

Cécile Chaminade: A Composer at Work

by

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Abstract

Despite her great popularity in her lifetime, nowadays Cécile Louise Stéphanie Chaminade (1857 – 1944) is only a name in the relatively short list of successful women composers. While there is a trend in current musicology to focus on women composers and musicians, the existing literature on Chaminade is limited to a couple of biographies, and a few book chapters, the most significant resource to date being Marcia J. Citron's *Cécile Chaminade: A Bio-Bibliography*. In light of the scarcity of writings on Chaminade, this thesis will discuss her life and selected compositions with the purpose of uncovering the composer's most salient musical characteristics. Chapter one will begin with a biographical sketch and brief discussion of the cultural context of Chaminade's time. In chapter two, I provide analyses of three of Chaminade's songs (*Chanson slave*, *Rosemonde*, and *Tu me dirais*), as well as discussions of three songs by her contemporaries (Jules Massenet, Augusta Holmès, and Vincent d'Indy) in order to compare subject matter and musical techniques. To round off the chapter, I conclude with an overview of a few piano pieces by Chaminade (*Sérénade*, *Op. 29* and *Sonata*, *Op. 21*, movements 2 and 3) and by her favourite composer, Camille Saint-Saëns (*Chanson Napolitaine*, from *Album pour piano*, *Op. 72*). Chapter three is devoted to an analysis of Chaminade's large-scale dramatic work, *Les Amazones*, *op. 26*, a composition that displays both operatic and symphonic characteristics. Finally, I conclude with a general summary of Chaminade's style, in light of the compositions discussed. Through this thesis, my hope is that more interest will be piqued in this most fascinating French woman composer, and by extension, in the many women composers yet to be discovered.

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Karen J. McCann
The University of British Columbia
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Chapter One

1.1 Biography

If one were to ask the question, “Who was Cécile Louise Stéphanie Chaminade?” the answers would be sketchy at best. Nowadays, Chaminade is known mostly for her *Concertino* for flute and orchestra, a composition that enjoys relative popularity due to its inclusion in many audition playlists. Despite the *Concertino*’s success, Chaminade herself is not as well known, although her name is sometimes quoted in lists of women composers, and occasionally mentioned in survey articles on late nineteenth-century French music.

The current literature on Chaminade is limited to Marcia J. Citron’s *Cécile Chaminade, A Bio-Bibliography*, a couple of other biographies, a brief article in *Groves’ Dictionary of Women Composers*, and a few book chapters devoted to women composers written by authors such as Julie Anne Sadie and Citron.¹ Citron’s research on Chaminade is probably the most reliable and informative to date; her *Bio-Bibliography* provides a brief biographical sketch and list of resources on the composer, while her book *Gender and the Musical Canon* features an innovative analysis of the first movement of Chaminade’s *Sonata, op. 21* for piano.

A mystery surrounding Chaminade is why she was so popular in her lifetime, and then was forgotten. She was very well-received as both a composer and a performer; this public respect for her work led Chaminade to conduct many tours, both in France and abroad. This alone accounts for her popularity during her lifetime. But, for some reason, instead of being regarded as an intriguing musician, she remains only an historical figure, because of, or in spite of, her gender. Many of the existing contemporaneous reviews and articles on Chaminade reveal the gender rhetoric of the time, discussing her music in “feminine” terms. Recent scholarship is focusing more on women composers, but there is still much work to be done before women like Chaminade are fully recognized and taken seriously as *bonafide* composers, instead of women who happen to compose. This chapter will offer a biographical outline, interspersed with relevant newspaper and review excerpts and anecdotes, and also a brief discussion of the musical trends during Chaminade’s long career.

With so little published research available on Chaminade, it is not surprising that little is known about this woman composer. From the surviving biographical information, and from

¹ The books from which these chapters are taken include *The Grove Dictionary of Women Composers*, edited by Julie Anne Sadie and Rhian Samuel, and *Cecilia Reclaimed*, edited by Susan C. Cook and Judy S. Tsou.

numerous newspaper articles and concert reviews available, a rough outline of the composer's life can, nonetheless, be pieced together.²

Born in Paris on August 8, 1857 to Pierre-Hippolyte Chaminade, a well-to-do insurance manager and Stéphanie Courtin, Chaminade exhibited musical talent at an early age. That talent was nurtured and encouraged by her musical family. Both parents supported their daughter's artistic endeavours by including her in their musical *soirées*, either as a performer or budding composer. Chaminade, in an article for *The Etude* magazine, recalls that she was very young when she first started to compose; she describes how her *pavanes* inspired her dolls to dance, her dogs drifted to sleep to her slumber-songs, and "for her cat, whose ways were mysterious," Chaminade composed nocturnes or moonlight serenades.³

The Chaminades' neighbour in Paris, Georges Bizet, admired the girl's abilities and predicted a bright future for her. Cécile Tardif states that Bizet was a frequent visitor *chez* Chaminade.⁴ Perhaps Bizet was specially invited to the Chaminade home to "discover" little Cécile's talent. Chaminade, again in the aforementioned *Etude* article, reminisces about her meeting with the French master. She remembers being called into the drawing-room one evening, probably when she was about eight years old or so, and being introduced to a "stout, swarthy gentleman who made me play all the pieces I knew."⁵ Following the recital, Bizet administered a complete musical examination which included musical dictation. What Bizet discovered evidently pleased and impressed him, as he encouraged the girl's father to "give her the opportunity for coming to the front, and she cannot fail."⁶

Information about Chaminade's musical education is not entirely conclusive, as little specific data is available. However, Marcia Citron reports that in 1867 or 1868 Chaminade "was taken to see Le Couppey," an instructor on faculty at the Conservatoire, for "an assessment of her talent."⁷ This meeting was probably the result of Bizet's enthusiasm concerning Chaminade and was most likely similar to Bizet's informal examination. Le Couppey's reaction was also positive, and he strongly recommended that the young girl begin formal instruction at the Conservatoire. Unfortunately, Chaminade's father opposed the suggestion, as it did not agree

² Much of the biographical information on Chaminade in this chapter is based on Marcia J. Citron's *Cécile Chaminade: A Bio-Bibliography*. In that work, Citron also includes a list of secondary sources (e.g., newspaper reviews), many of which I consulted directly, as will be indicated by some of the following footnotes.

³ Cécile Chaminade, "Recollections of My Musical Childhood," *The Etude*, December 1911, 805. This article, unlike most of those I consulted, is in English, not French. Where applicable, in subsequent review quotations, I will cite the original French.

⁴ Cécile Tardif, *Portrait de Cécile Chaminade* (Montréal: Courteau, 1993), 32.

⁵ Chaminade, "Recollections," 805.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Marcia J. Citron, *Cécile Chaminade: A Bio-Bibliography* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1988), 4.

with his views on decorum for a young woman of his social standing. Instead, Chaminade *père* agreed to Le Couppey and a Monsieur Savard (another instructor at the Conservatoire) giving his daughter private piano and composition tutelage respectively.

Chaminade greatly enjoyed her lessons with Le Couppey, who in turn preferred the young girl above all his other students. He even nicknamed her his “first pedal,” a huge compliment, as he was known to refer to the pedal as the “soul of the pianoforte.”⁸ Savard, on the other hand, was not as inspiring an instructor as Le Couppey. He was a very scholarly musician, quite dry and pedantic and “too fond of strict rules,” according to Chaminade.⁹ Each of Savard’s composition lessons commenced with him harshly criticizing Chaminade’s musical assignment. This attitude did not endear him to his student. Because Chaminade found Savard “positively unjust” as a teacher, she resolved to play a joke on him, intending to expose his musical hypocrisy. One day, she brought a fugue, as per his instructions, for correction and revision. Savard immediately began to scold her for her many mistakes, grumbling under his breath while marking her exercise. After a decent interval, with “all the innocence in the world,” Chaminade said that she was so sorry, but “I have made a mistake! The fugue is not mine – it is one of Bach’s.”¹⁰ There was a long silence, after which he was a little more lenient of her musical shortcomings.

In 1870, when Chaminade was 13 years old, the Chaminade family fled to Angoulême to avoid the atrocities of the Franco-Prussian War, returning to Paris after the war was over.¹¹ Chaminade appears to have continued her musical studies in composition and piano throughout the rest of the decade, culminating in her musical début in 1877 at the Salle Pleyel.¹² This first professional performance showcased Chaminade on the piano in a recent piano trio in B flat Major by Widor.¹³ Chaminade is described as not only an excellent musician, but a real virtuoso. Around the same time, her *Étude, op. 1* was published to favourable reviews.

Chaminade performed at many salon gatherings and premièred many of her works in those situations, playing publicly on a regular basis starting in the 1880s. One of her first major musical events was a recital of her works at the Salle Erard on February 8, 1880; this concert

⁸ Chaminade, 805.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid, 806.

¹¹ Angoulême is located on a plateau above the Anguienne and Charente rivers, in the province of Poitou-Charentes on the west side of France. The city is 82 km southwest of Limoges.

¹² “Concerts et Auditions Musicales,” *Revue et Gazette Musicale*, May 6, 1877, 142.

¹³ Ibid.

featured her *Trio, no. 1, op. 11* as well as some of the smaller piano pieces and songs.¹⁴ One reviewer described the concert as lasting for “deux heures agréables” in the afternoon and as featuring seven of Chaminade’s piano pieces, all of which were of “bien remarquable mérite.”¹⁵ Chaminade is described as one of Le Couppey’s best students while her compositions revealed a freshness of melodic invention and clarity of ideas. Specific works on the program included the *Trio*, some vocal and piano pieces, and the *Marche hongroise*, a piece for two pianos performed by Chaminade and a Mlle. Colombier that concluded the concert.¹⁶ The *mélodies* that were particularly well-received included *Te souviens-tu*, sung “avec expression” by a M. Bosquin of the Paris Opéra, and a “très originale” *Chanson slave*.¹⁷ Already, we can see that Chaminade is touted as a rising musical force.

Throughout the 1880s, Chaminade was regularly busy with performances and premières of her own compositions. Following the première of the *Trio, no. 1* was Chaminade’s first offering to the orchestral repertoire a year later. The Société Nationale de Musique gave a concert on April 4, 1881 that featured Chaminade’s four-movement *Suite d’orchestre*.¹⁸ It was generally well-received according to Citron.

In 1882, Chaminade directed a private performance of her opéra comique, *La Sévillane*, at her parents’ residence in Paris. The one-act work received much praise, so much that enthusiasts desired to see *La Sévillane* on stage at the Opéra Comique.¹⁹ Despite public support for the opera, Chaminade was hesitant in promoting *La Sévillane*. It is possible that, as a woman, Chaminade suspected that her reception as a “serious” composer would be lukewarm at best, despite the largely positive reviews thus far. Another reason for her reticence could have been the recollection of the fiasco of *Carmen*. Chaminade was present at the March 1875 première of Bizet’s opera and, especially since she had a personal relationship with Bizet, she must have been dismayed to witness how negatively it was received by the audience. Critics were shocked and appalled by the explicit portrayal of female sexuality in *Carmen* and, thus, were quick to condemn it.²⁰ If the composer who encouraged her to pursue music experienced this much opposition in mounting an opera, perhaps she should be even more careful, as she was a relative newcomer. Bizet, after all, was more established and experienced a composer than

¹⁴ Citron, 5.

¹⁵ “Concerts,” *L’Art Musical*, Feb. 12, 1880, 51.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 52.

¹⁷ “Concerts,” *Le Ménestrel*, 15 Feb 1880, 86.

¹⁸ Citron, 5.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Susan McClary, *Carmen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 111.

she; if he was not immune to the critics' censure, then she could not have expected to be treated differently. Even though *La Sévillane* was never staged in its entirety, it was kept alive through the performances of various excerpts in concerts, such as the those as part of the Concerts Populaires.²¹

During the 1880s, Chaminade frequently premièred her compositions in many concerts, usually with success. Her music was also programmed by various composers in their own concerts. For instance, Benjamin Godard, one of Chaminade's former teachers, organized a series of concerts, one of which featured Chaminade's *Suite d'orchestre* on March 29, 1885.²² The first concert of the twenty-third season of the Concerts Populaires included Chaminade's *Tarentelle* (the sixth piece from *Six Études de Concert*, op. 35 for piano), the only French work to be programmed (other music on the agenda ranged from Mozart's *Symphony in D Major* to excerpts from Wagner's *Meistersingers*).²³ Her music was now starting to appear in venues other than the salons.

One major life event for Chaminade during this decade was the death of her father in 1887. This loss placed the family's financial security in jeopardy, resulting in the selling of the Paris house and relocating to the summer home in Le Vésinet.²⁴ Perhaps that is why Chaminade's focus in composition shifted from the large genres to the more marketable ones of the vocal *mélodie* and piano solo in 1890. Her compositional output from 1890 to the end of her life largely consisted of works in the small genres, a fact that corresponds with this hypothesis. These musical forms were relatively facile to compose and thus, readily available to submit to Enoch (her music publisher) on a regular basis. This move on Chaminade's part would probably have netted her a steady income, rendering her financially independent. Chaminade appeared to have had a contract with Enoch, as that particular publishing house was the one that distributed most of her work, which may have facilitated the spreading of her reputation abroad as her music became available to the public.

The 1880s was the decade in which Chaminade wrote one of her last large-scale works, the dramatic symphony *Les Amazones*. It is interesting to note that of all the music Chaminade composed, she cites *Les Amazones* as her favourite.²⁵ The première of *Les Amazones* occurred in

²¹ Citron, 6.

²² "Concerts," *L'Art Musical*, 31 March 1885, 43-44.

²³ "Nouvelles Diverses: France," *L'Art Musical*, 31 October 1886, 159.

²⁴ A small village, Le Vésinet is 18 km from Paris.

²⁵ Ida B. Cole, "Mme. Chaminade, Famous French Composer, Calls Women Here 'Adorable,'" *St. Louis Star*, 25 November 1908.

Anvers on April 18, 1888 and was positively received.²⁶ In an unsigned review, the critic likened the flight of Himris and Gandhar to the "Ride to the Abyss" from Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust* and Wagner's *Ride of the Valkyries*; however, despite certain musical similarities, Chaminade reveals a fundamentally French character in her music, "endiablée et pittoresque . . . avec . . . puissance . . . Sa musique n'est pas poussée dans l'extrême . . . et n'a aucune prétention à la complication, à l'inattendu."²⁷ *Les Amazones* was not performed in Paris, which is unfortunate, given the work's enthusiastic reception in Anvers. Actually, the première of *Les Amazones* in Anvers also appears to be its last performance; it was not performed again. Perhaps the money necessary to secure performances of the work was scarce. If Chaminade was as introverted as she made herself out to be in various newspaper articles and interviews, she may not have been successful at garnering capital for her endeavours. *Les Amazones* requires fairly substantial musical forces such as an orchestra, full choir, and three vocal soloists.

While touring mainland Europe, Chaminade again found success in her concerts abroad. Audiences were very appreciative of, and receptive to, her work. For example, in late February 1894, the Société de Chant du Conservatoire in Geneva, Switzerland, sponsored a concert featuring some early music and some "modern" music. Handel's *Concerto grosso* was the old music and Chaminade's songs and piano works constituted the new. Upon hearing Chaminade's compositions, the reviewer, in an unsigned article, remarks that Chaminade appeared as capable a conductor as a pianist and composer. Furthermore, her music is on par with that of the best artists in the city.²⁸

One of Chaminade's regular musical activities in the 1890s was her annual concert in London. There is no existing evidence that points to how Chaminade's reputation became known in England. We can only hypothesize that the English were able to access her music through print sales. The distance between London and Paris is not that great; it is likely that news of cultural events travelled between the two cities frequently. In any case, Chaminade's London première was on Thursday June 23, 1892 in St. James' Hall.²⁹ Despite her inability to speak English, the British appeared to support her. Queen Victoria was an admirer and invited Chaminade to play at Windsor Castle. A large audience at the St. James' Hall concert "bore witness to the popularity of her works in England."³⁰ Works on the programme included the

²⁶ Anvers is a port city, found at the mouth of the North Sea in Belgium. The city is the second-largest in Belgium and is well-known for its diamonds.

²⁷ "Anvers," *Le Guide Musical*, 26 April 1888, 133.

²⁸ "Nouvelles Diverses," *L'art musical*, 1 March 1894, 69.

²⁹ "Mlle. Chaminade's Concert," *The London Times*, 25 June 1892, 19.

³⁰ Ibid.

second *Trio* for piano and strings, “meritorious” piano works such as *Automne*, *Fileuse*, and *Air de Ballet*, and a number of songs sung by a Mr. and Mrs. Oudin (the unsigned review offers remarks such as “quaint” for the song *Voisinage* and “charming” for the mélodie *Madrigal*).³¹ The tone of the article indicates that a positive impression was made on both the audience and the reviewer. In fact, the reviewer goes on to say that Chaminade’s “productions stood the severe test better than might have been expected . . . no sense of monotony is produced.”³² It seems that the author of that article did not anticipate to be positively affected by a female composer’s music.

The composer’s popularity was such that she was invited to return to England each year for the rest of the decade. Chaminade’s yearly recitals were all very well-received by the English public, evident in the large crowds that flocked to hear her. The unsigned review in *The London Times* that discussed the June 1894 concert reported that Chaminade was a “talented musician with considerable refinement of style and a charming gift of melody.”³³ That refinement and charm were illustrated by a Mlle. Landi, whose “exquisite voice, method, and style . . . were well displayed in *L’anneau d’argent* and *Auprès de ma vie*, both of which were encored.”³⁴ Three years later, the June 1897 concert review was fairly positive, commenting on the “perfect singing” of the soprano and the satisfaction of listening to some “elder favourites” (*Chanson Slave* and *Tu me dirais* were among the four encored songs).³⁵ It seems that the English public preferred hearing the older, more familiar songs to the new ones. Chaminade’s relationship with the English public lasted almost a whole decade, which is remarkable in that it was based on her original compositions. The works presented in those London recitals did not vary too much in terms of style; Chaminade’s music was cast in clear forms and was always tuneful. At that time, there was no one dominant English composer, so perhaps it was easier for Chaminade to break into that culture. Also, it is possible that the English viewed her as a novelty (i.e., successful woman composer) and were more receptive to her. In any case, Chaminade was very popular with the English and possibly was encouraged by that success to travel to Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, and the rest of France.

One European concert which occurred in Berlin in November 1899, is of interest not only for the actual programme, but for the substance of an accompanying newspaper review by

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ “Mlle. Chaminade’s Concert,” *The London Times*, 5 June 1894, 13.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ “Mlle. Chaminade’s Concert,” *The London Times*, 12 June 1897, 8.

Edward Baxter Perry. Works included a piano trio, piano duets and solos, and some fifteen songs. Chaminade played each piece from memory, which, as Perry notes, was remarkable as the concert lasted for almost three hours.³⁶ While Chaminade may not be a great pianist, she is worthy of “high consideration” as a composer; in fact, Perry notes that her piano solos are “exquisite creations . . . forming almost a school by themselves.”³⁷

While Perry concedes that Chaminade’s piano works are of very high quality, he firmly asserts that she reaches the highest artistic levels in her songs. The *mélodies* are tuneful, effective, sensuously beautiful “but genuinely musical, with melodies that . . . almost sing themselves . . . qualities too often conspicuous in their absence in songs of the modern German school.”³⁸ Chaminade’s songs definitely belong to the “best class of French vocal compositions of the present day,” according to Perry.³⁹

Unfortunately, Perry’s high opinion of Chaminade was not shared by the Berlin press critics. In his *Etude* article, Perry claims that the German critics were quite harsh in their assessment of Chaminade. According to Perry, their criticism was manifested in three concrete objections. First, Perry believes that the Germans were convinced that women can do nothing capably, at least when competing in a profession that, up to then, had been dominated by men. Second, the Germans were generally prejudiced against everything French. And, finally, the Germans were irritated (and perhaps offended?) that Chaminade had the “effrontery to remain single until well on toward middle life, and to possess little, if any, physical beauty.”⁴⁰ This last criticism is especially interesting, as it is not related to Chaminade’s musical ability at all and seems to be the most passionate complaint in the Germans’ diatribe. It points to the shortcomings that *men* see, and thus feel justified in criticizing. (However, it is noteworthy that it is a man – Perry – who points this out.) Because Chaminade does not conform to the traditional model of femininity (i.e., domestic wife whose realm is restricted to the home), those critics do not understand her and as a result, condemn her.

The new century brought another major life change to Chaminade: she married the Marseille music publisher Louis-Mathieu Carbonel on August 29, 1901 in Le Vésinet.⁴¹ This marriage was unusual for several reasons: Carbonel was more than twenty years Chaminade’s senior and due to the conditions Chaminade proposed, it was clear that she was seeking a

³⁶ Edward Baxter Perry, “Sophie Menter and Cécile Chaminade,” *The Etude*, November 1899, 348.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 349.

⁴¹ Citron, 13.

marriage of convenience (one of her conditions was that there were to be no sexual relations between them).⁴² It is not entirely clear as to why Chaminade would even consider such a union; perhaps she wanted the freedom of an independent woman in order to compose but also the social respectability of a married woman. (The diary Chaminade kept would probably have revealed her feelings on this issue, but unfortunately, she requested that it be destroyed upon her death.) Another puzzling aspect of the marriage is that Chaminade did not seem to take advantage of her husband's connections as a publisher. Most of Chaminade's music was distributed by Enoch. However, it is not likely that Chaminade thought much about composition in general during her brief relationship with her husband, for Carbonel was in poor health and died in 1907. The last few years saw Chaminade nursing her ill spouse rather than writing music.

Meanwhile, Chaminade was becoming very popular in the United States through print. Her music was selling extremely quickly and was being featured regularly in periodicals such as *The Etude* and *The Ladies' Home Journal*. Several reasons can be postulated as to why Chaminade's music was so popular. First, her melodious tunes appealed to the public, fulfilling the need for musically challenging works that were still accessible. Another reason for the composer's popularity in America could have been that she was a woman composer. That simple fact may have endeared her to her largely female fan base in the United States. Women were more likely to play the piano and sing than men, as the two activities were largely considered domestic arts. For female musical dilettantes, studying and performing works by a woman composer could have been, in a sense, empowering. Rather than playing the "standard" repertoire by male composers like Chopin and Schubert, women had an alternative in Chaminade. Fan clubs (called "Chaminade clubs" out of admiration for the composer) started appearing in America at this time and were devoted to Chaminade and music making in general. As early as February 1900, "Chaminade clubs" were studying the composer's music and communicating with Chaminade in order to procure concerts and recitals in the United States.⁴³ In fact, Chaminade acknowledged that her first U.S. tour was much anticipated by Americans because of "unprecedented numbers of presidents of Chaminade clubs who have besieged her manager for audiences."⁴⁴ She would have come to America earlier, but different things prevented her from doing so, including the advanced age of her mother and "the illness or death

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ethelyn Friend Middleton, "The Idol of the Girls," *The Ladies Home Journal*, February 1900, 7.

⁴⁴ "Chaminade busy seeing New York," *Musical America*, 24 October 1908, 1.

of persons near to me. I have had many letters from America, many letters to tell me how my compositions were received.”⁴⁵

As is attested by an unsigned article in February’s 1899 volume of *The Etude*, women’s musical clubs were thriving in the United States. Activities in these clubs were not restricted to performance. Academic musical education was encouraged and supported. Topics of research included those on individual composers (such as Chaminade or Amy Beach) and movements in music (like the Modern Russian School).⁴⁶ However, the same writer gently admonishes those women not to “overlook those practical needs and opportunities” in favour of the more academic and scholarly, remarking that music teaching, especially to young children, is still a rich and valuable area in which women can thrive.⁴⁷ It is very obvious that the author is uncomfortable with the idea of women pursuing higher education and uses the article not to highlight the events and activities in which women are involved, but to uphold what society believes is proper women’s work in music. In the opening few paragraphs of the article, which serve as a disclaimer of sorts, the author believes that a “clear, dispassionate statement” is necessary in order to ascertain whether these clubs were useful or not.⁴⁸ Here, we can see the power of the (largely male) establishment opposing the (primarily female) dissidents in participating in an activity that has largely been dominated by men.

In any case, those women’s clubs were very excited about Chaminade and it was this response in the United States which influenced Chaminade to embark on a tour of the country. She arrived in New York on October 17, 1908, performing her first American concert on October 24 in Carnegie Hall, and “as anticipated, the tour was a tremendous financial success. The halls were generally filled to capacity . . . and people were regularly turned away.”⁴⁹ Chaminade accompanied two singers in this concert, Yvonne de St. André, mezzo, and Ernest Groom, baritone, in a program of songs and piano solos. The works that were performed included *Valse Romantique*, *Quatrième Valse*, and the *Deuxième Trio* for piano, violin, and cello.⁵⁰ Richard Aldrich, in his *New York Times* review, states that Chaminade is one of very few active woman composers of the day.⁵¹ He describes her music as containing “interest, charm” and a “well-recognizable artistic personality of her own” and further claims that what

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ “Women’s Work in Music,” *The Etude*, February 1899, 36.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Citron, 17.

⁵⁰ “Chaminade busy seeing New York,” *Musical America*, 24 October 1908, 1.

⁵¹ Richard Aldrich, “Mlle. Chaminade’s Concert,” *The New York Times*, 25 October 1908, 13.

Chaminade has done is “unpretentious in idea . . . [she aims] chiefly at attractive melody, rhythmic grace and claiming immediate acceptance by those whose knowledge and taste in music are not erudite.”⁵² Finally, Aldrich concludes that Chaminade does not try to be more than she is (a compliment of sorts disguised in the gender rhetoric of the day), that she possesses “Gallic grace and charm,” and that “harmonic piquancy” is in “the best of what Mlle. Chaminade writes.”⁵³

In the Sunday October 18, 1908 edition of the *New York Sun*, a relatively lengthy interview with Chaminade appeared in response to her U.S. tour. Miss Lynch, the interviewer (no first name given), reports that Chaminade only intends to stay in the U.S. for a couple of months at most, touring the principal cities of the country. Despite Lynch’s best intentions, the article still devotes a good deal of space to Chaminade’s physical appearance. Perhaps this is because the author is a woman and was expected to write about appearance, dress, and manners.

