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Cécile Chaminade: imaginative genius, ephemeral star

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CÉCILE CHAMINADE:
IMAGINATIVE GENIUS, EPHEMERAL STAR

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Music
in the Wits School of Arts, Faculty of Humanities,
University of the Witwatersrand.

Johannesburg, March 2020

Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Music in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.



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25 March 2020

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Abstract

This dissertation has emerged out of my deep fascination for French female composer and pianist, Cécile Chaminade, as well as my growing recognition of the need for forgotten women in music to be unearthed and given the credit they so deserve. While there have been many great female musicians and composers such as Clara Schumann, Amy Beach or Ethel Smyth who warrant recognition in their own right, Chaminade is unique in the impact she made on the audiences of her day, in her output of music that was so adored and the celebrity status she achieved in a way that no other female composer has attained.

Chaminade enjoyed unprecedented success in the period 1890 to 1910 yet, despite her fame, she died in relative obscurity in 1944; it seemed as if her legacy was to be consigned to the same abyss shared by so many female musicians. Feminist musicology, though, has seen major strides in recent years and, since the publication of Marcia Citron's book, *Cécile Chaminade: A Bio-Bibliography* in 1988, research on Chaminade has been on the rise. Citron, by virtue of being the major authority on Chaminade and her work, has served as the most important source for my purposes. This dissertation builds on extant information about Chaminade and presents a detailed overview of her musical upbringing, education and career as both pianist and composer, provides context on some of her French contemporaries, and explores her musical style across her career, identifying stylistic patterns and trademarks in her work.

This project has extended far beyond merely researching and writing about Chaminade for my Master's degree and has involved tracing her footsteps in Paris, which led me to her home and her grave; uncovering her family tree and history; listening to, playing and analysing her music; scrutinising critical reviews; performing a selection of her works in an all-female recital; and presenting her as Composer of the Week on Classic 1027's "Full Works" in commemoration of the 75th anniversary of her death in 2019. The last entailed selecting and sourcing five works to be broadcast and writing a script for the introduction of each work which I presented on air. The works included Chaminade's *Concertstück, Sonata, op. 21*, *Callirhoë,* Piano Trio No. 2 and five songs: *La lune paresseuse, Nice-la-belle, Espoir, L'été* and *Chanson triste.*

Table of Contents

Declaration ii

Acknowledgements iii

Abstract iv

List of Figures vi

Chapter 1: Introduction 1

Chapter 2: Unveiling Cécile Chaminade 13

Chapter 3: The Musical Milieu of Chaminade 28

Chapter 4: Musical Analysis and Interpretation 49

Conclusion 73

Bibliography 79

Scores 84

List of Recordings 85

List of Figures

Figure 1: The overlapping of composers' lives 28
Figure 2: Open chords in mm. 2 and 4 of Valse carnavalesque (Piano 1) 31
Figure 3: Open tremolo chords in mm. 1-5 of Le carnaval des animaux (Piano 1) 31
Figure 4: Descending chromatic bass line in mm. 11-17 of Le carnaval des animaux (Piano 1) 32
Figure 5: Descending chromatic pattern in mm. 26-29 of Valse carnavalesque (Piano 2) 32
Figure 6: Siegfried's horn solo from Wagner's opera, Siegfried 35
Figure 7: Horn solo from Holmès' symphonic poem, Andromède 35
Figure 8: Original manuscript of Chaminade's Les papillons, sourced from the BnF online catalogue 43
Figure 9: Dans l'immense tristesse mm. 1-4 45
Figure 10: Number of published works per year 49
Figure 11: Opening of Étude printanière, mm. 1-15 with modulation to C-minor in measure 6 52
Figure 12: Étude printanière mm. 34-49 showing E-flat major section and Neapolitan pivot chord in measure 44 53
Figure 13: Automne mm. 6-11 showing chromatic movement in measures 8 and 10, as well as key excursion in measure 10 56
Figure 14: Automne mm. 30-37 showing beginning of B-section with thirty-second note patterns and transitional sequences 57
Figure 15: Automne mm. 38-39 with sweeping E-flat minor melody 58
Figure 16: Automne mm. 45-50 showing inverted augmented sixth chord, cascading patterns leading to French augmented sixth chord 58
Figure 17: Automne mm. 69-77 showing the climax of the piece, cascading patterns and transitional runs into section A 59
Figure 18: Solitude mm. 1-9 showing recurring melodic motive in soprano line and modulation to A-major in measure 5 62
Figure 19: Solitude mm. 16-18 showing inverted melodic motive and diminished seventh harmony 62
Figure 20: Solitude mm. 19-29 showing tonicisation of chord iv (tonicisation of B-minor), prolongation of respelled German augmented sixth chord, added register and stepwise motion and repeat of main F-sharp minor motive with pedal C-sharp bass 63

Figure 21: Solitude mm. 36-38 showing change in texture and voices in unison 64
Figure 22: Solitude mm. 39-49 showing modal mix between C-sharp major and minor and D-flat major section with modulation to A-major and circle of fifths progression 65
Figure 23: Solitude mm. 67-74 showing coda 65
Figure 24: Nocturne mm. 1-13 showing embellishing chords, modulation to F-sharp major and prolongation of the tonic 67
Figure 25: Nocturne mm. 14-17 showing harmonically open section 67
Figure 26: Nocturne mm. 21-27 showing chromatic harmony and prolongation of chord ii (C-sharp minor chord) 68
Figure 27: Nocturne mm. 35-42 showing augmented dominant chord and dominant prolongation with pedal D and augmented submediant chords borrowed from G-minor 69
Figure 28: Nocturne mm. 58-67 showing prolongation of cadential 6/4 and prolongation of G-major tonic with borrowed tonic minor chords 70
Figure 29: Nocturne mm. 99-103 showing coda 70

Chapter 1: Introduction

She is an imaginative genius, like few of her sex on the face of the earth. Her creations bear the stamp of incomparable daintiness and playfulness (Katzenberger 1908, quoted in Citron 1988, 177)).

These words of German critic, Gabriel Katzenberger, appeared in a concert review of Cécile Chaminade (Citron 1988, 177). Chaminade was a composer and pianist who, although relatively unknown today, enjoyed fame and adulation across Europe and the United States of America between 1886 and 1910 and who has been described in many accounts as one of the most famous female composers. Her fame was linked not only to the quality of her music but to the impact and influence she had on audiences and amateur musicians which, for some time, made her a meteoric star. In more modern parlance, Chaminade's brand was everywhere. Her most popular piece, *Scarf Dance*, sold over five million copies during her lifetime, making her one of the most commercially successful composers of the day (Crawshaw 2015, 1). The English cosmetics company, Morny, developed the Chaminade fragrance, which scented a range of products, all decorated with her signature and a couple of measures from her piece, *Air de Ballet*; and her portrait appeared on Will's cigarette boxes (Smith 1994, 740). Additionally, Chaminade was at the leading edge of technology of the day – she was one of many prominent musicians chosen to endorse the Aeolian Company's pianola for their launch at the turn of the twentieth century (Citron 1988, 18). Although the celebration of composers was not uncommon, the adulation Chaminade received is remarkable. Ultimately, however, it is the quality and lasting value of their music that perpetuates the works of composers, and Chaminade's music was increasingly dismissed after World War I as being part of the outdated tradition of the salon.

Katzenberger's quote above deserves a little consideration as it speaks to the separation between the reception of male and female composers. The praise Chaminade receives in the first sentence is at the expense of her gender; and the use of the word "daintiness" plays into the expectations of, and assumptions surrounding, a female composer, especially of the period. Such a word borders on the derogatory and would not be seen in a description of lyrical music by a male composer. It undermines the quality of the music and suggests a certain weakness in it. As will be revealed in this study, while Chaminade's music *is* lyrical, it is by no means lacking in substance.

This dissertation explores the extent to which Chaminade's music and career were shaped and affected by her upbringing and surroundings, taking into account the patriarchal framework in Western Europe during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Analysis of a selection of works sheds light on Chaminade's personal style, stylistic influences, the extent to which her style developed or changed during the course of her career and to what degree her style was responsible for the unforeseen rise and fall of her career. This study makes efforts to add to and extend the exploration of this relatively unknown composer, providing an extensive examination that combines music analysis and understanding of Chaminade's work with performance, as well as critical analysis with contextual material. It aims also to add to the journey of rediscovering the forgotten women composers who, without question, made an impact on those around them. In addition, the inclusion of performance reviews reveals some critical reception towards Chaminade's music.

Regarding the methodology of the dissertation, apart from the consultation of contextual sources, data collection took shape in the development of a digital catalogue with information regarding various facets of Chaminade's oeuvre, such as the number of publications per publisher or number of works published per year, for example. The catalogue can be sorted and classified in multiple ways and proved an invaluable tool in navigating Chaminade's oeuvre. In addition, graphs and charts were created from this data to provide visual representations of the various phases and details of Chaminade's career. Since Citron is the only researcher to have collected and catalogued concert and performance reviews, she is the sole source in this dissertation for quotation of contemporary reviews. With the consultation of performance reviews, reception history could naturally form a part of my research. Reception history "implies the study of compositions as mirrored in the reactions of critics, artists, and audiences" (Stinson 2001). With regards to this, there are many sources that exist and some were considered as models for this study such as Katharine Ellis' book, *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France* (1995), Sandra Rosenblum's article, "'Effusions of a master mind': The reception of Chopin's music in nineteenth-century America" (2000) and Sinéad Dempsey's dissertation, "Aesthetic and ideological trends in the reception of Mendelssohn's music in nineteenth-century Germany" (2008). However, this area was not explored in depth since its relevance fell outside the parameters of this study.

Chaminade lived at a time when women were not easily accepted or promoted as musicians. Despite the challenges faced by female musicians in the nineteenth century, Chaminade quite

quickly developed a reputation for writing music that, according to a review from *La Renaissance Musicale,* had "elegance, grace, and a striking delicacy of feeling" (Citron 1988, 118). At that time, women who composed rarely had their music published. This was largely due to an overriding belief from profit-driven publishing houses that women were not capable of composing anything worthwhile (Reitsma 2014, 56). However, Chaminade stands out as an exception with over 400 works published by 12 different publishers in her lifetime, although she did have a primary publisher across her entire career, which was unusual even for male composers. While her oeuvre is dominated by songs and pieces for solo piano, it also features bigger genres, including a ballet, an opera and a symphony. Chaminade, in fact, revealed great aptitude for orchestral writing and perhaps would have pursued larger genres more seriously had she not been hampered by societal attitudes and expectations for women to lead a life of domesticity. Chaminade's compositions were mostly premiered at salon gatherings but her performance career extended far beyond this type of venue. She made appearances throughout Europe in countries such as Belgium, Austria, Germany and Hungary. She toured numerous times to the United Kingdom and, in 1908, to the United States. Despite Chaminade's sudden and quite surprising rise to fame for a woman of her time, she fell into decline almost as rapidly and, by her death in 1944, the musical world had moved forward and Chaminade's name had largely dwindled into insignificance.

Historically, women were discouraged from pursuing musical careers and were not granted the same opportunities as men (Reitsma 2014, 55). Feminist musicologists have pointed to one of the reasons for the lack of acknowledgement of women's musical accomplishment as being due to "women not having the power to promote their own music in a male-dominated field" (Reitsma 2014, 55). While Chaminade was one of the most successful female musicians in her day, it can be argued that she did not reach her full potential or was restricted to some extent because of the confines placed on women at the time. These confines were not enforced by law, they were prescribed by societal convention and were, therefore, more insidious. As stated by Nancy Reich, "the advice and support of a man was still a necessity in the musical career of a woman no matter how talented she was" (1991, 98). Chaminade was fortunate in the support and encouragement she received from three men in particular: Benjamin Godard, one of her teachers, and composer friends Emmanuel Chabrier and Maurice Moszkowski. Chaminade did not allow her gender to impede her compositional efforts and unashamedly expressed her femininity in her music. In one review by the head of the Paris Conservatoire, Thomas Ambroise, she was complimented as a composer in her own

right, equal to men without being defined with the usual qualifying prefix that most women were subjected to (Jerrould 1988, 22). The review read, “This is not a woman composer; this is a composer who is a woman!”

As “style” is a key concept for this study, it is necessary that the meaning of this term and the sense in which it will be used in the context of this dissertation should be clarified. Most simply, Pascall defines style as “the manner in which a work of art is executed”; as a “mode of expression” (2001). However, when looking at forms of art, or specifically music, there are many complex levels that emerge. Pascall identifies five main aspects of musical language which characterise style: form, texture, harmony, melody and rhythm, and all of these will be considered in the stylistic analysis of Chaminade’s music with an emphasis on harmonic structure and melody. There are, however, other factors that come into play when determining style, such as the individual personality of the creator, which can be influenced by historical, social and geographical conditions (Pascall 2001). Similarly, Leonard B. Meyer describes style as a “replication of patterning … that results from a series of choices made within some set of constraints”, which are either learned or adopted from historical or cultural conditions (1989, 3).

Chaminade was raised within the culture of the salon and, undoubtedly, crafted her personal style within this context where the demand was for light, entertaining and accessible music. The French salon has played a part in French culture, society and politics for centuries; however, the implied meaning of the term has undergone continuous change. Therefore, it seems appropriate to provide some historical background in order to understand the nature and function of the salon, particularly during Chaminade’s lifetime. During the seventeenth century, the word “salon” typically referred to an informal gathering of men and women of intelligence, usually upper class, for refined conversation and entertainment (Mason 2007, 137). Such entertainment would include readings, recitations, music, games or philosophical discussion (Mason 2007, 138). During the Enlightenment years of the early eighteenth century, the dynamic within the salons changed, with the women who hosted them finding a certain level of power as “intelligent, self-educated, and educating women who reshaped the social forms of their day to their own social, intellectual, and educational needs” (Goodman 1989, 332-333). Towards the end of the eighteenth century, France underwent a time of social, political and economic upheaval and salons became centres for political debate (Mason 2007, 242). The esteemed hostesses of artistic gatherings were replaced by men of

action. The women "who had made the social life of the century so powerful and famous" were silenced and the salon lost its prestige (Mason 2007, 243). Following the French Revolution, Napoleon worked to revive the spirit of the salon of the old regime where literature and refinement flourished, and he turned to women of a high position, education and reputation to re-establish the tradition of salon gatherings (Mason 2007, 275). In the nineteenth century the salon maintained its function as an artistic and literary social gathering, but also became a place of nostalgia for writers and scholars attempting to bring together the two French traditions, the aristocratic and the revolutionary (Chesney 2008, 94).

In modern music criticism, Robert Pascall identifies personal style, which reflects the artist's view on life, as being the most important for discussion since this is the "differentiating factor" between "societies and composers" of the same period (2001). This will be the main thrust for this study in looking at Chaminade. This dissertation aims to establish stylistic qualities and patterns that are personal to and typical of Chaminade. Analysis of a selection of works sheds light on Chaminade's personal style, stylistic influences, the extent to which her style developed or changed during the course of her career and to what degree her style was responsible for the unforeseen rise and fall of her career. An important aspect in stylistic analysis is development in the artist's personal style across his or her career (Pascall 2001). In most cases, the styles of composers are rarely fixed and display some sort of change as they explore different influences and adapt to changing musical trends and demands. Chaminade may have had a style that was unique to her, but she was criticised in the latter part of her career for displaying no change and for failing to adapt to emerging modern styles.

This exploration of Chaminade's style attempts to combine contextual and historical research with musical analysis. Musicologist Peter Burkholder believes that in order to understand a composer or a piece of music fully, music history cannot be separated from music theory as music is both a historical and a technical subject. In a study of musical style, Burkholder recognises that economic, cultural, social and intellectual influences, as well as personal beliefs, values and ideas, all affect the work of a composer (1993, 11-12). Each chapter in this dissertation is concerned with aspects which shaped and developed Chaminade's style and career. Chapter two introduces a biographical account of Chaminade, focusing on her musical upbringing, education and early musical influences as well as providing an overview of her career as a performer and composer. It also mentions some of the societal expectations and inhibitions experienced by other female musicians and reveals some of Chaminade's own

thoughts regarding women's place in society. In order to contextualise the musical scene in France during the formative years of Chaminade's career, this chapter outlines briefly the tensions between German and French music in the mid-nineteenth century and the subsequent revival of French music, led by a group of nationalist composers with whom Chaminade strongly identified.

Chapter three aims to locate Chaminade's style within the musical milieu of France through a brief exploration of other French composers from the same period: Camille Saint-Saëns, Augusta Holmès, Benjamin Godard, Claude Debussy and Lili Boulanger. These composers span the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and represent a range of experiences and stylistic connections or contrasts, which help to shed light on Chaminade's own development and limitations. Having understood that the style of an artist is influenced by geographic location, which in turn comes with certain cultural influences, this chapter calls attention to defining characteristics of a French musical style, which each of the selected composers display in one way or another in their music. Following France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War, French musicians sought a more intimate musical style, compared to the "over-indulgent excesses of the German Romantic style" and favoured sentimental characterisation and emotional intensity (Donnellon 2006, 2). In a review of Chaminade, the author Théodore Massiac, in praising her dedication to the French style, describes it as the "style of reason, of clarity, of inspiration, of grace, of elegance, of grandeur—of wisdom and of order" (Citron 1988, 139).

Chapter four presents the music analysis and interpretation of four works for solo piano by Chaminade. The chosen works represent the arc of Chaminade's career from one of her first compositions and one at the beginning of her rise to fame to a composition at the start of her decline and one of her last. The aim of the analysis is to determine repeated patterns and stylistic traits particular to Chaminade and to assess any changes or development in her compositional style. Additionally, the chapter explores the shape of her career, highlighting events which may have affected her writing, and critical reviews that discuss Chaminade's style. Existing analyses were examined for additional insights. John Jerrould's *Piano Music of Cécile Chaminade* (1988) and Candace Magner's *The Songs of Cécile Chaminade* (2001) provide general analyses of Chaminade's piano works and songs respectively, which are more descriptive in nature than the analysis performed in this study. Karen McCann's dissertation (2003) presents an analysis of a few of Chaminade's works and this was consulted for guidance on structure as well as general stylistic observations.

The conclusion summarises the conditions and influences that played a part in the development of Chaminade's musical style, as well as her ascendancy and decline particularly with regard to the reception of her style and how this changed across decades. It weaves personal reflection with ideas around concert programming and how best to present Chaminade's music in contemporary performances, as well as exploring the extent to which works by Chaminade appear in mainstream repertoire. The conclusion also touches briefly on modern feminist thought.

Review of the literature

The distortion of the musical landscape is not limited to performance and composition but, to date, has extended to music criticism as well. Female composers have largely been overlooked in musicological studies or have received merely minimal mention in comparison to male composers. Chaminade, in particular, has received little attention in music criticism and music history in general. Richard Smith, in his commemorative article entitled "Sister of Perpetual Indulgence", 50 years after Chaminade's death in 1944, declared that interest in Chaminade was on the rise (1994, 740). However, despite the 26-year gap since Smith's article, extensive academic literature about Chaminade remains fairly limited. Published literature is largely restricted to Marcia Citron's book, *Cécile Chaminade: A Bio-Bibliography* (1988), Cécile Tardif's French book, *Portrait de Cécile Chaminade* (1993), a few brief articles and a handful of book chapters dedicated to women composers, such as in *Women and Music* (1991), edited by Karin Pendle and the *Historical Anthology of Music by Women* (1987), edited by James Briscoe. Shorter online articles by Charlotte Higgins and Robert Hillinck entitled, "I am Music's Nun" (2002) and "The Rise and Fall of Cécile Chaminade: A Hopeless Romantic in a Time of Progress" (2019) respectively, offered some additional anecdotes about Chaminade, but provided little new information and simply endorse Citron's research and the statements that information about her remains tenuous: "There is no reliable tradition of scholarship" (Higgins 2002).

As gender politics of the time undoubtedly affected Chaminade's life and compositional career, I have consulted various sources to ground and enhance an understanding of the gender politics of the time, which would have had some impact on Chaminade's career. Citron's book, *Gender and the Musical Canon* (1993), deals extensively with gendered ideas surrounding creativity throughout the Western art tradition. Citron observes that society has had a strong impact on women's creative output and that, with regard to music, there have

been many ideologies and historical traditions at play which affected women's involvement. She identifies some of the challenges faced by women including denial of equal education to that of men, discouragement from entering the music field professionally, negative attitudes towards women, and prescribed gender roles that limited women to wifehood and motherhood and put constraints on their creative output. Additionally, it features a gendered analysis of the first movement of Chaminade's *Sonata, op. 21*. Citron avoids a purely "traditional" approach in this analysis—understanding the structure of the music solely in music terms—and instead, explores the gendered themes and codes imbedded in the composition.

Women and Music, while also centring around Western art music in Europe and America, provides a much broader scope than Citron on women's participation in music, including chapters on women in popular music and jazz, women as patrons of the arts and women's contributions to non-Western music. While this book provides a critical understanding of the history of women in music, the chapters on the Romantic period by Citron and Nancy Reich, specifically, proved invaluable to the writing of this dissertation. Reich's chapter, "European Composers and Musicians, ca. 1800–1890", offers important overviews of the political, social and economic factors that affected women's musical activities in the nineteenth century and touches on the emergence of women in education, scholarship, composition and performance. Citron's chapter, "European Composers and Musicians, 1880–1918", which focuses on the improved status of European women between 1880 and 1918 and provides brief summaries of six female composers, including Cécile Chaminade and Augusta Holmès, was referred to frequently throughout the writing of this dissertation.

Sophie Fuller, in her introduction to *The Pandora Guide to Women Composers: Britain and the United States 1629-Present* (1994), provides a beneficial outline of the ideologies surrounding women and their capabilities as well as their participation in music from the convents in the Middle Ages to their affiliated roles as songwriters well into the twentieth century. Susan C. Cook and Judy S. Tsou reiterate, in the introduction to *Cecilia Reclaimed* (1994), that understandings of sexual differences in society have affected all facets of musical culture. They state that "Throughout history, changing, even contradictory, definitions of 'the masculine' and 'the feminine', incorporating as well cultural notions of creativity and genius, determined who did what in music and what was done in the name of music" (1994, 1).

Many musicological studies have divided "women's and men's realms into private and public domains" (Post 1994, 35). Reich is of the opinion that despite the learning opportunities provided to women within their private home environments, they were usually not allowed by their husbands or fathers to pursue music seriously and were discouraged or even forbidden to perform publicly. Jennifer Post's chapter, "Erasing the Boundaries between Public and Private in Women's Performance Traditions" in *Cecilia Reclaimed*, offered a useful frame of reference to understand the environment in which Chaminade would have been raised, as well as allowing for reasonable conclusions to be drawn regarding the extent to which Chaminade emerged into the public sphere.

While providing a gendered context perhaps sets up the expectation for a feminist study, this overview is merely provided as contextual background in order to see Chaminade in the light of her times and understand how she made her mark in musical history despite the age in which she lived. Richard Smith laments the fact that when female composers and musicians are researched, the focus of attention is their gender and the ways in which they are set apart from men. While the reality of music history has naturally created this distinction, Smith feels that women composers should be examined and judged purely by their musical worth and not by their gender (1994, 740). However, in a dissertation that centres around a female composer, it would be unrealistic to ignore the hardships and disadvantages faced by women, and, therefore, the theme of gender cannot entirely be ignored. In order to provide balanced insights into Chaminade's music, it is vital to understand and unpack her musical environment as well as the opportunities that were afforded to or denied her because of her gender.

Further insights about Chaminade were found in her article, "Recollections of my Musical Childhood", published in 1899 in the American music magazine, *The Etude*, which shed light on some of her experiences and musical connections as a child. Although not providing much contrasting information to that found in Citron's bio-bibliography, this account by Chaminade supplies a more detailed, personal perspective. Another first-hand account from *The Etude* comes from American pianist, Ward Stephens, in which he writes about his meetings with Chaminade and visits to her home, painting a brief but detailed picture of her personality and manner of living. *The Etude,* which has an online archive and contains numerous pages featuring Chaminade or articles written by her, adds significantly to the personal dimension. Chaminade's article written in 1908, "How to Play my Best-Known

Pieces" for example, offers brief guidance to some of her short piano works and, therefore, provides insights into some of her musical thoughts and ideas around interpretation.

Unpublished sources include a small collection of letters addressed by Chaminade to her mentor Emmanuel Chabrier, to the poet Eugène Manuel and to various other musicians. These letters are available for viewing on microfilm at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris; however, the poor quality of the microfilm tapes makes reading and interpretation of the letters difficult. A few dissertations on Chaminade provided additional perceptions: *The Mélodies of Cécile Chaminade: Hidden Treasures for Vocal Performance and Pedagogy* by Robin Smith (2012), *Cécile Chaminade: A Composer at Work* by Karen McCann (2003), and *The Reception of the Music of Cécile Chaminade in Colonial New Zealand (1894-1934): Contexts and Institutions* (2015) by Sandra Crashaw. Whilst all three dissertations draw from similar sources used for this study, they provided valuable evaluations of Chaminade's life with very specific explorations of certain aspects of her music.

In order to provide a fuller picture of Chaminade's musical milieu in France, literature that highlighted the style, circumstances or musical upbringing of the selected composers was consulted. Camille Saint-Saëns, called the "Patriarch of French Music" in Brian Rees' book, *Camille Saint-Saëns: A Life* (2012), was one of France's greatest composers of the time and his music established an environment from which his successors, including Chaminade, emerged. He was born in 1835, 22 years before Chaminade and remained one of her greatest influences (Citron 1988, 22). Rees explores Saint-Saëns' views on musical style and aesthetics and discusses Saint-Saëns' exploration of nineteenth-century musical genres. Martin Cooper's book, *French Music: From the death of Berlioz to the death of Fauré* (1951), and Elaine Brody's book, *Paris: The Musical Kaleidoscope 1870-1925* (1988), although somewhat dated, nevertheless offered important contextual insights, along with Timothy Jones' chapter "Nineteenth-Century Orchestral and Chamber Music" from *French Music Since Berlioz* (2016), into the social, industrial and musical changes that prevailed in France during Saint-Saëns', and thus, Chaminade's lifetime.

Augusta Holmès played an active part in Parisian musical life and many concert announcements in Citron's bio-bibliography feature Holmès' name alongside Chaminade's. Holmès features in Citron's chapter "European Composers and Musicians, 1880–1918" in *Women and Music* as well as in *Paris, A Concise Musical History* (2019) by Guy Hartopp.

Citron's chapter is brief but provides insight into Holmès' musical style and output, providing direct comparison with that of Chaminade's, whereas Hartopp's overview of Holmès centres more on her life and interactions within the artistic circle of Paris. An article by Rollo Myers, "Augusta Holmès: A Meteoric Career" (1967), is the most critical source on Holmès, exploring her life and the reasons for her popularity and impact on Parisian culture.

