

Piano Writing of Henri Duparc: A Study Focused on *Feuilles Volantes*, Op. 1, and the Accompaniment in Selected *Mémoires*

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Abstract

This paper discusses the piano writing of the French composer Henri Duparc through his little known early set of piano pieces, *Feuilles volantes*, Op. 1, and the accompaniment in selected *mélodies*: *L'invitation au voyage*, *La vague et la cloche*, and *Phidylé*. The roots and nature of Duparc's piano writing are traced by studying relevant examples of his music alongside those of earlier composers and contemporaries alike. The significance of Duparc's treatment of the *mélodie* and his approach to the piano parts are revealed through harmonic and textural analyses of both piano and orchestral versions of these works. Possible sources of inspiration from other genres, such as symphonic poem and opera, are discussed. Performance implications of the analytical findings are suggested for pianists who wish to expand the interpretative perspective of Duparc's song accompaniments.

Abstrait

Ce travail s'intéresse à l'écriture pianistique du compositeur français Henri Duparc, au travers de son cycle de jeunesse méconnu de pièces pour piano, *Feuilles volantes*, opus 1, et de l'accompagnement de piano dans une sélection de mélodies: *L'invitation au voyage*, *La vague et la cloche*, et *Phidylé*. L'origine et la nature de l'écriture pianistique de Duparc sont retracées grâce à l'étude d'exemples musicaux pertinents, mis en regard avec des extraits pris chez des compositeurs plus anciens, ainsi que chez ses contemporains. L'analyse de l'harmonie et de la texture des pièces choisies, tant dans leur version pour piano que pour orchestre, révèle la spécificité du traitement mélodique chez Duparc, et son approche singulière des parties de piano. D'autres genres, tels que le poème symphonique et l'opéra, sont examinés, au titre de sources d'inspiration potentielles. Les pianistes qui souhaiteraient enrichir leurs perspectives d'interprétation des accompagnements des mélodies de Duparc trouveront, dans les découvertes révélées par ces analyses, la suggestion de nouveaux enjeux.

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Introduction

Henri Duparc's (1848-1933) compositional heritage is not a particularly extensive one, consisting mainly of sixteen *mélodies*. However, it is not only their distinct harmony, melody, and choice of poetic texts, but also the richness and the intensity of the piano writing that make Duparc's songs truly stand out from the song canon. Duparc's piano parts create ambience, they shape the structure by means of cyclic motives, countermelodies and specific harmonies employed at certain phases of development, and they often lead rather than support. All these factors contribute to the overall sense of scope that most of Duparc's accompaniments are recognized for.

Henri Duparc's period of creative activity fell in the turbulent historical times of Franco-Prussian tension, when national and cultural identity of French music was at stake. A contemporary of Camille Saint-Saens, César Franck, Gabriel Fauré, Ernest Chausson, Vincent D'Indy, Claude Debussy, and Maurice Ravel, Duparc was one of the founding members of the *Société National de Musique* where he served as a secretary for a considerable amount of years, helping to promote music by living French composers.¹ Thus, it is hard to overestimate Duparc's influence on the cultural life of France.

Two major questions arise when reflecting upon Duparc's artistic path:

- 1) Why he was not as prolific a composer as one would expect from a man who lived well into his eighties?
- 2) Why he was particularly attached to the genre of *mélodie*, or what was it about this genre that allowed Duparc to realize himself most fully as a creator?

When faced with the small quantity of Duparc's compositions, it is important to consider the somewhat limited period of his compositional activity. Although Duparc lived a very long life, as a composer he was only active between 1868, when his Op. 1, a collection of piano

¹ Northcote, Sydney. 1949. *The songs of Henri Duparc*. London: D. Dobson, p. 44.

pieces *Feuilles volantes* appeared, and 1885, when he was hit by a nervous illness and stopped composing.² Another factor to consider is that, being an extreme perfectionist, Duparc destroyed a considerable body of his compositions, refusing publication for some.

Perfectionism is certainly one reason why Duparc may have chosen to focus on the more compact, and more easily controlled genre of *mélodie*. Throughout his compositional years and also some years after he finished composing new music, Duparc kept reworking his compositions, at times even those already published. Often unsatisfied by the outcome of the numerous revisions, Duparc frequently destroyed his works. As a result, many of Duparc's compositions have not survived to the present day.

As for the bigger works, Duparc's symphonic poem *Lénore* is the only one that has been carried to completion. Duparc took several years to finish it; he also reworked it until the very last moment before the performance.³ It is noteworthy that despite Duparc's constant self-doubt Franz Liszt, the champion of the symphonic poem genre, spoke highly of *Lénore*. He remarked, "I greatly appreciated the inspiration and the texture of this remarkable work."⁴

The unfinished opera *Roussalka*, based on the poem of Alexander Pushkin is another example of Duparc's attempt to create a larger work. Its first act was created, destroyed and rewritten by Duparc, only to be destroyed again.⁵ Such examples of Duparc's painful attempts to create larger-scale works, namely an opera and a symphonic poem, may partially explain his overall predilection for and success within a smaller-scale genre of *mélodie*. As Duparc's compositions demonstrate, some of his symphonic and operatic aspirations could be fulfilled successfully within the smaller-scope vocal compositions. This factor makes his contribution to the genre unique.

