An Aggregate Study of Gabriel Pierné's *Sonata for Violin and Piano*, Opus 36

by

Andrew Marshall Quiring

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Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Andrew Campbell, Chair
Rodney Rogers
Russell Ryan
Martin Schuring

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ABSTRACT

Henri Constant Gabriel Pierné (1863-1937) was a French composer and conductor. Given his position of importance during his life alongside César Franck, Claude Debussy, and Camille Saint-Säens, Pierné's musical *oeuvre* has largely gone unrecognized in the modern musical canon. Scholarly literature on Pierné is severely limited; currently, there is only one identified biography about Pierné, written in French by author Georges Masson ain 1987. To date, no formal analysis exists of Pierné's *Sonata for Violin and Piano,* Opus 36 (1900).

This document provides an account of Pierné's life and style, gleaned in particular from this author's original English translation of Masson's definitive text. It also delivers the first known scholarly musical analysis of the sonata. Each chapter discusses a particular movement in depth, considering the elements of Structure, Harmony, Melody, Rhythm, and Texture, while illustrating contextual trends and potential influences across all three movements. The document concludes with the author's original score analysis charts as well as a comprehensive bibliography. The discussion herein illuminates aspects of Pierné, and specifically his *sonata for violin and piano,* to promote greater awareness of a composer whose work merits elevated recognition beyond his current reputation of semi-obscurity.

DEDICATION

To my parents for their continuous and loving support.

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Thank you to my friends and colleagues Valérie Condoluci, Renaud Boutin, and Béatrice Létourneau for their helpful leads and assistance with specific aspects in exploring the French musicology throughout this quest.

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The artistic and personal components of my character have been most prominently shaped by the interaction with my two most profound and long-standing mentors, Dr. Elizabeth Grant and Dr. Lawrence Jones. Their genuine passion and benevolence have fostered my love both for music and for life.

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CHAPTER 1

GABRIEL PIERNÉ

I. Pierné's Biography

On August 16, 1863, Henri Constant Gabriel Pierné was born at home at the address of *5 rue de la Glacière* in Metz, France.[1] At age three, the precocious child was able to recall specific songs, demonstrating a natural proclivity for music.[2] Little is known of Pierné's mother, pianist Hortense Souteyrant (1827-1898), other than that she supported her son's musical talent from an early age. Pierné's father, Jean-Baptiste (b. 1821, Metz, d. 1894, Paris), was the first member of his family to pursue a career in music; he studied at the *Paris Conservatoire* and became a well-known bass singer before proceeding to work in the theatres of Liège, Béziers, and Montpellier.[3]

As the third and only surviving child of this family, Pierné was pampered by his parents. Attentive to his development, they enrolled him in the Metz Conservatoire at age five. [4] Despite demonstrating considerable musical aptitude, the young Pierné consistently conjured creative excuses to avoid practicing, thus thwarting the supportive efforts of his parents.[5] At age seven, he witnessed Napoléon III's invasion of Paris on July 27, 1870, which initiated the Franco-Prussian War. Because of Pierné's young age,

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[1] Georges Masson, *Gabriel Pierné: Musicien lorrain* (Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 1987). Note: The information presented in this section was directly translated by the author of this paper; the content is from Masson's French biography of Pierné, the only known biography of this composer.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Cyril Bongers, *Correspondance romain* (Lyon: Symétrie, 2005), vii.

[4] « *Conservatoire à rayonnement régional Gabriel Pierné. Metz* » [archive], sur data.bnf.fr. Note: the Metz Conservatoire was later renamed the Conservatoire Gabriel Pierné in 1991.

[5] Masson, 13.

these events initially had negligible impact on him; he later recognized the resultant severity, notably reflecting it in his 1895 composition *Nuit de Noël de 1870*.[6]

The Germanic victory in Sedan motivated the Pierné family to move to Paris. Here, Gabriel was introduced to the highly respected Ambroise Thomas, with whom he continued his musical studies in the Paris Conservatoire. He also met Claude Debussy (1862-1918), a classmate with whom he developed a lifelong friendship.[7] At the early age of twelve, Pierné already submitted his *Ritournelle* to the Alphonse Leduc publishing house who eagerly disseminated it as the first of his many published *mélodies* and *romances* that were received with great enthusiasm, thus initiating his compositional profile.[8] Soon after, Pierné officially enrolled in the compositional classes of Jules Massenet (1842-1912) as well as the organ classes of César Franck (1822-1890) although here, too, composition was the primary concentration of discussion. Pierné proceeded to win numerous awards during his time in the Paris Conservatoire, and in 1882 at the age of nineteen, he claimed the coveted Prix de Rome with his cantata *Édith*, based on poetry by Édouard Guinard.[9]

On January 28, 1883, Pierné departed Paris for Villa Médici – also known as the French Academy – in Rome, the sojourn earned by winners of this competition.[10] Pierné was enamoured with the new environment. The years he spent at Villa Médici brought

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[6] Ibid, 14.

[7] Ibid, 14-15.

[8] Ibid, 15.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Masson, 18.

him travel, inspiration, an unhurried opportunity to develop his craft, and aristocratic and artistic connections. Here, Pierné would meet such influential figures as Edvard Grieg (1843-1907) and his wife, lyric soprano Nina Grieg; encounter visits from Massenet and Franz Liszt (1811-1886); and be introduced to the music of Wagner.[11] Musicologist and Pierné specialist Cyril Bongers highlights this Italian period as critical in the shaping of Pierné's career. His time in Rome provided artistic inspiration as well as exposure to important styles that would influence his eclectic approach. Bongers states: "Much more than a simple place of residence, [Villa Médici] was the heart of a real community of artists, whose diverse skills and daily exchanges stimulated an intense emulation."[12] Pierné returned to Paris on December 31, 1885. Thirty years later, he would musically reflect these Italian influences in his oratorio *Saint-François d'Assise* and his orchestral tone poem, *Paysages franciscains.*[13] In his own correspondence, Pierné noted:

> One of the greatest advantages of the four years spent at the Villa is, for the students, the possibility of chatting, mainly at mealtimes, and of discussing between artists on artistic questions which, all the arts linked together, are common.[14]

Pierné spent the next few years establishing his career as a virtuoso pianist throughout Paris and the provinces, composing many solo piano works for his own performance.[15] He briefly taught piano, *solfège*, and harmony in his parents' studio at *7*

[11] See: Masson, 19-20; and Bongers, xiii.

[12] Bongers, xviii-xiv.

[13] Masson, 19-20.

[14] Bongers, xiv.

[15] Ibid, viii.

Rue Christine. One of his piano students was Louise Bergon, an eighteen-year-old member of Parisian high society with whom he fell in love and eventually married in 1890. By all reports, they enjoyed a happy marriage.[16]

In the same year, Pierné's mentor, Franck, passed away after a thirty-nine-year tenure as master of the Cavaillé-Coll organ at St. Clotilde. Pierné inherited this position; he was charged with the ecclesiastic and artistic responsibilities of providing music that would attract the bourgeoisie. Pierné introduced new harmonic and melodic elements, and was recognized for allegedly providing spirited postludes. Author Eugène Bertraux noted how Pierné occasionally displeased Gregorian purists by uniquely connecting plainchant versets and strophes with surprising timbres, "enribboning" arabesques, and ingenious harmonies. Pierné responded to such protests in his usual manner of combined seriousness and humour, defending that he liked to cook with various spices. Pierné left his organist post after eight years.[17]

After marrying Bergon, Pierné retained important relations with the Merson family, especially painter Luc-Olivier (1846-1920), son of notable painter and art critic, Charles-Olivier Merson (1822-1902). Luc-Olivier was seventeen years Pierné's junior but they shared considerable aesthetics and ideals. Pierné admired Merson's well-rounded nature and often relied on his knowledge of literature for assistance in selecting texts for his vocal works. The two men vacationed together near the city of Carantec, in an eighteenth-century residence known as *le domain de Francik* which they rented

[16] Masson, 25.

[17] Ibid, 24-27.

together. This was not merely a place of summer respite; it was the ideal venue for composing, and Pierné developed many of his early sketches here.

After three months of annual summer vacation, Pierné and his family would return to their Parisian home on *Rue Monsieur le Prince* in the *6^{e} arrondissement*.[18] In 1900, while staying within the *6^{e} arrondissement*, they relocated to *6 de la Rue de la Tournon*, a beautiful home with a garden courtyard. Their home was frequented by numerous important figures of society, including Saint-Saëns, Debussy, Paul Dukas, Georges Enesco, Marguerite Long, Alfred Cortot, Lily Laskine, Henriette Faure, the Pasquier brothers, and Jacques Thibaud, the dedicatee of Pierné's violin sonata. Numerous theatre directors, librettists, and conductors would call upon the house, and all of them, Masson notes, were received with "urbanity and warm hospitality."[19]

In 1910, Pierné accepted the position as leader of the *Concerts Colonne*, a series which comprised forty-eight standard season concerts plus supplementary events such as provincial and foreign performances. He was frequently invited as guest conductor with numerous other ensembles, and often returned in such capacity to his home city, Metz.[20]

Throughout his life, Pierné maintained a positive reputation. He was devoted to his musical work, but also contributed many non-musical acts of public service, such as committee participation for state curriculum reform and brief teaching engagements. He became rector of *l'Université de Paris* where he was tasked with promoting choral music in Parisian schools; he founded a high school choir for girls; and he wrote several articles

[18] Ibid, 23.

[19] Ibid, 30-31.

[20] Ibid, 32.

on music.[21] In 1924, Pierné was elected into *l'Académie des Beaux Arts*, inheriting the chair position from Théodore Dubois upon his passing. As an alumnus, Pierné was faithfully invested in recent winners of the Prix de Rome and he was carefully attentive in evaluating and selecting prospective candidates. He also maintained a strong advocacy for the Villa Medici.[22]

Extreme fatigue from a demanding career and a lifelong use of tobacco prompted the early symptoms of bronchitis. In 1933, Pierné retired to the Gwen Kaer estate of Ploujean. He died there on the morning of July 17, 1937 at the age of seventy-three. He was buried in *Père Lachaise* in division 13, not far from the tomb of Frédéric Chopin. Jacques Rouché, director of *Théâtres lyriques nationaux* and later manager of the Paris Opera, commissioned Pierné's memorial monument – the Greek goddesses of music and song, Euterpe, and Polymnia – from sculptor Henri Bouchard.[23]

II. Pierné's Conducting Career

Pierné's conducting career blossomed around age forty, which spanned thirty years (from 1903-1934). He was first a substitute conductor for *Concerts Colonne*, then became its official leader in 1910.[24] He favoured transparent and impressionistic works,

[21] See: Pascale Gallien, "Cydalise et le chèvre-pied de Gabriel Pierné: Étude analytique et critique," Master's thesis (Lyon: Université Lyon II, 1987), 12; and Masson, 35. Of particular note, Pierné contributed to Lavignac's six-volume *Encyclopédie de la Musique* with a 340-page entry on the history of orchestration, co-written with Henri Woollett.

[22] Masson, 36.

[23] Ibid, 29, 40-41.

[24] Masson, 43-44.

which allowed him to demonstrate colour from the podium. His gestures were moderate, avoiding gymnastic displays of virtuosity, and he never conducted from memory, a display that he considered an act of foolishness designed to impress.[25] Masson colourfully describes Pierné's conducting style as having a sense of persuasive dignity, the subtlety of a diplomat, and the hazy radiance of an artist immersed mid-dream, inaccessible to elitism and visibly detesting false eloquence; Pierné was revered with an impression of infallibility and an intimate knowledge of the text and works.[26]

Pierné's conducting style demonstrated a comical, capricious element, which is perhaps best represented in his presentations of works such as Emmanuel Chabrier's *Bourrée fantasque*.[27] Pierné was very careful to mute his compositional persona when conducting other composers' masterpieces. He sought to render every detail of other composers' intentions accurately without extraneous interpretive contributions; in particular, he demonstrated diligent observation of tempi and adherence to the text. Pierné was extremely flexible, adapting to the nuances of concerto soloists and generously offering opportunities to apprentice conductors.[28]

Masson asserts that in Pierné's later years and despite his loss of hearing, he was still able to notice and correct the smallest of minutiae. He was a tremendous podium sight-reader, where no detail would escape his notice in orchestral scores.[29] A testimony

[25] Ibid, 43-46.

[26] Ibid, 47.

[27] Ibid, 49.

[28] Ibid, 48-50.

[29] Ibid, 48.

by critic Henri Massis described him as a creator of atmosphere, capable of eliciting rare and unforeseen nuances with full and luminous sonorities and subtle refinement.[30] Regarding Pierné's direction of Debussy's *Nocturnes,* Darius Milhaud called him an "alchemist of timbre."[31] André Jolivet considered Pierné's recording of Debussy's *L'après-midi d'un faune* as the most beautiful execution he had encountered.

Remarkably, seventy-four recordings of Pierné's conducting survive, among them 78 rpm recordings of his own works produced with *Concerts Colonne* between the years 1928-1931. Sadly, there exists only one recording of Pierné performing at the piano, this being his *Sonata da camera* for flute, cello, and piano, op. 48 from 1927.[32] He was interested in recording technology, and participated in creating piano rolls with the mechanical pianos of the Leipzig firm Hupfeld in May of 1908.[33] His ballet *Giration*: *divertissement chorégraphique* was to be danced to 78 rpm recordings (limiting the time to two 8-minute intervals).[34]

[30] Ibid, 48-49.

[31] Ibid, 49.

[32] Gabriel Pierné, *Chabrier; Bizet; Lalo; Berlioz; Debussy; Franck; Pierné. Orchestre de Concerts Colonne* et al., 2CD: Disc 2, Malibran, CDRG140 (France: La Celle sur Morin, 1999). Previously released material.

[33] Cyril Bongers, « Histoire de girations: Introduction à la discographie de Gabriel Pierné, » *Tempus perfectum: revue de musique,* 19.

[34] See: Ibid; and Jacques Tchamkerten, "Liner notes" to *Gabriel Pierné: Chamber Music, Vol. 1,* Christian Ivaldi et al., trans. by John Tyler Tuttle (Timpani: 2CD. 2C1110, 2006). This ballet involved a ballerina and a spinning top dizzily moving about in a playroom, allegedly evoking the circular movement of the record player.

III. Pierné's Programming Choices

Pierné was an eclectic programmer who drew from a variety of aesthetics (impressionistic, post-Wagner, neoclassical, and the *avant-garde*), sometimes in deliberate resistance to public preference. Simultaneously, however, he was careful to provide a variety of accessible vs. challenging works for his audiences. These *potpourri*-style concerts contrasted with the Wagner festivals which were dominant throughout Paris at the time. Apart from a few occasional exceptions of Wagner, Mahler and Bruckner, Pierné generally avoided programming post-romantic Germanic music, as the thick sounds, exhausting duration, and unique instrumentation were largely incompatible with the French taste associated with Colonne's organization. While the public generally preferred Beethoven, Wagner, and Berlioz, Pierné never diverted far from his aim to promote French music.[35]

Pierné organized numerous themed festivals and in doing so, introduced many unfamiliar but important individuals to French audiences. Among these composers were Prokofiev, with whom he shared an amicable friendship over common aesthetic preferences; Vincent d'Indy; and Albert Roussel. Pierné sporadically presented early music as well, most notably Mozart concerti and symphonies, Bach concerto movements or cantata selections, Handel *concerti grossi* and opera arias, Gluck arias, and the occasional works of Rameau and Lully. However, Pierné predominantly focused on nineteenth-century repertoire, including the repertoire of Schumann, Liszt, Chopin, and

[35] Masson, 60-62.

Russian music.[36] Pierné also was a tremendous advocate of new music. Under his baton, more than two hundred and fifty living composers were represented.[37] Pierné presented many premieres; among the most significant were Stravinsky's *Firebird* on June 25, 1910 to tremendous acclaim; Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloë* suite on April 2, 1911**;** and the orchestrated version of *Tzigane* on Nov 30, 1924.[38]

Pierné was known to recurringly program favoured composers. Debussy was one such composer, with Pierné's frequent inclusion of *Nocturnes* and *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*. Saint-Saëns was a second popular composer, and Pierné especially preferred his symphonic poems, concertos, and septet, in which Pierné would himself feature at the piano. He persistently promoted Ravel's music, as *Bolero* and *La Valse* often closed his programmes. The next most frequently programmed composer was d'Indy, his symphonic poems and his *Symphonie cévenole* being among the most frequently presented works of all.[39]

Pierné was one of Paris's most important promoters of Stravinsky's music.[40] Pierné also gave considerable attention to Dukas and Fauré. Other notables included Richard Strauss, especially with his *Der Rosenkavalier* suite, and Ernest Chausson, especially his *Poème*. Pierné only modestly programmed his own works, careful to never exploit his position; when he did, he usually only offered excerpts of longer pieces, or

[36] Ibid, 65.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid, 67-68.

[39] Ibid, 67.

[40] Ibid, 69.

selected works that would showcase a soloist.[41] Pierné encouraged young artists, including Ravel's friend, violinist Hélène Jourdan-Morhange, who was forever grateful for his help in her preparation for the première of Chausson's *Poème*; she described Pierné as a "…fine musician capable of understanding all types of music."[42]

IV. Pierné's Aesthetics and Output

Pierné's position as a conductor allowed him to experience many compositional trends, all of which nourished his own eclectic aesthetic flavor.[43] As a composer, he did not earn fame by advancing any unique innovations, but rather by embracing a tremendous variety of styles, and his compositional output was therefore as diverse as his concert programming.

Pierné wrote in nearly every genre and felt equally comfortable contributing works for the salon, the concert hall, the church, and the dramatic stage. Bongers acknowledges that Pierné never completely adhered to one school, "…using older models with hindsight and discernment, not for imitation but for creating an aesthetic ideal."[44] Masson similarly described Pierné as an independent composer who made his own personal sound while fluently participating in everyone else's language.[45] A musical

[41] Ibid, 65-69.

[42] Marc Wood, "Pierné in Perspective: Of Church and Circus," *The Musical Times* 143, 1878 (2002): 48. https://www.jstor.org/stable/1004422 (accessed June 29, 2020).

[43] Masson, 79-80.

[44] Bongers, *Giration* 16.

[45] Masson, 81.

chameleon, he embraced a bit of everything that came into his sphere of influence, from nuances of Ravel's orchestration to the occasional audacities of *Les Six.*[46] His output encompassed a vast spectrum. His works *L'an mil* and *Poème symphonique* exhibited Wagnerian-Franckian harmony and drama associated with the *schola cantorum*. His *Ballet de Cour* and *Sonata de camera* harkened back to previous eras with their neoclassical and neo-baroque styles. Impressionistic influences associated with the *conservatoire* are heard throughout many sections of *Cydalise et le chèvre-pied*; and more academic contrapuntal writing is evident in his *Prélude de concert sur un thème de Purcell, op. 53* for bassoon and piano.

Pierné was deeply interested in popular legends and mysticism. This fascination manifested in four important large works: the symphonic poem *Paysages franciscains* (1919), the oratorio *Saint François d'Assise* (1912), the *mystère Les enfants à Bethléem* (1907) and the *légende musicale La Croisade des Enfants* (1902), the latter being his most celebrated piece, earning him the City of Paris Prize of 10,000 francs in 1903.[47] These works were especially favoured outside of France, especially *Croisade* in Germany.[48] Elements of popular culture also made their way into his compositional palette; for example, he incorporated aspects of American jazz in his *Impressions de Music-Hall*, opus 47. Marc Wood addresses the synthesis of Pierné's traits in this piece:

[46] Ibid, 84.

[47] Wood, 49.

[48] See: Gallien, 11; and Henri Woollett, "Gabriel Pierné," in *Le Ménéstrel*, no. 4524, 85e année, no. 2, 12 janvier 1923, 13.

> Perhaps this work summarizes all that was best about Gabriel Pierné – his open-mindedness, his sense of style, his indomitable wit and command of form and texture. His musical journey, throughout a long career, from avowed Franckian to devil-may-care hedonist of the 1920's is the musical journey of France itself.[49]

Although Pierné respected and even advocated innovation, he generally avoided modernism and remained sincerely connected to his past. He was completely disinterested in the serialist music of Schoenberg and favored emotionally engaging music rather than the progressive trend of cerebralism.[50] Musicologists have had difficulty trying to categorize Pierné, some saying he belongs in no category at all. Wood, however, identified him as an important transition between Franck; the progressivism of Debussy, Ravel, and Stravinsky; and the innovative elements of late Fauré.[51] David Ewin describes Pierné as having:

> …technical skill; his style was elegant; sensitivity and refinement characterized his speech; his thought was touched by poetic beauty. What he lacked in originality and independence, he compensated for in charm. While discovering no new world, while content to live in a familiar one, he said what he had to say with freshness and appeal.[52]

Masson suggests that Pierné's personal and musical character exhibit traits inherited from his parents. His Nordic father contributed a sense of moderation and balance, and his Mediterranean mother evoked grace and exuberance, thus yielding a blended mix of technique with curiosity, discipline and instinct. His other attributes

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[49] Wood, 53.

[50] Masson, 85; Gallien, 16.

[51] See: Dominique Sordet, *Douze chefs d'orchestre* (Paris: Librairie Fischbauer, 1924), 106; Gallien, 19-20; and Wood, 47.

[52] Wood, 47.

included charm, tenderness, gaiety, humor, elegance, and sensibility, never with any trace of malice, aggression or inquietude. His lyrical propensity likely derived from his singer father, and his virtuosic writing from his pianist mother. [53]

Unquestionably, Pierné's greatest aesthetic influences came from his mentors Franck and Massenet, as well as his friend, Saint-Saëns. Masson regards Pierné as a descendent of Massenet but a spiritual son of Franck.[54] From Massenet, he likely learned operatic lyricism, drama, delicacy, and charm, as well as the art of seduction without languor.[55] Other characteristic influences derived from Massenet include an interest in structural or rhythmic mottos, melodic heterophony, and subtler choices of sentimental harmonic progressions, but also certain chromatic choices for dramatic affect.[56] Pierné likely also inherited Massenet's sense of sensuality as well as his access to lighter popular styles.[57] From Franck, Pierné learned structural architecture, grand religious piety, and mystical austerity. Franck's influence is also observed in Pierné's heightened chromaticism, use of instrumentation, fascination with cyclicism, and innate awareness for all voices and their movement within full textures.[58]

Roy Howat writes that attempts to prove influence can be questionable and unreliable, but the objective is "…rather to trace shared language and gestures for

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[53] Masson, 81-82.

[54] Ibid, 83.

[55] Ibid, 82-83.

[56] Hugh Macdonald, "Jules Massenet" in *Groves Music Online*. https://www-oxfordmusiconline com.hmlproxy.lib.csufresno.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000051469?rskey=pYNUNC (accessed March 4, 2021).

[57] Gallien, 7.

[58] Masson, 82-83.

whatever musical insights they can offer…"[59] In some cases, these connections help to explain broader stylistic trends and musical identities through relations. Pierné is indebted to Saint-Saëns for paving the way in the domain of purely instrumental writing, for focusing on the abstract musical content over external programmes, and for promoting specific French musical styles with national pride.[60] Saint-Saëns's interest in neoclassical textures and older forms from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are also paralleled throughout Pierné's works.[61] Cyril Bongers describes the combination of intelligence with elegance that Pierné inherited from Saint-Saëns the "surest science with the freshest fantasy."[62] Chopin's profound influence upon French music can also be observed in Pierné's writing, particularly in his lyrical coloratura heard in pearly pianistic figurations, use of chromaticism, pedal point, and indications of *rubato*.