Literature on Benjamin Godard remains relatively limited; however, a brief examination of him features as a direct link to Chaminade. Godard was one of Chaminade's teachers and she, therefore, shares stylistic similarities with him. Richard Smith's article on *Grove Music Online* (2001) is the most comprehensive source and provides a summary of Godard's life and a classified list of his works. Godard also features briefly in Citron's bio-bibliography in various concert announcements and discussion of Chaminade's education.

Within the exploration of this selection of composers, Debussy appears as a constant figure of comparison and serves as a link between them all, including Chaminade. Since Debussy represents a change in French music, and the styles of these composers can be located as "pre- or post-Debussy", it was important to include him in this study. David Code's book, entitled *Claude Debussy* (2010), was used as the main source to interpret Debussy's style and understand his influences and views on music. Rees' book, *Camille Saint-Saëns: A Life,* highlights the interaction and discord between Debussy and Saint-Saëns; Citron mentions Debussy's influence on Lili Boulanger's style in *Women and Music*; and Citron's bio-bibliography reveals Chaminade's distaste for Debussy's music. Debussy's first article published in *La Revue Blanche,* "L'entretien avec M. Croche" ("Conversation with M. Croche") (1901), as well as Fiona Maddocks' article "Crotchety Monsieur Croche" (2018), established a better understanding of Debussy's persona as a critic and provided a more direct look into his musical ideals.

Lili Boulanger was born in the last decade of the nineteenth century, some 40 years after Chaminade, and was strongly influenced by Debussy. Boulanger appears in Citron's chapter in *Women and Music* (1991) together with Holmès and Chaminade. Citron offers a brief comparison to Chaminade and highlights the most important events in Boulanger's short but successful life. The main theme in most writings on Boulanger is how her poor health and premature death hindered her musical career. An article by Christopher Palmer, written 50 years after Boulanger's death, entitled "Lili Boulanger 1893–1918" (1968), deals with the

development of her musical style and compares it with that of Debussy, and April Smith-Gonzalez' doctoral dissertation "Lili Boulanger (1893-1918): Her Life and Works" (2001) provided a closer look into much of Boulanger's music, her stylistic influences and her attraction to the Symbolist and Impressionist movements.

Chapter 2: Unveiling Cécile Chaminade

An artist who has perhaps surpassed in achievement anything ever done in music by any other woman in the world's history (St. Louis Daily Globe Democrat 1908, 3, quoted in Citron 1988, 175).

Cécile Louise Stéphanie Chaminade was born in the suburb of Batignolles, Paris, on 8 August 1857, and was the third of four surviving children. Her father, Hippolyte, was a wealthy and successful man who managed the Paris office of the British insurance company, Gresham. Chaminade enjoyed a privileged childhood, moving between Paris and the family villa in Périgord, and later Le Vésinet, a suburb west of Paris where her parents built a house that would later become Chaminade's personal residence. In an article written for *The Etude* in 1911, Chaminade reminisces about her childhood in Le Vésinet and recalls her love for the hills, flowers, woods and "broad stretches of green landscape", which inspired her most (1911, 805).

According to Chaminade, she was constantly surrounded by music at home: "My childhood was spent – perpetually under the influence of music" (1911, 805). Her parents were both musical: Hippolyte was a violinist and her mother, Marie, was a pianist and singer, and they regularly formed trios and quartets with their friends, playing music late into the night. Chaminade writes how she loved these evenings as a child and, when she grew tired, would place herself under the grand piano and allow herself "to be lulled to sleep by some piece of chamber music softly played" (Chaminade 1911, 805). Chaminade received her first lessons on the piano from her mother, but it was soon evident that Chaminade's musical talent needed more advanced guidance. At the age of about ten, Chaminade was assessed by Felix Le Couppey from the Paris Conservatoire and he strongly recommended that she attend the Conservatoire for studies in music. Not long after, Georges Bizet, a family friend and close neighbour in Le Vésinet, asked Chaminade to play all the pieces she knew for him, including her own compositions. Chaminade recalls what Bizet said to her father after he had tested her aural and dictation skills: "She undoubtedly has the gift. Give her all the opportunity for coming to the front, and she cannot fail, but, above all, do not bore her" (Chaminade 1911, 805). We can gain many useful insights from Chaminade's personal writings and this can be considered as valid information as long as we are aware that she is addressing a public audience and, therefore, could be writing in a slightly more image-conscious manner.

Although Chaminade achieved great fame, her musical journey was not without its challenges. The opening quote of this chapter, which appeared in the *St. Louis Daily Globe Democrat* in 1908 (Citron 1988, 175), speaks volumes about the light in which Chaminade's accomplishments and success were viewed – as a woman, distinct from the achievements of men. Throughout European history, hierarchical social structures have positioned women below men. Constraints have been placed on women, which have resulted in their exclusion from various social events, jobs and activities (Post 1994, 38). Men and women were viewed as two separate social groups with different physical, intellectual and emotional capabilities. These differences led to the development of prescribed roles for men and women, which can be located within the private or public domain. The private domain, to which many women were limited, suggested a domestic life at home, as a wife and mother with little chance of entering fully into the world of work, which was dominated by men (Post 1994, 36). These social constraints hindered women's participation and success in the creative sphere, making them "handicapped", as described by Chaminade:

> I do not believe that the few women who have achieved greatness in creative work are the exception, but I think that life has been hard on women; it has not given them opportunity; it has not made them convincing … Woman has not been considered a working force in the world and the work that her sex and conditions impose upon her has not been so adjusted as to give her a little fuller scope for the development of her best self. She has been handicapped, and only the few, through force of circumstances or inherent strength, have been able to get the better of that handicap (Citron 1988, 24).

Ironically, part of a woman's duties within the home, especially for a young woman in the nineteenth century, involved playing the piano and perhaps singing too. The piano gained reputable status during the nineteenth century – a result of its mass production following the Industrial Revolution – and, for middle class families, became a necessary piece of furniture for proving social status (Todd 2004, vii). The piano not only symbolised wealth but improved the marriage prospects for young women. Leon Plantinga describes a scene from Jane Austen's *Emma,* where Emma is asked to sing and play after tea in order to impress a potential suitor (2004, 1). The piano became the tool "used by respectable ladies engaged in the art of 'husband-hunting'" (Todd 2004, vii). While the act of playing the piano became a desirable feminine skill and, according to Stendhal, "it was absolutely essential that a girl know music; otherwise one would think her quite uneducated," a woman that threatened to cross the boundary into the professional musical world became less desirable (Plantinga 2004, 2-3).

Despite the strong recommendation for Chaminade to study music at the Conservatoire, her father forbade it as it went against his views on the propriety for a young woman of her class. Chaminade's father did, however, allow her to study privately with teachers from the Conservatoire. Chaminade studied the piano with Le Couppey – who regarded her as one of his best students – and harmony, counterpoint and fugue with Augustin Savard. She also received tutelage from Antoine Marmontel from the Paris Conservatoire and was later a student of Benjamin Godard. Chaminade was fortunate in that she received a musical education almost equivalent to the standards of the Conservatoire; however, as highlighted by Citron, being denied attendance meant exclusion from musical influences and contacts. Thus, Chaminade had little opportunity to interact with other students and nurture important relationships for the future (Citron 1988, 25).

Although it became increasingly acceptable and accessible for women to embark on musical careers in the nineteenth century, the advice and support of a man was still a necessity (Reich 1991, 98). It was commonly believed that women had weaker bodies and minds to men and were, therefore, less capable. In music, this idea was extended to women being considered too emotional and unstable to be able to write or perform music (Reitsma 2014, 39). Chaminade was fortunate to have male support and, in her article for *The Etude*, she mentions three men who played significant roles in her life: Benjamin Godard, Emmanuel Chabrier and Maurice Moszkowski: "Thanks to them, I never lacked the encouragement so necessary for a beginner. They sustained and comforted me from the very beginning of that most difficult of all careers – above all for a woman – the career of a musician" (1911, 806). When a work by a female composer was successful, people questioned whether it was possible for a woman to have composed it. A magazine article in the New York based *Century Magazine* written by Rupert Hughes highlights this: "The most prominent woman composer and, on many accounts deservedly so, is Mlle. Chaminade. Many musical people who were familiar with the compositions of 'C. Chaminade' have been surprised to learn that music of such ability belongs to a woman" (Citron 1988, 157).

For most women, attempting to break the societal expectations seemed too massive a task and most would give in, "worn down by her society's ability to silence her, succumbing to her own self-doubts" (Beer 2016, 2). Clara Schumann, despite achieving renown for her compositions and virtuoso performances, suffered greatly from self-doubt and inhibition due to the social attitude toward female composers in the nineteenth century, as well as being in

the shadow of her famous husband, Robert Schumann (Reich 2004, 140). Women of the nineteenth century were expected to support their husband's musical work rather than embark on a musical career themselves (Reitsma 2014, 39). Alma Mahler, for example, who was a talented composer herself, was forced by her husband, Gustav Mahler, to give up all notions of being a composer. He wrote to her before their wedding:

> How do you envision such a marriage between two composers? … You must become the person I need if we are to be happy together, my wife and not my colleague – that is for certain! … Do you feel this would be an upheaval in your life, and do you think you would have to do without an indispensable high point of existence if you were to give up your music completely to possess mine and be mine as well? (Hilmes 2015, 42).

Fanny Hensel, sister of Felix Mendelssohn, suffered, too, at the hands of men. She received equal musical training to her brother but was forbidden by her father to perform for money or have her compositions published. Mendelssohn supported his father in the opinion that women, particularly of their class, did not belong in the professional world and should rather attend to their responsibilities as a mother and wife (Reich 1991, 104). Fanny Hensel and Clara Schumann may have achieved significance in nineteenth-century German music; however, their fame only came posthumously and was due more to their relationships with Mendelssohn and Schumann respectively (Kimber 2004, 316-317).

While Chaminade preferred the comfort of her own home, she defied many of the expectations that women should lead a life of domesticity and her active touring and performing life shows this. Chaminade avoided marriage for much of her life and when she did eventually marry music publisher, Louis-Mathieu Carbonel, in 1901, she perhaps unwittingly mirrored Mahler in prescribing strict marriage conditions. According to Antoinette Lorel, Chaminade's niece, the marriage was to be completely platonic and they were to live separately, Chaminade in Paris and Carbonel in Marseille (Citron 1988, 13-14). Carbonel accompanied Chaminade on tours but the marriage was short-lived as he died from a lung disease in 1907. Even with these strict marriage terms, Chaminade's family believed her creative work suffered during the years of her marriage (Citron 1988, 14). Chaminade wrote shortly after becoming a widow: "Marriage must adapt itself to one's career … If the woman is the artist it upsets the standards, the conventions, the usual arrangements, and usually it ruins the woman's art … Though I have been married, I feel that it is difficult to

reconcile the domestic life with the artistic" (Citron 1988, 14). This statement, again, shows Chaminade's resistance to a life of domesticity, clashing as it did with her artistic ambitions.

Chaminade lived at a time when Paris was rapidly becoming the musical capital of the world due to its vibrant artistic culture. Paris attracted many foreign composers who, to a large extent, became the leading musical forces in France. Despite there being a rich culture of orchestral and chamber music societies in Paris such as the Quatuor Lamoureux (1860) and the Société de Musique Jacoby-Vuillaume (1864) during the nineteenth century, with opera as the dominant musical form in Paris commanded by German and Italian composers, the musical climate in Paris was not favourable to young French composers or French instrumental music until the 1870s (Jones 2016, 55). These societies were largely influenced by Viennese classics and mostly performed music by leading nineteenth-century German composers such as Mendelssohn, Schumann, Liszt and Wagner. French composers struggled to rise above the prevalent attitude that instrumental music was German territory (Jones 2016, 55). The end of the Franco-Prussian War in January 1871 marked a significant change in France, and the need for the resurgence and advancement of French nationalism became paramount. Composers of serious instrumental music starting emerging and young French composers had increased chances of their instrumental works being performed (Jones 2016, 55).

Shortly after France's surrender, Camille Saint-Saëns and Romaine Bussine, with a group of young French musicians, formed the Société Nationale de Musique with the sole purpose of promoting and reviving French music and moving away from the strong influences of German music (Brody 1988, 17). Frustrated by their constant rejection and the pull German music had had on French audiences for so long, the Société worked at placing French music above German music in the concert halls. Membership was restricted to French citizens and concert programmes featured only French music (Jones 2016, 55). Hector Berlioz, as described by Elaine Brody, was, with his unequivocally French style, one of the greatest French musicians of the nineteenth century (1988, 1). However, the height of Berlioz's career clashed with the German musical domination in France and the value of his work went largely unnoticed until after his death in 1869 when the spirit of French nationalism was renewed (Donnellon 2006, 1). Berlioz's contribution to French music was pivotal in establishing the Romantic movement in France, as well as paving the way for the revival of French music. He moved beyond the restraints of classicism and created room for

imagination in music (Brody 1988, 5). With the efforts of the Société to revive French nationalism, Berlioz was rediscovered and became the idol of French Romantic music (Brody 1988, 20).

Saint-Saëns and Charles Gounod, following the foundations set by Berlioz, cultivated a style of music that, while owing much to the German Romantic and Classical schools as well as the Italian school, could be identified as unquestionably French (Cooper 1951, 17). Chaminade affiliated herself with these nationalist composers and her musical style was unreservedly both Romantic and rooted in French tradition throughout her career. In describing her own style, Chaminade wrote, "I am essentially of the Romantic school, as all my work shows" (Citron 1988, 21). A review on Chaminade from *The Manchester Courier* stated that, "All her work is eminently French in its grace, in its piquancy, in its display of good taste …" (Citron 1988, 152). French music in the late 1850s and early 1860s, as described by Saint-Saëns, idolised melody that was vocally and symphonically rich: "The tune which could be picked up at once and easily remembered" (Cooper 1951, 9). This idolisation of melody dates back to the troubadors, whose songs "fed the French love of melody for more than seven centuries". The troubadors established a vocal tradition, which favoured simple form and structure, vocally rich melody and themes of love, pastorality and heroism, which survived well into the nineteenth century (Resick 2017, 1). Chaminade's most typical stylistic characteristics include melodies that are appealing, memorable and tuneful, with regular phrase structure, and the use of functional tonality and ternary form. Her music embodies the French style with its detachment from any philosophical connections and it appealed largely to the French public in its expressions of nostalgia, a feature that was central to Chaminade's work and which, Citron believes, resonated with the middle classes (2008).

According to Brody, French music calls for a text or an action in order to be able to show its true French spirit (1988, 259). French literature could easily be translated into music and served as a prominent inspiration for composers. Chaminade, unlike some composers who favoured specific writers, sought inspiration from a range of poets, both recognised and unknown. Texts by poets Charles Fuster, Edouard Guinand and Armand Silvestre were most popular for Chaminade, however, she also used the poetry of Charles de Bussy, Pierre Reyniel and Rovery Myriel, among others (Magner 2001, 24). On the gender front, many of Chaminade's favoured poets were women and she often selected texts that were told from a

female perspective (Magner 2001, 24). Additionally, many of Chaminade's titles appeared as feminised versions of typically masculine names: from *Pierrot* to *Pierriette*, for example (Jerrould 1988, 46). Chaminade was most inspired by Romantic and emotional poetry and charmed by the exoticism of foreign lands. Many of her songs and piano pieces sport titles suggestive of distant locales, including Spain, Hungary and Italy, such as *Chanson Espagnole* or *Chanson d'Orient,* for example (Magner 2001, 25). It became commonplace in the late nineteenth century for composers to weave Spanish idioms into their works. Chaminade's Spanish-influenced pieces are likened to those of Moszkowski but, on the whole, Chaminade's works are defined by their French qualities of elegance, charm and wit (Jerrould 1988, 46). Stylistically, Chaminade's music bears most resemblance to Godard and Saint-Saëns (Jerrould 1988, 46). Mendelssohn features in Chaminade's use of his "songs without words" tradition in *Romances sans paroles, op. 76*, and her music is often seen as resembling the style of Frédéric Chopin as will be discussed in chapter four, although Chaminade falls short in a comparison made by George Lowe in *The Musical Standard*:

> Her music also shows traces of the influence of Chopin … But Mlle. Chaminade has not the genius of Chopin … It is just 'salon' music, but salon music of the most refined and pleasing kind. There is also a particularly feminine element about it just as there was about the music of Chopin (Citron 1988, 185).

Sonata, op.21 and *Concertstück* are Chaminade's only German-influenced works which present Wagnerian characteristics and, as speculated by Citron, were possibly partly influenced by Moszkowski too (Citron 1988, 22). Chaminade wrote in Baroque or Renaissance forms such as the gavotte and minuet and much of her work takes inspiration from dance, with balletic influences and waltzes being the most common (Jerrould 1988, 46).

The salon played a pivotal role in Chaminade's life, with her musical fascination being nurtured in this context. Chaminade's parents hosted salon gatherings regularly at Le Vésinet and Chaminade gave her first performance in this environment at the age of eighteen in 1875. She played a Mozart violin sonata with her friend, Martin Marsick, and received a notable review by a critic from the *Assemblé Nationale*: "If my admiration was great for the magnificent skill of the master, it was no less so for this child … so brilliantly and truly talented" (Citron 1988, 111). Chaminade made her professional debut at the Salle Pleyel in Paris two years later to positive reviews and her career as a performer began to gain momentum. The Salle Pleyel was an intimate concert hall opened by piano manufacturer,

Ignace Pleyel, with the intent of showcasing his instruments. It seated a few hundred people and was a rather grand room with chandeliers, high curtains and ornate walls. The Salle Pleyel, although not the largest or most prestigious venue, was a very laudable one in which to perform. It was also the meeting space for the Société Nationale de Musique. Saint-Saëns made his professional debut at the Salle Pleyel and many distinguished composers performed there such as Claude Debussy, Franz Liszt, Frédéric Chopin and Artur Rubinstein. The Salle Pleyel today is completely different to how it was in Chaminade's day, seating over 2000 people and showcasing popular music exclusively. Following negotiations, from 2016 it lost its function as a classical music venue to the Philharmonie de Paris concert hall (Salle Pleyel 2019).

In 1878, Chaminade gave a salon performance under the auspices of her professor, Le Couppey, consisting entirely of her compositions. This performance marked the beginning of her emergence as a composer and became the archetype for the concerts she gave for the rest of her career in which she only performed her own works (Citron 1988, 4). This is not particularly unique to Chaminade as many composers of that time would have been the strongest advocates of their own work.

For Chaminade, composing came easily and, as a child, it was merely a game:

> My cat and my dogs, like everything else, were merely an excuse for a musical parade. My dolls danced the pavan, I dedicated slumber-songs to my dogs, and for my cat, whose ways were mysterious and unaccountable, I would compose a nocturne, or a *serenade lunaire* – a moonlight serenade (Chaminade 1911, 805).

According to Chaminade's niece, Antoinette, *Pastoral enfantine* is Chaminade's earliest composition, written when she was seven years old (Citron 1988, 4). Chaminade drew inspiration from beauty and nature (Magner 2001, 25). Her workroom in Le Vésinet, or "laboratory" as she called it, was positioned on the upper floor of the house, with large windows that overlooked the tops of an expanse of trees (Stephens 1899). It was a bright and highly decorated room, adorned with flowers, books, ornaments and photos of her friends. For Chaminade, it was her sanctuary: quiet, close to nature and away from the noise of the city.

Chaminade's love for decoration and flowers extended to the covers of her works. Most of her pieces were published with elaborate cover art of varying designs including art nouveau swirls, flowery borders, drawings of mothers and children or women looking out to sea, people dancing and playing music, or nature-inspired sketches. Some works were decorated with a detailed border surrounding a photograph of Chaminade leaning over the piano, resting one hand on the keys with a pensive and distant expression (Magner 2001, 27). It is unknown how much of a say Chaminade had in the designing of her covers or whether this was purely controlled by her publisher, Enoch, since many of his publications have artistic covers, although Chaminade's covers were the most elaborate.

Chaminade's output of published works, amounting to over 450, is impressive for a woman composer in the nineteenth century particularly since many publishers were reluctant to publish works written by women in case they were not financially viable (Reitsma 2014, 56). What is perhaps even more astonishing is that Chaminade had multiple publishers across her career. Publishers included Hamelle, Teller, Ricordi and Hachette, to name a few; however, from 1885 Chaminade's works were almost exclusively published by the Enochs. Enoch & Cie was founded in 1853 by Carl Enoch who was originally a salesman. Chaminade's first piece to be published by Enoch & Cie was *Studio, op. 66* in 1878. Enoch's eldest son, Wilhelm, succeeded him in the 1880s. The business was liquidated during the Second World War but was restored in 1944. A statement made by Chaminade to Ward Stephens that Enoch took care of all her affairs suggests that he also took on the role as her manager (1899). Although Chaminade and Enoch maintained a long relationship, her family believed the terms to be unfavourable. According to a contract valid from 1909 for two consecutive five-year periods, Chaminade was expected to submit 12 compositions for publication a year, for which she was paid 500 francs each, and to perform in at least two concerts organised by Enoch (Crawshaw 2015, 5). As claimed by Citron, similar terms appeared in a contract valid from 1920, with the same demand of 12 pieces and two concert appearances a year, as well as an agreement that Enoch would be her sole publisher (1988, 18).

Chaminade's oeuvre is dominated by smaller forms and genres, mostly songs and solo piano works, and her music was consequently relegated to the category of salon music. Despite her reputation as a *saloniste*, Chaminade did not entirely ignore larger genres. In 1881, her four-movement symphony, *Suite d'orchestre, op. 20* was performed in a programme of the Société Nationale de Musique and received mixed reviews. Despite this, in later performances, it was

praised for its melody and orchestration. A review that appeared in *Le Monde Artiste* sheds light on the unexpectedness of such talent for orchestration being displayed by a woman:

> Seduced by the originality that characterises a part of the work and struck by the breadth of the Chorale that occurs last, the public did not skimp in its applause. How many in the audience were far from realising that this symphony, which reveals an uncommon talent in orchestration, was written by a young lady! (Citron 1988, 122).

Chaminade wrote one other symphony, *Les Amazones,* which premiered in Anvers in 1888 but, despite positive reviews, it was never performed again. The work was likened to Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries" and Berlioz's "Ride to the Abyss" from *The Damnation of Faust* and was praised by Charles Darcours for its allegiance to French style: "In this time of musical troubles and complications in which every new arrival strains to imitate Wagner, Mlle. Chaminade's music provides a character that is fundamentally French, faithful to its nature … This 'flight' is indeed a French 'ride'" (Citron 1988, 9).

Chaminade's venture into operatic writing faced a similar fate to *Les Amazones.* She presented her opéra comique*, La Sévillane,* at a private performance at her parent's home in Le Vésinet, directing the one-act opera from the piano. It received high acclaim but was never staged and only the overture was published. Citron surmises that Chaminade lost her confidence in operatic writing due to the unsuccessful premiere of Bizet's *Carmen,* which she took very much to heart (1988, 5-6). From opera and symphony, Chaminade moved to ballet. The job of composing the score for *Callirhoë* was originally given to Benjamin Godard; however, he passed it on to Chaminade. *Callirhoë* is based on Chariton's ancient Greek novel and it premiered in Marseille, much to the pride of local journalists. It was hugely popular and saw roughly 200 performances between 1888 and 1910 and then seems not to have been performed again. According to Jeremy Nicholas in a *Gramophone* review, the complete score of *Callirhoë* had not been heard until 2017 when the BBC Concert Orchestra recorded it with *Dutton Epoch* (2017). The success of and response to Chaminade's ballet raised her beyond the label of mere "salon composer", as can be seen from two reviews. The first by R. Prégentil in *Le Soleil du Midi* (1888) states, "I will add immediately that upon leaving the theatre, one was almost murmuring the word 'masterpiece,' and we are still under the charm of this bright, brilliant music, whose powerful consideration seems to flow from the pen of an experienced master" (Citron 1988, 128), and the second from *Le Petit Provençal,* 1888, as summarised by Citron, reads:

> The reviewer discusses the city's gradually changed perception of Chaminade since her arrival a few weeks earlier—from one known only for music for dilettantes to an acknowledged grand master. The reviewer is extremely impressed by her talents: 'What charming and agreeable things in the score of *Callirhoë*—Delibes or Widor would have gladly signed his name to it, and a colorist like Massenet would not fail to render homage!' (1988, 129).

Chaminade composed only one work for piano and orchestra, *Concertstück*, and its success proved to be one of her greatest triumphs. Chaminade performed the work in Paris in 1889 and in her view, "It was the beginning of my public career. My reputation had commenced" (Citron 1988, 7). The *Concertstück* was performed many times across France and even made its way to Europe and the United States – it was performed in Geneva in 1894 and in Chicago and Philadelphia in 1896 and 1919 respectively. Reviews ranged from favourable to highly critical. Positive reviews described it as "a work of value", "a work that is interesting, serious, and brief, with a well-conceived structure", and a work that has the feeling of "grace and charming delicacy". Chaminade, in these reviews, was described as having "nothing else to learn" and being an "absolute master of this very important aspect of her art" (Citron 1988, 136-137). The negative reviews, however, were disparaging and severe: "Concertstück evinces vigor and artistic quality … although the passages for piano seemed ornamental rather than essential. The distinguished woman composer lacks both the physical power and the technique necessary to produce large musical effects in a huge auditorium like that of the Academy" (Citron 1988, 171). Chaminade's *Concertstück* is proof that she was capable of writing more robust works; however, this quality in female composers was viewed as being inappropriate or misplaced. Women composers were placed in a hopeless position; music that displayed feminine traits meant creative deficiency or inferiority, but a woman who displayed masculine traits in her music was seen to be "overstepping the boundary between her own territory and that prescribed for men" (Citron 1988, 23).

The death of Chaminade's father, Hippolyte, in 1887 marked a significant change in her life and career as a composer. Hippolyte left the family with numerous debts, placing huge financial pressure on Chaminade, which effectively changed the course of her creative output. With the high risk of failure in larger works, particularly for women, Chaminade retreated after 1890 into the commercial safety of salon music and wrote piano pieces and songs almost exclusively. Chaminade did not limit her compositional ventures to fit within the limitations prescribed for female composers but was forced to make a financial decision; she knew her strengths and worked to the demands of the music market. One review from

The Etude points to this: “She knew her limitations and never tried to waste her ability upon works of large dimensions” (Citron 1988, 196). The only larger work published after 1890 was the *Concertino for Flute and Orchestra, op. 107*. It is interesting to note that the Concertino was the only piece Chaminade was commissioned to write for the Paris Conservatoire. It is one of the few surviving, well-known pieces of Chaminade’s in the musical canon today and is part of the standard repertory for flautists.

