of Education at Tarbes. The brilliant composer and virtuoso pianist made a striking impression upon Fauré's

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[5] Gabriel Fauré, *la Revue Musicale* (February, 1922).
[6] Jessica Duchen, Gabriel Fauré (London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 2000), 22.

parents, relatives and many friends. "Your visit here left a radiance that many people are still dazzled by,"[7] Fauré wrote to Saint-Saëns after he returned to Paris.

During Fauré's Early Career

Fauré completed his studies at the Ecole Niedermeyer in 1865, winning first prizes for piano, organ, harmony and composition. Early in that year, he obtained his first professional post as a church organist in Rennes. Not particularly ambitious during this time, he tended to spend more time daydreaming than composing. His only spur to action was the correspondence he maintained with Saint-Saëns. As Fauré remembered later, "Saint-Saëns rescued me from stagnation. He kept me working and saw to it that I sent him my earliest efforts when I wrote them."[8] In 1868, Fauré sent Saint-Saëns an unfinished setting of the *Tantum Ergo*, which the older composer later used in his own *Piano Concerto No. 2 in g minor, Opus 22* (1868), as part of the first movement's main theme.

At the beginning of 1870, Saint-Saëns helped Fauré to find another job, as organist at Notre-Dame de Clignancourt in Paris. Fauré, however, was dismissed for daring to miss a service in order to hear Meyerbeer's opera *Les Huguenots*. Fauré also took Saint-Saëns' place at the Madeleine on numerous occasions when this versatile and much-traveling musician was called out of Paris by his concert engagements. In Paris, Saint-Saëns introduced Fauré to many of the most significant figures in the musical and social world, and Fauré threw himself eagerly into the musical life of the city. At Saint-Saëns' Monday-evening gatherings of performers and composers, Fauré was introduced to Anton Rubinstein, the great pianist from Russia; Edouard Lalo, who composed well-known works for violin and orchestra; and the famous composer and organist, César Franck.

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[7] Jessica Duchen, Gabriel Fauré (London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 2000), 23.
[8] Ibid., 27.

In 1877, Saint-Saëns resigned from his position at the Madeleine to concentrate on concert appearances and composition. The former choirmaster, Theodore Dubois, was promoted to organist in place of Saint-Saëns. Upon Saint-Saëns' recommendation, Fauré was soon given the appointment of choirmaster at the Madeleine. The same year, he journeyed to Weimar with Saint-Saëns for the première of *Samson et Delila, Opus 47* (1877), which was arranged by the great composer and piano virtuoso, Liszt. During this visit, Saint-Saëns introduced Fauré to Liszt, who was then sixty-five years old. Fauré showed Liszt his *Ballade, Opus 19* (1877-1879), in its original form as a pianoforte solo. After trying a few pages, Liszt returned it with the incredible and unexpected remark, "It is too difficult... I've run out of fingers." It is quite interesting that the virtuoso pianist Liszt himself found Fauré's intricately written *Ballade* too difficult to play.

Unlike the difficult *Ballade*, Fauré's *Violin Sonata No. 1 in A major, Opus 13* (1875-1876) received significant recognition. Written in 1876, it was accepted for performance at the Trocadéro in the concerts of the 1878 Exhibition, where the composer himself accompanied the violinist Jean-Pierre Maurin. This sonata was the first of Fauré's major works to be published by Breitkopf and Härtel in Germany. In 1877, Saint-Saëns wrote an enthusiastic article about this sonata in the *Journal de musique*, and Ivan Turgenev agreed to translate it for newspapers in Berlin and Moscow. For Fauré's sonata itself, Saint-Saëns had nothing but praise: "There is no stronger work among those which have appeared in France and Germany over the past several years, and there is none with more charm."[9]

With the Société Nationale de Musique

The Société Nationale de Musique (SNM) was founded in 1871 as a result of the combined efforts of Saint-Saëns and Romain Bussine, a Paris Conservatoire

[9] Jessica Duchen, Gabriel Fauré (London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 2000), 44.

professor of singing. The committee included Georges Bizet, Jules Massenet, Franck, Lalo, Dubois, and Fauré himself. The motto of the SNM was 'Ars Gallica,' and the society was thoroughly nationalistic. Specifically opposed to the current German dominance in the musical world, it was run by and for French musicians only, with exclusively French programs. It was the SNM's aim to provide consistent concerts of new French music written by living French composers.

The SNM's later decision to admit foreign works in 1886, however, caused a split in the membership of the society. The society accepted Vincent d'Indy's proposal to introduce interesting modern foreign works, still unknown in France, into the programs. Saint-Saëns, who had opposed the move, eventually resigned from the presidency, and the leadership role was given to the pro-Wagnerian composer, Franck.

Providing Fauré with great opportunities and benefits, the SNM inspired him to compose a number of great chamber works. Since almost all the regular members of Saint-Saëns' Monday-night gatherings (soirées) joined the society, Fauré was exposed at an early age to the most important composers of his time. At each meeting, Saint-Saëns played a new piece of his own and sometimes that of another composer. Fauré presented numerous chamber works, songs, Nocturnes, and Barcarolles at Saint-Saëns' soirees, and the SNM continued to present new compositions by Fauré. In fact, he first performed most of his important chamber works at SNM concerts, including his *Violin Sonata No. 1 in A major*; *Piano Quartet No. 1 in c minor, Opus 15* (1876-1879); *Piano Quartet No. 2 in g minor, Opus 45* (1885-1886); *Violin Sonata No. 2 in e minor, Opus 108* (1916-1917), *Violoncello Sonata No. 1 in d minor, Opus 109* (1917); *Violoncello Sonata No. 2 in g minor, Opus 117* (1921); *Piano Quintet No. 2 in c minor, Opus 115* (1919-1921); and *Piano Trio in d minor, Opus 120* (1922-1923).

With Piotr Ilich Tchaikovsky

Fauré's *Piano Quartet No. 1* was described as "excellent" by the great Russian composer Tchaikovsky when he visited Saint-Saëns in Paris and heard this piece in June of 1886. Tchaikovsky already had some links with Paris. He had met Saint-Saëns during the French composer's visit to Moscow in 1875. The two men had quickly become friends, meeting again several times in Paris, and also in England. During his visit to Paris in 1886, Tchaikovsky was able to meet several other French composers, including Fauré. After a dinner given in the Russian composer's honor, Tchaikovsky recorded in his diary, "acquaintance with the charming Fauré." He also commented that he liked Fauré "extremely, both as man and musician." Fauré gave Tchaikovsky an inscribed copy of *Piano Quartet No. 2* in 1888, and the following year, he had dinner with Tchaikovsky and d'Indy after an SNM performance. The acquaintance between Tchaikovsky and Fauré was important to the eventual inter-influence of French and Russian music, which was to develop later, in the early twentieth century.

Tchaikovsky recorded in his diary after the SNM concert in 1889, "Rubbish... (here, he was referring to d'Indy). But Fauré is delightful!" Fauré also greatly respected Tchaikovsky, the most Westernized among late nineteenth-century Russian composers, but Fauré had little patience for the more nationalistic elements of Russian music that fascinated his contemporaries increasingly around the turn of the century. He thought that the use of folk music and deliberately orientalized harmonies was superficial and irrelevant to the worth of musical substance. His lack of acceptance of the fashions of the time while continuing to develop his own style gave Fauré the reputation of a stubbornly self-reliant musician. He was resistant to those musical influences which did not suit his artistic outlook.

As a Professor at the Paris Conservatoire

Fauré's first attempt to obtain a professorship (of one of the composition classes) at the Paris Conservatoire was indignantly rebuffed by Ambroise Thomas, then the director. Thomas was outraged at the idea of Fauré's application and accused him of being neither a Rome scholar nor even a Conservatoire pupil. "Fauré, never! If he is nominated, I resign."[10]

However, in 1896, Fauré, then over fifty, at last obtained a professorship. The immediate cause of this move was the death of Thomas. Dubois was next appointed director of the Conservatoire. Massenet, one of the Conservatoire's composition professors, had hoped to succeed Thomas, but the school and the composer could not agree on terms. Massenet, therefore, resigned the professorship of composition and left the Conservatoire altogether. Dubois' own composition class was naturally without a professor as well.

Saint-Saëns advised Fauré, who had already tasted bitter frustration, to be circumspect. "In your place, I would allow [Charles] Widor to succeed Massenet and I would take the organ class," he suggested. The organ students would be without a teacher if Widor were to take the composition class instead. Fauré would have none of this: "I would not offer myself for the organ class in any case. Never will I undertake to learn to improvise fugues to students who do not even know harmony,"[11] Fauré explained himself in a letter to Saint-Saëns. Fauré was gloomy, having been told that there might be a reduction in the number of available composition professorships. He felt that Widor would certainly be appointed. "My only hope would be to succeed you in forty years," Fauré told Saint-Saëns, "and I swear to you that I like you far more than the Institute!"[12] It proved that Fauré was wrong to be pessimistic. The Conservatoire retained its compositional classes. Widor did receive

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[10] Charles Koechlin, Gabriel Fauré (London: Dennis Dobson Ltd., 1976), 5.
[11] J. Barrie Jones, Gabriel Fauré: A Life In Letters (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1989), 81.
[12] Ibid.

the appointment to Dubois' formal class, and finally, in October of 1896, the vacancy created by Massenet's furious departure was filled by Fauré.

The Correspondence between Fauré and Saint-Saëns

The strong friendship between Fauré and Saint-Saëns, which began at the Ecole Niedermeyer, was to continue until Saint-Saëns' death 60 years later. According to a collection of Fauré-Saint-Saëns correspondences,[13] their affectionate friendship was obviously pronounced. Fauré wrote Saint-Saëns a number of letters in which Fauré discussed in every detail such topics as his health, family, work, and the music upon which he was working. They both wrote about their compositions often, and the master gave his young friend honest and sincere criticism.

Fauré relied heavily upon his mentor's opinion of his compositions and seriously considered the master's advice. In addition, Fauré greatly admired his old friend and his music, which Fauré clearly stated in his letters. Fauré wrote to Saint-Saëns to congratulate him on the first French performance of his *Third Symphony* (1850) on January 9, 1887.

> My dear composer of a splendid symphony! Dare I ask you to come tomorrow evening to the Société Nationale to hear my new quartet? You will never know what a treat it was for me last Sunday! And I had the score, something which ensured that I did not miss a single note of this symphony, which will live much longer than us two: even when putting our ages together![14]

Saint-Saëns was also faithful to his dear friend. He always gave his honest opinions to Fauré. Below is the old master's letter, which provides sincere criticism for the seventy-year-old Gabriel.

