A MUSICAL DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF ROMANCE SANS PAROLES
BY THREE FRENCH COMPOSERS –
CHARLES-FRANÇOIS GOUNOD, CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS,
AND GABRIEL FAURÉ

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF ARTS IN MUSIC
BY
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BALL STATE UNIVERSITY
MUNCIE, INDIANA
DECEMBER 2013
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I owe this glory, the completion of my doctoral studying, to the Lord. I sincerely thank God for being with me throughout my life, guiding me in his grace and protection and giving me wisdom and strength to overcome countless hardships.

I am fortunate to receive the support of many people to complete my doctoral dissertation and degree. I express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Robert Palmer who has played a formative role both in this dissertation and throughout my graduate training. I also thank Dr. Kirby Koriath and Dr. Jody Nagel along with Dr. Palmer for their efficient and thorough editing, insightful advice, unlimited support, wise guidance, wonderful personality, and great patience in helping me to complete my dissertation. Without their encouragement and guidance, I could not have completed my degree. I extend special thanks to Dr. Ray Kilburn and Dr. Mary Theresa Seig for serving on my committee and supporting me. I express my sincere thanks to Dean Robert Kvam, Alexandra Christina Kocoshis, and all the professors in the Theatre Department for their support and trust.

Finally, I am so very grateful to my wonderful father (Sangsoo Hwang) and my mother (Youngok Kim) and my reliable younger brother (Junhyuk Hwang) for their prayers, unconditional love, endless support, and unlimited encouragement; I thank them from the bottom of my heart.
ABSTRACT

DISSEYIATION: A Musical Discussion and Analysis of Romance Sans Paroles by Three French Composers – Charles-François Gounod, Camille Saint-Saëns, and Gabriel Fauré

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DEGREE: Doctor of Arts in Music

COLLEGE: Fine Arts

DATE: December, 2013

PAGES: 83

Contained in this study is a musical discussion and analysis of seven Romance Sans Paroles (song without words), written by three French composers, Charles-François Gounod, Camille Saint-Saëns, and Gabriel Fauré.

The Romance Sans Parole genre seems to be quite unknown in the piano field; as a result, there are few secondary sources available. By immersing myself in these scores, I sought to discover their musical value and compositional nuance and excellence. I thoroughly investigated each composer’s unique treatment of melody, harmony, rhythm, texture, and form.

Chapter One includes an Introduction, brief biographical information on each composer, the Need for the Study, the Purpose of the Study, a Review of Literature, and a Methodology. Chapters Two, Three, and Four consist of a musical analysis and discussion of the seven Romance Sans Paroles. Chapter Five offers a Conclusion and Suggestions for Further Study.

I believe my dissertation will enhance the understanding and appreciation of this art form.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .................................................................................................................2

ABSTRACT ..................................................................................................................................3

TABLE OF CONTENTS ..................................................................................................................4

LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES ....................................................................................................5

CHAPTER

1. INTRODUCTION ..........................................................................................................................7
   Need for the Study ......................................................................................................................11
   Purpose of the Study .................................................................................................................12
   Review of Literature ...............................................................................................................13
   Methodology .............................................................................................................................18

2. CHARLES-FRANÇOIS GOUNOD’S ROMANCE SANS PAROLES
   No.1 ...........................................................................................................................................19
   No.2 ...........................................................................................................................................26
   No.3 ...........................................................................................................................................32

3. CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS’ ROMANCE SANS PAROLES .............................................................40

4. GABRIEL FAURÉ’S ROMANCE SANS PAROLES OP.17
   No.1 ...........................................................................................................................................50
   No.2 ...........................................................................................................................................59
   No.3 ...........................................................................................................................................70

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY ..............................................78

BIBLIOGRAPHY ...........................................................................................................................82
**LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gounod <em>Romance Sans Paroles</em> “La Pervenche,” mm.1-8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Gounod <em>Romance Sans Paroles</em> “La Pervenche,” mm.17-20</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Gounod <em>Romance Sans Paroles</em> “La Pervenche,” mm.21-28</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Gounod <em>Romance Sans Paroles</em> “La Pervenche,” mm.41-49</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Gounod <em>Romance Sans Paroles</em> “La Pervenche,” mm.50-57</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Gounod <em>Romance Sans Paroles</em> “Le Ruisseau,” mm.9-16</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Gounod <em>Romance Sans Paroles</em> “Le Ruisseau,” mm.57-73</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Gounod <em>Romance Sans Paroles</em> “Le Soir,” mm.1-9</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Gounod <em>Romance Sans Paroles</em> “Le Soir,” mm.10-17</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Gounod <em>Romance Sans Paroles</em> “Le Soir,” mm.18-34</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Gounod <em>Romance Sans Paroles</em> “Le Soir,” mm.35-43</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Gounod <em>Romance Sans Paroles</em> “Le Soir,” mm.43-46</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Saint-Saëns <em>Romance Sans Paroles</em>, mm.1-16</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Saint-Saëns <em>Romance Sans Paroles</em>, mm.17-32</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Saint-Saëns <em>Romance Sans Paroles</em>, mm.33-40</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Saint-Saëns <em>Romance Sans Paroles</em>, mm.41-52</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Saint-Saëns <em>Romance Sans Paroles</em>, mm.64-75</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Saint-Saëns <em>Romance Sans Paroles</em>, mm.95-104</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Saint-Saëns <em>Romance Sans Paroles</em>, mm.105-118</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The Romance sans Paroles (song without words) appears to be a neglected piano genre. Many composers wrote Romance sans Paroles (the French equivalent of the Lieder ohne Werde of Felix Mendelssohn), including Charles-François Gounod, Camille Saint-Saëns, Gabriel Fauré, Jean Henri Ravina, Louis Durey, Vincent d’Indy, Mel Bonis, and Cécile Chaminade.

All of these compositions were written between 1861 and 1894. This document will focus on the contributions that Charles-François Gounod, Camille Saint-Saëns, and Gabriel Fauré made to the Romance sans Paroles genre.

The nineteenth century enjoyed a richness of short piano character pieces. Chopin, with his Mazurkas, Preludes, and Waltzes, and Schumann, with his Papillons and Carnival as well as several other works, were the leading composers of this genre.

Liszt claimed that the predecessor of the Romance sans Paroles was John Field’s nocturnes because there are shared musical characteristics between the two, such as lyrical melody, and usually a ternary form.¹ As shown in the name of Romance sans Paroles, most of these works were written by French composers, many of them not considered to be significant. However, well-known French composers, such as Charles-François Gounod, Camille Saint-Saëns, and Gabriel Fauré wrote several Romance sans Paroles. I will focus on a musical discussion and analysis of seven Romance sans Paroles which were written by these three French composers.

Charles-François Gounod

Charles-François Gounod was a composition student at the Paris Conservatoire in the 1830’s. In 1839, he won the Grand Prix at the renowned Prix de Rome for his cantata Fernand. Although Gounod wrote compositions in various musical genres, he was especially active in writing sacred music.² To this day he is regarded as an important composer of religious music in nineteenth-century France.

Gounod was a prolific composer of vocal music including opera, mass, oratorio, motet and secular works. Besides his Romance sans Paroles, his other piano works include Impromptu, Royal-Menuet, Scherzo, Meditation, Georgina, 6 Melodies, 8 Melodies, Marche-Fanfare, and Maid of Athens.

Camille Saint-Saëns

Camille Saint-Saëns was a precocious piano talent. At the age of six he made his concert debut performing Beethoven’s Piano Concerto in C minor and Mozart’s Concerto, K.450, which included his own cadenza! In 1848, Saint-Saëns entered the Paris Conservatoire where he studied organ and composition, winning the Premier Prix in 1851.

While still in his 20s, his reputation as a virtuoso pianist, organist, and composer was already established. From 1861 to 1865, Saint-Saëns taught at the École Niedermeyer as professor of piano; his students included Gabriel Fauré. His musical gifts helped gain the friendship and patronage of Liszt, Viardot, Gounod, Rossini, and Berlioz. Saint-Saëns was a noted symphonic and chamber music composer.

His piano works include five concertos, which form his most important contributions to the repertoire, an assortment of solo pieces including études, a suite, and bagatelles, as well as music for piano duo and duet.

During his formative compositional years Saint-Saëns was heavily influenced by the

music of Bach, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Schumann. Many of his melodies and forms are built in short phrases that consist of three or four measures with the phrase pattern AABB, regarded as one of his most telling characteristics. He used counterpoint, sonata form, modulation by thirds, simple harmonic progression, and various tempos in ordinary duple, triple, or compound meters as well.

Much of Saint-Saëns's piano music was written after 1870, and most of it was written as salon music. However, the three sets of Etudes (Opp.52, 111, 135) and the Variations on a Theme of Beethoven, Op.35 (piano duo) rank with the concertos.

**Gabriel Fauré**

At the age of ten Gabriel Fauré was accepted as a student at the École Niedermeyer School in Paris, where he remained until 1865. His teachers included Camille Saint-Saëns and Louis Niedermeyer himself. Saint-Saëns, who joined the school staff in 1860, had the greatest influence on Fauré’s work; Saint-Saëns helped improve Fauré’s piano playing and gave him a thorough background in composition. His first publication, in 1863, was the *Trois romances sans paroles*, Op. 17, for piano, which was composed during this period of his studies.

Fauré’s works range from an early romantic style, when in his early years he emulated the style of Mendelssohn, to late nineteenth-century Romantic, and finally to a twentieth-century aesthetic. His most important piano works include his Barcarolles, Elegie, Nocturnes, Preludes, and *Romance sans Paroles*.

He was not widely known during his lifetime, but his reputation has grown steadily since his death. Fauré is considered to be one of his country’s greatest composers - a master of French song whose music reflects a specifically Gallic temperament and tradition, and an

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important innovator who has had a profound influence upon contemporary French music.