Chaminade led a full concert life in Europe, performing frequently in Germany, Austria, Belgium and Switzerland. She also travelled to Eastern Europe, giving concerts in Poland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece and Turkey (Citron 1988, 12). Her music was most popular, however, in England and America. Chaminade’s trips to England occurred almost annually between 1892 and 1924, with expected gaps during the wartime years. Chaminade was received enthusiastically by the British public, quite different to the more muted response in her home country. She performed in front of Queen Victoria – who became an avid fan – many times. According to Ward Stephens, whenever Chaminade performed at Queen’s Hall, which seats around two thousand people, guests were turned away at the door (1899). There is a record of Chaminade being invited to Windsor Castle (Citron 1988, 11), and Stephens recounts a story told by Chaminade about the arrival of a signed photograph of Queen Victoria at her home in Le Vésinet, sent as a personal gift (1899). Chaminade dedicated the song, *Reste*, to Princess Beatrice and received a Jubilee Medal shortly after Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee in 1897. To add to the extent of her status and achievement at the time, Chaminade’s Organ Prelude, op. 78 was played at Queen Victoria’s funeral in 1901 (Citron 1988, 11).

Reviews from Chaminade’s first tour in England were full of praise and her piano pieces and songs were immensely popular; however, by 1895 and especially 1897, the responses from critics became increasingly condemning. She was criticised for sounding commercial rather than artistic and for displaying no signs of development: “Each year the forms in which the songs are cast seem fewer and more conventional, and the same tendency may be noticed in the direction of self-repetition which so regrettably marks the work of some popular painters” (Citron 1988, 159).

In America, fascination and interest in Chaminade and her music grew to the extent that she quickly achieved celebrity status. Music sales were high, and she featured repeatedly in

popular American magazines and newspapers. Some of these include *Century Magazine, The Etude* and *The Ladies Home Journal,* as well as the *Boston Evening Transcript* and *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle.* Chaminade was reportedly invited to tour America in the late 1890s, but she declined these invitations continuously until 1908. The weak state of her mother, Chaminade's closest companion, as well as the dread of the journey across the Atlantic contributed to her not wanting to travel to America. Before Chaminade finally arrived in 1908, appreciation for her was already widespread, endorsed by the Chaminade clubs that developed towards the end of the nineteenth century. These clubs for amateur musicians, mostly women, emerged out of admiration and respect for her and they appeared across the States reaching a number close to 200. Music performed at these clubs was not limited to that of Chaminade, but she served as a role model and inspiration to women, a figure to whom they could aspire. Here was a woman who had successfully broken from the reins of a gender-biased society, pursuing a professional career and choosing a life without the pressures of domestic duty. While women today have many more musical opportunities than women during Chaminade's time and are not expected to lead exclusively domestic lives, Macarthur et al. recognise that equality between men and women in music has still not been attained (2017, 5). Contemporary female musicians feel the lack of female teachers and role models and stress the importance of support from and to female composers and musicians (Macarthur et al. 2017, 20). The existence of the Chaminade clubs and the adoration of American fans proved the necessity for female role models, a gap which Chaminade filled.

Preceding Chaminade's arrival in America, the journal *Musical America* announced, "No European celebrity has been more sought after by American impresarii than Chaminade" (Citron 1988, 164). Chaminade's tour in 1908 was sponsored by the John Church Company and she performed in twelve cities across two months, ending her tour with a visit to the White House where she met President Theodore and Mrs Roosevelt.

24 October	New York	Carnegie Hall
29 October	Brooklyn	Academy of Music
6-7 November	Philadelphia	Academy of Music
9 November	Louisville	Macauley's
12 November	Cincinnati	Grand Opera House
16 November	Milwaukee	Pabst Theater
17 November	Minneapolis	Auditorium
22 November	Chicago	Orchestra Hall
24 November	St. Louis	Odeon
3 December	Indianapolis	English Opera House

8 December	Washington	New National Theater
9 December	Philadelphia	Academy of Music
12 December	Boston	Symphony Hall
15 December	New York	Carnegie Hall

Table 1: Chaminade's concert itinerary in America. Information acquired from Citron (1988, 16)

As expected, the concert programmes comprised only Chaminade's compositions in a mixture of piano pieces and songs. The songs were sung by singers, Yvonne de St. André and Ernest Groom, who toured with Chaminade to America. The concerts were extremely popular and mostly completely sold out. According to a report in the *Musical Courier* about Chaminade's first concert at Carnegie Hall, which made $5000 dollars before tax, "Not in a dozen years has there been such a profitable concert event in New York" (Citron 1988, 17). However, despite the magnitude of Chaminade's popularity in America and the enthusiastic response from audiences, her concert reviews were mostly negative and many of the comments attacked both her playing and composition skills: "The concert yesterday disclosed no element of depth of inspiration but had features certain to interest those who look upon music as an after-dinner recreation of the salon. Perhaps the piano compositions would have made a firmer impression if they had been well played …" (Citron 1988, 168). One review from the New York *Evening Post* was particularly critical with a biting tone and a strong gender bias:

> Mme. Chaminade's music is salon music. It has a certain feminine daintiness and grace, but it is amazingly superficial and wanting in variety … But on the whole this concert confirmed the conviction held by many that while women may someday vote, they will never learn to compose anything worthwhile. All of them seem superficial when they write music … Mme. Chaminade is even more superficial in her playing than in her compositions (Citron 1988, 168-169).

Some reviews suggest that the social interest in Chaminade's visit almost outweighed the musical interest and claim that audiences flocked to her concerts more out of the desire to see her as a musical celebrity than for the talent or quality of her work. The appeal, as stated in an article in the *Cincinnati Post,* was to "hear the only world-famous woman interpret her own compositions" (Citron 1988, 173).

Chaminade obtained an impressive selection of awards across her career, the most distinguished being the Chevalier of the Légion d'honneur, bestowed upon her by the French government in 1913. The Legion of Honour is the most eminent French order of merit,

awarded in recognition of military and civil excellence, established in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte, and Chaminade was the first female composer to receive this title. The painter, Théophile Poilpot, handed her ribbon to her and gave the following tribute: "You are universally famous. In France, you are adored, and, beyond the seas, you are also adored, for your poetry, for the charm of your music, for your considerable musical output …" (Citron 1988, 187). Two earlier French awards received by Chaminade were the Officier de L'Academie (1886 or 1887) and Officier de L'Instruction Publique (1892). These awards attest to her fame and popularity in France, putting into question Richard Smith's view that France did not fully grant her the acclaim she merited (1994, 740). Recognition from other countries included the Jubilee Medal already mentioned from Queen Victoria, the Chefekat from the Sultan of Constantinople, the Order of St. John the Lateran from the Pope and honorary membership in the Philharmonic Society of Barcelona.

Many considered Chaminade "the greatest woman composer in the history of music", or "one of the few successful woman composers of her era"; however, she underwent much criticism and outlived the popularity of her music. As one obituary pointed out, "Her songs and piano pieces, written in salon style, were popular a third of a century ago" (Citron 1988, 195). Nevertheless, Chaminade's success and musical impact is clear from the popularity and adulation she received across America and Europe. One obituary on Radio Monte Carlo paid homage to her legacy: "Farewell Cécile Chaminade, your name will become the symbol of talent, of duty, of kindness; and know that your works will sing forever in our hearts" (Citron 1988, 194). As emerges from discussion further in this study, Chaminade's music is increasingly finding a place in the repertoire of today.

Chapter 3: The Musical Milieu of Chaminade

This chapter explores a selection of French composers whose lives overlapped with Chaminade's across the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The period of examination extends from 1835, when Camille Saint-Saëns was born, to 1944 when Chaminade died, during which period Augusta Holmès, Benjamin Godard, Claude Debussy and Lili Boulanger also lived. These composers mixed in some of the same artistic circles, influenced or diverged from each other's styles and supported or criticised one another. The aim of this chapter is not only to contextualise some of Chaminade's musical contemporaries, but to shed light on the stylistic progression across the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in France, from Saint-Saëns' style, which preceded and influenced Chaminade's, to Debussy's more avant-garde style, which she abhorred and actively resisted. Chaminade lived the longest amongst these composers and, therefore, had the most opportunity to develop her personal style and adapt to progressive musical trends, an opportunity she chose not to take.

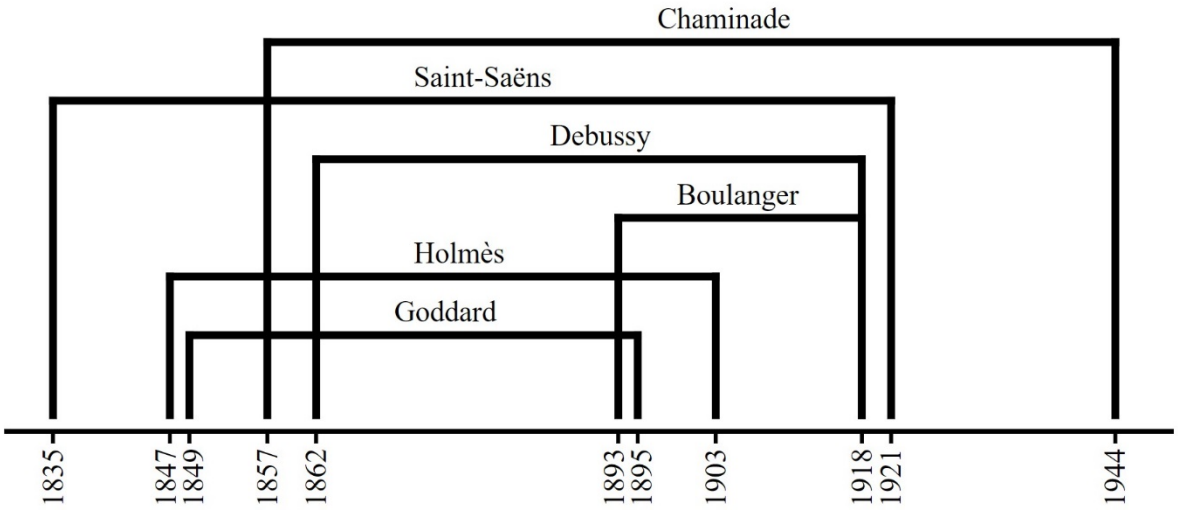


Figure 1: The overlapping of composers' lives

Chaminade's musical upbringing was fostered in the aesthetic of the 1860s and 1870s, during which time Gounod and Saint-Saëns were two of the leading French composers. Gounod and Saint-Saëns had different stylistic approaches, which led to the establishment of two musical traditions (Cooper 1951, 18). Although many French composers displayed influences from both traditions, it can be said that most composers across the nineteenth century leaned more towards one tradition than the other (Cooper 1951, 18). Chaminade falls more under the tradition of Saint-Saëns; however, she admired both composers, Gounod for his "passion for expressiveness and preoccupation with orchestral colour" and Saint-Saëns for his "classical

purity and linear design" (McCann 2003, 14). From the time of the beginning of World War I in 1914, Chaminade's style, along with that of Saint-Saëns and Godard, was considered out of date (Citron 1988, 25).

While these six composers were contemporaries, they did not all know each other. Salons, being an integral part of Parisian cultural life during the nineteenth century, provided an ideal meeting-ground for musicians and access to other composers, although some artistic circles were quite exclusive. Chaminade, in general, did not socialise much and preferred to stay in Le Vésinet away from the main city. While she performed at and hosted salons, she appeared not to have attended many (Citron 1988, 19). Apart from Godard who was one of Chaminade's teachers, there are no records of her ever meeting or socialising with Holmès, Debussy or Boulanger. Robin Smith, in her doctoral dissertation, claims that Saint-Saëns, among other composers such as Gounod, Jules Massenet and Bizet, attended the salons hosted at Chaminade's home in Le Vesinét (2012, 5), which would mean that Saint-Saëns and Chaminade must have met on at least one occasion.

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)

Saint-Saëns was dubbed the "Patriarch of French Music" during the nineteenth century (Rees 2012). The years leading up to the Franco-Prussian War in 1870 saw the loss of many of the great French Romantics of the time, with painter Eugène Delacroix dying in 1863, poet Charles Baudelaire in 1867, and composers Berlioz and Daniel Auber in 1869 and 1871 respectively (Cooper 1951, 8). As stated in chapter two, due to his founding of the Société Nationale de Musique, Saint-Saëns began to emerge as one of the most prominent French composers. His main goal was to revive support of French music and discourage French people from their hero-worship of Wagner. Interestingly, Saint-Saëns had initially admired the music of Wagner and advocated his works, along with those of other German composers such as Felix Mendelssohn and Robert Schumann. However, this changed when German music began to overshadow the contributions and works of French composers (Brody 1988, 288). Saint-Saëns became a musical leader to which younger French composers could aspire, and his musical style established an aesthetic from which his successors, including Godard and Chaminade, emerged.

Saint-Saëns was born in Paris and displayed gifted musical talents from before the age of three (Rees 2012). He gave his professional debut at the Salle Pleyel at the age of ten and

later studied organ, composition and orchestration at the Conservatoire. Saint-Saëns has an impressive number of compositions to his name. Unlike Chaminade who largely limited herself to songs and piano pieces, Saint-Saëns composed in every nineteenth-century musical genre (Fallon 2001). Many of the works of Saint-Saëns sit amongst other Romantic masterpieces. Despite the typically French character of his music, the French did not, however, afford him the credit he would have desired. Saint-Saëns composed music very easily and quickly and the French often missed the quality of music they expected of him. They felt he "composed too readily and demonstrated too much talent with too little effort" (Brody 1988, 287). Debussy believed that "[Saint-Saëns] lost the respect of all those young people who counted ardently on him to open new paths", and French critic, Pierre Lalo, said of him:

> If he is truly the descendant of the Great Masters he is not, however, their equal, and above all not that of a Mozart. Craft and technique have taken too great a place with him: there was lacking to him that which makes the genius of Mozart, the 'shining forth' of the idea, the ardour and beauty of emotion. His melodic ideas are ordinarily neither very personal, very prominent, nor very significant, and emotion is rare in his elegant and brilliant music; he always appears to attach less importance to what is said than the manner of saying it (Rees 2012).

Qualities of logic, clarity of form and precision are inherent in Saint-Saëns' style, making him "the musician of tradition" according to Debussy (Fallon 2001). Saint-Saëns developed an early passion for Mozart and Beethoven, which nurtured his admiration of classical forms and ideals, and his most successful works are those that use traditional Viennese models such as the sonata, symphony, concerto and chamber forms (Fallon 2001). While his style is unequivocally French, Saint-Saëns was largely influenced by the German school of music and particularly the music of Schumann, Mendelssohn and Liszt (Cooper 1951, 17). Criticism towards Saint-Saëns highlighted the lack of any evolution in his music and he was considered a musician of amalgamation and adaptation rather than a pioneer of new and original musical ideas (Fallon 2001). Similar criticism was directed at Chaminade, particularly in the latter part of her career when the musical idiom in France had changed. She stayed within the confines of familiarity and was not a composer of innovation, therefore, it was inevitable that her music would become outdated post-World War I when avant-garde music was becoming more popular. Chaminade did not at all admire the music of Debussy and found it to be full of effect and without sincerity (Citron 1988, 22). According to Citron, it was Saint-Saëns for whom Chaminade "reserve[d] her highest praise" (1988, 22). Perhaps part of Chaminade's

musical conservatism can be attributed to the fact that her greatest model, Saint-Saëns, was himself relatively conservative in his musical style.

While Saint-Saëns explored many more genres than Chaminade, their solo piano pieces, and songs particularly, bear much resemblance in form and structure, and the use of lyricism and harmonic vocabulary (McCann 2003, 63-64). The songs of Saint-Saëns are generally less nostalgic than Chaminade's and have more of a classically clean feel to them. Saint-Saëns' *L'enlèvement* (1865) and *L'attente* (1855), for example, display classical tendencies with light, homophonic accompaniments, small dynamic ranges, and melodic crispness in contrast to Chaminade's *Madrigal* (1886), for example, which is much more romantic in style with its broader range of dynamics and colour, textured accompaniment and embellished melody. Further resemblance of style can be found in Saint-Saëns' *Le carnaval des animaux* (1886), a work for two pianos and orchestra, and Chaminade's *Valse carnavalesque* (1894) for two pianos. Both works feature similarities in character and in the use of harmonic and rhythmic patterns with trill effects, tremolo and scalic runs. The high-register, open chords that appear in the first measures of Chaminade's *Valse carnavalesque* are reminiscent of the beginning of the Finale from *Le carnaval des animaux*, which features similar open chords in a repeated tremolo pattern.
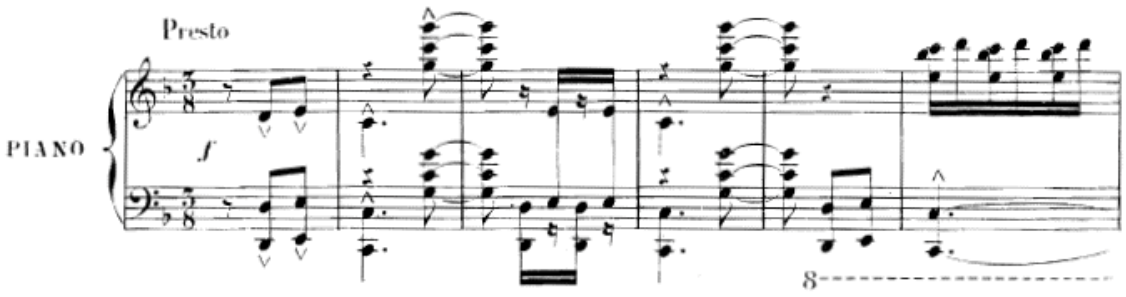


Figure 2: Open chords in mm. 2 and 4 of Valse carnavalesque (Piano 1)

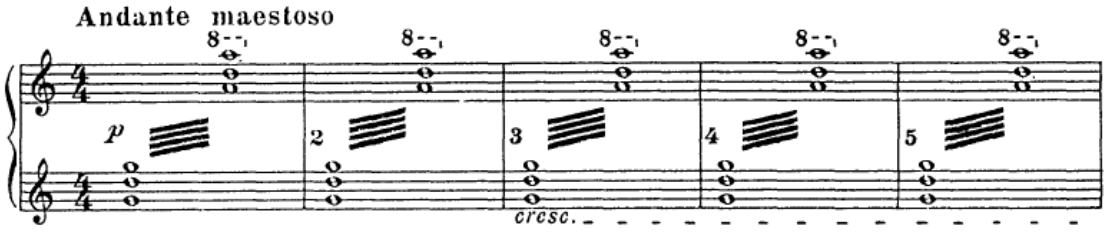


Figure 3: Open tremolo chords in mm. 1-5 of Le carnaval des animaux (Piano 1)

Later, in the second piano part of Chaminade's *Valse carnavalesque,* a four-note descending bass line features slightly differently, but with a similar effect to a descending chromatic passage in *Le carnaval des animaux.*
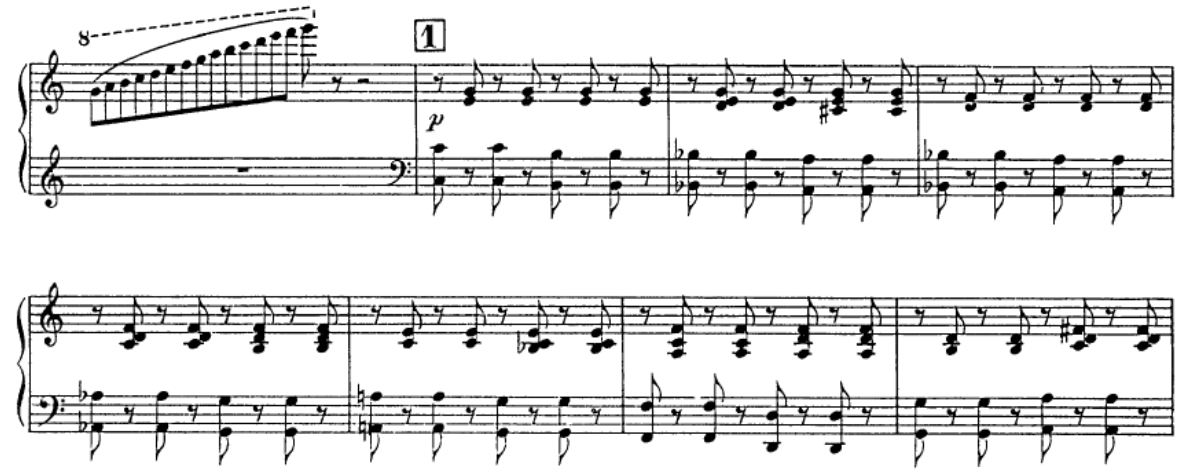


Figure 4: Descending chromatic bass line in mm. 11-17 of Le carnaval des animaux (Piano 1)
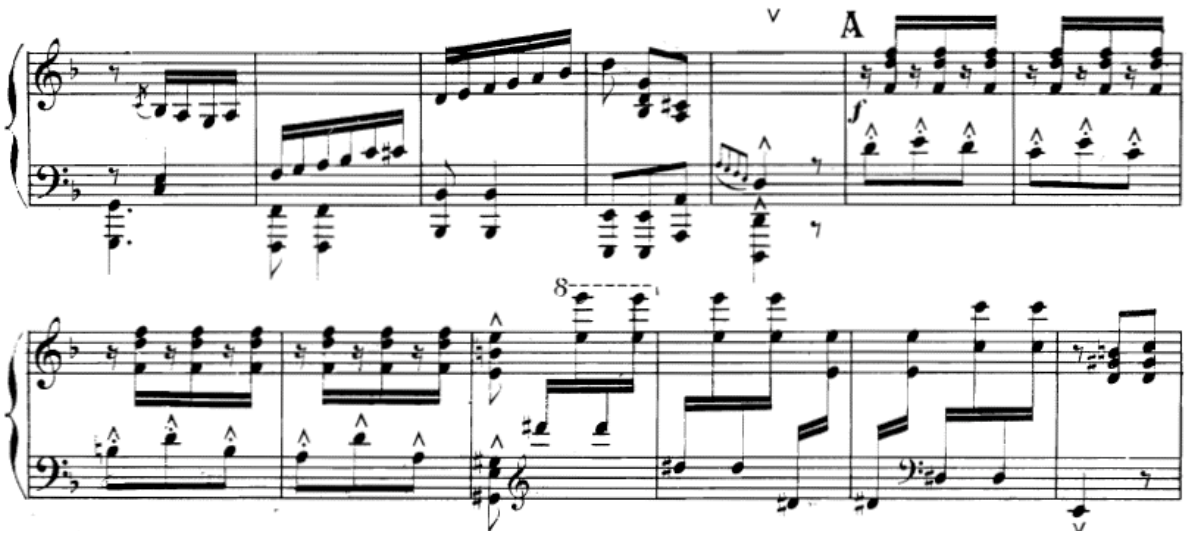


Figure 5: Descending chromatic pattern in mm. 26-29 of Valse carnavalesque (Piano 2)

Interestingly, Saint-Saëns was one of the first composers to write music for films in the early decades of the twentieth century and much of his music appeared as the accompaniment to silent films (Brody 1988, 287). Chaminade never wrote music specially for films, but much of her music was used in the repertoire of silent film accompaniment and has appeared in the soundtracks of more recent films such as "Goin' South" (1978) and "Joe Gould's Secret" (2000).

While both Chaminade and Saint-Saëns were awarded the Legion of Honour for their musical accomplishments, by the time of their deaths they had suffered a loss of popularity and recognition. Despite the criticism of Saint-Saëns, however, he is an important musical figure in the history of French music. The Minister of Education and Fine Arts said at Saint-Saëns' funeral, "In his works there breathes something of the grace, the charm, the smiling beauty of our country. And thus by music, which is an international language, Saint-Saëns was one of the great forces of light which spread and made loved the French soul by the whole world" (Rees 2012).

Augusta Holmès (1847-1903)

The lives of Chaminade and Augusta Holmès coincided in Paris for some 40 years and, for a time, they were considered the leading female composers of France (Citron 1988, 20). Their names and works occasionally appeared together in reviews and concert programmes, however, there are no records of Holmès and Chaminade ever meeting and their careers remained quite distinct. They led very different lives and, in terms of personality, could probably be described as complete opposites.

Chaminade's fame relied on her melodious, easy-listening songs and piano solos written in a light, appealing style, whereas Augusta Holmès' rested more on her beauty and strong personality than on the quality of her music. Chaminade achieved celebrity status from admiration for her musical endeavours as a woman, but Holmès' renown emerged from the impact she made on the leading musicians, poets and artists of Paris. Chaminade relied on her contract with her publisher, Enoch, for her works to enter the public domain and to ensure financial stability, whereas Holmès, with her charm and popularity, received generous sponsorship from the French government and other sources for the presentation of her larger works, even though many of them were never published (Crawshaw 2015, 5). Holmès was the darling of Parisian artistic society and was warmly welcomed at the most exclusive salons in France. Saint-Saëns is reported to have said of Holmès: "We were all in love with her – literary men, painters, musicians – any one of us would have been proud to make her his wife" (Myers 1967, 366). Typically, posthumous views of Holmès focus on her beauty, rather than her music (Citron 1991, 126). Holmès had a much more informal musical education than Chaminade, and this perhaps led to a marked difference in the quality and reception of their music. Conceivably, what connects them and, indeed, all female composers of the time, is the

fact that they had to strive to overcome the restrictions placed on them because of their gender.

Holmès was of Irish descent but was born in Paris, just ten years before Chaminade. Although neither of Holmès' parents were musical, unlike Chaminade's, she grew up in a similarly culturally rich environment, with writers, artists and musicians visiting the family home frequently, the most noteworthy being the poet, Alfred de Vigny, who was Holmès' godfather. Most young nineteenth-century women wanting to pursue music as a profession were usually discouraged by their fathers; however, in the case of Holmès, it was her mother who disapproved of her interest in music and her father who encouraged her (Citron 1991, 125). It was only after the death of her mother that Holmès was allowed to start studying music. She received a musical education quite different to that of Chaminade, studying with local musicians in Paris to begin with rather than professors from the Paris Conservatoire. She learnt the piano with Mlle. Peyronnet and Henri Lambert, the organist at the Versailles Cathedral and later studied with César Franck (Myers 1967, 371).

Despite Holmès' popularity, her music was quite severely criticised for its lack of originality and was noted more for its extravagance and quantity than for its quality and intrinsic value. Critics deemed her music old-fashioned, nevertheless, they recognised her efforts in producing such a lavish abundance of music (Myers 1967, 366). Ward Stephens commented after meeting Chaminade, "I have often heard Augusta Holmès' works compared with those of Chaminade. In truth, they are not to be compared at all; they are very different, and, while the compositions of both are interesting, Chaminade's are the more so of the two" (1899).