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[13] Philippe Fauré-Fremiet, editor of Gabriel Fauré: Lettres intimes (Paris: La Colombe, 1951).
[14] J. Barrie Jones, Gabriel Fauré: A Life in Letters (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd. 1989), 61.

> My dear friend, I am amusing myself by working at your second *Valse-Caprice*; and it seems to me that there must be some mistakes in the passage beginning at the last bar.....I have some worries over the chords in the left hand and the C flats or naturals in the right hand.[15]

Fauré never complained about Saint-Saëns' unfavorable comments. Fauré rather appreciated them; he dedicated his one of finest works of incidental music, *Pénélope* (1913), to his respected teacher. Saint-Saëns responded to his pupil by saying, "My dear Gabriel, you give me the greatest pleasure by telling me that you have dedicated *Pénélope* to me. I was even a little moved... ."[16]

Had he not had such a faithful friend and splendid mentor as Saint-Saëns, it may not have been possible for Fauré to become either a great composer or an honorable professor at the Paris Conservatoire. Fauré clearly appreciated his beloved friend, admirer, and supporter, Camille Saint-Saëns.

Fauré's Rival, Claude Debussy

As a young composer, Claude Debussy began to establish his reputation as a prominent French composer after winning the Prix de Rome in 1883. Debussy explored possibilities far removed from the traditional, formal concepts of harmony and music, and his compositions were regarded as unconventional and unusual. With great imagination, he created special sonorities, colorful harmonies, and flowing rhythms which revolutionized early twentieth-century music. He became the most radical French composer of his generation.

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[15] J. Barrie Jones, Gabriel Fauré: A Life in Letters (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1989), 166.
[16] Ibid., 150.

The relationship between Fauré and Debussy was difficult. Debussy's music embraced many of the qualities that Fauré preferred to avoid. Debussy especially liked to use elements that Fauré regarded as superficial including the current fashions for Orientalism, gamelan (high-pitched percussive) effects, whole-tone writing, and large-scale orchestrations filled with colorful sound effects.

The two masters' different musical tastes are exemplified by their contrasting reactions to the Universal Exhibition, held in 1889, one of the most influential occasions in the history of the French arts, especially music. The Exhibition presented decorative arts, music, and architectural styles from diverse regions of the world. There, Debussy heard for the first time the Javanese gamelan—an orchestra of pitched percussion instruments—performing intricate rhythmic patterns, an experience which had a remarkable influence both on his mind and his music.

In contrast, Fauré sensed that his own creative processes were not compatible with what he heard at the Exhibition. In his works, there is no trace of Orientalism, whole-tone writing, or gamelan effects, which became very fashionable tendencies at the time. While Paris overflowed with the influence of the new fashion, Fauré steadily went on writing in his own way.

In musical language, also, Debussy was far more extreme than Fauré. Debussy seemed to want to challenge all the old harmonic rules, such as forbidding 'parallel fifths,' and produced his own colorful palette of sound, which departed radically from traditional tonality. Debussy's comments about Fauré were often slightly sarcastic, and Fauré's view of Debussy's music usually expressed disfavor.

In 1898, Fauré received his first major commission for incidental music (music intended to accompany a play). Upon a visit to London during an Easter vacation, he met, at Leo Frank Schuster's house, Mrs. Patrick Campbell, a celebrated actress. She requested that Fauré should write incidental music for Maurice Maeterlinck's enigmatic Symbolist drama, *Pelléas et Mélisande*. The play

was to be produced in London, in 1898, in a translated version by Jack Mackail. *Pelléas et Mélisande, Opus 80* (1898) would later become Fauré's most substantial score of incidental music. It has been considered his symphonic masterpiece. However, it was also the title a work by another composer, which would come to represent the peak of musical Symbolism; Debussy had completed an opera based on *Pelléas et Mélisande* in 1895. Debussy's *Pelléas* remained unheard until 1902, and even then it required considerable courage to perform because it was so innovative and demanding. However, the existence of this piece was well known from the start in French musical circles.

Debussy and Fauré were all too aware of their clash of interests over the incidental music to Maeterlinck's drama. Fauré had only received the commission because Debussy had turned down the suggestion to create a suite from his opera to serve as an illustration of the play. Debussy's publisher had punished him by then offering the commission only to Fauré. In response, Debussy publicly and sarcastically derided Fauré's work and further expressed personal disdain for Fauré's society patrons, for whom Debussy's opera could have been unpleasantly avant-garde.

> The impact of this music seems to me hardly likely to survive the current production and, if I may boast, I don't see there can be any confusion between the two scores, at least not in the matter of intellectual weight. In any case Fauré is the mouthpiece of a group of snobs and imbeciles who will have nothing whatever to do with the other *Pelléas*.[17]

Debussy's *Pelléas* certainly contrasts with Fauré's. Though the two works share a sense of mystery, Fauré's *Pelléas* belongs in spirit to the nineteenth century and Debussy's to the twentieth. Fauré's incidental music is melodic yet narrative. It has a powerful, poetic impact and makes good use of the ensemble. Concerned with

[17] Jessica Duchen, Gabriel Fauré (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 2000), 130.

the overall unity of his incidental music, Fauré repeated extracts from the main suite movements, thus creating a beautiful unified ensemble with traditional motion and tonal harmony. Debussy's opera is more atmospheric and dreamlike. Notes are used sparingly, and unusual orchestral effects produce a mood of dramatic enchantment.[18] Debussy's *Pelléas* carries Wagner's influence into a new generation of development, in which tonality has disappeared and whole-tone passages and chromaticism create a personal and rootless sound. Upon hearing the 1902 première of Debussy's opera, Fauré's response was quite unfavorable: "If that is music, then I have never understood what music is."[19]

Fauré's view of Debussy's music may have been affected by a personal scandal surrounding Debussy this time. Debussy had left his wife and married Madame Sigismond (Emma) Bardac. Madame Bardac was the woman to whom Fauré had dedicated *La Bonne Chanson, Opus 61* (1892-1894) and to whom he had become deeply attached. Along with many others, Fauré disapproved of Debussy's 'dishonorable' affair, but perhaps for more personal reasons.

Fauré was to remain critical of Debussy's musical procedures. He regarded the Debussian influence as something quite serious. He considered it: "a disastrous influence in the sense that it has diverted our French conception of music."[20] Debussy was equally critical of Fauré, caustically calling him the "music-case of a band of snobs."[21]

Although the two composers shared common qualities, such as elegance, refinement, sensibility, and a highly developed feeling for sonorous beauty, Fauré and Debussy shared more dislikes than likes when it came to each other's music.

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[18] Jessica Duchen, Gabriel Fauré (London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 2000), 130.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.

CHAPTER 2

Fauré's Years at the Paris Conservatoire

Fauré's Influence on Young Musicians

When Fauré arrived at the Paris Conservatoire in 1896 to assume his duties as professor of composition, he became a mentor to numerous gifted students, and his unconventional approach to teaching was very much appreciated. Fauré's influence was derived significantly from the appeal of his own compositions. Fauré reserved his foremost attention for chamber music, and orchestration counted for as little in his teaching as in his own composing. He brought a new, more liberal atmosphere to his conservatory classroom, which felt more like a salon than a traditional teaching environment. As 'salon host', he would listen with interest to the younger musicians' compositions, providing them with suggestions rather than 'criticism.' Fauré was described by one of his pupils as "less a teacher than a guide."[22] Although Fauré himself was a product of the old school, he had an open mind and a keen interest in modern forms. He liked to encourage creativity in his pupils.

Fauré's composition class produced a major proportion of the outstanding names in French composition, including Louis Aubert, Nadia Boulanger, Roger-Ducasse, Georges Enesco, Charles Koechlin, Maurice Ravel, Florent Schmitt and Emile Vuillermoz.

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[22] Jessica Duchen, Gabriel Fauré (London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 2000).

Nadia Boulanger

At the age of fourteen, Boulanger became Fauré's youngest pupil and the only female student in the class. She became one of the most important French musicians of her generation and one of the most influential teachers of composition in the entire twentieth century. "Fauré exerted a very great influence on us," Boulanger recalled:

> which enlightened and directed our [lives], which gave us a sense of dignity and a vision of life that was modest, tranquil and detached... In all the years I spent in Fauré's class, he never spoke of himself, nor played a note of his own music. He often had the air of a dreamer, of being somewhere else. We adored him, but sometimes we would say to each other: "Today he didn't listen to much!"[23]

Visiting Fauré near the end of his life, Boulanger was surprised when the composer told her that perhaps she should not have abandoned composition. He illustrated his point by playing on the piano, from memory, part of an exercise that she had brought to his class around fifteen years earlier—on a day when the class had thought he was not listening.

Fauré became friendly with the Boulanger family and invited them to his apartment for meals. Nadia later recalled such occasions at Fauré's home when he suddenly but politely excused himself for a few minutes. When he returned, he explained that he had just been writing down what he had composed in his head during lunch. He would often visit the Boulanger family and continued their friendly relationship. However, after he discovered that Nadia had secretively gone to study with Charles Widor, they hardly spoke for fifteen years. Shortly before Fauré's death, Boulanger became eager to recover their relationship and Fauré immediately and warmly welcomed her back into his life as a friend.

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[23] Nadia Boulanger, as quoted in Bruno Mon saingeon, Mademoiselle: Conversations with Nadia Boulanger (Manchester: Carcanet, 1985), 24.

Maurice Ravel

Ravel entered Fauré's class in January of 1898. Fauré noted in his report concerning Ravel: "A musical nature. Much taken with the new. Disarming sincerity."[24] Over the next few years, Ravel brought his works to class: a one-movement *Violin Sonata* (1897) written for performance with the Rumanian violinist Georges Enesco; a *Habanera* for two pianos (1895-1897); a passionate piano piece entitled *Jeux d'eau* (1901); a *String Quartet* (1902-1903); and a vibrant three-movement *Piano Sonatine* (1903-1905).

Fauré could be severe from time to time in his criticism, but he was always ready to change his opinion if he felt that he had formed an impression too quicky. One day, Ravel brought him a song entitled *Simorne*, and Fauré returned the composition with stiff censure. At the next lesson, Ravel was surprised when his teacher asked to see the manuscript again.