Chaminade addresses a couple of issues relating to gender and music in an interview in the Sunday November 15, 1908 issue of *The New York Herald*. More gender rhetoric is evident in this article, especially since both Chaminade and the American composer John Philip Sousa were answering the same questions. The author’s summary concerning the composers’ musical styles is that Sousa writes like a “manly man and Chaminade like a womanly woman.”⁵⁴ Anecdotes are related so that they adequately reflect either the femininity or masculinity of the composer in question. For example, Chaminade shares that her song, *L’anneau d’argent*, was born out of a “vague sorrow about nothing in particular,” and that when she read the poem on which the song is based, she wept.⁵⁵ On the other hand, Sousa’s most famous march was inspired by the thought of his country and how “important to the world it was that our flag should keep afloat – *The Stars and Stripes Forever!* I saw in my vision the enemies rising like waves against it, and our soldiers going out to battle, great armies of them.”⁵⁶ Perhaps the most telling thing regarding Chaminade’s reputation and popularity among both critics and public is her reputation for grace: it is an “unequalled grace in expressing *as a woman* musical ideas *in a woman’s way* that has lifted Mme. Chaminade from the mob of women composers who are trying to disguise their femininity under a bearded mask and who confuse racket with virility.”⁵⁷

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Rupert Hughes, “Mme. Chaminade and John Philip Sousa Talk About Music,” *The New York Herald*, 15 November 1908, “Magazine” section, part 2, 10.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 9.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 10, emphasis added.

Most people do not find her music or her demeanour offensive, as they both adhere to societal norms. Even though Chaminade was financially and musically independent for most of her career, she conducted herself in a manner that was acceptable to those in a position to judge (i.e., music critics). Her marriage must have legitimized her somewhat, even though she did not have any children through it.

Further evidence of the prevailing gender rhetoric of the time is illustrated in the December 14, 1908 review of Chaminade's Boston concert. The author, Louis Elson, opens the commentary by writing that "we believe in the female composer, and this [the concert] was a definite endorsement of the work of a female creator in music,"⁵⁸ then adopts a more patronizing tone by utilizing adjectives such as "grace," "daintiness," and "charm" (words found in abundance in this review) to describe Chaminade and her music. We should wonder if Chaminade's popularity was largely due to how she conducted herself, or whether her music evoked a simpler, by-gone era. That is, most of the available concert reviews and newspaper articles emphasize the composer's grace and femininity; unlike Augusta Holmès, for instance, Chaminade was not one to assert herself physically in artistic circles.⁵⁹ While Chaminade felt free to air her musical opinions, her public behaviour would not stray far from the manner in which "proper" ladies should conduct themselves. Also, it is possible that Chaminade's music, especially the small genres, evokes a sense of nostalgia toward older styles. Her music exhibits clarity of form, tuneful melodies, and an early-Romantic tonal language, all of which contrast with the emerging avant-garde trends in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The 1910s were years of transition. Chaminade's mother died in 1912, (a great emotional loss, as the two were very close), the Great War erupted in 1914, and composition generally ceased as Chaminade assisted in the nursing of soldiers. However, her previous musical accomplishments were not forgotten as she was awarded the highest French civilian honour in 1913 – Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur. She was the first woman composer to be named to the Légion. After World War I, her music was still being performed. One of the few musical events after World War I that highlighted Chaminade's music occurred on February 5, 1928, at a festival that was held as part of the Concerts Dubruille. The program included excerpts from *Callirhoë* and the piano works *Pavane* and *Courante* (all three transcribed for string quintet), piano solos (*Nocturne*, *Troisième Prelude*), mélodies (*Le Chant du Nord*, *Sérénade espagnole*), the flute *Concertino*, and excerpts from a mass (*O Salutaris* and *Gloria*). According to one

⁵⁸ Louis C. Elson, "Mme. Chaminade's Boston Début a Great Success," *Boston Daily Advertiser*, 14 December 1908, 5.

⁵⁹ At least, there is no evidence of that in any reviews or articles.

review, a highlight of the concert was Mme. Marie Capoy's biographical recitation of Chaminade's life, given with enough dramatic flair that it captivated the audience.⁶⁰ The unsigned review concludes that the concert proves that Chaminade could create beautiful things without "resorting to polytonality. Distinction, elegance, exquisite sensibility . . . Chaminade has these qualities in abundance and the public will always vote for them."⁶¹

After World War I, Chaminade did not resume her compositional activities, either due to feelings of obscurity or to declining health. She died in Monte Carlo on April 13, 1944 at the age of eighty-six.

1.2 Cultural Background

The time during which Chaminade was most active in her career was an artistically rich era in France. One of the major cultural influences, Wagnerism, began around 1870 and split French composers into two opposing camps. This musical schism was one of the results of the Franco-Prussian War, for France's defeat precipitated a "concentrated reassertion" of national consciousness affecting every field of musical activity.⁶² The "Petit Bayreuth," a group that included such musical figures as d'Indy, Fauré, and Charles Lamoureux, was a group of Wagner enthusiasts who promoted and studied his music. Evenings would be devoted to sight-reading operatic excerpts and chamber works.

Wagner's reliance on symbolism, borrowings from folk and epic legends, and his belief that opera and drama should stem from the same source all resonated with intellectuals, especially writers.⁶³ This resulted in sensual, grandiose music with unusual, and unexpected, sonorities. Wagner's musical form emerges from the use of motivic logic (*leitmotif*) rather than melodic periods.⁶⁴ That is, instead of relying on harmonic cadences as the goals to which the musical action strives, Wagner's use of *leitmotif* permeates the orchestral setting, "determining its structure at any given moment."⁶⁵ Thus, Wagner's music appeared to be "never-ending" because he had a different conception of musical time, evident in the "unexpected" appearances of his *leitmotifs*. He helped open up new possibilities in the aesthetics of transfiguration; this,

⁶⁰ *Le Ménestrel*, 10 February 1928, 61.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁶² Edward Burlingame Hill, *Modern French Music* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1924), 5.

⁶³ Elaine Brody, *Paris, the Musical Kaleidoscope* (New York: George Braziller, 1987), 22.

⁶⁴ Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 197.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 196.

writes Botstein, explains the relationship between “Wagnerism in France and the Parnassian poets and later the literary symbolism of Mallarmé.”⁶⁶

The opposing camp was devoted to French music and style. Composers such as Saint-Saëns and Gounod strongly believed in the preservation and promulgation of French music. In fact, Saint-Saëns, along with Romaine Bussine, a voice teacher at the Conservatoire, founded the Société Nationale de Musique in 1871 in order to “aid the production and popularization of all serious works, whether published or not, by French composers.”⁶⁷

When Chaminade was old enough to decide how to approach music herself (for she was only in her early teen years at this time), she too aligned herself with the nationalist composers. Chaminade admired both Gounod and Saint-Saëns, the former for his “passion for expressiveness and preoccupation with orchestral colour” and the latter for his “classical purity” and “linear design” of his music.⁶⁸ Both of these composers’ influences can be seen in Chaminade’s own music.

Regarding Wagner’s influence, Chaminade was not one of those composers who fell under his spell. She adhered to the harmonies and compositional techniques of the Romantic age, stating that she was “essentially of the romantic school, as all my work shows.”⁶⁹ From the extant newspaper interviews and articles concerning Chaminade’s music and personal style, one learns that “Romantic” to Chaminade means tuneful, tonal, and traditional. Part of what Chaminade disliked about “modern” music (i.e., Wagner and Debussy) was the purported lack of form and direction. Thus, her music upholds the structure found in classical and early romantic music. Forms largely adhere to those demonstrated in Classical music (sonata form, ternary songs, periodic phrases), using variations to provide contrast. Harmonies shifted between triadic and dissonant ones; chromatic sonorities were used to reflect expression and emotion.

Chaminade’s oeuvre illustrates these characteristics quite nicely. Like Gounod and Saint-Saëns, Chaminade placed great emphasis on expression and colour within definite formal boundaries. Small piano works and solo songs constitute the vast majority of her output, both genres being intimately associated with Romanticism. Chaminade did not write music in the

⁶⁶ Leon Botstein, “Beyond the illusions of realism: painting and Debussy’s break with tradition,” in *Debussy and His World*, ed. Jane F. Fulcher (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 146.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁶⁸ Martin Cooper, *French Music from the Death of Berlioz to the Death of Fauré* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951), 17.

⁶⁹ Citron, 21.

larger genres often. Apparently, from an interview in the *Ladies Home Journal* from 1900, the orchestra “does not attract Mademoiselle Chaminade so much as the voice and piano.”⁷⁰

Her melodies are simple and tuneful, a definite contrast to Wagner’s approach to melody. Dissonances are used judiciously within clear forms. The only Germanic composition Chaminade wrote (in title, scope, and style) is her *Concertstücke*; even then, the inspiration and influence was personal, as her sister’s husband, the composer Moritz Moszkowski, responded to Chaminade’s request to assist her in using that “foreign” musical language.⁷¹ She turned to local settings and French poetry for inspiration, instead of subjects and places with which she had no experience. For instance, her earliest and fondest memories were of the sea, broad stretches of open country, and trees. Chaminade claimed that she “cannot seem to accomplish much unless I am in accord with the out-of-doors – and always preferably where the ocean is by.”⁷²

Musical exoticism was a trend that was very popular in France in the second half of the nineteenth century. According to Elaine Brody, musical Orientalism in France has its roots in the struggle between the Greeks and the Turks in 1821-1830.⁷³ Many Frenchmen allied themselves with the Greeks in that conflict and in 1830, with France’s conquest of Algiers, new landscapes and cultures were exposed to them. Interest in the East magnified after that time. To the French, “oriental” applied both to the music of the Far East (e.g., Japan) and to the music of India, Persia, and Morocco (i.e., the Near East). The proximity of France to Spain also accounts for the fascination with Iberian culture. Orientalism is simply the composer’s attempt to “remove the Western music lover from his habitual surroundings, to give him the sensation of something new,” drawing upon the available resources.⁷⁴ However, that exotic language will never be truly “authentic” as oriental music is melodic while western music is harmonic, resulting in an effect that is superficial at best, since the Oriental language does not fit perfectly into the western musical idiom. Locales and cultures upon which inspiration was drawn included the Mediterranean, Russia, and – especially in France – Spain.

As genuine Oriental music rarely penetrated the music of Western composers, more commonly composers would use descriptive titles and rhythmic and melodic figures suggestive of the East.⁷⁵ Other exotic characteristics, according to Frits Noske, are the use of the medieval

⁷⁰ Middleton, 7.

⁷¹ Even though Chaminade used the plural form for the title of her piano concerto, she only wrote one such composition.

⁷² “Chaminade busy seeing New York,” *Musical America*, 24 October 1908, 1.

⁷³ Brody, 69.

⁷⁴ Frits Noske, *French Song from Berlioz to Duparc* (New York: Dover, 1970), 313.

⁷⁵ Brody, 69.

modes (“chiefly the first, seventh, and ninth”), augmented second, double pedal (i.e., the drone bass fifth to suggest the “monotony and emptiness of Oriental music”), and melismas.⁷⁶ To that list, Susan McClary adds “colourful timbral effects (especially percussion), simple formal designs and insistent dance rhythms.”⁷⁷ Each characteristic listed is rooted in authentic non-Western music, but what is important is the “deviation from the European norm.”⁷⁸ Western composers take what their listeners are accustomed to and shape the exotic elements around those expectations. Another important facet of Exoticism is the demarcation between East and West. Composers deliberately contrasted Western musical conventions (such as form and harmony) with their conception of the Eastern folk idiom (i.e., whichever culture from which they borrowed), through which the idea of the “Other” was very evident. The infusion of the “foreign” musical elements into the Western musical environment drew attention to them, indicating them as unique and out-of-place, yet are accepted and appreciated by the Western listener because they fit into the forms, styles, and harmonies to which he or she is accustomed.

These “Oriental” displays of culture influenced musicians to experiment with pentatonic and whole-tone scales, intricate rhythmic patterns, and static harmony. Sometimes “exotic” melodies would be notated from first-hand experience of the culture in question and interpolated into the “Western” score. This exotic borrowing enriched the musical language of the time and inspired composers to pursue alternative directions in music, leading to Modernism in the early twentieth century. Examples of other instances of Exoticism are numerous and span much of the latter half of the nineteenth century; for instance, we have Gounod’s *La reine de Saba* (1862), Bizet’s *Djamileh* and *Carmen* (both 1875), Saint-Saëns’ *Suite algérienne* (1881), Délibes’ *Lakmé* (1883), and Massenet’s *Thaïs* (1894).

Chaminade, then, was in good company. Many of her compositions display a foreign influence, usually Iberian. Her *mélodie Chanson slave* is only one song that capitalized on the folk idiom; it features a strong dance-like pulse and ornamentation reminiscent of improvisation. Some piano works that feature Oriental characteristics are *La Lisonjera*, *La Morena*, and *Lolita*. All of these works feature the “typical” exotic elements mentioned earlier, such as pedal tones, clear formal designs, and a percussive accompaniment. It seems that Chaminade was following the French musical trend in alluding to Oriental elements in her work. Her music is more evocative than authentic, like much of the “exotic” music written by French composers. For instance, Massenet’s *Hérodiade* (1881) includes a “Danse galliléane” with an “Oriental flavour

⁷⁶ Noske, 313.

⁷⁷ McClary, 53.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

in its accompaniment” while Saint-Saëns recalls the “ancient Orient” in the “Bacchanale” in *Samson et Dalila* (1877).⁷⁹

These movements contributed to Paris’ reputation as the musical capital of the world by 1925.⁸⁰ A major factor in the promotion of the aforementioned artistic currents was the salon. The salon played a couple of key roles; first, it provided financial and moral support to the creative élite, as salon leaders were often wealthy and well-connected.⁸¹ Second, salons provided the ideal environment in which to meet different artists, showcase new talent, and to exchange ideas and discuss art. In Chaminade’s time, Paris was indeed the musical capital of the world, due in part to the interrelationships between artists, writers, musicians, and poets, which contributed to the richness of the city’s culture. This networking opportunity was invaluable to serious musicians because of the exposure afforded them. Also, the opportunity to exchange artistic ideas with other like-minded artists was also helpful as those meetings could and did lead to fruitful working relationships.⁸²

During the late nineteenth century in France, the cultural emphasis on art (musical, visual, and literary) was very high. The salon played an integral role in this by being the centre for all of the different artistic movements of the time. Salons were organized around the pro and anti-Wagner camps, with activities and discussions tailored to reflect the views of the participants. This musical debate, coupled with the stinging memory of France’s defeat in the Franco-Prussian War, helped rouse French nationalism and incited a group of patriotic French composers to found institutions such as the Société Nationale de Musique in order to promote French music. (These composers included, but were not limited to, Massenet, Saint-Saëns, Franck, and Fauré.)

The only solid evidence regarding Chaminade’s salon activities we have are her compositional premières and performances described in various newspaper and journal reviews. While the names of the salon hosts are always cited in these clippings, the guests’ names are absent.⁸³ There is no mention in those reviews of who attended those events, and conversely, we do not know the salon gatherings Chaminade frequented as a guest. It is unlikely that

⁷⁹ Brody, 72.

⁸⁰ Elaine Leung-Wolf, *Women, Music, and the Salon Tradition: Its Cultural and Historical Significance in Parisian Musical Society* (DMA diss., University of Cincinnati, 1996), xii.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 283.

⁸² For instance, Debussy and Mallarmé frequented the same salons, more notably that of Ernest Chausson. It is also probable that Chaminade and Rosemonde Gérard (Chaminade often set Gérard’s poems to music) first met at a salon, but I have not discovered any written documents that support this hypothesis.

⁸³ The two salons that appear most frequently in the extant reviews of Chaminade’s musical activities are the Salles Erard and Pleyel. The hosts of both of these salons were piano manufacturers. Apparently, both the Salles Erard and Pleyel often hosted meetings of the Société Nationale de Musique.

Chaminade attended salons when not performing as she has been quoted as preferring nature and solitude to social activities. She found greater pleasure remaining at her own home, in the company of her mother and natural environment.

It is not surprising, though, that most of Chaminade's musical activities were centered on the salon. After all, Chaminade was part of the upper-class circle. Her social interactions, though limited by choice, would probably have been with those of a similar station. Another thing to remember is that Chaminade's output mainly consists of small-genre compositions (i.e., piano solo and song). This again corresponds to the socioeconomic aspect of the salon environment. Piano and voice lessons were "*de rigueur* in the education of any young woman of station, and of those who aspired to this station."⁸⁴ Not only was writing in the small genres profitable for Chaminade, as it enabled her to submit scores to her publisher, Enoch, quickly, it was socially acceptable for her. Within this context, Chaminade could suitably promote her music through her premières. Various critics representing the many different music publications would also be there to witness those performances and to report them in their reviews, ensuring that Chaminade's name would be circulated between different musical circles.

Practically speaking, salons themselves were often limited in size, as they were usually situated within private residences. Obviously, this placed restrictions on the kinds of music that could be performed. Chamber music (solo performances, small groups) was the norm. Of course, since Chaminade was associated mainly with the salon circuit, this meant that she wrote in the smaller genres. Chaminade performed at many salon gatherings and premiered many of her works in those situations, playing publicly on a regular basis starting in the 1880s.

1.3 Summary

It is difficult to form a picture of Chaminade's personality because of the lack of reliable, personal documents. However, from the existing news articles and reviews, we know that she was a prolific composer and had great stamina, as shown by the sheer number of concerts she gave. She is quoted as preferring the company of her mother and close family friends to that of the musical élite. This reluctance to penetrate the artistic circles around her may help explain why she was traditional in her deportment and music. Interaction with the musical leaders of the time would undoubtedly exert influence over what one thought and composed. Exposure to different artists would give one access to the newest ideas and techniques. Chaminade, because

⁸⁴ Dahlhaus, 314.

of temperament, or preference, or both, stands out from her contemporaries, such as the fiery and charismatic Augusta Holmès, who was considered a leader in Paris' musical and social circles.

This isolation from the centres of artistic power, (i.e., the Conservatoire, salons), self-imposed or not, limited the personal contacts Chaminade could cultivate, relationships that are so crucial in the formative years of one's career. Also important to remember is the era in which Chaminade was educated and worked. She was reared in an older aesthetic, one that emphasized melody and traditional forms. Although Chaminade's style was considered *passé* by the time World War I occurred, she refused to modify her style to follow the modernist trend in music at the time. Thus, she remains a solitary voice in the musical wilderness.

Obviously, the fact that Chaminade was a woman composer had a huge effect on her career, as that made it more difficult to be taken seriously by critics. Despite her gender, isolation from musical centres of power, and traditional musical outlook, Chaminade still managed to forge a very respectable career as a composer and performer during an era in which few women musicians were able to do so.

Chapter Two

2.1 The Songs

During her long career, Chaminade composed 136 solo songs, many of which she performed in her concerts and recitals in France and abroad.¹ The songs range in difficulty, with the majority geared for intermediate to advanced amateurs. A large number of the songs are no longer in print. There are only one or two anthologies devoted to Chaminade, while other song collections from the turn of the twentieth-century only feature one or two vocal solos at best (usually the popular *L'anneau d'argent*, a song that came to be Chaminade's signature tune).

From the available collections, I have selected three vocal compositions that represent the composer's most prolific song writing years, the mid-1880's to mid-1890's. These works will be examined with respect to form, harmony, the music-text relation, and gender issues. In addition to the three Chaminade compositions, I will include a few songs written by some of Chaminade's musical contemporaries in order to compare and contrast their compositional techniques and subject matter. The penultimate section of this chapter will feature a brief discussion of two of Chaminade's piano compositions, the *Sonata, Op. 21* (movements two and three) and the *Sérénade, Op. 29*, as well as a short piano solo by Saint-Saëns (*Chanson Napolitaine*), since Saint-Saëns was a composer whom Chaminade greatly admired. I will conclude with a few comments summarizing observations made in the course of the chapter. From the analyses, I hope to offer insights into Chaminade's music-text aesthetics and into the most salient characteristics of her style.

Before delving into the songs themselves, a few words on Chaminade's general musical style are in order. As mentioned in Chapter 1, she was first and foremost a "Romantic composer."² From the extant newspaper interviews and articles concerning Chaminade's music and personal style, one learns that "Romantic" to Chaminade means tuneful, tonal, and traditional. She preferred to adhere to tonal structures. Dissonances were used judiciously; her modulations and tonal shifts were reserved for "major breaks in the poetry or dramatic changes of mood within the text."³ She chose not to follow the avant-garde movement that was

¹ In performances of her songs, Chaminade collaborated most often with Yvonne St. André, soprano, and Ernest Groom, baritone.

² Marcia J. Citron, *Cécile Chaminade: A Bio-Bibliography* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1988), 21.

³ Soohyun Jin, *Selected mélodies of Cécile Chaminade with English translations and analysis*, DMA diss. (University of Oklahoma, 1998), 97.

becoming popular with other French composers like Debussy, opting to remain a conservative voice in the modern world. Part of what Chaminade disliked about modern music was the “grayness,” the lack of form and direction.⁴ Chaminade once related an anecdote concerning Debussy in which a music critic, upon emerging from the Manhattan Opera House after hearing *Pelléas et Mélisande* “for the first time, stood silently on the sidewalk for a few moments and then burst out with the cry: ‘What wouldn’t I give for one real fortissimo!’”⁵ This seems to reflect her opinion of Debussy.

From the above story, the most important thing to Chaminade seems to be melody. She seems to appreciate simple settings that do not detract from the melody (unlike the harmonic and structural fluidity associated with the so-called Impressionist school). Melodies should be tuneful, pleasant, beautiful, and full of grace. Her own melodies reveal a commitment to individuality and self-expression. Chaminade was definitely individual as a composer, as she was one of the few who stubbornly wrote in the tonal language; tonality was the musical idiom with which she identified best. The French composers with whom she aligned herself were those who are now known for their lighter, more melodic style. These composers include Jules Massenet, Camille Saint-Saëns, and Benjamin Godard. Chaminade had the highest praise for Saint-Saëns, stating that he “was at the top of her list”; she also favoured Massenet and Godard, the latter of whom she was once a pupil.⁶

According to Frits Noske, the rise of the vocal genre now known as the French *mélodie* occurred in the fourth decade of the nineteenth century. Noske states that the publication of German *Lieder* in France and the quality of French poetry during that time were important factors in the rise of the new vocal genre, as was the need for a national art form.⁷ The French art song became more complex in both form and content; for instance, the vocal line was no longer restricted to four-bar phrases. It would exhibit varying phrase lengths and incorporate such things as recitative and ornamentation. The piano part assumed a more important role in interpreting the text, partly in response to the quality of the texts used, as interest in French “verse of high literary value” increased during the latter half of the nineteenth century.⁸ Chaminade’s attraction and musical loyalty to the French art song is evident in her numerous

⁴ Miss Lynch, “Mme. Chaminade in New York,” *The Sun* (NY), Sun. Oct. 18, 1908, section 1, p. 4, col. 1-2.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Frits Noske, *French Song from Berlioz to Duparc* (New York, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1970), 1. Several musical organizations in the latter half of the nineteenth-century were founded precisely on a nationalistic premise, the more prominent ones being the Société Nationale de Musique and the Schola Cantorum.

⁸ Noske, 38.

compositions in that genre; by writing *mélodies*, she used the medium which best expressed herself, marrying her twin passions of music and poetry. Also, by writing solo songs, she contributed to her country's musical "specialty." After 1870, the term *mélodie* simply referred to 'French song.' These songs are "linked to the French Romantic song tradition through their shapely vocal lines and Gallic genius for suggesting so much in a single stroke."⁹

How, then, did Chaminade write her *mélodies*? What are some of their musical characteristics? A logical starting point when beginning song analysis is the text. Chaminade set poems by many different poets, many of whom are not well-known today. The poems she selected are all from the Romantic age with subject matter ranging from love – passionate, unrequited, blissful – to the beauty of nature and exotic lands. Chaminade chose verses that struck her personally; again, she adhered to Romantic practice by expressing her individuality. Some of the writers by whom she was inspired were Georges van Ormelingen, Louis Guays, Edouard Guinand, Rosemonde Gérard (a friend of Chaminade's and wife of the poet Edmond Rostand, author of *Cyrano de Bergerac*), Paul Ginisty, and Armand Silvestre.

The poems that Chaminade utilized exhibit, for the most part, regular rhythmic structure and form. Octosyllabic and decasyllabic rhythms are most common, in tetrameter or pentameter; each stanza may have any number of lines (but generally no more than ten).

In this chapter, I shall discuss three of Chaminade's *mélodies*, all published between 1885 and 1895. These songs were very well-received by the public and contributed greatly to the composer's popularity around the turn of the twentieth century.

Chanson slave

Dans mon beau pays, j'avais un ami
 Mais je l'ai perdu, je suis seule au monde.
 Voilà bien des nuits que je n'ai dormi,
 J'ai beaucoup pleuré, ma peine est profonde.
 Le desert est grand, le vent souffle fort,
 Un serpent m'a prise au coeur et me mord!

À travers l'espace, à travers la nuit,
 Je vais réclamant mon ami perfide,
 Où donc est-ce enfin qu'il court et qu'il fuit?
 Mais la terre est sourde et le ciel est vide!
 Le desert est grand, le vent souffle fort
 Mon coeur est sanglant, la douleur le tord!

⁹ D. Tunley. "Mélodie," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 26 March 2003), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>.

Aux oiseaux passant, j'irais bien me plaindre
 Et redemander l'ami que j'avais,
 Mais pour l'appeler le temps est mauvais,
 Aucun d'eux, hélas! ne pourrait l'atteindre.
 Le désert est grand, le vent souffle fort,
 Il n'entendrait pas, notre amour est mort!

- Paul Ginisty (1855 – 1932)

Chanson slave was published in 1885.¹⁰ The text, by Paul Ginisty, depicts a woman's lost love and her futile hunt for her beloved. The poem is set throughout in the first person, outlining the active voice of the woman. From the first two lines, we already know that the feminine protagonist was left alone by a male friend. However, as "le désert est grand" and "le vent souffle fort," the search proves to be beyond the strength of the protagonist. Throughout the poem, after incommensurable suffering, she is clearly tired of believing and of looking for her beloved to appear. While she was unable to let go of him in the past, by the end, she seems ready to make a clear decision and resolves to sever herself from him, in an abrupt pessimistic change of heart in the very last line of the song ("notre amour est mort!").