Contrary to Chaminade, who was strongly opposed to Wagner's music, Holmès was a devoted Wagnerite all her life, first hearing his work at the age of 13 and later becoming a strong advocate to have his works performed in the Concerts Populaires, a formidable concert series in Paris (Citron 1991, 125). Holmès knew Wagner well and visited him at his home in Tribschen in Lucerne. He once advised her not to imitate anyone in music, especially him; however, most of her contemporary critics agreed that she neglected to follow his advice (Myers 1967, 371). Many parallels can be found in the music of Holmès and Wagner. One of the most direct examples of stylistic likeness can be heard in Wagner's famous "Ride of the Valkyries" from *Die Walküre* (1856) and Holmès' *Roland furieux* (1876). While Wagner completed *Die Walküre* in 1856, its first performance was not until 1870. Both works make

use of chromaticism and similar orchestral colour, with dominant brass sections announcing strong, rhythmically catching, melodic motives, while the strings drive the music forward with rapid, galloping patterns underneath the melody.

Holmès' orchestral works reflect the dramatic intensity present in much of Wagner's musical dramas in a way that sets her music apart from Chaminade's. The dominance of brass in Holmès' music, such as in the opening of *Andromède* (1883), creates a sense of darkness and foreboding; her work is of a grander and more epic nature than Chaminade's in her emphasis on long, dramatic phrases and deep-toned instrumentation. Interestingly, one could describe Chaminade's *Concertstück* in a similar manner; however, this work was by no means typical of her.

A feature that appears in the music of Holmès and can be seen as a direct influence from Wagner's *leitmotiv,* is the creation of a sequence through the repetition of melodic motives, usually rising by step but sometimes also descending, to add to dramatic effect. Holmès' sequential patterns are generally longer than Wagner's and appear more frequently, and her reliance on this effect is perhaps what led critics to label her music as flamboyant and less inspired. Such examples can be found in Holmès' *Andromède* and *Roland furieux* (1867), as well as Wagner's *Der Fliegende Holländer* (1840) and *Tannhäuser* (1845). A more direct musical resemblance between Wagner and Holmès appears in the horn solo from *Andromède,* which, like Siegfried's horn solo from Wagner's *Siegfried* (1845), is a short, striking motive with accented notes and dotted rhythms.
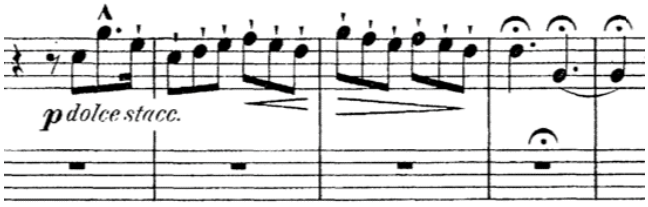


Figure 6: Siegfried's horn solo from Wagner's opera, Siegfried
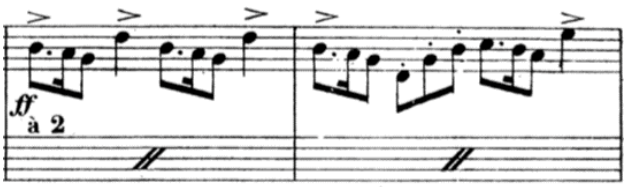


Figure 7: Horn solo from Holmès' symphonic poem, Andromède

Holmès' oeuvre is made up of cantatas, symphonic poems, operas, a few works for solo piano and over 100 songs. She largely wrote her own texts for her songs and was inspired, like Chaminade, by nature, romantic ideals and emotions (Citron 1991, 126). In Chaminade's *La lune paresseuse* (1905), for example, the text evokes images of the beauty of nature at night: "the ray of twilight", "the shining moon", "the sky with whirling stars". The mood is one of peace and tranquility and yet the lyricism of description is touched with a feeling of melancholy: "Oh! Idle one, why do you toy with my tender feelings?" Similarly, in Holmès' *En chemin* (1886), there is an ethereal quality, which emerges particularly through evocative imagery of the night: "the wonder of dreams and moonlight". Once again, the text is imbued with a sense of sadness: "O wanderer, sadly travelling through the dark night". Musically, both composers utilise broken chords in a high register to echo the etherealism, as well as simple harmonic chords to convey the stillness of the moonlight. Looking at another example, Chaminade's *Chanson Slave* (1880) and Holmès' *Noël d'Irlande* (1896) display a similarity of theme. In both texts, the characters are yearning for a better quality of life. Chaminade's protagonist looks forward in hope after coming to an acceptance of a broken relationship, while Holmès' song focuses on the Irish people looking ahead to a more hopeful future (McCann 2003, 48). The accompaniment to *Noël d'Irlande* is more dirge-like in character than in *Chanson Slave* where the intensity lies in the melody, and the accompaniment is more upbeat in comparison.

Holmès, like Chaminade, wrote only one piece for the Paris Conservatoire: *Fantaisie* for clarinet and piano (Citron 1991, 126). She wrote four operas, inspired by Wagner; however, *La montagne noire,* staged in 1895, was the only one to be performed. It was one of the few operas written by a woman to be produced at the Paris Opéra in the nineteenth century, but it was poorly received (Citron 1991, 125). Since the opera was composed some twelve years before it was performed, it was felt that its Wagnerian influences had become outdated, contributing to its lack of success (Citron 1991, 126). Chaminade's opera, *La Sévillane,* was never performed publicly and only the overture was published. Well into the twentieth century, it was expected that female composers would write only in smaller, so-called feminine genres such as songs or instrumental solos – in genres that "mirrored the Victorian image of women as pretty, delicate and undemanding" (Fuller 1994, 18). Although some women ignored this expectation, others fell prey to the widespread belief that they simply were not capable of writing in large, complex genres.

The gender rhetoric of the nineteenth century had an impact on the reception towards the music of Chaminade and Holmès; both women were praised for their creative gifts but were criticised for displaying masculine qualities in their music. Saint-Saëns, in a review of Holmès' symphonic poem, *Les Argonautes,* remarked on her "excessive virility – a frequent fault with women composers – and flamboyant orchestration in which the brass explodes like fireworks …" (Myers 1967, 371). Chaminade received similar comments about her *Concertstück:* "We are in the presence of a work that is strong and virile, too virile perhaps", and "The *Concertstück* … seemed to us to have an extreme propensity for violent sonorities … one can be energetic without putting the brass and percussion in the forefront …" (Citron 1988, 137). Théodore Massiac in *La Semaine Artistique et Musicale* compared Chaminade to Holmès, stating that between the two, Chaminade "is certainly the most feminine" (Citron 1988, 139). Here again, the problem with the way women were perceived and judged comes to the fore; when two female composers are compared, it is not necessarily about who is the better composer, but who is the more feminine, conforming more to societal expectations.

Despite their struggles as women, both achieved notable fame in their lifetimes, with Holmès achieving her status in France, and Chaminade making her name across Europe and America (Citron 1988, 179). Nevertheless, both women's musical styles quickly became outdated and they outlived their success, with their musical and creative achievements being largely marginalised and dismissed (Myers 1967, 366).

Benjamin Godard (1849-1895)

"He can conjure up visions of the past, stir up memories of forgotten days … the best that was in him was perhaps expressed in works of small caliber, songs and pianoforte pieces" (Smith 2001). These words could just as easily be a summary of Chaminade. Benjamin Godard, although not regarded as one of the top French composers, played an important part in Chaminade's life, as a teacher, mentor and friend, and their musical styles are closely linked.

Godard was a talented violinist in his youth and studied at the Paris Conservatoire. According to Richard Smith, because of his early displays of virtuosity, Godard was often compared to the young Mozart, which fueled people's expectations of him (2001). Interestingly, Bizet referred to Chaminade endearingly as his "little Mozart", although neither Chaminade nor Godard lived up to their comparisons. Despite Godard's prolific compositional ventures and

partial acclaim in opera, symphony and concerti, his success, like Chaminade's, relied on his smaller pieces for piano and songs, and he developed a reputation for "operatic triviality and salon lightness" (Smith 1994, 743).

Chaminade's compositional style, although owing much to the influence of Saint-Saëns, resembled that of Godard's too. Both anti-Wagnerians, the music of Godard and Chaminade is strongly rooted in the Romantic style, makes use of traditional harmony and echoes much of Mendelssohn's lyrical style (Smith 2001). Whilst Godard wrote many of his own texts, both he and Chaminade, like various other French composers, drew inspiration from French poetry, particularly with romantic themes. Another direct link in their styles can be seen in the reviews of critics. The word most often used to sum up Chaminade's music is "charming". English critic Arthur Hervey describes Godard's music as being "full of charm, breathing a gentle spirit of melancholy" (Smith 2001). Smith and Citron both highlight the centrality of nostalgia in Chaminade's work and, according to Cécile Tardif, after 1887 Chaminade was most successful with melancholic pieces (Smith 1994, 741). The titles of many of Chaminade's works reveal the theme of nostalgia and melancholy, suggesting a strong sense of looking back to the past, of regret, sadness and loneliness: *Autrefois No. 4*, op. 87 (In the Old Days), *Comme autrefois—le bon vieux temps* (As before—The Good Old Times)*, Contes bleus*, op. 122 (Blue Tales), *Elégie*, op. 90 (Elegy), *Mélancholie No. 1*, op. 76 (Melancholy), *Rimembranza,* op. 88 (Remembrance), *Chanson Triste* (Sad Song) and *Rêves défunts* (Dead Dreams). Many of Godard's works sport similar melancholic titles: *Réverie* (Reverie), *Au revoir* (Goodbye), *Contemplation* (Contemplation) and *Tristesse* (Sadness).

Despite the similarities in the style and reputation of Godard and Chaminade, there are some major overall differences, revealed in their oeuvres, that point to the distinction between the gendered notions surrounding male and female composers. Although Godard is not known for his symphonies and operas, he did not appear to shy away from these genres – eight operas and five symphonies is no small feat for any composer. Godard studied at the Conservatoire, a privilege denied to so many female composers and did not have to answer to the same societal expectations as women, therefore, had more freedom in his compositional ventures. It was also believed that women did not have the mental or creative capacity to write in complex genres and were largely limited to songs or solo instrumental works (Fuller 1994, 19). Despite this perception, some female composers such as Amy Beach, Dora Bright

and Ethel Smyth persevered in writing and having their large-scale works performed (Fuller 1994, 19).

Godard was a strong supporter of Chaminade and frequently featured works by her in his concert programmes. He had her *Suite d'orchestre* performed in 1885 at the Cirque d'Hiver and three of her works were presented at the 1884-1885 season of *Les Concert Modernes* (Citron 1988, 125-126). While Godard and Chaminade supported each other, they recognised reasons for the criticism that each received. Chaminade felt that Godard's personality and brusque manner affected the reception of his music:

> Benjamin Godard—who was both my friend and my teacher—was something of a mystic in appearance. He was very tall, incredibly stern, and as unyielding as a stick. Speaking little, much given to self-communion, he resembled some vague legendary spirit. Godard's stiffness and reserve earned him some enemies, who attacked his personality more than his music. Quite a number of people decried his music for reasons which had nothing to do with music (Chaminade 1911, 806).

Godard acknowledged that much of the criticism directed at Chaminade was somewhat due to the fact that she was a woman, and he wrote to her after the failure of her *Suite d'orchestre*: "had it been signed by Massenet or Saint-Saëns it would have been well received" (Smith 1994, 743). Godard and Chaminade suffered a similar fate with their oeuvres being mostly dismissed as "salon music". Nevertheless, Godard played a significant role in Chaminade's life and was a prolific composer whose contribution to French music should not be underestimated.

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Debussy was at the forefront of the avant-garde movement in French music during the late nineteenth century, although within that time of musical change, it is difficult to categorise his music. David Code surmises that any biography about Debussy will feature the "unreliable, contradictory guidance he left us about his artistic ambitions" (2010, 13). There is controversy surrounding the labelling of Debussy; he is most often termed an Impressionist; however, he considered himself much more of a Symbolist (Smith-Gonzalez 2001, 53). Although these movements share similarities in the sense that both portrayed the significance of a symbol as representation of a whole, the two terms are not interchangeable and cannot be viewed definitively (Smith-Gonzalez 2001, 53-54). Giving an account of Debussy, however, that does justice to him, is beyond the scope of his place in this

dissertation. This section of the chapter will, therefore, focus largely on Debussy's break from tradition, his influence on French music at the turn of the nineteenth century, and the impact of his style and musical development, particularly as a contrast to Chaminade whose style remained unchallenged by contemporary musical trends.

While Saint-Saëns may have been one of the most important composers in France during the years following the Franco-Prussian war because of his contribution and devotion to traditional French music, Debussy, with his harmonic innovations and modern approach to composition, became one of the most influential composers of his time (Lesure and Howat 2001). Debussy found a musical voice that deviated from the ideals of Wagner and broke away from traditional harmonic, rhythmic and structural forms. He developed new genres and presented a range of timbre and colour in his orchestral and solo piano works which contributed to the establishment of a highly original musical style (Lesure and Howat 2001). Chaminade was rather critical of Debussy's orchestral music and felt he relied too much on his orchestra for effect (Citron 1988, 22).

Taught by the likes of Massenet and Antoine Marmontel, Debussy received a traditional education at the Conservatoire where classical forms and opera, as the most pre-eminent genre, were emphasised (Code 2010, 7). Interestingly, Marmontel was also one of Chaminade's teachers. While Chaminade and Debussy may have received similar instruction from him, one that was grounded in traditional methodology focusing on counterpoint and fugue, from a young age Debussy was reluctant simply to comply with already existing formulae. He frequently challenged convention and authority and ignored pre-existing musical rules, which was often viewed as carelessness by his professors, (Jensen 2014, 15). Debussy apparently used to shock his classmates by writing unconventional harmonic progressions, which included chains of fifths and parallel octaves, and unresolved ninth, eleventh and thirteenth chords (Cooper 1951, 91). Debussy argued at the Conservatoire: "Dissonant chords – to resolve dissonant chords. How's that? Consecutive fifths and octaves forbidden – Why? Parallel motion condemned and sacrosanct *contrary motion* beatified – in whose honor?" (Briscoe 1984, 90).

Whilst some of Debussy's early works display influences of the more traditional composers such as Godard, Massenet and Saint-Saëns, he was constantly seeking inspiration outside of the restrictions of the Conservatoire (Cooper 1951, 90). Much of the development of and

influence on Debussy's musical aesthetic is owed to his frequenting of artistic and literary cafes where he was exposed to Symbolist ideas (Lesure and Howat 2001). His social circle was primarily made up of avant-garde poets and painters such as Paul Valéry, André Gide, Pierre Louÿs and Henri Lerolle (Lesure and Howat 2001). The Symbolist influence on Debussy can be seen, for example, in the texts that he wrote for his *Proses lyriques* (Lesure and Howat 2001). Debussy wrote the texts himself as he wanted to use a form of expression that was neither poetry nor prose, but rather *prose lyrique*, a "construct of sound that integrates the harmony produced by vowels with the rhythm of verse and the symbolic meaning of its words", which creates mental imagery (Dworak 2014, 3). The French language, with its rich set of vowels, lends itself well to the form of *prose lyrique.*

Des Fleurs
***Proses lyriques* No. 3, translated by Faith J. Cormier**

Dans l'ennui si désolément vert
De la serre de douleur,
Les fleurs enlacent mon coeur
De leurs tiges méchantes.
Ah! quand reviendront autour de ma tête
Les chères mains si tendrement désenlaceuses?
Les grands Iris violets
Violèrent méchamment tes yeux,
En semblant les refléter.
Eux, qui furent l'eau du songe
Où plongèrent mes rêves si doucement,
Enclos en leur couleur;
Et les lys, blancs jets d'eau de
pistils embaumés,
Ont perdu leur grâce blanche,
Et ne sont plus que pauvres malades sans
soleil!
Soleil! ami des fleurs mauvaises,
Tueur de rêves: Tueur d'illusions,
Ce pain béni des âmes misérables!
Venez! Venez! Les mains salvatrices!
Brisez les vitres de mensonge,
Brisez les vitres de maléfice,
Mon âme meurt de trop de soleil!
Mirages! Plus ne refleurira la joie de mes
yeux,
Et mes mains sont lasses de prier,
Mes yeux sont las de pleurer!
Eternellement ce bruit fou
Des pétales noirs de l'ennui,
Tombant goutte à goutte sur ma tête,
Dans le vert de la serre de douleur!

In the desolate green boredom of
Pain's hothouse,
Flowers surround my heart
With their nasty stems.
Ah! When will the dear hands return to
Delicately untangle them from round my
head?
The tall purple Iris
Cruelly violated your eyes,
By seeming to reflect them.
They were the pools of reverie into which
My dreams softly dove,
Absorbed by their colour.
And the lilies, white jets of water with
perfumed pistils,
Have lost their white grace
And are but poor invalids who do not know
the sun.
Sun! Friend of evil flowers,
Dream-killer, illusion-killer,
Holy bread of miserable souls!
Come! Come! Saving hands!
Smash the windows of lies,
Smash the windows of evil spells,
My soul is dying from too much sun!
Mirages! Joy will never flower again in my
eyes and my hands are tired of praying,
My eyes tired of crying!
In an eternal crazed noise,
The black petals of boredom
Drip constantly on my head
In pain's green hothouse!

For a time, Debussy was heavily influenced by Wagner and could find no criticism for his music. He admired Wagner's innovative style, however, over time, found himself in disagreement with Wagner's ideas surrounding musical drama and strove to develop his own individual musical ideal (Jensen 2014, 43). Debussy's friend, Maurice Emmanuel quotes him: "I am not tempted to imitate what I admire in Wagner. I conceive dramatic form differently; music begins where words are powerless to express. Music is made for the inexpressible and I should like it to seem to rise from the shadows and indeed sometimes to return to them" (Cooper 1951, 89).

Debussy's creative innovation was brought to bear on harmony, rhythm, texture and form, and his lifelong quest was "to banish blatancy of musical expression" (Lesure and Howat 2001). He explored the music of Russian composers, drawing from Alexander Borodin's use of sequential major thirds and ninths and was particularly fascinated with the theatre of Javanese gamelan and the modal languages of Asian music (Lesure and Howat 2001). Debussy studied the music of many composers in his search for a new musical voice, and his interest in Emmanuel Chabrier (Lesure and Howat 2001) is noteworthy, since Chabrier was a close friend of and a strong influence on Chaminade.

Chaminade and Debussy's approaches to music were completely different. Chaminade felt that music should be melodious and, therefore, she did not acquire any liking for the way Debussy treated melody (Smith 1994, 743). Debussy believed that music should create an illusion of improvisation and not be inhibited by traditional musical structure and form (Jensen 2014, 124). Chaminade's opinion of Debussy reveals her unwillingness to be receptive: "[H]is music is to my ears, well, gray—a bit gray. You do not grasp Debussy's music because it is wanting in significant ideas … I do not like the personality his music reveals, because it is to me insincere" (Citron 1988, 22). Interestingly, Chaminade (in 1878) and Debussy (in 1881), as well as Chausson (in 1880) and Godard (unknown), all set the poem *Les papillons* by Théophile Gautier to music. It has proved difficult to source recordings and scores of all four versions to make a comprehensive comparison; however, according to Robin Smith, Debussy and Chaminade represent the fluttering of butterfly wings through the use of rapid, arpeggiated accompaniments (Smith 2012, 84-85). Debussy's accompaniment features quick tremolo patterns and rippled ascending and descending scalic runs. He utilises the full range of the piano keyboard, unlike Chausson's accompaniment, which sits mainly in the middle register. Chaminade's accompaniment features a recurring

sixteenth-note figuration and, like Debussy, reaches the higher registers of the keyboard with quick, delicate runs. It can be surmised that at least Chaminade's, Debussy's and Chausson's versions are similar in their rhythmic representation of the butterflies. According to Robin Smith, Chaminade's differs from the others in mood as it is set in a minor key and has a more sombre and reflective feeling to it, however, the original manuscript does not reflect this statement and is, in fact, set in A-flat major (Smith 2012, 85).
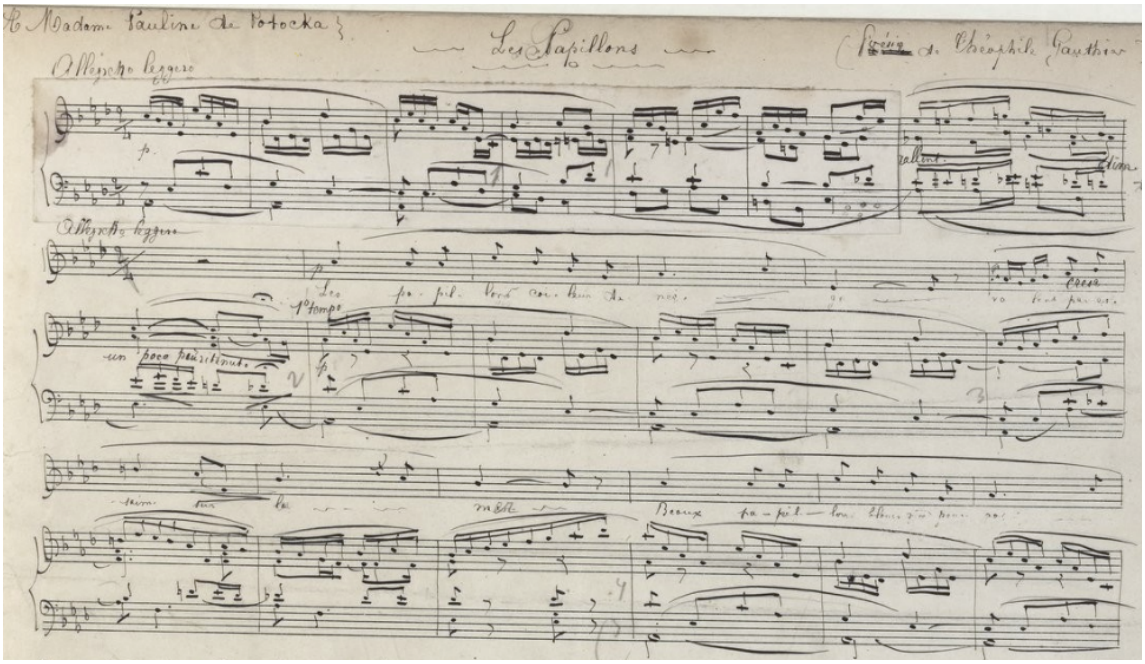


Figure 8: Original manuscript of Chaminade's Les papillons, sourced from the BnF online catalogue

In 1901, Debussy established himself as a critic, writing under the pseudonym "Monsieur Croche", supposedly his alter ego, for the *Revue Blanche.* Similarly to Wagner, it was through his writing that Debussy developed some of his more radical ideas around traditional musical genres and conventions. "Monsieur Croche" described concert audiences as hostile; he criticised Parisian musicians for being too inward-looking and he derided the Conservatoire for being too rule-bound with its emphasis on classical models (Maddocks 2018). It was in his very first article that Debussy touched on the restrictiveness he felt, presumably from his education: "Discipline must be sought in freedom, and not within the formulas of an outworn philosophy only fit for the feeble minded. Give ear to no man's counsel but listen to the wind which tells in passing the history of the world" (1901, 386). It was in the *Revue Blanche* that he expressed his criticism of Saint-Saëns' "apparent stagnation of style" (Rees 2012). In line with Chaminade's thinking, Saint-Saëns doubted Debussy's

musical integrity and did not support his idea that “music came mysteriously out of the ether” (Rees 2012).

Initially, Debussy’s music was not well-received, perhaps because audiences had not yet become accustomed to his modern style with its freeness of form, tonal ambiguity and rejection of traditional melody and rhythm. The music critic, Georges Servières, who praised the way Saint-Saëns continued the tradition of the great tonal masters and their techniques as taught at the Conservatoire, criticised Debussy for abandoning conventional principles (Dworak 2014, 7). Servières felt that rhythm, particularly when set to text, should be even and fluent, that melody should be pleasant, and that form should be easy to comprehend. Saint-Saëns himself harshly described Debussy as “the man who abandons all keys and piles up dissonances which he neither introduces nor concludes and who, as a result, grunts his way through music as a pig through a flower garden (Dworak 2014, 7). Up until 1905 with the first performance of the opera, *Pelléas*, most works by Debussy had little impact (Lesure and Howat 2001). *Pelléas* drew the attention of critics and audiences and Debussy started emerging as a significant composer. While audiences began to accept this new modern aesthetic, they still found present the qualities of grace, charm and colour, typical of French music (Cooper 1951, 94). It is interesting that, despite the divergence in the musical styles of Chaminade and Debussy, their music received the favour of the Americans, with Debussy’s music reaching the United States in the first few years of the 1900s, the same time that Chaminade was being pressured to do an American tour.

While Chaminade was still popular pre-World War I, after 1914 Debussy was well established as a leading proponent of avant-garde music, and Chaminade’s style, which seemed stuck in the “late Victorian salon” (Smith 1994, 743), began to lose its appeal. Debussy’s music, introduced by Olivier Messiaen, became a model at the Paris Conservatoire for a whole new generation of French composers and the styles of Godard, Chaminade, Holmès and Saint-Saëns, who was once a leader of French music, were considered out of date.

Lili Boulanger (1893-1918)

Lili Boulanger was born into a family who had been known in the musical world for generations. Her grandmother was an opera singer at the Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique, and her grandfather was a cellist and professor at the Paris Conservatoire. Lili’s mother had

travelled from Russia to Paris to study voice at the Conservatoire with Ernest Boulanger, whom she later married. Ernest Boulanger was an established composer and had won the Prix de Rome in composition in 1835. Both Ernest's daughters, Nadia and Lili, became accomplished composers; however, Lili fell severely ill with bronchial pneumonia at the age of two and suffered with chronic weakness and illness until her premature death at the age of 25.