Since the existing research on Duparc largely focuses on the vocal and poetic aspects of his works, the goal of the current document is to focus on his piano writing, trace its roots and

² Davies, Laurence. 1967. *The Gallic muse*. London: Dent, p. 31.

³ Northcote, Sydney. 1949. *The songs of Henri Duparc*. London: D. Dobson, p. 46.

⁴ Stricker, Rémy. 1996. *Les Mélodies de Duparc: essai*. Arles: Actes Sud, p. 32. (Translated by author, TD).

⁵ Davies, Laurence. 1970. *César Franck and his circle*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., p. 175.

draw attention to its uniquely attractive features. *Feuilles volantes*, a little known and under-researched set of Duparc's solo piano pieces, provides an invaluable opportunity to look at Duparc's piano writing from its first stage of development and to explore the roots of the composer's piano style. As to the song accompaniments, several of these exist in both piano and orchestral versions, which is truly beneficial for the discussion. Tracing the influence of Duparc's orchestral thinking on his piano writing is of particular interest; examining the song accompaniments from this perspective allows a pianist to make specific interpretative choices as to sound production, voicing, dynamics, etc. Thus, the pianistic and the orchestral aspects of Duparc's treatment of the piano will be examined and the variety of employed features of piano texture will be discussed. The harmonic language of the composer is also a point of attention, and the analysis is aimed to enrich the pianist's interpretative perspective and to facilitate the making of informed musical decisions.

Chapter 1. Henri Duparc's Writing for Piano Solo. *Feuilles Volantes*, Op. 1

1.1 Pianism. Influences

Duparc's Op. 1, *Feuilles volantes*, is the composer's only surviving piano work. This is an early set of five piano pieces that were written in 1868. Not only do these pieces serve as the only accessible example of Duparc's solo writing for the instrument, they also establish a starting point for the further development of Duparc's piano style within the genre of *mélodie*.

Laurence Davies characterizes the early set by Duparc in the following way:

These [*Feuilles volantes*], as their titles imply, owe much to Schumann, and though they do reveal a mature grasp of pianistic idiom – something which was to serve the composer well when he came to devise accompaniments to the songs – they do not otherwise call for analysis. The sentiments they evoke are facile and romantic.⁶

This view of the set is somewhat ambiguous: while the pianistic vocabulary of Duparc is appreciated and seen as a basis for the further development of his song accompaniments, the doubt in the value of the analysis of the set can be somewhat argued. As will be discussed in depth in the relevant sections of the document, Duparc remains true to certain harmonic procedures already established in Op. 1.

It would be safe to assume that the nature of piano writing in *Feuilles volantes* owes to Duparc's natural inclination towards composition in the genre of *mélodie*. The texture of *Feuilles volantes* combines the 'singing' melodic line with the 'instrumental' accompaniment within a solo piano work. This factor relates Duparc's piano pieces to those of the Romantic composers, such as Chopin, Schumann, and Mendelssohn – the composers known for their

⁶ Davies, Laurence. 1967. *The Gallic muse*. London: Dent, p. 30.

predilection to the song genre and for exploring the singing nature of piano as an instrument. For example, Felix Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words* are unavoidable models for all such subsequent compositions. Among Duparc's close contemporaries, Gabriel Fauré was writing in a similar manner; his *Romances sans paroles*, Op. 17 (1863), written about the same time as Duparc's set, reveal some features in common with *Feuilles volantes*. Such vocally inspired piano texture poses significant challenges for the performer, as it is necessary to pay close attention to distinguishing the 'solo' and the 'accompaniment' parts, to phrasing and breathing moments – and all this while playing an instrument that is percussive in nature.

While Duparc occasionally uses countermelodies, thus further challenging the performer with the voice-leading as seen in Example 1 (note the bass line), Fauré employs doubling of the melody in the lower register, putting it on syncopated beats as seen in Example 2. This creates an illusion of not one, but two voices singing. A possible source of inspiration for these works may be Schumann's *Romance No.2* from *Romanzen*, Op. 28 (1839), where the two melodic lines are developed simultaneously as seen in Example 3.

Example 1: Duparc, *Feuilles volantes*, Op. 1 No.3, mm. 1-13

The image shows a musical score for Example 1, consisting of two systems of music. The first system is marked 'III' and includes the tempo instruction 'Andante un poco agitato.' and a piano dynamic marking 'p'. The music is written for piano in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The upper staff (treble clef) contains a melodic line with some slurs and ties. The lower staff (bass clef) features a more rhythmic accompaniment with many sixteenth notes and chords. The second system continues the piece with similar melodic and accompanimental textures.

Example 2: Fauré, *Romances sans paroles*, Op. 17 No.1, mm. 9-16

Example 3: Schumann, *Romance*, Op. 28 No.2, mm. 1-4

The main difference in the melodic treatment between the examples from Duparc and Fauré is that the former uses the countermelody consistently throughout the piece, while the latter employs the doubling of the melody in the repeat of every section of the piece.