The poem is generally decasyllabic and comprises three stanzas of six lines each. The last two lines of each stanza form a refrain, whose first line, "le désert est grand, le vent souffle fort" remains identical, while the last line of each stanza states a different, and worsening, state of mind and heart. Thus, while in the refrains of the first two stanzas ("un serpent m'a prise au coeur et me mord," and "mon coeur est sanglant") the speaker appears as a victim, in the third refrain ("Il n'entendrait pas, notre amour est mort!"), she is a more realistic person who recognizes the severing of the relationship. Interestingly, the rhyme scheme of *Chanson slave* corroborates this change of perspective in the last stanza. Stanzas one and two are similar in that the first four lines comprise couplets with alternating rhymes; that is, stanza one features the rhyme scheme ABABCC while stanza two outlines DEDECC. Stanza three, however, alters the former rhyme structure in the first four lines of the stanza, using FGGFCC, rather than FGFGCC as before. The altered rhyme scheme thus reinforces the plot twist in this third and last stanza.

The song itself is in strophic form, mainly due to the poem's organization; like the text, the music includes a refrain that corresponds to the recurrence of line five in each verse, "le désert est grand." Within each stanza, the poem's layout is asymmetrical, each stanza falling

¹⁰ While we know the date of the song's publication, I was unable to pinpoint the date of this poem (or that of the poems *Rosemonde* and *Tu me dirais*) on which Chaminade's music is based.

into a 4 + 2 lines pattern. Chaminade does not compose the melodic line and accompaniment strictly in parallel with the ABABCC rhyme scheme. Instead, she sets lines 1 and 4 to the same melody, but different accompaniments, while lines 2 and 3 exhibit slightly different melodies but very similar accompaniments. Table 1 shows how these structures interact. The refrain melody and accompaniment are labelled c (and c¹) in the Table, but they are in fact quite closely related to the b¹ ideas associated with line 3.

Table 1.

Line:	1	2	3	4	5	6
Rhyme Scheme:	A	B	A	B	C	C
Music:	a	b	b ¹	a ¹	c	c ¹
					{Refrain}	

One wonders what might constitute the Slavic character indicated by the song's title. First, some presence of a folk idiom may be discerned through such elements as the 6/8 time signature, heavy accents on beats one and four of the accompaniment (rather like a tambourine or guitar that accompanies a dance), the many grace notes, and the "simple" parallel fifths marking each beat in the first three bars of the piano introduction (and corresponding transitional material, measures 23 – 28 and 45 – 50). The six-bar piano introduction begins, in the antecedent, on the tonic E and descends to its mediant G via a sinuous route. In measures 4 – 6 (the consequent), the tonic key is emphasized by the alternation between i and V, contrasting with the emphasis on G Major in the antecedent, which is not unexpected as folk music is often limited to simple functional harmonies. Also, the drone on the low E in the first four measures of the melody evokes images of peasant dances, the consistent beat keeping time for the rest of the ensemble. Second, both the piano introduction and the vocal line exhibit a rhapsodic character through their speech-like melodies, which illustrate the improvisatory element of the song. All of these characteristics might be taken as demonstrating, if not a necessarily "Slavic" quality, at least some "folk" element, related to a foreign country described in the text as a "beau pays," with its "desert," and "strong wind" (see Fig. 1 below).

Much of the harmonic activity in measures 7 – 14 is between tonic and dominant, which could symbolize the tension the speaker senses between herself and her beloved. In fact, the dominant B Major seems to represent the narrator's dwelling on her pain, as all the ends of phrases linger both melodically and harmonically on the dominant, despite the underlying E pedal (measures 8, 10, 14, 16, 18). Like the dominant sonority, the woman's grief does not

resolve until the end of the refrains, where she lets herself show the expression of her pain. At the refrain's entrance (marked by a return to the original tempo, and the absence of an accompaniment to the words "le désert est grand"), a sequence of dominant sevenths begins, starting on the E7 on the word "grand" in measure 20, which reveals both the still stirring inner turmoil the speaker experiences with her lover's disappearance and "le vent souffle fort." In fact, even at the final cadence of the refrain in measure 23, the vocal line concludes on a dominant harmony, to be closed on the tonic only by the piano accompaniment. This open ending suggests that the problem is far from being solved, and that the suffering may continue (Fig. 1).

Melodically, *Chanson slave* employs grace notes to evoke a foreign, exotic quality and rather large intervals that outline the main harmonies. For example, the vocal part in measures 7, 9, and 11 includes the use of vocal appoggiaturas, while in measures 10 – 11, we see that the interval between "mais" and "perdu" is an eleventh; immediately after singing the high E, the voice leaps down to the low B on the word "je," rather like a sigh. In measure 9, for instance, the words "j'avais" outlines a C Major triad, the B on the second beat being an appoggiatura over the accompaniment's ii^{ø7} harmony, while in measure 11, the vocal line clearly emphasizes the tonic of E minor (Fig. 1).

One significant textual association in the song occurs in measures 11 – 14, with each measure's pitch summit within the melodic line descending by step (each instance occurs on the fourth beat in each measure): in measure 11, the highest note is E, followed by the D and C in measures 12 and 13. The vocal phrase then cadences in measure 14 on the quarter-note F#. That is, while thinking of the beloved's whereabouts, the speaker spends all her energy and time to that end, resulting in insomnia and general depression. Those four notes – E, D, C, F# – can be seen as a musical "sigh" emitted by the narrator as she realizes the futility of her situation (Fig. 1). This sets the stage for the rest of the song – will she continue to suffer silently or will she take matters into her own hands?

Harmonically, the language is tonal and uses few chromatic notes. The chords are largely diatonic to E minor; however, there are two instances of harmonic variety. The first, discussed earlier, is the dominant seventh sequence in measures 20 – 22. Measure 22 also reveals the second example: the augmented-sixth sonority (German sixth). The narrator sings of her grief and despair ("Un serpent m'a prise au coeur"), which is punctuated by the A# and the pungency of the German sixth chord. Strophe one concludes with a solid cadence in E minor and the repetition of the piano introduction which acts as a transition to the second strophe (Fig. 1).

Andante.

PIANO. *mf* *p*

(with full voice.)

In my love-ly land, —
Dans mon beau pa - ys

marcatiss. e sostenuto. *f* *pesante.*

I had once a friend! — But him I have lost, A -
j'a - vais un a - mi — Mais je l'ai per - du, je

Ad. *Più lento.*

lone I am dwell - ing. Man-y nights has sleep re - fused to descend; My
suis seule au mon - de. Voi-là bien des nuits que je n'ai dor-mi, J'ai

dim.

Fig. 1, *Chanson slave*, mm. 1 – 23 (continued next page).

eyes melt with tears; my griefs be-yond tell -
 beau-coup pleu - ré, ma pei - ne est pro-fon -

p string. *mf string.*

Tempo I.

- ing! Wide the desert lies! Fierce the storm-winds
 - de. Le désert est grand, le vent souff-le

cresc. *p* *cresc.*

roar! In my heart a ser - pent gnaws ev - er - more!
 fort, Un serpent m'a pri - se au cœur et me mord!

cresc. *rit. f a tempo.* *rit.* *f a tempo.* *mf*

Fig. 1, (cont.'d).

Strophes two and three are generally identical to the first. One moment in the third verse stands out, however; the penultimate measure of the song (m. 66) exhibits a fermata on the highest note of the piece (the G), emphasizing the text at this crucial moment — “Notre amour” (Fig. 2). The fermata is dramatic, prolonging the resolutions of both the song (harmonic) and the speaker (psychological). After the pause, the narrator proclaims that “notre amour est mort!” at a *ff* dynamic level. The song ends on the tonic, as expected, and the lover appears to be reconciled with her grief, perhaps determined to continue on with her life. It is also noteworthy that the

descending interval between the high G and low A# in measure 66 on the words “amour est,” leading to the unresolved dominant in the vocal line, is the largest in the song, and that the fall from so high to so low may mimic the character’s psychological fall. Possibly, the emotional resolution is not as final as the woman would like to believe. However, perhaps by painfully succeeding in accepting the reality, the woman will be able to move on and forge a life of her own without the misgivings about her ex-love.



Fig. 2, *Chanson slave*, mm. 65 – 67.

Rosemonde

Pourquoi tarde-t'il à venir
 Quand je suis à l'attendre,
 Craint-il, hélas! Mon regard tendre
 Et mon premier soupir!
 Dieu qui daignez nous bénir,
 Pitié, pitié pour mon martyr!
 O Dieu qui daignez nous bénir
 Pitié pour mon martyr!

Oubliant les travaux du jour,
 Au village ou sommeille
 Quand moi seule ici je veille
 Conduite par l'amour!
 Faut-il attendre son retour
 Dans ce triste séjour!
 Faut-il attendre son retour
 Dans ce triste séjour!

Ah! des larmes voilent mes yeux
 m'est il infidèle!
 Peut-être hélas une autre belle
 Écoute ses aveux?
 Ah! si la haut l'on aime mieux,
 Je veux monter aux cieux;
 Ah! si la haut l'on aime mieux,

Je veux monter aux cieux, monter aux cieux!

- Marc Constantin (1810 – 1888)

Rosemonde is a song that Chaminade composed around 1878 but did not publish until 1894.¹¹ As in the previous poem, Marc Constantin's poem tells of a woman's pain and sorrow – her lover has not arrived yet, leaving her wretchedly alone. Her name could be *Rosemonde*, as the title suggests: in the poem, there is clearly a female protagonist, referring to an absent male character. Chaminade's choice of poems reveals her strength and individuality at a young age; as the composer was barely twenty-one when she wrote the song, selecting a "feminine" text (i.e., a poem with an obvious woman narrator) was perhaps an extension of her desire to compose with a woman's voice, thus being set apart from the majority of other musicians who were male. In setting her songs, Chaminade takes what a man produced (the poem) and creates something entirely new in her own voice (the song).

Rosemonde is organized into three stanzas of eight lines each, the last four lines comprised of repeated couplets. The rhyme scheme of the poem is unexpected in that it follows the same pattern in each verse. Stanza one exhibits a rhyme scheme of ABBAAAAA, the last four rhymes resulting from the repetition of the "ir" sound and the reiteration of the couplet "Dieu qui daignez nous bénir, / Pitié, pitié pour mon martyr!"; stanza two displays CDDCCCCC (the last four lines echoing "-our"), and stanza three illustrates EFFEEEEEE (the last four lines repeating "-eux").

Stanza one expresses the speaker's anxiety at her lover's absence, as in *Chanson slave*. In fact, she experiences so much pain that she cries out to God to pity her (lines 7 – 8, "Dieu qui daignez nous bénir / Pitié, pitié pour mon martyr!"). The second stanza illustrates the woman's anguished state of mind as she keeps a vigil for her faithless lover. Her feelings of isolation and despair intensify in the last verse, as she tortures herself with thoughts of another woman possibly listening to her lover's tender words; this proves to be too much for the narrator as she passionately declares that if one loves better in heaven, then she would rather be there ("Ah! si lahaut l'on aime mieux / Je veux monter aux cieux").¹²

This heartfelt invocation is echoed in the music through the use of several hymn-like features. First, *Rosemonde* is set to a moderate tempo in common time and is in the key of C Major. Each beat is marked by an quarter-note attack in the music; in fact, the only instance

¹¹ Citron, *Bio-bibliography*, 212.

¹² A similar sentiment is expressed at the end of *Les Amazones*, Op. 26.

when this constant rhythmic pulse ceases is in the last bar, with the resolution to the tonic. The texture is homophonic and the music moves in regular four-measure phrases – both conventional features of standard hymns or chorales. All of these characteristics evoke a prayer-like atmosphere, lending a sense of repose to the song, despite the storminess and sorrow the speaker experiences.

Musically, the song is in three strophes, but it is not in strict strophic form. Instead, it is in modified strophic form, in an interesting scheme. While strophes one and two have different music for their first four lines, they share exactly the same music for the last four lines (the respective repeated refrains). The last strophe, however, returns to the musical opening of the first strophe, but its “refrain” is different from those of the first two strophes. This scheme can be represented as follows:

Table 2.

			Refrain		Refrain		Refrain
Measures:	1 – 4	5 – 12	13 – 20	21 – 28	29 – 36	37 – 44	45 – 54
Text lines:	-----	I: 1 – 4	5 – 8	II: 1 – 4	5 – 8	III: 1 – 4	5 – 8
Music:	-----	A	B	C	B	A	D
Harmony:	V/C – C	C	G – e – G	C – G, V/a	G – e – G	C	(F) C
	_____ Stanza I _____			_____ Stanza II _____		_____ Stanza III _____	

Rosemonde begins with a four-measure piano prelude that prolongs the dominant of C major by moving chromatically through a large-scale ii – V progression in measures 3 and 4. Each chord necessitates resolution, either because of the nature of the harmony (e.g., dominant seventh chords) or because of the makeup of the actual harmony (e.g., lacking a third, suspension, etc.). Measures 1 and 2 set a pattern of suspensions, while measures 3 and 4 exhibit chromatic voice-leading (see Fig. 3). The dynamic level swells to *f* in measure 2, but then subsides in time for the *p* marking in measure 5, at which point the voice enters.

Andante.

marcato assai. cresc. *f*

p

Comes he not my heart, tell me why,
Pour - quoi tar - de - t'il à ve - nir

p ben sostenuto.

Fig. 3, *Rosemonde*, mm. 1 – 6.

Melodically, the vocal line is contained within a small range, between middle C (first heard in measure 10 on the word “tendre”) and the E an octave above (first heard in measure 7 on the word “quand”). The melody in strophe one features intervals that outline the main harmonies found in the tonal centre of C major. For instance, measures 5 – 7 delineate the third and fifth of C major. The low E in measure 5 rises to the half note G in the next measure, ascending yet again to the high E in measure 7. Note that the harmonic tones (E-G-E) are set to key words: the low E is paired with “pourquoi,” the G with “venir,” and the high E with “quand.” All of these words reflect the anxiety and frustration the narrator experiences. Despite the diatonic nature of the melody, small chromatic inflections in the accompaniment lead in measures 8 – 9 to a short tonicization of D minor. Again, the melody line shapes the harmony, beginning with the F and reaching the D a sixth above. The same thing occurs in measure 10 with the contouring of the tonic in the vocal part (Fig. 4). This stepwise movement – E-D-C – outlines a larger melodic structure (3-2-1) and may be interpreted as a musical (and emotional) “sigh” that appears again later in the song (though manifested through different notes).

f

Why so long is he de - lay - ing! Ah, does he fear to
 Quand je suis à l'at - ten - dre, Craint - il, hé - las!

cresc.

p dolce. *f poco slargando.*

list to my pray - ing, To hear my ten - der sigh!
 Mon re - gard ten - dre Et mon pre - mier sou - pir!

p *cresc.* *f*

Fig. 4, *Rosemonde*, mm. 7 – 12.

Thus, at the beginning, *Rosemonde* is largely diatonic, up to measure 12. This changes slightly starting in measure 13 with the refrain words “Dieu qui daignez nous bénir.” At this point in the song, the lover is begging God to pity her, a martyr to love. Measures 13 – 15 reveal a modulation to G Major, then E minor in measures 16 – 18, which belies the (relative) calm with which the song began. The G Major harmony in measure 20, though, moves the harmonic progression back to C Major in measure 21.

The rhythm becomes a little more varied as well, with the narrator’s plea for mercy: before measure 13, the rhythm in the vocal line consisted of quarter notes and eighth notes, whereas now, dotted quarter notes are occasionally employed. This is very subtle, but the effect is that of another heartfelt sigh, a catch in the throat. When the narrator prays for God to have pity on her, one can imagine her earnestness in her fervent invocation. In measure 14, she appeals to God’s mercy, singing “Dieu qui daignez nous bénir;” the words “nous bénir” are set to a dotted quarter note and two eighth notes. An eighth note rest follows, immediately succeeded by a quarter note and eighth note on “Pitié.” Those two eighth-note rests break up the melodic

line, giving the impression of urgency. Both the new rhythmic motive and harmonies reflect the despair the woman feels (Fig. 5).

p

Heav'n that deigns to watch a-bove, O pit - y me, be - cause I love!
 Dieu qui dai - gnez nous bé-uir, Pi - tié, pi - tié pour mon mar-tyr!

p

Fig. 5, *Rosemonde*, mm. 13 – 16.

The emotional urgency evident in the musical setting of the last four lines of the first verse of the poem is also reflected in the last four lines of verses two and three through repetition (see Fig. 6). Chaminade writes the same music for measures 13 – 20 and 29 – 36 (strophes one and two respectively), but instead of repeating that music in measures 44 – 54 (“Ah! si lahaut . . . monter aux cieux!”), she introduces the dominant of F Major in measure 44, which prepares the song for the final plagal cadence in measures 53 – 54.

dear - er, a - near him, One who his vows now hears? Ah, if they love tru - ly a -
 une au - tre bel - le E - cou - te ses - a - veux? Ah! si la - haut l'on ai - me

bove, Let me die, then, for I love; Ah! if they love tru - ly a -
 mieux, Je veux mon - ter - aux cieux; Ah! si la - haut l'on ai - me

bove, Let me die, then, for I love, I love, I love!
 mieux, Je veux mon - ter aux cieux, mon - ter aux cieux!

poco slargando.
colla voce.
lento m.g.

Fig. 6, *Rosemonde*, mm. 42 – 54.

At the beginning of the second stanza (measures 21 – 24), the atmosphere switches from one of urgency to one of repose. The first four measures of strophe two (called “c” in Table 2), begin in C Major, and, rhythmically, the music returns to the steady quarter notes heard in the beginning of the song. Yet, the next measures (mm. 25 – 28), corresponding to the words “quand moi seule ici je veille, conduite par l’amour” increase the tension, as they are nothing else but a sequence of the previous measures, a fourth higher, closing however in the dominant of A minor (Fig. 7). It is interesting to observe that the sequential measures feature F Major so prominently: the first harmony of the middle strophe (m. 21) and the last sonority of measures 25

and 26, as well as the first half of measure 27 all utilize the song's subdominant. As already mentioned, *Rosemonde* contains religious overtones and concludes with a plagal cadence (IV – I in C major), which, in light of those spiritual associations, may be interpreted as having benedictory connotations (“amen”). The situation begins peacefully enough in the second stanza but then reverts to the atmosphere of unease commencing with the protagonist's words “Quand moi seule ici” This juxtaposition of the “benedictory” key of F to the anxious words of the lover creates tension which will only be resolved through drastic action. Rapidly changing dynamic levels also attest to Rosemonde's state of mind. Measure 25 is marked *p*, which then gives way to a *crescendo* in measure 26 and then a *f* indication in the next measure, only to subside to *p* a couple of measures later. All of these dynamic fluctuations accompany the narrator's insecurity and frustration at being left alone.

The musical score for measures 25-28 of *Rosemonde* is presented in two staves. The top staff is for the vocal line, and the bottom staff is for the piano accompaniment. The key signature is one flat (F major), and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line begins in measure 25 with a *p dolce* marking. In measure 26, the dynamic changes to *cresc.* and in measure 27 to *f*. The piano accompaniment begins in measure 25 with a *p* marking, changes to *cresc.* in measure 26, and to *f* in measure 27. The lyrics are written below the vocal line: "I a-lone here vi-gil keep, Wait-ing one still far a-way! Ah, Quand moi seu-le i-ci je veil-le Con-duit-te par l'a-mour! Faut."

Fig. 7, *Rosemonde*, mm. 25 – 28.

As mentioned, measures 29 – 36 set the twice repeated refrain-like four last lines of the text with the same “refrain” melody that ended the first strophe. But here, in a noticeable rhetorical gesture, Chaminade overlaps the end of the second strophe's music with the beginning of the third: while the music extends the dominant chord for one extra measure before resolving to the tonic on the first beat of measure 37, the first word of the strophe is already uttered (the exclamation “Ah!”), which, coupled with the augmented triads on the words “des larmes” increases the urgency of the woman's suffering (Fig. 8).

heart may break for pain? Ah! ... mine eyes are
 ee tris - te sé - jour! Ah! ... des lar - mes

p dolcissimo. *p*
p dim.

Fig. 8, *Rosemonde*, mm. 36 – 38.

With the introduction of Rosemonde’s cry “Ah! si lahaut...” at the beginning of the third refrain (measure 44) comes a textual and registral shift. The accompaniment’s left hand switches from the previous low octaves to close intervals (thirds, fourths, fifths) that are approximately an octave higher. For example, in measures 41 – 43, the left hand’s register is almost three octaves below middle C at its lowest point (see measure 43, beat 2, octave D), whereas in measures 44 – 46, the left hand gradually descends from middle C on beat 3 in measure 44. This change in texture and register indicates a turning point in the narrator’s emotions, at the beginning of her last “refrain,” where she beseeches invokes the heavens to grant her relief from her intense emotions. The use of a sequence a fifth higher at the repeated words of this last refrain (measures 49 – 51) serves again to raise the intensity of her prayer, but also to unify the piece via this sequencing device.

Rosemonde concludes with a plagal cadence, the so-called “amen” cadence. This plagal cadence is actually foreshadowed in the vocal line in measures 45, 46, and 49. Each of those bars contains one note of the F Major triad; measure 45 contains the F, measure 46 the A, and measure 49 the C (Fig. 6). All three of these notes are half notes, which immediately draw the listener’s attention to them, given that the value of the other notes surrounding them are quarter notes and eighth notes. The words that are set to these three notes are “lahaut” and “mieux,” words usually associated with heaven. Thus, it is as if the lover’s prayer will be answered with the sounding of the piece’s harmonic resolution “amen.”

Tu me dirais

Tu me dirais que l’on entend le souffle,

Qu'au sein des fleurs exhale un papillon,
 Et que l'on a retrouvé la pantoufle,
 Qu'en s'enfuyant laissa choir Cendrillon.

Tu me dirais que ces vers sont en prose,
 Et qu'une femme a gardé des secrets,
 Que le lys parle et que l'azur est rose,
 Vois ma folie, ami, je te croirais.

Tu me dirais que l'astre qui scintilla,
 Au ver luisant doit son éclat joyeux,
 Et que la nuit accroche à sa mantille
 Comme un bijou le soleil radieux;

Tu me dirais qu'il n'est plus une fraise
 Dans les recoins tout mousses des forêts,
 Et qu'une plume de Bengali pèse
 Plus qu'un chagrin au coeur, je te croirais.

En t'écoutant tous mes doutes d'eux mêmes
 Tombent soudain, vaincus; tu me dirais
 Que le bonheur existe et que tu m'aimes,
 Vois ma folie, ami, je te croirais!

- Rosemonde Gérard (1871 – 1953)

The last song by Chaminade that I will discuss in this chapter is *Tu me dirais*, a work published in 1891 by Enoch. Rosemonde Gérard supplied the whimsical, charming text. Gérard's poem outlines a woman's spirited mental monologue directed toward her lover. The tone of the text is self-conscious, as the protagonist admits that she is so infatuated with her lover that she would believe anything he says, even while knowing that he might be lying. The structure of the music reflects that breached trust in several ways, all of which will be discussed below.

Tu me dirais is organized into five stanzas of four lines each. Structurally, the poem is composed of rhyming couplets, which accounts for the simple rhyme scheme: ABAB CDCE FGFG HIHE JKJE. The "E" rhyme represents the word "croirais," which occurs in the last lines of verses two, four, and five. In fact, not only are the last words of those three lines identical, but the last lines of stanzas two and five are exactly the same. Again, there is an expectation present in the text: will Chaminade reflect the recurrence of those lines by setting similar music to them?

Another consideration to note about the poem is that the last stanza does not begin in the same manner as the previous four stanzas. Stanzas 1 – 4 start with the phrase "Tu me dirais," recalling all of the fanciful observations the lover's companion might have made. Stanza 5,

though, begins with “En t’écoutant,” and builds to a resolution expressed in the final line “Vois ma folie, ami, je te croirais!” Even though that particular line has been heard before in stanza two, here, with the addition of the exclamation mark and the fact that the line succeeds “En t’écoutant” instead of “Tu me dirais,” the meaning of that last statement is totally different. With that in mind, it is not unreasonable to anticipate new music for this last stanza.

Tu me dirais features five musical strophes that reveal the form *a b a b c*. Strophes one and three are virtually identical, with the same vocal line and piano accompaniment. Both strophes begin on the dominant seventh harmony, progress to the tonic F, pass through V and bIII (which can be construed as musically “deceptive”), then conclude on C. The second and fourth strophes also start with C7 resolving to F, then the harmonic progression moves to VII (E Major acting as V of A minor, but ultimately not resolving there), V (C Major), then the F Major tonic. Strophe five displays the “circle of fifths” harmonic rotation; this will be discussed later in the course of the analysis.

The song’s complexity lies in the subtle musical puns throughout the work (more musical “falsehoods”) rather than in the sonorities utilized. A recitative-like opening heralds the first proclamation of *Tu me dirais*, namely that the speaker is so much in love that she would believe anything her lover would say (for example, that one can hear butterfly breaths and see Cinderella’s abandoned glass slipper). Chaminade intended that this song be performed *Animato*, yet *legato*, which hints at a cheerful and coquettish realization. Furthermore, the bass half notes point to a dance-like rhythm, another indication of *joie de vivre*. The syncopated piano chords found overall belie the declaration of trust and devotion on which this work (and romantic relationship) is built. When we hear the narrator sing “Tu me dirais que...” accompanied by the lively, off-beat chords, we know that we should not take those words at face value (Fig. 9).

Animato. *dolce.*

If thou dost say that one may hear the
 Tu me di - rais que l'on en - tend le

legato.

breathing Of but - ter - flies while on the flow'rs they rest, — And that the
 souff - fle, Qu'au sein des fleurs ex - hale un pa - pil - lon, — Et que l'on

Fig. 9, *Tu me dirais*, mm. 1 – 5.