Boulanger grew up in a time of musical transition and, contrary to Chaminade, her music fits more easily into what was becoming defined as a post-Romantic style. Like Debussy, Boulanger associated herself more with Symbolism than Impressionism. Her music features the sense of obscurity and indirection more common in Symbolism (Smith-Gonzalez 2001, 53-54), but she also "explored the 'Impressionists' palette of nonfunctional seventh and ninth chords, parallel chords, and modal progressions" (Citron 1991, 132). However, Boulanger typically used darker harmonies and sonorities than other Impressionist composers (Smith-Gonzalez 2001, 47). Looking at the first few measures of her song, *Dans l'immense tristesse* (In the immense sadness), there is much that contributes to the darkness and heaviness of mood: the minor key; the slow tempo, *lent*; the low register of both the piano accompaniment and the voice; the quiet dynamic, *piano*; and the word *grave* in the vocal line. Boulanger often used directions such as *grave* or "*comme à travers la brume*," (as if through a fog), as found in *Le retours*, for example, to help the performer capture the seriousness or gloom of the work (Smith-Gonzalez 2001, 82).
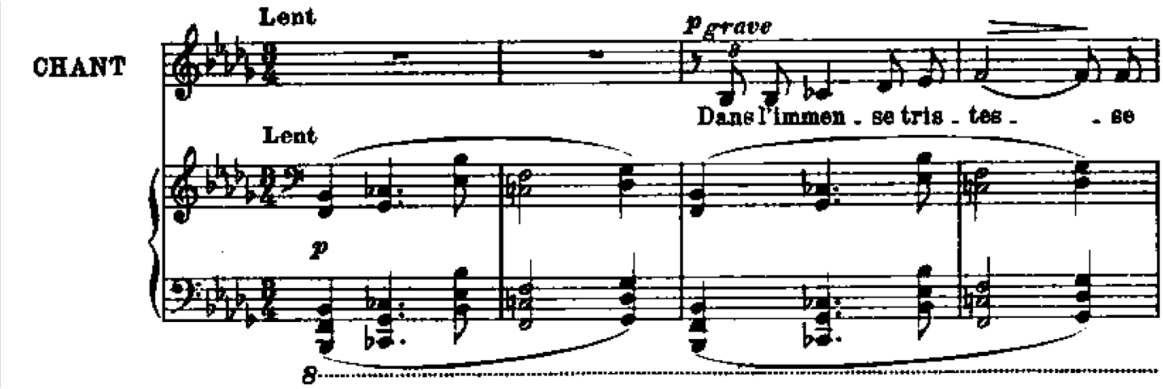


Figure 9: Dans l'immense tristesse mm. 1-4

While much of Boulanger's music reflects the feelings of isolation and alienation that were starting to emerge during the twentieth century (Citron 1991, 133), it also reveals her own struggles with depression and loneliness caused by her long-term illness. She often chose

texts that conveyed a strong sense of hopelessness and sadness, as seen in *Demain fera un an*: “Nothing more. I have nothing more, nothing to sustain me” and “I seem to feel a weeping within me, a heavy, silent sobbing, someone who is not there”. Elements of nature feature in Boulanger’s songs, much like Chaminade and Holmès; however, the romanticism of the imagery is thwarted by feelings of anguish and seclusion. This can be seen in the text of *Reflets*, for example, a song based on a poem from Symbolist poet, Maurice Maeterlinck's collection *Serres chaudes*:

Within my soul where thoughts are streaming,
There's naught but fear, there's naught but fear.
In my heart the moon, like a spear, has plunged
To the depth of my dreaming!
And in the waters around the reeds
weeping reflection there disposes
of lilies, of palms and of roses
Where the deep stillness supercedes.
And from the flowers, one by one,
the petals fall lit from above,
and descending reflect in the flood of all my
dreaming
And of the moonlight.

Boulanger’s sister, Nadia, studied at the Conservatoire, as would Lili had she not fallen severely ill. Although the Paris Conservatoire started accepting female students from 1795, even in the late nineteenth century, and as in the case of Chaminade, many women were still denied the opportunity of formal musical instruction. Boulanger occasionally attended classes with her sister but mostly received private training at home. She studied multiple instruments and was exposed to a broad range of historical musical styles (Fauser and Orledge 2001). Chaminade, who also studied privately, seems to have been firmly instructed in an “older aesthetic”, one that prioritised melody and traditional forms (McCann 2003, 19). While Chaminade’s resistance to adapt her style can be partly attributed to temperament and personality, it would not be amiss to suggest that her limited or purely traditional tutelage played a part too. Boulanger’s musical style reflects clear development, from her early “apprentice” works to her later works, which “testify to the emergence of a distinctive

musical personality and are clearly the product of a distinguished, markedly individual creative intelligence" (Palmer 1968, 227).

Although Chaminade's and Boulanger's music sits in different musical periods and styles, their shared preference for vocal forms locates their music in the French tradition. Boulanger was more adventurous in her vocal works compared to Chaminade's and wrote for voice and orchestra, or voice and brass, as in her *Psalm 24.* Their choices of text differed in themes and ideas, with Boulanger more drawn to political and social issues than fantasies of love and heroism. While the form of Boulanger's text-setting emulated the models set by Massenet, Fauré and Debussy, she was experimental in her compositions, constantly striving for harmonic and instrumental colour. Her later works, such as *Pié Jesu,* exhibit her exploration of polytonality (Fauser and Orledge 2001). Durand and Ricordi were Boulanger's main publishers, both of whom each also published four of Chaminade's works.

With Boulanger's supportive musical family and freedom to pursue music seriously, she seems to have escaped the restrictions placed on so many women in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, as with all female musicians and composers at the time, Boulanger's music was discussed in gendered terms. Her religious work, *Hymne au soleil,* was noted for its display of masculinity, supposedly at odds with Boulanger's feminine character and, thus, with societal expectations, whereas the song-cycle, *Clairières dans le ciel,* was seen as much more feminine and in line with Boulanger's temperament (Palmer 1968, 227-228). A statement by Justin Davidson in a recent article in the New York based *Vulture* magazine, underlines the paucity of female representation in the history of music: "[Their works] are not lost, hidden, or unplayable; they [are] just treated with a neglect that would be shocking if it weren't so predictable" (2019).

Interestingly, in 1913 both Chaminade and Boulanger made history, Chaminade by being the first female composer to be admitted to the Legion of Honour and Boulanger the first woman to win the Prix de Rome in composition (Citron 1991, 131).

While some of these composers are not particularly well known today, they all, despite the distinctions between their styles and circumstances, made an impact on the musical society of the time and contributed, to a greater or lesser extent, to the oeuvre of French music. All six of these composers found their own musical voices and, while some differed vastly in terms

of their musical expression, ideas and influences, their music remained rooted in French tradition, particularly seen in their exploration of vocal forms. During Chaminade's life, especially up until World War I, France boasted a rich, artistic society, to which all of these composers belonged in varying degrees. These artistic circles nurtured and inspired as well as offered support and interconnectedness between musicians, poets and artists. Holmès, for example, gained status through her strong presence in Parisian society; Debussy was inspired by the Symbolist and Impressionist artists and poets that he met; and Chaminade, although more reclusive, created her own musical circle in which to showcase new compositions.

Like Chaminade, these five composers all had their own struggles and were subjected to criticism in various forms. Saint-Saëns did not uphold his status as a French musical leader, Godard was unable to overcome his reputation for "operatic triviality", and the women were criticised for music that seemed to cross the boundary between what was considered "feminine" and "masculine". An exploration of these composers helps to contextualise Chaminade's musical style, provides understanding of her musical tastes and influences and locates her position as a composer in the French musical milieu.

Chapter 4: Musical Analysis and Interpretation

A composer with a strongly marked, attractive individuality (Moritz Moszkowski 1884, quoted in Citron 1988, 124).

Although Chaminade was criticised for the lack of change in her musical style across her lifetime, and particularly after World War I, she showed clear individual stylistic qualities in her work. This chapter explores Chaminade's compositional journey and aims to identify stylistic patterns and influences as well as the individual qualities in her music through an analysis of four piano pieces which span and represent specific points in her career: *Étude printanière* (1876), her second published work; *Automne* (1886), composed at the beginning of her rise to fame; *Solitude* (1908), composed at the beginning of her decline in popularity; and *Nocturne* (1925), one of her last compositions.

Before analysing Chaminade's style more closely, there is value in examining a timeline of her compositional years and exploring reasons for the various peaks and drops in her productivity. Chaminade's first publication by Colombier, *Deux mazurkas*, op. 1, was in 1869 at the age of eight years old; however, it was only really from 1876 that she started composing more seriously and from 1883 that she had works published every year.

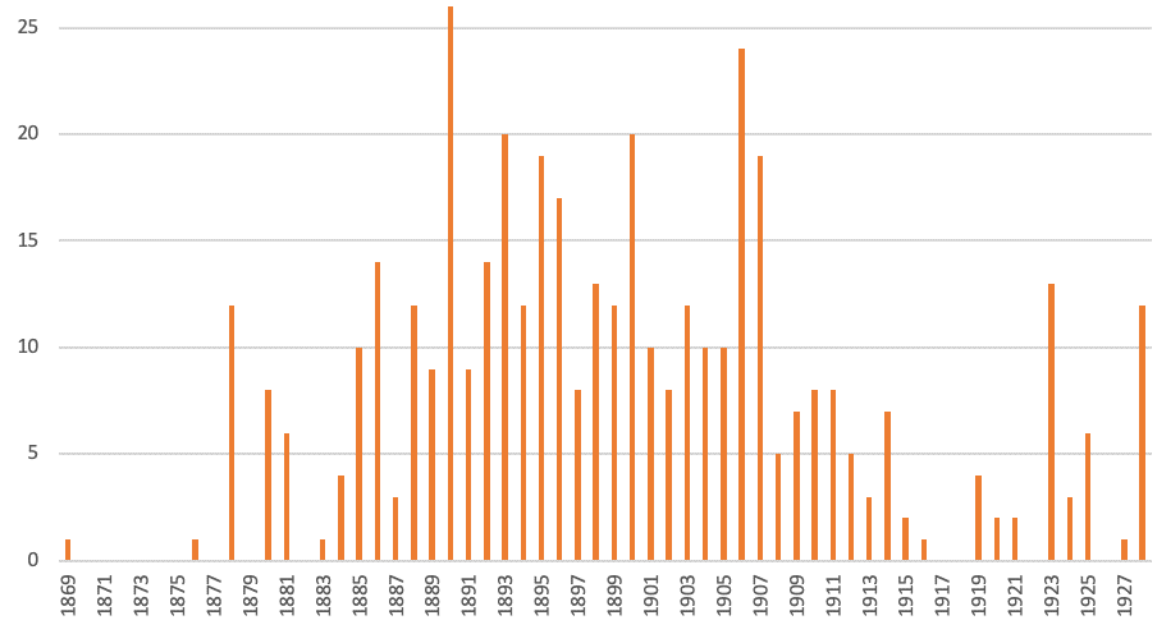


Figure 10: Number of published works per year

The year 1886 was a very fruitful one for Chaminade and is often recognised as the onset of her rise to fame as her compositions started gaining appreciation. Chaminade wrote some of

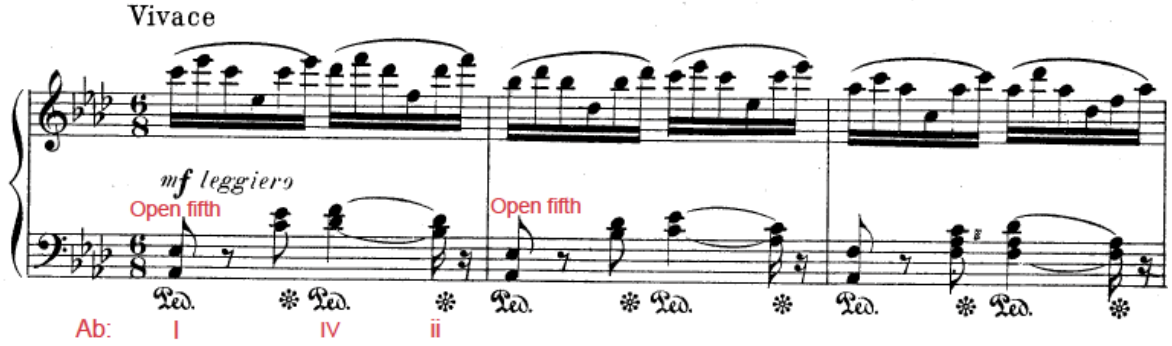
her most successful works in 1886 such as her second piano trio (op. 35) and the collection of concert études (op. 34). Chaminade's career took a slight setback in 1887 with the death of her father but continued to peak for the next 19 years (1888-1907) during which time she composed around 280 works, toured across Europe and established her reputation as one of the most successful female composers of her time. Otto Ebel wrote in 1902 that at "the present time there are very few male composers France can boast of whose works compare with those of Chaminade's, and not one whose compositions are so widely known and played as hers and find such a ready sale" (Citron 1988, 161).

During the early 1900s, Chaminade's career started losing its impetus with the illness of her husband and his death in 1908. Chaminade's family were of the opinion that the marriage caused her "to sacrifice professional momentum and precious creative years to the nursing of a sick man" (Citron 1988, 14). During the war, Chaminade devoted her focus to caring for soldiers in Les Sablettes, a sea-side town on the south coast of France , and did not give much time to composition, ceasing to write altogether in 1917 and 1918. While her pace slowed down considerably until 1928, there are notable peaks in both 1923 and 1928 in which she composed 12 and 13 pieces respectively. This is probably due to her exacting contract with Enoch, which demanded 12 compositions a year (Citron 1988, 18). Thomas Arnold Johnson said of Chaminade in 1936, the year she moved to Monte Carlo, "Since the war, Chaminade's music has not been quite as good, and it now seems that she has ceased to write altogether" (Citron 1988, 192). There is no doubt that Chaminade lost her inspiration to some extent post-World War I. This could have been due to a loss of stamina after a highly active career as well as her declining health, but also perhaps because the musical idiom was changing at a rate that Chaminade could not follow. She did not take to progressive musical trends and, in fact, found herself at odds with a fast-changing modern world. In a letter to a friend during the 1920s, she wrote, "I confess that I can adapt myself no more to modern music than to modern painting, architecture, poetry, literature, mentality or morality" (Smith 1994, 740). Chaminade may have received some criticism for abandoning composition and neglecting new trends; however, Johnson argued, "It must be realised that she has produced quite enough for us to enjoy intelligently … Far better for her to cease writing than to try to alter her style to suit modern tastes" (Citron 1988, 192).

The first work selected for analysis, *Étude printanière,* stands as a relatively isolated work right at the beginning of Chaminade's career, published in 1876 when she was 19 years old.

The title translates to “Spring Étude” and the piece resembles one of Chopin’s figuration studies with a repeated figure pattern that occurs throughout. The étude is set in A-flat major and seems to welcome in the spring with its high-register melody, *vivace* tempo and light feel, indicated by the performance direction, *leggiero*. Chaminade exhibits an interesting key relationship in this piece and alternates between the home key of A-flat major and C-minor, with the bulk of the piece actually in C-minor, which detracts from the spring-like mood and adds tension to the work. The relationship between these two keys is important, as the subdominant chord of the home key can be read as the Neapolitan of the secondary key and functions in one place as a chromatic pivot chord (measure 44). A similar relationship between the subdominant chord and the Neapolitan appears in Chopin’s Funeral March, the third movement of his Piano Sonata No. 2, op. 35; however, in this case, C-minor is the home key and A-flat major the secondary key. Further relevance is seen in this key relationship since C is the third scale degree of A-flat and this reveals one of Chaminade’s signatures. In her works, Chaminade frequently switches between the home key and the key of its third or, in some cases, between the relative major and minor, which is a third apart. The interval of a third has a distinctive sound and Chaminade possibly favoured this relationship because of its ability to colour her music with a sense of wistfulness and yearning.

Étude printanière begins with a standard four-measure phrase using only diatonic harmony. Measures 1, 2 and 4 all feature an open perfect fifth in the bass, creating a drone. The second phrase begins as a repetition of the first but introduces chromaticism from measure 6 as well as a modulation to C-minor through the use of a pivot chord – the submediant of the home key becomes the subdominant of the new key. In measure 7, as part of a prolongation of the dominant, Chaminade places a minor ninth interval above the bass, suggestive of a dominant minor ninth chord, a common angst chord.



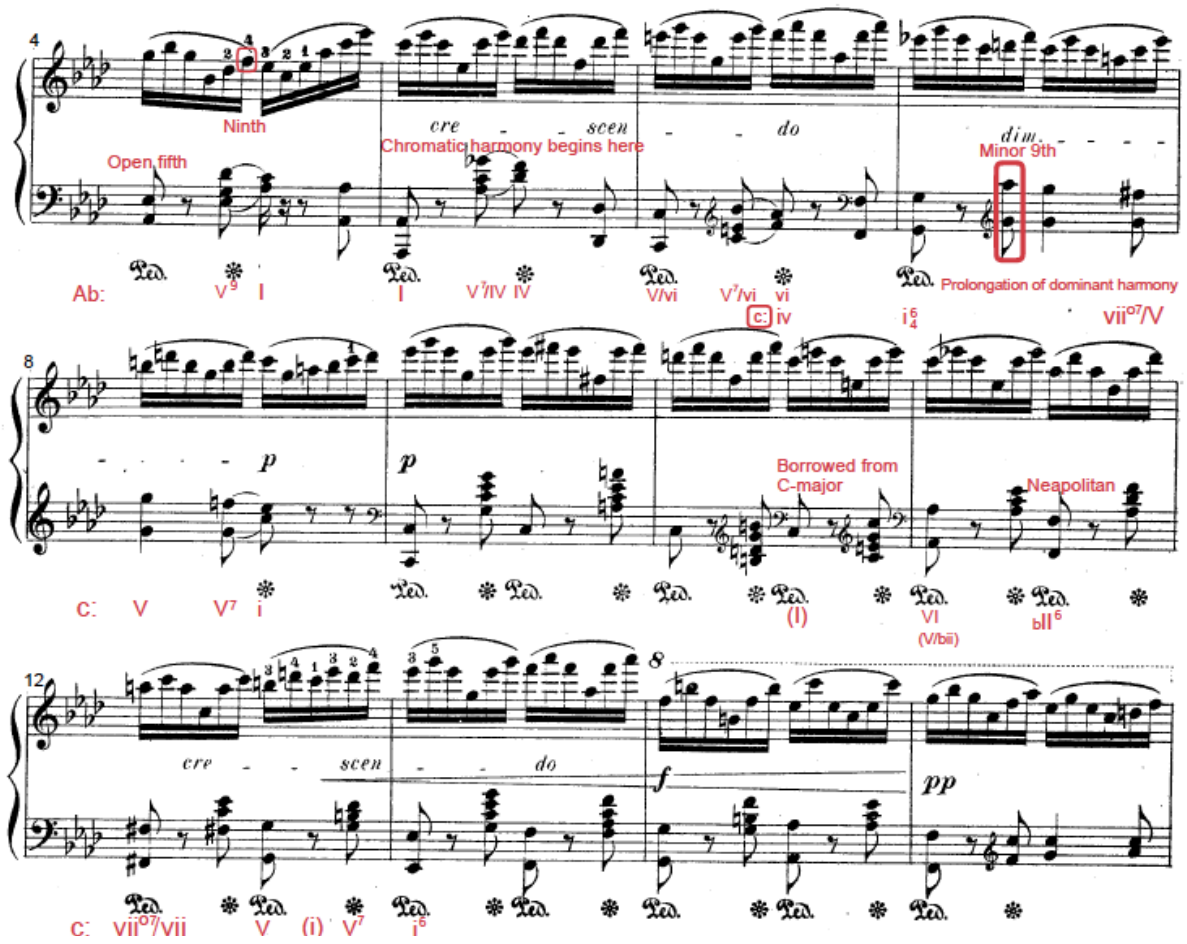


Figure 11: Opening of Étude printanière, mm. 1-15 with modulation to C-minor in measure 6

The piece stays in C-minor until measure 30 where the opening A-flat major theme is repeated. Chaminade then modulates to the dominant key, E-flat major, in measures 36-40, featuring a pedal E-flat throughout to emphasise the dominant feel, as well as a borrowed subdominant chord from E-flat minor. Here, Chaminade shifts the register of the right-hand part up an octave, lasting only for the duration of the E-flat major section. The piece returns to A-flat major in measure 40 through the use of a pivot chord, with the tonic chord in E-flat major being the dominant chord of A-flat major. A prolongation of the subdominant chord over three measures leads to a modulation to C-minor, where the subdominant chord of A-flat major becomes the Neapolitan of C-minor. The prolongation of chord IV in measures 42-44 provides an interesting point for discussion. The chord is coloured by the B-flat and can theoretically be stacked to make a B-flat minor seventh chord in first inversion. However, the B-flat is registerally separate and the low octave D-flat and stacked D-flat major triad in the bass clearly underpins the chord as the most important structurally (note the printing error in measure 44 with the omitted treble clef preceding the D-flat major chord). The high B-flat

would then identify as a non-chord note, functioning as an upper neighbour to the A-flat. The lower B-flat can be identified as a lower neighbour to c-natural in measures 43 and 48 (with a brief deviation to b-natural in measures 46 and 47). The clear D-flat structure indicated in the bass means that when the chord moves to the standard Neapolitan resolution of V, we hear it functioning as a Neapolitan and it would be amiss to label it as a flat seventh. The Neapolitan is followed, as would be expected, by a dominant seventh chord, which further endorses the reading of the pivot chord as chord IV.
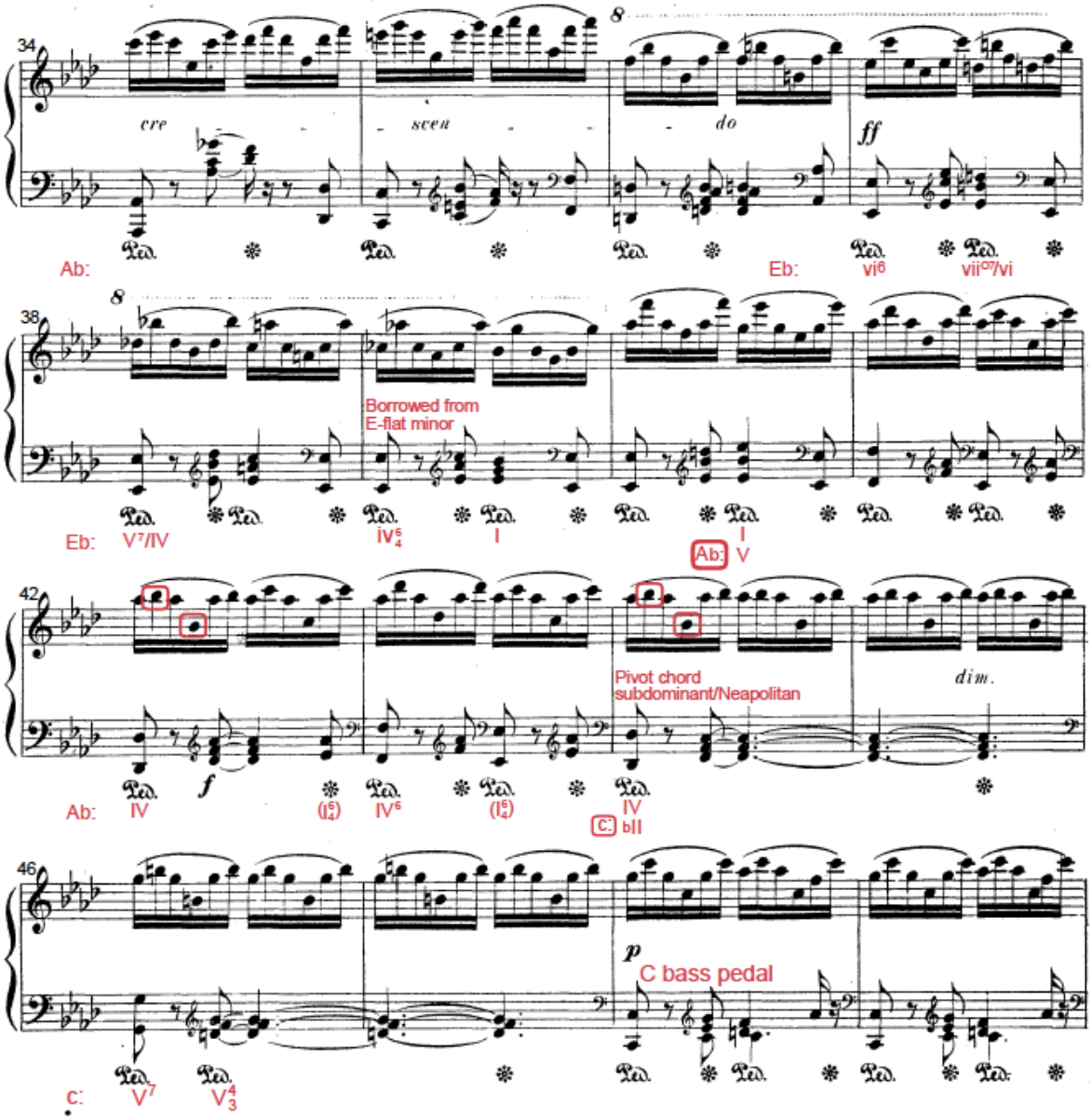


Figure 12: Étude printanière mm. 34-49 showing E-flat major section and Neapolitan pivot chord in measure 44

Still in C-minor, measures 48-51 present a prolongation of the tonic, with linear half-diminished supertonic chords and a pedal bass on C. The prolongation of harmony with an extended pedal note continues from measure 52, but this time it is a prolongation of B-flat

minor, the supertonic of the home key. The piece modulates back to A-flat major and remains in this key until the end. In measures 59 and 60, Chaminade introduces a similar use of non-chord notes and chromatic harmony as seen in measures 15-16 and 23-24. The non-chord notes in measures 61 and 62 give a flavour of ninth chords, although the ninth notes are resolved within the harmony. The piece winds down with a strong perfect cadence and a prolongation of the tonic chord, finishing with a *fortissimo* split chord in the upper register of the keyboard.

In general, this piece presents a standard technical study demanding rhythmic stability, strong finger technique in the right hand and a certain level of flexibility in the left hand to execute the shifting bass chords smoothly. Chaminade employs a standard dynamic range, building from *piano* to *fortissimo* at climactic moments, and the texture and register of the piece remain relatively constant throughout. Chaminade's shift in register in the right-hand part during the E-flat major section, as mentioned above, is clearly a carefully considered decision for effect and reflects the discerning manner in which she crafted her music. In an article written by Chaminade, she stresses the importance for the performer to "Read carefully all that is written. The tempo, nuance, accent, phrasing, having all been minutely indicated, the interpreter ought, with reflection, to achieve technical accuracy, and to approach very nearly what the author desires" (Chaminade 1908, 759). Colour and harmonic variety are brought into this piece through the use of chromatic non-chord notes, borrowed chords from parallel keys and the appearance of chordal ninths, which introduce tension into the work. While this piece does not exhibit the typical nostalgic feel that Chaminade developed in her later works, it is also not a wholly joyous celebration of spring and perhaps reveals only glimpses of her wistful nature.

While musical studies had existed before, the genre of the étude emerged in the nineteenth century with the demand for material that would develop the technical skills of musicians. Composers such as Johann Cramer, Carl Czerny and Ignaz Moscheles published technical studies in the early 1800s; however, Chopin's études, published in 1833 and 1837, became the archetype for this nineteenth-century genre. With their harmonic freshness and emphasis on musical refinement as well as technique, Chopin's études were the first to establish a place in concert repertoire, thus bringing forth the genre of the concert étude (Ferguson 2001). The concert étude incorporates technical didacticism with musical expressiveness (Ferguson 2001). Liszt composed concert études that were closely connected to the programmatic

character piece, with descriptive titles and material inspired by extra-musical ideas (Ferguson 2001). Here Chaminade's *Étude printanière*, with its descriptive title, is more in line with the études of Liszt since Chopin did not give titles to his. Despite the use of standard techniques, fitting in between the études of Chopin and Liszt, this piece exhibits a construction and a quality that is personal to Chaminade. The way the minor mode is extensively featured in a piece about spring gives the work its individual essence and allows the listener to hear Chaminade's musical personality.