Outside of France, Pierné also took inspiration from Russian harmonies and timbres, rhythms from the Spanish and Basque regions, as well as various Eastern scales, and modalities of both foreign and domestic origins. From Pierné's varied integration of a wide array of influences, Masson writes, he blends his own style: "classical in form, sensible in spirit, tinted with ingenuity and light humour, a melodically abundant sense […] taste for cyclical development, harmonies that we would consider savant."[63]

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[59] Roy Howat, *The Art of French Piano Music: Debussy, Ravel, Fauré, Chabrier* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), xv.

[60] Masson, 83.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Bongers, *Correspondance romain*, xi.

[63] Masson, 84.

Pierné was widely respected and admired by the public outside of Paris. During his career of nearly sixty years, he was bestowed numerous awards and distinctions including Commander of the Legion of Honour, entered into the Order of the Holy Saviour of Greece, the Royal Crown of Belgium, the Order of Labour of Austria, and made Knight of St. Olaf of Norway and Order of Leopold of Belgium.[64] He was known to be occasionally severe, but primarily friendly and even, at times, a joker. Evidence of his good relations is observed in the letters exchanged during his summers in Carantec.[65] The surviving testimonies describe him as generally happy, calm, and dedicated to work. In Paul Landormy's book on French music, he writes: "[Pierné] was a delicate mind, a man of taste, a sensitive heart."[66] René Dumesnil writes of Pierné:

> His career was long and brilliant, his life perfectly decent, laborious, and worthy. This honest man and great artist avoided scandal and envy. He never looked for success or popularity and yet he encountered them both.[67]

The few scholars who have written about Pierné agree that he was a most respectable composer. Even in the 1940s, Pierné's sustained appeal was still apparent in Walt Disney's original concept of a faun-based segment for his animated film *Fantasia,* initially intended to be used with an excerpt of Pierné's ballet *Cydalise et le chèvre-pied.* Disney abandoned the idea of using Pierné's music, opting for Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony* instead, but he still retained the original concept of fauns for the animation

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[64] Bongers, *Correspondance romain,* xi.

[65] Masson, 75-76.

[66] Paul Landormy, *La musique française après Debussy* (Paris: Gallimard, 1943), 211.

[67] René Dumesnil, *Portraits de musiciens français* (Paris: Éditions d'histoire de l'art, 1938), 211.

subject.[68] Had Disney not pivoted away from his first choice, Pierné's name or music might enjoy greater recognition today, comparable to the mass general familiarity with Dukas on account of the association of Mickey Mouse with his *L'apprenti sorcier*.

There are various speculations as to why Pierné's reputation failed to retain warranted recognition over time, even though his works demonstrated tremendous skill and versatility, and encompassed a broad eclecticism through many genres and styles. Pianist Stephen Coombs suggests that Pierné's preference for embracing existing trends rather than promoting progressive or original innovations may have suggested a false perception of inferiority and unjustly pushed him aside.[69] Other scholars believe that Pierné's conducting overshadowed his compositional efforts, and had he not busied himself with so many different pursuits in his career and devoted more focus to writing, his reputation as a composer might have grown. Regardless, it is regrettable that he has not secured a more prominent place in musical history; as Masson attests, within every genre of his output there is at least once masterpiece.[70]

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[68] Walt Disney Pictures, *The Fantasia Anthology: 3-Disc Collector's Edition*, DVD (Burbank: Distributed by Buena Vista Home Entertainment, 2000), Disc 3.

[69] Stephen Coombs, liner notes to *Pierné: The Complete Works for Piano and Orchestra*. Stephen Coombs, piano; BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Ronald Corp. 2CD London: Hyperion CDA67348, 6 (page 6 in booklet).

[70] Masson, 87.

V. Pierné's *Sonata for Violin and Piano* Opus 36

Pierné composed his *Sonata for Violin and Piano*, op. 36, in the summer of 1900 at *le Fransik*, his summer residence in Brittany.[71] It was premiered on April 23, 1901, by violinist Jacques Thibaud (to whom the piece was dedicated) and pianist Lucien Wurmser at the *Salle Pleyel* in Paris.[72] Presumably at the request of his publisher, Pierné produced a transcription for flute and piano in 1909, likely for flautist Gaston Blanquert of the *Concerts Colonne* orchestra; its premiere was performed with pianist Armand Ferté in May of 1910.[73]

Pierné was thirty-seven when he composed this piece. The sonata as a genre was largely viewed as a rite of passage for a composer**,** but Pierné, like so many of his colleagues, waited until reaching artistic maturity to overcome any anxiety of influence and contribute a demonstrative work of original craftsmanship.[74] By 1900, Pierné had already produced a third of his output and was starting to abandon smaller forms in favor of larger ones, particularly the symphonic poem, dramatic works, and the sonata.[75]

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[71] Tchamkerten, vol. 1.

[72] See: Denis Herlin, transl. by Megan Davies, "Liner notes" to *Minstrels: Debussy; Pierné; Fauré*, Christophe Giovaninetti & Izumiko Aoyagi (Continuo Classics, CD, CC777.705, 2014?), 6; and Cyril Bongers, "Liner notes" to *Gabriel Pierné: L'œuvre pour violon & piano,* Gaëtane Prouvost & Laurent Cabasso (Continuo Classics, CD, CC777.707, 2015), 8.

[73] See: Heinzmann, 6; Tchamkerten, 13; and Jacques Tchamkerten, "Liner notes" to *Pan: Saint-Saëns; Gabriel Fauré; Guy Ropartz; Gabriel Pierné*, Michel Bellavance & Roy Howat (Meridian, CD, CDE 84509, 2006), 5. Further discussion here will be limited to aspects concerning the original version; note that the flute version exhibits minimal differences, mostly concerning minor modifications which idiomatically suit the alternate instrument.

[74] See: Charles Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, rev. ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1988), 366; and Stéphanie Moraly, "La sonata française pour violon et piano (1868-1943): Identité d'un genre musical," Doctoral diss. (Paris: Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2014), 232, 321.

[75] Bongers, *Giration*, 16.

Pierné's violin sonata appeared at the turn of the century; its chronological status reflects the initial shift in aesthetic taste concerning the length and dynamic nature of French sonatas. Throughout the nineteenth-century, the French sonata continued to expand in scope; many Wagner-inspired *sonata-fleuves* at times approached or exceeded forty minutes in duration.[76] The French gradually moved away from the epic and grandiose form and showed increasing affinity for concision, brevity, and clarity.[77] *Sonatines* evolved from their status as pedagogical tools, and became interchangeable with *sonates* as composers gradually shed their duration but preserved or even heightened the integrity of content.[78] By 1900, Pierné's violin sonata settled halfway through this aesthetic arch. Most performances of it last between twenty-one to twenty-four minutes. Pierné's stylistic hybrid reflects that balance of grander Germanic romanticism with subtler Gallic characteristics. Marc Wood writes of this piece:

> It is in the Violin Sonata of 1900 that Pierné begins to find a true and distinctive voice. What is interesting about this piece is the way in which it reflects the main influences on the composer yet carves a personal niche for itself, being poised exactly between the first explorations in the genre of the nineteenth century and the flowering of the violin sonata in France that was to follow.[79]

[76] Moraly, 264. Moraly's term *sonata-fleuves* is a variation of *roman-fleuves* used to describe long and often serial novels. Examples of such *sonata-fleuves* include Lekeu's 1892 violin sonata of thirty to thirty-five minutes or Lazzari's forty-five-minute sonata of 1893.

[77] Ibid, 228. Debussy's 1917 violin sonata only lasts approximately fifteen minutes.

[78] Ibid, 380.

[79] Wood, 48.

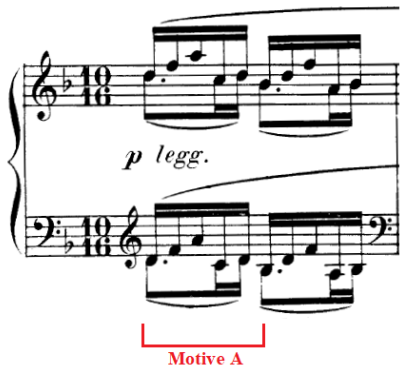
CHAPTER 2

MOVEMENT 1, *ALLEGRETTO*

I. Specific Motives in the *Sonata*

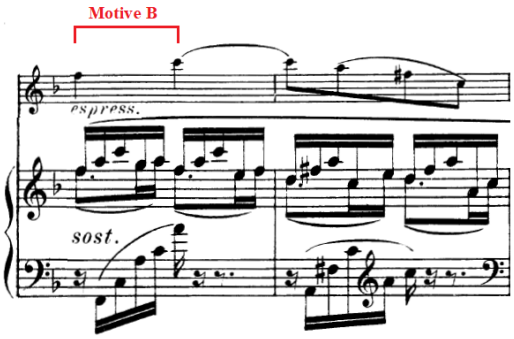
Most of the first movement navigates around use of the opening motive, but three figures in this movement occur throughout the entire sonata, enough to constitute labeling them as motives due to their frequent occurrence.

The first – Motive A (Example 1) – is the combination of arpeggiated figures blended with a curling melodic figure that makes up the identity of the P (Primary) theme. The constant presence of this material during the first movement and during its *finale* reprises warrants identification, though it does not always serve a legitimate thematic function, especially when demoted to accompanimental status in various figuration versions that decreasingly resemble the original form.



Musical Example 1: I: m. 1. Gabriel Pierné, *Sonate pour piano et violon, op. 36,* Paris: A. Durand & Fils, 1901. All subsequent musical examples of this sonata are from this source.

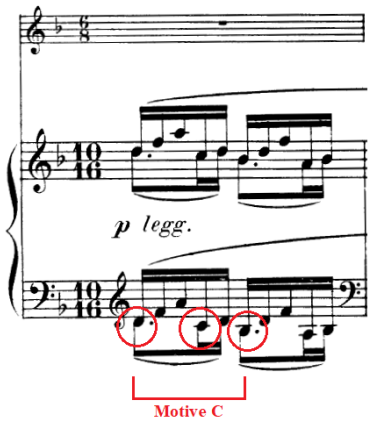
Many of Pierné's broader, lyrical themes feature a prominent rising fifth – Motive B (Example 2).[†] The fact that these themes all begin with the same strong, declamatory gesture suggests noteworthy unity, comparable to the same application with the same interval found in all movements of Ravel's 1906 *Sonatine*.



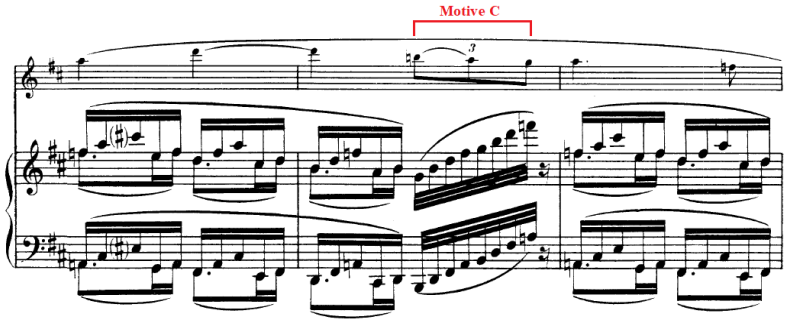
Musical Example 2: I: mm. 37-38

Lastly, Pierné seems to take an interest in scalar groups of thirds – Motive C (Ex. 3a, b, and c). This is perhaps the broadest classification of motives here, given their variety in form and less substantive quality. This figure is recognized for its repeated emphasis across all movements, even sometimes appearing as the broad melodic outline of Motive A without the *échappée* "curl" (e.g., m. 127 in the violin).

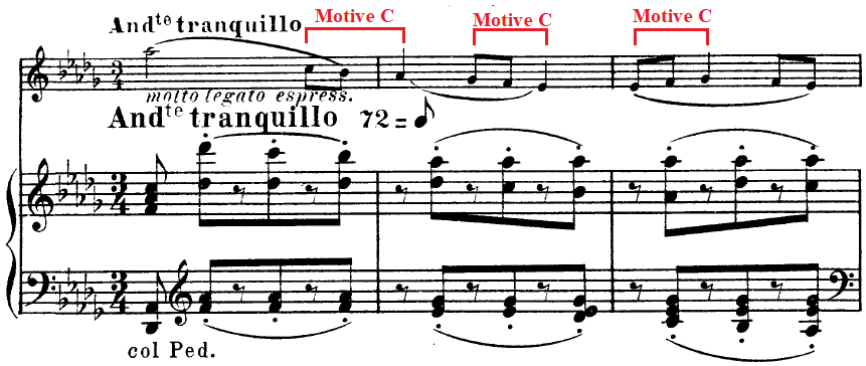
[†] Also see Themes S, T2b, as well as T2a where inverted as a fourth.



Musical Example 3a: I: m. 1



Musical Example 3b: I: mm. 279-281



Musical Example 3c: I: mm. 192-124

II. Structural Ambiguity

Roy Howat writes that French music has often been wrongly criticized for being too free in its process, lacking any definitive structure.[81] However, what is revealed through a more thorough examination of Pierné's *Violin Sonata* is rather the opposite: in many cases, very thoughtful and specific choices are too often mistaken for arbitrary indifference to inherited convention. The following structural discussions of this sonata should dismiss any hypothesis that Pierné's unique designs are haphazard or meritless; instead, these discussions should reveal a skillful and creative architecture with a purposeful narrative. This discourse aims to equip listeners with a better understanding of the piece and allows interpreters to stress these aspects.

After extended Germanic cultural and political oppression, culminating in the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), the French were diligently seeking to establish their own distinct musical identity, achieved in part through a reliance on original variation from traditional forms. While Pierné's deviances from sonata structure involve some common practices such as reordering of themes and new arrangements of the texture or other elements during the recapitulation, he also demonstrates unique modifications to the form. Structural modification is not atypical for him, and other instances of it are evident in his output, especially in his chamber works. In his *Quintet*, op. 41, for example, the development begins with a new third theme and dissipates without a recapitulation, and the third movement offers a varied recapitulation followed by a second development

[81] Howat, 38.

before returning to the slow reprise of the opening.[82] As another example, his *Sonata da camera* involves an inverted recapitulation.[83]

The obscurity that results from such deviances is an important characteristic of French music. For the French, ambiguity was an integral component that they celebrated as part of their *fin de siècle* aesthetics. Debussy wrote on the subject:

> Let us maintain that the beauty of a work of art will always remain mysterious, that is to say that we will never be able to exactly verify "how it is done." Let us preserve, at all costs, this magic peculiar to music. By its essence, [music] is more likely to contain [ambiguity] than in any other art.[84]

This deliberate ambiguity derives in part from an affinity for subtlety. Michel Fleury identifies *suggestion* as the preferred means of French presentation over direct description, promoting nuance rather than emphatic contrasts.[85] French philosopher Anne Souriau spoke of such nuances as being integral to French aesthetics:

> It is said that a work is "half-tinted" to indicate that it has an ethos of veiled sweetness, linked to a weak intensity, more finesse than force; in literature, often words suggest more than they explicitly label. The use of "half-tint" is generally praiseworthy; it indicates in the artist a great mastery of nuances, small differences, and a lot of sensitivity.[86]

French musicologist and philosopher Vladimir Jankélévitch spoke at length on the "ineffable" nature of Fauré's suggestive and nuance-saturated music, which shares many

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[82] Tchamkerten, 12-13.

[83] Ibid, 13.

[84] Claude Debussy, "Du goût" (in S.I.M., February 15, 1913), *Monsieur Croche et autres écrits* (Paris: Gallimard, 1987), 230.

[85] Michel Fleury, *L'impressionnisme et la musique* (Paris: Fayard, 1996), 62-63.

[86] Étienne Souriau and Anne Souriau, "Demi-teinte," in *Vocabulaire d'esthétique* (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1990; 3rd ed., 2010), 590. Translated by Andrew Quiring.

characteristics with Pierné and their contemporaries; this deliberately indescribable nature of *je-ne-sais-quoi* has been identified as a critical identity of French charm.[87] Parenthetically, for the defense of this study, consider that Debussy's statement about ambiguity may be intended for the listener's experience rather than for the analyst or interpreter, whose responsibilities are to understand the composer's intentions in order to effectively convey such ambiguities, much like an actor who must establish but not necessarily reveal his character's subtexts.

Pierné achieves structural ambiguity in this movement by using a persistent opening motive to blur the structural distinctions. This motive functions both as primary material and motivic-based accompaniment in different contexts and combinations. What results is a hazy uniformity wherein sections appear as subtle variations rather than the separate sections. This notion of evolving a structure from very few materials that then dominate throughout the various sections is a common feature, not only of Pierné's output but of French repertoire in general.[88] French interest in monothematicism quite possibly is related to their longstanding love of Haydn, who designed many of his sonatas and symphonies with a single dominating theme or motive, deriving accompaniments from opening material of the primary theme.[89]

As with many of his chamber works, including his *Cello Sonata* and *Quintet*, Pierné is economical with his material throughout the entire sonata, exhibiting an

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[87] See: Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Fauré et l'Inexprimable* (Paris: Seuil, 1983), 176, 344-345; and Moraly, 397. Jankélevitch referred to Fauré as the "*poète du demi-jour et de la pénombra*," translated as the "poet of the dusk/dawn and of the penumbra."

[88] Ibid, 62-63.

[89] Rosen, 4-5, 181.

incredible skill of variation and development based on very few ideas. Pierné evolves his transitions, which already tend to be ambiguous regarding their starting locations, often based on continuously varied material taken from the primary theme.[90] This approach is fairly common in sonata writing, but Pierné goes even further and continues the opening motive as the accompaniment for the secondary theme area, a procedure earlier used by Franck in the middle movement of his symphony.

i. The Exposition

EXPOSITION

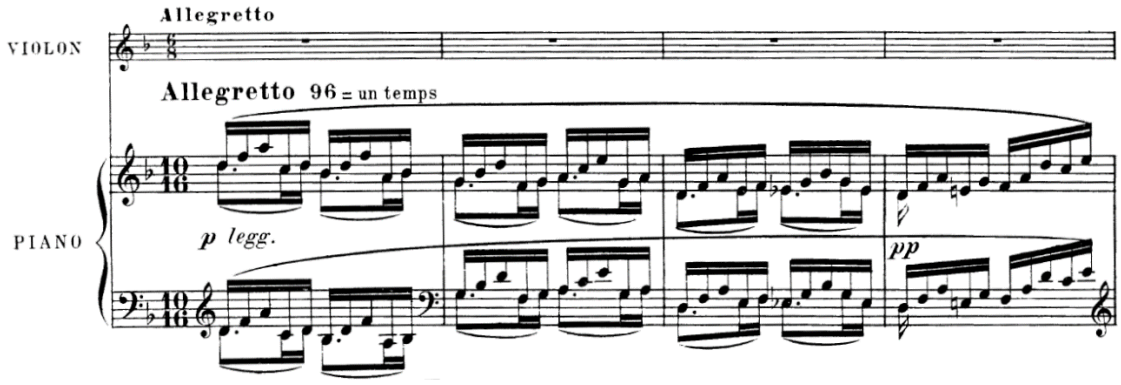
P		**T(P)**	**S**	**T2a**	**T2b**	**S**
1; 5;	9	15; 19; 23; 29	37 (41; 45)	53 (61)	69; 77; 85	93; (97; 101)
d	(A)	d → C	F	F → E♭	E♭ →	F

Figure 1. The Exposition, Mvt. I, *Allegretto*.[†]

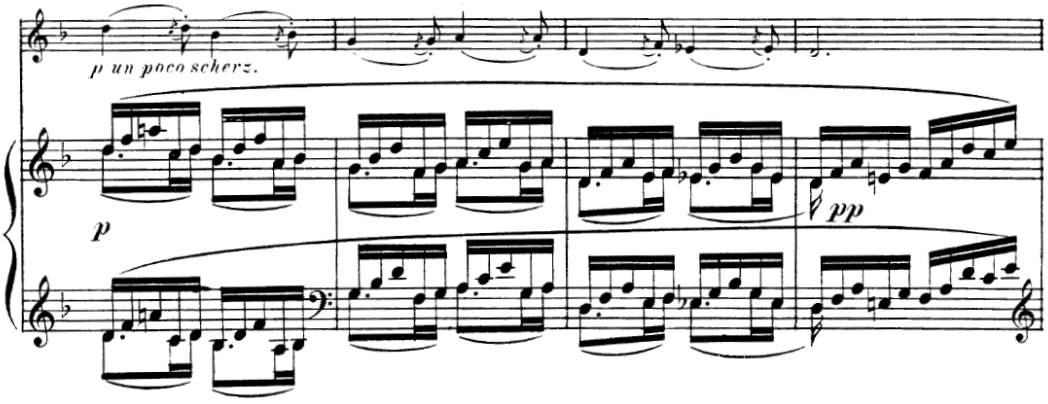
The P (Primary) theme is largely based on Motive A (Ex. 4), and further discussion appears in the forthcoming section 3.IV: Melodic Line. The violin joins the piano with the melody but in a unique rhythmic heterophony at m. 17 (Ex. 5). The transition takes a common approach where it deceptively poses as an immediate restatement of the P theme but with developments and modulations to travel towards the S (Secondary) theme (m. 37).

[90] See: Howat, 40; and Thomas Schmidt-Beste, "The Sonata," in *Cambridge Introductions to Music* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 71.

[†]Note: complete and annotated analytical charts are provided in the appendix.