"But I should blame myself," Ravel told him, "if I even mentioned this work to you again, you found it so detestable." However, Fauré replied, "I may have been mistaken."[25]

Recognizing Ravel's unusual ability, Fauré gave him many suggestions, which were of invaluable help to the young composer's development. Fauré's influence can be heard in Ravel's brilliant *Jeux d'eau* and *String Quartet*. Acknowledging Fauré's influence, Ravel dedicated both compositions to '*mon cher maître G. Fauré.*' In 1922, two years before Fauré's death, the *Revue Musicale* published a special piece in honor of the great musician; Ravel's contribution was a *Berceuse sur le nom de Gabriel Fauré.*

Fauré's letters to his pupils showed his carefully balanced attitude, combining constructive criticism with affectionate encouragement. Fauré's pupils were deeply

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[24] Jessica Duchen, Gabriel Fauré (London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 2000).
[25] Madeleine Goss, Bolero: The Life of Maurice Ravel (New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1945), 53.

appreciative of his encouragement and his devotion to them. One of the most touching gifts he received from his students was a string quartet, in which each of its four movements was written by a different pupil. The key of each movement spelled out his name: F, A, U(G), RE(D). Respective to the order of the movements, the contributing composers were Ravel, Raoul Bardac, Paul Ladmirault and Roger-Ducasse. Ravel's portion of this piece later became the first movement of his *String Quartet in F major* (1902-1903), now one of the most popular French chamber-music pieces in the repertoire. "To my dear teacher Gabriel Fauré, in heartfelt homage," was the dedication.

Members of the Société Musicale Indépendente

Fauré's former pupils took an interest in various modern facets of French music, and some of these young composers assembled to form a musical society, the Société Musicale Independente (SMI). Its members included Koechlin, Ravel, Schmitt and Roger-Ducasse, among others. The SMI's goal was to challenge the ideals of the SNM. Under the leadership of d'Indy, the SNM had become heavily biased towards the works of the 'Franckists.' In contrast to the SNM, the new society would have an eclectic view. Koechlin explained:

> The name defines the aims: independence of cliques, dogmas and theories. More a wish than a reality; total independence is very rare! But it was linked with the aesthetic, at once liberal and traditional, of Gabriel Fauré. The new venture intended to accept, without bothering about tendencies, all works worthy of interest... .[26]

Fauré expressed his own view of the SMI's founding in an interview in *Camoedia* on April 20, 1910. He stressed the new society's focus upon liberal and

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[26] Charles Koechlin, Gabriel Fauré (London: Dennis Dobson Ltd., 1945), 12.

varied aspects of music: "I could hardly imagine that the SMI would offer competition to anyone at all. Its programs are too eclectic to permit it. Moreover, competition! That term is inadmissible in musical matters."[27]

The first years of the SMI were brilliant, and its success incited the SNM to broaden its view, which produced a fruitful rivalry. Fauré agreed with the traditional spirit of the SNM, and remained loyal to the organization. However, this did not prevent him from encouraging the younger rival society. His musical sympathies were with the SMI; his disciples knew this well.

The rivalry between the two societies quickly began to divide nearly the entire Parisian musical world. Conservatives fell with the SNM and progressives with the SMI. Fauré was elected as the new society's president because most of its members had been his pupils and, naturally, regarded him as their leader. In fact, his musical style at the time had developed from the aesthetics of Romanticism into a much more progressive, modern style. Since Fauré incorporated both liberal and traditional aspects in his music, he legitimately belonged in both societies.

The SMI involved an element of French nationalism as did the original SNM. Just as the SNM had opposed German dominance, the young musicians in the SMI were eager to throw off outdated Wagnerian influences and to create truly French compositions. Unlike Debussy, Fauré had never attempted to define himself as the ultimate French composer. Furthermore, he never declared himself a nationalist in any way, in contrast to composers such as d'Indy. However, Fauré was a deeply Gallic composer, and this character is quite evident in his music. His melodies are intimately related to the rhythms of the French language, and these flowing melodies often of a melancholic temperament. Fauré's *Sicilienne for Violoncello and Piano, Opus 78* (1989, originally 1893)—derived from *Pelléas et Mélisande*—and the first

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[27] Jessica Duchen, Gabriel Fauré (London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 2000).

movement of his *Piano Quartet No. 2* both contain similar French stresses and flowing modal melodies.

Fauré as Reforming Director (1905 -1914)

Fauré obtained some well-deserved recognition in his late fifties. In 1903, the celebrated journalist Gaston Calmette invited Fauré to write a musical criticism of Mozart's opera *Figaro*. Much more importantly, when Dubois resigned as head of the Paris Conservatoire in 1905, Fauré became the Conservatoire's new director. Unlike most French composers of his generation, Fauré had never studied at the Conservatoire—it was well-known that he had been educated at the Ecole Niedermeyer. It is, therefore, even more remarkable that Fauré became one of the Paris Conservatoire's most famous directors.

At the time of Fauré's promotion, the Conservatoire had been a deeply conservative and bureaucratic organization for many decades. The rebellious Hector Berlioz recalled how obsolete and biased the Conservatoire's then director, Salvatore Cherubini, had been; the much disliked director had often chased Berlioz around the library tables in an attempt to throw him out.[28] The same Cherubini had turned away a teen-aged piano prodigy from Hungary, Franz Liszt, on the basis that the piano classes were too full to permit admission of a foreigner. The Prix de Rome—a prize awarded on the basis of a competition held by the Conservatoire—was also surrounded by controversy. The prize was awarded for the composition of a cantata, which was quite an old-fashioned musical genre by this time, and the contest was entered primarily, though not exclusively, by students.

Fauré's talented pupil Ravel entered for the Prix de Rome four times without success beyond a second prize. In 1905, he tried again and did not even pass the first

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[28] Jessica Duchen, Gabriel Fauré (London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 2000).

round, despite his growing public reputation. The situation, soon termed *'l'affaire Ravel'*, exploded into a scandal when it turned out that the six Prix de Rome finalists that year were all from the composition class of Charles Lenepveu, who was also on the jury. The critic, Pierre Lalo, described the events of the competition, in *Le Temps* on 2 July 1905, as "corrupt, conniving and destructive."[29]

When Fauré was appointed director of the Paris Conservatoire, his old friends Eugene Ysaÿe and Debussy wrote congratulatory letters to Fauré. In their letters, they both expressed their regard for him as the right person for the position. As director, Fauré applied himself to several important reforms. Those who had regarded him as a socialite-salon musician or a dreamer must have been amazed to discover that he was a man of great energy, determination, and power.

Fauré's reforms began just a week after he took the position. His first moves were to separate the study of counterpoint and fugue from that of composition. Also, he liberated singing students from the obligation to choose pieces from a rather limited repertoire. The study of music history became mandatory for composition and harmony students, and the requirements for orchestral and chamber-ensemble classes were more strongly enforced. Moreover, Fauré prohibited the Conservatoire professors from serving on entrance examination juries; this was to prevent prospective students from being forced to take private lessons in advance from those who had the power to admit them. Fauré appointed such notable musicians as Debussy, Ravel and Paul Dukas to the examination boards for harmony, counterpoint, and fugue.

Fauré's directorship played a large part in the enlargement of the repertoire that students would study and perform. Wagner was still considered taboo at the Conservatoire at this time, and Fauré rapidly corrected this. Singing students were

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[29] Jessica Duchen, Gabriel Fauré (London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 2000).

now free to take on and perform any works, from those of Claudio Monteverdi through Franz Schubert and Robert Schumann. Even contemporary French melodies, including those of Debussy, could be heard at student concerts.

Many professors who were opposed to Fauré's changes became furious and resigned as a result, giving Fauré the opportunity to make new appointments. Fauré believed that his professors should include the very best performing soloists, as well as qualified instructors. Thus, he appointed Lucien Capet as the violin instructor, while Alfred Cortot and Édouard Risler were put in charge of the piano class. Fauré rightly believed that the presence of great soloists would strengthen the Conservatoire's growing reputation and inspire its students.

A venerable artist, liberal teacher, and revolutionary director, Fauré had a great and lasting influence upon the Conservatoire. As Debussy had predicted in his congratulatory letter to Fauré in 1905, Fauré was indeed "the right man" who would shake up tradition and lead the Paris Conservatoire in a new direction.

CHAPTER 3

Fauré's Chamber Music

Fauré was not a prolific composer of chamber music. During the entirety of his career, he wrote a total of only twenty chamber works (these are listed on the following page). Yet through these works, Fauré clearly expressed his own distinctive and personal musical style, which he developed continuously throughout his life. The most significant among Fauré's chamber works are two violin sonatas, two cello sonatas, two piano quartets, two piano quintets, a piano trio, and a string quartet.

Fauré's creative output has often been divided into three stylistic periods: the First Period (1860-1885), the Second Period (1885-1906) and the Third Period (1906-1924). Fauré's early works are fairly representative of traditional nineteenth-century French Romanticism. In contrast, his later works, written during and after World War I, feature the results of Fauré's ceaseless musical exploration and innovation.

The Chronological Order of Fauré's Chamber Music

First Period (1860-1885)

Opus 13	*Violin Sonata No.1, in A Major*	1875-1876
Opus 15	*Piano Quartet No.1, in c minor*	1876-1879
Opus 28	*Romance for Violin and Piano in Bb Major*	1877
Opus 16	*Berceuse for Violin and Piano*	1879
Opus 24	*Elégie for Violoncello and Piano*	1880
Opus 77	*Papillon for Violoncello and Piano*	1885

Second Period (1885-1906)

Opus 45	*Piano Quartet No.2, in g minor*	1885-1886
Opus 49	*Petite pièce for Violoncello*	(circa 1888)
Opus 78	*Sicilienne for Violoncello and Piano*	1898 (orig. 1893)
Opus 69	*Romance for Violoncello and Piano*	1894
Opus 75	*Andante for Violin and Piano*	1897
_____	*Morceau de lecture for two Violoncelli*	1897
Opus 79	*Fantaisie* for Flute and Piano	1898
Opus 89	*Piano Quintet No.1, in d minor*	1887-1895, 1903-5

Third Period (1906-1924)

Opus 98	*Sérénade for Violoncello and Piano*	1908
Opus 108	*Violin Sonata No.2, in e minor*	1916-1917
Opus 109	*Violoncello Sonata No.1, in d minor*	1917
Opus 115	*Piano Quintet No.2, in c minor*	1919-1921
Opus 117	*Violoncello Sonata No.2, in g minor*	1921
Opus 120	*Piano Trio in d minor*	1922-1923
Opus 121	*String Quartet in e minor*	1923-1924

Fauré's First Compositional Period: 1860-1885

Since Fauré was not concerned with the publication of his manuscripts, it is difficult to exactly date his first-period compositions. Unfortunately, only about half his manuscripts have survived, and just a few of these are precisely dated. (He also rarely dated his letters before he became Director of the Conservatoire in 1905.) Except for a few songs, Fauré had nothing of significance published until 1877, when his *Violin Sonata No.1* appeared as *Opus 13*. Only twelve opus numbers remained to catalogue over thirty of his youthful works. These early compositions are mostly songs, to which Fauré evidently did not attach much importance. The distribution of these early opus numbers did not take place until Fauré requested that a catalogue of his works be printed by Julien Hamelle. Strangely, Hamelle's opus numbers follow the chronological order of neither the works' composition nor their publication.