Automne, composed in 1886, is the second piece in a collection of six concert études and it very quickly became Chaminade's most popular piece internationally, particularly in England, selling 21,000 copies over a three-year period (Citron 1988, 21). While Chaminade had productive years before 1886, particularly in 1878, *Automne* played a large part in boosting her reputation as a composer. *Automne* fits the definition of a concert étude with its demand for both technical dexterity and a strong sense of musicality, as well as its designation of a character piece in keeping with Liszt's interpretation of the étude. According to Chaminade, she wrote *Automne* "at the time of the year when nature is at peace and where one looks back on the fine days that have passed and, looking back, realising with heartfelt regret that they are now things of the past" (Smith 1994, 741). Chaminade wrote many works inspired by the seasons, such as *Chanson de neige* (Snow Song) in 1906 and *L'été* (The Summer) in 1894, but she returned most often to autumn, perhaps because of her inclination towards the nostalgic: *Amour d'automne* (Autumn Love) in 1889, *Sérénade d'automne* (Autumn Serenade) in 1890, *Feuilles d'automne* (Autumn Leaves) in 1912 and *Valse d'automne* (Autumn Waltz) in 1928.

Further likeness to Liszt in this piece can be seen in the technical flourishes and cadenza-like passages. Additionally, *Automne* displays influences from both Mendelssohn and Schumann. Chaminade admired the music of Schumann and felt that he was "the most imaginative and suggestive" of composers (Smith 2012, 6). Schumann's influence can be seen more generally in Chaminade's oeuvre, for example, in the compositions she wrote specifically for children: *Albums des enfants,* op. 123 and 126 and *Pastorale enfantine,* op. 12, inspired by Schumann's *Album für die Jugend*, op. 68 (Smith 2012, 6). The lyricism in *Automne* strongly resembles Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words*, as the melody has a strong vocal quality to it, with the melodic intervals rarely extending beyond a fourth. With Mendelssohn's, Schumann's and Chopin's compositional years pre-dating Chaminade's birth and Liszt

composing prior to Chaminade's peak (beginning in 1886), it is clear that music critics turned to these composers as their first point of comparison and that Chaminade herself drew influence from them.

Automne is written in ternary form with a very clear A-B-A structure and is in the key of D-flat major. The main melody is somewhat instantly familiar and evokes a strong sense of aching and longing. Chaminade utilises the full range of the keyboard in this piece but the main theme, which is heard repeatedly in the first section, is set in the middle register, invoking a sense of warmth. This differs to her other pieces inspired by autumn, which use the upper register almost exclusively in the right-hand parts and express a sense of lightness and harmonic simplicity. The A-section of *Automne* features chromatic passages, diminished sonorities and excursions into other keys, usually the supertonic, subdominant or dominant. The chromatic passages, as seen in measures 8 and 10, coupled with the performance direction *molto stringendo,* add colour and harmonic variety, and push the piece forward.

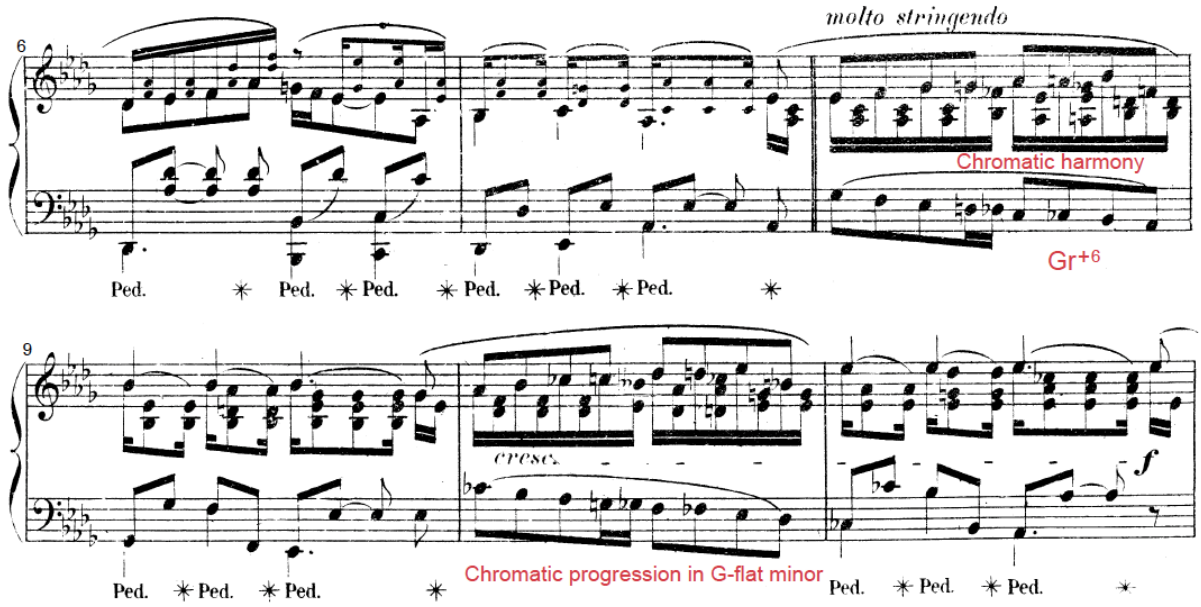


Figure 13: Automne mm. 6-11 showing chromatic movement in measures 8 and 10, as well as key excursion in measure 10

From the melancholic A-section, a stormy middle section erupts evoking wild flurries of autumn leaves. As can be seen in figure 14, the B-section draws away from the melodic emphasis of the A-section but exhibits tumultuous patterns with rich tonal and dynamic contrasts as well as multiple colours, which emerge from the chromaticism and use of diminished and augmented sonorities. Chaminade often erodes the sense of any specific key by using sequential progressions as transitions from one key to the next. Here, Schumann's

influence can be seen as he, too, often created a sense of tonal ambiguity in his music, as in his song *Im wunderschönen Monat Mai*, for example, where he alternates between F-sharp minor and A-major but neglects to establish fully either key (Kopp 2011, 303). In the case of *Automne,* Chaminade shifts between F-minor and E-flat minor. The B-section begins in F-minor with rapid thirty-second note patterns, leading to a descending chromatic triplet, which is followed by a chain of descending diminished sevenths that land in E-flat minor. The thirty-second note pattern is repeated in E-flat minor, but the chain of diminished sevenths is replaced by E-flat minor tonic prolonged with a descending scale.

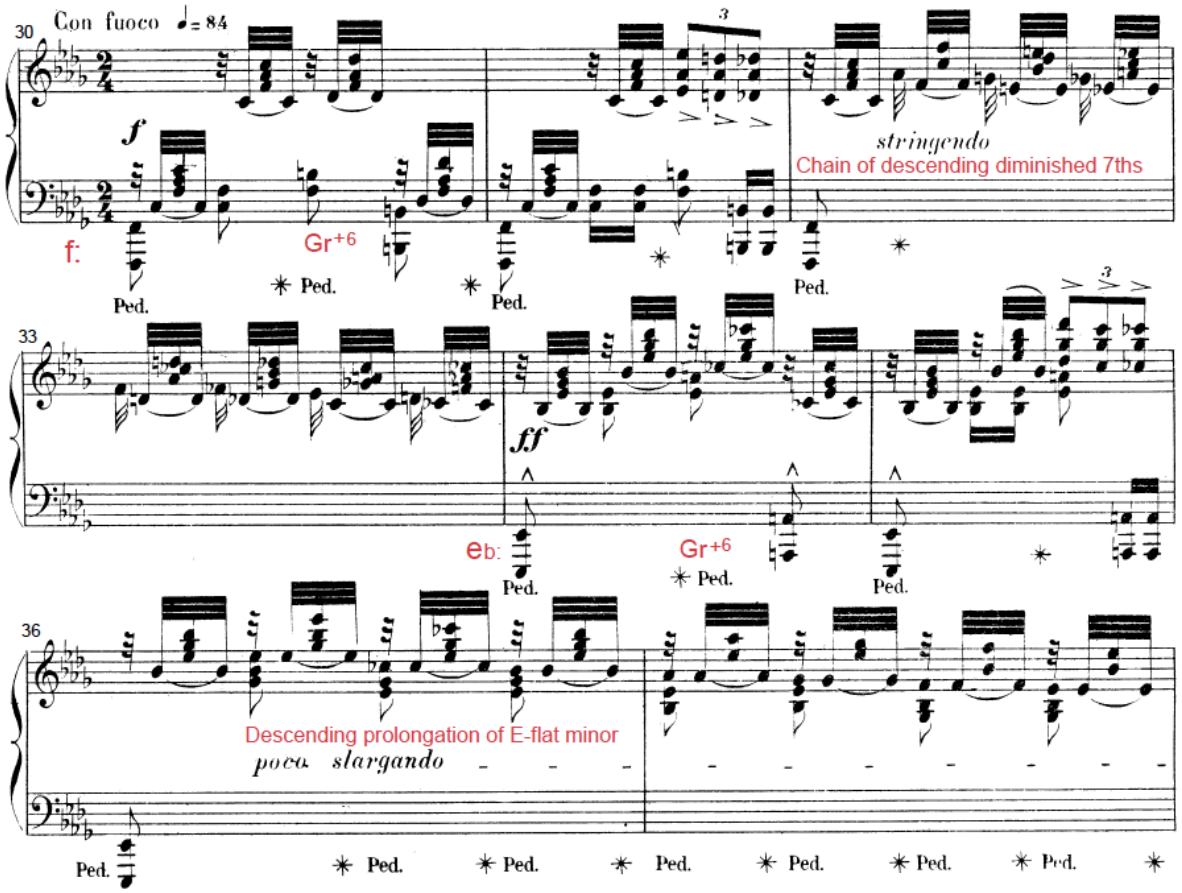


Figure 14: Automne mm. 30-37 showing beginning of B-section with thirty-second note patterns and transitional sequences

From measure 38, the music becomes more passionate, *poco più largo appassionato*, with a sweeping octave melody in the right-hand part, climbing up and down the E-flat minor scale. This line, which presents a return of melody, reveals Chaminade's gift for writing a simple yet deeply distinctive and evocative melodic line. It is in phrases such as these that

Chaminade's character and personal voice emerge revealing qualities of her nostalgic disposition.
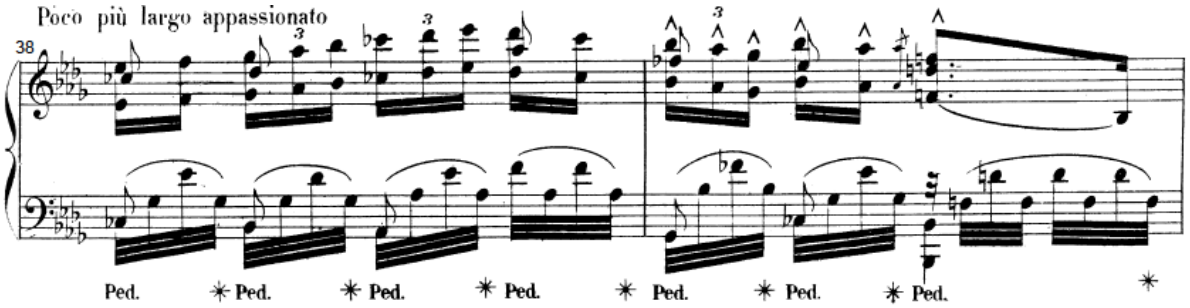


Figure 15: Automne mm. 38-39 with sweeping E-flat minor melody

The fiery thirty-second note pattern returns from measure 42, this time staying in F-minor, and leads to a climactic inverted German augmented sixth chord. This chord announces a four-measure transition phrase with cascading patterns, featuring a French augmented sixth chord, leading to a repeat of the beginning of the B-section, this time starting as an echo with the dynamic *piano*.

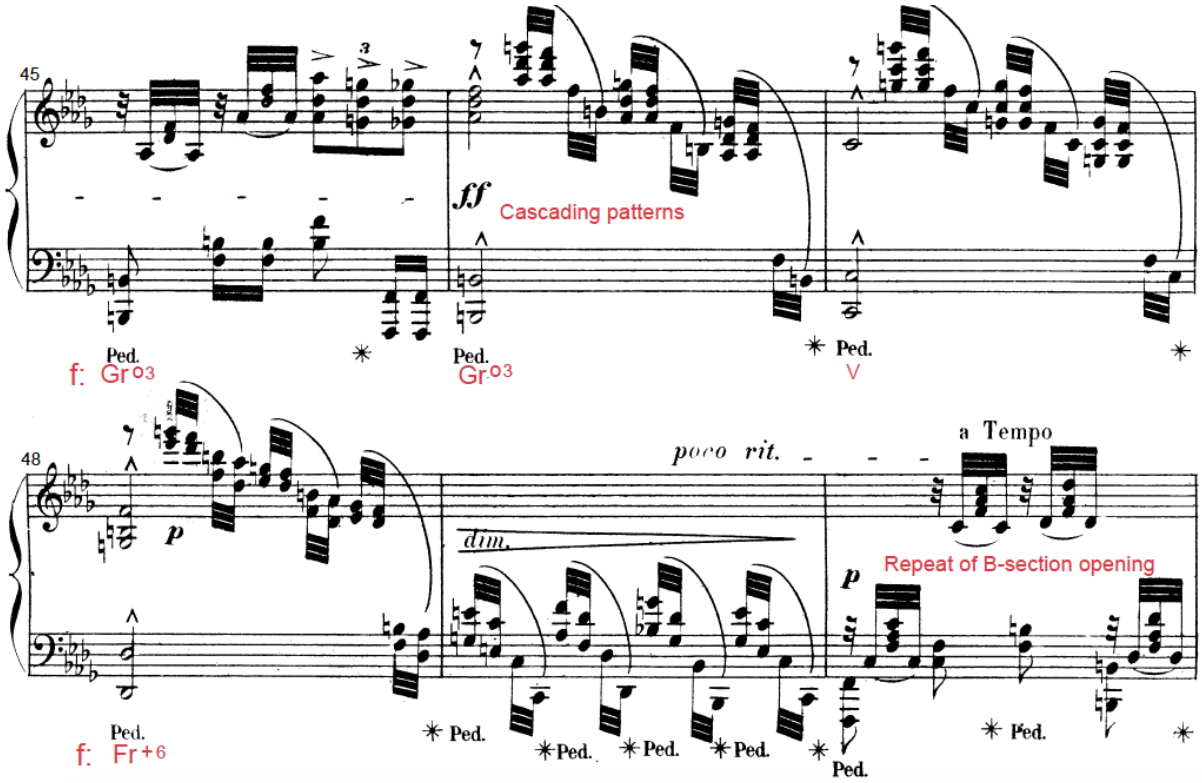


Figure 16: Automne mm. 45-50 showing inverted augmented sixth chord, cascading patterns leading to French augmented sixth chord

This repeat is almost identical to the opening of the section but winds down with broad, descending octave chords, which lead to a majestic restatement of the main melodic theme.

The theme occurs three times, using different harmonies and getting progressively slower and softer. One might expect the return of the A-section here, but Chaminade presents another surprise by launching into a fast and agitated chromatic section, a prolongation of an A-flat dominant seventh chord, which builds to the climax of the piece, a broad restatement of the chromatic triplet motive recurring throughout section-B. This is followed by another cascading pattern marked *fortississimo*, which leads into two contrasting runs. The first, *rapido energico*, rises to an A-natural and with the use of a fermata, sustains the tension; and the second, instantly *pianissimo* and this time *dolcissimo a piacere,* sets the mood for the return of the A-section. The main theme returns as a memory, softer than before, infused with a sense of regret, and closes with a drawn-out split chord in D-flat major rising up the keyboard.

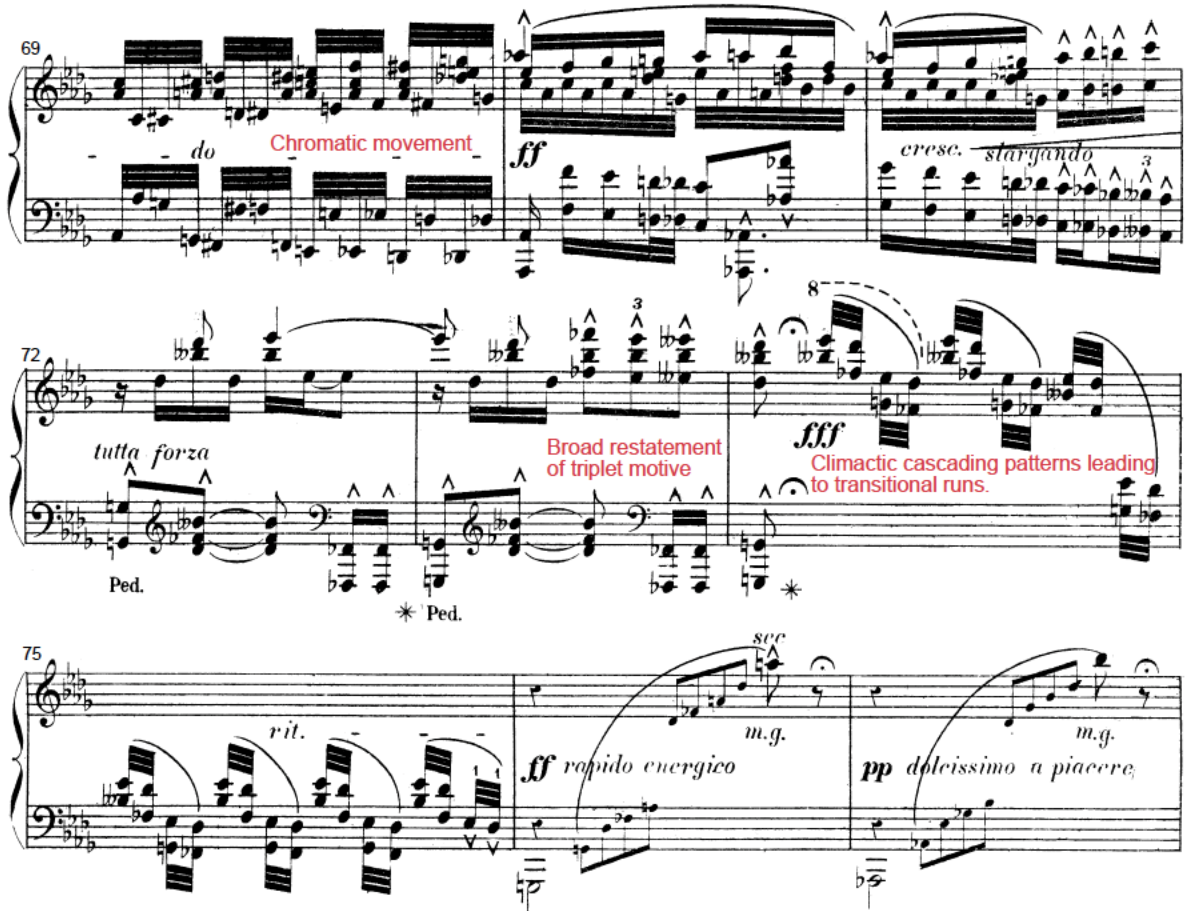


Figure 17: Automne mm. 69-77 showing the climax of the piece, cascading patterns and transitional runs into section A

Automne, labelled as a concert étude by Chaminade, is strikingly different from *Étude printanière,* which, if viewed more as a technical study, reveals the distinction between an étude and a concert étude. *Automne* is decidedly meant for concert repertoire rather than technical practice and this is emphasised by its sheer popularity. The piece is undoubtedly

one of Chaminade's finest works, rich with emotion and sentiment, technically demanding, and both moving and impressive. Out of the four pieces chosen for analysis, and indeed across her entire collection of works for the piano, *Automne* most strongly gives a sense of Chaminade as composer. Whether this is due to the longer length, the variety of musical material or the harmonic richness, this piece somehow presents a profundity of emotion that does not feature to the same extent in her other works for piano.

While this stylistic analysis does not attempt to expand on Citron's gendered analysis of Chaminade's piano sonata by highlighting particularly feminine or masculine traits in her music, one cannot ignore the feminine qualities inherent in Chaminade's style. Between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, sexual aesthetics in music emerged out of various social constructs and, while controversial, it became an accepted stereotype that "masculine music" displayed qualities of dominance and boldness, while "feminine" music displayed more lyrical and passive characteristics (Reitsma 2014, 40). For most critics, generally male, music that displayed feminine traits revealed a creative deficiency, as seen in chapter two in an *Evening Post* review highlighting that Chaminade's music seemed superficial and "confirmed the conviction held by many that … [women] will never learn to compose anything worthwhile". However, while Chaminade may have suffered to some extent from gendered criticism, it seems that she unashamedly expressed her femininity in her music, which was ultimately to her benefit. In 1908, H. La Perrière said, "For woman, it is much better to utilise her charm, and it is totally feminine charm that has fashioned the success of Mme. Cécile Chaminade, a true French woman" (Citron 1988, 179) and, in the same year, critic William Henry Humiston shared a similar sentiment:

> There are distinctly feminine traits about Chaminade's music, which are decidedly to its advantage. There is one word which sums it all up … *charmante!* There is a feminine charm, if you will, about Chaminade's music that makes it individual—I know of no other woman's music which has just that quality, and, of course, no mere man could possess that identical quality to which I refer. It is her unequalled grace in expressing as a woman, musical ideas in a woman's way that has lifted Mme. Chaminade from the mob of women composers who are trying to disguise their femininity under a bearded mask and who confuse racket with virility (Citron 1988, 23).

Solitude, op. 127 is the second piece of *Poème Provençal*, published in 1908, the year after Chaminade's husband died and the year she travelled to America. This piece exhibits typical feminine qualities – the melody is tranquil and lyrical, the dynamic level never rises beyond

mezzo forte, the tempo is relatively slow, and the piece maintains a level of passivity throughout. There is little thematic development and the piece settles into a state of constancy. The title is suggestive of loneliness and poignancy – qualities that are inherent in much of Chaminade's music – and the main melodic theme, beginning in F-sharp minor immediately captures this mood. The entire piece is built on a simple 2-measure melodic motive, presented in the soprano line, which occurs throughout with slight rhythmic changes and varying ornamental decorations. The melody is accompanied by alternating sixteenth note chords.

The harmonic structure is consistently divided into regular four-measure phrases, although Chaminade sometimes extends the period to 10 measures with a prolongation or cadential extension. Within the first period, the piece modulates to A-major, the relative key, and ends with a strong cadential 6/4 in measure 8 before returning to F-sharp minor for an exact repeat of the first period, this time as an echo in a quieter dynamic, *pianissimo.* This interplay between F-sharp minor and the key of its third, A-major, is a hallmark throughout the piece and adds to the sense of pathos. As stated previously, Chaminade was constantly drawn to the interchange between the home key and its third, or the home key and its relative minor or major. Although it is less evident in *Automne,* the B-section begins in F-minor, the third of the home key, D-flat major. Interestingly, the key relationships chosen in *Solitude* form a direct parallel to Schumann's *Im wunderschönen Monat Mai* mentioned above, where the same interplay between F-sharp minor and A-major appears.
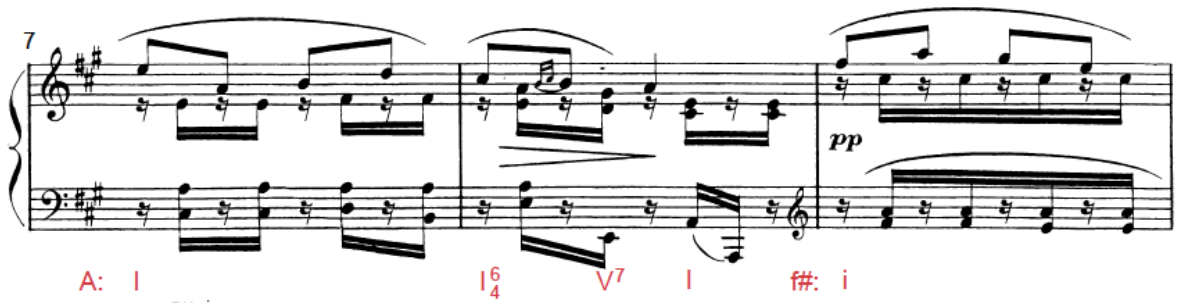
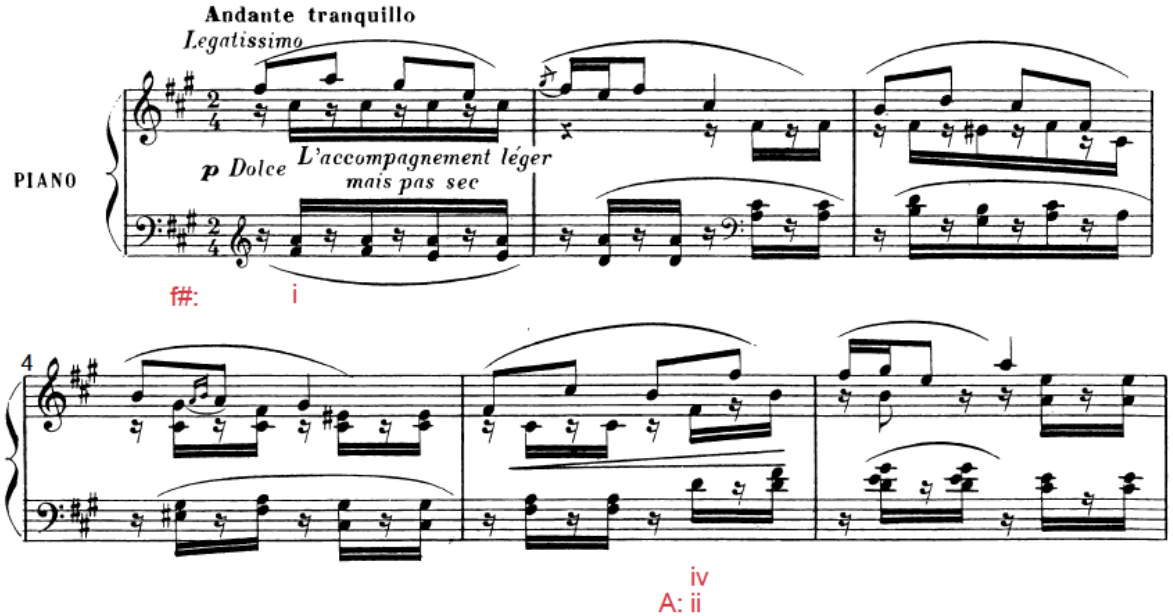




Figure 18: Solitude mm. 1-9 showing recurring melodic motive in soprano line and modulation to A-major in measure 5

Developing from the diatonic first section, the following section is 10 measures in length and becomes more harmonically interesting with the introduction of secondary and diminished seventh chords. The melody in measure 17 presents a glimpse of a parallel relation to the opening motive; however, this time it is inverted and first descends and then ascends by a major sixth.