Fauré’s compositions incorporate typical French characteristics such as refinement, order, lyrical melody, expressiveness through subtle suggestion rather than emotional outburst, simplicity in form, and a meticulous nature in detail and nuance. In regards to clarity of structure and phrasing, Fauré is a Classicist in the manner of François Couperin (1668-1733) and Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764).\(^5\) However, his music preserves individuality that cannot easily be mistaken for other’s, even after hearing only a few bars.\(^6\) Innovations in his style appear in the use of the ancient modes in both melody and harmony, the free succession of seventh chords often associated with the Impressionists, modulation into remote keys through enharmonic spellings of pivot chords, avoidance of usual progressions and modulations, and the avoidance of resolving the leading tone to the tonic scale degree in melody and harmony.

Fauré was not greatly influenced by other composers of his day. César Franck (1822-90) was the leader of another major school of thought in French composition at the time. However, Fauré did not follow Franck’s tendencies and he did not assimilate the ideas of Wagner (who had many followers in France). Fauré’s own work was influential in the writings of others, such as Claude Debussy (1862-1918), Ernest Chausson (1855-99), and Henri Duparc (1848-1933).

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Need for the Study

In the nineteenth century, character pieces were a popular compositional form. Even though they do not have uniform traits, a few genres such as Ballade, Prelude, and Impromptu belong to this category. *Romance sans Paroles* can also be classified as character pieces. However, this genre seems not to be well known.

It appears these works were intended for the home, not the concert hall. They possess a salon-type character. The combination of the immense popularity of the piano with a cultured bourgeois created a fertile opportunity for this music to flourish.

I played one of Fauré’s *Romance sans Paroles* on my doctoral recital. While studying Fauré’s *Romance sans Paroles*, I was interested in and fascinated by the music. Therefore, I tried to research his *Romance sans Paroles* to study them in depth but I recognized there were no references in the scholarly literature. Indeed, Gounod, Saint-Saëns, and Fauré are so widely regarded as representative of French composers that most people simply know their names and a few famous works. Unfortunately, I believe that just a few people know about the *Romance sans Paroles*, as I myself was unfamiliar with the genre. There does not exist a thorough musical analysis of this genre, and I hope that my dissertation can help make the understanding and appreciation of the *Romance sans Paroles* easier in the future.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to thoroughly analyze the seven *Romance sans Paroles* written by Gounod (three pieces), Saint-Saëns (one piece), and Gabriel Fauré (three pieces). By doing so, the distinctive character of these French composers’ writing for *Romance sans Paroles* will come to the fore. By providing a detailed musical analysis of three composers’ *Romance sans Paroles*, I seek to provide students, teachers and performers with a blueprint to understanding their unique musical language, and to recognize the obvious contribution of Gounod, Saint-Saëns, and Fauré to this genre. Moreover, I believe that music lovers will look with renewed appreciation to the rich resources of *Romance sans Paroles*. 
Review of Literature

Among the relatively few serious studies of Gounod, Saint-Saëns, and Fauré’s works, a detailed analysis of any of their *Romance sans Paroles* is absent in the scholarly literature. However, there are many books and articles that include valuable information related to their lives and music.

*Gounod* by James Harding discusses only the biography of this composer. Even though this reference does not have a detailed study of Gounod’s works, it discusses his main works including *le Medecin malgre lui, Faust, and Romeo et Juliette*. Further, it contains an interesting account of Gluck’s and Mozart’s influence on Gounod and, in turn, his own influence on Saint-Saëns and Bizet. The end of this book includes a bibliography and a list of Gounod’s works by genre in chronological order. This book allows the reader to better comprehend his musical style and compositional influences.

Another helpful reference about Gounod is *The Operas of Charles Gounod* by Steven Huebner. This book discusses Gounod’s operas in detail with a final chapter on his musical style. Although the book is centered on Gounod’s operatic output, there is informative biographical material that is useful to my dissertation.

*Autobiographical Reminiscences*, written by Charles Gounod and translated by W. Hely Hutchinson, consists primarily of Gounod’s own words. This book contains the story of the most important events of his artistic life, “quotations from his correspondence with his friends,” and notes on music. By looking through important events in his life, I can examine how he was affected by other composers, his own circumstances, and how these factors influenced his musical ideas.

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Camille Saint-Saëns, 1835-1921. A Thematic Catalogue of his Complete Works,
Volume 1, The Instrumental Works by Sabina Teller Ratner is a valuable reference. As an acclaimed expert on Saint-Saëns, Ratner produced three volumes of Saint-Saëns’s catalogue: the instrumental works; the dramatic works; and his vocal works. In this first volume, the instrumental works are categorized by genre. Catalog entries consist of the following information, when should be: not; the title and opus number of the composition, the incipit of each movement for tempo changes within the movement, the dedication, and the instrumentation. This source is very thorough and exhaustive and provides detailed information about Saint-Saëns’ instrumental music.

Musical Memories by Camille Saint-Saëns, translated by Edwin Gile Ricch, consists primarily of Saint-Saëns narrating the most important events of his artistic life through his personal letters and notes on music. Since this book is an autobiography, researchers can encounter and grasp the historical environment of Saint-Saëns’ day, as well as the people and composers who were an integral part of his life. His thoughts are clearly captured as well, making for a valuable insight into his mind.

Jean Gallois’s Camille Saint-Saëns consists of Saint-Saëns’ life, ideas, and works. Gallois’s book generally follows a chronological approach showing a number of photographs, caricatures, and engravings, all of which are integrated into a discussion of Saint-Saëns’ music and brought together in a recounting of the composer’s life. Gallois provides brief information on all of the composer’s important compositions, as well as some that could be considered peripheral, such as the theatrical works. He comments on diverse works briefly, but perceptively shows simple music examples, usually illustrating a brief melodic idea or rhythm. Throughout this book, one can grasp Saint-Saëns musical characteristics in general. With reference to these traits, it is possible to analyze his pieces Romance sans Paroles.

10 Camille Saint-Saëns, Musical Memories (Boston: Small, Maynard & company, 1919).
11 Jean Gallois, Camille Saint-Saëns (Belgique : Mardaga, 2004).
There is also a book discussing Gounod’s and Saint-Saëns’ lives in general. *Masters of French Music* by Arthur Hervey contains seven chapters that treat the topic of important composers who affected the history of French music. Hervey discusses Gounod in Chapter two and Saint-Saëns in Chapter three, giving an account of their lives and drawing attention to the musical tendencies exhibited in their works. This is a valuable reference because it is possible to look over both composers’ musical traits. Moreover, comparison between these two composers is possible.

*Regarding Fauré*, edited and translated by Tom Gordon, contains a collection of essays by fourteen scholars originally given as papers at the conference that was held in 1998 at Quebec's Bishop's University in celebration of the 150th anniversary of Fauré's birth. These essays contain a variety of aspects of Fauré's world, including the personal, the cultural, and the critical, along with his pedagogical contributions and his music as well. Among these essays, Sabina Teller Ratner’s essay “Camille Saint-Saëns: Fauré's Mentor” describes Saint-Saëns’s education, career, pedagogical compositions, students, and shows his close relationship with Fauré. By looking over their close relationship, finding similarities and differences between Saint-Saëns and Fauré was possible, and I have applied these factors to my musical analysis of their *Romance sans Paroles*.

*Gabriel Fauré: A Musical Life*, written by Jean-Michael Nectoux, who is regarded as an expert on Fauré, and translated by Roger Nichols, presents the basic facts of Fauré's life mostly in chronological order. This book comprises twenty chapters, a coda, and a well-organized chronology of Fauré's life. It also contains a chronological catalogue of Fauré's works, a comprehensive bibliography, an index of names, and an index of works by Fauré, including many clearly printed musical illustrations.

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provides a largely convincing overview of Fauré's accomplishments as a composer and identifies the various components of his style. Nectoux suggests various ways of thinking about and analyzing Fauré's music that were beneficial to my musical analysis.

A valuable contribution to the literature is *Fauré and French Musical Aesthetics* by Carlo Caballero. This book presents Fauré's writings, beliefs, and aesthetics. Especially in the beginning it offers an ideological, holistic approach to Fauré instead of merely a study of Fauré as a composer. Caballero focuses on Fauré’s relationship to the musical, literary, and cultural scene present in France during the composer’s lifetime, though it also refers to more recent practices. This book illuminates the infusion of French idea, color, and traits in the *Romance sans Paroles*.

*Gabriel Fauré*, written by Robert Orledge, is a very valuable and organized reference that includes Fauré's biography in a manner similar to describing pictures, his musical styles and shifting critical attitude, his working method, and an examination of sketches and manuscripts. There is also information on his musical techniques, lists of works, and an outline analysis of his works in chronological order. Orledge organizes Fauré's compositions into three main divisions: the first period, 1860-1885; the second period, 1885-1906; and the third period, 1906-1924. These periods are further subdivided into genres for easy reference: songs, piano music, chamber music, secular choral music, religious vocal music, orchestral music, and Fauré and the theatre. At the end of this book, there is a well-organized appendix that is divided into three sections. These sections provide useful information on catalogues of works and a select bibliography. This book is the only reference that includes brief information on Fauré's *Romance sans Paroles*.

*The Musical Language of Gabriel Fauré* by Robin Tait provides a fair amount of analytic detail of musical elements in the course of his six chapters on Fauré's compositions:

harmony, modality, harmonic processes, melody, and rhythm. In addition, it contains information on the formal aspects of Fauré's music. Since earlier Fauré studies were written from the standpoint of his life and works, his music has been more often surveyed than analyzed, and so this reference is valuable from the standpoint of analysis.

In addition to these references, several scholarly books have been published that contain Fauré's life, works, and his style in general, including: Charles Koechlin’s *Gabriel Fauré*, which provides his works by genre; and Emile Vuillermoz’s *Gabriel Fauré*, which provides an exhaustive discography. The arrangement of the discography is by type of composition and the categories.