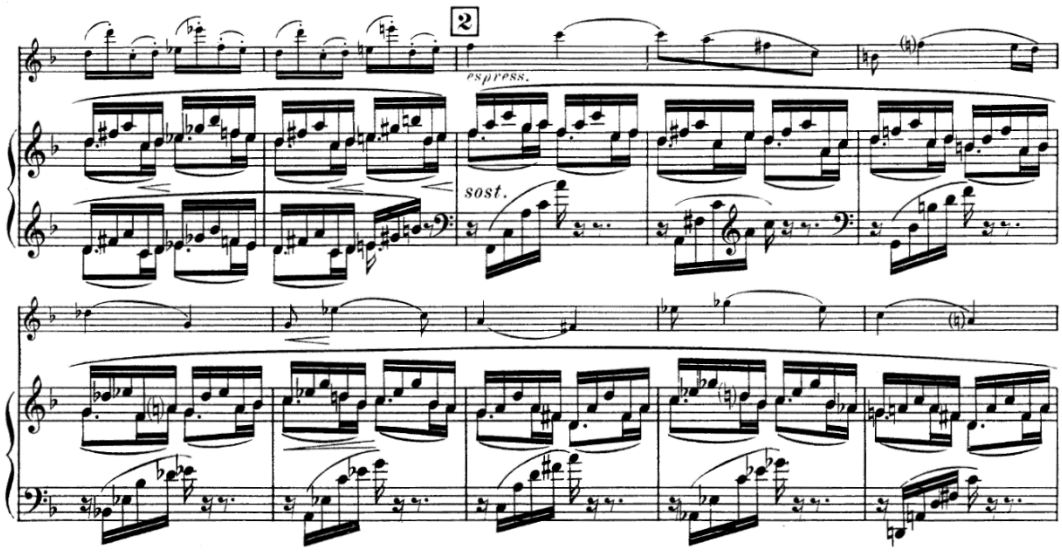
Musical Example 4: I: mm. 1-4



Musical Example 5: I: mm. 15-18

In this nebulous structure where the ideas are blended together seamlessly, the S theme (Ex. 6) can be difficult to distinguish; however, several defining characteristics confirm its identify. Most apparent is the adoption of a broad lyricism in immediate contrast to the preceding gestures, initiated by the interval of the rising fifth that defines Motive B. In addition, the underlying chromatic progressions and short-term tonicizations are merely decorative. They ultimately prove to be deceptive teases of any attempted

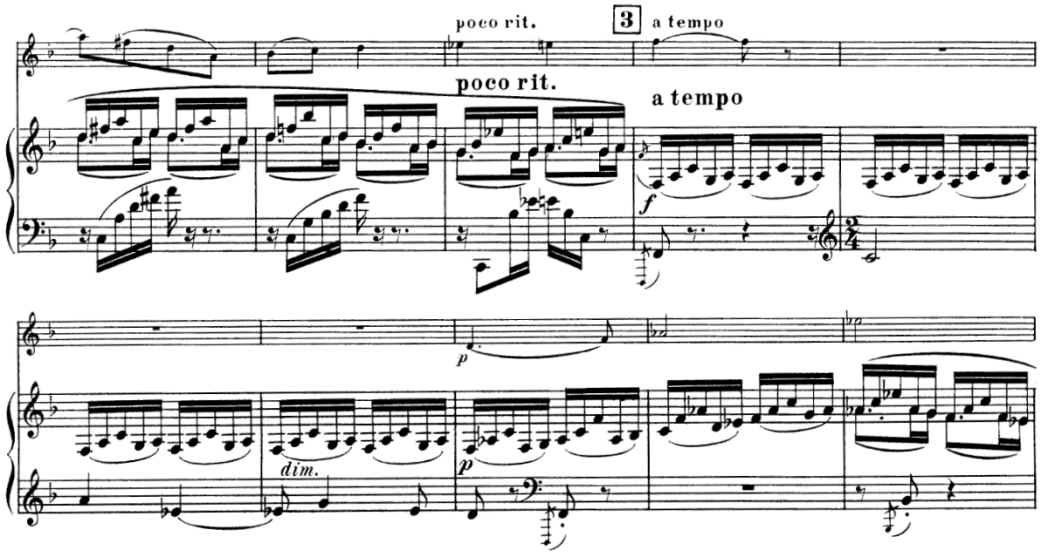
harmonic migration, and therefore do not commit to any proper modulation. The harmonic centre ultimately remains fixed in the same key from start to finish, that of the conventional relative major of F major. Lastly, the degree of finality and determination in character with which the S theme concludes further solidifies this reading.



Musical Example 6: I: mm. 35-44

Pierné introduces further structural ambiguity through two unique interpolations of surprise subsections: 1) the bipartite T2 area between S statements in the exposition, and 2) the *intermède* in the development. The bipartite section comes after the closing of the second theme at m. 53. Considering its modulatory and developmental activity, this section takes on the character of a second transition. Thus, the label T2 is adopted, despite its unusually late and redundant positioning in the exposition, as well as its ultimately vain objective to modulate in preparation for a new theme or section. This kind of quasi-developmental second transition in the middle of the second theme group may

be somewhat unusual, but it is not an original practice.[91] It can be briefly summarized as follows: the first part (T2a at m. 53, Ex. 7) develops melodic elements from the S theme, particularly the initial interval of a rising fifth, Motive B, in inverted augmentation as well as the subsequent syncopations over continued use of the opening Motive A.

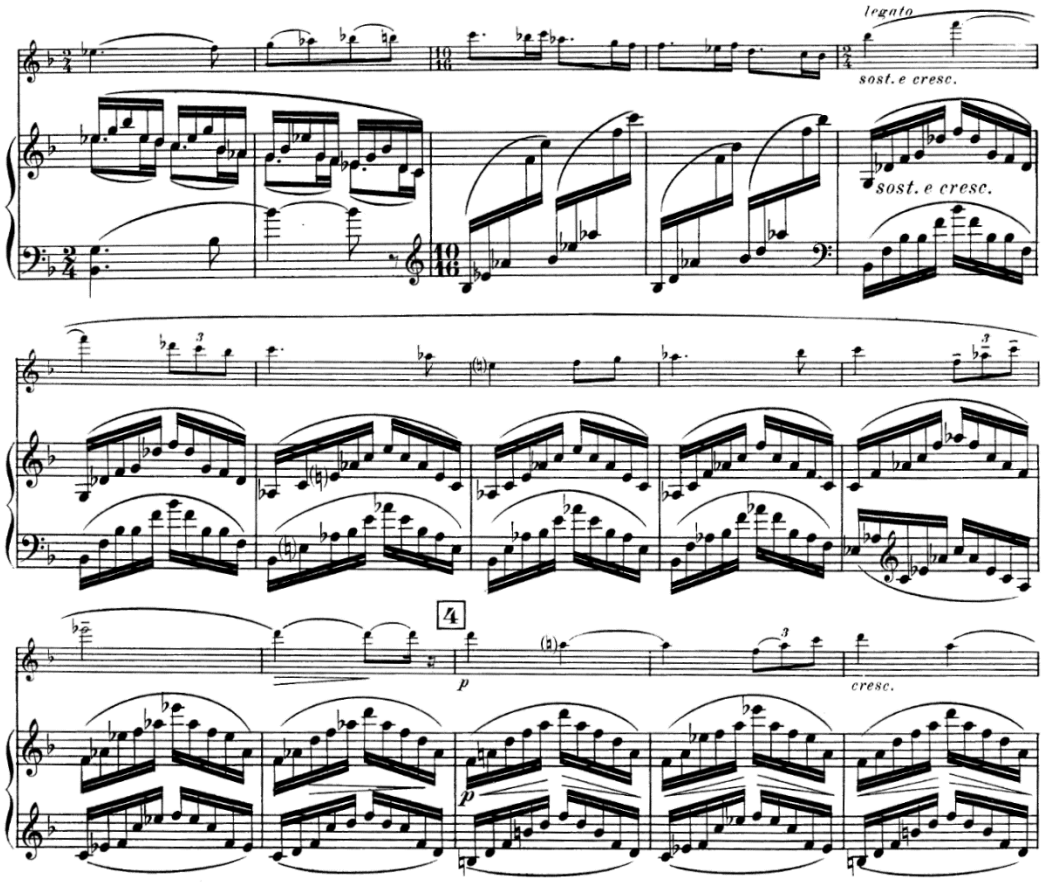


Musical Example 7: I: mm. 50-59

The second part (T2b, m. 69, Ex. 8) provides a new theme with reminiscent contours and lyrical style to the S theme over arpeggio figures that had evolved from Motive A and move through kaleidoscopically modifying harmonies. The transformative techniques on pre-existing material after a conclusive S theme deceptively suggest misreading this section as the development, but the subsequent events confirm otherwise. Although the harmonic excursions during this false development clearly depart from the relative key of F Major and continue to modulate ambitiously, they eventually make their

[91] Rosen, 246. Similar ternary-style secondary groups may be found in Mozart's *F Major Sonata*, K. 332, and several sonatas by Schubert.

way back to F major in preparation for the restatement of the S theme, rendering all harmonic excursions in vain.



Musical Example 8: I: mm. 65-79

At m. 93, a full restatement of the S theme appears in an almost literal repetition with the exception of a few small changes added to further emphasize a more absolute conclusion to the exposition this second time around: downbeats replace the original syncopations in the left-hand arpeggios (further compensated by added grace notes) and one of the very few, albeit brief, moments of clear cadential activity provided in the entire movement, articulated by rare chordal punctuations and a *poco ritardando*.

ii. The Development

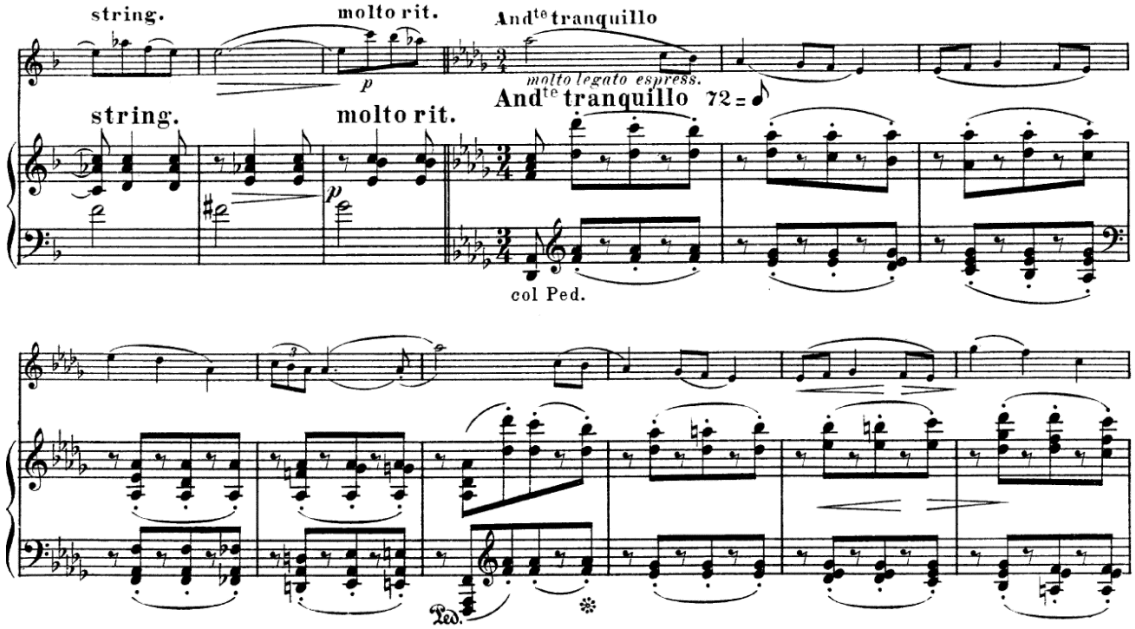
DEVELOPMENT					
T2a	**T2b**		**T2b**		**T3**
109; 113; 117; 123; 127;	133; 137; 141		150; 158; 166		180
F; series of dom. 7ths	→	…B^7	E^7 = A major		→
Intermède					
a	**b**		**(a)**	**(a)**	**a**
192; 197; 203	207; 210; 213**;**		220;	226	228; 236; 239
D♭ (flattened tonic)	D♭	→b♭	B♭	D (N of Db)	D♭

Figure 2. The Development, Mvt. I, *Allegretto.*

After one of few clear cadences legitimately closes the exposition, the true development begins; nonetheless, its identity is brought into question because it commences much like its foreshadowing imposter (T2a). Unlike the imposter, this section features more extensive developmental techniques: specifically, more extensive use of repetition, interruption, and juxtaposition of material through continued modulation. The classical development section is conventionally comprised of two halves: the first section, which is a rhapsodic expansion of expository material**,** and a second section devoted to dominant retransition.[92] This developmental section is also bipartite; while the first half is largely figuration-based, the second is far from the conventional blueprint.

[92] Schmidt-Beste, 80.

The appearance of new themes in the development is neither extraordinary nor novel by this point in history, but Pierné advances this idea to the next level. Preceded by a transitional process of *developing variation* at m. 180 (T3), a new and completely unrelated section then appears.[93] Here Pierné presents a new tempo (*Andante tranquillo*) and new theme in a completely different character, essentially composing a contrasting *intermède* at m. 192 (Ex. 9).



Musical Example 9: I: mm. 189-200

While Pierné does not specifically label this section with anything more than a tempo change, this designation for such an interpolation aligns with an entry for "Intermezzo" in the Harvard Dictionary: "In the 19th and 20th centuries, a middle movement or section of a larger work, usually lighter in character than its

[93] Walter Frisch, "Brahms, Developing Variation, and the Schoenberg Critical Tradition," *Nineteenth Century Music* 5, 3 (1982): 215-232. http://www.jstor.org/stable/746461 (accessed March 3, 2021).

surroundings."[94] Groves Dictionary offers additional nuances in their definition: "a lyrical character, relief, contrast as movements or section of work."[95]

The incorporation of an inner-movement intermezzo is perhaps not common among standard Austro-Germanic sonatas, but this became a recurring trend for post-1900 French composers, particularly among d'Indy's students.[96] Pierné's *intermède* is cast in a basic ternary form (mm. 192, 207, 228), a relatively simple structure in contrast to the complexity of the entire movement. However, it is not without deliberate irregularity for purposes of cohesion: elements from the A section (mm. 199ff) reappear in blended incorporation within the B section (m. 220) approaching the climax before a proper return to a literal restatement of the A section. The final resolution of the developmental *intermède* is interrupted by an immediate return of the opening material, which jolts into the recapitulation (m. 243) without any conventional retransition. The "wrong key" indicates a premature recapitulation rather than a false recapitulation since the thematic rotation continues without a proper return to the P theme in the tonic key.[97]

[94] "Intermezzo," in *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*, ed. by Don Michael Randel, 4th ed. (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 413.

[95] Maurice J. E. Brown, "Intermezzo (iii)" in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 2001).

[96] David Roger Le Guen, "The Development of the French Violin Sonata (1860-1910)," PhD diss. (Hobart: University of Tasmania, 2007), 151. For example, two *intermèdes* are found in Gustave Samazeuilh's violin and piano sonata.

[97] Schmidt-Beste, 84; and Rosen, 149, 156-157.

iii. The Recapitulation and Coda

RECAPITULATION

P	T(P)	T2a		T2b	S	T2b	S
243	247	249;	253	259	267 (271; 275)	279; 287; 295	303; (307; 311)
D♭	(f)	A♭	F	A →	E →	(d); f#	D

CODA

T2a	T(P)
319; 325; D	331; 336; 338; 340 D

Figure 3. The Recapitulation and Coda, Mvt. I, *Allegretto.*

Pierné plays with expectations in the recapitulation through the rearrangement of thematic material, a continuation of developmental procedures, and other creative divergences.[98] Through the use of these techniques, the recapitulation advances the dramatic narrative, rather than merely resorting to an auto-pilot redundancy.

Charles Rosen writes that one of the greatest liberties in sonata writing has been how the opening P theme reappears: where, how much, and if again later.[99] While recapitulations already tend to be somewhat more concise to avoid excessive repetition, Pierné is clever to dramatically reduce the P theme to its bare initial motive in order to avoid overkill from an obsessive gesture that had already dominated most of the piece so far. Such abridgements cause the structural narrative to advance forward rapidly.[100]

[98] Schmidt-Beste, 83.

[99] Rosen, 161.

[100] Schmidt-Beste, 87.

Pierné continues some of the specific procedures and variations used in the development rather than mirroring the exposition (e.g., T2b behaves like the developmental version at m. 133), but most notably he achieves variety by considerably abridging the content and re-ordering the thematic material. Although the re-ordering of material is substantial, it occurs nearly imperceptibly on account of the pervasiveness of the opening motive that unifies all the different content, making the modifications appear subtle. By misplacing themes and offering partial sections, Pierné continues to set up new structural conflicts which he eventually resolves through reimplementation later in the recapitulation.[101]

The coda (m. 319) offers a last opportunity to reconcile shortcomings which the recapitulation failed to satiate, including more complete thematic statements of the opening material, especially in the resolved key of D major.[102] Pierné opts to restate the T2a theme, which closely resembles the P theme that he had truncated to almost nothing during the recapitulation. In recreating T2a, this section mirrors the onset of the development (either real or false development of T2a, both based on P), a typical practice in codas, before Pierné similarly offers an extended T(P) (m. 29 at m. 331) in compensation for its brevity during the early recapitulation (m. 247) amid the various thematic abridgements.

[101] See *Appendix: Analysis Chart* for specific examples.

[102] Rosen, 297.

III. Harmony

This sonata is in D minor. The most frequently encountered keys for French violin and piano sonatas throughout the Third Republic were in D and G.[103] Stéphanie Moraly suggests that these key predilections reflect idiomatic aspects of the violin – such as pitches of the open strings, especially the lower three – and posits that these keys permitted the most comfortable fingering and the most accessible intonation, allowing for greater natural resonance and for sympathetic vibrations from the instrument.[104]

French *fin de siècle* music often features a rich aural flavour, partly because of its predilection for modal harmony. A fresh alternative to the intense chromaticism associated with the late German Romantic aesthetic, this new and unique modal harmony distinguished the French musical sound and helped to further French efforts in establishing a cultural autonomy after the Germanic cultural and political oppression from the previous century.[105]

Two prominent trends motivated this emphasis of modality. The first is ecclesiastical. With the restoration of Gregorian chant in *Bénédictins de l'Abbaye de Solemes* and the resultant implementation of their liturgy into Catholic churches worldwide, the associated modality was integrated into French music through religious and educational institutions which disseminated this musical language of the Middle

[103] For example: the sonatas of Ropartz, Emmanuel, Lekeu, Poulenc, Koechlin, Debussy, Magnard, and Ravel; also, Saint-Saëns's *Sonata* No. 1.

[104] Moraly, 217, 219, 223.

[105] Ibid, 347-348.

Ages.[106] Countless French composers, including Pierné, were also active organists, and a good deal of their training and professional work involved arranging, composing, and improvising within these modal contexts to accommodate the chants. Thus, their acquired fluency with modes became an integral facet of their own musical identity.[107]

Secondly, proclivity for modality emerged out of an increased interest in regional music, both domestic and abroad. Europe at large was fascinated with the idea of exoticism in the nineteenth century, and the French began borrowing scales from other countries in an attempt to integrate fresh and unfamiliar elements into their music. The French also began exploring their own musical past, reaching back to their regional folk modes in an effort to establish their cultural identity. As such, modality became an especially popular vehicle for French composers, and their use of it increased dramatically after 1897.[108] Additionally, Pierné's love of Basque culture as well as his immersion in the region of Brittany during his summer vacations fueled his interest in modality, and it can be heard throughout much of his *œuvre*.

The harmonic palette of this sonata illustrates Pierné's eclecticism, simultaneously incorporating elements common to both Fauré and Franck in a hybrid but personal language. Like Fauré, Pierné blends elements of modality with tonality, sometimes using the modes for implication or suggestion, like a variation of conventional modal borrowing.[109] Likewise, Pierné freely flirts with different modal collections to

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[106] Françoise Gervais, *Étude comparée des langages harmoniques de Fauré et de Debussy* (Paris: La Revue Musicale, 1971), 12.

[107] Moraly, 347-348.

[108] Ibid, 345; these findings are according to statistical analyses of Moraly.

[109] Le Guen, 141.

emphasize various colourizations while remaining within the framework of conventional tonal grounding. Pierné specifically alludes to a Phrygian atmosphere in the opening phrase by passing through the subtonic (i.e., flattened leading tone) and lowered supertonic.[110]

These chromatic inflections, however, offer more than a fleeting impression of modality. Rather, these two "foreign" or "wrong" notes foreshadow specific harmonic relationships to be emphasized throughout the sonata, especially highlighting crucial structural moments across the broader narrative.[111] The following harmonic discussion will explore how these two critical harmonic relationships in the opening of Pierné's sonata, particularly the flattened supertonic or half-step relationships, play an important recurring role in the harmonic narrative throughout all three movements. These chromatic relationships permit access to the more distant chromatic harmonic centres.

The following is a concise summary of the harmonic playout of these chromatic relationships. The first brief flirtation of the flattened supertonic appears at the end of the first phrase, but by its repetition in the third phrase Pierné has already extended this emphasis to two full measures as the flattened supertonic on the dominant (B-flat at m. 13-4). The T2 area (separating the two S statements) is in the same flattened supertonic Neapolitan key of E-flat major (established by m. 60 and maintained into T2b). Note also the subtonic relations of E-flat major key to F major of its surrounding S theme, the

[110] Robin Tait, "The Musical Language of Gabriel Fauré," PhD diss. (Scotland: University of St. Andrew's, 1984; New York: Garland Publishing, 1989), 81. Fauré favoured the Phrygian mode.

[111] Rosen, 244. These tonal destabilizations used as long-term harmonic projections are not unique to Pierné but are well documented in the works of earlier composers; Haydn and Brahms both utilized dissonances to forecast future harmonic relationships.

relative major of the home tonic. After elaborate harmonic migrations during the first half of the development, the *intermède* (m. 192) proceeds in D-flat major, the flattened tonic key; this is an inverse half-step relation to the initial lowered supertonic. Despite some colourful chromatic decorations, this tonality remains fixed throughout the section with the exception of a brief but noteworthy passage at the end of the inner B section: a move to D major (originally the tonic key of the piece) functions here as a brilliant Neapolitan excursion, which temporarily highlights the climax.

In addition to the half-step relations, thirds play an important recurring role throughout this sonata, occurring both at the local level within many chord-to-chord progressions and also across large key centres as part of the structural narrative. These occur both in diatonic and chromatic contexts. Generally, the French prefer milder progressions of thirds for their subtler and suggestive qualities and the tonal ambiguity they create; typically, they avoid the bolder and more direct chords like dominant functions that more explicitly define the tonality. Consider the opening of the sonata where the pattern of descending thirds prompts uncertainty as to whether each chord is an isolated sonority (D minor–B-flat major–G minor) or whether these are juxtaposed expansions towards an eventual G dominant-ninth through tertian installments.

While diatonic thirds contribute to the characteristic French sound, chromatic thirds are certainly not foreign to the harmonic soundscape. In some cases, Wagnerian-Franckian influence is evident in the rich, expressive chromatic expansions associated with the Germanic Romantic harmonic language. This harmonic language is at home in many of Pierné's works; some suggest even more chromatic angst, such as *L'an mil* and his *Quintet*. Many of the remote chromatic progressions, especially chromatic-mediant

ones, result from a late-Romantic harmonic practice common among *fin de siècle* composers wherein remotely related chords and keys are accessed, not through functional relation, but through a linear or **"**parsimonious" voice-leading style as often described by Neo-Riemannian theorists.[113] This type of writing often allows for highly interesting and colourful progressions, especially into reh. 9 (m. 180). See also m. 154 of Movt. III.

As mentioned, third-relations are also present across key centres as part of the broader structure. As a minor-mode sonata, it is no surprise to find the S theme in the relative F major during the exposition (notwithstanding the colourful excursions along the way). Similarly, after a modulatory expedition through the first half of the development, the next third-relation customarily settles on the dominant key of A major at m. 150. However, from this point, Pierné continues the cycle of thirds into deviant territories. For the *intermède*, he moves into the next enharmonic chromatic mediant, D-flat, with a sidestep to the relative B-flat minor in the B section. This D-flat carries over into a "wrong key" recapitulation that evades the tonic resolution as long as possible, proceeding largely by third relationships with a few exceptions. It progresses first with simple diatonic thirds through F minor and A-flat – a combination of relations that deceptively suggests D-flat might be the actual tonic – before resuming more chromatic relations through F major and A major.