Fauré's most important creations in his first period were the *Violin Sonata No. 1 in A Major* and the *Piano Quartet No. 1 in c minor*. In 1883, he completely rewrote the finale of this *Piano Quartet*, which was originally completed in 1879. The cataloguing of Fauré's four minor chamber works in these early years reveals Hamelle's random assignment of opus numbers. Strangely, the *Romance for Violin and Piano in B-flat Major, Opus 28* (1877) and the *Berceuse for Violin and Piano, Opus 16* (1879) are both contemporaries of the *Piano Quartet No. 1, Opus 15*. Fauré's two early-period works for cello and piano, *Elégie for Violoncello and Piano, Opus 24* (1880) and *Papillon for Violoncello and Piano, Opus 77* (1884), were obviously assigned opus number of no significant relevancy.

Inspiration for Fauré's first great masterpiece, *Violin Sonata No. 1*, was probably derived from his meeting with the great Belgian violinist Hubert Léonard and from Saint-Saëns' own first *Violin Sonata* (1850). Fauré was discovering the violin's expressive possibilities, and his experiences with several violinists helped

make his sonata successful. He had taken the opportunity several times to hear the famous virtuoso Pablo de Sarasate, for whom Saint-Saëns had written his *First Violin Concerto* (1867). Fauré had also heard Henri Vieuxtemps play concerts in Rennes. Furthermore, Fauré had played duets with his friend Paul Viardot, in particular a sonata by Viardot, which had been published in 1874.

The most important contributor to Fauré's *Violin Sonata No. 1* was Léonard, a pupil of Vieuxtemps. Fauré was fortunate to have the attention of the great violinist, who watched closely over the sonata's composition during a long visit to the home of the Clerc family in the summer of 1875. Léonard gave Fauré practical advice on how to make the work more playable and improve its effectiveness.

This four-movement sonata is one of the first landmarks in the renaissance of chamber music, which the SNM helped to promote. The sonata was written ten years before Franck's celebrated sonata in the same key, *Sonata for Violin and Piano in A major* (1886). Koechlin commented that "the violence of the opening *Allegro* does show some affinity at times with Franck's second movement", but he adds humorously, "render unto Gabriel, and not unto César, that which is Gabriel's."[30]

There was some slight mystery attached to Fauré's violin sonata's first performance. It was dedicated not to Léonard, who had contributed so much to its creation, but to Viardot, perhaps in fulfillment of an earlier promise. However, neither of these violinists was granted the honor of playing this sonata in public for the first time, probably because of uncomfortable relations between the Société Nationale and the Viardot family. On December 31, 1876, the committee of the SNM unanimously accepted the sonata for performance, and the premiere on January 27, 1877 was enthusiastically received. Fauré played the piano part, and the violinist was

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[30] Charles Koechlin, Gabriel Fauré (London: Dennis Dobson Ltd., 1976), 41.

Marie Tayau, a young player who had founded an all-female quartet. A complimentary review by Saint-Saëns greeted the arrival of this splendid new sonata.

While Fauré was staying with the Clercs at Sainte-Adresse in the summer of 1876, encouraged by his hosts' interest and enthusiasm, he began to compose a new chamber work, the *Piano Quartet No. 1 in c minor*. As had been the case with his violin sonata, progress was swift, and Fauré had hopes of finishing it soon. However, several circumstances prevented completion of the quartet. Some obstacles during this time included serious financial problems and Fauré's application for a job at the Madeleine. In addition, Fauré endured during this time the whole unhappy episode of the breaking of his marriage engagement by his fiancée. The quartet was not to be finished for another three years, until the summer of 1879, and still the piece was subsequently revised.

The *Piano Quartet No. 1* constructed around a Classical framework, as is Fauré's first violin sonata. The opening *Allegro* is formally in strict sonata form, but the affirmation of the first theme played by unison strings is unusually strong. The dominant and energetic modal theme develops into a square rhythmic motif, which dominates the movement. In the second movement, Fauré defines the *Scherzo* with an even greater rhythmic assurance. The piano theme, the alternations of duple and triple time, and the delicate pizzicato in the strings are combined in an ensemble of ideas, which is continuous yet never aimless. The slow third movement, in c minor, establishes a mood of tragedy with an accompanied theme based on a rising octave and a major second. This kind of motif was to recur frequently in his works. Fauré probably destroyed the original version of the *Finale*. The new version, *Allegro molto in c minor*, successfully revisits the broad conception of the opening *Allegro*.

The popularity of his first two chamber works, composed one after the other, may have convinced Fauré that this was a genre which suited him and which he should pursue further. As soon as he had completed the first piano quartet, he began

to think about a cello sonata. Fauré may have been inspired by the Saint-Saëns' *Cello Sonata No.1 in c-minor, Opus 32* (1872). Fauré started work on his own his sonata in the same key and began with the slow movement. This movement was played on June 21, 1880 at Saint-Saëns' salon, where it was enthusiastically received. However, as often was the case with Fauré, the sonata remained 'in progress' for years and was never finished. In January of 1883, the single 'first movement', *Elégie for Violoncello and Piano, Opus 24* (1880) was finally published as an entire work.

Fauré's first cello composition, *Elégie*, is a powerful and emotional work of great beauty. Evoking the sadness of a funeral, the hauntingly beautiful first theme recalls the *Adagio* movement of Fauré's first piano quartet (written in the same key of c minor) with its reflective mood and the repeated accompaniment chords. Fauré often used the same tonality to express similar sentiments. 1880 was probably the last year in which Fauré permitted himself to directly express such tragic emotion. Musically, *Elégie* may also be one of the last manifestations of French Romanticism in Fauré's compositional style. After this period, Fauré's music became more introverted and careful. The central section of *Elégie*, in the relative major key, is noticeably expressive and passionate. Following the dramatic, sweeping cello *cadenza*, the opening funeral theme returns, this time played *fortissimo* and an octave higher than in the beginning, with an overwhelmingly Romantic piano accompaniment. The coda concludes, restating the second theme in a gradual diminuendo. Fauré resolves the force of the rhythm, nuances, timbres, and moods into an atmosphere of calm. The whole piece is finely balanced.

Immediately upon its appearance, *Elégie* was a great success, and Hamelle asked Fauré to write another complementary virtuoso cello piece. Fauré complied, but without much enthusiasm. The circumstantial piece in A major, *Papillon* (Butterfly) *for Violoncello and Piano* was written in 1884 as a companion piece for *Elégie*, but it was not published until 1898. Fauré argued with Hamelle over the title

of the piece. The composer wanted to call it *Pièce pour violoncelle,* but the publisher preferred *Libellules* (Dragonflies) for marketing reasons. Hamelle waited for fourteen years before Fauré would agree to his work being published as *Papillon.* Even then, the composer was angry. "Butterfly or dungfly," he said in exasperation, "call it whatever you like."[31] However, Hamelle's expectation was correct. Played by cellists all over France, *Papillon* achieved great success and popularity.

Papillon is a light, charming display piece for cello. The formal structure is ABAB' and coda. The A section contains a fast and light figure of sixteenth notes played by the cello. The more expansive B section expresses Fauré's voice in the lovely, graceful melody, which does indeed beautifully describe a soaring butterfly. The A section returns in the coda, which vanishes into thin air.

Fauré's Second Compositional Period: 1885-1906

The beginning of his second compositional period was a difficult time for Fauré. Not only did the composer face financial difficulties, he also became depressed following the death of his parents. Fortunately, a restorative Venetian holiday was arranged by the Princesse de Polignac in 1891. During this period, Fauré also turned to composing incidental music for the stage, perhaps as a substitute for symphonic composition or as a substitute for the ideal opera libretto he never found. His work *Prométhée* (1900) was a great success and confirmed his undoubted dramatic talents. Despite his efforts, however, he retained his salon image. Debussy expressed this popular view when he described Fauré as the "master of charms" in *Gil Blas* in 1903.[32] In contrast to the late 1880's, the post-Venice years were happy

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[31] Jean-Michel Nectoux, Gabriel Fauré: a musical life (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 89.

[32] Robert Orledge, Gabriel Fauré (London: Eulenburg Books, 1979), 77.

and productive for Fauré, and he wrote such creative works as *La Bonne Chanson*, the *Sixth Nocturne* (1894), the *Seventh Nocturne* (1898) and *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1898).

Beginning in 1891, Fauré broadened the scope of his melodic invention by lending it a novel structure and harmony. Each genre reflects Fauré's developing maturity as a composer, which is most evident in his subtler cadences, sectional links, and his increasing use of modality. Moreover, his increasing poetic awareness, self-criticism, and emotional depth all contributed to the maturation of his style with an increase in bold and forceful expressiveness.

Fauré achieved his full artistic maturity at the beginning of his second period with the completion in 1886 of his *Piano Quartet No. 2 in g minor, Opus 45*. He had likely pondered this second piano quartet from the time the first one was published in 1884, and its composition seems to have occupied him for most of 1885 and 1886. The première of *Piano Quartet No. 2* took place at the SNM on January 22, 1887 with Fauré himself playing the piano part. The work was published a year later, and the composer dedicated this piece to Hans von Bülow. The second piano quartet is significantly more advanced than the first in the force of its expression, its greater rhythmic drive, and the complexity of its themes. However, the second piano quartet still maintains a close resemblance to its predecessor in the powerful but clear part-writing, the layout of the movements, and even the character of its thematic material. In the first movement, *Allegro molto moderato*, one finds many of the same characteristics as in the first quartet. The movement is almost symphonic in scale with contrast between the two main themes. The second movement is a *Scherzo* of a delicate ensemble, with a piano melody played beneath string pizzicato. The slow movement, *Adagio*, is meditative and serene while the finale, *Allegro molto*, returns to the energetic chordal theme on the piano.

Piano Quartet No. 2 and *Violin Sonata No. 2* are Fauré's only instrumental essays in cyclic form. The second piano quartet is also one of the most successful

nineteenth-century chamber works overall. Fauré clearly states his direction in every movement. His extended sonata form based on the Classical plan never seems artificially drawn out. In addition to the basic techniques of thematic and motivic development in the Classical manner, Fauré smoothly transforms the mood and implicates a theme throughout unified movements of remarkable internal variety. His harmonic fluency and his original approach to subtle cadences and modulation seamlessly interconnects all sections.