The sudden modulation to bIII in measure 6 not only provides harmonic interest, but introduces another musical pun. A clever enharmonic relationship is utilized to connect the foreign harmonies in the *a* and *b* sections (Ab Major and E Major respectively): the Ab found in measures 6 and 22 of the *a* section is altered in measures 13 and 29 to G#. All four of these enharmonic instances are set to words that relate to secrets and concealment; respectively, those words are “retrouvé,” “secrets,” “nuit,” and “forêts.” In the case of “retrouvé,” the idea is of rediscovering something that was previously hidden, while “nuit” and “forêts” are effective in obscuring objects from sight. The Ab/G# connection reflects the “hidden” nature of the enharmonic relationship while simultaneously bringing the text into relief (Figs. 10 – 13).

cresc.

slip - per is found once en -
a re - tron - vè la pan -

cresc.

Fig. 10, *Tu me dirais*, m. 6.

mf

wom - an can se - crets con - ceal, That lil - ies
femme a gar - dé des se - crets, Que le lys

mf

Fig. 11, *Tu me dirais*, mm. 12 - 13.

p

jew - el e'er the sun de
nuit ac - cro-che à sa man -

p

Fig. 12, *Tu me dirais*, m. 22.



Fig. 13, *Tu me dirais*, mm. 28 – 29.

Just when we become accustomed to the jarring sound of E major in measure 13, there is yet another shock, this time melodic. Our narrator's vocal line becomes quite disjointed when it leaps up a tenth from the low D in measure 14 to the high F on the word "rose" in measure 15 (Fig. 14). This is the highest pitch of the song and is prominent not only because of its range but also because of its accompanying dynamic (*ppp*). Also, the piano's left hand is playing a low octave C. Essentially, there is a wide gap between the vocal line and the piano accompaniment, which hints at the disparity between the lover's declarations and the woman's disbelief.

Fig. 14, *Tu me dirais*, mm. 14 – 15.

Strophe four reveals yet another musical pun that again implies the woman's skepticism. The text in measure 32 reads "je te croirais." Removed from its appropriate context, we have no idea if that verbal phrase is meant to be taken at face value or if it is a facetious statement. However, if we look at the music to which these words are set, we see that the vocal melody drops down to the lowest pitches of the song, approaching the limits of the typical female singer's range. This musical setting of "je te croirais" is a fourth lower than the accompaniment

to the first instance of “je te croirais” in measures 16 – 17, which hints at the woman’s faith in her lover weakening. It seems that the protagonist is becoming more skeptical of her lover, the lower pitches being evidence; her unfortunate gentleman may find it even more difficult to placate and persuade his lady of his trustworthiness at this point (Figs. 15 – 16).



Fig. 15, *Tu me dirais*, vocal line, m. 16.

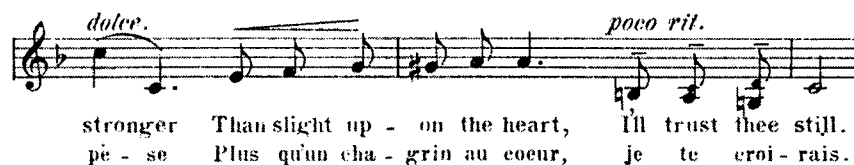


Fig. 16, *Tu me dirais*, vocal line, mm. 32 – 33.

The last stanza is perhaps the most interesting one in the song. It is the only one that does not begin with “Tu me dirais,” which should alert us to other alterations or the introduction of new material. Immediately, in measure 34, we hear a F7 harmony, whereas previously, in measures 2, 10, 18, and 26 (identical spots in verses), we heard C7 (Fig. 17). In addition to the “new” harmony, we have a sequence of dominant-seventh sonorities. These dominant-seventh sonorities progress by 5-6 motion over an ascending chromatic bass and further contribute to the air of disbelief exhibited by the woman. Dominant-seventh chords are full of tension and the fact that we have a succession of unresolved dominant-seventh harmonies (or rather, that each dominant-seventh “resolves” to another dominant-seventh, creating more and more tension) is evidence of the woman’s incredulity. The climax is in measure 39, with the lady’s last statement growing out of the sustained E (under which the dominant of D minor is prolonged) in the previous measure. After the fermata in measure 39, she begins her last declaration unaccompanied, announcing that if her lover tells her that he loves her, then of course she would believe him. But, again, her last avowal of trust is offset by the musical accompaniment. In measure 43, the words “je te croirais” are again paired with low notes, as in measure 32. The dynamic is again *p*, the registral difference between the bass and the soprano voice is substantial, and the specific instructions in the score are *poco rit. dolce.*, which appear to undermine the sincerity of her vow.

più animato.

list, all my doubts far a - bove me
 tant tous mes dou - tes d'eux - mê - mes

mf più animato.

cresc. *f*

Van - ish a - way in air; if thou dost say
 Tom - bent sou-dain, vain - eus; tu me di - rais

cresc. *f*

pp rit.

That there is
 Que le bon -

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system shows the vocal melody in treble clef and piano accompaniment in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The tempo/mood is marked 'più animato.' and the dynamics are 'mf più animato.'. The second system continues the vocal melody and piano accompaniment, with a 'cresc.' (crescendo) marking and a forte 'f' dynamic. The third system shows the vocal melody and piano accompaniment, with a 'pp rit.' (pianissimo, ritardando) marking. The lyrics are in French and English, with some words in French and others in English.

Fig. 17, *Tu me dirais*, dominant-seventh sequence, mm. 34 – 39.

In *Tu me dirais*, the gender of the protagonist is unclear. Both women and men may perform this song, as the melodic line is suitable for mezzo-sopranos and baritones. However, it is perfectly acceptable to interpret the text from the woman's perspective; in fact, since a woman poet (Rosemonde Gérard) wrote the verses, it is quite likely that she was attributing her written sentiments to a woman. One may study this *mélodie* from a feminist perspective, in which case, one would have a strong female narrator who is skeptical about the love claims of her lover. The woman presented in this song is not afraid to speak her mind and air her opinions.

Before coming to any conclusions about Chaminade's compositional practices and stylistic tendencies, it would be helpful to include some songs by other composers to gain a better idea of the musical context in which she worked. I have selected three songs against which to compare Chaminade's three songs discussed in this chapter: *Ouvre tes yeux bleus*, by Jules Massenet, *Madrigal*, by Vincent D'Indy, and *Noël d'Irlande*, by Augusta Holmès. I chose these composers for specific reasons: Massenet, because Chaminade respected his melodic ease and felt an affinity with his Romantic style, D'Indy because he was a contemporary of Chaminade's, and Holmès because she was another successful woman composer.

Massenet's *Ouvre tes yeux bleus* (1878) is a simple song, clearly segmented into two parts, one for each of the lovers depicted in the narrative. The text is from Paul Robiquet's (1848 – 1928) cycle of six poems, *Poème d'amour*, of which *Ouvre tes yeux bleus* is the third. Measures 1 – 24 are assigned to the male speaker ("Lui" in the score) and measures 25 – 38 are devoted to the female character ("Elle"). The young couple in the song have possibly enjoyed a night of love together and are eagerly awaiting the dawn. The lover is encouraging his beloved to arise and open her eyes, as the day is becoming brighter, while she entreats him to look beyond nature to find beauty and love, as she has done.

In the first part of this song, the lover's accompaniment exhibits only two musical ideas – the first is a rippling sixteenth-note figure that outlines the specific harmony while the second is a pair of half notes. In measure 1, the song begins with arpeggiated G Major chords, which the vocal line mimics in eighth notes in the next measure (Fig. 18).

Fig. 18, *Ouvre tes yeux bleus*, mm. 1 – 2.

This is repeated throughout the first half of *Ouvre tes yeux bleus* (for example, F# Major in measure 10). The half-note interludes (measures 4, 8, and 23) seem to function as resting points where the man can take a breath in the midst of wakening his lady. Note that measures 4, 8, and

23 are all set to the paired half notes; the accompanying phrases are “Voici le jour,” “Un chant d’amour,” and “Voici le jour” respectively. Each half-note interlude appears to build on the previous one, culminating in the perfect cadence in measures 23 – 24, which introduces the woman to the song. The first “Voici le jour” is set to an A minor harmony, which immediately resolves to the tonic of G Major. In measure 8, “Un chant d’amour” is accompanied by the same A minor chord, but this time, instead of moving to G Major, it shifts abruptly to B Major; this new key area brings forth rapturous descriptions from the male lover of their surroundings. He literally forgets himself in the beauty of both the environment and his lady. Finally, the lover reiterates his opening vocal line in measure 21 and concludes with the V – I cadence in measures 23 – 24 on the words “Voici le jour!,” successfully rousing his lady from sleep. Both motives only serve to support the vocal line. The thin texture of the continuous sixteenth notes lends an anxious, excited air to the situation while being innocuous enough for the listener to ignore it and pay full attention to the melody, which consistently outlines the harmonies found in the accompaniment (Fig. 19).

Measures 25 – 38 (part two) reflect the beloved’s thoughts on the approaching day. She is much more pragmatic: why dwell on the mysteries and beauties of nature when they can enjoy the love she feels in her heart? Her music is entirely different: the piano part indicates this change in sentiment by introducing a chordal accompaniment (Fig. 19). This thicker texture differs from the thinner one in part one but does not obscure the melody either; rather, it contrasts with the vocal line so that again, the focus is on the melody. Another difference between the two parts of the song is tempo. The man’s music is marked *Allegro con molto anima* while hers is to be performed *un peu moins animé, plus soutenu*. Her thicker eighth-note chords coupled with the slightly slower tempo encourage her lover to think more deeply about their love.

The musical score for 'Ouvre tes yeux bleus' (Fig. 19) consists of a vocal line for 'She (Elle)' and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is written in G major and includes the lyrics: 'Tis dawn of day! / Voi - ci le jour! / Why re-gard na-ture's face, which / À quoi bon con - tem - pler la. The piano accompaniment is written in G major and features a change in texture and tempo. The tempo is marked 'un poco meno mosso, molto sostenuto' and 'Tempo I (un peu moins animé, plus soutenu)'. The piano part includes a change in texture from a thin texture of continuous sixteenth notes to a thicker texture of eighth-note chords.

Fig. 19, *Ouvre tes yeux bleus*, mm. 23 – 25.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this simple song is that both the lowest and highest pitches of *Ouvre tes yeux bleus* are located within the second part (i.e., of the woman). Measure 24, which is where the accompaniment for the second part begins, contains a low G, the lowest note of the song. Measure 36 features a high A in the vocal line. One could interpret this by situating the woman as symbolizing the form or the structure of the relationship; the man here is surrounded by the woman, figuratively (as all of his pitches are found within the two extreme ones) and literally (act of love). All he can think about is his beloved. This implies that the woman, not the man, is actually the one in control of this relationship for she is the one who states that *they* (or, rather, her) decide what they feel and experience, not nature, thus putting an end to the man's "romantic" words. The song concludes with the woman appropriating her lover's music from the first half to express her thoughts about their love. She acknowledges the ecstatic nature of their relationship, represented by the recurrence of "his" vocal melody in measure 34 (Fig. 20), but tempers that with her assertion of *choosing* to love him, symbolized by her chordal accompaniment.



Fig. 20, *Ouvre tes yeux bleus*, m. 34.

Chaminade's song *Rosemonde* can be compared with Massenet's *Ouvre tes yeux bleus* in several ways. Interestingly, both *mélodies* were composed in the same year, 1878. In terms of gender, both *Rosemonde* and *Ouvre tes yeux bleus* feature a woman narrator who speaks for herself. In *Rosemonde*, we have a passionate woman who is not afraid to die for her beliefs, while in *Ouvre tes yeux bleus*, the woman's self-assurance is reflected in her appropriation of the man's vocal melody. Both songs' accompaniments are relatively simple; in *Ouvre tes yeux bleus*, we have both a light, thin texture and a thicker, more sonorous one, while in *Rosemonde*, a chordal texture remains in place throughout the song. These textures function as backdrops for

the sentiments expressed in the text and are relatively simple so that the focus in both is on the melody and the words.

Structurally, Chaminade's song is more complex with its subtle changes to the repetitive nature of the last four lines of each stanza of text. Massenet's *Ouvre tes yeux bleus* divides neatly into two halves. While both *mélodies* are fairly straightforward harmonically, Chaminade's song exhibits more variation in the sonorities employed. Aside from a brief passage in B Major (mediant of G Major), *Ouvre tes yeux bleus* is firmly rooted in the tonic key, with occasional secondary chords (e.g., E minor, A minor).

Augusta Holmès's *Noël d'Irlande* (1890) is not a Christmas song *per se* but an anthem of hope for the Irish people. Holmès, of Irish parentage, often infused her patriotic feelings into her music. This song, in 3/4 time, is more like a slow march than a waltz; the displaced strong beat (on the second beat, instead of the first) gives one the impression of weary footsteps, marching on towards a faraway goal. Each of the six stanzas of Holmès's own text begins with a refrain-like formula ("Rêvez, rêvez"), which is always rhythmically set to a short – long motive (usually a sixteenth note followed by a half note). Yet melodically and harmonically, this beginning formula is varied almost each time: only in stanza one does the downbeat corresponding to the second syllable ("-vez") land on the tonic G (measure 3, beat 1) (Fig. 21).

Fig. 21, *Noël d'Irlande*, mm. 1 – 4.

The opening harmonic underpinnings of the next stanzas are respectively: iii (B minor, measure 11), V (D Major, measure 19), IV (C Major, measure 27), iii (B minor, measure 35), and IV (C Major, measure 43).

Each of the six verses features phrasing in regular four-bar phrases, and important words are set to sustained notes, either half or dotted half notes (measure 5 “Irlande,” measure 8 “Noël vous apporte,” measure 13 “lande,” measure 16 “nus aux flammes,” measure 23 “temps,” measure 32 “Harpe, Tréfle,” and measure 40 “gloire”). The song employs very simple harmony, all of the chords used being diatonic to the tonic of G Major. Texturally, the accompaniment is comprised of block chords, further contributing to the simplicity of the song. Perhaps the most important idea in this song is found in measure 42, where the vocal line pauses on the half note on the word “d’équité.” Here, instead of completing the melody on a G (as in measures 2 – 10 which is identical to measures 34 – 42), the verse ends on the A. It is possible that all of these highlighted words reflect both Holmès’s desire for the Irish people to reclaim their dignity and the Irish people’s pride in their culture and heritage. Furthermore, the richness of that culture (including both the arts and the church) gives them the strength to persevere through life’s difficulties with the hope that things *will* be better. The best Christmas gift to the Irish people, then, is that of equality (presumably with the English) and liberty (from the English).

Chanson slave shares a repetitive structure with *Noël d’Irlande*. The texts of both songs are segmented into even sections by a regularly recurring refrain that features its own rhythmic and melodic motives. (Compare *Chanson slave*’s “le désert est grand” with *Noël d’Irlande*’s “Revez, revez.”) Harmonically, the two songs differ greatly. The chords utilized in *Chanson slave* are much richer, due to the song’s emphasis on chromaticism. *Noël d’Irlande* only employs sonorities diatonic to the home key of G Major. Another difference between the two *mélodies* is texture. Chaminade’s song attempts to reflect an exotic character through the use of sinuous melodic lines and bass drones in the accompaniment. Holmès’s *Noël* is homogeneous in texture. Despite these musical differences, both texts strive for a better quality of life for the characters involved. In *Chanson slave*, the woman realizes that she can either wallow in despair or accept that her relationship is broken and move on with her life. She decides to carry on and look forward to a new future, one without her ex-lover. *Noël d’Irlande* is an anthem, a call-to-arms so to speak, for the Irish people to rouse their sensibilities and to inspire in them a hope for a better future.

Vincent D’Indy’s *Madrigal*, composed between 1871 – 1873, is written “dans le style ancien” to a text by Robert de Bonnières. The song is strophic and comprises three verses, whose melody is repeated almost identically, while the accompaniment becomes progressively more complex rhythmically. D’Indy writes his accompaniment in the style of a harpsichord or clavecin piece, which is evident in the idiomatic piano style. For instance, in the first verse

(measures 1 – 19), the accompaniment features block chords (which can be rolled in the ‘old style’) and suspensions (Fig. 22).

Moderato
(Modéré)

Where can you find more charm-ing face or fair - er,
Qui ja - mais fut de plus char-mant vi - sa - ge,

Fig. 22, *Madrigal*, mm. 1 – 4.

Verse two (measures 20 – 38) contains notes moving in eighth-notes and even a mordent in bar 22. The last verse (measures 39 – 57) is the most interesting, rhythmically (Fig. 23).

mu - sic more en-tranc - ing,
d'un plus doux en - ten - dre,

Fig. 23, *Madrigal*, mm. 43 – 44.

This section contains the most figuration (sixteenth-note lines), as well as a trill and a mordent in measures 53 and 56 respectively and a ‘tierce de Picardie’ in measure 57. *Madrigal* is to be played lightly as indicated by the specific markings (especially in the last verse – *toujours très-lié et expressif*), which refer to the kind of touch one must have when playing the harpsichord.

The text is reminiscent of songs and poems in the courtly love tradition of the 14th and 15th centuries. Even the title – *Madrigal* – evokes that long-ago era. Bonnières's poem refers to the physical delights of the unknown lover's lady ("Qui jamais fut de plus charmant visage," etc.), declaring that there never was a more beautiful woman than her. In D'Indy's setting, this stylized poem may be interpreted tongue-in-cheek or not; the fact that the poem is set in "le style ancien" allows the performer to realize the song either way. The vocalist could sing the song in a straightforward manner – that is, taking the sentiments expressed in the poem at "face" value (pun intended) and the pianist could mimic the sound of a harpsichord or clavecin as closely as possible. On the other hand, both performers could present *Madrigal* in a more facetious vein, knowing that the message and the medium both refer to a long-dead practice. They could take advantage of the anachronistic element inherent in the song and pretend to deliver the song in a serious manner.

It is interesting to note that all of the lover's descriptions of his lady are set to a harmonic progression that is the same for each strophe. Even though the lover rhapsodizes about his beloved and can find new things about which to express his unceasing admiration, the actual music is static, which can imply a staleness in the lover's effusiveness. Despite the figuration that is present in strophes two and three, they do not mask the fact that the music is essentially the same throughout the song. Although we know that is indicative of strophic form, we can imbue *Madrigal* with this reading, resulting in an interesting performance.

Chaminade's *Tu me dirais* is another song that may be presented in a humorous manner. We have already seen how the lover's declarations of love and fidelity conflict with the accompaniment's syncopated chords and the setting of key phrases such as "je te croirais" to low notes. Both *Tu me dirais* and *Madrigal* exhibit repetitive elements – the former demonstrates an *ababc* structure while the latter is strophic throughout. However, the harmonies utilized in *Tu me dirais* are more varied and complex than those employed in *Madrigal*. Chaminade writes chords that move chromatically to accompany the melody, while the sonorities used in *Madrigal* do not stray from the tonic key of A minor. Texturally, D'Indy's *Madrigal* becomes progressively more dense with each verse: compare the block chords in the first strophe (measures 1 – 19) to the sixteenth-note figuration present in the third (measures 39 – 57). *Tu me dirais*, on the other hand, does not reveal any textural transformations; the song's interest lies in the manipulation of harmonic relations rather than texture. The surprise in *Tu me dirais* is in the music-text relationship already discussed, specifically in the fifth and last verse, which features the descending circle of fifths set to the woman's reiteration of her lover's supposed fidelity and

genuine love. *Madrigal*, as mentioned above, relies on anachronism in order to produce the musical joke.

2.2 Piano Music

Chaminade's *Sonata, op. 21* for piano was published in 1895 but was possibly mostly conceived in the late 1880's. According to Marcia J. Citron, the third movement is the earliest, having been "published in 1886 under the title "Appassionato," as the fourth of the *Six Etudes de Concert, op. 35* . . . the first movement dates from May 1893 at the latest."¹³ The three movements correspond to the conventional fast-slow-fast tempo alternation of sonata form. Here, I will focus on the second and third movements of the *Sonata*, as there is no current discussion of that music available. (Citron has written an innovative analysis of the first movement in the fourth chapter of her book, *Gender and the Musical Canon*.)¹⁴

Op. 21's second movement, while exhibiting the typical slow tempo (here, the tempo marking is *Andante*), is surprisingly unusual regarding its form. At the large scale, the movement appears to outline three distinct sections: the first being measures 1 – 39 in the tonic key of Ab Major, the second consisting of measures 40 – 80 in B Major, and the third comprising measures 81 – 118, back to Ab Major. By partitioning the movement into three, it is possible to observe that elements of both sonata form and ternary form are present in the structural makeup. Sonata form is represented by the presence of two contrasting themes: the first theme is more rhythmic and opens the movement in the tonic key of Ab Major (Fig. 24).

¹³ Marcia J. Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 147.

¹⁴ Citron prefaces her analysis of the *Sonata* with a discussion on the nineteenth-century sonata form. During that time, the first and second themes were regarded as "masculine" and "feminine" respectively, with the former exhibiting a more robust, rhythmic motive in the tonic key and the latter demonstrating a more lyrical character in the dominant tonality. In the recapitulation, the "masculine" theme appropriates the "feminine" theme through the return to the tonic key: the harmonic progression concludes in the "masculine" tonality, and the final statement of the "feminine" theme is also expressed in the "masculine" key.

In her analysis of the first movement of the *Sonata*, Citron suggests that the *Sonata, Op. 21/1* subverts the above idea in that the first movement does not establish a "feminine" key. While the tonic key of C minor is apparent, the lack of a positive "feminine," or secondary key avoids the concept of appropriation altogether. The movement hints at different tonal areas instead of defining a specific key. Furthermore, the second theme appears to exhibit both "masculine" and "feminine" characteristics (as understood in the nineteenth-century): the theme is *tranquillo* and lyrical, yet is set in the home key of C minor within the parameters of the fughetta form.



Fig. 24, *Sonata, Op. 21/2*, mm. 1 – 2.

The second lyrical theme enters in the new key of B Major in measure 40 (Fig. 25).

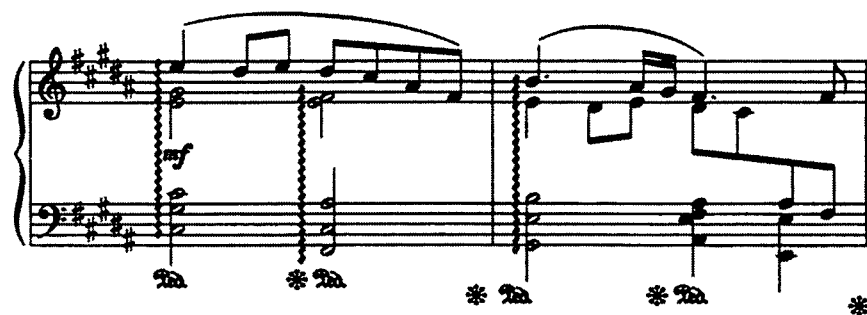


Fig. 25, *Sonata, Op. 21/2*, mm. 40 – 41.

Thus, the “exposition” could span measures 1 – 51.

Measure 52 begins a section that would normally be the development in conventional sonata form. However, the material here is not so much the “first theme,” but rather the “transitional” material that commences in measure 25 (Fig. 26).

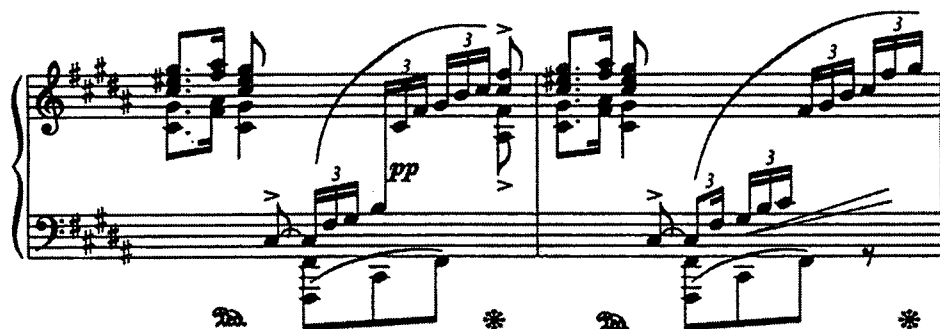


Fig. 26, *Sonata, Op. 21/2*, mm. 52 – 53.

This leads to an almost identical repeat of theme two, starting at measure 57. Thus, the second theme is not really developed, but reiterated in measures 57 – 67 at the same pitch level as before. Then, theme two starts again at measure 73 (Fig. 27), but continues into the “transitional” material two bars later, leading to the “recapitulation” at measure 84 (Fig. 28), with the return of the first theme melody, which is almost an exact repetition of the beginning of the movement.

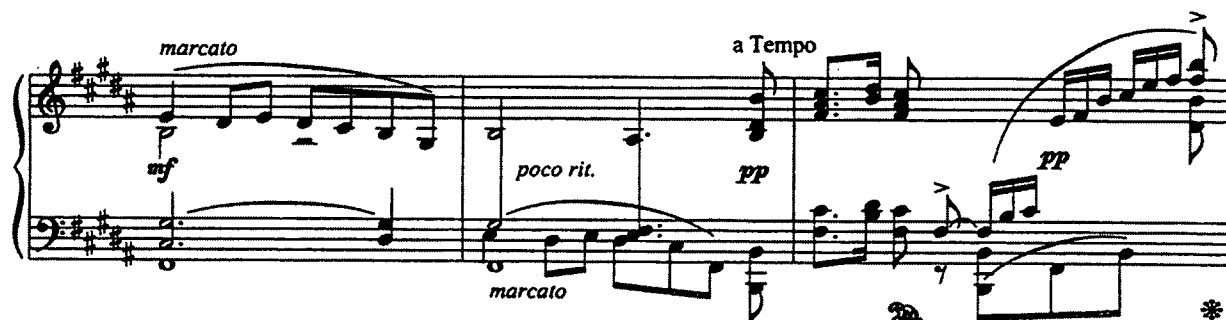


Fig. 27, *Sonata, Op. 21/2*, mm. 73 – 75.



Fig. 28, *Sonata, Op. 21/2*, mm. 82 – 84.