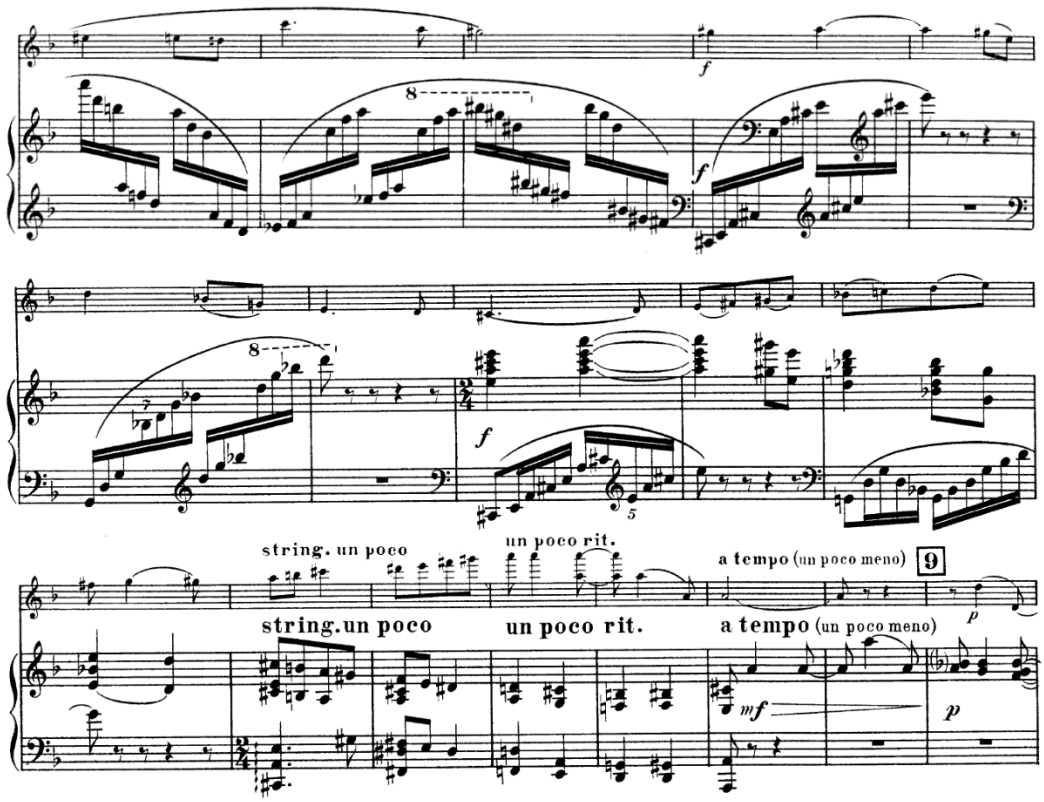
Pierné achieves a French sound in this sonata, in part, through the use of specific progressions which are characteristically associated with Fauré. One involves a series of unrelated, juxtaposed dominant sevenths as seen at reh. 8 (m. 150) as well as a less

[113] Richard Cohn, *Audacious Euphony: Chromaticism and the Consonant Triad's Second Nature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 6-8, 89ff.

pronounced example throughout the S theme.[114] Heard within this last passage is another pattern à la Fauré, identified by Françoise Gervais as *balancements* or swaying, essentially a back-and-forth oscillation between a pair of sonorities.[115] Pierné often applies these *balancements* in moments where he wants to suspend or enhance the tension, hesitating before eventually launching forward to the next content with the pent-up energy. Another example starting from m. 166 oscillates between the current A major tonic and its subtonic G major (as a substitute for dominant harmony) before propelling forward through elaborate chromaticism towards the sectional cadence. (See Ex 10.) A modified and slightly less effective example can be found at mm. 97-100.

[114] Gervais, 79.

[115] Ibid, 81.



Musical Example 10: I: mm. 163-180

Certain sonorities contribute to the overall Gallic sound of this sonata as well. The half-diminished-seventh sonority received significant attention from the French during the turn of the century. Indeed, it was used so often by Fauré and Ravel that it almost became a recognizable element for them. This chord is useful for its evocative sensual atmosphere; it is also useful as a versatile pivot point to remote harmonic destinations through subtle, incremental voice-leading.[116] In a French harmonic language where modality is pervasive, this chord often upgrades its conventionally unstable quality for a stable position within a new modal context. Pierné exploits this sonority at certain moments which, though tonal, offer allusions to atmospheric modes, even though they

[116] Tait, 128-129.

ultimately play out in a broader, more logical tonal placement through the unfolding of the phrase or section, much like the temporary allusion of modality in the opening of the sonata. The opening of T2b at m. 69 offers a strong example of this half-diminished seventh sonority, suggesting a B-flat Dorian modality before barely revealing its E-flat correspondence amidst additional chromatic volatility. (See Example 8.) However, Pierné eventually thwarts a strong confirmation of either of these as he continues to modulate back to F major for the restatement of the S theme.

The sustained D-flat tonality from the developmental *intermède* into the recapitulation is a striking surprise, as it conflicts with the formal expectation of a D minor sonata and challenges the labelling of the recapitulation at this moment.[117] In fact, in both this movement and the *finale*, Pierné does not actually bring back the proper tonic key until near the end of the recapitulation, close to the coda, in this case with the second statement of the S theme (m. 304)**.** The earlier structural discussion addressed the final tonal resolution achieved in the coda, although in the third measure, Pierné mirrors the development, already flirting with tonicizing the subdominant. This makes for a conclusive response to soften and counterbalance the earlier dominant emphasis; most notably, it neutralizes the remote chromatic tensions explored in the movement.

[117] See: Rosen, 222; and Deruchie, 33. This "wrong" key is not entirely unusual and is supported by plenty of other cases in the literature. Deliberate asynchrony between thematic and harmonic elements had been popular even as early as the eighteenth-century for the purpose of maintaining structural continuity, particularly in symphonic works, and off-tonic recapitulations had become rather typical throughout the nineteenth-century, contributing additional drama that could be counterbalanced by the coda.

IV. Melodic Line

Within all movements of this sonata, Pierné offers two contrasting types of primary melodic styles which represent characteristic aspects of French writing in violin and piano sonatas. One type is a more active, sinuous line with heightened rhythmic energy in a compact tessitura, and the other is a broad, sweeping, lyrical line, usually of a much wider range.

The former alludes to the *arabesque* figuration, which was an element of fascination for nineteenth-century Europe and which found recurring application in French music. The arabesque itself was largely derived from an interest in artistic exoticism. Merriam-Webster defines the arabesque as "…an ornament or style that employs flower, foliage, or fruit and sometimes animal and figural outlines to produce an intricate pattern of interlaced lines."[118] Initial interest in the arabesque likely originated from the importation of Islamic-Arabian culture during the Moorish raid of French states during the 700s, and it was further nourished by exposure to foreign cultures at the Paris exhibitions.[119]

The arabesque represents a few important aspects which are central to French music. After an extended period where musical content had been governed by the textual narratives of libretti and poetry, French music only recently began to celebrate independence from opera and programmatic elements during the last quarter of the

[118] "Arabesque," *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, https://www.merriam webster.com/dictionary/arabesque (accessed March 14, 2021).

[119] Elaine Brody, *Paris: The Musical Kaleidoscope, 1870-1925* (New York: Robson, 1988), 71, 66, and 81. For more information concerning "Exoticism," see Ralph Locke, Kathleen M. Randles, and Valeria Wenderoth.

previous century. As such, an acceptance and delight in the abstract or absolute elements became a priority trait for French instrumental style and encouraged what Moraly identifies as "musical hedonism," where art existed purely for its own sake, sufficient in its own beauty rather than relying on external attachment for meaning.[120] Immediately at the beginning of his sonata, Pierné exhibits this French affinity for the arabesque line, curvaceously descending in meandering spirals until reaching its phrasal destination.[121] Because the opening motive from this first theme is sustained throughout much of the movement, including as accompaniment for other material, such brief curvaceous figures become a fundamental ingredient as part of the overall aesthetic.

The most important aspect of French musical culture during the nineteenth century was the world of opera; this reverence for lyricism remained of paramount importance into the new century, and manifested in the instrumental domain. Poulenc recalled Koechlin saying, "You are right to make music that sings, it's essential!"[122] Violin playing in France had many specific ties to the vocal world. Berlioz called the violin the "…true feminine voice of the orchestra."[123] The Franco-Belgian violin pedagogy was based on the method of Giovanni Battista Viotti, which in turn looked to the *bel canto* singing tradition as a model. As well, Pierre Baillot's celebrated violin

[120] Moraly, 328, 341; Gervais, 5.

[121] Arabesque figures appear prominently throughout several of Pierné's other works, including *Bagatelle,* op. 33, *Pastorale variée,* and specifically the section at reh. E of his *Scherzo-Caprice,* op. 25.

[122] Françoise Porcille, "La belle époque de la musique française: Le temps de Maurice Ravel," in series *Les chemins de la musique, 1871-1940* (Paris: Fayard, 1999), 123.

[123] Hector Berlioz, *De l'instrumentation,* ed. by Joël-Marie-Fauquet, in series *Les Inattendus* #27 (Paris: Castor astral, 1994; originally published serially in La Revue Gazette Musicale de Paris 1841-1842), 34.

treatise features numerous mentions of the voice as the ideal reference, even suggesting that musicians imagine the four different violin strings as a vocal quartet of distinct voice types.[124] This associated significance was further evidenced at the *Paris Conservatoire* where string faculty would ask their voice colleagues to join them in assisting the evaluation of final string examinations.[125]

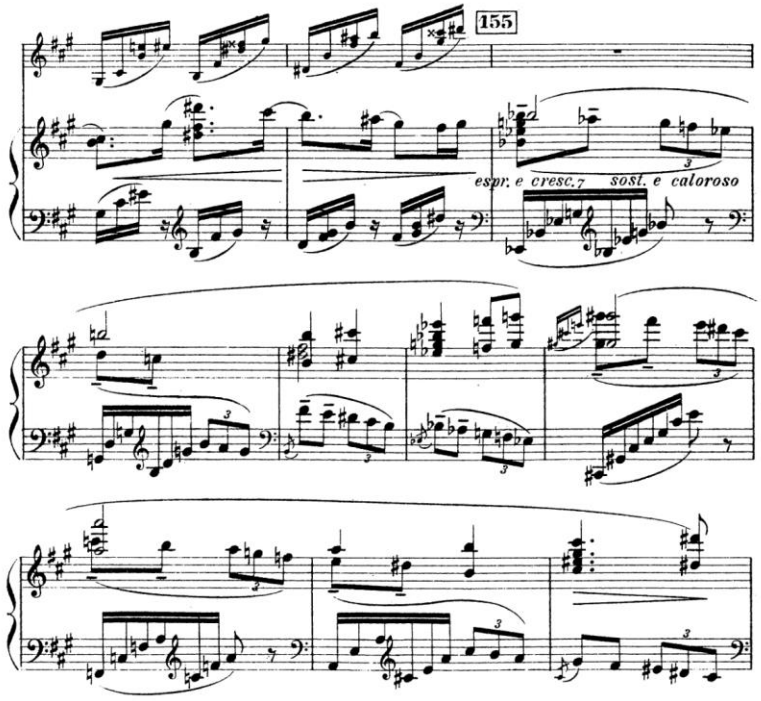
The prominent influence of vocal lyricism on French violin and piano sonatas is evidenced through specific characteristics, particularly an emphasis on *legato*, engagement of wider intervals, and perhaps most significantly, extended phrase lengths, oftentimes transcending the capabilities of the human voice. Pierné's broader themes (S, T2b) are constructed in such a lyrical design. It is worth mentioning that Pierné's penchant for lyricism was almost certainly indebted in part to the influence of his mentor and operatic master, Jules Massenet. Pierné's phrases generate a sense of lyricism due to their longer values, soaring tessitura, and connected nature. Pierné's indications of *espressivo, sostenuto,* and *appassionato* further reinforce this character. The melodic design of the S theme is particularly beautiful, featuring differently sized intervals, interesting turns of contour, use of sequence at different expressive distances (mm. 41-43), and an overall narrative arch with an initial high C followed by a slow rebuild back up to it again, before releasing into a tonic-seeking *denouement*. Though this melody contrasts with the first P theme, it still contains several arabesque-like direction changes.

Curiously, select passages in Pierné's ballet *Cydalise et le chèvre-pied* resemble this same style of lyrical writing illustrated in the S theme, particularly towards the

[124] Moraly, 308; Le Guen, 71.

[125] Moraly, 309.

ballet's completion. Ex. 11 is from the third *tableau* at reh. 155, which features similar intervals and harmonic progressions as well as the general broad legato over active passagework.

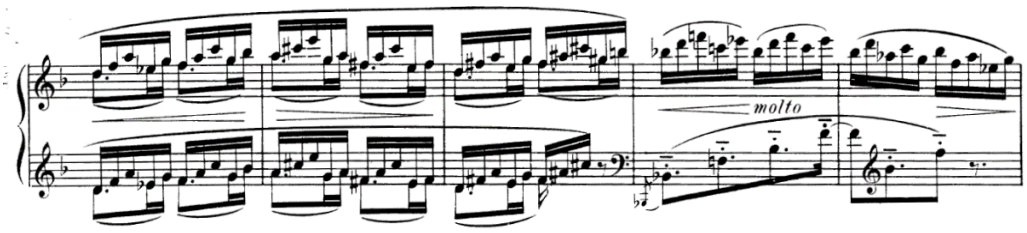


Musical Example 11: *Cydalise et le chèvre-pied*. Piano-vocal score: 2 before rehearsal 155

The transitional theme of T2b shares these similar characteristics of lyricism with the S theme but also bears a striking resemblance in its overall construction, beginning with the same interval of a rising fifth, tied over to a melody that moves in a similar contour with parallel length and rhythmic activity. This is surely deliberate, given Pierné's repeated display of compositional cohesion throughout.

V. Rhythm

The French can arguably claim rhythm as an integral ingredient of their musical identity, considering the importance of their long-venerated world of dance (particularly since Louis XIV's reign), as well the early roots of complex meters and rhyme schemes found in their Renaissance poetry.[126] As with the structural and harmonic elements, Pierné introduces intentional ambiguities in the rhythmic domain, purposefully veiling the metre, rhythmic patterns, and phrasing, with a particular reliance on asymmetry. The sonata begins in 10/16, essentially two quintuplets in a broader pulse of 2, but this is not clarified until the subsequent 6/8 and 2/4 sections later in the movement. This disorientation is further obscured by a blended textural context, where Pierné combines melody and accompaniment as one interwoven gesture. After using quasi-quintuplets to clarify the beat, Pierné further challenges any sense of metric grounding with the 3:1 pattern at the end of the P statement in m. 14. (See Ex. 12.)



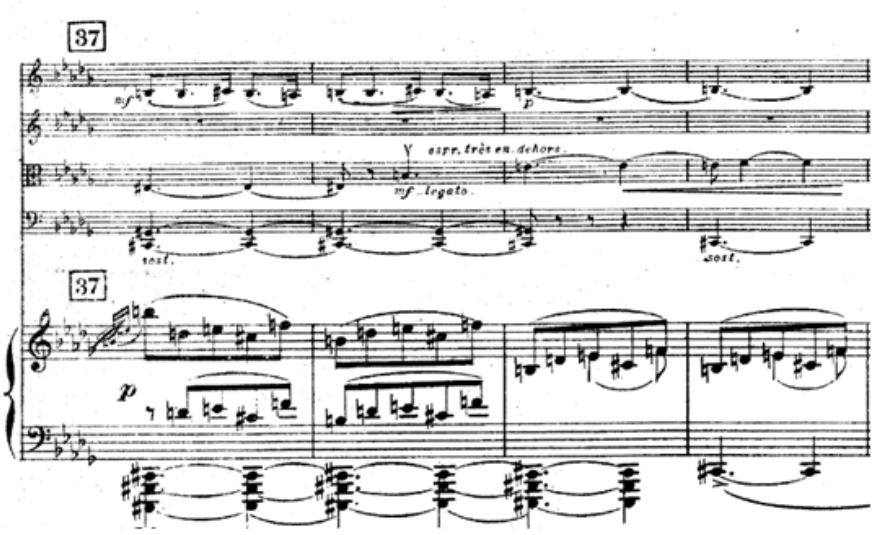
Musical Example 12: I: mm. 10-15

[126] Yves Dharamraj, "The Development of the Late Romantic French Aesthetic and Its Expression in Selected Cello Sonatas," DMA diss. (New York: Juilliard School, 2010).

As mentioned previously, the French demonstrated an increased interest in regionalism during the late nineteenth century, partly in a continued effort to break away from inherited Germanic traditions and partly to establish a representative Gallic musical identity.[127] Select rhythmic elements of this sonata demonstrate this regional influence. Pierné shared with Ravel an enthusiasm for Basque culture; this Basque influence is most evident in the recurring rhythmic and temporal elements borrowed from the *zortzico* dance, particularly the metre, most often in 5/4 (or 5/8) time.[128] Periodically, Pierné overtly identifies these cases, as with the second movement of his *Piano Quintet*, op. 41: this movement is largely in 5/8, and is described at the beginning "*Sur une rythme de Zortzico*" ("on a Zortzico rhythm") with an accompanying footnote that specifically defines the sub-divisional breakdown of 3+2. The accompaniment at reh. 37 of the Quintet (Ex. 13) reveals an arabesque pattern which strongly resembles a rhythmically augmented variant of this sonata's opening figure, suggesting the same *zortzico* influence.

[127] Moraly, 278.

[128] Denis Laborde, "Basque Music," *Grove Music Online*, https://doi.org.hmlproxy.lib.csufresno.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.02221 (accessed March, 14, 2021).



Musical Example 13: Quintet, reh. 37

Asymmetrical metres, particularly those emphasizing groups of five, were also characteristic of traditional Breton music, and numerous French composers who hailed from Brittany have implanted these metres into their piano and violin sonata literature.[129] Although Pierné was from the northeastern region in Nancy, he spent many summers at his vacation residence in Ploujean where the distinctive regional idioms are still noticeable even today; thus, it is likely that he deliberately included such Bretonesque asymmetrical rhythms in this sonata.

Pierné's interest in asymmetrical groupings extends beyond metrical designation; his affinity for groups of five can be frequently observed in many of his works.[130] Pierné

[129] Moraly, 283. For example, the second and third movements of *Le Flem*'s sonata; and Ropartz's *Sonata* No. 2 before reh. 22).

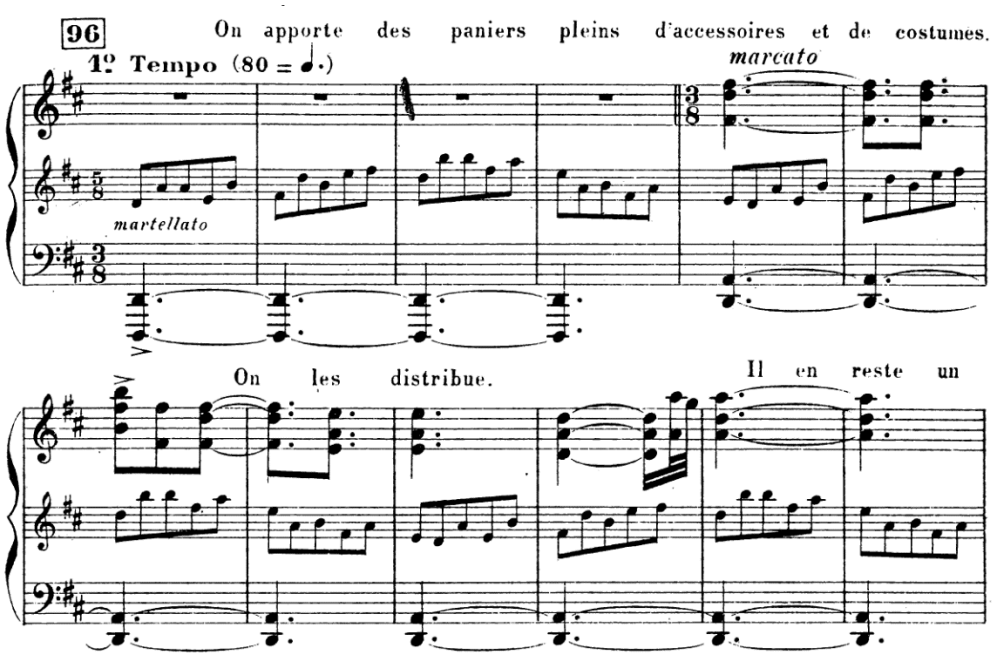
[130] For example, see his piano quintuplets per bar surrounding reh. 90 in *Quintet* (preceded briefly by cello), or the extended quasi-zortzico - 3+3+2 in the second movement of his *Trio*. Pierné would later experiment with more 3+2 groupings in another of his violin and piano works, the unpublished *Danseuse espagnole* of 1925, as well as in many sections throughout *Cydalise*.

further develops the previously mentioned 3+2 subdivision throughout the sonata by means of expressive rhythmic juxtaposition and superimposition. Specifically, in theme T2b (Ex. 8), he writes adjacent triplets and duplets within a broad lyrical melody, yielding so-called Bruckner rhythms. These rhythms are extremely common in the work of Franck, and the related influence is likely here.[131] Additional applications of Pierné's use of the Bruckner rhythms can be found in the broader melodies of *Cydalise*.

Pierné uses the violin's first entrance to further advance both aspects of duple vs. triple and the metrical ambiguity. (Refer back to Ex. 5.) At the beginning of the first transition, T(P) (m. 15), Pierné presents melodic and rhythmic heterophony – a device frequently used by Massenet – whereby the violin transforms the opening material into lilted trochees from the original nebulous dactyls in the piano that continue underneath from the first presentation at the beginning.[132] Here, the violin appears in a concurrent 6/8 against the piano's continued 10/16, the latter which has now been relegated to accompanimental status under the new melodic stratum in the Massenet-style of melodic heterophony addressed earlier. This metrical incongruence is paralleled in another moment from Pierné's output with similar perpetual, asymmetrical figures under a lilting *scherzando* melody in the opening to the second act of *Cydalise* found in Ex. 14.

[131] Moraly, 125.

[132] This kind of rhythmic heterophony is not an isolated occurrence within Pierné's output; a parallel example can be found in the first movement of his *Piano Trio*, op. 45 at reh. 25. In poetic rhythm, a trochee is a disyllabic rhythmic foot consisting of one stressed syllable followed by an unstressed one, whereas the trisyllabic dactyl features one stressed syllable followed by two that are unstressed.



Musical Example 14: *Cydalise*, reh. 96

A majority of the first movement's rhythmic interest focuses on the ambiguity and interplay with the asymmetrical 10/16 metre and its opposing meter (the simplified concurrent 6/8), as well the resultant subdivisional cross-rhythms. The two metres are not confined to each instrumental part, but alternate back-and-forth as necessary to facilitate different rhythmic aspects of the various thematic material. These metre changes never detract from the consistent larger pulse of two-beats-per-bar, nor do they occur in rapid succession throughout the work like in the more disorienting nature of the quasi-Stravinskian sections of his later cello sonata (see the *Animé* section of reh. 32 of *Cello Sonata,* op. 46).

The rhythmic ambiguities further intensify during the development section, particularly during the *intermède*. During its preceding transition (T3, m. 180), Pierné cleverly applies the *developing variation* technique by isolating a melodic syncopation of

T2b (recently heard in mm. 173, 176, 178). He repeats this figure throughout the chordal accompaniment in a perpetual offbeat, while the reinforcing downbeats in the bass gradually diminish until nearly absent in the *intermède*, resulting in a Fauréan-style pulsation. This offbeat pattern with scarce downbeats might not be enough to shake the listener's sense of metric disorientation, were it not for Pierné's additional changes of the added beat resulting from the sudden metre change to 3/4 in a new tempo, plus an immediate melodic hemiola at the very beginning of the theme.