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to acknowledge and bring to light the undeniable significance of Gounod, Saint-Saëns and Fauré as composers, specifically regarding their *Romance sans Paroles*. Therefore, this researcher will investigate the *Romance sans Paroles*, providing detailed analysis of each piece of the *Romance sans Paroles* from many angles, including each composer’s treatment of melody, harmony, rhythm, texture and form. Relevant data will be gathered from books, articles in scholarly journals, and on-line resources such as Oxford Music Online and Grove Music Online. However, the main source of information will be the music scores themselves. By immersing myself in the scores, I will seek to illuminate the charm of these compositions. Finally, music examples will also be provided to illustrate my analysis.
CHAPTER 2

Charles-François Gounod’s *Romance Sans Paroles* No.1

Charles-François Gounod’s three *Romance Sans Paroles* were written in 1861. These works are quite different in comparison to Saint-Saëns’ and Faure’s *Romance Sans Paroles*. Generally, Gounod uses simpler harmonies and forms. Also, his pieces include programmatic titles. They are “La Pervenche” (periwinkle), “Le Ruisseau” (stream), and “Le Soir” (evening). The first *Romance Sans Paroles*, “La Pervenche” is a tuneful and gentle work, as indicated at the beginning (*legato e molto cantabile*).

This piece is divided into three sections, A-B-C, with two short interludes and a brief coda. Based on this writer’s knowledge of the genre (song without words), the best description of the form would be a through-composed three-part song form. Each section shares melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic ideas with the other sections, creating a sense of unity across the composition.

This piece is in 4/4 meter with a *Moderato* tempo and it remains almost wholly in the key of B major to the end.

The key structure of this piece is given below.

A section (mm. 1-16) key: B major

Theme A (mm.1-8)

Theme A, repeated (mm.9-16)

B section (mm.17-40) primary key: B major

Interlude preceding Theme B: (mm.17-20) B major - temporary key of D major

Theme B (mm.21-28) key: B major

Interlude, repeated (mm.29-32) B major - temporary key of D major
Theme B, repeated (mm.33-40) key: B major

C section (mm.41-50) primary key: B major

Theme C, first half (mm.41-44) key: B major

Theme C, second half (mm.45-50) keys: B major, with E minor inflections.

Coda (mm.50-57) key: B major

**Section A (mm.1-16)**

The A section (mm.1-16) is comprised of two phrase groups of eight measures each and these in turn can each be subdivided into two four-bar phrases. The basic melody, rhythmic figures, (quarter, dotted eighth and sixteenth note), and quite simple harmonic progressions (usage of secondary dominants) remain constant throughout the piece.

The main melody begins with a lyrical tune in the right hand with the bass line moving in contrary motion. This is one of the most common compositional devices composers use to create musical tension. While these two lines move at a steady quarter note beat, Gounod employs varied harmonies. He not only uses a simple harmonic progression (I-vi-IV-V-I), but also secondary dominants, and a particular half-diminished seventh chord, which was also used by Faure and Saint-Saens to create a distinctive French color.

The second phrase group (mm.9-16) is a repeat of mm.1-8. A short, magical interlude emerges in m.17. Even though this interlude is comprised of only four measures, Gounod here employs diverse changes by exchanging the role of melody and accompaniment, in using a temporary key center, and by employing an Italian augmented sixth chord at one point. In this interlude, a new tune appears.

In the A section, the main melody is played by the right hand, whereas here, the left hand plays the new tune while the right hand plays syncopated chords. This changed texture initially provides a more energetic and excited atmosphere.

Additionally, Gounod uses the temporary key center of D major to create a striking and colorful effect in mm. 18.3-20 of the interlude. The temporary key of D major (B: bIII), beginning in m. 18.3, is preceded by an F⁷ major triad; this direct modulation results in a chromatic mediant relationship. In turn, the D major key zone becomes a secondary dominant (B: V⁷/bVI), which prepares for the It⁶ chord in m. 20.3. The It⁶ then moves to V, as expected, before returning to a B major tonic in m.21. The entire harmonic progression in the interlude is as follows: B: V - vii⁰⁷/V5 -V- {D: I⁶ - V⁷ - I - V⁹/1 - I} - B: It⁶ - V⁷. The {D} key cell in the preceding is a prolongation of B: V/bVI, and the progression arrives at bVI in the guise of the It⁶ chord.
Section B (mm.17-40)

In m.21, the B section begins with a new melody in the key of B major. Even though Gounod adopts a similar texture to the beginning of the A section, there are many differences: in the B section the range of the melody expands with leaps between notes; this section consists of two four-bar phrases, which have a clearer question-and-answer structure as compared to the phrase groups in the A section; and the harmonies have been simplified.
In mm.29-40, the interlude and the B theme are simply repeated. This is followed by the C section. Typically, as can be seen in other Romances Sans Paroles, following the B section the A section (or A’) returns. However, another new section appears here, and this is a significant difference in this particular piece.

**Section C (mm.41-49)**

As with the B theme, the C theme also has similar traits to the A theme, such as the tune being in the same key of B major, as well as using the same rhythmic patterns. However, there are three prominent differences: the C section begins with the sub-dominant rather than the tonic; the use of mode mixture is incorporated; and there is a phrase extension.

In m.41, the closing theme begins with another new melody, this time on an E major chord, the sub-dominant (B: IV). Many composers, most notably Bach, used this technique; in many Fugues he would visit IV near the end of the composition. Gounod also borrows from the minor mode here, substituting the minor iv-chord (E minor) for IV in m. 45. This usage of a modal mixture adds a richness to the harmony in this C section. The E major chord of m.41 changes to an E minor chord in m.45. The key of B major does not have an E minor chord; thus, Gounod is “borrowing” a chord from the parallel minor. This compositional technique is also shown in Faure’s Romance Sans Paroles. Obviously Gounod considers this visit to E minor to be noteworthy as he marked it ppp and una corda e con tristezza in the score. The overall harmonic progression in the C section is IV\(^6\)_4-I-V/7/IV-iv\(^6\)_4-I-V/7-I, which is essentially a tonic prolongation. This section ends not in m.48, as expected, but rather, after a two-bar extension, in m.50. The V-chord in m.48 is extended by one bar into m.49, and it resolves in m.50 to the tonic. Measure 50 serves as a formal elision, completing the final measure of the authentic cadence that concludes the C section, and also serving to launch the material of the coda.
Ex. 4. Gounod *Romance Sans Paroles* “La Pervenche,” mm.41-50.

The brief coda, befitting the shortness of this work, consists of just eight bars (mm.50-57). Here, Gounod reiterates the motives from the A section, such as the dotted-eighth-and-sixteenth-note figuration in the melody as well as the descending bass line in the left hand. This continues Gounod's technique of unifying the piece through repeated motives.

Harmonically, the coda consists of a very simple progression: I-V\(^7\)-I-I-V-I without any peculiarities; not a single accidental is used. This piece ends serenely with an authentic cadence. For the pianist, playing this coda section requires extreme sensitivity and control to express the delicate ppp dynamic.
Ex. 5. Gounod *Romance Sans Paroles* “La Pervenche,” mm.50-57.
Charles-François Gounod’s Romance Sans Paroles No.2

Charles-François Gounod’s second piece of Romance Sans Paroles is titled “Le Ruisseau” which means “stream.” As the name suggests, this piece prominently displays flowing, running figures which consist of constant triplets. This forms the most important rhythmic cell supporting the main melody, which is in the unusual top layer of the right hand texture.

The piece is in a one-part song form and has modified ternary phrase structure, [: A:] [: B-A’:], though written without repeats, and it has a coda. In the key of G♭ major, and in 2/4 meter, its character projects energy underneath the lovely, lilting tune. The *ben marcato il canto ma legato* indication at the beginning gives a clear clue as to what the atmosphere should be. Cohesion of weighted touch for the melody and legato touch for accompaniment is integral throughout this piece.

The key structure of this piece is given below.

A (mm.1-8, repeated in mm.9-16) primary key: G♭ major-modulating to B♭ minor

B (mm.17-24) primary key: B♭ minor modulating to D♭ major

A’ (mm.25-36) primary key: G♭ major with a prominent deceptive progression and a four-bar extension.

Repeated B+A’ (mm.37-56) primary keys: B♭ minor-D♭ major-G♭ major

Coda (mm.57-73) primary key: G♭ major

**Section A (mm.1-8)**

The A section begins with an eight-bar phrase, consisting of a beautiful melody set in a homophonic texture. Under the main melody restless triplets are played by both hands in an accompanying role, and these triplets take place over a pedal tone “G♭” creating an image of running water. The chords used during the first four measures are tonic or dominant. During
mm.5-8, the phrase modulates to B♭ minor with a common-chord modulation. The harmonic progression in the A section is as follows: I-V7-V-I-{B♭ minor: ii6-V7-i}.


The eight-bar phrase is repeated in m.9 to m.16 except for one little difference; Gounod does not utilize an A♭ which appeared in m.8.

Ex. 7. Gounod *Romance Sans Paroles* “Le Ruisseau,” mm.9-16.
**Section B (mm.17-24)**

A definite change of character occurs in m.17. The key is B♭ minor was established in the previous bar. From mm.17-20, Gounod infuses the music with more drama by incorporating an enriched musical vocabulary. Here, the harmonic progression becomes more sophisticated by the usage of diminished chords, common chord relationships, and secondary dominants. The harmonic progression in mm.17-20 is i-vii♭°- i-vii♭°, followed by a common chord modulation to D♭ major: the diminished seventh chord in m.20 serves simultaneously as B♭m: vii♭° and D♭: vii♭°. Mm.21-23 contain a dominant pedal point in the bass on A♭ and mm.21-24 can be analyzed as follows in the key of D♭ major: I♭₆- V⁷/Ⅳ- V⁷- V⁷/Ⅳ. The V⁷/Ⅳ chord is then treated as V⁷ in G♭ as the A’ section begins. The progression A♭°/B♭ to D♭₆ (mm.20-21) contains a curious example of indirect octaves: the right hand A natural and the bass B♭ both proceed to A♭. Thus, the combined A and B phrases constitute and unfolding of the principal tonic: G♭-B♭m-D♭. This is similar to Faure’s Romance Sans Paroles op.17, no.2 (mm.1-8). This passage contains some of the most colorful writing in this piece.