When Fauré had nearly finished the second piano quartet, he found himself thinking about another work for piano and strings. A sketchbook dating from the summer of 1887 contains the theme of this future work's *Finale*, noted in F major. The project soon expanded to become a piano quintet, and the transformation could be related to the friendship between Fauré and Ysaÿe. The two had become acquainted during concerts they performed together in Brussels in 1888 and 1889. These programs had included Fauré's first violin sonata and both of his piano quartets.

Most of the *Piano Quintet No. 1 in d minor, Opus 89* had been sketched out by the end of 1890. Fauré's son Philippe recalled that, "the *Allegro* and the *Andante* were sketched more or less simultaneously, but only the exposition of the *Allegro* was written out in full. Written and rewritten."[33] Ysaÿe looked over the quintet's opening during a visit to Paris. He was enthusiastic, and Fauré promised to dedicate the work to him. However, Fauré had trouble developing the ideas to his satisfaction, and he abandoned the work in favor of two song cycles: the *Cinq melodies 'de Venise' Opus 58* (1891) and *La Bonne chanson*. He returned to the *Quintet* with the full intention of completing the work. Hamelle announced that the work was: "to appear soon" in

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[33] Philippe Fauré-Fremiet, Gabriel Fauré (Paris: Editions Rieder, 1929), 74.

the spring of 1896 and expected it to be assigned opus number 60.[34] However, this opus number was never used because the quintet ultimately required three summer holidays of intense and hard work in Switzerland from 1903 to 1905 before Fauré would pronounce it finished.

The completed *Piano Quintet No. 1 in d minor Opus 89* (1887-1895, 1903-1905) opens with a passage of remarkable beauty. The strings ascend and descend a modal scale played beneath piano arpeggios. The second movement, *Adagio*, has a Berceuse theme, prominently displayed at the beginning by violin playing over a soothing piano accompaniment. The final movement, *Allegretto moderato* in D major, is in the sonata rondo form, the first such example in Fauré's chamber works. Fauré was to use this form often in late compositional period. The formal strength of this last movement suggests that Fauré was influenced by Saint-Saëns' sense of proportion and shape. The movement is well-balanced and logical, and the texture is almost symphonic in feeling.

On March 23, 1906, the day of the *Quintet*'s first performance in Brussels, Fauré wrote to his wife:

> Ysaÿe finds the style of the *Quintet* broader and loftier than that of my *Quartets*... Roger Ducasse may not like it as being a work which stands only on its own two feet, but I couldn't care less. I've come to the firm conclusion that the way I write music is not within the capabilities of everybody![35]

The smaller chamber works of Fauré's second period include the *Petite pièce for Violoncello, Opus 49* (circa 1888); *Sicilienne for Violoncello and Piano, Opus 78* (1898, originally 1893); *Romance for Violoncello and Piano, Opus 69* (1894); *Andante for Violin and Piano, Opus 75* (1897); and *Fantaisie for Flute and Piano,*

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[34] Jean-Michel Nectoux, Gabriel Fauré: a musical life (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 95.

[35] Gabriel Fauré, *Lettres intimes* (Paris: La Colombe, 1951), 118.

Opus 79 (1898). Included in this period are also several short conservatory sight-reading pieces.

The *Petite pièce* for cello, tentatively dated 1888, has been lost. The famous *Sicilienne* for cello and piano was written in Mach 1893, and is dedicated to the English cellist William Henry Squire. *Sicilienne*, rich with beautiful, long-breathed, modal melodies, is an excellent example of Fauré's second-period compositional style.

Sicilienne was originally included in Fauré's incidental music for Moliere's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* (1893). The orchestral version of *Sicilienne* was later incorporated into Fauré's incidental music for *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1898), Fauré's finest and most substantial score of incidental music. A rough incomplete score for flute, oboe and string quartet of the *Sicilienne* in the Fauré-Fremiet collection shows that Fauré may have intended to orchestrate *Pelléas et Mélisande* himself. Most of the score of *Pelléas et Mélisande* seems to have been written in May 1898, and Fauré must have passed the pieces onto his pupil Koechlin for orchestration. The first full score of the orchestral suite was written in the following order: *Sicilienne, Fileuse, Prelude, Molto Adagio.*

The overall arched form of *Sicilienne* (A A' A - B - A' A Coda) is rather unusual. The A section is punctuated by an eight-bar phrase followed by advanced falling-ninth chords and cadential phrases (A'), both drawn from A. A' returns after a center section (B) in E-flat major that turns from melodic arpeggios to scales in the piano part, with a rising tenor counter-subject on the cello. The rhythm of the counter-subject is the same as that of the start of the A section and in the final 10-bar coda. In the B section, the melody in the piano part and the counter-melody played by the cello are fused together as the music passes deliberately into E-flat major while retaining the texture of the A section. A calm and gentle piece, *Sicilienne* has become one of Fauré's most beloved compositions.

Fauré composed his *Romance* for cello and piano in 1984. The manuscript for *Romance*, from the collection of Mme. Fauré-Fremiet, shows that the work was originally written as a simple *Andante* for cello and organ. The solo part of the manuscript is very similar to that of the published *Romance*, however the accompaniment of the original form is written in simple block chords. The title, *Romance,* was not Fauré's choice, and the piece in its original form dates from the first period of his works. The inked manuscript is covered with the additions in pencil that Fauré made as he arranged the piece for cello and piano, and concurrently transformed the work from church music to salon music.

Fauré added some harmonic subtleties in the revised form including seventh chords and a bass pedal. In addition, the start of the recapitulation illustrates the manner in which Fauré elaborated upon his earlier chordal plan. The original ending was quite different, with the cello descending in semiquavers through three octaves from high 'A'. The printed version is a bar shorter here and the cello simply holds the high 'A' above repeated tonic chords. As tempo moves forward from *Andante* to *Andante quasi Allegretto*, the harmonies get richer, and the keyboard writing becomes far more fluent. *Romance* is really one long song for cello in the tenor register, with the form A-B-A-Coda. The middle section B (mm16-33) is flexible and harmonically interesting and at the piece's conclusion is replaced by a coda.

The little duo, *Allegretto moderato* for two cellos, was written during Fauré's first year at the Paris Conservatoire. It is one of four *Morceaux de lecture* for various instruments written by Fauré as sight-reading tests for annual exams. These *Morceaux* include the cello duo (July 1897, with a pizzicato accompaniment added later for second cello); a piece for flute (July 1898); a piece for violin (July 1903); and a piece for harp (July 1904). Among these, only the violin piece was eventually published in *Le Monde Musical* on August 31, 1903.

Fauré's Third Compositional Period: 1906-1924

In his third period, Fauré was quite sensitive to the current events around him. The horror of World War I is reflected in the tremendous power and even violence of his works such as *Violin Sonata No. 2* (1916-1917), *Violoncello Sonata No. 1* (1917) and *Fantaisie for Piano, Opus 111* (1918). In the final years of the third period, 1919-1924, the rage in his works resolves into the more philosophical wisdom characteristic of Fauré's last years of life. The music of these years expresses serene beauty and inner peace, and is filled with the intensity of human experience rather than the passionate outbursts of the earlier years. In comparing the first and second cello sonatas, composed in 1917 and 1921 respectively, one can observe how much more warm and approachable Fauré's final musical style became.

Fauré's ceaseless creativity and exploration are remarkable, even astounding. One might imagine that a 75-year-old man in a weakened physical condition would be finished as a composer. Yet Fauré at this time suddenly took off in a new direction. Just as Beethoven did in his late quartets, Fauré crowned his previous achievements in his own final years. Though his production became slower, the quality of Fauré's compositions became loftier. His *Piano Trio in d minor, Opus 120* (1922-1923), and his *String Quartet, in e minor Opus 121* (1923-1924) are true masterpieces.

Sérénade for Violoncello and Piano, Opus 98 (1908) written in b minor, was the only shorter piece for cello to be written after 1900. It is also the only chamber work from Fauré's early third period. *Sérénade* is Fauré's last piece in the written in the galant style, thus recalling his early period. The galant style, the principal style of the early-eighteenth century Classical period is characterized by light texture, simple harmony, and liberally ornamented melody.

Sérénade includes two distinct sections, A and B, each of which contain two contrasting ideas. The first section is a serious introduction and the second section, a more expansive and lyrical response, is well suited to the cello's singing powers.

Section B, which contains such old-fashioned devices as turns and mordents, is briefly developed and juxtaposed with an almost exact repetition of the A section. *Sérénade* is one of Fauré's most attractive short entertainment intermezzos with a unique style inspired by musicians of the past, such as lyrical troubadours and Baroque keyboard masters.[36]

His second violin sonata (in e minor) and first cello sonata (in d minor) represent Fauré's most substantial wartime compositions. Both works are richly contrapuntal, favoring a close canon between the outer parts. They are harmonically bold, and syncopated rhythm is used extensively. Both works are remarkable for their vitality and for their powerful, elevated conceptions.

Fauré's second violin sonata was written during his peaceful stay at Evian in the summer of 1916. The letters Fauré wrote to his wife show that in six weeks (mid-August to the end of September), the first movement, the longest of the three, was finished, the finale more than half done and the slow movement sketched out. When he wrote the first and last movements together in the summer of 1916, Fauré may have intended to give the violin sonata a cyclic form as he had done earlier with his second piano quartet. A few months later, Debussy, writing the *finale* of his own *Sonata for Violin and Piano* (1916-1917) also introduced a repeat of the initial idea of the first movement. Thus for his last great work, Debussy may have used Fauré's structure as a model. Fauré's own model was probably Schumann's *Violin Sonata No.1 in A minor, Opus 105* (1851), in which the opening theme reappears at the end of the last movement. Fauré may have simply taken Schumann's idea a step further in bringing back both the themes of his own first movement.