The rest of the *Andante* progresses similarly to its “exposition” with two exceptions. First, the return of the second theme in measure 107 is not in the tonic key of Ab; rather, it is in Db Major, i.e., the subdominant of the main key (Fig. 29).



Fig. 29, *Sonata, Op. 21/2*, mm. 106 – 107.

Second, in measure 113, the chord on the first beat is an amalgamation of themes one and two (Fig. 30). We have the lyrical theme resolving on the tonic key (reconciling the Ab7 secondary harmony mentioned previously) and the dotted rhythm of theme one appearing as a textural “spice.”

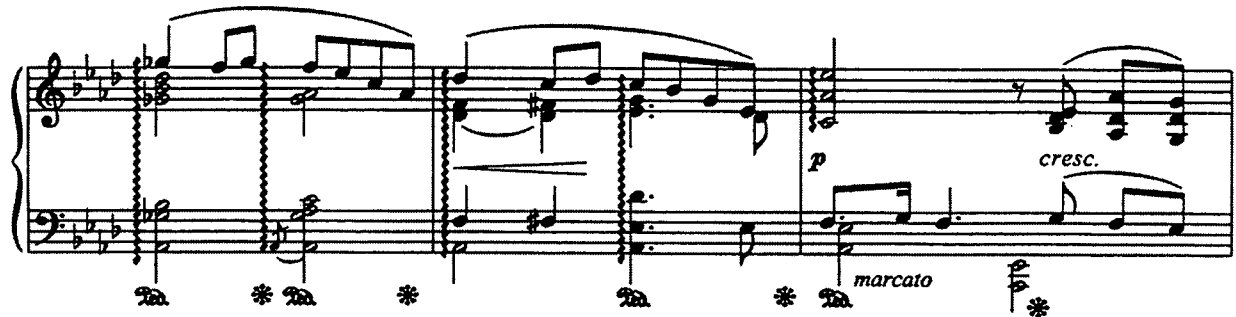


Fig. 30, *Sonata, Op. 21/2*, mm. 111 – 113.

Thus, the movement ends with both themes co-existing peacefully (almost literally, as the dynamic marking at this point is a serene *p*) rather than a conflict “won” by one of the motives, usually the first theme, as it concludes the movement. This movement could be labeled as a sonata form without development, given the presence of two contrasting themes and emphasis on transitional sections.

Op. 21/2 also illustrates a few characteristics of ternary form. The most obvious is that the movement can be divided into three parts. However, those sections do not adhere to A-B-A structure which defines ternary form. While the first segment (the “Exposition” or “A,” measures 1 - 51) and the last (the “Recapitulation,” measures 84 - 118) share a great amount of the same materials, such as themes one and two, the differences between the two parts point to an organizational layout other than ternary form. For instance, the third section (measures 84 - 118) is markedly shorter than the first by almost twenty measures. Another contrast is the appearance of the second theme in measure 107 in the dominant harmony of Db major (i.e., V7/IV) instead of the tonic key of Ab Major (I). The middle passage is definitely different from the outer two, with the lyrical motive dominating the thematic action; this contrast between the “A” and “B” sections is in keeping with ternary form.

It seems that there is a reluctance to adhere to a particular structural framework in *Op. 21/2*. As in *Op. 21/1*, the second movement appears to be an “exploration of possibility.”¹⁵ With that in mind, perhaps *Op. 21/2* should be viewed more as a study in expanding form through texture and chromaticism. The different rhythmic layers and harmonizations that Chaminade

¹⁵ Citron, *Gender*, 145.

assigns to each theme (and variations thereof) shape the structure of the movement and provide melodic interest. Texture implies touch and as this is a keyboard work (played with the hands), a better understanding of the musical “strands” used in the *Sonata* may result in a more convincing performance.

At a more detailed level, the opening four measures of *Op. 21/2* are homophonic and evoke a prayerful, quasi-Brahmsian atmosphere (Fig. 24). The chords move mainly through chromatic motion, which yield a thick, rich aural effect. Measure 1 presents the first theme, denoted by the dotted eighth-note – sixteenth-note rhythm and is reminiscent of the first movement’s opening motive. That dotted rhythmic figure appears throughout the rest of the movement in its original first theme guise, in an inner voice (as in measure 2), or as part of new material (Fig. 31). For instance, in measures 5 – 6, the *Animato* tempo marking necessitates a new texture in order to convey the more insistent, sequential quality of this passage.



Fig. 31, *Sonata, Op. 21/2*, mm. 4 – 6.

These bars have a thinner fabric, due to the larger space between the hands and within the hands; the right hand plays octaves while the left hand spans tenths. The dotted rhythm is present in the left-hand tenths, which is a cross-rhythm to the more even right-hand octaves, resulting in musical tension. Measures 8 – 12 return back to homophonic style; the hands are basically moving in rhythmic unison. However, unlike the beginning four bars, the distance between the hands is great. Low octave C’s are heard in the bass, anchoring the C minor tonality of this section and contributing to the more substantial texture. Measures 13 – 15 are a prolongation of C minor (Fig. 32), which produces an expectation either for resolution (of C minor, the iii of Ab Major) or progression. (What occurs next in measures 16 – 19 is a repeat of the first theme.)



Fig. 32, *Sonata, Op. 21/2*, mm. 13 – 15.

These measures restrict the hands to the bass clef, which produces a very thick, sonorous conclusion to the first fifteen bars.

A sudden rolled F minor chord (vi in Ab Major) in measure 22 (Fig. 33) interrupts the reiteration of the first theme heard in measures 16 – 19, which is followed by rhapsodic arpeggiations.

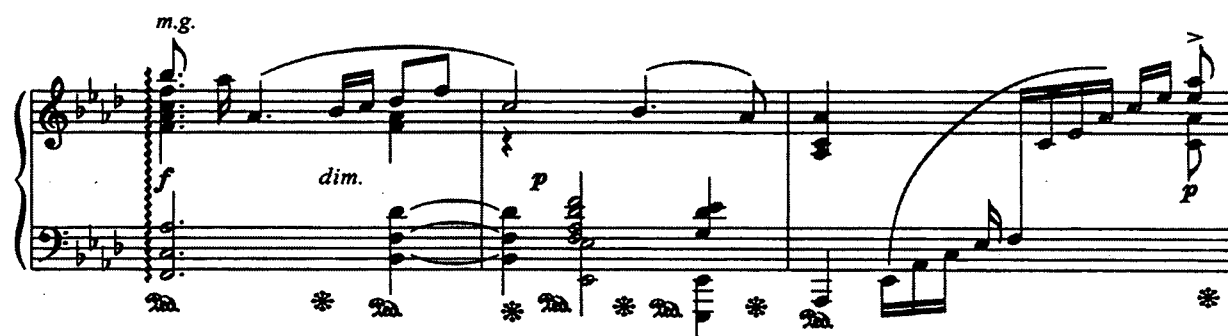


Fig. 33, *Sonata, Op. 21/2*, mm. 22 – 24.

Although the Ab Major tonic harmony is heard again in measure 24, that particular sonority is not accompanied by the first theme. Instead, in measure 25, only the original dynamic rhythm is present here (the dotted eighth-note – sixteenth-note motive) in conjunction with the Ab tonic key. In fact, measures 22 – 39 do not contain any material that is found in measures 1 – 21, save the aforementioned rhythmic motive. This seems to indicate that measures 22 – 29 function more as a transitional section than a new thematic area, a hypothesis that is substantiated with the introduction of the second theme in measure 40 in B Major.

Theme two (measure 40) is much more open in texture than the more chordal, dense theme one. Widely spaced rolled chords and large intervals between individual notes convey an expansive atmosphere. Only with the reappearance of the transitional material in measure 52 (here in F# Major) does the texture become thick again. The alternation of textures continues

throughout the movement, with the emphasis on the more open texture near the end of 21/2.

Measures 117 and 118 conclude the movement with three iterations of the tonic key, Ab Major.

The last movement is a spirited finale, with perpetual sixteenth-note passages punctuated by *sf* octaves in the left hand. *Op. 21/3*, as mentioned previously, was first published in 1886 as one of the pieces in the *Six Études de Concert, Op. 35* and originally bore the title “Appassionato.” One can definitely see the technical nature of the work in the series of doubled fifths and sixths and the many scale-like passages, all to be executed at a fairly rapid tempo (*Allegro*, ♩ = 126).

Op. 21/3’s form is fairly simple. It is dictated by the specific idiomatic techniques found in the movement, such as alternating fifths and sixths (in both hands) and “Alberti” bass (modified to larger intervals of sevenths and octaves). For instance, the first 51 measures are devoted to the successive doubled fifths and sixths and remain rooted in the key of C minor (Fig. 34). The constant oscillation between the fifths and sixths and their rapid movement up and down the keyboard result in a dense texture that is fraught with tension.

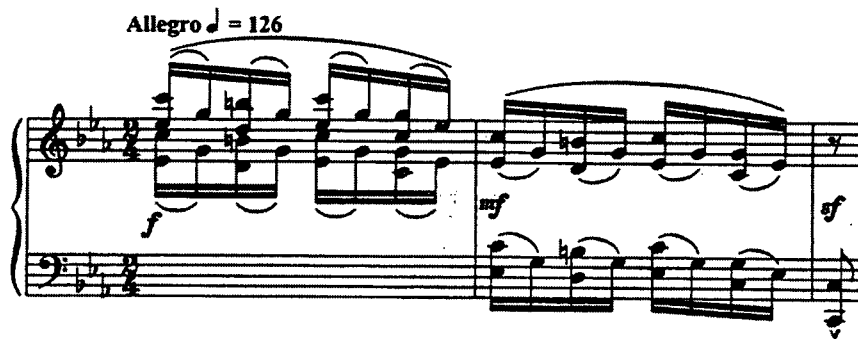


Fig. 34, *Sonata, Op. 21/3*, mm. 1 – 2.

However, the next section, measures 52 – 114, highlights the use of sustained figures. Left hand octaves are juxtaposed to the right hand’s accented quarter notes (i.e., melody), resulting in a more lyrical line. There is more harmonic and melodic interest in this middle section as there is an inner voice line in addition to the different techniques and more obvious right hand melody. Chaminade’s own instructions here, *ben marcato il canto*, further indicate her desire to differentiate between the first section and this middle section. Note also the dynamic distinctions within this second passage compared to the first. Measures 1 – 51 are generally *f* and active. On the other hand, this second section displays a wider range of detail that corresponds to the difference in texture. Measures 52 – 114 also modulate to Eb Major (relative major), which further substantiates the possibility of this section being distinct from the previous one (Fig. 35).

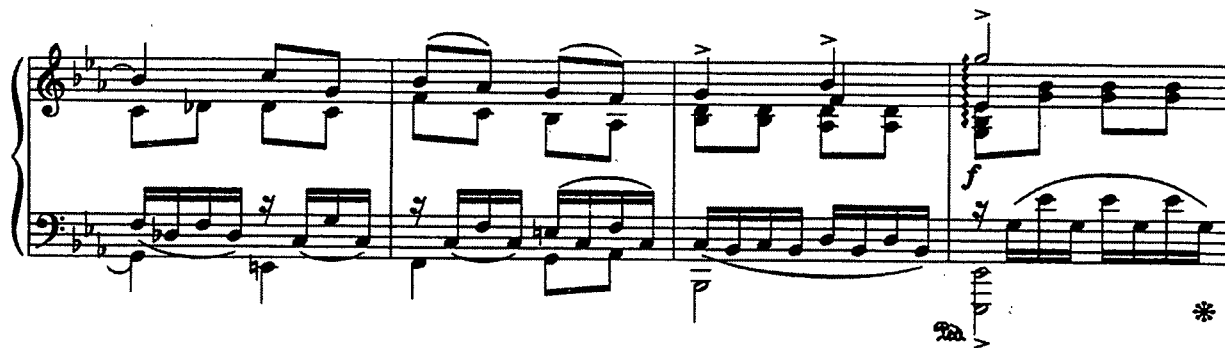


Fig. 35, *Sonata, Op. 21/3*, mm. 64 – 67.

The first theme returns in variation in measure 115 (Fig. 36). Instead of the alternating fifths and sixths, Chaminade writes descending triplets and thirty-second notes, which give the impression of faster music. Like the first section, this third and last segment is to be performed with vigour, culminating in the climax of the movement in measure 127.

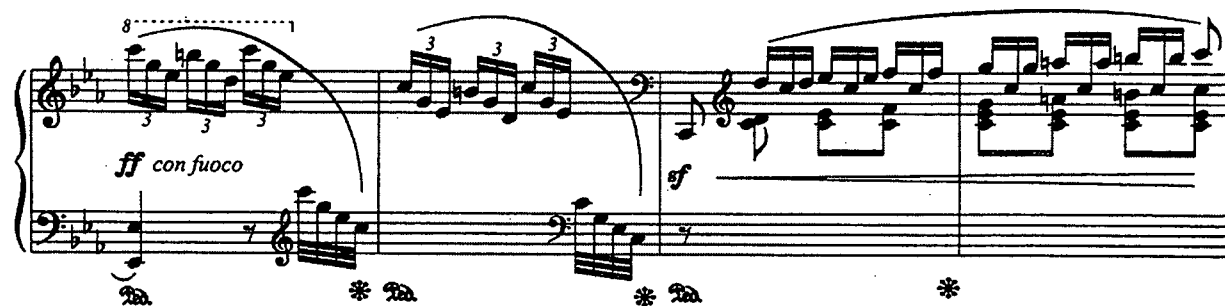


Fig. 36, *Sonata, Op. 21/3*, mm. 115 – 118.

Actually, measures 123 – 139 are marked no softer than *ff*; measure 127 is marked *fff*. The final sixteen bars of the movement return to the alternating motive found in both the first and second parts, growing in intensity until the final two chords of the piece, which display a bVI – i cadence instead of the “expected” V – I cadence.

It appears that the forms for the second and third movements of the *Sonata, Op. 21* are governed more by texture and technique than by an adherence to conventional structures. These movements resemble character pieces more than sections of a sonata; while we know that the third movement was published separately as an *étude*, there is no conclusive evidence regarding the publication or compositional history of the second movement. Perhaps Chaminade was experimenting with larger genres or perhaps this sonata was more of a personal, creative exercise in which she could toy with ideas. She did not perform this work in public (at least, none of the

existing reviews mentions a performance of the sonata), which raises a few questions, the most important of which is why not? It is likely that she became too busy with composing in the smaller, more marketable genres of the short piano solo and song to concentrate on this sonata. The publication date of the sonata in its entirety – 1895 – coincides with the period in which Chaminade was most active and successful in the small genres.

To conclude the overview of Chaminade's stylistic features as exemplified by various genres, let us now turn to the character piece. A comparison of two pieces, one by Chaminade and the other by Saint-Saëns, will highlight their respective styles. *Sérénade*, Op. 29 was published in 1884, only a few years before the premiere of *Les Amazones* in 1888. This short piano work is, in fact, a song with a melody that is passed from one register to another, much like two people engaged in a conversation. Measures 1 – 4 outline the tonic key of D Major and prepare the entrance of the main melody in measure 5, which is heard in the right hand's top voice (Fig. 37).

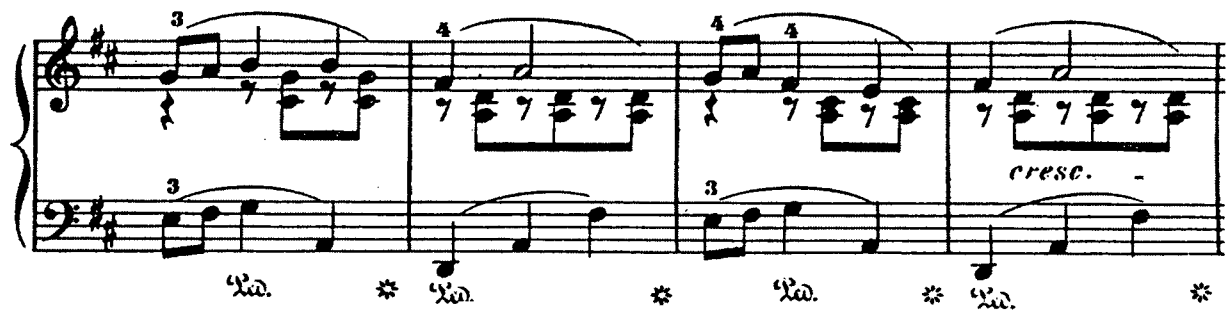


Fig. 37, *Sérénade*, mm. 6 – 9.

In measure 21 (Figs. 38 – 39), the melody is heard in an inner voice in the right hand then eight measures later, it is back in the top voice. This melodic transference occurs throughout the piece. Phrasing is regular and the bass maintains a steady quarter-note beat.

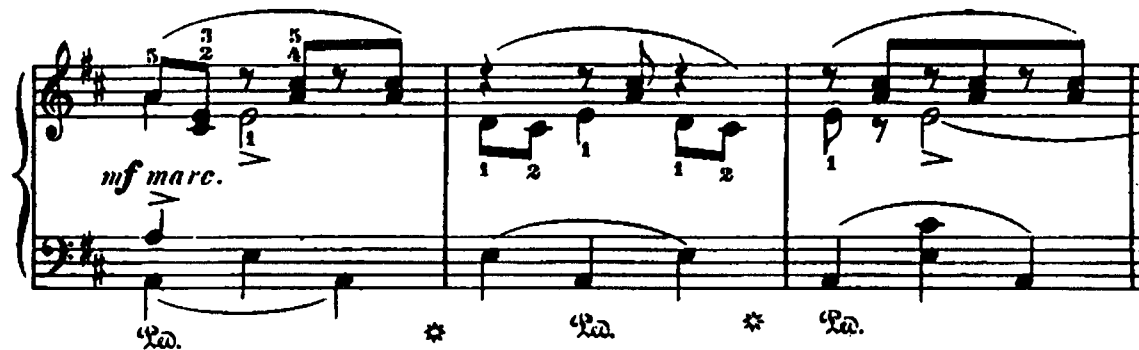
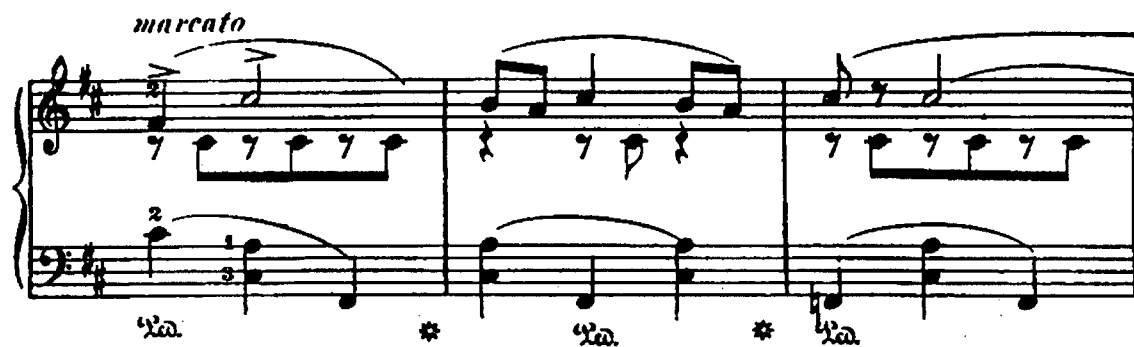


Fig. 38, *Sérénade*, mm. 21 – 23.

Fig. 39, *Sérénade*, mm. 29 – 31.

Texture divides *Sérénade* into two large sections (Figs. 40 – 42). The first, measures 1 – 62, is largely homophonic while the second section is signalled by the recapitulation of the opening starting in measure 63. There is a thicker texture here resulting from the combination of low bass intervals (fifths and octaves), an inner melody, and middle-register intervals in the right hand (thirds and fifths). This thick aural structure dissolves into a thinner one in measure 71 (this time, an exact statement of the opening theme; Fig. 41) which *again* yields to yet another texture (a more complex, but also a lighter, more delicate one) in measure 91 (Fig. 42).

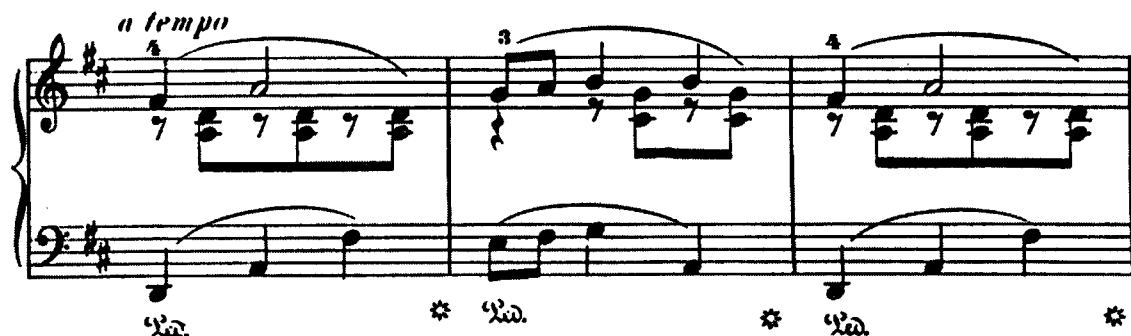
Fig. 40, *Sérénade*, mm. 63 – 65.Fig. 41, *Sérénade*, mm. 71 – 73.



Fig. 42, *Sérénade*, mm. 90 – 93.

Harmonically, this piece is not extremely complicated. It is strongly rooted in the tonic key of D Major and employs only a few chromatic tones (namely, F natural and G#, first heard in measure 11, and A#, first heard in measure 17). The most interesting section of the work is measures 87 – 90 (Fig. 43). These four measures expand the Bb Major sonority, a harmony that is not diatonic to D Major. However, if one takes the chromatic tones that have already occurred (i.e., F natural, G#, A#) and enharmonically alters the latter two to Ab and Bb, we see that those three notes, originally “foreign” to D Major, are amenable to Bb Major. This four-measure section can be interpreted as a culmination of these “strange” tones with the original tonic of D, resulting in the bVI tonality of Bb Major. *Sérénade* concludes shortly after these four measures.

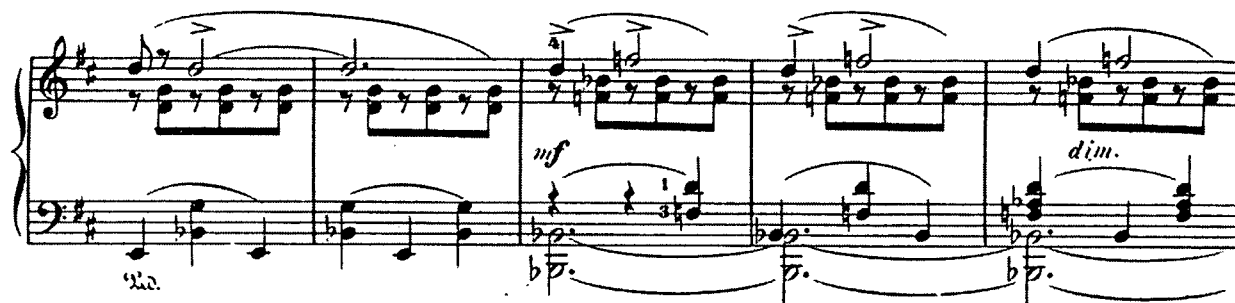


Fig. 43, *Sérénade*, mm. 85 – 89.

Saint-Saëns’s piano piece *Chanson Napolitaine*, the fifth of six short works in *Album pour piano*, Op. 72, was written around 1884. This work shares some features with *Sérénade*, the most important being lyricism. While *Sérénade* is similar to a duet, *Chanson Napolitaine* is more a solo song. The left hand accompaniment largely retains the same harmonic progression (C minor – Ab Major – C minor – G7 – German 6 – C minor), with texture being the musical

variable. For instance, the first section of the *Chanson* (measures 1 – 20) is basically an accompanied “song” (Fig. 44).

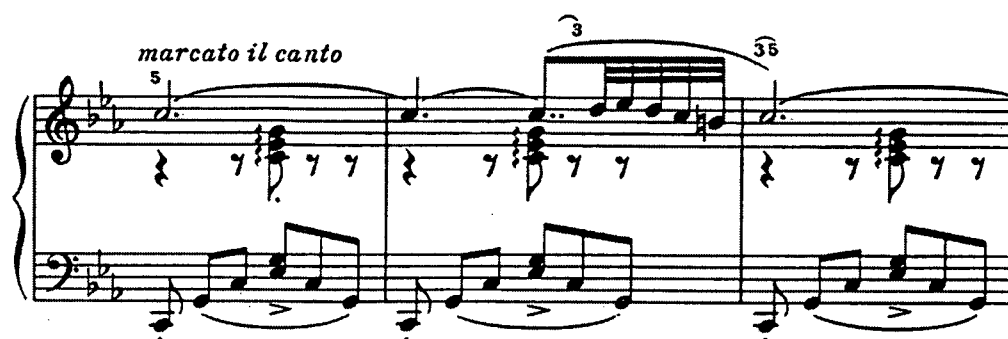


Fig. 44, *Chanson Napolitaine*, mm. 5 – 7.

Measures 31 – 46 place the melody in the inner voice (in the score, the melody is in the middle staff); here, the musical texture is thinner due to the distance between the hands (Fig. 45).

Fig. 45, *Chanson Napolitaine*, mm. 31 – 33.

In measures 47 – 56, the musical layers are closer together again, but the left hand is now assigned oscillating sixteenth notes (Fig. 46). These sixteenth notes, coupled with the right-hand accented octaves, result in an even denser sonority.



Fig. 46, *Chanson Napolitaine*, mm. 51 – 52.

The next passage, measures 57 – 72, features repeated triads and ascending chromatic scales in the left hand, and a melody doubled at the octave in the right; naturally, the sound is rich and powerful, even without the *f* dynamic and *tempo rubato* indication (Fig. 47).



Fig. 47, *Chanson Napolitaine*, mm. 57 – 59.

Following this is the penultimate section of the work, measures 73 – 93. Here is presented a summary of all the different textural figures used thus far: octaves, chords, oscillating sixteenth notes (Fig. 48). This is the climax of the *Chanson* and is marked *Allegro agitato*.



Fig. 48, *Chanson Napolitaine*, mm. 80 – 83.