Section A’ (mm.25-36)

The usage of common chord modulation is followed by the familiar main melody from the beginning of the work. However, this return is different than the first occurrence due to modified harmony, an altered melody, and an extended twelve-bar phrase. During this phrase, a colorful harmonic progression includes a modal mixture, borrowing from the minor mode in a major key, as Gounod showed in his first Romance Sans Paroles. Furthermore, another noticeable technique present here is prolonging the phrase with a deceptive cadence. The progression in mm.29-32 is I-iv⁶-V⁷-vi. Moving from V to vi, which includes suspensions in mm.31-32 provides for the phrase extension. The extended four measures contain highly chromatic material at the beginning of this phrase, ending on tonic Gᵇ major chord in m.36.

Mm.37-56 contains the same material as mm. 17-36, in essence the repeated B section (A’ section) of the modified ternary form.

**Coda (mm.57-73)**

In his first *Romance Sans Paroles*, Gounod visited the subdominant region in the C section; in the present piece, he does the same in the coda. The coda begins with IV\(^6\) in G\(^b\) major. In this section, Gounod continues the predominant texture of the piece by clinging to a constant triplet rhythm over a pedal tone. However, he does introduce a new melody. The harmonic language in this section is very simple; the entire section embodies simple chords—tonic, sub-dominant, or dominant. The harmonic progression of this section is as follows: IV-I-IV-I (mm.57-60)\| V-I-V-I (mm.61-64)\| V- vii\(^7\)-I- vii\(^7\)-I (mm.65-67)\| IV-iv-vi\(^7\)-I-V\(^7\)-I (mm.68-73).

In the second half of m.69, it occurs an interesting example of a vii\(^6\)\(^4\) with a tonic pedal in the tenor voice. This dissonant chord contains a curiously powerful perfect fifth in the lower two voices, which suggests that this chord is a continuation of the preceding iv chord with two neighbor-tones in the upper two voices.

In the last four measures of this work, a new texture comprised of full chords in the right hand and big leaps in the bass emerges suddenly, ending in an abrupt tempo change to Adagio. All materials such as amplified rhythm figuration, enriched chord sound, and slowed tempo signal the end of the piece, and the piece ends with an authentic cadence.

Ex.10. Gounod *Romance Sans Paroles* “Le Ruisseau,” mm.57-73.
Charles-François Gounod’s Romance Sans Paroles No.3

The third piece of Gounod’s Romance Sans Paroles is titled “Le Soir,” which means “evening.” Unlike the other two pieces of his Romance Sans Paroles, this piece is based on an earlier composition, Gounod’s art song of the same name. The original song was composed first in 1840-42 and arranged later for piano solo as one of his “3e romance sans paroles” in 1861.20

As indicated by the opening directive, “Andante quasi adagio” and “misterioso assai”, this piece contains a feeling of calm restraint within a mysterious atmosphere. There is a religious character present. Set in a leisurely 4/4 tempo and in the key of E♭ major, it is comprised of a ternary form, A-B-A’, followed by a short coda.

The key structure of this piece is given below.
A (mm.1-17) primary key: E♭ major
B (mm.18-34) primary key: C♭ major – A♭ minor - E♭ major
A’ (m.35- second beat in m.43) primary key: E♭ major
Coda (third beat in m.43-m.46) primary key: E♭ major

Section A (mm. 1-17)

The prominent texture in the A section is a beautiful main melody in the right hand with an ostinato chord accompaniment in the left hand consisting of a steady eighth-note pulsation. This is the primary accompaniment figure used throughout the piece.

The A section is divided into two parts: a1 (mm.1-9), and a2 (mm.10-17). In the art song version of this work, a1 is presented as a sort of prelude or introduction while a2 is regarded as the main melody. A2 does contain some similarity to the first eight bars. Gounod does the same thing here in his solo piano work. Gounod marks the difference between a1 and a2 by writing “expressivo” in m.9 and by adding octaves to the melody. Interestingly,

Gounod begins both phrases with a second inversion tonic triad, an unusual way to begin a piece.

A common, but notable, compositional technique employed here at the beginning is contrary motion through a voice exchange in mm.5-6. Here, the upper voice in the right hand ascends chromatically from D♭ to D natural to E♭, while the bass line does the opposite, descending chromatically from E♭ to D natural to D♭. The chord progression is V7/IV-passing6-4-V4, an omnibus-like chromatic median progression that basically prolongs V7/IV. The entire harmonic progression in a1 is as follows: I6-16-V7/IV-passing6-4-V4/IV-Iv6-ii6-V-I.

A2 introduces two notable changes beginning in m.10. The melody is now played in octaves, and is lightly embellished by adding dotted eighth notes within the basic frame of the a1 melody. Except for these two changes, Gounod uses the similar harmony to that of a1. The harmonic progression in a2 part is as follows: I₄₋IV₆₋IV₆₋ii₆₋I₄₋ii₆₋I₄₋V₇₋ii₋ii₋I₄₋V₇₋I.


**Section B (mm.18-34)**

The B section begins in m. 18 with a new melody alongside a sudden change of key. The primary key in the B section is Cᵇ major which is a chromatic mediant relation from Eᵇ. Modulation by the chromatic mediant relationship is a significant feature in the B section. Many composers in the Romantic era, especially Schubert, were very fond of this relationship.
Along with the use of modulation by chromatic mediant relationship in the B section, Gounod uses significant and colorful harmonic effects to enrich the musical language. Especially, Gounod employs suspension, mode mixture, and common chord modulation. He also uses several suspensions, which often feel like appoggiaturas, in m.20, m.21, and m.23. In m.21, he employs a modal mixture, much as he did in the first and second pieces of Romance Sans Paroles. Mm.18-23 consist essentially in ascending fifth progression. The chords are C\(^b\) (m.18), G\(^b\) (m.20), D\(^b\) (m.21), A\(^b\)m (m.23.3), which can be thought of as \(bVI-bIII-bVII-bIV\) in the opening key of E\(^b\). The G\(^b\) chord in m.20 functions as the dominant of the C\(^b\) chord of m.18. Mm.21-23, in particular, tonicize, A\(^b\)m with a progression: A\(^b\)m: IV-iv-V\(^7\)/1-i. Next, A\(^b\)m is again absorbed into the home key, and the progression from m.23.3 to m.26 is E\(^b\): iv-V-ii\(^{6}\)/V-V\(^7\)-i\(^6\). Finally, the tonic in E\(^b\) major is established in m.26.

Once this is established, Gounod employs abrupt and leaping gestures within a harmonically rich texture that leads to the climax of the B section as well as the entire piece. Two dynamic indications, crescendo and sf propel the music to the climax, which concludes the B section on a tonic E\(^b\) major chord. From mm.26-34 the chord progression is quite diverse but remains completely within the sphere of E\(^b\) major tonality. After the ii\(^{6}\) in m.27, a prolonged dominant (mm.28-30) prepare for the final return to E\(^b\) major in m.31. The harmonic progression in mm.31-34 is a simple chord progression securing the home key of E\(^b\) major.
Ex. 13. Gounod Romance Sans Paroles “Le Soir,” mm. 18-34.
Section A’ (m. 35- second beat in m.43)

In accordance with tradition, the A’ section involves nearly the same melody and harmony as in the A section. Aside from a slight alteration of the melodic rhythm in m.41, the a1 part of the A section is duplicated in the A’ section. It is notable that the entire second half of the A section is omitted from the A’ section.

Coda (third beat in m.43-m.46)

The very brief codetta, which is comprised of a four-bar phrase, begins on the third beat in m.43. This phrase shows a simple harmonic language with the exception of the vii7 in m.43, and the colorful iiø5 chord in m.45. The harmonic progression in the codetta is I-vi7-V-I6-I-iiø5-I. The penultimate iiø5 chord progressing to the final tonic is a plagal cadence. This final choice seems to remind the listener of the strongly tonicized pre-dominant chords in mm.5-7, mm.14.3-15, and mm.21-23.3, and reveals that Gounod’s treatment of the traditional dominant function is weakened.

Based on the contents of the text in his song (please refer to the text below), I believes that the last two measures, which consist of two half notes and one whole note, imply a sense of life’s fragility.
Ex. 15. Gounod Romance Sans Paroles “Le Soir,” mm.43-46.

“Le Soir,”

Le soir ramène le silence.
Assis sur ces rochers déserts,
Je suis dans le vague des airs
Le char de la nuit qui s'avance.

Vénus se lève à l'horizon;
À mes pieds l'étoile amoureuse
De sa lueur mystérieuse
Blanchit les tapis de gazon.

Tout à coup détaché de cieux,
Un rayon de l'astre nocturne,
Glissant sur mon front taciturne,
Vient mollement toucher mes yeux.

Doux reflet d'une globe de flamme,
Charmant rayon que me veux-tu?
Viens-tu dans mon sein abattu
Porter la lumière à mon âme?

Descends-tu pour me révéler
Des mondes le divin mystère?
Ces secrets cachés dans la sphère
Où le jour va te rappeler?

Viens-tu dévoiler l'avenir
Au cœur fatigué qui t'implore?
Rayon divin, es-tu l'aurore
Du jour qui ne doit pas finir?