Given the various rhythmic and metric complexities and their resultant ambiguities, what remains surprisingly consistent and regular throughout this movement is Pierné's adoption of standard phrase lengths, usually four of measures in length (or multiples thereof) with only occasional groups of six (usually a result of cadential extension to conclude larger sections). This regularity of phrasing is temporarily abandoned, however, during the *intermède* of the development section. Here, ambiguity reigns as asymmetrical and changing phrasing lengths dominate, beginning with the first five-measure phrase. Pierné's manner of veiling phrases – continuously connecting and developing melodic line and steady offbeats, sometimes along with inconclusive harmonies that disregard phrasal divisions (see mm. 201-203) – creates a blurred uncertainty as to the onsets and ends of phrasal arches.[133]

The B section of this *intermède* (m. 207) also delivers substantial but different metric obscurity: the melody begins mid-measure in an undetermined metre, undecidedly positioned between delayed syncopation and early anacrusis, and then immediately

[133] See: Macdonald, Massenet; and Deruchie, 63. It is worth noting that Pierné's two greatest mentors, Massenet and Franck, were especially recognized for their irregular and square phrasing, respectively.

proceeds via hemiola (m. 208-9). There is virtually no metrical clarification from the supportive harmonies or rhythm; the accompaniment flows in steadily creeping chromatic eighths which eradicate the bar lines. A brief canonic treatment at m. 213 additionally heightens the metric ambiguity with a dislocated starting position for the imitative voice.

VI. Texture

The equality of the two instruments in Pierné's sonata is illustrated by the balanced distribution of thematic ideas and their complementary contributions to the overall textural makeup.[135] Pierné's score shows varied instrumental order in the appearances of the title in the printed publication, suggesting that neither instrument is more important than the other. Franck's sonata was one of the first in the French repertoire to provide a balanced texture with a self-sufficient piano part, even in accompaniment positions; this trend continued in successive sonatas.[136] Similarly, Pierné's texture is active but always maintains clarity, sincerity, and simplicity, characteristics advocated by his mentor Massenet.[137]

Figurations based on broken-chord patterns and arpeggios pervade this work, often appearing within the melodic constructs but more consistently as the principal style of accompaniment. Pierné manages to sustain interest with these figures throughout most

[135] See: Basil Smallman, The Piano Trio: Its History, Technique, and Repertoire (New York: Clarendon Press, 1992), 5; and Moraly, 26-28, 29, 213-214. Duo instrumental equality was increasingly common. Particularly with French sonatas during the Third Republic, the order in which instruments were listed in titles ceased to refer to their ranking importance; rather, where non-piano instruments were listed first simply was for easier distinction since it was implied that piano was the default instrument in collaboration for most duos.

[136] Moraly, 132.

[137] Macdonald, *Massenet.*

of the entire sonata without tedium, on account of motivic derivation or evolution of previous material through the creative use of *developing variation*. At times, especially of high-intensity moments, arpeggios occupy most of the full range of the piano in a rapid gesture, and often appear under contrasting lines of soaring lyricism, as is the case shortly before reh. 8, m. 150; these arpeggiated flourishes occur frequently throughout the piano parts of other works in Pierné's chamber output.[138]

Even at the most passionate climaxes, the musical atmosphere never becomes thick or heavy, but always remains light with forward-momentum. Angst-suggestive repeated blocked chords, which might appear sporadically in some of his other works for heftier melodrama (e.g., *Trio,* reh. 9), are absent here. Solid chords are extremely scarce and are generally reserved for cadential punctuations. The exception occurs in the *intermède* section of the first movement's development, but even here Pierné maintains forward momentum and weightlessness through textural techniques common to French music: 1) continuous syncopated pulsations, especially with the *portato* articulation requiring *carrezzando* touch; and 2) chords that progress subtly through incremental voice-leading.[139]

Most of Pierné's works demonstrate his aptitude for counterpoint; often, specific sections are devoted to deliberate displays of learned contrapuntal writing (e.g., *Prélude de Concert sur un thème de Purcell*, op. 53). This is of little surprise considering his

[138] Cf., reh. 11 of the first movement of his *Trio,* op 45; the C section of the Saint-Saëns-reminiscent second movement of his *Piano Concerto,* op. 12, as well as various moments throughout the *Scherzo-Caprice*, op. 25; and reh. 81 of his Quintet *finale*.

[139] Charles Timbrell, *French Pianism: A Historical Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Portland: Amadeus Press, 2003), 93.

career as an organist where counterpoint is generally the default *modus operandi*. What is surprising is that such designated sections do not appear in this sonata: this piece, unusually, does not make overt use of serious counterpoint. Only briefly does Pierné use canonic writing (mm. 87, 214). However, his contrapuntal skills are still evident in his skillful handling of different textures, particularly in his superimposition of multiple concurrent thematic ideas, either as heterophony in T(P) or as a combination of the pervasive opening motive from the P theme under different melodic ideas.

CHAPTER 3

MOVEMENT 2, *ALLEGRETTO TRANQUILLO*

I. Structural Ambiguity

The second movement begins with transparency and simplicity, deceptively suggesting a relief from the complexities that dominated the opening movement. However, Pierné continues to subvert structural expectations. In this movement, he assembles a hybrid structure, blending the *sonata-allegro* form with elements of a broad ternary and an internal theme and variations. Curiously, the first section of this three-part form does not resemble a conventional exposition and therefore is the least adherent to the sonata form template. The subsequent larger sections of development and recapitulation offer more conventional structural definition, satisfying formal expectations and giving shape to the sonata scheme.

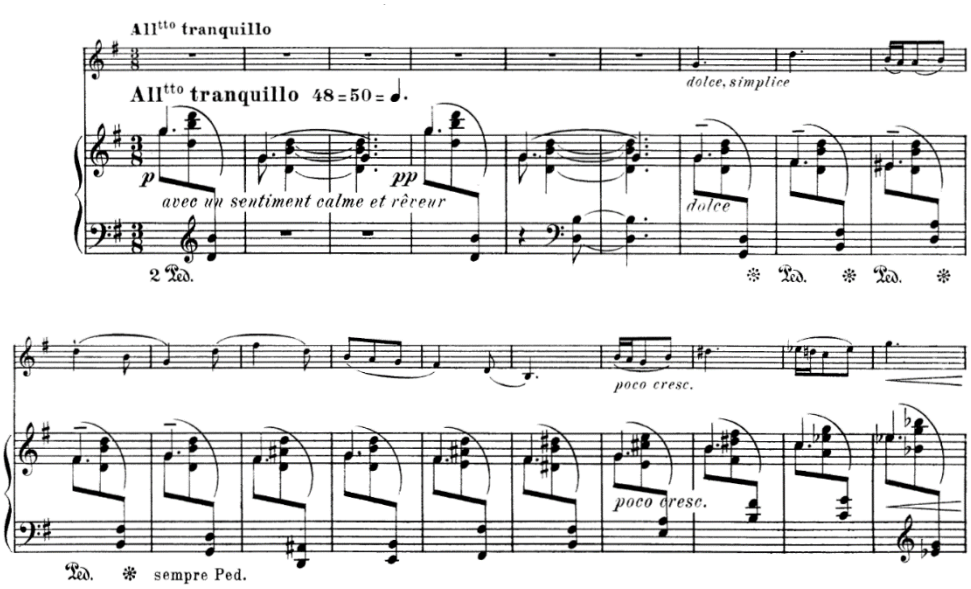
i. The Exposition

INTRO	**EXPOSITION**			
(A)	**A**	**A**	**A**	**B**
1; 4	7; 16	23; 32	39	53
G	G→B→	G→D→	G	G

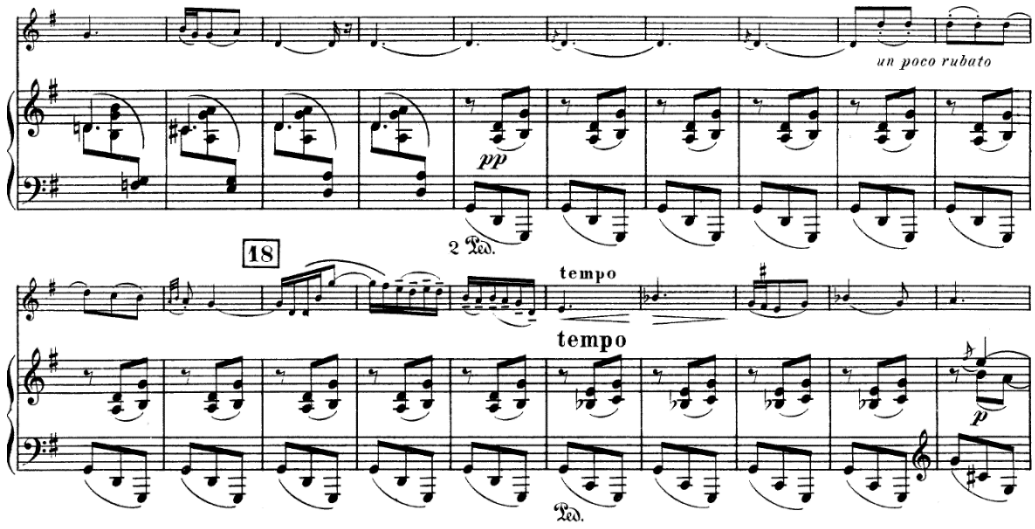
Figure 4. The Introduction and Exposition, Mvt. II, *Allegretto-Tranquillo*

As in the first movement, Pierné again uses his material resources economically. The exposition is almost exclusively monothematic, with a single repeated melody that dominates nearly the whole section, apart from a seemingly inconsequential codetta-like figure (m. 53). This figure materializes as a cadential expansion, offering only the

slightest thematic contrast. The development and coda sections, however, devote such significant attention to this latter idea that it warrants its own thematic designation. Because this exposition lacks the elements associated with sonata form, it is more fitting to label these ideas as Theme A (m. 7, Ex. 15) and Theme B (m. 53, Ex. 16), rather than the Primary or Secondary Theme designations.



Musical Example 15: II: mm. 1-19



Musical Example 16: II: mm. 49-68

Transitionary themes are absent from the standard exposition template, as are their corresponding modulations. The same melody is modified to work with a different reharmonization with each reiteration; therefore, the structure instead resembles a small theme and variations form.[140] Despite the constantly increasing chromaticism with each phrase, rescinded attempts at modulation adamantly hold the key in G major. This results in an entire exposition that is devoid of any harmonic migration, which is usually one of the most defining characteristics of a sonata exposition.

[140] Pierné would later create a more pronounced version of this hybrid form in the *finale* of his *Piano Trio* where the exposition comprises six closed variations before launching into the development.

ii. The Development

DEVELOPMENT

A	**B**	**A**	**B**	**A**	**B**
64	68	77	85	93	97
C Mixolydian	A Mixolydian	G dom. pedal	E♭ (N of D)	B Mixolydian (E=N/E♭)	--

C	**C'**	**A**	**A**	**B**	**A**	**B**	**A**
108	116; 120	124	132	140	148	152	163
E;	E; B♭	B♭	D♭ →	C	C Mix.;	A Mix.	

Figure 5. The Development, Mvt. II, *Allegretto-Tranquillo*

The development section (m. 64) reveals clearer elements of sonata form. It utilizes the conventional manipulative devices of fragmentation and textural interruption of the two themes exchanged in dialogue through different keys. Of note, the piano never takes Theme A during the development, and the length of Theme B constantly varies.

Common to all three movements of this sonata is Pierné's introduction of new material halfway through the development. Unlike the outer movements, the character and tempo here remain unchanged; however, he does provide a distinctly new melodic theme at m. 108, though its rhythmic ingredients derive from Theme A. An added countersubject accompanies a varied repetition before returning to previous developmental procedures. In this way, Pierné steers the increasing tension towards the climax (m. 140), which is defined by the only marked *forte* in the movement. This initiates a section that seemingly poses as a retransition, except that the tonal centre is in the plagal subdominant of C, rather than the customary dominant harmony. The section closes with the most intense chromaticism of the movement, and in doing so, effectively

anticipates a forthcoming structural event, which is marked by the return of the familiar opening material, strengthening the identity of a sonata form.

iii. The Recapitulation and Coda

RECAPITULATION			**CODA**
A	**A**	**B**	**B**
171;180	187	203	211; 215; 223
G→B→	G	G	G

Figure 6. The Recapitulation and Coda, Mvt. II, *Allegretto-Tranquillo*

Composers frequently strive to obscure the onset of the recapitulation (m. 171), but Pierné's setting here is one of his clearest structural events of the sonata. A direct, unadulterated return of the opening theme in the tonic key of G major provides the necessary structural resolution. This resolution is further confirmed by additional textural and rhythmic clarity in the first instance, where both the bass notes and specifically, chordal roots, are finally relocated to the firm downbeats. Without any sectional blurring or structural ambiguity, the recapitulation explicitly delivers clear reiterations with only mild modifications, chiefly a few subtle harmonic substitutions, some textural variations, and only two statements of Theme A rather than three. The coda functions as an afterthought development, offering additional manipulation of Theme B.

II. Harmony

The middle movement is in G major, which, by its nature as the subdominant of a D minor sonata, softens the harmonic context by counterbalancing the tension accumulated from the dominant and chromatic harmonies of the first movement, fitting for the tender nature of this *berceuse*-like *divertissement*. Pierné further reinforces this softening counterbalancing through additional subdominant emphases throughout the movement. While such plagal reinforcement is customarily expected in codas to compensate for previous harmonic complexity, Pierné further develops this precept and tonicizes the subdominant of the subdominant of G major (C7=V/IV/IV) at m. 209, preparing the coda. Pierné also notably occupies C major during the peak of the movement at m. 140 before the retransition.

The harmonic aspects presented in the first movement continue here and throughout the whole sonata. Third relationships remain important, both in large-scale across the movement's structure as well as in smaller chord-to-chord progressions. Analogous to the opening of the first movement, Pierné again favours weaker and less tonally-defined progressions of thirds; his specific use of diatonic thirds evokes a melancholic atmosphere reminiscent of Massenet's approach.[141] This is complemented by the softer qualities brought on by the subdominant emphasis aforementioned. Following this gentle ease into the theme**,** he moves through increasingly stronger progressions and evolves into chromatic excursions. The subtle, incremental voice-leading style allows for a kaleidoscope of harmonic changes via chromatically enhanced chords (especially

[141] Macdonald, *Massenet.*

augmented), allowing for chromatically remote digressions. Chromatic-third relationships already begin to appear in mm. 18-21.

Starting in m. 23 and continuing throughout much of the movement, Pierné introduces ambiguity by presenting sonorities in textural installments, ending with the clarifying chord root in the bass. In some cases, this delayed clarification alters the perception of the sonority from what was first discerned (e.g., mm. 28-29: B minor or D augmented?; G major or E minor-seventh?). This process parallels a compressed version of the alternative reading of the first movement's opening, wherein the accumulating tertian stacking of the first few chords suggested a different composite. Pierné later abandons this process for a brief period for heightened clarity, with distinct roots on every downbeat to articulate the onset of the recapitulation.[142]

As mentioned in the earlier discussion on structure, Pierné's tenacious adherence to the G major tonic throughout the entire exposition challenges the standard sonata process by avoiding a proper modulation to the dominant. Pierné avoids harmonic monotony through elliptical harmonic progressions, scarcely hinting at modulations which are thwarted back to the tonic G major. As the exposition is almost entirely monothematic, Pierné repeats the same Theme A three times with only slight modifications to the melody. He embraces a characteristic process of Massenet wherein the same (or slightly modified) melody is reharmonized and attempts to modulate elsewhere, but continues to return to the same tonic for the next repetition (as heard in his

[142] This is reminiscent of the opening of Brahms's *Clarinet Quintet*, op. 115 where a similar degree of incremental harmonic unveiling also occurs.

Poème d'avril, among other works).[143] Resultantly, the entire exposition remains in G major despite the very colourful chromatic movement.

Although the exposition never concretely departs from the tonic of G major, the numerous chromatic flirtations along the way foreshadow the remote chromatic relations that are pursued throughout the development, particularly extensions to distant tonal areas via chromatic mediants. Two critical harmonic centres occur at mm. 85 and 132, E-flat major and D-flat respectively. While both of these chromatic relations are relatively distant from G major**,** they continue to reanimate the important half-step relations which the original tonic of the sonata, D major, introduced in the previous movement.

Pierné's use of pedal point beneath intense and capricious chromatic passages (m. 77ff; 163ff) not only offers a sense of tonal grounding, but reflects Franck's similar style of rising chromaticism over pedal point.[144] Specifically, this technique recalls similar passages in Chopin's *Berceuse*, op. 57, a piece of probable influence which shares several traits including the similar rocking gestures in a comparably lilting metre (6/8 rather than 3/4), cantabile lines, and the pearly figurations of Theme B. Selected passages juxtapose the consecutive, non-functional dominant seventh chords introduced in movement one. The second appearance of these occurs during Pierné's quasi-retransition (m. 163), dodging rather than emphasizing the dominant sonority until the last possible moment.

Certain harmonic aspects contribute to the folk-like simplicity throughout this movement, including pedal points which evoke supportive drones under changing harmonies, emphasized intervals of open fourths and fifths in the accompanimental

[143] Macdonald, *Massenet.*

[144] Howat, 33.

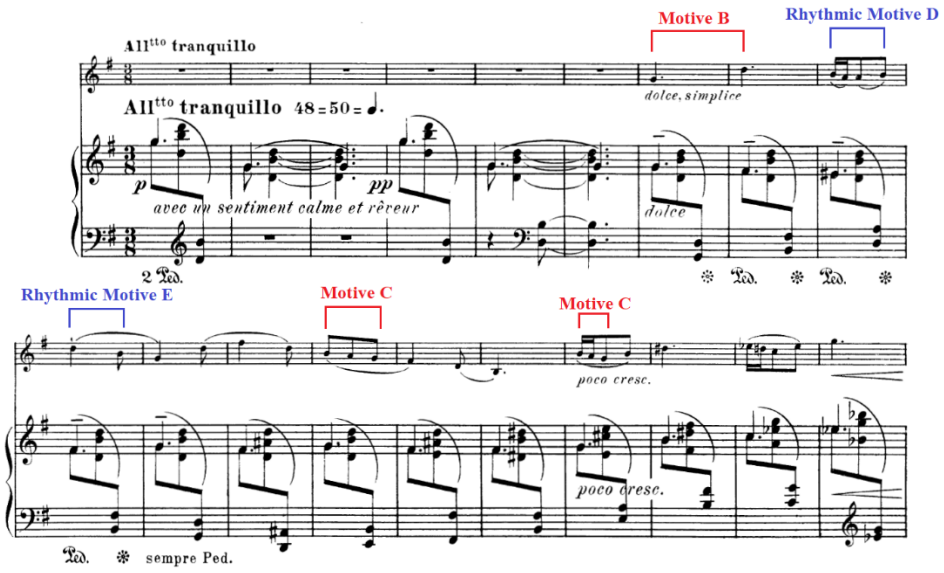
dyads, and significant plagal emphasis. Allusions to the folk-like Mixolydian mode occur during several extended passages of dominant seventh chords which do not resolve. The deceptively simple melodic and harmonic lines also conjure a folk-like character, though the piece gradually expands to include remote chromaticisms and complexities.[145]

III. Melodic Line

Pierné uses the same two types of melodic styles in the first movement for his two thematic ideas in this second movement, but in reverse order: the first theme (A) is more lyrical whereas the second (B) is more rhythmically active and arabesque-minded. Theme A evokes a sung *berceuse* with its *dolce* gestures which lilt as a result of the metric sway of 3/8 and the circular contour waves, all of which are underscored by repeated rocking gestures in the accompaniment. The phrases of Franco-Belgian *bel canto* lyricism are well-designed in that they incrementally evolve toward satiating peaks through resourceful development of a few repeated rhythms and intervals. Two rhythmic motives define and pervade this melody, and are exclusive to this movement. The first motive consists of two sixteenth notes and two eighth notes – Motive D (e.g. m. 9); the second motive consists of a quarter note followed by an eighth note **–** Motive E (m. 10). As well, two ideas from the first movement reoccur here: the strong opening perfect fifth (Motive B)**;** and conjunct scalar thirds (Motive C), the latter which appears most prominently throughout the rhythmic Motive D (m. 16, also in augmentation in eighth notes m. 13).

[145] This approach of deceptive simplicity evolving gradually to complexity is reminiscent of many of Fauré's works, such as *Aurore*.

(See Ex. 17.) Melodic intervals of thirds are also featured significantly, which complement Pierné's interest in harmonic third relations.



Musical Example 17: II: mm.1-19

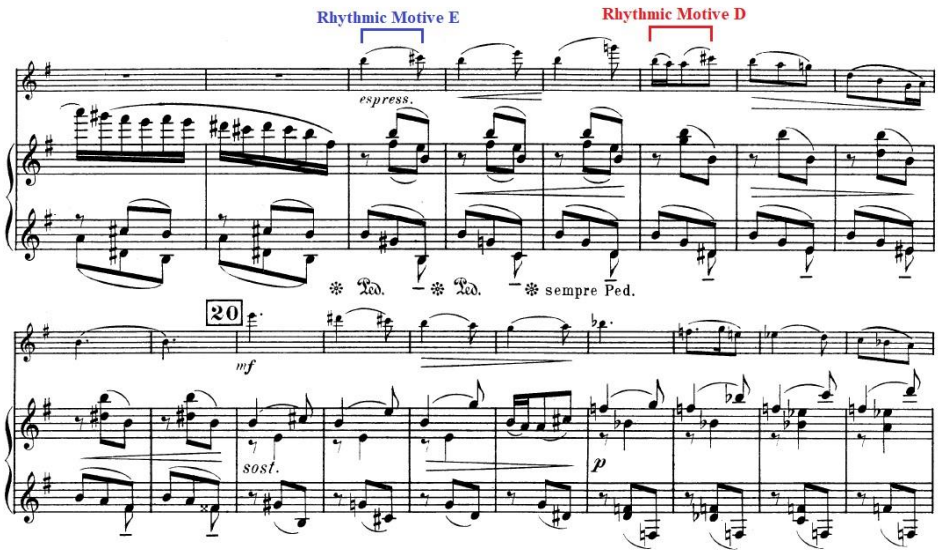
Theme B emerges as a subtle outgrowth from the dissolving Theme A in a *developing variation* style. The final waning pulsations of the previous Theme A transform into initial hesitations of B, which eventually gain momentum and blossom into a rhapsodic outburst. These decorative arabesque figures meander in an improvisatory cascade that perhaps forecast the *je-ne-sais-quoi* nonchalance of future *cabaret chanteuses* like Edith Piaf or Juliette Greco. They also bring to mind the pearly coloratura figures of Chopin. The duration and precise beginning of Theme B are difficult to pinpoint, not only because the theme nebulously emerges out of a tied note in its single appearance during the exposition, but also because Pierné varies how long it takes for each recurrence to acquire traction during the development. In doing so, he plays with the aesthetics of ambiguous charm (compare the different openings of m. 85, 97, 140).