Finally, the original song returns one last time in measures 94 – 118, this time more poignant after all of the turmoil.

As in the *Sonata, Op. 21*, musical interest in both *Sérénade, Op. 29* and *Chanson Napolitaine* lies more in the use of different textures, each texture indicating a new formal section. Both Chaminade and Saint-Saëns, in the *Sérénade* and *Chanson Napolitaine*, choose clarity of form over harmonic complexity. Tempo variations, registral shifts and various pianistic techniques are also employed, to varying degrees, in all of the piano works discussed.

Chapter Three

3.1 *Les Amazones, Op. 26*

Throughout history, the word “Amazon” has evoked a number of images, all of which are exotic and erotic. Generally speaking, an Amazon is a beautiful, statuesque woman with extraordinary martial abilities. She is most often found in a community of like-minded women, all of whom eschew living with men for various reasons, one of which may be the desire to have total control over how they live their lives, from everyday tasks (e.g., growing food) to more elaborate responsibilities (e.g., implementing military strategies). While these women may find the idea of co-habiting with men distasteful, they are not necessarily celibate. It is possible that these Amazons utilized the men they defeated in war for their own conjugal purposes, ultimately ensuring that their sorority would not become extinct.¹

The stories of the Amazon warriors have intrigued and fascinated many, resulting in stories and legends that have existed for thousands of years. Despite the stories, there is no concrete evidence to attest to the existence of these women.² There are only allusions in various texts from antiquity, the Renaissance, and the modern era and ancient friezes depicting artists’ conceptions of these fantastic warriors.

Before delving into the “history” of these women, it would be useful to consider the different origins and meanings that have been given for their name. The most common etymological explanation is that the word “Amazon” comes from Greek and means “one breasted” or “breastless,” from *mazos*, (breast) and *a* (no).³ However, there is no sufficient evidence to attest to the image of the single-breasted female warrior, and Abby Kleinbaum argues that this common definition is erroneous. She studied the Amazon in Athenian art and identified Amazon statues from three different periods. All sculptures “depict an Amazon in a short tunic with one breast bared.”⁴ There is no Hellenic artistic tradition that supports the notion that Amazons removed or suppressed a breast. Furthermore, Kleinbaum points to the fact that the word “Amazon” is not originally of Greek origin and thus, the “correct” definition is open to interpretation. Other scholars have explored that etymological uncertainty to offer

¹ Elaine Fantham and Helene Peet Foley, *The Women in the Classical World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 133.

² Lyn Webster Wilde, *On the Trail of the Women Warriors* (London: Constable, 1999), 4.

³ Batya Weinbaum, *Islands of Women and Amazons: Representations and Realities* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999), 84.

⁴ Abby Wettan Kleinbaum, *The War Against the Amazons* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1983), 16.

alternative explanations. For instance, Batya Weinbaum suggests other terms such as the Roman *emonymzone* (“months” – from *emon*, month, and *zone*, belt), *oyorpata* (Scythian for “man killer”), and *amazon* (generic Persian for “warring people”).⁵ Thus, we can not define the term “Amazon” with any great certainty; the only things we know are that the Amazons, if they existed at all, were women and that they fought.

Another unknown aspect regarding these women is their geographical origin. Themiscyra is widely cited as the Amazon capital, on the southern coast of the Black Sea. According to Lyn Wilde’s research and travels, the Amazon era was “back in the Bronze Age,” as the central myths about the woman warriors point to that time.⁶ For instance, Wilde claims that the very first literary reference to the Amazons is by Homer, who was active around 750 BC. Since Homer, in his *Iliad*, narrated events dating from around 1200 BC, we know that the Amazons, if they existed, lived around that time.⁷ As for how the Amazons’ influence spread, Herodotus chronicles the migration of these famed women warriors in Book Four of his *Histories*, stating that after the Greek victory at the River Thermadon, the Greeks sailed off in three ships with many of their female prisoners of war. However, those ships never reached their destination because the Amazons overpowered and murdered their captors, leaving the ships aimlessly adrift, as the freed captives had “not the slightest knowledge of navigation”; soon, the wind carried them into Scythian territory, where the Amazons left the boats and made for shore, travelling inland until coming upon a herd of horses.⁸ Herodotus further relates that the Scythians were astonished by the newcomers; they soon felt fascination for the horse-riding women and intermingled with them, resulting into a “minority ethnic group dwelling in the North Caucasus.”⁹

The most famous of the Amazon stories centres on Achilles’ first encounter with the Amazon queen Penthesilea, after the battle at Troy. He slays her, then removes her helmet, only to gaze upon her beauty and immediately fall in love. Achilles is overcome with remorse, not because he legitimately killed a soldier in war, but because he did not realize that the warrior with whom he fought was a woman. Another legend relates that the Gorgons were “warlike women in Africa who were overcome by Perseus, who also killed their queen Medusa.”¹⁰

⁵ Weinbaum, 89.

⁶ Wilde, 27.

⁷ Ibid., 28.

⁸ Kleinbaum, 6.

⁹ Weinbaum, 37.

¹⁰ Kathryn Schwarz, *Tough Love: Amazon Encounters in the English Renaissance* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 30.

While the tales on which the “history” of the Amazons is based are many and varied, they all point to a story with a moral, one that is gendered and engendering. As Kleinbaum writes, “To win an Amazon, either through arms or through love or, even better, through both, is to be certified as a hero. Thus men told of battling Amazons to enhance their sense of their own worth and historical significance.”¹¹ In all of these stories, the conflict is reversed, as it lies in the domination of men by women. Men succeeded to “rectify” this only after an arduous struggle, until they prevailed over the women.

Whatever the case may be regarding the history and origin of the Amazons, it is interesting that many of the world’s cultures include stories of great women warriors who were martially skilled and beautiful. From Herodotus to Shakespeare (e.g., Hippolyte, queen of the Amazons in *Midsummer Night’s Dream*) and *Arcadia* to *Xena, Warrior Princess*, the appeal, fascination, and connotations associated with the Amazons have not waned today. Colloquial speech also incorporates allusions to these fantastical female fighters. Nowadays, a tall, strong, often “masculine” woman may be described as “amazonian.”

However, it is striking how little the Amazon legend was used, despite the inherent appeal it might have had. Throughout the nineteenth century, several European composers drew upon Greek myths such as the Trojan war (e.g., Hector Berlioz’s *Les Troyens*) for inspiration. One notable example is Hugo Wolf’s symphonic poem *Penthesilea*, a one-movement orchestral work based on the struggle between the Amazon queen Penthesilea and Achilles. Another more obscure work is a three-act opera called *Les Amazones ou la fondation de Thèbes*, published in Paris in 1811. Victor-Joseph Étienne Jouy provided the libretto, to which Étienne Nicolas Méhul wrote the music. A third composition that utilizes the Amazonian myth is *L’Amazone*, a dramatic piece in two acts, for which Amédée de Beauplan wrote the music to a text by Eugène Scribe and Mélesville (the second name a pseudonym for Anne Honoré Joseph Duveyrier). It premièred at the Theatre de l’Opéra in 1830.¹² More recent is Anatoly Konstantinovich Lyadov’s *Dance of the Amazons*, op. 65, an orchestral suite that was probably premièred around 1925 (Schirmer first published the *Dance* in 1925); however, existing records do not indicate where the première took place.

As for Chaminade, it is possible that she selected the Amazon myth for her dramatic work because she related to the fortitude and independence of those women. Perhaps Chaminade saw the myth as symbolic of her own life as a woman composer. Late nineteenth-

¹¹ Kleinbaum, 1.

¹² I wish to thank Dr. Vera Micznik, my thesis advisor, for providing me with the references to *Les Amazones ou la fondation de Thèbes* and *L’Amazone*.

century France was still not entirely receptive to serious woman composers; while Chaminade's performances of her "salon" compositions were lauded by the critics, her more serious attempts at writing music were not premièred in Paris. In fact, the première of *Les Amazones* took place in Anvers in March, 1888; the only known subsequent performance occurred in Marseilles the following month. *Les Amazones* was well-received; critics likened the flight of Himris and Gandhar to Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries" from *Die Walküre* and Berlioz's "Ride to the Abyss" from *La Damnation de Faust*. One of the most obvious similarities is the choice of subject. Both the Valkyries and the Amazons are warrior maidens who are skilled martially and ride horses (or, flying horses in the case of the Valkyries). The flight scene in *Les Amazones* depicts the two lovers escaping from the female army while the "Ride of the Valkyries" heralds the Valkyries' entrance. The musical tension in both scenes is the result of several things, first of which is the quick tempo. *Les Amazones* is marked *Allegro molto agitato*, $\text{♩} = 164$; the "Ride of the Valkyries" is to be *lebhaft* (lively). Incessant sixteenth-note tremolos in the strings and woodwinds ensure that the tension does not slacken for an instant in Wagner's music. Those tremolos are to convey the image of the Valkyries' aerial ride on their whinnying steeds. On the other hand, ascending chromatic eighth-note sequences in the bass in *Les Amazones* punctuated by offbeat sixteenth-note chords sustain tension within the bar and direct the resulting harmonic discord to a gigantic tutti climax at the moment of capture.

Despite certain musical similarities, Chaminade reveals a fundamentally French character in her music, "wild, evocative, and powerful . . . her music is not forceful in the extreme and lacks pretension."¹³ Oddly enough, Chaminade seemed to cease composing in the larger genres shortly after the premiere of *Les Amazones*, focusing on the piano solo and *mélodie* for the remainder of her career. This is especially curious in light of the fact that Chaminade cited the work as her favourite composition.¹⁴ Possibly, Chaminade felt that she had written all she could with the completion of *Les Amazones*. Or, it is perhaps more likely that she was trying to ensure a steady income by composing in the smaller genres (and thus, publishing those pieces) with her father's death the previous year.

Les Amazones uses a libretto written by Charles Grandmougin (1850 - 1930) that centres on a battle between the female Amazons and the male Persians. Himris, queen of the Amazons,

¹³ "Anvers," *Le Guide Musical*, 26 April 1888, p. 133.

¹⁴ Ida B. Cole, "Mme. Chaminade, Famous French Composer, Calls Women Here 'Adorable,'" *St. Louis Star*, 25 November 1908.

orders the sole prisoner of war, the Persian leader Gandhar, to be brought before her.¹⁵ (Gandhar's men have fled, panicking for their lives.) Gandhar is presented to Himris and proudly declares that he is not afraid of what she will deal him. Himris' resolve to exact punishment on Gandhar wavers, as she realizes her growing attraction to the prince, but Kalyani, Himris' advisor, urges the queen to remember the edict regarding captives of war. Himris resigns herself to fulfilling the Amazonian law, despite her heavy heart, until Gandhar exhibits signs of attraction as well. Their passion emboldens them to plan their escape, which will free both of them from their respective responsibilities. Unfortunately, while they are galloping away in the night, the Amazon forces catch up with them and kill them. The work ends with a spirits' lament, much in the style of Purcell's final chorus in *Dido and Aeneas*.

Grandmougin's libretto mainly focuses on Himris and Gandhar. The text is basically composed of three sections of varying length: the first presents the interaction of the two groups of warriors, their provocations, pursuit, and war; the second (and longest) section is devoted mostly to the private drama of the two main characters, Himris and Gandhar; the third (and shortest) section concludes the work with a chorus that laments the passing of Himris and Gandhar and imparts a benediction on their souls. *Les Amazones'* formal construction is obvious in that clear delineations are made between different sections of text. As in an operatic scene, choral passages are closed numbers, with alternations or superimpositions of the two groups (i.e., Amazons and Persians). The choruses, though, do more than provide background music for the drama in *Les Amazones*. In the first section (p. 1 to the *Allegro* marking on p. 39), the choruses enact the actual characters (Amazons and Persians), by representing the two different sides in the conflict. On one side are the Amazons, led by Himris, and on the other are the Persians, captained by Gandhar. Both choruses are assigned different lines of text to depict the enmity between the two groups. For example, on p. 3, sys. 1, mm. 41 – 47, the Amazons, certain of their martial skill, sing of their victory over their enemies, while the Persians desire nothing but death for theirs.¹⁶ Later, as the two armies approach each other for direct warfare, both choruses cry "en avant!" to rally their respective fighters (the first instance of this being on p. 20, sys. 2,

¹⁵ One wonders if Grandmougin's libretto is based on an historical source. The word "Gandhar" is an older name for present-day Kandahar (Afghanistan). The name "Himris" appears in an online file of information relating to Middle-Earth (<http://homepage.mac.com/jeremybaker/towerhills/Resources/Evael.xls>), accessed April 11, 2003. "Himris" appears to refer to the name of a household in the Elvish world, presumably the same realm made famous by Tolkien in his *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. At first, it is easy to dismiss Grandmougin's "Himris" simply as a figment of his imagination. Yet, when the same name appears in the fantastical Elvish world, to which Tolkien's books refer, then perhaps the connection is more than coincidence, especially since Grandmougin and Tolkien are more than a generation apart (Grandmougin was born in 1850, Tolkien in 1892).

¹⁶ For referencing purposes throughout this chapter, I will cite the page number (p.), system number (sys.), measure number (m. or mm.), and text (where applicable).

m. 174). By contrast, near the end of *Les Amazones* (p. 110, "Leur cheval tombe"), the role of the chorus changes from that of representer to narrator. Upon the death of Himris and Gandhar at p. 111, sys. 1, m. 649, the Amazon chorus concludes the drama for them, describing them physically and then, having enforced justice, outlines new plans for themselves (beginning on p. 114, sys. 3, m. 697).

As in opera, "recitative" verses feature shorter lines of text and faster interplay between characters, while "aria" verses illustrate heightened emotion, manifested in longer poetic lines and rhyme schemes. In the versified sections, the rhyme scheme of the individual characters' verses is fairly conventional; for instance, Gandhar and Himris' first words (the verses beginning "En avant!" and "Sur nos frémissantes cavales" respectively on p. 21) exhibit an alternating pattern, Gandhar's rhyme scheme displaying AAABCBC while Himris' scheme reveals DDDEFEF. Metre fluctuation is largely between iambic and trochaic. There is much repetition of words, such as "mort" and "victoire;" in fact, that repetition is heightened by the extensive use of diminished sevenths and tritones. The combination of reiterating words and dissonant intervals builds dramatic and harmonic tension, both of which are present in the battle between the two choral armies.

One of the first questions this work raises is that of its genre. All references made to *Les Amazones* label it a "dramatic symphony"; even Chaminade herself called this composition a dramatic symphony.¹⁷ In the published piano score of *Les Amazones*, however, the subtitle clearly indicates that it is a "poème dramatique," a form that implies a shorter work, like the romantic one-movement tone poem, not a "symphonie dramatique." Yet, of course, as Hugh Macdonald recognizes, this work is not a symphonic poem in that it is not exclusively orchestral, as it features a chorus and three soloists that provide an actual narrative.¹⁸ *Les Amazones* appears to be a hybrid genre between a dramatic symphonic work and opera, that Chaminade modified and adapted as she saw fit.¹⁹

The musical form of *Les Amazones* is subordinated to the drama, very much as in an opera. As mentioned previously, the libretto exhibits distinctions between "recitative" and "aria" passages that Chaminade's music reflects. These divisions are not characteristic of an instrumental form, such as symphonic poem or sonata-allegro form, and point more to operatic forms (such as scenes) in which solo arias and ensemble sections are alternated and

¹⁷ Marcia J. Citron, *Cécile Chaminade: A Bio-Bibliography* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 135, 178.

¹⁸ Hugh Macdonald, "Symphonic poem," *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (online), 2001.

¹⁹ *Les Amazones* seems inspired by similarly hybrid works by Berlioz (e.g., *Roméo et Juliette*, *La Damnation de Faust*).

superimposed to convey the drama. The score displays changes in tempo, key signatures, and dynamics, and these varying musical elements enhance the emotions in the text instead of dividing the work into obvious “movements,” as in a symphony.

According to the libretto, the music of *Les Amazones* also falls into three distinct parts: a long first, mainly choral, section depicts the conflict between the two warring parties and introduces the three soloists; the second section, the *Duo*, the most substantial section, includes the love scene and the flight of Himris and Gandhar; the third section is a postlude consisting of the Chorus of the Dead. (The first section, in particular, could be viewed as a *tempo d'attacco* preparing the way for a multi-sectional duet.) These three “movements” are clearly separated by double bar lines, a change in key signature, and most importantly, the presence of titles. That is, only the episodes displaying obvious titles (i.e., *Duo* and *Choeur des Péris*) are accompanied by the aforementioned signals marking “movement” divisions.

The first forty bars of *Les Amazones* is comprised of small motivic fragments that interact, such as the eighth note – sixteenth note rhythmic idea beginning in m. 5 (p. 1, sys. 1) (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1, mm. 6 – 10.

The combination of those motivic fragments with the passage’s initial harmonic ambiguity support the idea of this opening orchestral section serving as an introduction. *Allegro moderato* is the tempo marking (a brisk $\text{♩} = 116$) and the key signature includes four flats, which, from the context, indicates F minor. Measures 1 – 16 act largely as a dominant extension of F minor. A trill in the bass on C is present in each of the first sixteen bars. Over this extended tremolo (pedal tone), first starting in measure 5, is a series of descending second motives that outline diminished harmonies. The effect of these sonorities is presumably one of anticipation; that is, since the work begins on an extended dominant chord (V of F minor) and since the diminished harmonies build on each other without resolving, the expectation for resolution is increased. Indeed, a few phrases later, the chorus’ entrance in m. 41 (p. 3, sys. 1) is marked by a “common-tone” German sixth - F minor “cadence,” which is repeated five more times (Fig. 2).

The musical score is for measures 41-44. It features five vocal parts and piano accompaniment. The vocal parts are: Soprano (LES AMAZONES), Contralto (LES AMAZONES), Tenors (LES PERSER), Basses (LES PERSER), and Piano (LES PERSER). The lyrics are in French and German. The tempo is marked *ff* *marcatissimo*.

Soprano (LES AMAZONES):
 Ah! ah! Pour nous la vie toi re est cer -
 Ha! Ha! Siegs - ruf wird die Luft gleich er -

Contralto (LES AMAZONES):
ff Ah! ah! Pour nous la vie toi re est cer -
 Ha! Ha! Siegs - ruf wird die Luft gleich er -

Tenors (LES PERSER):
ff Mort mort mort mort mort
 Tod Tod Tod Tod Tod

Basses (LES PERSER):
ff Mort mort mort mort mort aux a - ma -
 Tod Tod Tod Tod Tod den A - ma -

Piano (LES PERSER):
ff *marcatissimo*

Fig. 2, mm. 41 – 44.

The first “en avant!” is sounded in measure 82 (p. 8, sys. 1) by the Amazons (sopranos and altos) and rounds off the first section of the opening chorus. Chaminade begins the Amazons’ war whoop on the second half of beat two to land on the following downbeat in accord with the anapestic nature of those two words (i.e., en – a – vant) (Fig. 3).

En a - vant Ah! -
Nur cor - an! Ha! -

En a - vant Ah! -
Nur cor - an! Ha! -

Ah! cou - ra - ge Mort! -
Ha! seid tap - fer Tod! -

ra - ge cou - ra - ge Mort! -
ta - pfer seid tap - fer

Fig. 3, mm. 82 – 84.

The musical setting of the Persians “en avant” on beat one in m. 93 (p. 9, sys. 2), however, ignores the accentuation of those two words, emphasizing the first syllable “en.” Here, by placing the men’s call later than the Amazons,’ Chaminade intimates that the men’s military (and musical) progress is impeded (Fig. 4).

marcato
- ne. En a - vant!
- len Nur cor - an!

marcato
- ne. En a - vant!
- len Nur cor - an!

marcato
- ge En a - vant!
- fer Nur cor - an!

marcato
- des En a - vant!
- nen Nur cor - an!

Fig. 4, mm. 91 – 93.

Those war cries lead into the repetition of the F minor musical material on p. 10 (sys. 2, m. 99, “Ah!” and “Mort!”), which introduces new text on p. 11 (sys. 2, “Notre tourbillon vigoureux”) set to another common-tone German sixth harmony, this time resolving to C minor (as in m. 49). A second round of “en avant!,” beginning on p. 15, sys. 1, concludes this final section of the battle chorus, like a “coda” or “stretta” in an operatic scene.

After all of this choral conflict, Gandhar makes his first appearance in measure 192 (p. 21, sys. 4). His arrival is marked by a new key (A minor), tempo (*Moderato*), and a *piano* tremolo that grows in volume; he sings his lines in declamatory style (perhaps over-exaggerated here as he only sings one pitch, Eb) (Fig. 5).



Fig. 5, mm. 191 – 193.

Measure 198 (p. 22, sys. 2, “En avant”) gives Gandhar a sequence of two parallel four-measure phrases through which he urges his men on to war. Interestingly, while the motives in these phrases descend, the sequence is rising by half step from Eb (minor, then major) to E minor. Gandhar finishes his last utterance of this section on G# minor on the word “profondes” in m. 208 (p. 23, sys. 1). At that point (*Allegro molto*), the harmonic progression moves from the G# tonic to the submediant, followed by the subdominant in m. 209 (p. 23, sys. 2). Rapid descending sixteenth notes in the treble half of the accompaniment, enhancing the transitory nature of measures 208 – 209, stop abruptly on a G# triple octave in m. 210, which is succeeded by an E tremolo, which, as for Gandhar’s entrance in m. 192, prepares Himris’ entrance in m. 211. Himris commences her sequential, aria-like section on E (minor then major) in m. 216 with the words “Sur nos frémissantes” (p. 24, sys. 1), then moves to F minor (m. 220), cadencing on A minor in mm. 224 – 226. Her last line in this section (“Frappons avec la lance”) is her only line that is not octosyllabic, which presumably encourages the Amazons’ frenzied charge against their enemy, as it directly precedes a furious orchestral interlude, which could depict the cries and tumultuous chase by the two warring parties.

Fig. 6 shows two systems of musical notation for voice and piano. The first system (measures 198-200) is marked 'energique'. The voice part has the lyrics: 'En a-vant qu'elles soient frappé-es Tenez haut les grands boucli-' and 'Nur vor- an! Das sie Tod er-ci-le, Eure Schil-der hat-tet em-'. The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of running sixteenth notes in the right hand and a more melodic line in the left hand. The second system (measures 201-204) continues the vocal line with lyrics: '-ers Ban-dez vos arcs tour-nez vos frondes Et vous en avant cava-' and 'por Den Bo-gen spannt, laßt Schleuder flie-gen Rei-ter, ihr stürzt her-'. The piano accompaniment continues with similar rhythmic patterns.

Fig. 6, mm. 198 – 204.

That new orchestral section, beginning in m. 226 (p. 24, sys. 3), is marked with a new tempo marking (*Allegro*) and rhythmic figure (running sixteenth notes). During this interlude, the harmonic action exhibits continuously evolving diminished-seventh chords, with an underlying lyrical melody in the lower register beginning on p. 24.²⁰ That is, the diminished sonorities move by semitone either in a compressed sequence of descending chords (treble chords on p. 25, sys. 1 – 3) or in a more expansive sequence (p. 25, sys. 3, mm. 250 – 261) in which each new diminished-seventh configuration comprises anything from 1 – 4 measures. Diminished-seventh chords, of course, are highly mutable, largely due to their makeup (i.e., equal distance between tones) which result in rather ambiguous harmonies as there really is no root, each “inversion” of a diminished-seventh chord being both root position and inversion. This orchestral interlude, consisting of diminished harmonies, is interesting because the progression can literally end up anywhere, as there is no “tonic” to which the music is headed. We can interpret the action, then, as either gathering momentum due to the buildup and sequence of diminished-seventh chords or leading nowhere because of the ambiguity of the harmonies (i.e., neither side will prevail in this war). It is not surprising that Chaminade utilized diminished-seventh chords so heavily, as they were often used in the nineteenth century to depict

²⁰ Actually, that lower melody is reminiscent of the “love” leitmotif from *Die Walküre*, which is first introduced by the cellos and double basses.

such things as war and storms. Wagnerian instability is also evident, the diminished harmonies suggesting different tonics yet resolving to other root pitches. It is also possible that Chaminade related the inherent dissonance of diminished-seventh sonorities to the exotic nature of the Amazons, as those harmonies were generally utilized for harmonic colour, and, like the Amazons, were “foreign” to their respective context (Fig. 7).

The musical score consists of five systems of piano music, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The first system begins with a *cresc.* marking and a *p* (piano) dynamic, followed by a *marcato* marking. The second system features a *più f* (more forte) dynamic and a *f* (forte) dynamic, with a *marcato* marking. The third system includes a *più f* dynamic and a *cresc.* marking. The fourth system shows a *più f* dynamic. The fifth system is marked *sempre cresc.* (always crescendo) and includes a *V* (Coda) symbol. The score is written in a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 3/4.

Fig. 7, mm. 238 – 258.

Measures 293 – 368, beginning at the *a Tempo* on p. 30, again rely on heavy chromaticism and tritones to convey the tension between the Amazons and the Persians. The choral lines beginning in m. 301 in F minor in the bass section (p. 31, sys. 1) weave slowly upwards, seamlessly meshing with the musical phrase of the next section. This provides structural direction and dynamic intensity. All four choral lines gradually ascend, reaching the summit in m. 365 (p. 38, sys. 2) on the words “en avant!,” those two words concluding the section in F minor, as in the opening chorus. In fact, the final cries of “en avant!” in both choruses are set to identical music (compare the passages starting at p. 20, sys. 2 with p. 38, sys. 1) (Fig. 8).

Sup.

Conj.

Ten. *più f*

Bas. *marcato*

M.C.

Se - rions
Soll'n durch

Al - lons al - lons c'est un dernier ef - fort
Ha! nur ver - sucht ein letz - tes Aufge - hot

mf cresc.

mf cresc.

Il faut as - sou -
da, der grim - me

nous vain - cus par des fem - mes
Wei - ber schmach - voll wir en - den

M.C.

M.D. *cresc.*

Figure 8, mm. 301 – 315 (continued on next page).