“Evening” 21

The evening brings silence.
Seated on these lonely rocks,
I follow in the vacant air
The chariot of approaching night.

Venus rises above the horizon;
At my feet the star of love
With her mysterious light
Whitens the carpets of lawn.

Suddenly from the heavens
A beam from the evening star,
Gliding across my solemn face,
Softly comes to touch my eyes.

Sweet reflection of a ball of flame,
Charming ray, what is your with?
Are you come to my despondent heart
To illuminate my soul?

Are you come down to show me
The divine mystery of the world?
Those secrets hidden in the sphere
To which day will recall you?

Are you come to disclose the future
To this tired heart which implores you?
Divine gleam, are you the dawn
Of the day that has to end?

CHAPTER 3

Camille Saint-Saëns’ Romance Sans Paroles

Although Saint-Saëns composed various genres of piano music, he composed only one Romance Sans Paroles. This work, written in 1871 and published in 1903, is composed in a traditional ternary form, A-B-A,’ with a short coda. The opening A section is in B minor and is followed by a B section that modulates to the relative major. The A’ section consists of material from the earlier A section with slightly modified melodic endings and with added scalar figures. The short coda has a distinct character based on ascending figures that do not stem from earlier material. This is unlike that of a conventional coda.

The key structure of this piece is given below.

A (mm.1-32) primary key: B minor
B (mm.33-68) primary key: D major (relative major of B minor)
A’ (mm.69-104) primary key: B minor
Coda (mm.105-118) primary key: B minor

Section A (mm. 1-32)

The Romance is in 3/8 meter and it begins with a tonic harmony. The main texture in the work is comprised of a dotted-quarter-note melody in the middle register of the piano with block chords on beat three in both higher and lower registers. This idea is used throughout the piece and creates a vibrant syncopated sound. This kind of writing creates challenges for the pianist, since a legato line must be maintained between both hands, and there are leaps between the various chords.

The insistent syncopated sound and the Moderato appassionato indication create a gentle salon music character. The A section contains two statements of a 16-measure melody.
In the first statement, the simple harmonic progression is imbued with primarily diatonic harmony. The second statement contains a bit more harmonic richness, though it ends on a single-note F♯, the dominant in B minor.

Ex. 16. Saint-Saëns *Romance Sans Paroles*, mm.1-16.

The second statement of the A section begins in m.17 with a slightly altered version of the melody from mm.1-16. A notable harmonic event in this passage is the use of a descending circle-of-fifths progression. Beginning in m.17, a B minor chord moves to an E minor chord in m.19, an A chord in m.21, a D chord in m.23, a G chord in m.25, a C♯7 chord in m.27, and an F# chord in m.29. That is, it starts on B minor and it progresses through the entire circle all the way to the dominant. The circle progression contains a secondary dominant (V7/V) in m.27, rather than a diatonic ii-chord, as the chord to precede the V-chord.
The A section ends on a prominent V with a dotted quarter note. The offbeat ending material to section A returns again in the coda.

Ex. 17. Saint-Saëns *Romance Sans Paroles*, mm.17-32.

B section (mm.33-68)

While the texture and rhythm in the B section remain the same as the A section, a new melody is introduced, and the key shifts to the relative major (D major). An interesting compositional device that Saint-Saëns incorporates in the B section is the usage of fully diminished seventh chords and several secondary dominants. The progression in mm.33-35 is D: I - vii$^o$/V - V$^7$/I. In m.34, Saint-Saëns uses a fully diminished seventh chord spelled E$^g$-G$^g$-B-D, which is the common-tone diminished 7th (#ii$^7$) of D, rather than the
enharmonically equivalent chord spelled G♯-B-D-F, which would have been the leading-tone 67 of A. Because the V7 chord (A7) in m.35 is over a tonic pedal (D), Saint-Saëns chooses the common-tone 67 spelling rather than the secondary leading-tone 67 spelling for the chord in the preceding bar. This little detail becomes of even greater interest in the following measures. From mm.37 to 39, the chords (I- vii67/V-V7/1) are repeated exactly as they were in mm.33-35. However, this time Saint-Saëns spells the fully diminished seventh chord as G♯-B-D-F, apparently now considering it to be vii67 of A. Nevertheless, that A7 chord in m.39 continues to be supported by a tonic pedal. The two ways of spelling the exact same chord with the exact same function would seem to suggest that Saint-Saëns was aware of the ambiguous functions of this 67 chord and chose to spell it first one way and then the other.

Ex. 18. Saint-Saëns Romance Sans Paroles, mm.33-40.

The material found in mm. 41-44 is then sequenced up a step in mm.45-48, while the material in m.49 begins an additional sequential unit up a step. In m.49, there is another fully diminished seventh chord (A♯-C♯-E-G = D: vii67/vi, or vii67/Bm). The vii67 sonority in m.49 functions in the same manner as the dominant 7ths did in m.41 and in m.45. Presumably, Saint-Saëns wanted to change the color here from major-minor 7th to 67 for added harmonic variety. In any case, this 67 chord in m.49 is noticeably unresolved and progresses instead to an E667 chord (E♯-G♯-B-D), again spelled as #ii67 in the key of D major. The chord in m.51 is
indeed a D major triad, so the chord in m.49 is spelled in a reasonable manner. However, the D major chord of m.51 is in second inversion and functions as part of a cadential $6_4$ progression. Thus, the $9^7$ chord in m.49, enharmonically respelled as G$^b$-B-D-F, also functions as vii$^9$/V. The composer seems to revel in the ambiguity of this fully diminished 7th chord.

In addition to the use of fully diminished seventh chords, a significant harmonic technique in the B section is the use of secondary dominants. In m. 41, there is a C natural added to the D major chord, which means the composer is indicating a secondary dominant (D: $V^7$/IV). As with the preceding example, the appearances of accidentals in m.42 and m.43 signify even more secondary dominants. In m.42, the G-B-D-F chord is a major-minor 7th chord in third inversion and is a “borrowed chord” (D melodic minor: IV$^3_2$). This major-minor 7th chord progresses via a chromatic mediant relationship to an E$^7$ chord ($V^7$/V) in m.43. This same relationship occurs up a step in mm.46-47, where the third-inversion A$^7$ chord progresses directly to the F$^#$7 chord (D: $V^4_2$ - $V^7$/vi).

Finally, the series of secondary dominants, fully diminished 7th chords and chromatic mediant relationships conclude with a cadential $6_4$ (I$^6_4$ - $V^7$) in mm.51-52. To summarize, the sequential progression in mm. 41-52 is in four-bar units and is as follows: [$V^7$/IV - IV$^4_2$ - $V^7$/V]; [$V^7$/V - $V^4_2$ - $V^7$/vi]; [vii$^9$/vi - vii$^6$/V (= #ii$^7$) - I$^6_4$ - $V^7$].

Melodically speaking, from the F$^#$ in m.41 to the B in m.50, the main dotted-quarter-note melody, which occurs on downbeats in the right hand, consists of a chromatically ascending line. Subsequently, in mm.49-51, chords on the third beat in both the right and left hands join in with the ascending half-step movement. This rising motion along with the given indications (piu cresc. in m. 41, and stringendo in m.42) indicate that the music is heading toward a climax.
Ex. 19. Saint-Saëns Romance Sans Paroles, mm.41-52.

In all the aforementioned ways, Saint-Saëns ingeniously varies his musical language to produce wonderful inflections of color and sonority in the B section.

Section A’ (mm. 69-104)

The primary melody returns in m.69 in the home key of B minor. From m.69 to m.94, the main tune is melodically and harmonically the same as its analog in the A section. However, Saint-Saëns injects variety into the melody by adding an extended trill and a counter-melody. The trill and counter-melody, in particular, require additional and great technical skill and nuance from the performer.

The trill begins in m.64, and continues above the melody in mm.69-82. This writer believes that this compositional device may have been influenced by Beethoven, as his music,
especially his later works, contains many examples of this technique. One well-known passage occurs in the third movement of the “Waldstein” sonata op.53.

Ex. 20. Saint-Saëns Romance Sans Paroles, mm. 64-75.

![Ex. 20](image)

The counter-melody, consisting of running sixteenth notes, begins in m. 83. This secondary material serves as a partner to the main melody for ten measures.


![Ex. 21](image)
As mentioned previously, Saint-Saëns uses the same harmonic progression as the beginning in mm.69-94. In m.95, the previously interesting E♯⁷ chord reappears, and this chord replaces the C♯⁷ analog of m. 27. Following this, Saint-Saëns inserts an interesting harmonic change (relative to the A section): a D major chord, in m. 97. Thus, the fully diminished 7th chord in m.95 is again interpreted as a common-tone ⁷ chord, which then progresses to the second-inversion D major chord (Bm: III) in m.97. Again, this ⁷ chord, enharmonically reinterpreted as G♯-B-D-F, might also be considered to function simultaneously as the secondary leading-tone ⁷ chord, D: vii⁷/V. However, the D⁶₄ chord never progresses to an A chord, and the dominant function is never fulfilled in this key. The D major chord (Bm: III) lasts until m.103, where it is then found in first inversion, and it then progresses to a V⁷ in m.104. The resulting chromatic mediant relationship between D⁶ and F♯⁷ (Bm: III⁶ – V⁷) in mm.103-104 is reminiscent of what was found in mm.29-33 and again in mm.51-53. The entire B section was both entered and exited by this same relationship, and its restatement briefly in the coda helps add closure to the piece’s form.
Ex. 22. Saint-Saëns *Romance Sans Paroles*, mm. 95-104.

Coda (mm.105-118)

The brief coda begins in m.105. Here, Saint-Saëns uses a basic four-bar phrase unit that involves a freely ascending tonic arpeggiation which he repeats three times. The final bar, following a bar of rest, has a strongly syncopated feeling and seems to require two additional bars of rest to follow in order to complete a four-bar sense of hypermetric closure. The entire coda remains completely in the tonic key of B minor and the piece ends on the strong tonic chord in a manner similar to what Saint-Saëns does in his piano concerto no.2.