Upon completing his second violin sonata, dated January 7, 1917, Fauré started work on a sonata for cello and piano during the spring of 1917. He had been

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[36] Steven Isserlis, *"Fauré: Complete works for cello"* (CD Program notes, 1994), 5.

considering this project for nearly forty years, since the composition of *Elégie* in1880. The *Violoncello Sonata No. 1* was composed at great speed for Fauré, mostly at Saint-Raphael during May and August of 1917, the darkest period of the war. Fauré's late years involved a great deal of sadness. He felt isolated by his increasing deafness and felt ignored by the general public. The success that he did achieve came too late to bring him real satisfaction. Moreover, the horrors of the World War I affected him deeply. It was at this dark time that he composed his first cello sonata,[37] deciding on the key of d minor. The cello sonata expresses the same vitality and power as his second violin sonata, yet it is more compact and formally straightforward. The accents and cross-rhythms of the first movement, approaching violence at times and exploiting the rough side of the cello, contrasted with the public image of Fauré and his more popular *Elégie*. For this reason, the *Violoncello Sonata No. 1* is sadly the least played of Fauré's cello pieces and is overshadowed by the more melodic and easily accessible *Violoncello Sonata No. 2*, composed in g minor four years later, in 1921.

The first cello sonata's opening, *Allegro* (3/4 in d minor), starts in duple time rather than in the indicated time of 3/4. The first theme is written for cello in a very unusual manner, with furious accents and sudden dynamic changes. The cello part is further disturbed by violent cross-rhythms and syncopations set against a biting piano accompaniment. The opening theme is derived from his discarded *Symphony, Opus 40* and also from the music for the warlike Ulysses in Fauré's opera *Pénélope* (1913). The second theme, based on a simple rising arpeggio, responds to the previous violence with patient calm. Still, a frenetic energy takes over both in the development section and in the varied recapitulation. The coda contains some

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[37] Steven Isserlis, *"Fauré: Complete works for cello"* (CD Program notes, 1994), 5.

extraordinary swing chords, which prove that Fauré, in his old age, kept up with the latest musical innovations.

Following the furious first movement, the *Andante* (3/4 in g minor), has the effect of a gentle nocturne. The inner peace of the *Andante* provides a perfect contrast to the first movement. Fauré is inventive in varying a single theme in ABA form. The two complementary ideas comprise long, singing dialogues. The serene melody of the second theme is a combination of purity and melancholy. The two themes return in the tonic near the end, thus culminating the ternary form of this movement.

The final *Allegro commodo* (4/4 in D major) brings an unexpected air of indifference to this work of deeply felt tragedy. The beginning theme is graceful and peaceful with a nonchalant air. The bold but brief second theme leaps around more energetically, covering all three cello registers in just two bars. This unusual gesture is accompanied by flying arpeggios and scales on the equally liberated piano. The rest of the movement is one long development. The themes are so clearly differentiated that simple recapitulation would be redundant. The harmonic direction is clear and easy to follow. The interest of this movement is centered on the canonic treatments of the first theme. A strict one-beat canon is played in a long passage at the octave. By the end of the finale, the anger of the first movement has been transformed through the quiet meditation of the *Andante* into the joyous optimism of the *Allegro*, an expression Fauré's true wartime sentiments.

Fauré spent the summer of 1919 in the peaceful village of Annecy-le-Vieux in Savoy. While he was there, he began working on his *Piano Quintet No. 2 in c minor*. As with the *Piano Quintet No. 1*, the problems of balance in this genre and the size of the piece required on Fauré's part a long period of preparatory work and reflection. As was typical, the composition was interrupted by Fauré's conservatory duties and by his illness. In a letter to his wife (dated August 23, 1920), Fauré relates that the

Scherzo and slow movement of the quintet were now finished[38]. While staying in Nice, he then completed the first movement, in December 1920, and the *finale*, in January and February of 1921. The work was dedicated to his close friend Paul Dukas.

The *Piano Quintet No. 2* is Fauré's most monumental work. For its composition, Fauré adopted a four-movement form: *Allegro, Scherzo, Adagio, Allegro*. After using this format for his first sonata for violin and for both of his piano quartets, he had abandoned it, omitting the *Scherzo* from his first piano quintet. In the difficult genre of piano quintets, masterpieces such as the piano quintets by Schumann (1842), Brahms (1864), Dvorak (1887) and Franck (1879) are rare, yet Fauré met well the challenge of balance between piano and strings. His piano writing is light and mostly in the center of the keyboard, with a few bass octaves. It is quite dependent on arpeggio figuration to support the melodic and contrapuntal outlines of the strings. Fauré achieves an almost orchestral effect of sound by the use not of massed but of varied textures. He uses various combinations of two or three stringed instruments with the piano in order to reinforce melodic lines, with groupings such as first violin, cello and piano, or first violin, viola and piano.

The *Piano Quintet No. 2* was first performed on May 21, 1921 at the SNM. The reaction of the audience was remarkable, including shouts as well as enthusiastic applause.

At the beginning of 1921, as he was finishing the second piano quintet, Fauré received an unusual commission by the State. He was asked to compose a funeral march for a ceremony to be held on May 5, 1921 at the Hôtel des Invalides to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the death of Napoleon. As a renowned composer, Fauré felt this honor could result in embarrassment. He wrote to his wife

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[38] Jean-Michel Nectoux, Gabriel Fauré: a musical life (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 414.

from Nice on February 22, 1921: "I'm busy with Napoleon and I find the subject and the occasion thoroughly intimidating!"[39] When this job was over, the funeral march continued to haunt Fauré. He thought it too fine an idea to be abandoned after the military ceremony. Therefore, he transcribed the work for his *Violoncello Sonata No. 2, in g minor*. This sonata was completed on November 10, 1921, and dedicated to his friend, the composer and cellist Charles Loeffler. Gérard Hekking and Alfred Cortot played the successful premiere on May 13, 1922 (the day after Fauré's seventy-seventh birthday).

In this second cello sonata, the ecstatic energy of the first movement is quite astonishing when we consider that it is the work of an increasingly feeble man in his late seventies. Aaron Copland probably had this movement in mind when he wrote that Fauré's works, "become ever more spiritually youthful and serene as he becomes physically older and weaker."[40]

The first movement is a remarkable example of sustained lyrical force, and its use of sonata form is relatively straightforward. The first theme starts on the piano in a close imitation of the cello, and it is accentuated by an off-beat accompaniment. This contrasts with the broadly passionate and lyrical second theme in the piano part. The two sixteen-bar themes on which the movement is based are longer than Fauré's usual phrases, and the development section is presented with a long one-bar canon passage. In the recapitulation, the themes are now played on the cello, which leads the way to a new canonic development in G major, which is glowing and happy.

The central *Andante* movement in c minor is transcribed directly from the *Chant Funéraire* (the original funeral march for wind band written by Fauré to commemorate Napoleon's death). The beautiful, chorale-like theme recalls Fauré's *Elégie*, yet comparing the two, one can see how far Fauré had traveled musically

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[39] Gabriel Fauré, *Letters intimes* (Paris: La Colombe, 1951), 269.
[40] Charles Koechlin, Gabriel Fauré (London: Dennis Dobson Ltd., 1976), 44.

since 1880. While the climax of *Elégie* is powerfully expressive in its cello cadenza with thundering piano, the *Andante* of the cello sonata preserves its noble gravity and profoundly meditative mood throughout. It has greater contrapuntal strength, too, and its restrained passion makes the grief feel heavier. Ultimately an answering voice in the brief recapitulation brings the movement to a peaceful resolution expressed in C major.

The sonata's *finale* is a light and joyous *Scherzo*. The elusive rising idea of the first theme begins with the piano, and is only identifiable as a rhythmic unit. When the descending scale on the cello answers, it proves equally important. This movement often includes whole-tone progressions. After the development, a false recapitulation in the tonic suddenly turns to an episode in which a three-tone rising figure is followed by a flashing arch of semiquavers on the piano, together with pizzicato interjections on the cello. This episode returns briefly, after further development preceding an exciting coda in which movement ends with energetic repeated notes played by the cello.

This *finale* demonstrates Fauré's interesting use of structure in phrasing. The length of each phrase is unusually irregular. The first piano theme starts with a 6-bar phrase and the cello theme answers with (3+6+3)-bar phrase. The last bar of the cello theme overlaps with the first new chord of the next piano phrase, also a 6-bar phrase. Later the 6-bar phrases extend to 9-bar and 12-bar phrases. Interestingly and characteristically, these irregular phrases make up an overall symmetrical and balanced structure. This is a fine example of Fauré's fine art of solid musical architecture.

In general, Fauré's second cello sonata is simpler and easier to approach than his first cello sonata. In the second sonata, all of the movements pass from minor into tonic major keys, and the central funereal *Elégie* brings this piece a special

memorable beauty. The work also provides one of the best examples of Fauré's pure music.

The chamber works composed in Fauré's last years are masterpieces of concise and profound serenity. His *Piano Trio in d minor* for violin, cello, and piano, was composed between 1922 and 1923 upon the suggestion of his publisher Jacques Durand. During this time, Fauré was struggling with failing physical health and especially the gradual deterioration of his sense of hearing. The *Trio* was first performed on May 12, 1923 by Tatiana de Sabsevitch (piano), Rober Krettly (violin) and Jacques Pathe (cello). The second performance, however, on June 29 by the celebrated Cortot-Thibaud-Cassals Trio was considered to be the most outstanding. The *Trio* was dedicated to Madame Maurice Rouvier and published by Durand.

Interestingly, Fauré first conceived of the *Trio* for clarinet (or violin), cello and piano. Fauré certainly liked the warm sound of the clarinet. He probably had in mind the fine sonata that Saint-Saëns had just written in 1921 and could have remembered hearing a performance of trio with clarinet by his friend Vincent d'Indy. However, the idea of the clarinet trio was suppressed, and the score was published by Durand with the title *Trio pour piano, violon et violoncelle*. There is no clear reason why the clarinet should not replace the violin in Fauré's *Trio*. However, the commissioner, Durand, could have been concerned with this unusual grouping because it might not be so widely played. Perhaps it was tried and proved disappointing. In the final analysis, the *Trio* itself proved that the violin's technical abilities, such as double-stopping and glissando, combined with the violin's superior balance of sound with the cello, made the violin the most appropriate instrument for this work.

As with most of Fauré's late chamber works, the *Trio* is structured in three movements. The first movement incorporates the characteristic features of Fauré's treatment of sonata form during his later years. It has two development sections

based on two themes. The first theme is sung out in the principal key by the cello, and the second theme appears in B-flat major on the piano. This movement is remarkable for the clarity of both its texture and its form.

In the second movement, the first theme, a melody of great beauty, is played initially by the violin and then by the cello. The second theme (related to the first) and the third theme are both presented by the piano. The music reaches a climax after the themes are repeated in turn, and the final section concludes, with variations on the third theme.