If Theme A emulated singing with its wide intervals and slower rhythm, this Theme B is much closer to a speaking style; its conjunct nature and repeated notes suggest a recitative style and foreshadow a more distinct use which opens the subsequent *finale*. Interestingly, though there is no explicit reference to this movement as a *berceuse*, this Theme B contains grace notes, a specific element that appears in two of his lullabies: *Petits de Noël* and *Complainte des Arches de Noé (pour bercer l'enfançon).*[146]

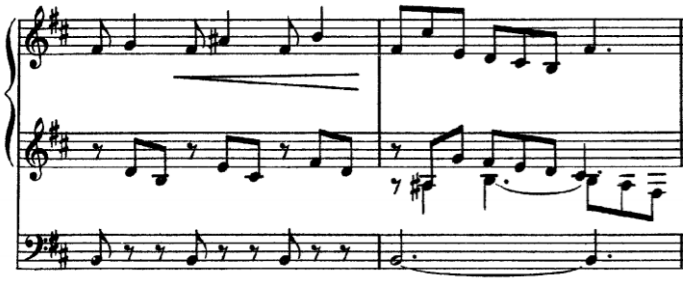
The new Theme C at m. 108 (Ex. 18), appearing halfway through the development, is comprised from the earlier rhythmic Motives D and E but is shaped in new, distinct lines beyond a mere variation of the previous themes; therefore, it warrants its own designation. This theme evolves via a signature Franckian technique that Serge Gut identifies as *point d'appui*. This may be translated as "point of reference," and refers to melodies which expand intervallically around a central fulcrum.[147] An effective example is the second theme of Franck's *Prélude, fugue et variation*, op. 18, m. 16-17; compare the melody with that of Pierné's Theme C (Ex. 19):

[146] *Complainte* is third song of his *Six ballades françaises* from 1921. This mélodie features similar lilting and expanding accompanimental gestures to this movement.

[147] Serge Gut, "Y-a-il un modèle beethovénien pour la symphonie de Franck?" in *Revue européene d'études musicales 1*, 1990 : 59-79. Pierné uses this dramatic melodic tool of Franck's in many other works, including the opening theme of his Trio, the *finale* of his Quintet (rehearsal 76), and the opening of his cello and piano sonata.



Musical Example 18: II: mm. 106-123



Musical Example 19: Franck: *Prélude, Fugue et Variation*, op. 18, mm. 16-17.
From César Franck's *Six pièces pour grand orgue.* Paris: Durand, Schoenewerk et Cie. n.d. (ca. 1878)

IV. Rhythm

This middle *divertissement* movement offers rhythmic relief from the intensity of the more animated first and final movements. Nonetheless, with a tempo marking of 40-50 for the dotted quarter note, Pierné cautiously maintains a forward momentum without permitting a greater indulgence commonly associated with slower tempos of an inner movement. Within this *Allegretto tranquillo* tempo framework, the movement's internal rhythmic energy continues to forge ahead in the large-scale sonata narrative toward the *finale*. Further reinforcing this momentum is Pierné's metric designation of 3/8, which, according to Sandra Rosenblum, usually progresses faster than its 3/4 equivalent.[148] This sonata's quasi-minuet movement, however, still maintains a relatively serene atmosphere despite the continuous momentum.

Pierné continues a perpetual rhythmic activity throughout the whole sonata, driven by constant subdivisions in the piano.[149] Innumerable accounts reveal how the majority of French composers generally favoured strict pulses, and protested the use of *rubato* and other temporal flexibilities, especially casual approaches to rhythm, in interpreting their music.[150] Extraneous manipulations either interfere with calculated rhythmic plans or alter the natural changes of pace already written into the music in the

[148] Sandra Rosenblum, *Performance Practices in Classic Piano Music: Their Principles and Applications* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1988), 306. The absence of a slower indulgence here is counterbalanced by Pierné's insertion of his atypical slow interpolations in the quicker outer movements. This kind of redistribution of temporal relations across the full work's narrative is observed in some of Pierné's other works as well, e.g., the slow first movement of his Quintet, and the active middle movement of his Trio.

[149] Inconsequential exceptions to this ceaseless rhythm are the outer extremities of the movement wherein the brief pauses respectively permit accumulation and yield of momentum, like measured fermatas.

[150] Howat, 246.

opening and closing moments of this movement. It is critical to remain faithful to the steady pulse without such temporal indulgences, out of respect for French cultural adherence to reservedness and modesty as essential aesthetic ingredients.

Pierné denotes exceptions to the vigilant pulse in two situations. The first is his indications of *ritardando* and *rallentando,* which he carefully reserves for select moments of easing into and acknowledging cadential areas. The former, Howat explains, is the milder version of the two, whereas the latter is usually employed for more generous temporal expansions to mark the conclusion of larger sections; in doing so, it articulates larger structural points, just as Pierné has implemented here.[151] The second and more prominent case for tempo flexibility is Pierné's explicit request for *rubato*. This is not a characteristic device found in abundant use throughout *fin-de-siècle* French music. Its appearance should read as indicative reinforcement of how little flexibility is otherwise intended on the whole; however, its appearances are not scarce either, and when present, they inform the overall character. The intended *rubato* style is likely the *contrametric* variety rather than the holistically adaptive *agogic* type.[152] This is especially considering the improvisatory *cabaret* style and even more so, the recurring ostinato figures, the presence of which, according to Howat, warn against slowing down during transitional passages.[153]

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[151] Ibid, 248. E.g., the end of this movement, as well as the end of the *finale*'s development before the slingshot reaction back into the original quicker tempo.

[152] See: Neal Peres da Costa, *Off the Record: Performance Practices in Romantic Piano Playing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 192. Contrametric *rubato* involves a flexible soloist above an unaligned but steady accompaniment, often of repeated patterns or ostinato figures whereas agogic *rubato* refers to the full ensemble executing the same temporal flexibility together. Da Costa reveals that the prominent violinist Joseph Joachim (1831-1907) favoured the contrametric variety.

[153] Howat, 248.

Pierné makes considerable use of the Lombardic short-long rhythms, which Roy Howat notes is a popular means by which the French mark the beat.[154] A significant *agogic* emphasis on the second eighth note serves as the source material for much subtle development throughout the accompanimental variations, as Pierné variously highlights the syncopated second eighth, chiefly through fuller texture on this beat, or withdrawn downbeats.[155] This syncopated gesture also concludes Theme A and launches Theme B, which is initiated by tied notes. Pierné offers a final tease of syncopated three-note groups during the coda (mm. 215-223).

Though this movement's metric and surface rhythms are rather straight-forward and free from ambiguity, the phrasing is quite irregular, featuring asymmetrical groupings, a direct reversal of the outer movements.[156] Phrase lengths of nine and seven bars comprise each statement of Theme A, followed by extensions of five and seven for the final statements of the exposition and recapitulation. The single expositional occurrence of Theme B lasts eleven measures and melodically elides into the subsequent phrase. However, Theme B's length varies greatly with each restatement throughout the rest of the piece, depending on the duration of the sustained ties and repeated notes each time. Surprisingly, symmetrical eight-measure phrases dominate the development section in the midst of complex thematic manipulation and remote harmonic excursions, though this phrasal regularity is often veiled by elisions and interrupting dialogue entries.

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[154] Howat, 264.

[155] See the following discussion on Texture.

[156] Macdonald, Massenet; Deruchie 63. Regular and irregular phrasings are prominent traits of both his mentors Franck and Massenet, respectively.

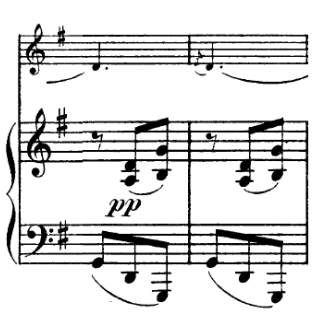
V. Texture

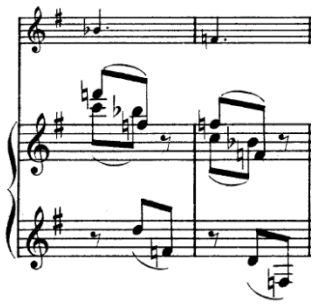
The texture of this movement resembles that of a salon *mélodie*, as it features almost exclusively homophonic chordal or arpeggiated texture under long *cantabile* lines. There are only two short contrapuntal passages: a countermelody above the new Theme C at m. 116, and a brief canon at m. 156 which heightens the tension in preparation for the recapitulation.

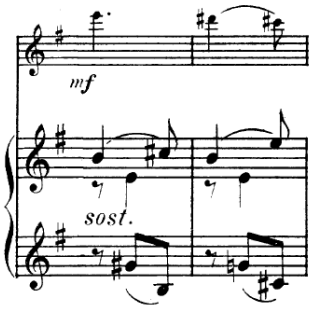
Pierné breaks away from his otherwise equal textural distribution as the violin is the dominant solo voice for most of the movement, apart from the few following moments. During the exposition, Pierné very briefly offers the melody to the piano in a textural inversion for the first half of the third statement of Theme A (m. 39), but he soon returns it to the violin. The development, however, involves much more textural equality, presenting an interactive dialogue between the two parts as they constantly exchange the thematic material. Interestingly, while the violin engages both Themes A and B, the piano never states Theme A here. This is compensated with a refreshing variation, initiating the recapitulation, wherein the piano finally delivers a full melodic statement of Theme A while the violin soars in long descant-style drones before once again returning to the original texture for the remainder of the piece.

Pierné manages to demonstrate variety and cohesion with the piano accompaniment despite its simple nature. By using subtle nuances and variations, he spares the chordal patterns from banality, and when combined with clever harmonic diversions and substitutions, the net result yields absolute charm. In a reverse *developing variation* technique, Pierné extracts two elements from the initial accompanimental components under Theme A and isolates them in different versions throughout the

movement. (See Ex. 19a-e for comparison.) First, for the second statement of A during the exposition, Pierné shifts the first two beats of the original theme forward, bringing out the initial syncopation aspect with a thicker chord on the second eighth (mm. 53ff, Ex. 20a). The two-note slurs become an element in themselves, sometimes combined with other variations, including conflicting two-note slurs (m. 124, Ex. 20b), sometimes in complement with the melody, and as a series of two-note slurs but in different rhythms (m. 116, Ex. 20c). Second, Pierné expands chordal leaps in perpetual eighth notes, which he then isolates into a single line for the left-hand foundation in mm. 53ff, and 140ff.





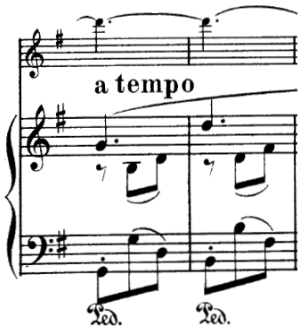


Musical Example 20a: II: mm. 53-54 **20b: II: mm. 124-125** **20c: II: mm. 116-117**

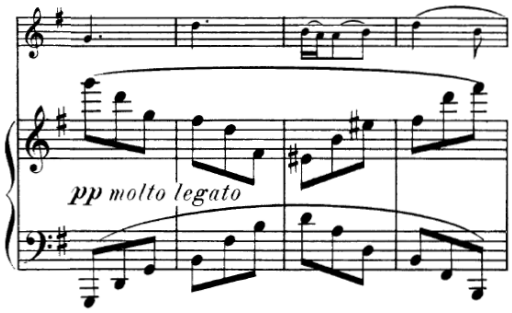
Immediately following the latter example, Pierné offers two other variations, both gestures which will reappear in the *finale*. The first occurs at the onset of its recapitulation at m. 171 (Ex. 20d). Here, he displays the fullest texture with the widest tessitura, reshaping the contour into Chopinesque expanded triads in circular gestures which provide chordal roots and metrical reinforcement on the downbeat to clarify earlier ambiguities where both were absent.[157] Secondly, for the final statement of A in the

[157] This gesture becomes the accompaniment for the P theme of the *finale* at m. 32.

recapitulation at m. 187 (Ex. 20e), he extends the pattern of chordal leaps in perpetual eighth notes from m. 53, now extended over two measures in both hands to produce slow arpeggios in contrary motion; these then reverse direction over mild harmonic changes for a magical textural effect.[158] The second movement ends with a single *pizzicato* evocation in the piano, a subtle gesture of finality which is characteristic of French music.[159]



Musical Example 20d: II: mm. 171-172



Musical Example 20e: II: mm. 187-190

[158] This figure reappears with more rigour under Theme Te at m. 240 in the *finale*.

[159] Howat, 91. This gesture appears in countless prominent examples (e.g., Fauré's *Ballade* or *Arpège*; Chausson's *Le colibri*; movement three of Poulenc's cello sonata). It can also be found in select of Pierné's other works (e.g., the first two movements of his *Trio*; and the first movement of his *Quintet*). Howat attributes this common French ending to the influence of Chabrier with his soft timpani-like articulations which appear in many of his cadences.

CHAPTER 4

MOVEMENT 3, *ANDANTE NON TROPPO - ALLEGRO UN POCO AGITATO*

I. Cyclicism and Recitative

The *finale* is the most dynamic movement of Pierné's entire sonata. The forward momentum and energy accrued since movement one now meets with increased complexities and an intensification of individual elements. Featuring the quickest tempi, the most rhythmically active textures, phrases which are constantly driving unresolved from one to the next, further structural eccentricities, and intense chromaticism – especially at cadences – this sonata demonstrates the nineteenth-century preference since Beethoven to shift the emphasis of a multi-movement work towards the *finale*.

Warren Darcy's use of the Latin expression *per aspera ad astra* ("through adversity to the stars") has come to describe the narrative trajectory of conflict toward resolution that occurs in nineteenth-century large-scale musical forms; Deruchie describes this trajectory as "…from fragmentary, turbulent, or troubled beginnings to consummation and affirmation."[160] In contrast to the increased complexity and intensified elements, this *finale* also achieves its climax via increased simplicity, offering a sense of resolution after the intricacies of the earlier movements. For example, in the *Allegro*, the opening movement's asymmetrical metre of 10/16 is here replaced with a direct 6/8; earlier irregular phrasing is standardized to square measures of four; and modal allusions with weaker harmonic progressions are replaced with direct, albeit very chromatic, use of

[160] Warren Darcy, "Bruckner's Sonata Deformations," in *Bruckner Studies*, 256-277, ed. by Timothy Jackson and Paul Hackshaw (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 259; and Deruchie, 12.

tonality. The most discernible application of broad resolution is the shift from minor mode in the first movement to major for the *finale*, which reflects a large-scale "Picardy third."[161]

Cyclicism is another prominent device used to direct the sonata's trajectory towards the *finale*. Cyclicism, which recalls content from earlier movements to draw attention towards a climactic finish through large-scale structural cohesion, was a popular device in *fin de siècle* French sonatas.[162] Different French sonata composers approached cyclicism with various techniques, whether reprising motives, harmonic progressions, or full themes (either transformed or in original version); however, most cases involved a recurrence of material in the *finale*, especially via the incorporation of the first movement's primary theme into the development of the last movement.[163]

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[161] See: Deruchie, 12; and Romain Rolland, *Beethoven*, trans. by B. Constance Hull (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1924). This "Picardy third" gesture was so common in nineteenth-century instrumental literature that the scarce few symphonic works which did *not* feature it, instead retaining minor modes throughout, now receive special recognition as "tragic symphonies." More than a mere abstract shift of modality, the transformation served as optimistic symbolism for many nineteenth-century revolutionists pursuing their own independent destines through newly acquired liberty. Romain Rolland identified Beethoven's symphonies for nineteenth-century audiences as "[model] parables of triumph over suffering and mastering one's destiny through monumental force of will." After the Franco-Prussian war, the symbolism took on a new varied significance for the optimistic and determined French in their cultural rebirth after the defeat and oppression from the Austro-Germanic hegemony.

[162] See: Moraly, 269; Schmidt-Beste, 145; Rosen, 145; Vincent D'Indy, *Cours de composition musicale* (Paris: Durand, 1909), 423; and William S. Newman, *The Sonata Since Beethoven: The Third and Final Volume of A History of the Sonata Idea*, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1972), 519. Many scholars cite Franck as the source of this cyclic trend in French sonatas, though the process would be codified by d'Indy's *principe cyclique* c. 1900. Newman and Rosen caution against defining the cyclic process as a nineteenth-century novelty, as examples can be observed in earlier era works such as Palestrina cantus firmus masses and Frescobaldi variation ricercars.

[163] Moraly, 269; Deruchie, 133. Notable French cyclic sonatas are those by de Bréville, Castéra, Chevillard, Hahn, d'Indy, Koechlin, Lazzari, Le Flem, Lekeu, Rhené-Bâton, Ropartz, Roussel, Samazueilh, and Widor. Pierné embraced cyclicism several times throughout his compositional output, including his *Piano Concerto*, op. 12; *Solo de Concert*, op. 35 for piano and orchestra; symphonic poem with chorus, *L'an mil; Piano Quintet*, op. 41; and *Piano Trio*, op. 45.

Various scholars have attempted to categorically summarize the use of cyclicism by different composers. Thomas Schmidt-Beste distinguishes two types of cyclicism: one based on motive derivation, where there is a continued and evolving flow of an idea; and the other based on quotation, often interruptive.[164] Moraly articulates cyclicism differently, focusing solely on French repertoire and adding another layer in her 3-tier classification:

1. *Cyclicisme générateur* – Beethovenian style of motivic elaboration of a cell from early in the piece resulting in transformation and eventual return, a process many associate with Franck or d'Indy;
2. *Cyclicisme structurel* – "…where the cyclic return of a theme or element of a theme participates in the construction of the large form"; and
3. *Cyclicisme de reminiscence* – an evocative, atmospheric recall of motives from earlier movements in *leitmotiv* fashion.[165]

Based on Schmidt-Beste's distinctions, Pierné's cyclicism predominately is of the second quotation style, rather than first evolution-based style. Motive A's evolution is primarily confined to the first movement and reappears in the *finale* but without transformation; Pierné's Motives B and C occur referentially throughout all movements, supporting structural cohesion rather than demonstrating any significant continuous evolutionary process.[166] However, Schmidt-Beste's first type of evolutionary cyclicism

[164] Schmidt-Beste, 123-126.

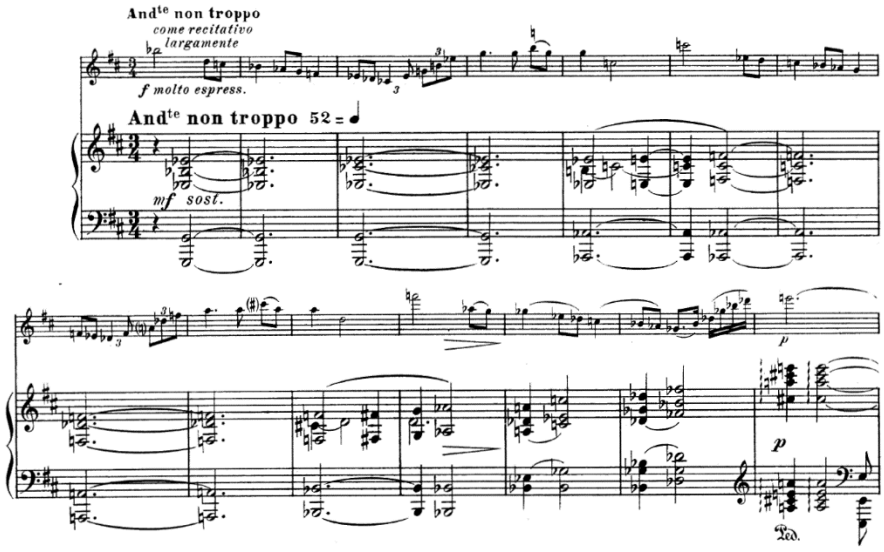
[165] Moraly, 267-8.

[166] Albert Lavignac, « Lionel de la LAURENCIE,» *Encyclopédie de la musique et dictionnaire du Conservatoire*, 1925, 2e partie : « technique – esthétique – pégagogie » p. 128, note 2. This view is further supported by Koechlin's comments in Lavignac's *Encyclopédie* wherein he distinguishes sonatas which merely recall motives in a d'Indy style from a more evolutionary Franck-like style of cyclical sonatas.

does take place, somewhat more discretely, during the S theme of the *finale* (mm. 114 and 140) and even more subtly during the brief cadenza-like solo preparing the developmental *intermède* (m. 204); these passages are based on material from the first theme from the *intermède* of the first movement, here transformed in a completely different character.

Schmidt-Beste's second type of interruptive quotation appears in two cases, also both in the *finale*: the opening recitative (Example 21) based once again on the same *intermède* theme in a closer resemblance, and the critical moment of the interruptive return of the P and T2a themes in alternation from the opening movement that initiates the development section (m. 174). The former finds a parallel case in the *finale* of Pierné's Trio, which similarly opens with a slower, stately introduction (also in 3/4), recalling earlier motives before launching into a quick 6/8. Moraly classifies Pierné's sonata exclusively as her third type, *cyclicisme de reminiscence*, and she articulates the thematic recall for the recitative and development initiation.[167]

[167] The Beethovenian style of cell evolution described as Moraly's *cyclicisme générateur* also occurs with the opening motive of the first movement but this *cyclicisme de reminiscence* is confined to the *finale*, thereby making the sonata ineligible as this type of cyclicism across the whole work.



Musical Example 21: III: mm. 1-14

Particularly noteworthy in this movement is Pierné's inclusion of two different introductions: one indicated *come recitativo*, the other at the actual tempo and character of the movement proper that naturally evolves into the concrete structure.[168] The appearance of a recitative is not a unique occurrence, but rather represents a French trend with numerous observable examples in the violin and piano sonata literature, most notably in the sonatas of Tournemire, Lazarri, Vierne, Ropartz, and especially Franck and Magnard.[169] Although inclusion of recitative in the instrumental literature is documented well before the *fin de siècle*, including Beethoven's ninth symphony and various Baroque string sonatas, it was Franck's extensive full-movement incorporation of recitative into his violin and piano sonata that stimulated a national trend in the genre.[170]

[168] See the forthcoming Rhythm section for more discussion on this topic.

[169] See: Le Guen, 70; Moraly, 323; and Stephen Sensbach, *French Cello Sonatas, 1871-1939* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2001), 107.

[170] Moraly, 308.

The integration of recitative in violin repertoire drew from two areas of vocal interest. First, there was the influence of the nineteenth-century French operatic genre, directly from the stage as well as indirectly through the Viotti-inherited Franco-Belgian tradition of violin pedagogy where *bel canto* lyricism was highly emulated.[171] Second, recitative interest came from church music, where the many composers who also held organ positions immersed themselves in the Baroque and Renaissance ecclesiastic genres as standard elements within their stylistic palette, particularly cantatas where the recitative found domain.[172]

The underlying chords of this *finale* recitative are relatively static; however, though it is one of the few moments in the whole sonata *not* driven by continuous subdivisional momentum, this particular recitative is still measured and rhythmic. This slow albeit brief *finale* opening recitative section serves as a connective bridge between the middle and last movements, a link further intensified by a conjunctive *enchaînez* at the end of the second movement, and in this position hints at emulation of the penultimate part of Franck's four-movement configuration of his sonata, where it is designated as a full-length recitative. Pierné states these declamatory *recitativo* phrases three times in various keys with an ascending bass, with the third statement expanded to prepare for the subsequent section.

Pierné's second introduction appears at tempo *Allegro un poco agitato*, with the purpose of transitioning towards the thematic content in the movement proper. Entering

[171] Ibid.

[172] This is unlike the recitatives of Pierné's other works which demonstrate considerable freedom like that of his cello sonata, or the rhapsodic style of his recitative-like introduction of his *Fantaisie Impromptu*, both cases notably unaccompanied.

first with rhythmic obscurity (see section 4.V: Rhythm), it evolves with increasing clarity through rhythmic manipulation until the gestures have morphed to resemble the defining figures of the P theme.