Ex. 23. Saint-Saëns *Romance Sans Paroles*, mm. 105-118.
CHAPTER 4

Gabriel Faure’s *Romance Sans Paroles* Op.17, No.1

According to researchers, it is not clear when Faure’s *Romance Sans Paroles* was written and it is presumed this piece was written in 1863 or earlier. The first piece of Faure’s *Romance Sans Paroles*, Op.17, is a charming, elegant work written in simple ternary form, A-B-A’, followed by a brief coda. It uses a very regular phrase structure throughout. The opening A is followed by a B section that contains a modulation to E♭. After a brief transition, the A’ section returns again in A♭. The A’ section is primarily a repetition of the original A section. The coda consists of similar materials taken from A and B section.

The key structure of this piece is given below.

A (mm.1-16) primary key: A♭ major
B (mm.16-38) primary key: E♭ major (V of A♭ major)
A’ (mm.39-54) primary key: A♭ major
Coda (mm.54-67) primary key: A♭ major

**Section A (mm. 1-16)**

This work is in 3/4 meter and it begins immediately with an eight-bar main melody. It is set in a homophonic texture with a very clear lyrical tune in the top part of the right hand, chords in the middle part of the right hand, in an accompanying role, with a very simple dotted half-note figure in the left hand. The harmonic progression is quite simple with the notable exception of a striking G♭ in measure 4.
This eight-bar phrase is repeated again with several changes. Indeed, one of the beauties of this work in the inventiveness with which Fauré utilizes the repetition of the main phrase. Here, Fauré changes the rhythm of the opening melody and he doubles the melody line, placing it in the tenor voice in a syncopated manner. A second change occurs in the bass line. Instead of dotted half notes, Fauré now inserts a simple downbeat quarter note in each measure. The musical result is lighter in character. The last change is the insertion of expression markings in mm. 13-14, an indication that was absent in the opening phrase.

Ex. 25. Fauré Romance Sans Paroles, Op.17, No.1, mm.8-16.
The harmonic progression in the A section is quite simple: I-IV-ii-V/Vii-V/I.

However, in m.7 and m.15, the music begins on a minor V, then turns into a major V, the dominant. Even though there is a G♭ on the downbeat of m.7 and m.15, it feels like V, because the G♭ is moving up to G natural on the third beat. This simple addition of the G♭ adds a little spice to the music.

Ex. 26. Fauré Romance Sans Paroles, Op.17, No.1, m.7 and m.15.

**B section (mm.16-38)**

After an authentic cadence at the end of a2 in the A section, the B section begins on the third beat of m.16. The B section can be divided into three sections, b1 (mm.16-24), b2 (mm.24-32), and a short transition (mm.32-38). In the B section, E♭ is the principal key, which is hinted at with the D natural introduced in m.17.

In the B section, a colorful harmonic progression occurs. Many composers use a circle progression (iii-vi-ii-V-I) in their music. But here, Fauré uses retrogression from the beginning of the B section: B♭ in m.17 goes to F major in mm.18 and mm.19-20 as well.
A normal harmonic progression moves from ii to V but this moves backwards, not what one is expecting.

Ex. 27. Fauré Romance Sans Paroles, Op.17, No.1, mm.16-20.

In m.21, there is a striking usage of a G\(^7\) chord. Fauré uses this chord as a secondary dominant (V\(^7\)/vi); naturally one expects this chord to resolve to vi. However, it does not go to vi (m.22), rather it moves to an A half-diminished seventh. In many cases, diminished triads function as leading tone chords. Here, A natural is a secondary leading tone 7th which goes to B\(^b\) (vii\(^{67}\)/V). This harmonic motion is a very common practice encountered in Fauré’s writing.


In m.24, the b1 section ends with a V\(^7\)-I cadence, and the b2 section begins on the third beat. The b2 section utilizes the same melody and harmonic progressions (V\(^7\)-ii-V\(^7\)) of the b1 section. However, the appearance of D\(^b\) in m.28 is a notable addition. Fauré inserts a
first inversion $D^b$ major chord on the first beat of m.28. Over the next ten measures, Fauré leads us back to the home key of $A^b$ major by using a direct modulation. In the b2 section, another feature which Fauré utilizes is using of many neighbor tone chords which slide to the next chords.


A short transition begins in m. 32. Even though this transition consists of only seven measures, Fauré uses several interesting harmonic features, such as the insertion of a Ger+6 chord (augmented 6th chord), non-chord tones, and tri-tones. In m.33, there is a Ger+6 chord on $A^b$. Normally, an augmented 6th chord would progress to V. However, here Fauré does not use a standard progression. Fauré’s +6th chord moves to ninth at the next measure instead of moving to V. Thus, in this case, this chord is a German 6th chord which is rooted in the key of C or c minor. This German 6th chord appears in m.35 again. Mm. 32-38 is a highly chromatic passage, containing many appoggiaturas and non-chord tones.

Another remarkable compositional device that Fauré incorporates during this short transition is a usage of root movements by tri-tone. The motion of bass notes in the left hand from m.33 to m.36 is as follows: $A^b$-D natural-$A^b$-D natural. Root movement by tri-tone is a characteristic of late Romantic style. Fauré uses this often in his music. In m.37, Fauré uses an A-finely diminished seventh chord moving to $E^b$ seventh chord, which is a $V^7$ chord of $A^b$. 
Finally, in m.39, Fauré arrives back in the home key of A♭ major and the A section returns. Since there are no Ger+6 chords, non-chord tones, and tri-tone progressions in the entire first part of the piece, the appearance of these traits helps distinguish the B section.

Ex. 30. Fauré *Romance Sans Paroles*, Op.17, No.1, mm.32-38.

**A´ section (mm.39-54)**

Generally, the A´ section contains the same melody and harmony as the A section. However, there are several nuanced changes from the beginning.

In the A´ section, the melody and harmony are the same as the A section and the key is clearly in A♭. However, the piano figuration has changed. In mm.39–46, the first 8 bars of A´ section, Fauré introduces a new left hand figuration that consists of wide leaps in the bass. For the first time in this work, octaves are used, here in the melody, and much more rhythmic motion appears during the second 8 bars of A´ section, beginning in m.47. With the addition
of a poco a poco crescendo leading to forte as well as off-beat left hand accents, the ensuing musical result is invigoratingly effective.

Coda (mm.54-67)

As soon as the familiar melody brings closure to the A’ with a strong authentic cadence in mm.53-54, the coda begins on the third beat in m.54. The chord progression of this section is quite colorful but remains completely within the sphere of A♭ major tonality due to the A♭ pedal bass notes in the left hand. Fauré uses a dominant seventh chord (A♭-C-E♭-G♭) to tonicize the subdominant (D♭). Tonicizing the subdominant has been a common practice since the time of Bach, who often visited the subdominant near the end of a composition. One example of this is the last four measures of Bach’s B♭ major fugue (mm.36-41), WTC I, BWV 868; here all the B♭s give it an F major feel.

The most interesting compositional feature in the coda is the use of mode mixture as Gounod did in his Romance Sans Paroles, no.1. The D♭ major chord in m.57 changes to a D♭ minor chord in m.59. A♭ major does not have a D♭ minor chord, therefore, we can surmise that Fauré is borrowing a chord from the minor. That is, the essence of the coda is a conflict between major and minor modes, concurrent of A♭ major and A♭ minor, and this is an important characteristic of the ending.

Besides the use of mode mixture, there is another interesting harmonic progression that occurs. On the third beat of m.61, a B♭ seventh chord, the dominant V of E♭, appears. Generally, one would expect this V7/V to resolve to V. However, Fauré did not follow this tendency. Instead, the V7/V moves directly to I, skipping the expected V chord altogether.

The last compositional device that Fauré incorporates in the coda is the appearance of a new harmony, bVI6. In m.62, there is a chord which is comprised of F♭-A♭-C♭-D natural (notice D natural, rather than E♭♭). As it appeared in m.33 previously, Fauré seems to desire to use another augmented sixth chord but this augmented chord is built on F♭. In m.64, this bVI6 appears again, followed by a tonic chord. Fauré repeats the tonic chord three times and this piece ends very peacefully.
Ex. 32. Fauré *Romance Sans Paroles*, Op.17, No.1, mm.54-67.
Gabriel Fauré’s Romance Sans Paroles Op.17, No.2

The second piece of Fauré’s Romance Sans Paroles, Op.17, depicts restlessness. Infused with much chromaticism, this piece is in A minor, written in a ternary form A-B-A’ with a short coda. Each section can be divided into two small sections, A (a+a), B (b+b’), A’ (a+b’’), while a coda then includes materials from both the A and B sections. A very common feature encountered in this piece is a simple but sorrowful melody consisting of eight-bar phrases in quarter notes and pairs of eighth notes with flowing sixteenth notes underneath. This type of writing is prominently displayed throughout this work. A similar technique, with the melody in the alto voice instead of the soprano, can be seen in Chopin, Op. 28, No. 5.

Some notable traits in this piece include the use of common chord modulations as well as diverse harmonies such as the Neapolitan, half diminished seventh, and French augmented sixth chords which add harmonic color and interest.