Il faut as - sou - vir no - tre
da, der grim - me Hass soll sich

xir no - tre hai - ne Il faut as - sou - vir no - tre
Hass soll sich küh - len da, der grim - me Hass soll sich

Mas - ses de fer bril - lan - tes
Schwin - get das Schwert mit kräft'gen

Mas - ses de fer bril - lan - tes
Schwin - get das Schwert mit kräft'gen

Fig. 8, (cont.'d).

An orchestral interlude succeeds the choral declaration of war. With this change in texture comes a change in key on p. 40 from F minor to D Major, via a half-step ascent in the bass from the implied Bb minor harmony in m. 386 to the B diminished sonority in m. 387 (although the tonic chord of D is not heard until the fanfare-like chords sound in m. 415, p. 42) (Fig. 9).

accelerando assai
errac.
f *ff*

Allegro (♩ = 132)
f *ff*

Fig. 9, mm. 385 - 390.

After a series of 6/4 chords, beginning at the 6/8 section at the bottom of p. 40, and seventh chords (p. 41, sys. 2, mm. 403 – 410), the action focuses on Gandhar and Himris once more, with both the Amazons and Persians singing in the background (Figs. 10 – 11). At this point in the drama, the two armies are in combat, with the Amazons appearing to have the upper hand (“victoire!”) over the Persians (“En retraite!”).



Fig. 10, mm. 394 – 397.

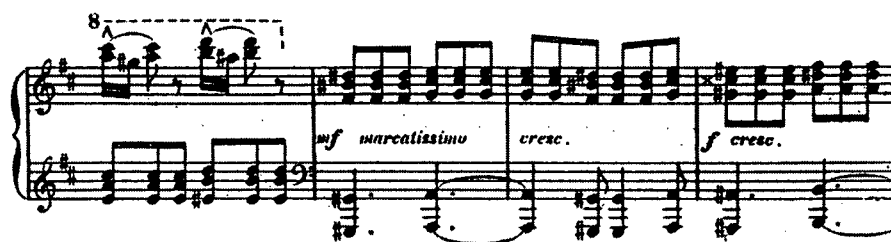


Fig. 11, mm. 402 – 405.

Both Gandhar and Himris are distraught, one for his lack of courage in the face of danger and imminent execution, the other because of the emotional turmoil in which she is trapped. Himris' high Bb's on the word "Chimère!" starting in m. 419 (p. 43, sys. 1) underscore the utter chaos she feels – she has no idea why she seems to be succumbing to passions long denied (Fig. 12).

The musical score for measures 419-420 consists of five staves. The top staff is for Himris, marked *f* (forte). The second staff is for Gandhar, marked *g* (grand). The third and fourth staves are for the piano accompaniment. The lyrics are in German and French. The German lyrics are: "Chi mè - re! O Wahn witz! - ra - ge cou - ra - ge cou - En retrain - te Weicht zu rü - cke! - tra - te en re - tra - te en re - En retrain - te Weicht zu rü - cke! en retrain - te en re -". The French lyrics are: "O Wahn witz! - ra - ge cou - ra - ge cou - En retrain - te Weicht zu rü - cke! - tra - te en re - tra - te en re - En retrain - te Weicht zu rü - cke, zu -". The piano accompaniment features steady chords in the left hand and a more active melody in the right hand, with some tremolos indicated by wavy lines.

Fig. 12, mm. 419 – 420.

Those high Bb's, always harmonized by ii⁶ borrowed from D minor, represent those foreign emotions and are discordant to D major, within which the passage is set. Gandhar's vocal line is also set in a high register, indicating his desperation as he gives instructions to his soldiers. Underneath their vocal lines are the orchestra and chorus, providing solid rhythmic and dramatic support. Steady chords are heard in the accompaniment until a *tutti* tremolo, marked *con fuoco* in m. 429 (p. 45, sys. 2), which then explodes into a run of sixteenth notes.

Measure 431 (p. 46, sys. 1) marks a change in texture. Previously, the texture is quite thick, due to the combination of the orchestra's repeated chords and tremolos and the chorus' melodic lines. Here, however, the orchestral accompaniment mimics the effect of a military brass ensemble, through the utilization of "open" intervals such as fifths and sixths and heavily accented downbeats in the bass, both of which build to the moment of confrontation between the two opposing forces in m. 435 (p. 47, "Ah!"). At this moment, the Persians, Himris, and Gandhar are musically in solidarity; they sing the same heart-wrenching cry ("Ah!") to identical rhythms. Not only are they uttering the exact same text, they are doing so to an "empty chord" (i.e., the third is missing). That missing third, F#, is found in the Amazons' part ("victoire!"). Thus, we have the empty chord set to the empty word "Ah" superimposed on the Amazons' F#

(the third) which is accompanied by the word "victoire." This seems to foreshadow the Amazons' victory at the end of the battle (Fig. 13).

P

re!
witz!

vant! im-puissance a mè-re Les voi-la dè-bor-
au O der bitt-ren Ohn-macht! Zersprengt die dich-ten

vic-toi-re vic-toi-re
Wir-sieg-ten wir-sieg-ten

vic-toi-re vic-toi-re
Wir-sieg-ten wir-sieg-ten

te en re-trai-te! en re-
cke! Weicht zu-rü-cke! weicht zu-

te en re-trai-te! en re-
cke! Weicht zu-rü-cke! weicht zu-

M.G. M.G.

Figure 13, mm. 431 – 435 (continued on next page).

rit. molto ff a tempo

H
ah!
Ha!

G
_dés
Reih'n!
ah!
Achl

vic_toi_re vic_toi_re vic_toi_re vic_toi _ _
wir sieg_ten! wir siegten, wir siegten, wir sieg _ _

vic_toi_re vic_toi_re vic_toi_re vic_toi _ _
wir sieg_ten! wir siegten, wir siegten, wir sieg _ _

_traite! en re_traite! ah!
_rü_cke! weicht zu _rü_cke! Ach!

_traite! en re_traite! ah!
_rü_cke! weicht zu _rü_cke! Ach!

a tempo

M.G. M.G. M.D.
rit. molto

Fig. 13, (cont.'d).

After the rests in m. 436 (p. 48, sys. 1), the action is again propelled by a recitative-like passage, in which Gandhar decides to remain stalwart against the enemy despite his men's pleas to flee with them. A change to *Moderato* 12/8, then *Maestoso*, introduces Himris, who in a short four-measure melody, announces to Gandhar that "C'est une reine qui te fait prisonnier" (p. 50, sys. 1, m. 452), a melody then echoed by the chorus of Amazons, and concluded reassuredly by Kalyani, Himris' advisor (Fig. 14).

Maestoso (♩ = 76) **HIMNIS** Maestoso

O roi - c'est u - ne Rei - ne, u - ne
O Fürst - 's'ist ei - ne Kön' - gin, ei - ne

Maestoso (♩ = 76) Maestoso

rei - ne qui - te fait - pri - son - nier
Kön' - gin die - ge - fan - gen dich hält

LES AMAZONES
LES AMAZONES

Sup. O roi - c'est u - ne
O Fürst - 's'ist ei - ne

Cont. O roi - c'est u - ne
O Fürst - 's'ist ei - ne

ff

Fig. 14, mm. 451 – 456.

Here, Chaminade is sensitive to Grandmougin's text, as illustrated by her musical setting. For instance, in the accompaniment, she depicts Gandhar's despair at being the sole combatant left to face the adversary with tremolos, chromatic movement, and large intervals in the bass (p. 49, sys. 2, mm. 445 – 446, "disperse") (Fig. 15).

GANDHAR

Dieu mon ar - mée se dis - perse et s'en - vole ain - si qu'une fu -
Götter! Ach mein Herr löst sich auf wie ein Rauch, umm. sch'ich es nicht

p

8

Fig. 15, mm. 445 – 446.

This contrasts with Himris' stately, controlled statement in mm. 452 – 456 (p. 50, sys. 1), which is set to solid, majestic chords in the key of Db major, a rich, lush sonority. These *tutti* chords are largely diatonic to Db Major until the *sf* chromatic sixteenth note runs begin in m. 460 (p. 51, sys. 1). Signifying more change and a turn in events, those sixteenth-note runs usher in Kalyani's brief exchange with Gandhar, exhorting the prince to accept the fate in store for him. The scene ends on a C dominant harmony, which remains unresolved.

The passage contained within measures 470 - 603 (pp. 52 – 61) and the duo that follows provide the most lyrical parts of the work. First, Gandhar sings an aria-like solo in Gb Major, in a modified ternary form (A-B-A¹), lamenting his loss of power and days of glory (p. 52, "Ah! c'en est fait"). Measures 479 (p. 52, sys. 3) to 491 (p. 53, sys. 3) constitute the first "A" section, which utilize ascending sequences to reflect Gandhar's growing despair over losing his prestige and glory (Fig. 16).

GANDHAR (♩ = 58) *mf*

Ah! c'en est fait de ma puis_sance et de ma
 Weh! um die Macht und um den Ruhm ist es ge-

poco rall. *p*

gloi - re, Les jours de fête hélas ne peuvent re - ve - nir, — Mon rê - ve
 sche - hen, Die schö - nen Ta - ge, ach sie keh - ren nie zu - rück; — Mein Traum von

Fig. 16, mm. 478 – 483.

A change in tempo, *Più mosso*, marks the "B" section, which introduces in the accompaniment chromatic ascending and descending eighth-note lines (Fig. 17).

The image shows two systems of a musical score. The first system is marked "Più mosso (♩ = 132)". It features a vocal line in G-clef and a piano accompaniment in F-clef. The lyrics are in French and German. The second system is marked "animato" and also features a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics continue in French and German. The piano part includes a "cresc." marking in the second system.

System 1: Più mosso (♩ = 132)

Vocal: dis - pa - ru pour ja - mais oui pour ja - mais
 German: Glanzes schwand e - wig hin, e - wig da - hin. 0

System 2: animato

Vocal: - dien jours pros pè - res A - dien palais pro - fonds ou vé - cu - rent mes
 German: grau - sa - mes Mah - neul lebt wohl, ho - he Pa - lä - ste, wo herrschten die

Fig. 17, mm. 490 – 495.

Bass tremolos round off the section, which are marked *poco à poco rit sino a tempo primo*, transitioning to the “A¹” section in m. 516 (p. 55, sys. 3). This third section repeats the melody which opened the aria, then ascends by sequence to Gandhar’s climactic high C in m. 524 (p. 56, sys. 2). In fact, his range is remarkable, even for a tenor, as a good number of his pitches throughout *Les Amazones* are well above C4, usually at least a fifth or sixth higher. Perhaps this emphasizes the heroic nature of both Gandhar’s character and tenor voice (Fig. 18).

animato

fait ——— Al c'en est fait ——— a — dieu hé —
 — schen, ——— es ist ge — schen, ——— lebt wohl lebt

animato cresc.

ff

Largo

— las wohl, a — dieu pour ja —
 lebt — auf e — wig

Fig. 18, mm. 521 – 525.

Although Gandhar's aria shows that the home key is Gb Major, the many chromatically modulating harmonies and ascending sequences appear to disregard that tonality. In fact, Chaminade's use of those elements seems to evoke Wagner. For instance, the words "Mon rêve de grandeur est un rêve illusoire / Mon prestige n'est qu'un cruel souvenir" are set to sequences that rise by third, resulting in increasing levels of intensity, especially with the score markings (*cresc.*, *Animato*), the chordal accompaniment, and the higher pitch levels. This particular instance recalls passages in *Tristan und Isolde*, where harmonies continuously modulate in sequence, effectively avoiding specific tonal references, and thus contribute to the tension or passion of the dramatic moment (Fig. 19).

gloi - re, Les jours de fête hélas ne peuvent re - ve - nir, — Mon rê - ve
sche - hen, Die schö - nen Ta - ge, ach sie keh - ren nie zu - rück; — Mein Traum con -

animato
cresc.

de grandeur est un rêve il - lu - soire Mon pres - ti - ge n'est qu'un cru - el sou - ve -
Hil - den - thum, er soll - te heut verwehen, Und nur Er - inn' rung spricht mir von dem einst' gen

cresc.
animato

Fig. 19, mm. 481 – 486.

Kalyani again appears as the unyielding advisor, after Gandhar concludes his aria; her recitative, marked *Très large* and in F minor, features block chords and many accents, both elements attesting to her militaristic and inflexible nature. Kalyani's vocal range mainly lies within C4 to C5, only straying beyond that octave boundary when her emotions become too much for her. For instance, in m. 545 (p. 57, sys. 4), Kalyani sings a half note F5 on the word “devons” (Fig. 20). It is imperative to her that Himris execute Amazonian law, so much that here, Kalyani steps outside of her boundaries (the same occurs two bars later on the words “lois”).

C rit. a Tempo

ro - se Nous de - vons o - bé - ir aux lois — des temps pas -
Strah - ten Das Ge - setz früh'rer Zeit be - stimmt was ge - sche - hen

rit. auf p.

Ped. >

Fig. 20, mm. 544 – 547.

Himris' brief recitative in response to Kalyani's exhortation to adhere to their law expresses the sense of being in a stupor. She knows her duty and responsibilities yet is loathe to carry them out. Her notes are within a small range and are indicative of the inner turmoil she feels, for the pitches are close together and are repeated beginning in m. 574 at the *Large* indication (p. 60, sys. 1) (Fig. 21). She is probably speaking to herself at this point, reminding herself of what she must do as queen of the Amazons. It is almost as if Himris is paralyzed by some greater force which prevents normal expression (in this case, a more melodic, freer line).

a Tempo **F** Large

p. Souviens - toi souviens - toi du fa - tal des -
 Er - iun' re dich — Er - iun' re dich welch grau - sam Vir -

ff jour!
 gran'n!

ff jour!
 gran'n!

a Tempo

ff *f* *p.*

- tin — Qui le con - dam - ne et de notre in - vin - ci - ble
 - hing - nias ihu ver - ur - theilt, Das Ge - setz al - lein ent - scheidet

Fig. 21, mm. 573 – 579.

After Himris' brief recitative, the section concludes with an orchestral codetta, which reprises the eighth-note then sixteenth-note rhythmic figure first heard in the orchestral introduction of *Les Amazones* beginning in m. 585 (p. 61, sys. 1). That particular rhythmic figure is first associated with the two warring armies at their initial choral entrance (p. 3, sys. 1, m. 43). Now, the incorporation of that rhythmic motive in this codetta shifts the focus from the

public domain of the Amazons and Persians to the private conflict between Himris and Gandhar, just in time for their first physical encounter in the *Duo*, the musical section that follows. Of course, that conflict stems from their respective struggles to submit to the laws (and consequences thereof) to which they must adhere and to keep their own desires at bay: Himris must remember the punishment that is exacted upon prisoners-of-war (“Souviens-toi du fatal destin qui le condamne,” p. 60) while Gandhar attempts to reconcile the loss of his power and prestige in the face of his imminent execution (“Ah! c’en est fait de ma puissance et de ma gloire,” p. 52). In this codetta, the dynamic level is very soft (*mm.* 585 and 588 are both marked *f*, but that immediately subsides to *p*); if the rhythmic energy of the recurring opening rhythmic motive is coupled with the soft dynamic markings, the result is a fairly tense musical situation, akin to the calm before a storm. The section ends *pp* in F minor (Fig. 22).



Fig. 22, *mm.* 584 – 589.

The section culminates in an extended duo on p. 62 between Himris and Gandhar, which consists of several passages that alternate between recitative and aria styles. The first section commences with fire and strength. Fast descending triplets are heard in the accompaniment (p. 62, *sys.* 1, *m.* 1) and conclude on the dominant of the new key (A minor). Gandhar’s entrance is heralded ceremoniously at *m.* 20 (p. 63, *sys.* 1), with more triplets and orchestral tremolos. He is brought before Himris and subjected to an interrogation. This rapid dialogue then ceases, and a brisk waltz accompaniment takes its place, to which Himris queries, in aria style at the *Allegro moderato* on p. 63, if love of danger brought Gandhar here (Fig. 23).

GANDHAR

-mour du péril qui t'a conduit i - ci? Cer - tes!
 Raug zur Gefahr, der dich hier her ge - führt? Si - cher!

Fig. 23, *Duo*, mm. 42 – 45.

His declamation “Certes!” (p. 64, sys. 1, m. 45), set in recitative style, is followed by Himris’s introduction of new musical material in aria style, (p. 64, sys. 2, m. 48), which is later confirmed as the first instance of the love theme (Fig. 24). Measures 53 – 54 (p. 64, sys. 4) foreshadow the actual duet that is heard later, starting in bar 197 (p. 74, *Andante*).

Fig. 24, Duo, mm. 46 – 54.

Fig. 24, Duo, mm. 46 – 54.

We have here the first inkling of love, at least on Himris' part, confirmed by her question to Gandhar on p. 65: "Tu n'aimes donc, hélas, personne sur la terre?" The following six bars, marked *Allegro* and in 3/4 time on p. 65, convey two important pieces of information crucial to the rest of the drama: first, that Himris is falling in love with her prisoner ("si je t'aimais!") and second, that Gandhar prizes freedom very highly ("Mon coeur bat pour la liberté!"). Himris' "et moi," standing out as it is marked *Lento*, is set to the same tritone (albeit enharmonically altered) that Gandhar sings in m. 45 (p. 64, "Certes!"). This is striking because her first confession of love matches the pitches to which Gandhar's assertion of freedom is accompanied. The fervency evident in those three words, coupled with the common notes, attest to the sincerity of which Gandhar and Himris speak (Fig. 25).

Lento *dolce*

Tu n'aimes donc, hé - las, per - son - ne sur la ter - re?
 Und hast du auf der Welt Kein We - sen das dir theu - er?

Lento *p* *pp*

Allegro *f* *GANDHAR* *HIMRIS* *Lento* *dolce*

Mon cœur bat pour la li - ber - té! Et moi si je t'ai -
 Nur für Frei - heit schlägt die - ses Herz! Und ich, wenn ich dich

Allegro *f* *Lento* *p*

- mais!
 lieb - te!

Fig. 25, *Duo*, mm. 55 – 63.

Despite Himris' passionate outburst, Gandhar is not convinced of his captor's supposed feelings towards him. Here, a new section marked *Andante* begins in which Himris tries to appease Gandhar's outrage and disbelief at her admission of love in her aria "Gandhar, Gandhar, écoute, je t'en prie." The most striking aspect of this aria is the ever-present eighth-note beat. All six beats of the 6/8 meter are punctuated, suggesting the thud of Himris' heart as she sings of her most intimate emotions to the man she should treat as nothing more than a prisoner (Fig. 26). Regular four-measure phrases and a tonality firmly rooted in A Major give the impression of this music as being simple; it is not until m. 88 (p. 67, sys. 1) that the incessant eighth-note beats cease and are replaced by an arpeggiated figure (Fig. 27). At this point, Himris is relating how she was like Gandhar once, drunk on life and freedom, ignoring love. The arpeggiated figuration

reflects this abandon, but as swiftly as the moment came, it leaves. In m. 96 (p. 67, sys. 3), the eighth-note beat returns, reminding Himris to recall her duty and to keep her emotions in check.

Fig. 26, *Duo*, mm. 72 – 75.

Fig. 26, *Duo*, mm. 72 – 75.

Fig. 27, *Duo*, mm. 88 – 90.

Fig. 27, *Duo*, mm. 88 – 90.

Apparently, Gandhar was moved by Himris' words in m. 127 (p. 69, sys. 3) for he declares that he has been ensnared by her penetrating voice. His recitative gives way to a languorous passage in Db major in m. 136 (p. 70, sys. 2) that effectively describes the stupour in which he finds himself (Fig. 28).

Fig. 28, *Duo*, mm. 136 – 137.

Fig. 28, *Duo*, mm. 136 – 137.

An abrupt orchestral tremolo shatters that tranquillity, building up to Gandhar's impassioned cry in m. 145 (p. 71, sys. 2, "je veux t'aimer toujours!"), set to an A7 sonority (Fig. 29). That A major harmony may be considered the "love" chord, as both Himris and Gandhar's initial declarations of love have been concomitant with that sonority. The only other instance of the "love" chord so far is in m. 62 (p. 65, sys. 2), with Himris' first confession of attraction. Other examples will be discussed as they occur.

The musical score for Duo, mm. 143-147, is presented in two systems. The first system shows the vocal line for Gandhar (G.) and the piano accompaniment. The vocal line includes the lyrics: "sir de ton em-bras-se-ment!" and "Je veux t'aimer toujours!". The piano accompaniment includes a tremolo in the right hand and a sustained chord in the left hand. The score is marked with "poco rit.", "p", "L a Tempo", and "a Tempo". Pedal marks are present at the bottom of the piano part.

Fig. 29, *Duo*, mm. 143 – 147.

Himris, upon hearing Gandhar's admission of love, is not thrilled. The word "toujours," sung by Gandhar, reminds her that she has yet to administer Amazonian justice – Gandhar is sentenced to die by her law. Gandhar is puzzled and attempts to console his newly realized love; his vocal line rises sharply from F#3 on "ce mot" (p. 72, sys. 1, m. 157) to the E4 a seventh above on "âme" in m. 159 to the high G#4 on "réponds" a bar later, then descends to E3 in m. 163 on "souffrir" (Fig. 30).

GANIHAR *ff* *Moderato* *p* *animato cresc.*

O fem - me ce mot "toujours" ta
O Zaub' - rin, dies Wort "e-wig-lich" preest

Moderato *p* *animato cresc.*

molto ritard.

fait sangloter, surmon â - me, ré - pons, répons, dis - moi - ce qui te
Seuf - zer dir aus, ich be - schwör' dich, gib Ant - wort mir, der Seuf - zer sprichtrou

molto rit.

fait souf - frir.
Her - zens Noth.

Fig. 30, *Duo*, mm. 154 – 163, beat 1.

Himris, sensing defeat and resigning herself to fate, steels herself to break the news of her duty as Amazonian queen to Gandhar. The line in which she informs Gandhar of her duty (p. 72, sys. 4, m. 168) is underscored by low octaves in the bass, which contribute to the sombre atmosphere.²¹ Himris' vocal line beginning at the *Moderato* on p. 72 begins in mid-register then quickly jumps to A5 on "demain" at the top of p. 73 followed by a sudden drop to E4 on "mourir" (p. 73, sys. 2, m. 175), which reflects the hopelessness she experiences at this moment in the drama (Fig. 31). We have here, then, a literal and figurative valley of despair.

²¹ This bass progression is reminiscent of theme one in the first movement of Chaminade's *Sonata, Op. 21* in mm. 1 – 4.

M Moderato

f

Eh bien apprends-le de ma bouche Sur toi plane
 Nun wohl, hör' aus mei - nem Mund - de Dein grauzam'

Moderato.

energico

f *p*

undestin immuable et fa - rouché, C'est de - main c'est de - main c'est de -
 Schicksal, hö - re die schreckli - che Kun - de: Morgen schön. mor - gen schön, morgen

rit. **N Moderato** (♩ = 76) **GANDHAR**

p *rit.* *p*

- main que tu dois mou - rir! Qu'im - porte de mou - rir -
 schon harret dein der Tod. Was frag ich nach dem Tode Wenn

Fig. 31, *Duo*, mm. 167 – 179.

This emotional turmoil culminates in a duet in moderate tempo on p. 74 (*Andante*, ♩ = 88), and in the key of F major. Here, the waltz idiom lends an ironic tone to the words uttered by Himris and Gandhar, as the elegance of the dance genre conflicts with the anguish they both experience (Fig. 32). Himris, despite her sorrow, marvels at Gandhar's stoic acceptance of his fate, while Gandhar swears that he will die bravely because of the strength her love gives him. The return of the love theme (p. 75, sys. 2, m. 212), first heard in the orchestra at the beginning of the *Duo* (p. 64, sys. 4, m. 53), further heightens the tension as that motive contains the highest

pitches of the duet for both Himris and Gandhar (A5 and A4 respectively) as well as the most extreme registers (p. 77, sys. 1, m. 225, – Bb1 in bass and A6 in treble).

HIMRIS
Andante (♩=88)
p Ah quel est cet a-mour si fi-dè-le
Ach die-ser Lie-be, so heiss und er-ge-ben,

G.
p J'attendrai sur ton sein l'au-ro-re qui dé-li-vre, Et rem-
Dir im Arm se-lig will bis zum Morgen ich mich wä-h-nen, Und er-

Andante (♩=88)
p
Ped.

Fig. 32, Duo, mm. 197 – 200.

Following Himris' despair and sorrow is potential freedom. The crucial point in the duet is Himris's change of mind when instead of fulfilling her duty to execute Gandhar, she proposes that they flee together (p. 78, sys. 2, m. 241). She realizes that as queen, she has the power to make her own decisions and thus, confirms her heart's desire to flee with Gandhar (Fig. 33).

p agitato
rê-ve! Non ne meurs pas! je ne veux plus! Mon
Wahn-sinn Nein, du stirbst nicht! Das darf nicht sein, Mein

ff *p*

p
cœur, mes sens sont ré-solus
Herz befiehlt ja hier al-lein

Fig. 33, Duo, mm. 239 – 243.

Could Himris have planned to release Gandhar from his fate, as prescribed by Amazonian law, all along? Even before Himris and Gandhar meet face to face for the first time, she entreats herself to remember the “fatal destin / Qui le condamne” (p. 60, sys. 1, m. 576). Perhaps she is tired of her life as an Amazon; Gandhar’s arrival provides Himris the opportunity to extricate herself from her obligations. Grandmougin’s libretto is assertive and decisive; there is no lingering or lamenting. The text outlines a plan which Himris and Gandhar execute while feverishly discussing the details, the urgency of which is reflected in the sparse accompaniment.

Finally, Himris and Gandhar are set to flee. Their flight, beginning in bar 256 (p. 79, sys. 2), is marked by another change in tempo and key (*Allegro molto agitato*, $\text{♩} = 164$, Bb minor) and features a denser orchestral texture than the previous section. Clear octave downbeats alternate with sixteenth-note triads on the offbeats, resulting in a frantic atmosphere. Those downbeats ascend by step in the bass, outlining the first five pitches of Bb minor, then pause on the dominant on the words “c’est l’immortel amour qui nous guide!” (p. 80, sys. 4, m. 270), resolving on Bb four measures later, where the ascending progression is repeated. Further contributing to the musical and dramatic tension are the tritones in both vocal melodies (e.g., “emportera”) (Fig. 34).