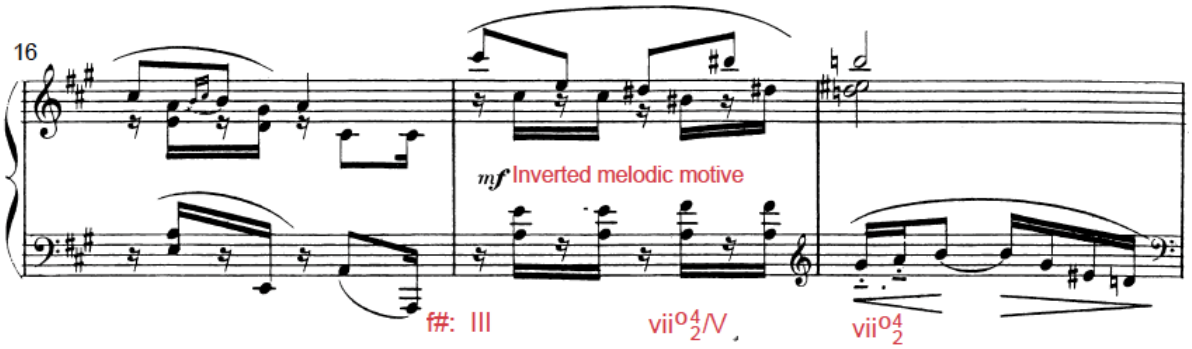


Figure 19: Solitude mm. 16-18 showing inverted melodic motive and diminished seventh harmony

The harmony in this section (measures 17-26) is clearly directed towards the German augmented sixth in measure 26 through a tonicisation of chord iv and a prolongation of a respelled German augmented sixth chord, where the C-natural features as a passing note and forms an ascending stepwise bass line (b-c-d) across measures 22-26, leading to the augmented sixth chord.

Chaminade plays with register in this piece, demonstrating her ear for orchestral colour, and once said, “I hear every instrument in the orchestra for which I am scoring my work, as clearly, or almost as clearly, as if real instruments were performing my music for me” (Magner 2001, 25). She adds a lower octave to the chord in measure 23, perhaps envisaging the sonority of a double bass, and then jumps up by an interval of a thirteenth to a rather high register for the bass clef, before dropping down again by two octaves. The chord in measure 23 is spelt as a secondary dominant chord – a dominant seventh in third inversion of the flattened supertonic; however, it is actually functioning as a prolonged German augmented

sixth chord, which is spelled correctly at the point of resolution in measure 26. Chaminade plays with voice exchange here, the C-natural in measures 22 and 23 finds its way to B-sharp in measure 26, but this progression sounds as one unified harmony.

The German augmented sixth chord in measure 26 is spread across multiple registers, featuring the sharpened fourth scale degree in the bass. The B-sharp in the alto voice tonicises the C-sharp in the following measure and section. The detail around this augmented chord – voiced over multiple registers, played *pianissimo*, drawn out with a *ritardando* and held with a fermata – makes it rather striking. The whole piece is suspended with this chord, as though to heighten the momentary intensity of experience for the listener before the release.
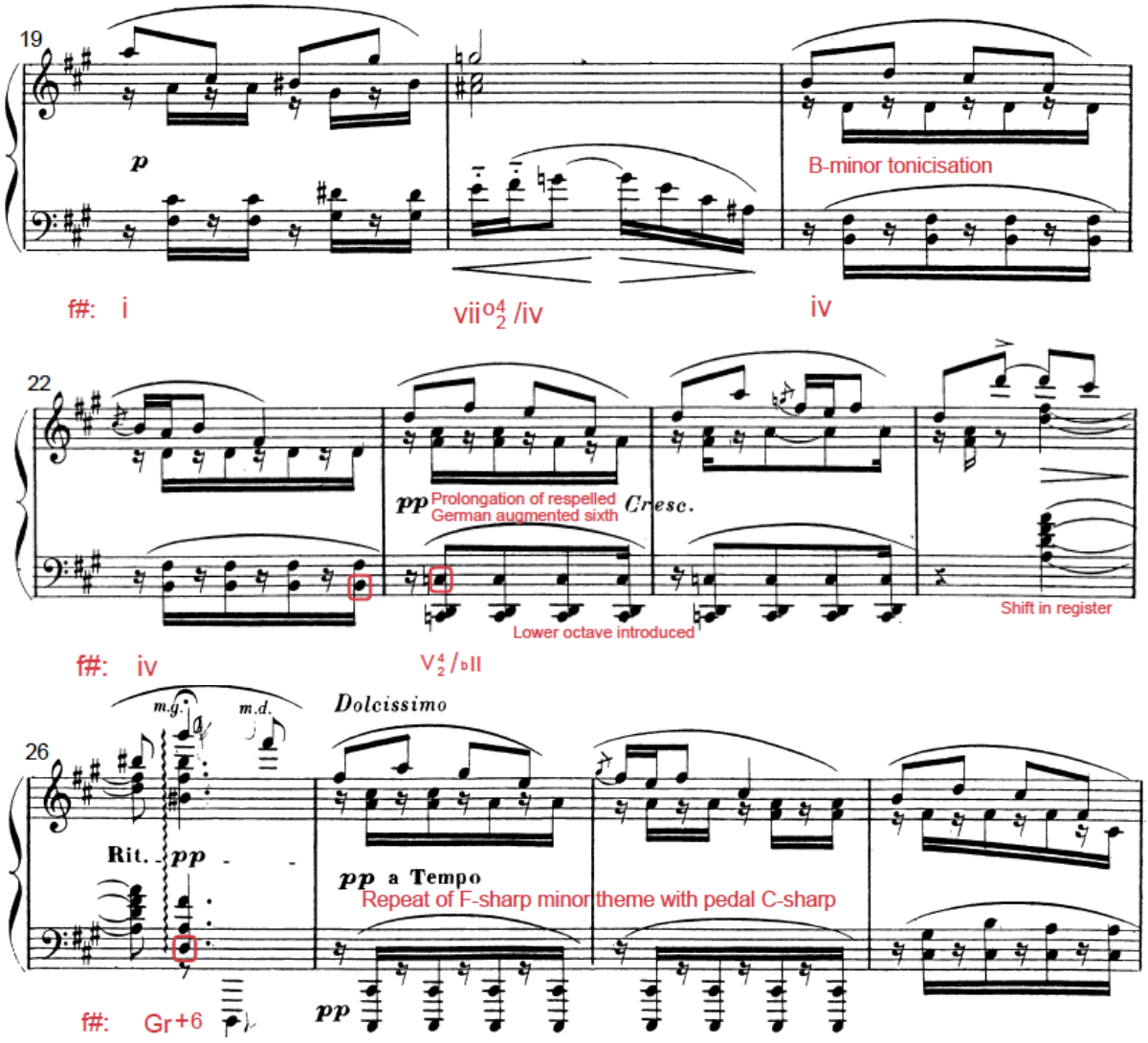


Figure 20: Solitude mm. 19-29 showing tonicisation of chord iv (tonicisation of B-minor), prolongation of respelled German augmented sixth chord, added register and stepwise motion and repeat of main F-sharp minor motive with pedal C-sharp bass

The F-sharp minor theme appears again from measure 27 with the same *pianissimo* as before, but over a low pedal octave C-sharp, the dominant of the tonic key, providing extra harmonic and structural texture. Perhaps the most interesting part of the piece, harmonically speaking, is from measures 37-47, as Chaminade shifts away from tonal harmony. A new texture is introduced in the first two measures of this section – the alternating chordal accompaniment falls away and the treble and bass are in unison. This thinner texture makes the mood even more plaintive.

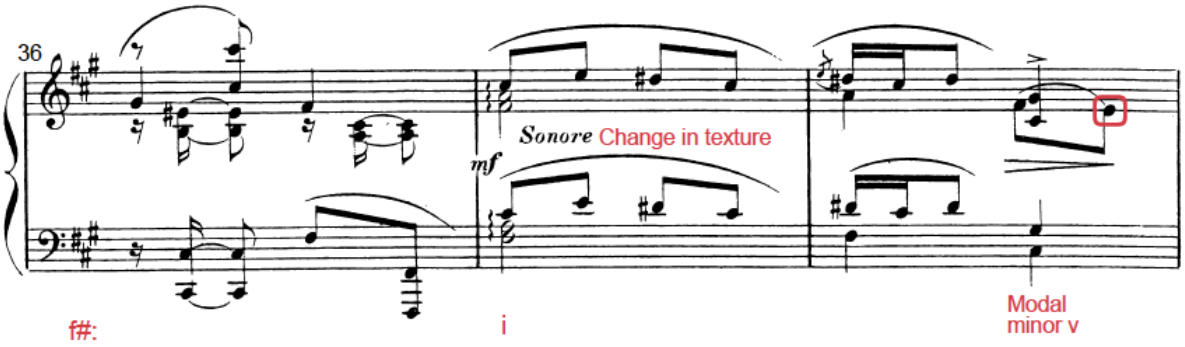


Figure 21: Solitude mm. 36-38 showing change in texture and voices in unison

The section begins in F-sharp minor, as expected; however, Chaminade erodes the sense of F-sharp as a tonal key by placing an E-natural at the end of measure 38 making the dominant chord a minor v chord. In measure 39, the melody appears in the alto voice for the first time but returns to the soprano voice again in measure 41. The following four measures present an exchange between E major and C-sharp minor (another interplay between relative keys) as well as a modal mix between C-sharp major and minor, reaching a cadence in the key of C-sharp major. This cadence sets up a three-measure section in the enharmonic key, D-flat major, which is the dominant of the home key, F-sharp minor. The D-flat major section is merely a prolongation of the tonic chord with passing dominant seventh chords leading to a perfect cadence in A-major, which elides into the next section, the tonic chord in measure 47 serving as both the end of the cadence and the beginning of the next section. The harmony is interesting here as Chaminade uses enharmonic chord spelling in measure 45. The D-flat in the first chord of measure 45 can be interpreted as a C-sharp, which functions both as a pivot chord to A-major and as the beginning of a circle of fifths progression (C#-F#-B-E-A). The pivot chord is somewhat tricky to label because of the enharmonic spelling, however, can be read as a secondary dominant chord in the key of A-major (chord V of vi). A repeat of the material in measures 17-36 lead to the coda.

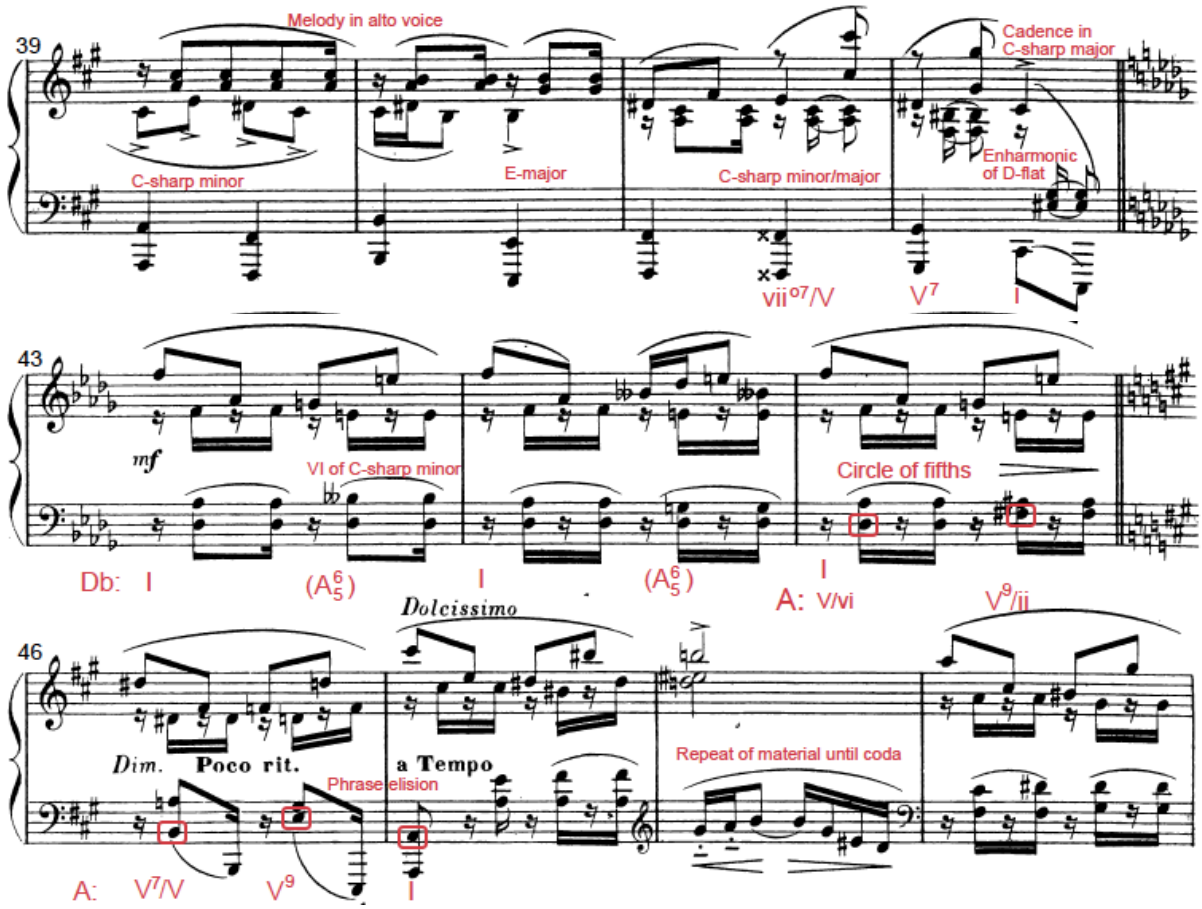


Figure 22: Solitude mm. 39-49 showing modal mix between C-sharp major and minor and D-flat major section with modulation to A-major and circle of fifths progression

The coda is somewhat "Chopinesque" in that it introduces new material at the end, which brings a sense of poignancy. The coda is essentially a sequence of superimposed diminished seventh chords over a tonic octave pedal (F-sharp). Interesting to note as well is Chaminade's indication of dynamic with *pppp.* In the last two measures, Chaminade still switches between modes with a plagal cadence in A major preceding the final plagal cadence in F-sharp minor.
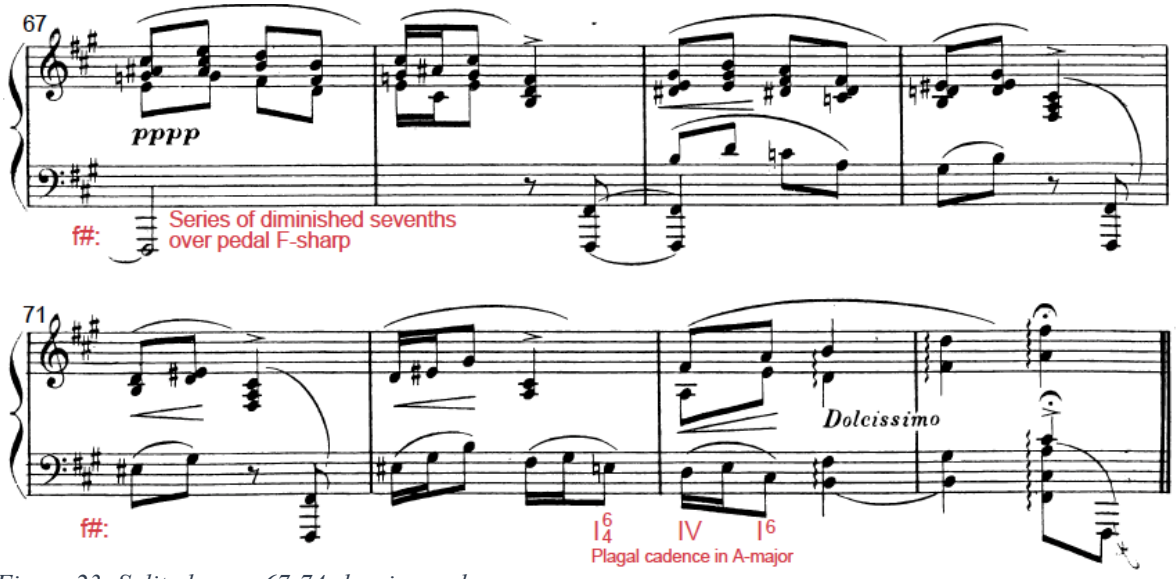


Figure 23: Solitude mm. 67-74 showing coda

Overall, this piece displays typical qualities described by critics – it emphasises melody and carries the distinctive nostalgic feel evident in most of Chaminade's works. Stylistically, the harmonic lines have a strong sense of direction, featuring chords that would not necessarily appear in isolation, as part of strict functional harmony, but which contribute to the colour, voice-leading and overall direction of the phrases. Chaminade favours diminished seventh chords, which appear throughout, either as passing chords or secondary chords; she plays with register and orchestral colour; and makes use of a broad dynamic range (*pppp – mf*). The piece is characterised by its performance directions (*Andante tranquillo* and *dolcissimo*), its emphasis on softer dynamics and the constant interchange between the minor and its relative major key, which gives the piece its melancholic mood. This piece particularly reveals the elegance and refinement of Chaminade's style suggested in various reviews across her career. Her use of register is carefully controlled, her moments of suspension and climax are meticulously planned and the movement between phrases and keys always displays an innate elegance in her craft.

Nocturne, op. 165 was written in 1925 and was one of Chaminade's last solo piano pieces. It again shows influence of Chopin in the title and, interestingly, is the only nocturne Chaminade wrote for the piano. It is in ternary form, Chaminade's most favoured form, and appears largely to be a study of prolongation. The main melodic motive features a descending three-note dotted chordal pattern which then rises up a step, with a constant figuration pattern underneath. Chaminade introduces different colours with the use of embellishing diminished seventh chords as seen in measures 3, 4 and 6. In measure 7, she places an embellishing augmented German sixth chord, with the G-double-sharp functioning as a non-chord note. This chord acts as a neighbouring chord between two dominant chords in first inversion. The appearance of this D dominant seventh, borrowed from B-minor (the tonic minor), is suggestive of yet another relationship of a third between a key and its relative major or minor.

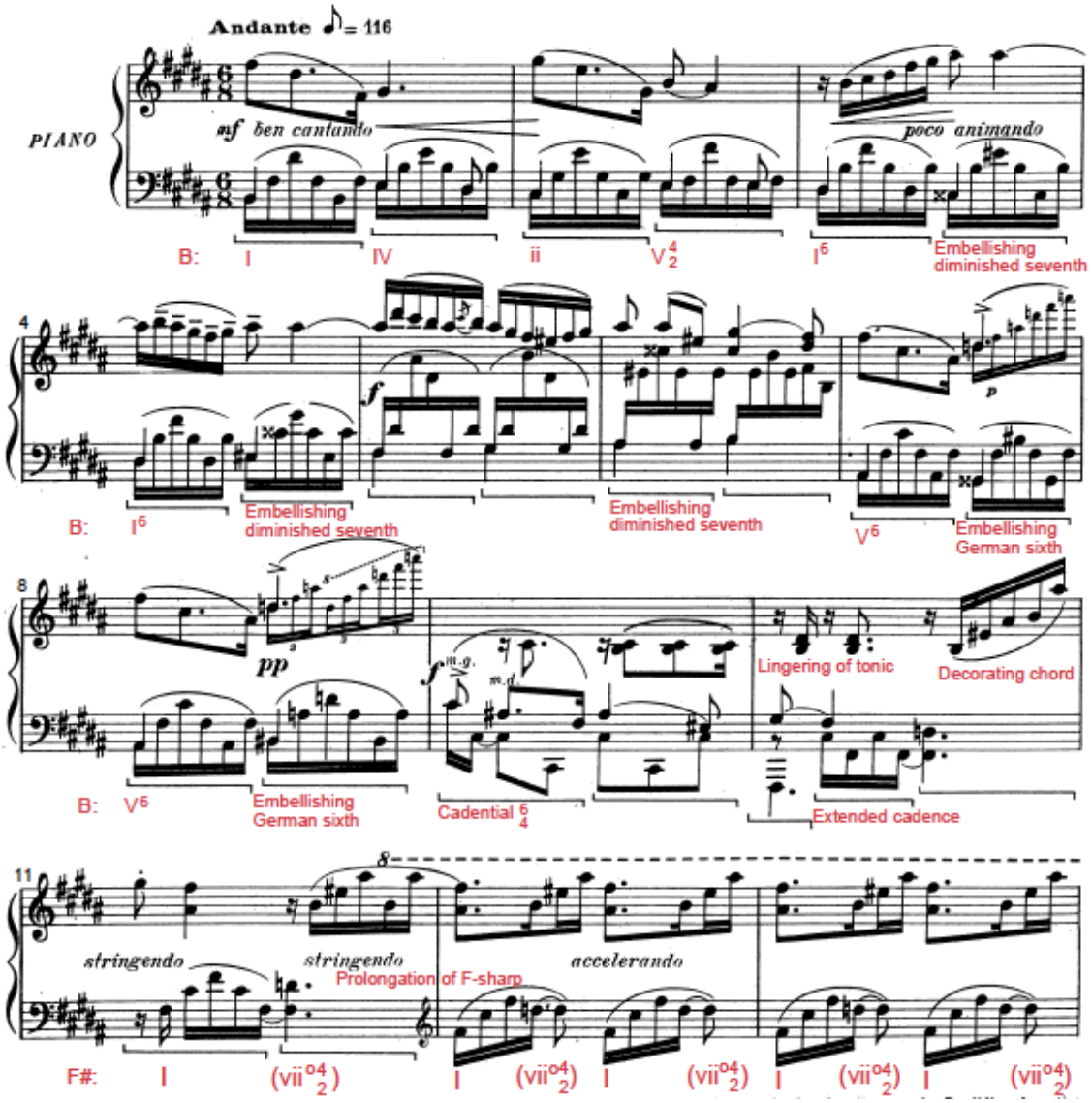


Figure 24: Nocturne mm. 1-13 showing embellishing chords, modulation to F-sharp major and prolongation of the tonic

The piece modulates to the dominant key, F-sharp major, through an extended cadence in measure 9, with an elision between the cadence and the beginning of the next phrase. The tonic of F-sharp major is prolonged for three measures with alternating diminished seventh chords functioning as linear chords. Before returning to the opening theme in B-major, Chaminade extends the F-sharp major section with a harmonically open phrase that elides into B-major.
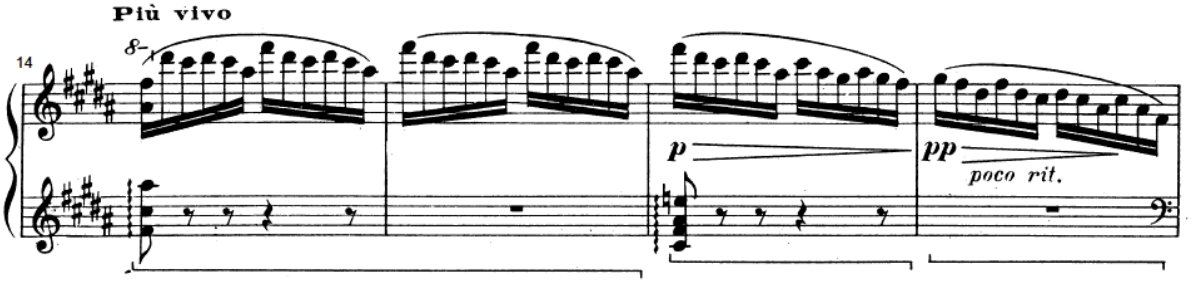


Figure 25: Nocturne mm. 14-17 showing harmonically open section

Chaminade does not repeat the first section exactly but introduces variation by means of chromatic harmony in measures 22-23, where the chords form a prolongation of the supertonic chord, a C-sharp minor chord. This prolongation serves as a pre-dominant function to the cadential 6/4, which is also prolonged by the appearance of two German augmented sixth chords before reaching the cadence. The landing of the cadence is not final as it elides into the tail of a prolonged tonic. This prolongation of the tonic of B is the same as measures 11-17 with alternating linear diminished seventh chords leading to a harmonically open phrase.

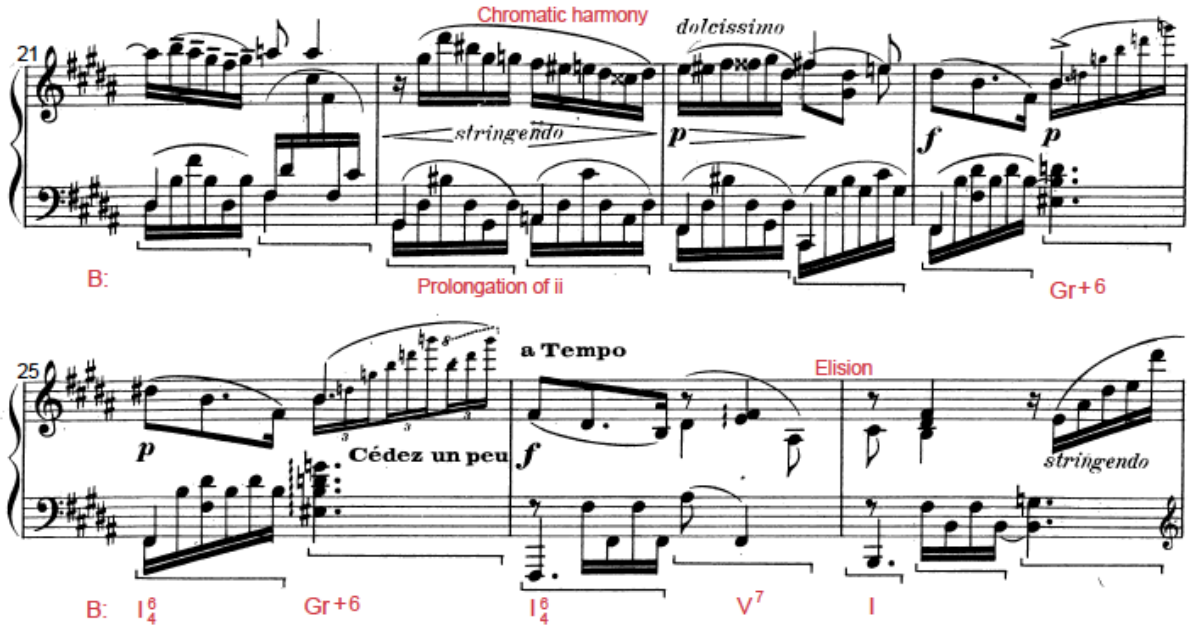


Figure 26: Nocturne mm. 21-27 showing chromatic harmony and prolongation of chord ii (C-sharp minor chord)

Chaminade then modulates to G-major for the B-section of the piece. The right-hand part continues with similar rhythmic patterns to the A-section, but the left-hand figuration falls away and is replaced with chords. Within this section Chaminade exhibits augmented sonorities through the use of an altered dominant chord in measure 37, where the fifth of the chord is augmented. Additionally, and more unusually, the use of two augmented chords on the flattened sixth degree (measures 41 and 42), created by neighbouring motion (D-Eb-D), gives an unusual flavour of modal borrowing from G-minor. The tonic chords in measures 41 and 42 are in second inversion and, therefore, with the assistance of dominant pedal notes, the prolongation has more of a dominant feel.