The third movement is based on three motifs. Motif 1 is full of passion and stated by the strings in unison. Motif 2 is played by the piano as a response to motif 1. Motif 3 is derived from motif 2, but is presented independently and canonically by the strings in D major. This movement is considered to be a rondo, due to the presence of its highly lyrical episodic sections. The inventive and masterful *scherzo* atmosphere of the movement goes beyond even that of the *finale* of the second cello sonata.

The powerfully extroverted endings of the outer movements of the *Piano Trio* contrast dramatically with the quiet endings that dominate Fauré's later solo piano music. These strong final phrases demonstrate his ceaseless passion for music, and serve as well as optimistic messages of hope. This piece evokes a sense of both inner peace and confidence.

The *String Quartet in e minor, Opus 121* (1923-4) is Fauré's first chamber work written without piano, as well as the great composer's final masterpiece. When Fauré wrote this piece, he was nearly too weak to compose. His son Philippe wrote:

> when he started on the finale of the String Quartet, he was no longer strong enough to walk ..... he was happy with his work and was full of a kind of inner energy which entirely revived him.[41]

Even without consideration of Fauré's weakened condition, the results of his last musical efforts are truly masterful. In 1924, one of his admirers, Darius Milhaud, remarked that Fauré's *String Quartet* would be considered his most captivating work.

Fauré recycled themes from the first movement of his *Violin Concerto, Opus 14* (1878-1879) into the first movement of the *String Quartet*. The opening *Allegro moderato* begins with a thematic dialogue between the violin and the viola, as in the *Piano Trio* between the violin and the cello. This movement is written in a straightforward sonata design, with the dominant appearing at the end of the exposition, and the tonic at the recapitulation. The serene coda extends the opening viola phrase in imitation, and the ending is unexpectedly lively.

The central *Andante* movement is one of the finest movements in all of Fauré's chamber works. It incorporates important characteristics of Fauré's later style: richness of melodic inspiration, density of polyphonic texture, and an identifiably transparent quality. In the *Andante*, the first theme, played by the violin, temporarily becomes a duet with the cello, which slowly ascends to a climax and then falls within an arch shape to complete the musical paragraph. The second theme, played by the viola, begins the second musical paragraph. The second theme is even more confident in character than the first. A gently syncopated third idea appears on the viola with a counter-subject for development of the second theme on the violin, which leads to the modified recapitulation. In the coda, the first theme and its melodic echo alternate in a tightly organized dialogue, moving easily through chromaticisms and harmonic progressions toward the final tonic.

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[41] Philippe Fauré-Fremiet, Gabriel Fauré (Paris: Editions Rieder, 1929), 124 - 5.

The *finale* of the quartet is composed in a sonata form with two themes, based on the rondo, a format that Fauré often used in the final movements of his late chamber works. This movement like that of the second cello sonata, is in the light and cheerful mood of a *scherzo*. The principal theme is given to the cello, then to the viola and the first violin, as in a popular dance. The vigorous cello theme is comprised of a series of small arched phrases, accompanied by sweet pizzicato. Another singing cello theme is continually varied as a long musical paragraph. The second theme is played by the cello in its higher register, over a counter-subject-like viola accompaniment. When the composer provides the contrapuntal contrast in this *finale*, all the accompanying rhythms and lines are almost as important as the themes. The coda, based on the refrain-theme, reaches a polyphonic climax with triplets in *stretto*, and the work ends with a broad and powerful *fortissimo*.

Fauré employs in this *String Quartet* an abundance of interesting counterpoint and contrapuntal contrast between subject and counter-subject, exhibiting his mastery of the art of the fugue, and providing the work with powerful liveliness and engaging variety. Fauré used all of his remaining strength to finish his *String Quartet*. Following the project's completion, the great composer was truly exhausted, and this piece stands as Fauré's final work.

CHAPTER 4

The Development of Fauré's Musical Style

Fauré's Complete Works for Cello

Among Fauré's twenty chamber works, nine were written for the cello. He must have been very fond of this instrument. With its deep, warm sound and singing quality resembling the human voice, the cello is highly capable of expressing the passion in Fauré's music. The *Romance* for cello and piano is clearly a song without words in the tenor register. The *Sicilienne*, also for cello and piano, with its melancholic and modal melodies, is another beautiful piece to be sung by the cello.

Of the nine pieces that Fauré wrote for the cello, the *Petite pièce in G major* (c1888) was unfortunately lost. All of his short pieces for the cello were written before 1900, except for one short piece, *Sérénade,* which was written in 1908 in the composer's the early third period, and dedicated to the great cellist Pablo Casals. These short pieces, including the famous *Elégie,* have achieved widespread popularity and have been loved by cellists everywhere as part of their performance repertoire.

Fauré's two cello sonatas, written in his late period, illuminate how far he had traveled stylistically from his earlier periods. Each work clearly presents the progressive harmonies and forms so characteristic of this period encompassing the most rapid evolution of Fauré's personal and distinctive musical language.

Fauré's first cello piece, *Elégie* (1880), is traditionally Romantic with its somber quality and expressive emotion. In fact, when one listens to the stormy and passionate middle section of the *Elégie*, one can easily regard Fauré as a representative of nineteenth-century French Romanticism. *Elegie*'s impassioned nature brought it swift and lasting popularity. It was dedicated to its first interpreter, Jules Löeb, who performed it at the SNM in 1883. Both Löeb and Hamelle asked Fauré to compose a companion piece, and in response, Fauré wrote the virtuoso piece *Papillon* in 1885. This light and charming display piece expresses Fauré's gracefulness, a component of his 1880's style in which happy and sprightly feelings are revealed.

Fauré's second-period cello compositions include *Romance* (1894), *the Little Duo for Two Cellos* (1897) and *Sicilienne* (1898). The *Romance* for cello and piano was originally written for cello and organ as a simple *Andante*; therefore, the piece in its original form is actually dated from the first period. Even though Fauré added some harmonic subtleties and later expanded upon his earlier chordal plan, the *Romance* incorporates much of Fauré's simpler, melodious, and graceful 1880's style and may even belong to the earlier aesthetics of Romanticism.

The *Sicilienne* for cello and piano has had an interesting life. The work was written originally for chamber orchestra in 1893. It was published in 1898 as a version for cello and piano and then incorporated that same year into the incidental music for *Pelléas et Mélisande*. The cello piece incorporates long and graceful modal melodies in the melancholic temperament of Fauré's 1880's style. The *Sicilienne*

expresses Fauré's inner character, displaying charming and intimate melodies as well as gentle rhythm.

In the 1890's, Fauré's style matured, with an explosion of bold and forceful expressiveness. Several works during this transition period reflect Fauré's developing maturity as a composer. His great piano works in this period and *La bonne chanson* all exhibit expanded breadth. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Fauré's style began to change quite dramatically; this is particularly evident in the lyric tragedy *Prométhée* (1900). This large-scale work incorporates all the aspects of the composer's maturing style at the turn of the century, including Fauré's subtle sectional links, delicacy, profundity, and measured force.

During his late compositional period, Fauré pursued a solitary and confident course. Ignoring the attractive innovations of younger composers such as Debussy and his followers, Fauré instead strove to free himself from the elements of his earlier style. In his *Sérénade* for cello and piano (1908), the change of style is immediately apparent. The *Sérénade* contains unusual dissonant chords on the piano, and this touch of gentle irony comes off like a peculiar and fanciful *scherzando*. In addition, *Sérénade* embodies Fauré's last fling with the galant style, incorporating as it does some grace notes and turns, inspired from past.

Fauré's two cello sonatas appeared during and after World War I, in the composer's last years. The first cello sonata (1917) is full of menace and violence, and the sublime *Andante* recalls Fauré's *Requiem*. This deeply felt sense of tragedy is at last resolved to optimistic hope with the use of a major key. The second cello sonata (1922) expresses Fauré's youthful energy as well as his profound serenity,

which are both characteristics of his late-period style. The last movement of this sonata also concludes with a joyous ending.

Fauré's late style possesses spiritual wonderment combined with his musical innovation, harmonic virtuosity, and expert use of counterpoint. His late-period chamber compositions may be considered as modern as any works written by his pupils.

Modern Aspects in Fauré's Late Works

Fauré's late works represent his most subtle and profound musicanship. The increasing restraint of expression, the boldness of harmony, and the enrichment of polyphony gave him the reputation as the most advanced figure in French music until the appearance in 1902 of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*.[42] With their expressive dissonances and highly chromatic passages, the works of Fauré's late period are considered to be legitimate specimens of twentieth-century modern music. The novelty of his style in this period, however, caused some debate as to whether his later works represented a great development in music or rather a personal experimental journey on the part of Fauré. Saint-Saëns was very concerned about the increasingly discordant music of Fauré's later years. Fauré's lifelong friend and mentor once even suggested that Fauré had gone "completely mad."[43] On the other hand, a composer of the younger generation, Aaron Copland, considered that Fauré's earlier works, "take on a great importance [only] in the light of his later works."

In Fauré's later works, expressions of beauty seem to be less sensuous and far more austere in comparison with his earlier works. This distinction can be heard very clearly in his *Elégie* and his first cello sonata. His first cello piece, *Elégie* (1880)

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[42] Stanley Sadie, The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians (London: Macmillan Publisher Limited, 1980).
[43] Robert Orledge, Gabriel Fauré (London: Eulenburg Books, 1979), 35.

expresses drama and passion, but the writing is not completely discordant. In contrast, the first movement of the first cello sonata (1917) is at times furious and even violent in its powerful style.

There has been some debate about the effect of deafness on Fauré's late works. The increasing abstractness of his late works including his second piano quintet (1919-1921), his second violin sonata (1916-1917), and his last work, the string quartet (1923-1924), has prompted the view that the distortion in his hearing could have affected his work. Even his son, Philippe, felt that Fauré's writing may have been affected by his deafness: "One has the feeling that the strings sound somewhat lower than he intended, that they grate and run out of energy."[44] However, Fauré struggled with the trials of his hearing affliction over a period of more than twenty years, giving him ample time to adjust his working methods to accommodate his hearing distortions. Moreover, his last years were his most prolific period. Among his so-called obscure late works, there are pieces of tremendous beauty, such as the *Piano Trio* (1922-1923) and the second cello sonata (1921), and also music of great emotional power, such as the first cello sonata (1917) and the second violin sonata (1916-1917). The opinion that the composer did not quite know what he was creating is therefore absurd. The developmental and harmonic experimentation of Fauré's late works must have been intentional. As did Beethoven in his late period, in spite of, or perhaps because of, his increasing aural isolation, Fauré experimented with and created music of exceptional depth in his late works.