The overall key structure of this piece is given below.
A (mm.1-16) primary key: A minor
B (mm.17-35) primary key: A minor, C major, D minor, F major
A’ (mm.36-55) prominent key areas: A minor
Coda (mm.56-74) primary key: A minor

Section A (mm. 1-16)

This Romance is in 4/4 meter, marked Allegro molto. Section A is divided into two parts: a (mm.1-8) and the repeat of a (mm.9-16). Fauré inserts two harmonic changes per bar, using busy sixteenth note figurations which contain many accidentals in the left hand. The opening eight-bar phrase consists of a tonic prolongation that unfolds the tonic triad. The principal triads consist of Am (m.1), C (m.3), and Em (m.5 second half), and the roots of these chords outline the primary tonic triad. The opening two measures consist of a descending thirds progression launched from the tonic, A minor. However, these chords (Am,
F, D⁷) make sense in the next principal key area (C: vi-IV- ii⁷). The progression then cadences on C with a V⁷-I progression (mm.2-3). Furthermore, this C major triad serves as a pivot chord to the third principal key area (C major=Em:VI). Mm. 3-8 tonicize E minor; the chords include Em-VI- ii⁷-Ger⁶-V-V⁷-i-Ger⁶-i-V⁷-i. This passage moves too quickly to consider that the piece has actually “modulated.” The principal key cells (Am, C, Em) merely arpeggiate the tonic chord over time. This entire eight-bar progression repeats in mm.9-16. One point of interest is that in m.9 the E minor chord never becomes major before returning to A minor in m.9. Thus, the return to A minor has a curiously modal sense. (v-i, in mm.8-9)

A noticeable composition feature in the A section is the usage of phrase modulation. For example, the “a” section ends in E minor. However, the identical “a” section which begins in m.9 is in A minor. This kind of phrase modulation can be found in many transitional parts in Fauré’s music.

Fauré shows uses traditional methods as well. From m.5 to m.6, he uses basic harmonic progression; v⁴₂ (a B⁷ chord with seventh in the bass) goes to I⁶, which is what ⁴₂ chords normally do. Then, he uses another German augmented sixth, a tonic, and a standard cadence (v⁷ –i).
**B section (mm.17-35)**

The B section is divided into two parts: b (mm.17-27) and b' (mm.28-35). From a harmonic perspective, the most interesting characteristic in the B section is the striking usage of the V chord: this section both begins and ends on V.

From m.17 to m.20, the basic harmonic idea is V-i, \((V^6_i-V^7_i-i^6_i-V^6_i-V^7_i-i^6_i)\). The texture and rhythm remain the same throughout the section as the A section with the same pianistic figurations in the left hand.


Beginning in m.21, a descending line begins a transition to a G chord, or V of C major. The descending line passes through G, E\(^7\), F, and D minor chords. The modulation to C major follows this progression: VII (in A minor) - V\(^7\) (in A minor) –VI (in A minor) / IV (in C major) - ii (in C major). Here, the music settles into the C major tonality, the relative major of A minor. However, this key area is represented by its dominant, and the tonic triad (C major) never actually appears.

In m.23, the heretofore descending line main melody of the right hand moves to the left hand for the first time, reiterating strong G chord (V\(^7\) of C) again, while the splendid
sixteenth-note figurations now move to the right hand. Finally, the music arrives on the
dominant chord, a half cadence in C major. For the pianist, this important V chord in m.27
has another meaning, in that he or she can relax his or her fingers and arms, because this is
the only break from the continuous sixteenth notes throughout the piece.

Ex. 35. Fauré Romance Sans Paroles, Op.17, No.2, mm.21-27.

Part two of the B section (b’ section) begins in an unexpected key, D minor. Fauré
employs key changes in the B section in order to heighten the excitement.

During these key changes, Fauré retains simple harmonies, $V^7$-I-$V^7$. However, Fauré shows his distinct musical style by using tri-tone relations instead of the more typical perfect fourth/perfect fifth relations. For example, instead of using the general idea of an ascending perfect fourth (F chord goes to $B^b$ chord in m.32), Fauré utilizes a tri-tone (F chord goes to $B^b$ half-diminished chord) which has something in common with usage of tri-tone found in mm.33-34 of the first piece. The F-$B^b$ $9^7$ relationship can be thought of as the pre-dominant VI-ii $9^7$ progression preceding the V chord in m.35.

Section A’ (mm. 36-55)

As the initial A section, the A’ section can be divided into two parts, but this time it is an a (mm.36-43), followed by b’’ (mm.44-55). This section utilizes material from both A and B sections. The first part of the A’ section repeats verbatim the exact same material as “a” section in the A section in mm.1-8, while the second part (the b’’ section) of A’ section is slightly different. Here, Fauré uses a short extension in the descending line melody, and he also reharmonizes the section, this time staying in the key of A minor instead of modulating. However, the harmonic language and the emphasis of the dominant is mostly the same: ||: VII\( ^7 \)-V\( ^7 \):|| progression, all leading to the prolonged dominant in m.52.

Ex. 38. Fauré Romance Sans Paroles, Op.17, No.2, mm.36-55.
Coda (mm.56-67)

The coda of this piece begins in m.56 and is dominated mostly by running sixteenth notes alternating between hands. Notably, Fauré sets the texture an octave higher, resulting in a more ethereal sound. An important point in the closing section is the appearance of an unusual harmonic progression involving the Neapolitan chord. The preceding V\(^7\) chord in mm.52-55 seemingly is leading to I. However, the anticipated I chord in m.56 is not established; rather, a vii\(^{o7}\)/iv chord appears. Furthermore, this chord resolves deceptively to the Neapolitan chord, (\(^{b}II=^{b}VI/iv\)). Fauré then uses another deceptive progression in the closing section in mm.58-59. The harmonic progression is as follows: ii\(^{o7}\) - i\(^{6}\) - V\(^7\)-VI.

From m.60 to 63, Fauré repeats the melody and harmonies of the first four measures of the closing section, changing the melodic register and modifying the harmony of the last chord ($\text{ii}^7$-$i_6^4$-$V_7$). In particular, the $\text{ii}^9$-$i_4^6$-$V_7$-$\text{VI}$ progression found in mm.58-59 is replaced with the $\text{ii}^9$-$i_4^6$-$V_7$-$i_6^4$ progression in mm.62-63.

Mm. 64-68 comprises a prolonged dominant used to set up the coda. Fauré utilizes a short melodic motive which signals the end is near. In particular, Fauré uses four descending notes, (D, C, B, A) consistently in a French augmented sixth chord which includes F, A, B, D#. This chord moves to the final dominant moment, $i_6^4$-$V_7$.

In m.69, the main sorrowful melody emerges briefly and finally this piece ends with the striking of a strong tonic triad three times.

Gabriel Fauré’s Romance Sans Paroles Op.17, No.3

The third piece of Fauré’s Romance Sans Paroles, Op.17, is an exquisite and primarily peaceful piece. At first glance the piece looks simple and easy to play; however, it requires pianists to demonstrate a fluency and lightness of playing, as well as a sense of style and the ability to present a beautiful, tuneful melody.

This piece and the first one of the set have many materials in common. First, both pieces are in A♭ major. Second, they are written in ternary form A-B-A’, followed by a brief coda. Third, both pieces repeat simple motives throughout the composition. Fourth, Fauré uses harmonic regressions, and his favorite chords; half diminished chords.

The overall key structure of this piece is given below.

A (mm.1-23) primary key: A♭ major
B (mm.24-40) primary key: Bb minor, F minor
A’ (mm.40-55) primary key: A♭ major
Coda (mm.56-74) primary key: A♭ major

Section A (mm. 1-23)

This piece is in 2/4 meter and it begins with a short introduction in the left hand. After this simple three-bar accompanying material is presented, a lyrical eight-bar tune begins in the right hand, above the left hand’s accompaniment. This gentle and beautiful melody is clear evidence of Fauré’s craftsmanship. The first half of the A section incorporates a simple harmonic language that consists of the following chords: I-I⁶-ii⁷-V-V⁷.
Ex. 41. Fauré Romance Sans Paroles, Op.17, No.3, mm.1-12.

In m.12, the main tune is restated, but this time with an altered ending. In addition, the harmony begins to change in m.18 with the introduction of an augmented triad on I.

Amidst all of the simple chord progressions, the augmented chord sounds strange, but welcomed, as it sets up the change in harmony to F minor, or vi, followed by V\(^7\)/V, ending on V using a half cadence at the end of the A section in m.23.

Section B (mm. 24-40)

The B section begins in m.24 with a sudden parallel shift from E\textsuperscript{b} major to E\textsuperscript{b} minor. It soon becomes clear that the E\textsuperscript{b} minor chord functions as iv in the new key of B\textsuperscript{b} minor. Indeed, modulation up a major second is somewhat unusual. However, Fauré used this major second movement motion (A\textsuperscript{b} major\textarrow{\rightarrow}B\textsuperscript{b} minor) as the first tonicization in his Romance sans Paroles no.1 (mm.1-8). This exact key relationship occurs in this piece at m.25, as the music actually modulates from A\textsuperscript{b} major to B\textsuperscript{b} minor. The B section utilizes a simple harmonic progression, but Fauré also includes a prominent E\textsuperscript{b} pedal point in mm. 24-28. His harmonic progression is as follows: ii\textsuperscript{6,5}-V\textsuperscript{4,2}, ii\textsuperscript{6,5}-i\textsuperscript{6,5}-V\textsuperscript{6,5} (from mm.25-30).

Ex. 43. Fauré Romance Sans Paroles, Op.17, No.3, mm.24-30.
In addition, there is the interesting compositional feature, an appoggiatura chord in mm.31-32, where the tuneful 8-bar melody ends (the melody in the right hand E\textsubscript{b} moves down to D\textsubscript{b}). Here, the F chord in m.31 is V\textsubscript{7} in B\textsubscript{b} minor but it is on scale degree 1 in B\textsubscript{b} minor. Thus, the entire chord is an appoggiatura v chord to prolong the tonic.

Ex. 44. Fauré *Romance Sans Paroles*, Op.17, No.3, mm.31-32.