Fig. 34, Duo, mm. 256 – 263.

This passage is then succeeded by an incongruous one (m. 288, p. 82) in the relative major (Bb major) – the libretto now describes the psychological state of Himris and Gandhar as being drunk on love (“agiles en ivrés de nos baisers secrets . . .”). Chaminade, in accordance with this new emotion, introduces an almost dreamy, very melodic style that is of an entirely different character than the preceding section. Himris and Gandhar sing their respective vocal lines together in close intervals of sixths and (compound) thirds, unlike in the Bb minor passage where they echo each other. The texture here is sparser, revealed by the long held notes and *leggiero* triplets in the treble register (e.g., p. 83, sys. 1, m. 291), highlighting the sung text. Dynamically, the music is much softer than the frenzied *f* that just transpired, but yet again, the shift back to the Bb minor flight is sudden and intense (m. 305, p. 84). All of these elements

illustrate the lovers' emotional intimacy during the present moment of crisis (Fig. 35). The scene ends with Himris and Gandhar galloping away on their shared horse, accompanied by the return of the Bb minor "flight" music.

HIMRIS

p dolce

A - gi - les, en - i - vres de
Nur schnell, be - rauscht von uns - rer

poco rit.

p

qui nous gui - de
A - gi - les, en - i - vres de
Nur schnell, be - rauscht von uns - rer

dim. *poco rit.* *p*

H.

nos baisers se - crets
stil - len Kü - ssen Gluth

G.

nos baisers se - crets
stil - len Kü - ssen Gluth

pp *leggiero*

Fuyons en -
So ci - len

Fig. 35, *Duo*, mm. 287 – 293.

What follows is an orchestral interlude that presumably depicts the actual flight on horseback. It begins in Gb Major in 2/4 time (p. 87, sys. 3, m. 330) and is in regular four-measure phrases. The way in which the sixteenth notes are grouped (i.e., three sixteenth notes and a sixteenth rest) probably is intended to express the “gallop” of Himris and Gandhar’s horse, while the different key areas (e.g., Gb major, m. 330; C major, p. 89, sys. 3, m. 370) most likely represent the various terrain and landscapes through which the pair travel along their journey to freedom (Fig. 36).

Fig. 36, *Duo*, mm. 330 – 333.

The two fugitives again pledge their love to each other, this time to the “galloping” sixteenth-note motive introduced in the orchestral interlude. Completely contradicting his stance on love at the beginning of *Les Amazones*, Gandhar passionately declares that “quand on se chérit librement – que le monde est beau!” (p. 91, sys. 4, m. 414). Note that the “love” chord reappears in m. 391 on the word “t’aime,” but instead of a simple A Major harmony, the C# is enharmonically altered to Db (Fig. 37).

Fig. 37, *Duo*, mm. 390 – 393.

Himris responds to Gandhar's avowal of love in bar 435 (p. 93, sys. 1, “je te veux éperdûment”), her reply ushering in the final duet of the work in G Major in m. 449 (p. 93, sys. 4, “Quel calme solennel!”). Soft bass tremolos support *pp* high woodwinds in the accompaniment, providing a sense of repose to the scene. Indeed, both Himris and Gandhar's melodies in mm. 449 – 467 (pp. 93 – 96) only move stepwise in close intervals, further contributing to the hypnotic calm of the moment (Fig. 38).

The musical score for Duo, mm. 446-453, features five staves. The top two staves are for HIMRIS and GANDHAR, both marked *pp dolce*. The third staff is for Flûtes and Clarinettes. The bottom two staves are for the Piano, marked *pp*. The lyrics are in French and German.

HIMRIS *pp dolce*
Quel
Wisch'

GANDHAR *pp dolce*
Quel
Wisch'

Flûtes
Clarinettes

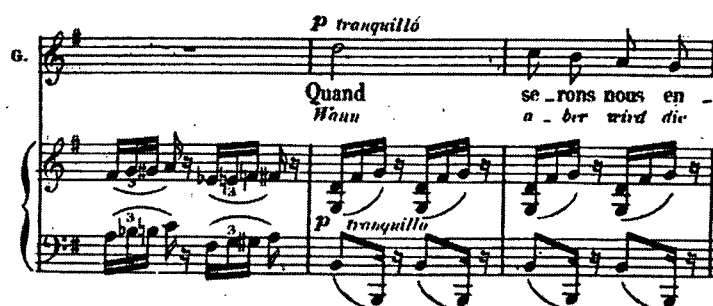
Piano *pp*

H.
cal - me - so - len - nel ! per - son - ne dans ces
fei - er - li - che Ruh' ! Kein Wä - sen Au dem

G.
cal - me - so - len - nel ! per - son - ne dans ces
fei - er - li - che Ruh' ! Kein Wä - sen Au dem

Fig. 38, *Duo*, mm. 446 – 453.

Unfortunately, for the two fugitives, that peace is shattered by the return of the galloping motive a few measures later in m. 470 (p. 96, sys. 2, “Quand serons”), a rude reminder of the danger from which they flee (Fig. 39). Melodically, though, the melody lines of both characters retain a sense of line and phrasing, almost as if to defy Himris and Gandhar’s pursuers. The two lovers strive to reach their goal at all costs; they express their longing for faraway lands and the happiness that awaits them there, both desires reflected in the use of uneven phrases and wider ranges – Gandhar’s fourteen measures (mm. 470 – 483) are broken into two groups of six and eight measures. Himris’ phrases, in regular four-measure groupings, convey her desire for safety through the consistency of her music (p. 97, sys. 1, mm. 483 – 498).

Fig. 39, *Duo*, mm. 469 – 471.

At this point (p. 98, sys. 3, m. 504), the libretto introduces the first hint of unrest with Gandhar's question "N'entends-tu pas ces bruits sourds?" This seemingly innocuous statement is preceded by low octaves in the bass; the return of that particular register (last time it was used was at the end of the flight) is ominous because it reiterates the mortal danger from which Himris and Gandhar are attempting to escape, effectively shattering any fantasies of peaceful happiness (of which they both sang just moments before). What is noteworthy here is the contrast between Gandhar's recitative-like music and Himris' more mellifluous phrases. Evidently, Gandhar has grasped the severity of their situation much more quickly than Himris; she seems to be in denial for she claims, almost blithely, that the low sound that Gandhar perceives is "le fleuve qui se brise aux rocs du rivage" (p. 98, sys. 4, m. 510). Sadly, Himris is mistaken and realizes that her former army of women is pursuing them furiously (Fig. 40).

Figure 40, *Duo*, mm. 503 – 514 (continued on next page).

HIMRIS

C'est le die

pp

fleu-ve qui se brise aux rocs du ri-va

Fluth, Man hō-ret sie au Fel sen cer hal

Fig. 40, *Duo*, (cont.'d).

The Amazons are closer to their quarry, demonstrated by their choral reappearance in m. 522 (p. 99, sys. 3). Here, they sing in unison their warrior cry “Ho!” and encourage themselves to go faster, as they are still a fair distance from Himris and Gandhar (as indicated by the score marking *au loin*). In m. 558 (p. 102, sys. 1), the Amazons separate into two groups, depicted in the musical score by the division of the women’s chorus into sopranos and altos, gathering vocal and military strength as they approach Himris and Gandhar. Unceasing diminished-seventh chords in the orchestra build tension, as do the dissonant intervals in the Amazons’ chorus (p. 104, sys. 3, m. 584 “Plus vite!”; p. 105, sys. 3, m. 594, “Ho!”). Those two elements, combined with Himris and Gandhar’s chromatically-inflected joint recitative culminate in the climactic moment of capture on the cry “Ah!” (p. 109, sys. 1, m. 628), supported by a tutti diminished-seventh chord, made more dissonant by the clashing A in the bass, implying V/D (Fig. 41).

Fig. 41, *Duo*, mm. 625 – 628.

A solitary D in m. 629 after the capture shatters the silence, succeeded by a slowed down version of the “galloping” sixteenths, probably mimicking the death throes of the horse on which Himris and Gandhar attempted their escape. Slowing down even more to *Lento*, Himris and Gandhar chant in unison that “an arrow has pierced their two bodies,” but are comforted that they will die together.

The orchestral reprise of Himris’ aria “Gandhar, écoute, je t’en prie” in m. 641 (p. 110, sys. 2) brings into relief the consequences of Himris and Gandhar succumbing to love (which they both originally shunned). The “love” chord is again present in measure 641, but this time, it is in A minor, as if to reflect love lost. Just as their love is thwarted, the statement of the orchestral melody is also, as the theme is abruptly cut off by the choral intervention of the Amazons two measures later in m. 643, who from now on function as observers narrating the drama. While Himris still manages to sing “je t’aime” twice above the love theme in the orchestra, that theme is interrupted again four measures later by the death of Himris and Gandhar (p. 111, sys. 1, m. 649). With Himris’ last breath in measure 648, the “love” chord is heard one last time, albeit modified to A7, instead of A major (Fig. 42). This appears to foretell a resolution that Himris and Gandhar were not able to achieve on their own on earth, a prediction that is confirmed in the final chorus, which will be discussed a little later in the chapter.

rit. Andante (♩ = 426)

H
- sem - ble!..
- ei - net!

G
- sem - ble!.. je t'ai - me!
- ei - net!.. Ich lie - be dich!

LES AMAZONES
DIE AMAZONEN Sopran

Andante
Leur che - val tom - be,
Ihr Pferd, ge - fal - len,

rit. *dolce* *p*

H
dolce
Je t'ai - me! je t'ai -
Ich lie - be dich! Ich lie -

ils sont frappés,
liegt hin - gestreckt,

M.G.

T (Ils meurent)
(Sie sterben)
- me!
- be dich!

Allegro

LES AMAZONES
DIE AMAZONEN
Sopr.
Leur che - val tom - be, ils sont frappés
Ihr Pferd, ge - fal - len, liegt hin - gestreckt,

Contr.
Leur che - val tom - be, ils sont frappés
Ihr Pferd, ge - fal - len, liegt hin - gestreckt,

mf

Fig. 42, Duo, mm. 640 – 650.

Suddenly, a solemn procession arrives upon the scene, led by none other than Kalyani. Her recitative, beginning in m. 673 (p. 112, sys. 3), reveals much of her stifling personality. Thick chords punctuating the downbeat attest to Kalyani's rigidity and obstinate nature. Starting at m. 680 at the *Poco più mosso*, a new aria-like section in E minor, with phrygian inflections, emphasizes melodically the tritone F – B and has a strong modal flavour, probably in an attempt to characterize Kalyani's mythical statements. The chromatic eighth-note octaves in the bass that start in measure 680 are loud and ominous, each octave resembling footsteps towards an inexorable conclusion.

Kalyani's final measures (beginning at m. 673 with "Maudite soit la reine") are bitter and vituperative. She is incensed by Himris' defection and curses both her former queen and Gandhar to eternal damnation. The tempo begins *Large et à volonté*, then gains intensity only to match Kalyani's passionate words. The sparseness of the orchestral accompaniment in mm. 673 – 679 (pp. 112 – 113, from the *Large* to the bar before *Poco più mosso*) highlights the first curse while the block chords on beats one and two reflect Kalyani's rigidity regarding rules and regulations. In m. 680 (p. 113, at the *Poco più mosso*), rising octaves in the lower bass attest to Kalyani's growing disdain towards Himris and Gandhar. Kalyani's desire for eternal punishment for the two lovers is alluded to in m. 687 (p. 113, sys. 4) with the word "désespérement." Finally, the moment at which Kalyani spits out her greatest malediction (p. 114, sys. 1, m. 690, "Que dans nul siècle..."), the tempo marking is *très large*, each beat drawn out to reflect the enormity of the curse. Kalyani's vocal line reaches its peak here on the high G; coupled with the *fff tutti* chords marked *très large*, the musical effect is overwhelming (Figs. 43 – 45).

KALYANI

A *f* 3 3

Maudi-te soit la
Un-ere sünd-hof-te

Largo, et à volonté (♩ = 66)

pp *sempre* *sf marcato*

rei - ne au dé - plo - rable a - mour qui tra - hit cet - te
Kin' - giu, dass sie Fluch tres-sen mag, Da zur Nacht sie ver -

Fig. 43, Duo, mm. 669 – 676.

B *Poco più mosso* (♩ = 76)

Poco più mosso

Et que son fol a - mant son
Dass ihn, den sie ge - licht, ge -

Fig. 44, Duo, mm. 680 – 682.

C *Très large* *fff*

les fui-ra sans trê - ve! Que dans nul siè - cle ne s'a - ché - ve Leur in - vin -
sä - ssen stül - len Frie - den, Bei - den für e - wig sei be - schie - den ein un - er -

Très large *f* *fff*

Fig. 45, Duo, mm. 689 – 691.

The action concludes with the exit of the Amazon warriors. Having succeeded in their pursuit of Himris and Gandhar, they depart to search for “la guerre et la chasse” (p. 114, sys. 2, m. 693). Here, the “galloping” sixteenth figure returns, marked *Allegro molto agitato*, signifying the sound of the Amazons’ horses as they ride away. The Amazons, along with Kalyani, vow to live as far from men as possible and to scorn love. Their lifestyle has no room for men and, after their former queen’s demise (the result of an alliance with a man), are probably more determined than ever to retain the purity of their sorority. As they ride away, the “galloping” figure ceases; only the echo of their horses’ hooves are heard, represented by the spartan thirds and unisons diatonic to E minor (the tonic of Kalyani’s aria and this final Amazonian scene) on the first and fourth beats. The texture gradually becomes thinner and dissipates until the only audible sound is a solitary E with a fermata (p. 120, sys. 1, m. 761) (Fig. 46).

The musical score for Duo, mm. 750–764, is presented in five systems. The first system features a vocal line with a fermata and a piano accompaniment with a 'galloping' sixteenth-note figure. The second and third systems continue the piano accompaniment with various dynamics like 'pppp', 'dim.', and 'pp'. The fourth system is marked 'Adagio' and 'largo', featuring a 'Corno' (horn) and 'Clar.' (clarinet) entry. The fifth system shows the piano accompaniment with 'Ped.' (pedal) markings and a final 'dim.' marking.

Fig. 46, Duo, mm. 750 – 764.

That lone E leads into the final orchestral section of *Les Amazones* (p. 120, sys. 1, m. 762). According to the directions in the score, this passage accompanies the entrance of the deceased spirits. They are to appear little by little from all sides, luminescent in the dark. Practically, this interlude allows for an emotional transition between what just happened and what is yet to come (i.e., the chorus of the perished) as well as enables the chorus to assemble themselves into proper formation for the finale if necessary.

Extensive use of sustained tones in the bass and incorporation of the higher register both contribute to a serene, almost ethereal atmosphere, as does the *piano* dynamic, all attesting to the delicate character of this tableau.²² The harmonic language displayed in this interlude, while fairly simple in order to adhere to the text's indications for tranquility ("Le silence se fait. La nuit est sereine."), does not seem to have a harmonic centre, which further contributes to passage's ambient nature as it moves between various tonal areas. After three measures of arpeggiated chords (p. 120, sys. 1, mm. 761 – 764), which reach and sustain the dominant of G, a change to *Moderato* accompanies the G Major harmony at m. 765. That G Major sonority is sustained by a bass pedal and accompanied by common-tone diminished-seventh chords in the treble (Fig. 47).



Fig. 47, *Duo*, mm. 765 – 769.

A sequential passage begins eight measures later in m. 773 (sys. 3) with an abrupt F major harmony that moves to Bb Major in m. 775 (sys. 4), Ab Major in m. 777, and Db Major in m. 779. The harmonic progression pauses again on F (p. 122, sys. 2, m. 812) at which point Chaminade utilizes a different texture. Instead of the treble chords and held bass notes that dominate the first half of this tableau, Chaminade writes alternating sixteenth notes and pedal tones, both in the treble register, which result in a much thinner, more airy texture (p. 122, sys. 3, m. 820) (Fig. 48). Those sixteenth notes then become tremolos (p. 122, sys. 6, m. 826) and are

²² That delicacy is further confirmed by the 3/4 time signature and lulling dotted quarter – three eighth-note rhythmic motive, one that evokes the theme of Brahms' popular *Waltz in A flat Major*, Op. 39, no. 15.

accompanied by octave pedal F's four measures later. The interlude concludes on F (p. 123, sys. 5, m. 853), which serves as the dominant of the following section.

The musical score for Duo, measures 817-827, is presented in three systems. The first system shows a piano introduction with a 'Ped.' marking and a 'pppp dolciss.' dynamic. The second system continues the texture with various 'Ped.' markings. The third system concludes with a 'pp' dynamic and a 'marcato' tempo change. The notation is dense, featuring many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and includes various accidentals and phrasing slurs.

Fig. 48, *Duo*, mm. 817 – 827.

Les Amazones concludes with the *Chorus of the Dead* (p. 124). Gentle spirits descend upon the bodies of Himris and Gandhar and transport them towards “la lumière” (i.e., eternal rest, paradise). This chorus opens in Bb major and contains four-voice contrapuntal writing within a small dynamic range (*p* and variations thereof) (Fig. 49). Each voice’s entrance represents images of groups of spirits that arrive. The chorus appears to impart a benediction on Himris and Gandhar’s souls and to absolve them of their “sin” of loving each other, the “folly” of which led them to forsake their royal obligations. Rather than condemning the fallen lovers for loving one another, the chorus of spirits grant them the chance to experience life “en sa splendeur première, vous que l’amour a fait mourir!” Finally, the dissonance of the “love” chord heard just before Himris’ death (A7, m. 648, p. 110) is finally resolved.

Sop. *pp*
 Dans la bleu - a - tre pé - nom - bre Ef - fleu -
 Wir flich'n im bläu - li - chen Schat - ten Durch der

Contre. *pp*
 Dans la bleu -
 Wir flich'n im

Ten. *pp*
 - rons les lacs et les prés
 Erd, der Mee - ren Be - reich,
 - a - tre pé - nom - bre Ap - pro - chions
 bläu - li - chen Schat - ten Nun ihr tod - ten

Bass. *pp*
 Dans la bleu - a - tre pé - nom - bre Ap - pro -
 Wir flich'n im bläu - li - chen Schat - ten Nun ihr

Dans la bleu -
 Wir flich'n im

Fig. 49, Chorus, mm. 3 – 6.

Most of the harmonic activity in this chorus is diatonic to Bb major. However, in the middle of the chorus, the harmonic language becomes more complex, to reflect the final destination of Himris and Gandhar. In m. 30 (p. 129, sys. 1), the tenors begin a new section, singing “La haut vous verrez la lumière.” At this point, the sonority of Gb major is heard for the first time, enharmonically altered in m. 32 to F# major (actually F#7) (Fig. 50). The rest of the chorus enters in m. 34 with the same words, this time set to D major.

ppp

Vers le radi - eux firma - ment
Zu den lichten himm - lischen Hö'h'n.

ppp

ces pau - vres â - mes
Zu lich - ten Hö'h'n.

pp dolcis.

Vers le fir - ma - ment La haut vous
Zu den lich - ten Hö'h'n. Dort hei - ßen

- eux fir - ma - ment
himm - li - schen Hö'h'n.

ver - rez la lu - miè - re,
al - le Le - bens Win - den,

Fig. 50, Chorus, mm. 28 – 33.

It is not until m. 42 (p. 131, sys. 2) that the harmonic activity shifts yet again to the more familiar tonal area of Bb major; the F#7 in m. 41 acts like a German sixth which resolves to V, ultimately leading back to I (Fig. 51).

Vous goû- te- rez la
 Ihr, die eust frü- hen
 - voir
 Leid
 Vous que l'a-
 Dort winkt ench-
 vi-
 Hun-
 la lu- miè- re
 Al- le- Hun- den

Fig. 51, Chorus, mm. 41 – 42.

All of the “foreign” sonorities utilized in the middle section of this chorus highlight the kind destiny in store for Himris and Gandhar. Just as life “la haut” is unlike anything experienced on earth, so are the harmonies of Gb major, F# major, and D major “unfamiliar” to the tonic key of Bb major. The chorus concludes strongly in the tonic key, reprising the initial Bb theme (p. 132, sys. 1, m. 44) and expressing the idea that Himris and Gandhar are to be commended for their love. They sacrificed themselves for love’s sake and now, they will reclaim that love in a setting far more splendid than they could have imagined. Delicate string tremolos bring *Les Amazones* to a close, bidding the spirits farewell.

3.2 Conclusion

It appears that Chaminade follows the tradition of Berlioz’s hybrid practices, evident in such works as *Roméo et Juliette*, and also absorbs Wagner’s chromatic influence, especially in the waves of sequences, which illustrate the erotic nature of the drama throughout *Les Amazones*. *Les Amazones* does not fit into a conventional form, such as the symphonic tone poem. Rather, it displays elements associated more with opera, such as the solo or duo aria. In some instances, orchestral passages are fragmentary, consisting of alternating motives, while in other instances, they are descriptive, almost onomatopoeic, in that they depict the dramatic events (e.g., the

“galloping” sixteenth notes in the “Flight,” representing Himris and Gandhar’s horse). Most important, though, is the melody, and Chaminade writes some very effective ones in this work, especially the love theme, which is utilized successfully, both as the basis for a duet and as a recurring motive.

Les Amazones is certainly an interesting work, illustrating Chaminade’s facility in writing both symphonic and vocal music. The orchestral accompaniment vividly portrays the conflict between the Amazons and Persians through extended diminished-seventh passages and the growing attachment between Himris and Gandhar through lush, melodic phrases. Rhythmic and melodic motives, are also employed effectively throughout *Les Amazones*, lending the piece cohesion.

Despite these positive aspects of *Les Amazones*, it is possible that the public in Chaminade’s time would not have appreciated the work for various reasons. The first is that of genre. Without a generic label, *Les Amazones* may have been ignored in favour of other, more “mainstream” compositions. Perhaps the subject matter of *Les Amazones* was either too radical or antiquated for popular taste. On the one hand, the Amazon story contained societal ideals contrary to those demonstrated in the nineteenth century. On the other hand, as mentioned previously in this chapter, the topic of mythical warrior women was not utilized often in nineteenth-century music, suggesting that the idea of fighting females was past its prime. In any case, Chaminade’s *Les Amazones* is a neglected work that deserves another chance to assert itself to the public, especially now, with the strong interest in historical musicology in women composers and their music.

Final Words

Cécile Chaminade still remains an undervalued figure today, known only for a few songs, piano pieces, and the *Concertino* for flute. Often dismissed as “charming” or “nostalgic,” her music is categorized under the heading “salon music,” a term that disregards much of her prolific *oeuvre*. Even though a large portion of her music is comprised of smaller genres, such as the *mélodie* and the piano character piece, it is important to remember that Chaminade’s reputation during her lifetime was based also on her symphonic and dramatic works, like the ballet *Callirhoë* and the dramatic symphony *Les Amazones*, Op. 26, a composition that was one of her favourites. While Chaminade perhaps preferred composing in the smaller genres, that did not mean that she could not compose in the large genres. Her prolific output of songs and piano pieces was probably due to the fact that she needed to support herself by publishing her work; after all, her father died in 1887 and Chaminade remained single until she was well into middle-age.

From the analyses of Chaminade’s three songs earlier in this thesis, it is apparent that the composer most valued a tuneful melody. Despite relatively conservative settings, the voice together with the piano part in each of the songs exhibits subtleties in chromaticism and form, subverting our formal expectations (e.g., as in *Chanson slave* and *Rosemonde*). Chaminade displays a harmonic originality, within a relatively conventional nineteenth-century tonal language, that forces the listener to pay closer attention to the relationship between music and words. *Tu me dirais*, for instance, illustrates a witty setting of the last stanza, in which the utilized harmonies present a dominant-seventh sequence, reflecting the woman’s suspicion of her lover’s avowals of fidelity and honesty. Besides their skillful music, the songs are also worth knowing as examples of how a “woman’s compositional voice” can subtly be embedded in her textured compositions.

Chaminade’s *Sérénade*, Op. 29, while not a complex work in terms of form or harmony, employs varying textures for musical interest. Both large sections of the work use different textures, resulting in formal clarity. Each movement of the *Sonata*, Op. 21, though, is more ambiguous regarding its formal structure. Movement one displays two themes, in accordance with sonata form, but does not establish a second tonal area. The second movement exhibits elements of both ternary form and sonata form in that it is divided into three sections and recapitulates material, yet those three sections vary greatly in length and the movement as a whole lacks a development. Dense chromaticism and varying textures also contribute to the

sectional division of this movement. Movement three is organized largely by texture, as well as piano technique, to dictate form. It seems that Chaminade utilizes the title "sonata" to establish formal expectations and then modify them, resulting in hybrid structures.

Les Amazones, Op. 26, Chaminade's most ambitious vocal-symphonic work, also resists a generic label. Throughout the entire work, operatic elements dominate, from the arias and choruses to the varying textures and word-painting techniques of the orchestral accompaniment, depending on the type of vocal music it is supporting. Musical interest lies more in the dramatic manipulation of the chorus and soloists rather than in the actual harmonic language used, as the chords are rooted firmly in nineteenth-century tonal practice. Chaminade employs both rhythmic and melodic motives in *Les Amazones*, like Wagner, which give the work a sense of continuity. Again, while both the subject and the music might seem outdated today, *Les Amazones* should still be recognized historically as an original contribution to the French tradition (especially in connection with Berlioz) of dramatic vocal symphonic hybrid works.

It is my hope that this thesis will inspire others to study Chaminade's music more closely, for appearances are deceiving. Her "salon" songs and piano pieces contain more musical depth than one would think and are a welcome addition to both the song and piano repertoires. Chaminade's *oeuvre* represents that tremendously rich body of work that was not *avant-garde* or contemporary in its own time, but expressive and challenging within the nineteenth-century romantic context in which it was composed, like much of Massenet's and Saint-Saëns' work. Her larger compositions, while perhaps a bit antiquated in subject matter, still deserve to be performed for their historical and musical value. Perhaps one day soon, Chaminade's name, and those of other women composers, will elicit more than puzzled interest and inspire performances, recordings, and scholarship devoted to shedding new light on these previously neglected musicians.

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