Fauré's handling of harmony and tonality is individual. He never completely let go of a sense of tonality, and he was aware of what limits ought to be retained, yet he freed himself from harmonic restrictions. Fauré's enriched harmony is matched by his melodic invention. He was a master of the art of unfolding melodies, which were

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[44] Robert Orledge, Gabriel Fauré (London: Eulenburg Books, 1979).

often constructed with harmonic and rhythmic variety and sequential inventiveness. In addition, his rhythmic alternation of duple and triple time and subtle syncopation are characteristics of his modern style.

In all of Fauré's late music, his continuous effort for a loftier musical quality can be found. On the evening of a successful performance (the first public performance of the *Piano Quintet No. 2* on 21 May 1921), Fauré returned home to say: "Obviously an evening like that is a pleasure. The annoying thing is that after it there's no letting up; one must try and do better still."[45] The pinnacle of Fauré's musical novelty and lofty quality is demonstrated in such works as his *Piano Trio* and *String Quartet*. These late works illustrate Fauré's profundity and serenity. Fauré's vision of his music is above that of ordinary life, as he said to his son Philippe: "For me, art, and especially music, exists to elevate us as far as possible above everyday existence."[46]

The Critics' Debate

Fauré's early chamber works did not immediately capture the interest of the musical press of the day. However, after the premiere performance of his first violin sonata in 1877, Fauré was finally recognized as having composed a masterpiece. Saint-Saëns wrote a brief review for the *Journal de musique* in which he stated that he anticipated the triumph which Fauré's work would achieve in French instrumental music over the next fifty years. However, the impassioned article seems not to have provoked lively reactions from the press.

Despite the efforts of Saint-Saëns and his friends, the activities of the SNM only had an impact within restricted circles of professionals and dedicated amateurs. Generally, the Society's concerts gained little critical attention at the time. Although

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[45] Recalled by Philippe Fauré-Fremiet, Gabriel Fauré, 122.
[46] Gabriel Fauré, Correspondance/LTL, letter 153.

the SNM had been considered as an avant-garde organization to introduce the most modern works of French composers, the audiences for its concerts were attracted chiefly by the presence of performers and composers who were popular with the conservative public. Concerts promoted for their 'superstar' performers were common, and Fauré was not considered one of these 'stars' until after the World War I.

Following the war, however, Fauré's new works that were premièred at the SNM began to capture the interest and attention of musical critics. For example, the first performance of the *Piano Quintet No. 2* on 21 May 1921 prompted more than ten reviews and concert notices in the Parisian dailies and specialized musical journals. In addition, the première of the *Piano Trio* on May 12, 1923 generated more than twelve reviews and notices.

Among the critics who would play a fundamental role in the promotion and the understanding of Fauré's chamber music were Hugues Imbert, Pierre Lalo, Pierre Lapommeray and Charles Tenroc, as well as Fauré's own former students, including Florent Schmitt and Emile Vuillermoz. Moreover, some of the articles by Paul Le Flem, Henri Collet, Roland-Manuel, Maurice Ravel, Roger-Ducasse, Louis Vuillemin and Charles Koechlin would contribute to the fame of Fauré's works.

Fauré's late-period chamber music contains elements of harmonic and formal novelty. He moved away from Classical schemes and adopted harmonic virtuosity, expressive dissonances, enrichment of polyphony, and unusual formal structures with asymmetrical, long phrases. These innovations caused debate among the critics. Their contrasting views tended to hinge upon their approval or disapproval of Fauré's radical ideas. The critic Imbert described Fauré's *String Quartet* as a "masterwork of simplicity" and "respectful and daring," and Vuillemin regarded this piece as an "affirmation of the spirit of pure music." On the other hand, negative opinions were

also expressed, including "absence of passion" and "neither grace nor charm."[47] Florent Schmitt asserted that, "the String Quartet is one of Fauré's most modern works, but it was not Fauré's most remarkable work—indeed far from it."[48]

Fauré's second cello sonata had also received both favorable and negative criticism. Lapommeray considered the piece to be "admirable and manifestation of Latin genius." Le Flem described its, "youthful inspiration, balance of materials, [and] mastery in the art of juxtaposing the most." In contrast, Maurice Boucher wrote, "it would have had somewhat less success if it were not by Fauré."[49]

In the review of Fauré's first cello sonata, Tenroc did not hesitate to reproach Fauré for the "clash of ideas," and he added that it was "thin or at least uncertain."[50] Negative opinions, even though they were few in number, were usually offered by conservative critics. Among the critics, Schmitt, Vuillermoz and Roland-Manuel could be considered pro-innovation.

The avant-garde groups of the SMI were opposed to the conventional works presented by the students and professors of 'Vincent d'Indy's Schola.'[51] For the avant-garde groups, each new work by Fauré presented a good opportunity to declare their own radical belief in music. They admired his freedom from any conservative constraint and applauded Fauré's new experiments and the modernity displayed in his late works. With the exception the *Piano Trio* and the *String Quartet*, most of Fauré's chamber works were acclaimed by the critics. His works were described with a variety of affirming comments such as these: "quality of invention," "variety of ideas," "grand distinction of thought," "serenity of harmonies," "charming, fluid and fleeting harmonies." The critics admired the "solid architecture" in Fauré's works.[52]

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[47] Tom Gordon, Regarding Fauré (Quebec, Gordon and Breach Publishers, 1999), 53.
[48] Ibid., 49.
[49] Ibid., 57.
[50] Charles Tenroc, "Concerts divers: Societe Nationale de musique," *Le Courrier Musical* 20, no.3 (1 Feb. 19 1918): 65.
[51] Émile Vuillermoz, Gabriel Fauré (NY: Da Capo Press, 1983), 28.
[52] Tom Gordon, Regarding Fauré (Quebec, Gordon and Breach Publishers, 1999), 55.

More specifically, they appreciated the balance Fauré maintained "[between] traditional and new harmony—between respect for the past and new innovation."[53] According to the critics from 1918 and on, Fauré's works were characterized by a youthful vitality in expressive ways. Yet this vitality never hindered the presence of a great serenity in his last period of chamber works.

Fauré's chamber music inspired many young composers who heard his concerts with the SNM. Fauré was not only a model to his own students but also to a subsequent generation of composers, including Les Six (the group of young composers including Georges Auric, Louis Durey, Arthur Honegger, Darius Milhaud, Francis Poulenc, and Germaine Tailleferre).

Auric wrote of Fauré's "homage to beauty in which there was not only faith, but a discreet yet irresistible passion."[54] The young Swiss composer Honegger, the member of the group most highly rated by Fauré himself, said, "I know of no other music which is more purely and uniquely music except, perhaps, that of Mozart or Schubert." Milhaud was also inspired by the way Fauré remained unmoved by Wagner, Debussy, atonality, and polytonality. In 1924, Milhaud wrote: "One could sense the attainment of the sobriety and extraordinary transparency which is so admirable in the *Second Piano Quintet*, in the *Second Cello Sonata* and, above all, in his *String Quartet*, probably his most captivating work."[55]

Unlike the chamber music of Debussy, Milhaud, Arnold Schoenberg or Igor Stravinsky, Fauré's chamber music is not revolutionary. However, it does transcend the ordinary with great serenity and profundity. Fauré's own achievements had an enormous influence on both his contemporaries and his students. Furthermore, his music had profound effects on French chamber music after

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[53] Tom Gordon, Regarding Fuaré (Quebec: Gordon and Breach publishers, 1999), 55.
[54] Jean-Michel Nectoux, Gabriel Fauré: a musical life (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 433.
[55] Darius Milhaud, *"Hommage à Gabriel Fauré," in Notes sur la musique*.

World War I. In the words of Vuillermoz, "Fauré's chamber works led the way for the triumph of a music genre largely neglected by French composers."[56]

Fauré's works created a general expansion of chamber music performance at the SNM, which developed French chamber music, giving its consideration a boost. Among his whole output of chamber works, the late-period masterpieces most inspired many avant-garde composers and encouraged them to develop their own personally modern style within this traditional musical genre.

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[56] Tom Gordon, Regarding Fauré (Quebec: Gordon and Breach Publishers, 1999), 61.

CONCLUSION

Gabriel Fauré lived during one of the most exciting periods for an artist, both historically and musically, between the nineteenth-century Romantic period and the mid-twentieth-century Modern period. This transitional time witnessed a tremendous evolution of musical language as it began to break with traditional diatonic tonality and encompass a new scope of rhythm and harmony.

Throughout his life, Fauré constantly invented and developed his unique musical style, creating his own modern language. He sought expression in the modern spirit by the means of harmonic virtuosity, melodic invention, and formal innovation. Fauré's creative output, in his late period in particular, is one of musical exploration incorporating his solitary and confident style. Their increasing economy of expression, boldness of harmony, and enrichment of polyphony give his works of this period authentic standing as modern twentieth-century compositions.

Fauré helped shape the musical destiny of the first wave of modern French composers. His legacy has subtly inhabited the spirit of modern French music through such composers as Ravel, Koechlin, Boulanger, Enesco and the members of *Les Six*. Without Fauré, twentieth-century French music would not exist in the way we know it today.

Fauré's modern approach was different from that of other contemporary French musicians. He remained stubbornly independent from the influences of Wagner and other trends of the day, such as folk and Oriental music. In fact, Fauré created idiosyncratic, yet truly Gallic, compositions. His individuality stems from his use of harmony and tonality. Without completely abandoning the sense of tonality in his works, he freely expressed his own harmonic ideas and virtuosity. In the early

twentieth century, when composers like Mahler, Strauss and Schoenberg required large orchestras and a complex range of sonorities to express their ideas, Fauré was quietly pursuing his own path of restrained and genuine 'pure' music.

Chamber music constituted Fauré's most important contribution to music. He enriched all the genres he attempted: the violin sonata, cello sonata, trio, quartet, and quintet. In the chamber-music genre he established his own musical style and continually and imaginatively developed this style throughout his life. His late-period chamber works, such as the *Piano Quintet No. 2* and the *String Quartet*, display astonishing novelty of conception.

Most of all, Fauré's wonderful contributions to the cello literature provide cellists with the profound opportunity to enjoy his beautiful melodies. The elegant and charming *Romance* and *Sicilienne,* along with the Romantic, impassioned, and tragic, *Elégie*, have become some of the most beloved pieces in the cello repertoire. Moreover, Fauré's final cello composition, his second cello sonata, reveals the composer's ecstatic energy and remarkable spiritual vitality, as well as his serene appreciation for beauty. In this work, Fauré truly achieves his personal intention to create "music that consists in lifting us as far as possible above what is".[57]

[57] Gabriel Fauré, Correspondence/LTL, letter 153.

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