After the ending on i in m.32, another phrase modulation happens in m.32. The B\textsubscript{b} minor triad in m.32 is a pivot chord. It functions as a tonic to conclude the previous key area, while functioning as iv in the following f minor key area. The next several bass notes constitute a harmonic sequence up of fifth relative to the previous bars. As Fauré did earlier between A and B section, here, he changed the key from B\textsubscript{b} minor to F minor.

In addition, a particularly interesting harmonic progression, iv-V\textsuperscript{7}-iv-V\textsuperscript{7}-ii\textsuperscript{ø7}-V\textsuperscript{7}-i, occurs between m.32 and m.38. In general, one would expect the V chord in m.32 to go to i, but Fauré utilizes a harmonic retrogression in which V goes to iv in m.34, just as V regressed to ii\textsuperscript{ø7} in m.27.
The use of a ii half-diminished seventh chord (ii\(^{7}\)) in m.36 results in a richer, more colorful sonority. The ii contrasts with the iv chord that occurs earlier in the progression, but it is still functionally a subdominant-class chord. With the same idea, the first chord of m.38 is i in f minor and also vi in A\(^{b}\) major and it is followed by V\(^4\)/V-1\(^{6}\) – V. These chords can all be regarded as a single dominant event. Therefore, the last half of the B section (mm.33-40) is alternating dominant and sub-dominant harmonies to create a more colorful sonic world before heading back to home key, A\(^{b}\) major with another half cadence in m.40.


Section A’ (mm. 40-55)

The A’ section begins in m. 40. The beginning of the A’ section starts with same tonal structure used within the first part of the A section. However, Fauré enhances the melody with the appearance of a canon in the right hand. Usage of canon is a distinct compositional characteristic in this piece. Fauré started to use counterpoint in his works from 1869, and this
compositional method makes its first appearance in this piece.\textsuperscript{22} According to Orledge, Fauré preferred to use a close canon at the unison or octave among his contrapuntal devices.\textsuperscript{23} In the present case, Fauré utilizes canon at the octave one beat apart. This elegant canon follows the main melody to the climax throughout the whole A’ section.

In conjunction with the appearance of this canon, there is another new chord presented, a common-tone diminished seventh chord. In m.47, the $F^#$ diminished seventh chord ($F^#$, A, C, $E^b$) functions as a $\#vi^7$ resolves to V in the key of $A^b$. These kinds of chords are called common tone diminished seventh chords, and are used as color chords. Fauré uses common tone diminished seventh chords in a similar manner to the aforementioned appoggiatura chord in the B section; the resultant sound more luxuriant and colorful.


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\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
Coda (mm. 56-74)

As in the beginning, the simple accompaniment in the left hand appears again in m. 55, signaling the beginning of the coda. The initial melody returns, this time with a nostalgic bent. Faure inserts a counter melody in the top of the right hand in mm. 61-62 which adds just the right amount of decoration.

Harmonically, the coda consists of the progression: I-I\textsuperscript{6}-ii\textsuperscript{7}-V\textsuperscript{7}, stated three times, followed by the progression: I-I\textsuperscript{4}-vii\textsuperscript{ø6}/V-I\textsuperscript{6}- ii\textsuperscript{ø5}-V\textsuperscript{7}-I. At the end of the coda, three simple but remarkable compositional techniques appear. The first technique is the usage of a descending bass line in the left hand. Overall, the entire last 8-bar phrase consists mostly of a one chord (I), but this section can be analyzed in detail. The bass line steps down, A\textsuperscript{b} (m. 67) - G (m. 68) - F (m. 69) - E\textsuperscript{b} (m. 70). This simple stepwise descent connects the tonic to the dominant. Mm. 69-72 is a dominant prolongation based on the traditional I\textsuperscript{6}-V formula. However, each chord is preceded by a neighboring chord: vii\textsuperscript{ø6}/V precedes I\textsuperscript{4} (with upper neighbor motion F-E\textsuperscript{b} in the bass) followed by ii\textsuperscript{ø5}/V\textsuperscript{7} (with lower neighbor motion D\textsuperscript{b}-E\textsuperscript{b} in the bass). This progression resolves firmly to the tonic in m. 33.
The second technique is the usage of retrogression with the V chord moving to iv in mm. 70-71, as was done in mm. 33-34. The third technique is usage of mode mixture (D♭ major + D♭ minor) as Fauré did in the coda of the first piece (A♭ major + A♭ minor). The last 8-bar phrase includes grace notes in the melody, ending with a very quiet dynamic, ppp, with a peaceful authentic cadence.

Ex. 47. Fauré Romance Sans Paroles, Op.17, No.3, mm.56-74.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Among the vast repertoire of piano music written over the past three hundred years, the *Romance sans Paroles* (song without words) genre still seems to be relatively unknown to this very day. Indeed, even though there are numerous pieces in this genre, containing many fascinating musical elements, there does not exist a thorough musical analysis of it. That is why I researched and studied this art form.

Among the French composers who wrote Romance sans Paroles, Charles-François Gounod, Camille Saint-Saëns, and Gabriel Fauré represent its leading composers. This writer discovered that these three composers’ *Romance sans Paroles* have four common characteristics. First, there is an obvious lyrical melody. Second, these works are quite short, mostly three to seven pages in length. Third, they are primarily in a moderate, gentle tempo except for the second piece by Fauré. Fourth, they are comprised of simple forms such as a through-composed, a modified ternary form, or a basic ternary form.

Based on these common traits, these three composers distinguished each piece with their unique compositional styles and techniques.

Charles-François Gounod is the only one of the three to use programmatic titles in his *Romance Sans Paroles*. The first piece of Gounod’s *Romance Sans Paroles*, named “La Pervenche,” is written in a through-composed three-part song form. Gounod uses shared melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic ideas in each section to unify this piece into one whole piece. In this piece he displays primarily a simple harmonic progression with the inclusion of the occasional secondary dominants, half-diminished seventh chord, Italian augmented sixth chord, and modal mixture to create a distinctive French color.
The second piece of Gounod’s Romance Sans Paroles, named “Le Ruisseau,” is written in a one-part song form incorporating modified ternary phrase structure, [: A:] [: B-A’:]. This work consists of constant triplets in accord with the image of the flowing stream as the name suggests. Gounod employs a fairly sophisticated harmony by using diminished chords, common chord relationships, secondary dominants, and modal mixture. Moreover, his usage of starting with the subdominant region in the coda, the appearance of new texture, and an abrupt tempo change at the end is prominent.

The third piece of Gounod’s Romance Sans Paroles, named “Le Soir,” utilizes a simple ternary form, A-B-A’, followed by a short coda. This work is based on an earlier composition, Gounod’s art song of the same name. For this reason, the beginning A section can be perceived as a prelude or introduction. Based on the text in his song, Gounod depicts a suitable atmosphere throughout. This piece consists of two distinctive materials: a beautiful main melody and ostinato chord accompaniment. He incorporates noticeable compositional techniques in this piece such as voice exchange, sudden key change, suspension, mode mixture, and common chord modulation to vary the color.

Even though Camille Saint-Saëns wrote only one Romance Sans Paroles, this lone example reflects his considerable compositional skill. His Romance Sans Paroles is composed in a conventional ternary form, A-B-A’, with a short coda. Saint-Saëns uses several fascinating compositional features in this piece. It has the character of gentle salon music because it is mainly comprised of a vibrant syncopated sound throughout the piece. There is an inventiveness and freshness about this music that includes substantial trill writing and a counter-melody that requires great technical skill and nuance from the performer. In particular, his usage of the trill shows the influence of Beethoven, and the strong tonic ending reminds one of his piano concerto no.2.
Gabriel Fauré wrote three pieces of *Romance Sans Paroles*, op.17. Compared to Gounod and Saint-Saëns, Fauré’s *Romance Sans Paroles* contains a more complicated and advanced musical language.

The first piece is a delicate work written in ternary form, A-B-A’, followed by a brief coda. In this piece, Fauré uses a very regular phrase structure which is set in a homophonic texture with a clear lyrical melody. Fauré utilizes a mature and sophisticated harmonic palette throughout this work to create a satisfying musical effect. His usage of root movements is a representative characteristic of late Romantic style, and tonicizing the subdominant is a common practice since the time of Bach.

The second piece is infused with much chromaticism. It is in the key of A minor, written in a ternary form A-B-A’ with a short coda. From the beginning, this piece displays a brilliant harmonic technique: the opening eight-bar phrase consists of a tonic prolongation that reveals the tonic triad. The principal triads (consist of Am, C, and Em) outline the primary tonic triad. Fauré uses common chord modulations, phrase modulation, diverse harmonies including Neapolitan, half diminished seventh, and French augmented sixth chords to add harmonic color and interest. The striking usage of the V chord (starting on V and ending on V) and the usage of key change by using tri-tone relations in B section are also noticeable traits.

The third piece is an exquisite and peaceful work. Even though the piece looks easy to play, it not only requires fluency of playing, but also demands the ability to express a lyrical melody. This work shares commonality with the first piece of Fauré’s *Romance Sans Paroles* including the same key, the same forms, a brief coda, simple repeating motives, and harmonic regression. However, it also includes a sudden parallel shift modulation and unusual key relationships.

Certainly, there are possibilities for further study of the Romance sans Parole genre.
that require research beyond the scope of this dissertation. I offer two possibilities.

One possibility is to explore the *Romance Sans Paroles* written by other nineteenth-century French composers. It would be an interesting discourse to research and compare the entire oeuvre of this genre. There are quite a few more *Romance Sans Paroles* just waiting to be discovered.

Another topic worthy of exploration would be to compare and contrast Mendelssohn’s *Lieder ohne Werde* (Songs Without Words) with the *Romance Sans Paroles* in regard to form, texture, style, character, etc.

I hope this dissertation will enhance the understanding of the *Romance Sans Paroles* with a renewed appreciation of this art form.
Bibliography

Books


Score


Website