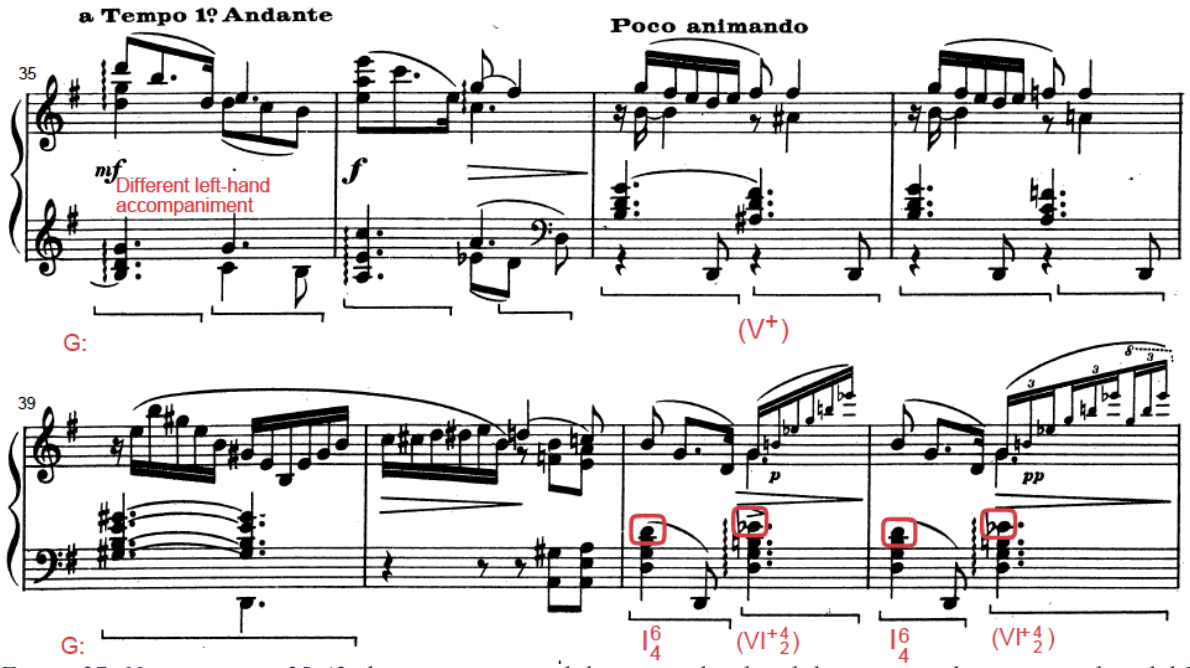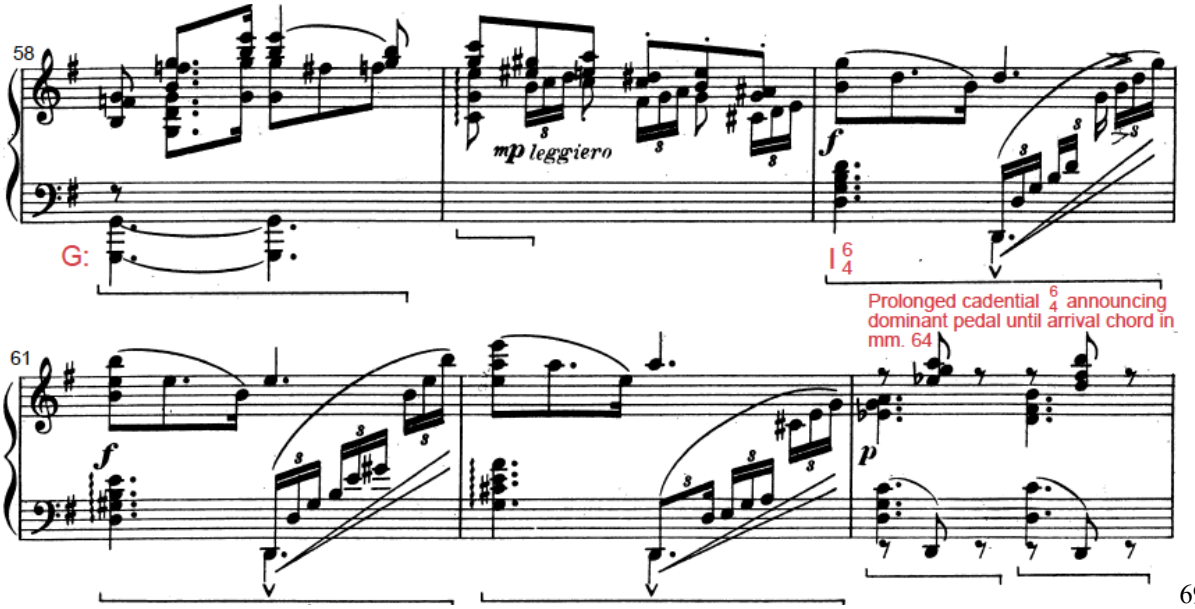


Figure 27: Nocturne mm. 35-42 showing augmented dominant chord and dominant prolongation with pedal D and augmented submediant chords borrowed from G-minor

In measures 51-55, the dominant of G-major is tonicised in various ways and includes dominant ninth chords as well as an altered dominant seventh chord. This section could be analysed in D-major, but as the arrival of the dominant chord itself in measure 55 has its unstable seventh included, which, therefore causes it to resolve straight to the tonic of G-major, it seems most appropriate to keep the labelling in G. In reaching the end of this B-section, Chaminade presents a prolonged cadential 6/4 from measures 60-63 with a dominant pedal on D until arriving at the perfect cadence in measure 64. Measures 64 and 65, a prolongation of the tonic, display more modal borrowing with the presence of an A-sharp, the enharmonic of B-flat, making the G-chord a minor tonic chord. The minor third in the chord is created by neighbouring motion to and from the major third of the chord (B-A#-B).
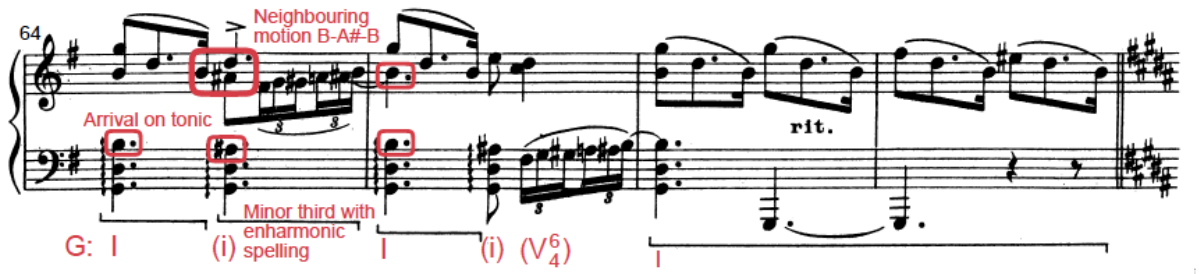




Figure 28: Nocturne mm. 58-67 showing prolongation of cadential 6/4 and prolongation of G-major tonic with borrowed tonic minor chords

From this B-section, the A-section is repeated exactly until the coda in measure 100, which is merely a prolongation of the tonic featuring a descending B-major figuration in both hands. Interestingly, this coda is decidedly softer (*pianissimo)* than the rest of the piece, similar to the coda of *Solitude*, which Chaminade marked as *pppp*. It is possible, even probable, that her pieces draw down in this way in order to convey a sense of quietude and reflection at the close.
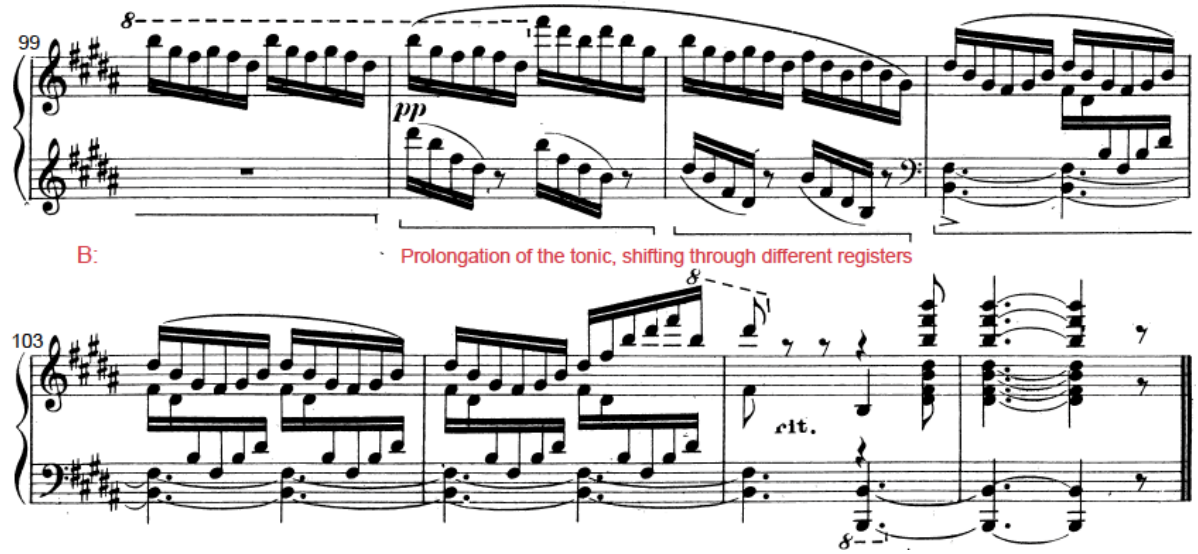


Figure 29: Nocturne mm. 99-103 showing coda

In summary, this piece is one of Chaminade's most harmonically complex and interesting and demonstrates a composer who has honed her craft. It is a highly embellished work featuring altered chords, modal borrowing, harmonic prolongation and chromatic movement and builds on the techniques and stylistic traits used in her other pieces. Chaminade weaves her phrases and sections together through the overlapping of cadential extensions and the beginnings of new phrases, without coming to a complete rest at any point. This constant phrase and section elision give the piece a feeling of never landing but rather a sense of undulation. This piece may reveal qualities seen in the previous three pieces; however, it certainly reveals a more mature and crafted style.

Although not one of the selected pieces for analysis, Chaminade's *Au pays dévasté* is worth a brief mention. This work for solo piano was composed in 1919 and makes direct reference to the devastation of World War I. Compared to her other pieces for solo piano and, in fact, most of her oeuvre, *Au pays dévasté* is an uncharacteristically heavy, slow piece without the usual lyrical charm one would expect of Chaminade. The mood is ponderous but not nostalgic and the whole work is imbued with a heavy-heartedness. The melody is dirge-like and ominous and feels isolated from the accompaniment, which sits in a very low register with brooding octave pedal chords. In comparison to the rhythmic and melodic freshness apparent in Chaminade's other works, *Au pays dévasté* seems to stagger along in a slightly disjunct fashion with none of the usual graceful flow characteristic of Chaminade's style. While this piece stands out as distinct, it is an individual response to the horrors of the war and does not signal a new stylistic approach from Chaminade.

Some of Chaminade's songs, too, show direct influences of the First World War. *Sonne, clarion (marche militaire)* (1915) is written in a march tempo and refers to achieving victory over Germany; *Le Village* (1915) speaks of a French village that was once beautiful but is now destroyed; and *L'anneau du soldat* (1916) tells the story of a soldier going off to war, leaving his loved one behind. The themes of these songs differ from Chaminade's usual choice of texts, which continuously spoke of love, exotic lands, nature, nostalgia or beauty with feelings of yearning, suffering or euphoria coming to the fore. Interestingly, Chaminade's last published song was in 1916, a good 12 years before she stopped composing. It is possible she was disheartened after the war, no longer inspired by the same romantic themes and notions. The demands of audiences had also changed significantly after the war and people would have related better to texts that spoke of the times, not of lost romantic ideals.

Chaminade was not one for innovation and, to some in her day, this may have seemed cause for criticism; however, her ultimate strength was her ability to use a set of conventions and rules and make them personal. Her individuality emerges through her control of texture and register, her gift for melody, her thoughtful use of chromaticism and the way she crafts the relationship between keys to create her signature nostalgic feel. Chaminade's frequent use of diminished seventh chords and added ninth notes, which are suggestive of minor ninth chords, evokes feelings of yearning or angst and portrays a sense of the brooding quality in her personality. Gérard Condé describes the style of Chaminade as:

> Clear, easy, melodic and unadulterated, reminiscent of Mendelssohn, with touches of archaism sometimes. The attacks always sound very distinctly as at Liszt or Saint-Saëns and, failing that possessing the originality of a Chabrier, a Fauré or a Debussy, her inspiration is never trivial, and that, without it being necessary to evoke the melancholy that often transpires or, on the contrary, the firmness of the rhythms, we can say that it is personal (Foy 1982).

The four pieces selected for analysis sit comfortably in the palette of nineteenth-century Romanticism and reflect influences of Chopin, Schumann and Mendelssohn. While they do not demonstrate a progression that is in line with progressive musical trends following World War I, they do demonstrate development in Chaminade's personal style. Consistency can be seen across her oeuvre; in her songs this is evident particularly through her choice of texts. Chaminade generally selected poems that demonstrated regular form and octosyllabic or decasyllabic rhythmic structures (McCann 2003, 22). The majority reveal similar stylistic choices and settings – and are prime examples of French Romantic music (Smith 2012, 12). They are most usually in ternary form with striking melodies and homophonic accompaniments, often displaying Spanish or exotic idioms as seen in *Chanson Espagnole* and *Chanson slave* (Smith 2012, 12). Chaminade's works for solo piano are mostly character pieces with rich vocal qualities and which stayed largely within conventional nineteenth-century tonality. Stylistic patterns evident in Chaminade's work, as seen across the four analysed pieces, include clarity of structure and form; harmonic lines with a clear sense of direction; phrase elision; a keenness for key relationships of a third; emphasis on melody and a tendency towards the nostalgic; a thoughtful use of dissonance and chromaticism; a strong presence of diminished sonorities; and an ear for orchestral colour – seen in her use of register. Chaminade's style is distinctively French with its emphasis on lyricism and the critic Théodore Massiac wrote in 1889 that he hopes "she remain[s] faithful to the French style … to that style to which we owe so many masterpieces" (Citron 1988, 139). Ultimately, Chaminade's ability to put herself into her music, without shying away from her femininity and her romantic ideals, helped her develop a style that was personal and relatable and one that touched a wide audience.

Conclusion

Not to be forgotten, to live in the heart and memory of those who understand you, that is the supreme consolation for an Artist (Chaminade in Citron 1988, 19).

Chaminade wrote these words to an American friend, Irving Schwerké, in 1942, two years before her death. Sadly, from 1928 when she ceased to compose, Chaminade retreated from the outside world, moving to Monte Carlo in 1936, and her music gradually became less known. Chaminade's decline was exacerbated by her deteriorating health – from 1926 her left foot started decaying, leaving her immobile for many years and, once in Monte Carlo, it was amputated due to severe decalcification. Chaminade refused to use a wheelchair or any aid and was, therefore, completely bedridden in the last years of her life. According to Citron, Chaminade suffered acutely with her loneliness and isolation and perhaps her words to Schwerké reveal her feelings and fears of being forgotten and misunderstood as an artist (Citron 1988, 19). Another statement written in 1927 by Chaminade, 25 years prior to the letter to Schwerké, reveals her understanding that the musical world had moved on and she had, to a large extent, been left behind: "Today there is a new style in music, and it is very easy to forget those artists whom one had respected and acknowledged in the past" (Citron 1988, 190).

Despite the transitory nature of Chaminade's fame and popularity, she had a monumental and hugely successful career. While other female composers achieved renown, the adulation that Chaminade received, even compared to many male composers, was certainly unique. There are many factors that contributed to Chaminade's rather rapid rise to fame, the most evident being the "charm and finesse" which all her work displayed (Perry 1899). She had a gift for melody and tunefulness, and this made her music memorable and appealing. The sense of nostalgia inherent in Chaminade's work gave it a poignant quality. In an interview on BBC Radio 3, conducted by Donald Macleod, Citron shared her opinion that the nostalgic elements in Chaminade's music were appealing to the middle class who could identify with feelings of yearning or longing for the past (2008, 05:30). Citron went on to say that "She was the right composer at the right time for a broad segment of the French public, the growing middle class, the [time of the] parlour. She got to cater to a group of people that perhaps hadn't been catered to before" (2008, 04:12). Chaminade "felt a natural affinity for the domestic/home arena" and "responded to the demand for 'music for the home' with the rise of the middle

class"; her music "plugged into nineteenth-century notions of sentiment" (2008, 05:01-05:14). As discussed previously, it was in the context of the salon that Chaminade's music thrived, particularly in the golden years of its revival in the nineteenth century. In my view, the same is still true today. I believe that for Chaminade to achieve her greatest success in contemporary performance, that is, for her particular, unique appeal and charm to come across fully, it is still in the smaller, more intimate settings – framed within a particular context where she can be effectively introduced – that the true value of her work can be experienced.

The popularity of salon music and music as entertainment in the home in the nineteenth century led to a high demand for sheet music, particularly that which was accessible and instantly appealing in nature. Chaminade's compositions were ideally suited to this demand, adding greatly to her commercial success. While some of her works require the skill and technique of more accomplished performers, much of Chaminade's music is accessible to amateur musicians. As Hans Schroeder wrote in 1908, "The compositions of Mme. Chaminade are so closely allied with the formative period of many young musicians that they control a far wider field of interest and really lead the so-called popular music in its highest estate" (Citron 1988, 177). An article in a Spanish newspaper, *El Mundo,* in 1909 declared that Chaminade's "popularity is such that not only are her compositions heard in concerts throughout the world, but her music has also infiltrated all households; there are few respectable aficionados who have no works of Chaminade in their repertoire" (Citron 1988, 185).

Although ironic, another factor that added to the glorification of Chaminade was her gender. Because women did not easily find a place in music, Chaminade became a role model and was idolised for her success. As seen through the merchandise and the clubs that emerged in America, Chaminade became a novelty, particularly for women. Recent surveys show that female musicians today feel the absence of historical role models (Macarthur et al. 2017, 22) and it is only through explorations within the context of scholarly feminist studies that the function and contribution of female composers and musicians such as Chaminade can come to light. This dissertation does not attempt to probe feminist thought; however, it can be used as a case study to explore gendered issues in music further. While feminist musicology made major strides in the 1980s and 1990s in its work to unearth forgotten female composers and tackle some of the root causes for their invisibility, there are many possibilities for additional

research in the field. Recent studies by Sally Macarthur et al. have shown that in the twenty-first century, the "field has not been transformed enough, with some of the literature suggesting that the performance of women's music on the concert platform is in decline" (2017, 15). While feminist musicology is valuable in its attempt to lessen the gendered imbalance that has occurred naturally throughout musical history, it often, by the nature of its discourse, tends to emphasise the division between male and female composers and fails fully to recognise that, despite the lack of visibility of female composers, they are decidedly present. This invisibility is rooted in the historically incorrect premise that there is an absence of great women composers (Macarthur et al. 2017, 6).

The very reasons for Chaminade's success and popularity point to her ultimate downfall. While Chaminade may have been considered "the right composer at the right time", for her music to have the lasting effect she desired, one could say that she was, in fact, born at the wrong time. The date of her birth in the middle of the nineteenth century towards the end of the Romantic era was to her disadvantage since she reached her peak at about the age of 40, by which time her musical style, fostered in the aesthetic of the 1860s and 1870s was out of step with modern trends (Citron 1988, 25). The turn of the century was a time of social, political and economic upheaval and the attitudes and demands of people changed. Following World War I, Chaminade's music was considered passé, belonging to an outdated salon tradition and the "intrinsic worth [of her music] was devalued by sheer force of its categorisation" (Citron 1988, 25). The term 'salon' became a derogatory one and given that Chaminade's reputation relied on her piano pieces and songs – music ideal for the salon – her work was trivialised (Smith 1994, 743). Chaminade may have experienced continued popularity had she adapted to the new century; however, she continued to compose in a "post-Saint-Saëns idiom" and her resistance to change, whether deliberate or due to her innate conservatism, was an obstacle to her reception in serious musical circles (Smith 1994, 741). It is possible, too, that Chaminade was affected by the changes in the world, particularly after World War I, and this may have impacted on her will to compose and on her ability to express herself in the same way as before.

While for the most part Chaminade received positive criticism, even flattery, she was also subjected to criticism that was highly derogatory. An article from *The Etude* aptly summarises the superfluous nature of much of the criticism Chaminade was given:

> When carefully analyzed, [the criticism] resolved itself mostly into: First, the genuine German conviction that a woman can do nothing ably, when competing in a line hitherto monopolized by men; second, the race prejudice against everything French in general, and French music and musicians in particular; and, third, a little irritation that the performer had the effrontery to remain single until well on toward middle life, and to possess little, if any, physical beauty (Perry 1899).

Chaminade's style presents much to admire in its inspiration of content, craftsmanship of melodic and harmonic form, and thoughtful and meaningful construction. Chaminade's music presents similar patterns and influences throughout her pieces, displaying little change and yet there is clear stylistic development in the added maturity and sureness in her later pieces. The fact that stylistic change is not a feature of her oeuvre should not necessarily be viewed as a negative. Perhaps Chaminade's deliberate resistance to the avant-garde movement and persistence in writing in the style which suited her best, remaining "a conservative voice in the modern world" as McCann (2003, 23) puts it, is in itself a mark of individuality. As stated by Edward Baxter Perry, "Regarded artistically, [Chaminade] is decidedly worthy of high consideration, though she as decidedly has her limitations, as who has not? She is neither very broad, very profound, nor very versatile; but along her special line, both as player and composer, she is unique and inimitable" (1899).

My own experience in practice revealed a parallel with the critical reception of Chaminade's music, particularly in England. As I found, Chaminade's music does not always provide enough variety to retain continued interest and there were many times that I felt her music, when practiced in isolation for several months lacked, to some degree, stimulating qualities for a pianist. This is not to say that her music is easy to play or even that her pieces lack integrity and appeal, but that focusing only on her oeuvre for a performance can begin to feel monotonous. Initially, I was concerned that the level of Chaminade's music may not be up to the standard required for an MMus performance. However, during rehearsals with the singer and other instrumentalists, it became apparent that Chaminade's work presents challenges of its own in order to make it convincing. With her apparently simple harmonic structures and often slow harmonic rhythm, passages, if not played with considered variation in tone and dynamic were at risk of being merely repetitive and monotonous. In my journey with Chaminade, performing her music became my tribute to her. Having been immersed in a year of exploration of her work, her style, her personality, her life, I was very mindful of her character and everything that I had come to know about her. My desire was to reveal

Chaminade to my audience – the Chaminade who, on the whole, so captivated audiences and critics alike just over a century ago with the charm and beauty of her music.

In Chaminade's day, as programmed by her, concerts comprised only her works and usually within the salon setting. That was how they were received and that was how she chose to present them. It was within this environment that her music was most successful. In my recital, I chose to replicate that environment as a means to introduce an audience to Chaminade as well as pay homage to the type of performance she would have given herself. In preparing for a recital of works solely by Chaminade, I discovered different challenges from a recital where the programme is more balanced with works of varying genres and composers. Chaminade's pieces are typically short with a major proportion of her work being for solo piano and voice, making interesting and varied presentations more difficult. Chaminade's method of programming triggered mixed responses from critics. While being commended for maintaining an appreciative audience, there was an inevitable degree of tedium in her concerts. An article in *The Times* in 1893 stated that, despite the cleverness of her pieces, "they can hardly be held to stand successfully the severe ordeal of being heard in a great quantity" (Citron 1988, 147). Given my awareness of the risk of monotony for my recital, I put much thought into the programme, taking care to find a selection of works that would complement each other and include a range of instruments and types of pieces – songs for solo voice and songs featuring the violin or the cello, piano solo, piano trio and the flute concertino.

While this dissertation does not aim to discuss the way in which Chaminade's music is programmed today, it is interesting to note some of the contexts or settings in which it appears in contemporary concerts. Chaminade's work often features within the context of a focus on female composers. In October 2020, for example, a performance by the Musikanten Piano Trio under the Ravello Concert Society will pay homage to female composers and perform works by Chaminade, Clara Schumann and Fanny Mendelssohn (Ravello Concert Society 2020). Chaminade also appears frequently in programmes featuring French composers such as the performance of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra in September 2019, where her music was presented alongside that of Erik Satie, Bizet, Maurice Ravel and two other female composers, Boulanger and Germaine Tailleferre (Royal Liverpool Philharmonic 2020). However, Chaminade's music is not only present in concerts featuring the works of female or French composers but also appears in varied programmes.

An example is a 2002 performance in which Chaminade's Trio in G-minor was played alongside Beethoven's Trio No.1 in E-flat major (Department of Music 2003). An interesting programme that took place in June 2019 as part of the Festival Baltimore featured Chaminade's less popular work *Au pays dévasté* as well as Robert Schumann's *Fantasie* and Charles-Valentin Alkan's *Grande sonate* (Festival Baltimore 2020).

The literature surrounding Chaminade, including this dissertation, foregrounds her loss of popularity and the disappearance of her music. However, even though audiences of Chaminade's time began to find her music outdated – and it was the specificity of the context in which it belonged that meant her music no longer had a place in a post-World War society – it never completely disappeared. There is little evidence of works by Chaminade featuring in concerts in the 50 or so years following her death, and, to a large degree, her music is still not part of mainstream repertoire. However, concert programmes in the 2000s attest to the fact that her music does exist in today's repertoire, albeit not mainstream, but it is certainly present. Having mentioned the way in which Chaminade is being presented in contemporary programmes, it is clear that she does not necessarily need to exist only within her own confined context. The examples given above show that she does feature alongside varied composers and musical works. Chaminade's music is timeless in its appeal. Its gift is its ability to evoke resonances of a more romantic, albeit somewhat idealised, past.

It is clear that while Chaminade did suffer a loss of popularity and a decline in the success of her music, she has by no means sunk into obscurity. She is slowly gaining more recognition due both to the work of musicologists such as Marcia Citron and an increased interest today in female composers. Chaminade's music, although seen as outdated towards the end of her life for various reasons as discussed, should not be devalued in any way. Her music reveals an integrity with no aspirations to being anything other than what it is. It was neither ground-breaking nor innovative and yet, within a musical milieu of gender disadvantages and challenges, she emerged as a composer with her own unique voice and stylistic individuality.

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