II. Structural Ambiguity

i. The Exposition

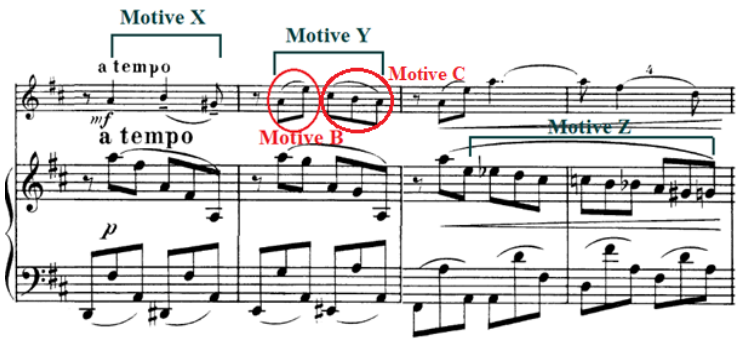
INTRODUCTION		**EXPOSITION**			
Récit-Intro	**Intro (Allº)**	**P (2x)**	**Ta**	**Tb**	**Tc**
1; 6; 11	18 (25; 28)	32 (36); 42 (46)	52;	60	66
E♭$^{6}_{3}$ (N) →	A dominant (D)	D	D/d → b♭ →	c	E♭/e♭ (N) - b

Td	**Te**		**Tf**	**S**		**K**
74	82	90	98	114	130 (138; 146)	166
d	B♭	G	G → E	E♭ (N)	E♭	E♭

Figure 7. The Introduction and Exposition, Mvt. III, *Andante non troppo – Allegro un poco agitato*

Much like the first two movements with their economical, almost monothematic exploitation of the same pervading opening motives, the *finale* is structured with a similar resourcefulness. However, it provides a greater display of transformational variety with its constituent parts. The main theme contains three primary motives found in the first three measures (Ex. 22), each motive an expansion of the previous one. All of these motives are used extensively throughout this movement. Motive X is a compact, elliptical

syncopated figure, emphasizing the interval of a third (consider its relation to Motive C from the first movement). Motive Y is a larger elliptical figure, initiated with the rising fifth of Motive B and a descent filled in with steady, conjunct eighth notes, comprising a more explicit Motive C; overall this gesture can be seen as an enlargement of Motive X. Motive Z, heard first in the accompaniment, is a longer descending passage in chromatic subdivisions, developing the latter descent of Motive Y.



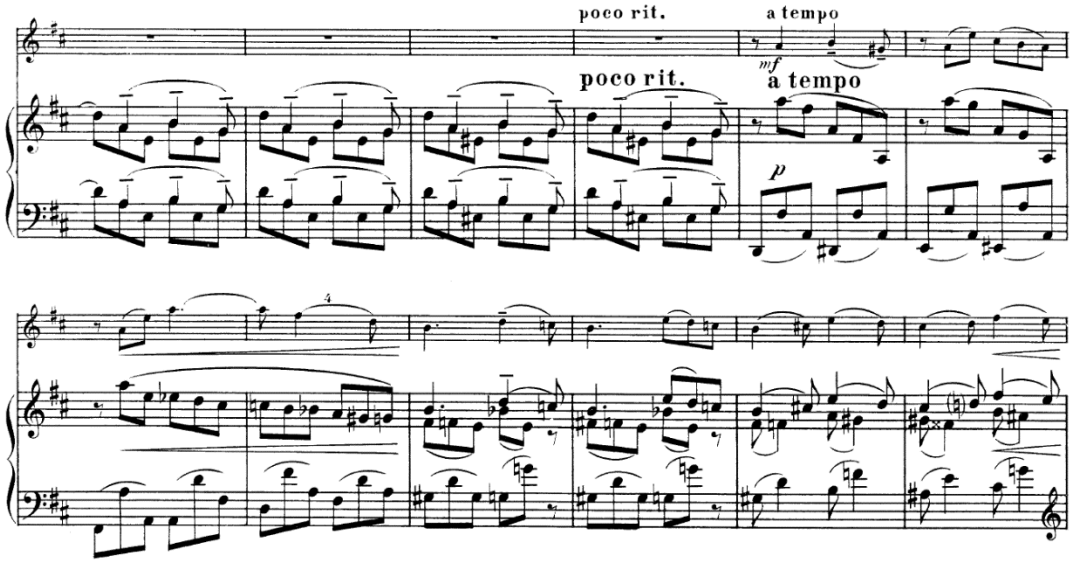
Musical Example 22: III: mm. 32-35

All three movements of this sonata are in *sonata-allegro* structure, but with substantial deviations. In this case, Pierné ambiguously hints at elements of, but does not commit to, *sonata-rondo* form, a recurring structure found in French *fin de siècle* sonata *finales*. This form is suggested by the frequent return of the opening thematic material as well as the *scherzo* character so commonly associated with the structure.[173] Although the *sonata-rondo* form tends to be less rigid, Pierné's deviations lead to an ambiguous hybrid between *sonata-allegro* and *sonata-rondo* structures (though it inherently leans toward the former).[174]

[173] Rosen, 124.

[174] Ibid.

Specifically, a handful of defining characteristics closely associated with *sonata-rondo* structure are absent. Firstly, with *sonata-rondo*, the first theme (A, or in this case, P, at m. 32, Ex. 23) is expected to return in its original key after a contrasting episode. Schmidt-Beste asserts that *sonata-rondo* form tends to juxtapose contrasting sections with less developmental procedures, whereas *sonata-allegro* form is more concerned with the conception and deployment of ideas.[175] In this movement, the alternating sections after A are so motivically derived, while the accompaniment continues in a similar fashion, that the episodes hardly appear contrasting at all.



Musical Example 23: III: mm. 28-45

Secondly, Pierné teases with what appear to be legitimate returns of the first theme; instead, these teases involve considerable modification and development in varying keys. After the two statements of the P theme, an extended transitional section in

[175] Schmidt-Beste, 97.

six parts is revealed, supported by continuous development and modulatory evolution. Aspects of *rondo*-like reprises are continuously suggested, with Pierné varying and developing two ideas both based on P. The first (Ta, Ex. 24) is a new theme based on a condensed version of Motive X from P, but which extends the augmented Motive Z chromaticism while preserving the syncopation aspects; the second half of this theme resembles a varied gesture of the initial Motive Y while continuing the syncopations. This is followed by a deceptive return to a more original version of the P theme. The sequence is summarized here:

Ta = condensed motive x and extended through augmented motive z

Tb = P abridged (in another key)

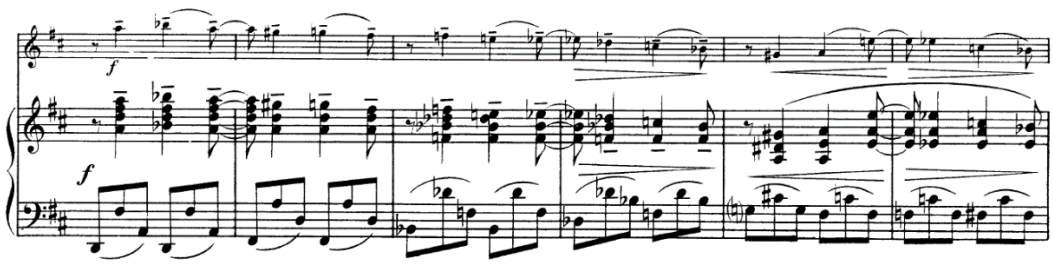
Tc = Ta but with countermelody

Td = Ta again but with different arpeggiated textures

Te = P opening fragment + long lyrical lines above introduction gestures in piano

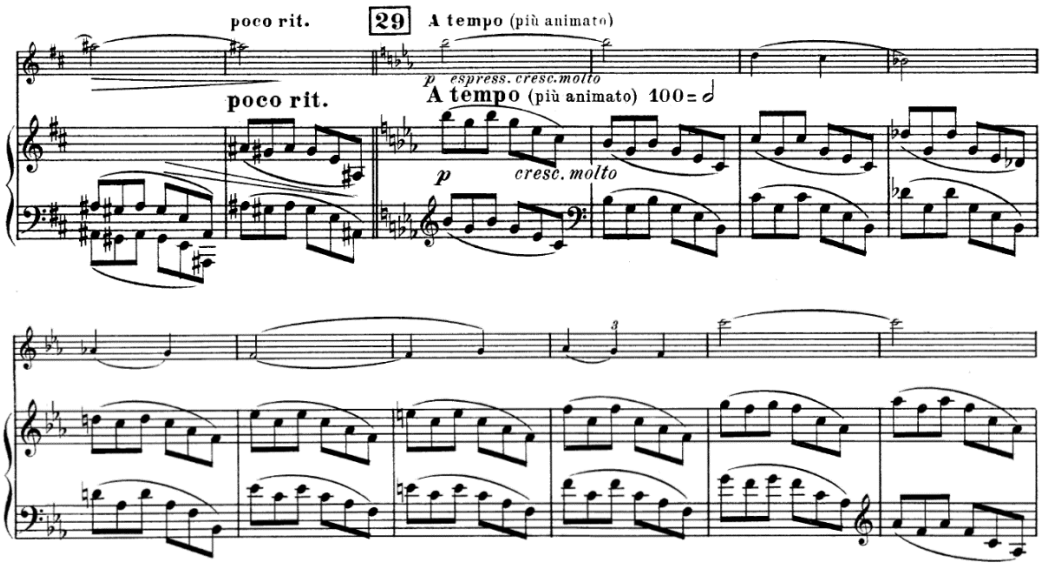
Tf = new variant of P with accompaniment and *accelerando*; prepares the S theme

In other words, Ta, Tc, and Td (all similar) are contrasting to and alternating with Tb and Te (closer versions to the original P theme). A gradual transformation throughout these subsections slowly introduces increasing lyricism with changing accompaniments in preparation for the S theme, most prominently in the final transition section, Tf, whose accompaniment seamlessly continues forward.



Musical Example 24: III: mm. 52-57

The S theme (Ex. 25) is an interesting amalgamation of different pre-existing elements presented within a new context. As mentioned previously, the opening of S is based on the initial idea from the first movement's *intermède*: it is the same cyclic material used to open the recitative, with a brief fragmentary reference to Motive Y at m. 121 (more specifically, Motive C). The second half of the theme returns to another variation of the opening P theme, Motives X and Y combined, in eventual unison between the parts; then, another variation of the same theme (I: *intermède*) appears at m. 130, first in unison, then heard in canon.



Musical Example 25: III: mm. 112-123

Several factors clarify the S theme's identity amidst the deliberately veiled structure. Firstly, though the character may be more triumphant as is typical of a closing theme, the increased breadth of lyricism meets the *cantabile* criteria expected at S, parallel to that found in the first movement. Secondly, the continuous modulations cease at the onset of this theme, and it remains in a stable tonal centre until the end of the exposition. Curiously, this particular key is E-flat, which is not related in any way to the expected harmonic narrative of sonata form. However, A.B. Marx attests that an S theme will always be perceived as such, even if in the wrong key.[176]

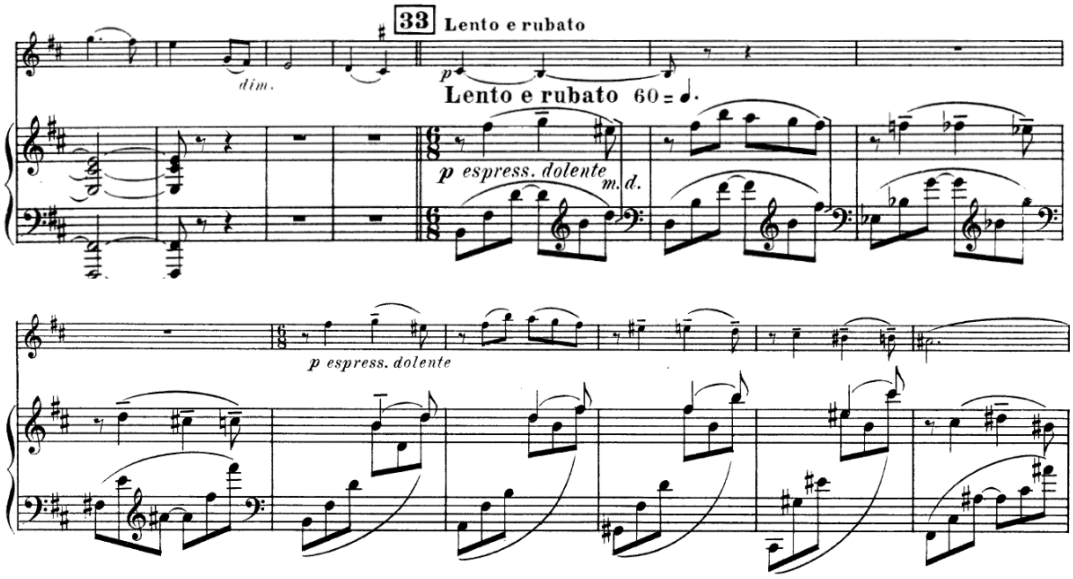
[176] Ibid, 100.

ii. The Development

DEVELOPMENT					***Intermède***	
I:P	**I:T2a**	**I:P**	**I:T2a**	**I:T2a**	**P+Ta**	
174	178;	184	188	192	208; 212; 216; 220; 224	
B	→	b,	→		b	→ F# f#

Figure 8. Development and *intermède,* Mvt. III, *Andante non troppo – Allegro un poco agitato*

This *finale*'s development section can be divided into two halves, similarly to the first movement, but once again Pierné dodges the default format of variation plus retransition. This section features one of the most striking moments of the sonata: instead of providing the expected development, Pierné cyclically initiates this section with a recall of material from the opening movement. Pierné proceeds throughout the first half of the development in an alternating medley of phrases from P and T2a from the first movement in new keys. An extension dissolves this content into a very brief transition (much shorter than the mid-development transition of the first movement) with a short violin solo at m. 205, which makes one final reference to the first movement's *intermède* theme before dramatically halting the tempo to enter into this movement's own *intermède.* (See Ex. 26.)



Musical Example 26: III: mm. 204-216

In all three movements, Pierné marks the second half of the development by offering innovative material. Whereas the first movement presented new themes in a new character, and the second movement provided a new theme (based on earlier motives) within a continued character, this third movement presents a new hybrid of pre-existing themes in completely contrasting tempos and characters. After thoroughly exploring extensive variations on P theme elements, Pierné displays further creative resourcefulness with yet another theme, a hybrid melody that merges the first two measures of P with the last two measures of Ta. He moves away from the jaunty *scherzo* nature toward a more sombre and melancholy tone. Pierné continues this part of the development by repeating this four-measure phrase; moving through different keys without further modification apart from harmonic migration; inverting textures; and, eventually, superimposing a simple countermelody for the fifth and final statement.

iii. The Recapitulation and Coda

RECAPITULATION

P	**Te**	**P**	**Tc**	**Tb**	**Tc**	**Td**
228; 232; 236;	240	248	258	266	272	280
A → e/G	C (♭^7)	A	A/a	d →	B♭ (N/V); f# →	a

Te		**Tf**	**S**	**K**
288	296; 300	304	320; 336; 344; 352	372
F; A	G♭	→ E♭ (N)	D	D

CODA

P		**N**	**P**
380	388	396; 404	412;420; 424
D	B♭	→	D

Figure 9. The Recapitulation and Coda, Mvt. III, *Andante non troppo – Allegro un poco agitato*

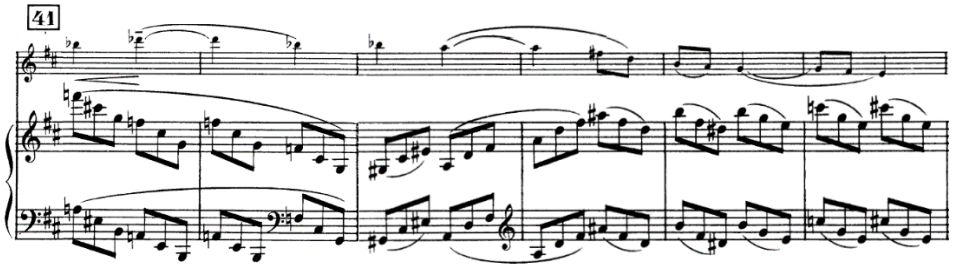
Abrupt emergence out of the final resolution, without any preparatory transition, raises the question of whether the recapitulation is a false or surprise one. Pierné maintains the ambiguity by offering evidence of both, comparable to the ambiguity he created by incorporating elements of both *sonata-rondo* and *sonata-allegro* forms. Three factors explain this ambiguity.

Firstly, Pierné opens the recapitulation by continuing to develop material in motivic fragmentation and rhythmic manipulation with indecisive, shifting tonal centres. These would support the notion of a false recapitulation by suggesting that the section has never exited the development. However, it is apparent through numerous other cases that Pierné enjoyed extending developmental procedures into the recapitulation in order to continue evolving the narrative and to avoid literal repetition.

Secondly, the projected harmony is largely dominant-centric over a pedal point and alludes to retransition status, but its imminent resolution is still not the tonic but rather the dominant of A major. Pierné does not actually surrender the true D major tonic until near the conclusion of the piece.

Thirdly, and perhaps most determinately of a false versus surprise recapitulation, is the issue of whether or not there will be another re-initiation of the opening theme. It is here where Pierné ambiguously hints at aspects of both false and surprise recapitulations. The exposition originally presented two consecutive statements in textural inversion of the opening theme, but Pierné divides these statements in the recapitulation, interpolated by a premature (and eventually redundant) offering of Te. From the second statement of P, specifically from m. 252ff, the recapitulation proceeds nearly identically to the exposition with only a few minor modifications: Tc replaces its near identical counterpart of Ta by simply offering the countersubject the first time; and its recurrence in its due sectional position soon after is spared redundancy through another textural inversion; additional canonic writing appears at m. 262 (with potential homage to Franck, given the A major/minor key area associated with his sonata); and the violin presents the Td theme in octaves for further emphasis. Apart from minimal repetition of expository material (only Te and Tc), this section ultimately proves to be more or less complete in reproducing the thematic rotation. This, therefore, confirms Pierné's use of a surprise recapitulation from its first instance after the *intermède,* rather than a false one despite continued development on the dominant of the dominant. A greater sense of forward motion is finally sensed as the second statement of P gains traction by progressing ahead, mirroring the exposition.

The coda offers one final variation of the P theme. It is perhaps the most altered version of the movement (specifically Motives X and Y) over piano accompaniment gestures taken from the introduction of m. 25, providing further cohesion for a full closure of the work. Just before the work's end, Pierné briefly introduces a new melodic idea at m. 396 (Ex. 27), which strongly resembles the main theme of Franck's symphony; it also possesses similarities to Pierné's own *L'an mil* (Theme III). An abridged repetition of this material (m. 412, texturally inverted) closes the piece with a rhapsodic flourish.



Musical Example 27: III: mm. 396-401

III. Harmony

Pierné's eclectic style and versatility are apparent in this movement, as he incorporates dramatic harmony in the context of a jovial *scherzo*-type rondo character. If the first movement demonstrated more traces of Fauré's musical language, the influence of Franck's harmonic sprit is much more present here, particularly with bolder progressions and heightened chromaticism unlike some of the more subtle and veiled unfolding of harmonic progressions earlier. The modulations here are more frequent and travel to remote regions. The chromaticism overall is pervasive, appearing within the melodic ideas and accompanimental figures as well as in the chord progressions and

overall key schemes. Chromaticism is inherent in the opening theme with initial *échappée* notes, the final ascending scale in mm. 40-41, and in the chromatic scales which occur in the accompaniment of mm. 34ff, as well as the ascending chromatic bass pattern à la Fauré.[177]

Half-step and third relationships continue as cohesive elements of the whole sonata, though in this movement Pierné puts more emphasis on the chromatic mediants rather than their diatonic alternatives**.** Wasting no time, Pierné opens the movement on E-flat major, in first inversion no less, directly emphasizing the Neapolitan relationships originally forecast as tonal destabilizations in the sonata's first phrase; this key choice also acts as chromatic mediant from the recent inner movement in G. The Neapolitan key centre occurs at significant moments in the movement's structure: briefly during theme Tc in E-flat at m. 66 (and the parallel spot in in B-flat major amid a "wrong key" recapitulation in A major, m. 271), but then definitively throughout the expository S theme (m. 114). Regarding half-step relations, Te to S moves down by half-step during the exposition from E major to E-flat, and in the recapitulation from E-flat to D, finally achieving closure.

Most of the key centres throughout the entire structure are navigated almost exclusively by root motion of mediants, usually chromatic, as well as a few by half-step. Especially at transitional moments, the key migrations can be swift and numerous, many of them exploiting Pierné's frequent and sudden chromatic mediant substitutions to launch into another centre. Even during the coda, after finally achieving a long-delayed resolution to D major at the second statement of S, he makes one final peripheral

[177] Tait, 169.

excursion by third to B-flat at m. 388. Chromatic thirds also occur in bolder illustration than in the previous movements, with sudden and unapologetic shifts between consecutive phrases, or even mid-phrase, to chromatic mediants. For example, consider the consecutive chain of thirds throughout the restatements of Te: they move into Tf (mm. 82, 90, and 102) from d minor; transition through B-flat and G; and eventually morph into E major before sliding down by half-step to E-flat major for the remainder of the exposition. Pierné also makes several resolution substitutions via chromatic mediants, an effective means of harmonic pivot to which he resorts often throughout this sonata.

Chromaticism permeates the entire movement. Even during the tonally stable sections such as the P and S themes, Pierné still creates harmonic ambiguity with thick chromatic infusions to challenge the tonal orientation. Already during the initial P theme he intensifies this chromaticism with the Tristanian style of double appoggiatura-laden figures at mm. 38-41 and 48-51. In this manner, he overlaps dissonances where different voices of the texture sometimes resolve asynchronized, whereby a particular voice's resolution is met with a new dissonance elsewhere or an alternative resultant sonority.[178] (Refer back to Ex. 22.)

In the case of the S theme, most of the chromatic harmonies are fleeting and decorative. At m. 154, however, Pierné unleashes more ambitious chromaticism to accentuate the cadential and structural tension with multiple applications: chromatic substitutions, *appoggiature*, ascending chromatic bass, use of the augmented chord (as a more accessible secondary dominant through voice-leading), and an *omnibus*-like progression for a bombastic end to the exposition. This passage resembles an amplified

[178] Howat, 91.

version in rhythmic diminution of the rising chromaticism first encountered with the accompaniments during the initial recitative. The movement's only chromatic escalation past this intense degree is the absolute climax in the coda, wherein both parts surrender any function of harmonic decoration and ascend in rapid chromatic scales. This constitutes the maximum chromatic application of the entire sonata. This dramatic chromaticism is a signature component of Pierné's style that appears in many of his works, notably his *Solo de Concert*, op. 35 and throughout *L'an mil*.

Though the piece is in the major mode, of interest is its regression back to minor amid the chromaticism. Initial presentations in D major at m. 32 are followed by sections with heavy modal borrowing and chromaticism in m. 52, before settling in D minor again for Td at m. 74. This echoes a Franck-like aspect of restless harmonic style involving constant shifts between major and minor, with possible earlier influence by Schubert.[179]

The harmonic tension is especially high in this movement. Each phrase pushes forward, and each usually ends with a dominant harmony that demands a continued propelling towards resolution in the next phrase. Additionally, many of the important cadences heighten the tension by increasing the harmonic rhythm and chromaticism, further intensifying the already forward-driving *agitato* character. The few moments when cadences promise to concretely conclude are thwarted by elisions into new phrases initiating new sections: the *intermède* and recapitulation.

Pierné further heightens these moments of extreme harmonic intensity through the engagement of the *balancements* progressions introduced in the first movement. They

[179] Richard Langham Smith, "Style, Performance Practice, and Reception in the Prelude, Chorale And Fugue: Placing and Performing César Franck," in *Perspectives of the Performance of French Piano Music*, ed. by Scott McCarrey & Lesley A. Wright (New York: Routledge, 2016), 105, 108.

prolong and amplify the tension through hesitative oscillations, enough so as to eventually gain traction and advance forward with momentum, especially towards climactic passages or moments of structural significance. The first of these ends the recitative, prompting an uncertainty between A major as a tonic alternating with A as a dominant function. Normally, an added seventh will continue to flavour a sonority to maintain its dominant status even after the degree disappears. However, the manner in which Pierné offers this repeated oscillation in textural dialogue, especially separated by tessitura, suggests an uncertain dichotomy before finally launching forward as a dominant, ultimately revealed with the presentation of the primary theme.

A smaller but more deliberate application of these *balancements* occurs at m. 36 (and all parallel moments) before proceeding with the aforementioned Tristanian chromatic cadences. Additionally, the extended oscillation between F-sharp major and A minor seventh chords at m. 194 effectively sets up the major structural change of the mid-development *intermède.*

IV. Melodic Line

As with the earlier movements, Pierné consistently presents the same two contrasting melodic styles for the main themes: one that is more rhythmically active with more curvaceous, arabesque-minded contours in close proximity (P theme); and the other with sweeping lyricism in long lines and slower rhythms, focusing more on legato and breadth (S theme). Pierné makes use of the extended transition to transform rhythmic aspects of the more *agitato* P theme, gradually incorporating longer values in preparation

for the longer lines of the upcoming S theme. This creates a smooth and seamless cohesion through a natural evolution of the melody.

This movement owes its relentless momentum in part due to the inconclusive nature of the phrases. Supported by harmonies and rhythms which accumulate intensity as each phrase progresses, all elements increase in complexity and evolve into interrogative cadential points which demand continuation into the subsequent phrase, sustaining a forward motion. Only two brief moments suggest the anticipation of a fully resolved stop – the solo preparing the *intermède* and the exit out of it – but, as mentioned earlier, these conclusions are thwarted by phrase elisions, which initiate new structural sections. Other than these brief comments, there is little to add about melody for this movement that has not already been discussed in previous chapters.

V. Rhythm

Despite the culminating emphasis directed from earlier in the sonata, this last movement offers the lightest rhythmic character, typical of *finales*; indeed, the common 6/8 metre with *rondo* or *scherzo* characteristics is fitting for French instrumental works, considering their origins in dance genres.[180] In a composition lacking a true inner *scherzo* movement, this *scherzando* character is the most satisfying alternative.[181]

[180] Schmidt-Beste, 97.

[181] Pierné offers a remarkable preview to this style in his *Solo de Concert*, op. 35 (which immediately precedes *Sonata*, op. 36), commissioned and published in 1898 as the *Conservatoire* test piece for bassoon with piano. The second part of this piece, *Allegro scherzando*, shares the same metronome marking, 6/8 metre, parallel syncopated gestures other rhythmic games, and aspects of the same romping rhythmic character reminiscent of the more energetic cadential areas of this sonata.

The rhythmic energy is continually propelled forward throughout the entire sonata by consistent activity in all movements. Reinforced by an *enchaînez* after the second movement, the ultimate rhythmic culmination is driven toward and throughout the *finale*. Not only does this movement present the fastest tempo yet – compare its *Allegro* at [126=dotted quarter note] to the *Allegretto* of the opening movement at [96=*un temps*] but the increasing internal tempi continue to propel the focus right toward the ends of the major sections, ultimately the coda.[182]

This movement offers the most temporal variety through a progressive narrative of multiple sections: a two-part introduction that transitions from the slow movement (first an *Andante non troppo* recitative, then *Allegro un poco agitato*); an *animando* in preparation for the second theme (*più animato*) operating at the hypermetric level of one-per-bar; and a *stringendo* climax toward a cyclical recall of the sonata *Allegretto* opening. This succession is reiterated, as expected, during the recapitulation after the mid-movement drop in momentum for the *intermède*. The increasing pace features shifts of pulse: the second theme operates at the hypermetric level, and its accompanying eighth-note subdivisions are only fractionally removed from the forthcoming cyclical sixteenth note return of the opening tempo to initiate the development.

Similarly to the first movement, the reduced energy of the *intermède* is an opposite approach to the norm during the development, where activity is typically maximized in order to accumulate heightened tension. Throughout the various temporal changes in all three movements, Pierné almost always modifies his tempo indications

[182] There is a misprint appearing in the violin/flute part, inconsistent with the piano score: the initial "All^{tto} un poco agitato" should read "All^{o}" (*Allegro*) to match its later appearance at the recapitulation alongside "1^{o} tempo".

with *poco* or *non troppo*, reinforcing the French notion of suggestiveness and controlled restraint, even during passionate outbursts.

As mentioned, Pierné heightens all activities in order to highlight cadences, especially harmonic and rhythmic elements, which continue to propel the energy forward into the subsequent material. Specific devices exacerbate the increased momentum: rhythmic fragmentation of increasingly smaller units (mm. 38, 50, etc.), increased syncopation (m. 162), especially those in overlapping textures (mm. 48ff), and occasional slowing of rhythmic values with thicker texture for more poignant chordal punctuations (m. 154). These devices are complemented by increased harmonic rhythm, intensified chromaticism, and open-ended melodic phrases. As this movement continuously drives forward, it is no surprise to find the most rhythmically active moment coupled with an absolute chromatic ascent in the coda at m. 410 in a flashy texture of broken octaves with the only sixteenth notes of the entire movement (excluding the cyclical recall from the first movement).

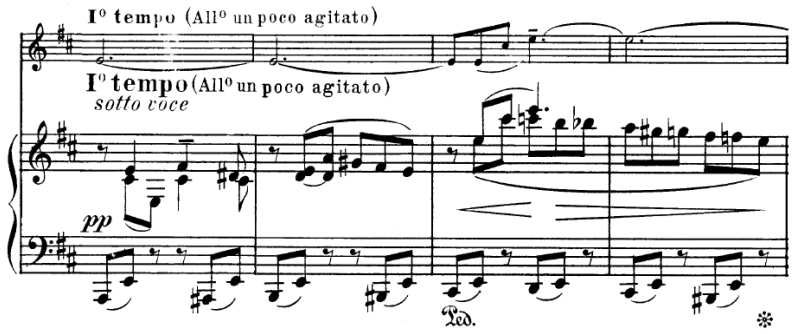
The most heightened cases of rhythmic ambiguity appear at the beginnings of sections, especially with new tempi or metre, where Pierné exploits contexts that have not yet been firmly established to the listener. Recall the first movement's opening 10/16, or the immediate hemiolas throughout the *intermède* of the first movement (echoed by this movement's recitative introduction). The two-part introduction features the most prominent rhythmic ambiguity of the movement; this is the longest span of rhythmic disorientation of the whole sonata, and Pierné's clever irregularities warrant a brief examination. The varied reprise of the first movement's *intermède* begins the first section, still infused with the original metre-challenging hemiola. The belated arrival of

the sustained piano sonorities on the second beat amplifies the metrical uncertainty; this uncertainty is teasingly rectified for only a brief moment on the next downbeat before further obscurity is introduced via the discrete merging of the irregular five-bar melodies in the violin with an intra-phrasal hemiola outlined by the piano chords. The *Allegro* section begins with a flurry of nebulous subdivisions reminiscent of the very opening of the sonata. Here, peppered accents demarcate asymmetrical groups of five and seven, a pattern Pierné initiates on an off-beat and moves through irregular, changing phrase lengths (4+3+3+4). Eventually through a *developing variation* process, the syncopated accents evolve into the main theme.

Once the metre and theme are established, the rhythm progresses with few deviations or obscurities. As perpetual-motion figurations pervade both first and last movements, the 6/8 metre of the *finale* serves as a metrical resolution to the asymmetry of the groups of 5 with the 10/16 that dominated in the opening. The phrasing proceeds regularly as is common with *rondo finales*, with the most direct presentation of simple, recurring four-measure phrases in the *intermède*. However, Pierné evades tedium with his second atypical request for *rubato* in the sonata, presumably of the agogic rather than contrametric variety, to highlight the *tenuto* articulations and chromatic decorations for the *dolente* character.

Overall, Pierné only explores two primary rhythmic elements throughout this movement. The first element is syncopation, which both defines the main theme and its constituents for consistent development, and emphasizes the galloping two-note slurs in the accompaniment, especially at the beginning of the recapitulation (e.g., beginning at m. 228, and mm. 270-271; see Ex. 28). The second element is the allusion to inner-

measure hemiola with concurrent suggestion of 3/4 within 6/8. This results in a simple yet expressive 2:3 cross-rhythm, sometimes executed in regular fashion (m. 88), but many times itself syncopated as with the Ta theme (m. 52), which extends the opening syncopated motive.[183] As with earlier in the sonata, he continues to expand on the 2:3 idea by juxtaposing duplets with triplets in the Bruckner rhythms throughout the S theme, comparable in broad, lyrical nature to the earlier T2b theme of the first movement. While these do not threaten any metrical ambiguity or obscure the rhythmic gesture, they do offer expressive and effective rhythmic interest.



Musical Example 28: III: mm. 228-231

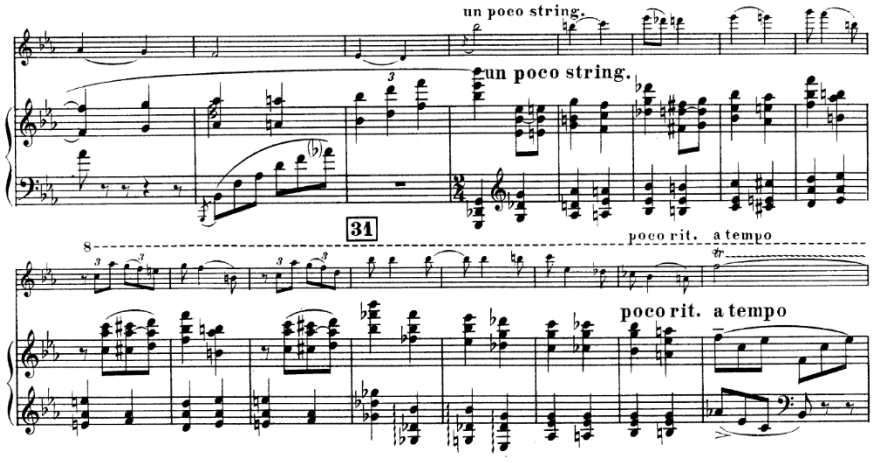
VI. Texture

Lastly, and to conclude the analysis of Opus 36, this *finale* demonstrates the most equal distribution of thematic material exchanged between the two instruments. Only a few passages permit the violin to dominate as soloist over a piano accompaniment of figurations: the final part of the Transition (Tf), leading into the first half of S, and a

[183] Cf. reh. 72 of his *Trio* for similar interplay of 6/8 and 3/4, as well as larger pulse of 2 over 6/8 at reh. 74. As previously mentioned, he also explores different groupings of 6/8 and 3/4 in his *Fantaisie-Impromptu*.

majority of the coda. Curiously, during the cyclic recall in the first half of the development, the violin never states the first movement's Ta theme; this is left for the piano while the violin plays the accompaniment. Otherwise, the material is consistently passed back and forth with balanced textural equality.

Although heterophony occurred in earlier movements, this movement is unique in that it offers the sonata's few moments where the two instruments finally express the same material in unison, albeit fleetingly, in order to effectively accentuate the climax and resolve the sonata's narrative. Given his penchant for counterpoint, the absence of a fugue or more serious counterpoint during this apotheosis seems uncharacteristic for Pierné; yet, he does resort to brief canonic treatment to highlight a few climactic moments of structural intensity during the S theme. The first moment occurs at m. 138; the second occurs in a peculiar variation of canon with augmentation and added appoggiaturas at the cadence at m. 154 (and their parallel spots in the Recapitulation, m. 344 and m. 360). (See Ex. 29). Though brief, this canonic writing suggests homage to Franck, whose pervasive canonic writing dominates the *finale* of his violin sonata.



Musical Example 29: III: mm. 151-166.

CHAPTER 5

ENVOI

In addition to providing an introduction to Pierné's life and musical style, the primary purpose of this research project was to contribute a formal musical analysis of the *Sonata for Violin and Piano,* opus 36 of Henri Constant Gabriel Pierné. This analysis explored the considerable creativity and craftsmanship with which Pierné employed both the violin and the piano, demonstrating contextual trends and potential influences, and marking his distinguished place within *fin de siècle* musical writing in France.

This piece illustrates Pierné's cosmopolitan eclecticism by synthesizing elements associated with Germanic writing such as Wagnerian harmonies and the adoption of the sonata genre, along with French compositional elements, such as the use of modes and, perhaps most notably, the innovative modifications of the inherited sonata form template. While these departures are not yet as extensive as those in sonatas by Debussy and later composers, this sonata integrates the use of cyclicism and recitative, trends made popular by Franck's influential violin and piano sonata. As well, Pierné showcases French interest in transparent textures, intentional ambiguity within all elements, and highlights the elevated French emphasis on lyricism after a century of operatic focus in France, likely influenced by his mentor Massenet. Based on conclusions drawn from the analysis, it is evident that this duo sonata is a masterwork worthy of a secure place among standard chamber music repertoire.

It is this author's hope that the content delivered herein will immediately, and in the long-term, contribute valuable material to the limited scholarly resources concerning this composer. Additionally, it is hoped that this document, situated alongside related

research, will serve to lift the piece from its current position of semi-obscurity and highlight its value as a testimonial work from the French Third Republic.

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APPENDIX A

ANALYSIS CHARTS, MVTS I-III

I. MOVEMENT 1, *ALLEGRETTO*

Modified Sonata-allegro Form: T based on P; interpolated 2nd Transition posing as false development between two S statements; development contains interpolated *intermède* section; recapitulation is significantly rearranged with continued development

EXPOSITION

P		**T(P)**[1]	**S**[2]	**T2a**[3]	**T2b**[4]	**S**[5]
1; 5;	9	15; 19; 23; 29	37 (41; 45)	53 (61)	69; 77; 85	93; (97; 101)
d[6]	(A)	d →[7] C	F	F → E♭	E♭ →	F

DEVELOPMENT

T2a[8]	**T2b**[9]		**T2b**[10]	**T3**[11]
109; 113; 117; 123; 127;	133; 137; 141		150; 158; 166	180
F; series of dom. 7ths	→	…B[7]	E[7] = A major	→

[1] Violin joins as heterophonic evolution of P theme (posing as varied restatement)
[2] First of two S theme statements, interpolated by a "transition" (T2)
[3] False development: Melody contains elements of S: Motive B augmented and inverted, syncopated, over continued use of Motive A from P theme
[4] Contains melodic similarities to S theme: Motive B and use of ties; more prominent Motive A from P theme, especially at mm. 85-87
[5] Second statement in textural inversion
[6] Phrygian mode allusion turns out be tonal destabilizations that foreshadow forthcoming harmonic centres of importance throughout the sonata: half-step and subtonic relations; In these analysis charts, lower case indicates minor mode and upper case indicates major for the purpose of conserving space rather than writing out "major" or "minor" each time
[7] Arrows indicate notable modulation or other extensive harmonic migration
[8] Abridged; m. 127 recalls m. 61 of T2a
[9] Piano accompaniment recalls m. 85 of T2b with sporadic recall of S in violin (m. 136 recalls mm. 37-38)
[10] Contains portions of S theme (m. 167 recalls m. 45 of S)
[11] Transition to *intermède*, contains syncopated octaves of S and triplets of T2b

Intermède

a	**b**[12]	(**a**)[13]	(**a**)[14]	**a**
192; 197; 203	207; 210; 213**;**	220;	226	228; 236; 239
D♭ (flattened tonic)	D♭ →b♭	B♭	D (N of Db)[15]	D♭

RECAPITULATION

P[16]	**T(P)**[17]	**T2a**[18]	[19]	**T2b**[20]	**S**[21]	**T2b**[22]	**S**
243	247	249;	253	259	267 (271; 275)	279; 287; 295	303; (307; 311)
D♭	(f)	A♭	F	A →	E →	(d); f#	D

CODA

T2a[23]	**T(P)**[24]
319; 325;	331; 336; 338; 340
D	D

[12] Considerable use of Motive C here
[13] Containing mm. 199 & 203-4 from **a** section
[14] More explicitly recalls opening of **a** section at m. 207 before a full return
[15] Expected resolution of G-flat substituted by enharmonic chromatic mediant
[16] Surprise recapitulation (i.e., interruption without retransition) on "wrong" tonic; Abridged and repeated: only first two measures
[17] Abridged: only the first phrase
[18] S absent here and re-sequenced later so that mm. 253-266 mirrors the same thematic sequence as the rotation in the development section; Abridged T2a: 1st phrase only, then advancing to T2a (development version)
[19] T2a version from development section (m. 127)
[20] Development version: m. 133 (originally based on m. 85)
[21] Incomplete S, interrupted by T2b
[22] Accompaniment replaced by a hybrid of mm. 85 and 133, not corresponding with original T2b until mid-phrase, m. 285, when original accompaniment resumes; mm. 287ff progress identically to exposition (mm. 77ff) apart from tonal adjustments
[23] Version from development, m. 109
[24] Based on m. 29

II. MOVEMENT 2, *ALLEGRETTO TRANQUILLO*

Form: Sonata/Ternary hybrid with elements of Theme & Variations in a nearly monothematic A section

INTRO	**EXPOSITION**				**DEVELOPMENT**					
(A)	**A**[25]	**A**	**A**[26]	**B**	**A**	**B**	**A**	**B**	**A**	**B**
1; 4	7; 16	23; 32	39	53	64	68	77	85	93	97
G	G→B→	G→D→	G	G	C Mixolydian	A Mixolydian	G dom. pedal	E♭ (N of D)	B Mixolydian (E=N/E♭)	--

								RECAPITULATION		**CODA**	
C[27]	**C'**[28]	**A**	**A**	**B**	**A**	**B**	**A**	**A**	**A**[29]	**B**	**B**
108	116; 120	124	132	140	148	152	163	171;180	187	203	211; 215; 223
E;	E; B♭	B♭	D♭[30] →	C	C Mix.;	A Mix.	[31]	G→B→	G	G	G[32]

[25] Opens with rising fifth interval (Motive B) from first movement and continued interest in scalar melodic thirds (Motive C), especially at mm. 13, 16; contains Rhythmic Motives D & E
[26] Third statement is varied via developmental procedures
[27] New theme based on Rhythmic Motives D & E
[28] Textural inversion, fragmented and repeated under countermelody
[29] Second of three statements of A omitted; two-measure extension
[30] Anticipated B-flat major resolution replaced by chromatic mediant, comparable to m. 226 of first movement
[31] Increasing chromaticism over tonic pedal before brief dominant to prepare recapitulation
[32] Super-plagal IV/IV for pre-coda emphasis, beginning in m. 210, before returning to G major

III. MOVEMENT 3, *ANDANTE NON TROPPO –ALLEGRO UN POCO AGITATO*

Form: Sonata-allegro that poses as Sonata-Rondo (i.e., P theme reappears as a deceptive first episode but is rather part of the larger 6-part transition due to its abridged and developed nature through continued modulation); development section contains another interpolated *intermède*

EXPOSITION

Récit-Intro	**Intro (All^{o})**[33]	**P**[34] **(2x)**	**Ta**[35]	**Tb**[36]	**Tc**[37]	**Td**[38]	**Te**[39]		**Tf**[40]
1; 6; 11	18 (25; 28)	32 (36); 42 (46)	52;	60	66	74	82	90	98
E♭$^{6}_{3}$ (N) →	A dominant (D)	D	D/d → b♭ →	c	E♭/e♭ (N) - b	d	B♭	G	G → E

S[41]	[42]	**K**[43]
114	130 (138; 146)	166
E♭ (N)	E♭	E♭

[33] Gradually morphs through *developing variation* into upcoming P theme
[34] Contains Motives X, Y, and Z; Motive Y contains a scarce reference to Motive B for cohesion in all movements
[35] Six-part transition that deceptively hints as rondo episodes; Ta contains extended Motive X and expanded elliptical Motive Y from P theme
[36] P abridged
[37] Ta with countermelody
[38] Ta with new texture: arpeggiated accompaniment
[39] Seems like another rondo return: P fragment combined with introduction figures of m. 17 at m. 86
[40] Most contrasting variation yet of P with varied right-hand piano accompanimental figure from P (m. 32)
[41] Based on I: *intermède*
[42] P in different rhythm; return to I: *intermède* material at m. 140
[43] Closing theme

DEVELOPMENT[44]

I:P	**I:T2a**	**I:P**	**I:T2a**	**I:T2a**[45]
174	178;	184	188	192
B	→	b,	→	

Intermède[46]

P+Ta

208; 212; 216; 220; 224

b → F# f# [47]

[44] In addition to previous cyclical recall (I: *intermède* in Recitative and S theme), and cohesive motivic usage used throughout all movements, the initiating moment of development is the most significant use of cyclicism of the sonata; Pierné alternates fragments of P and T2a from the first movement in continued development through different keys here

[45] Based on development version from first movement (m. 127); ends with a brief violin cadenza recalling I: *intermède* once again in m. 205 to transition towards this movement's *intermède*

[46] New 4-measure hybrid melody of pre-existing themes from earlier this movement in new tempo and character: first two measures of P + third and fourth measure of Ta: 5 statements with countermelody added in final statement

[47] Modulation via augmented chord functioning as altered C-sharp dominant in current F-sharp minor tonality but requiring only a single half-step resolution to new key of A major

RECAPITULATION

P[48]	**Te**[49]	**P**[50]	**Tc**[51]	**Tb**	**Tc**[52]	**Td**	**Te**		**Tf**	**S**	**K**
228; 232; 236;	240	248	258	266	272	280	288	296; 300	304	320; 336; 344; 352	372
A → e/G	C (♭^7)	A	A/a	d →	B♭ (N/V); f# →	a	F; A	G♭	→ E♭ (N)	D	D

CODA

P		**N**[53]	**P**[54]
380	388	396; 404	412; 420; 424
D	B♭	→[55]	D

[48] Fragmented with further development; 2nd statement of P (originally heard in immediate succession) postponed to m. 248, interpolated with additional Te

[49] Accompaniment from P but in contrary motion, comparable to m. 187 from second movement, alternated with accompaniment from Tf (m. 98)

[50] 2nd statement of P (delayed from recent Te interpolation), this time complete without fragmentation; recapitulation proceeds identically to exposition from this point forward (apart from harmonic adjustments) with three exceptions: Tc is substituted for Ta; additional canonic writing appears at m. 262, potentially demonstrating homage to Franck in the A major/minor key of his mentor's sonata; textural inversion

[51] Tc substituted for Ta (i.e., countermelody is presented the first time rather than waiting for restatement); Td appears in octaves in violin at m. 280

[52] Textural inversion

[53] New melodic idea, reminiscences to Pierné's *L'an mil*, or Franck's Symphony

[54] Abridged restatement of m. 380 with textural inversion and slight variance to close the work

[55] Most chromatic passage for apotheosis