As was mentioned above, Duparc's set is referred to as Schumannesque and there are reasons for that. Duparc's teacher, César Franck, to whom the opus was actually dedicated, introduced his students to the best available examples of German music as part of their education.⁷ Not only are Duparc's piano textures within this set often similar to Schumann's, but also certain features of the harmonic language are related, such as, the ambiguity of key in the beginning of a piece. For instance, in the third piece, in D major, the harmony is unsteady and the tonic appears only briefly towards the beginning. It is well into the second half of the

⁷ Northcote, Sydney. 1949. *The songs of Henri Duparc*. London: D. Dobson, p. 42.

structure that the home key is established in the glorious climax, only to modulate again into the subdominant key (Example 4). This harmonic progression is similar to Schumann's *Mondnacht* from *Liederkreis* Op. 39 No.5 (1840, Example 5).

Example 4: Duparc, *Feuilles volantes*, Op. 1 No.3, mm. 42-48



Example 5: Schumann, *Mondnacht* from *Liederkreis* Op. 39 No.5, mm. 55-60



Another feature in common with Schumann is Duparc's use of syncopated rhythms. These occur not only in accompanying voices, but also in the melodic line. It can be observed in the fifth piece from *Feuilles volantes* (Example 6). A similar syncopated layout of the melody occurs, for instance, in one of the posthumous variations from *Symphonic Etudes* (1834) by Schumann (Example 7). This may be seen as a way of notating a flexible, speech-like, *rubato* quality in the melodic line.

Example 6: Duparc, *Feuilles volantes*, Op. 1 No.5, mm. 1-13

Andro con tenerezza

V

mf

1^a 2^a

Cresc.

Example 7: Schumann, posthumous variation IV from *Symphonic Etudes*, Op. 13, mm. 29-40

mf

dimin.

p

cresc.

accelerando

Duparc did not create much for the piano and, unlike the above-mentioned composers who might have inspired *Feuilles volantes*, was not particularly attached to the instrument itself. As to Duparc's development as a pianist, from early on in his studies with César Franck it was mutually agreed to devote more time to composition rather than to mastering piano technique. In Duparc's own words,

I studied at the college at Vaugirard, where César Franck was my piano teacher and strove in vain to make me play an air from *La Fanchonnette* and *La Prière des Bardes*

(by Felix Godefroid); seeing at last that he would make nothing of me as a pianist he taught me music and remains always my incomparable master.⁸

As a result of this learning process, Duparc's early set of piano pieces reveals "a mature grasp of pianistic idiom" referred to above. Also, the set already demonstrates Duparc's characteristic reaching for the long melodic lines, his use of countermelodies, and some distinctive features of his harmonic language that are later to be found in the *mélodies*.

1.2 Technical Challenges

Unlike in some of the songs, in this early solo set Duparc does not explore the virtuosic possibilities of the piano; he rather concentrates on the lyrical side and keeps the figuration vocabulary to a minimum. However, a significant degree of skill from the performer is needed. For example, the fourth piece with its specific indication to emphasize the melodic voice (*bien marquer le chant*) that is somewhat hidden inside a multi-layered texture and is distributed between the two hands requires subtle distinguishing of layers of texture by means of touch (Example 8).

Example 8: Duparc, *Feuilles volantes*, Op. 1 No.4, mm. 1-7

The image shows a musical score for the first seven measures of 'Feuilles volantes' by Henri Duparc. The score is in 6/8 time and marked 'Andante' with the instruction 'Bien marquer le chant.' The music is written for piano and consists of two systems. The first system (measures 1-3) is marked 'M. G.' and 'M. D.'. The second system (measures 4-7) is marked 'M. D.', 'M. G.', 'M. G.', and 'M. D.'. A Roman numeral 'IV' is placed to the left of the first system.

⁸ Northcote, Sydney. 1949. *The songs of Henri Duparc*. London: D. Dobson, p. 40.

It is sensible for a performer to use a weightier touch in the melody and apply first fingers to better project it over the accompanying voices.

A similar case of distribution of textural layers can be found in the second piece from *Romances sans paroles*, Op. 17, by Fauré as seen in Example 9. However, none of Duparc's five pieces challenges the performer as much as this one by Fauré in terms of virtuosity. The sixteenth-note fast runs are employed throughout the piece and the accompanying figurations are distributed between the two hands, in a somewhat similar manner to the above example from Duparc (Example 8).

Example 9: Fauré, *Romances sans paroles*, Op. 17 No.2, mm. 1-4



With such a persistent flow of sixteenth-notes in the fast tempo of *Allegro molto* it becomes an even more challenging task to project and to phrase the melody. In the case of Fauré the phenomenon is explained in the following way:

Fauré was ambidextrous. That is why his figurations, themes and countermelodies so often have to be passed smoothly and imperceptibly from one hand to the other, and why he likes to place his tunes in the resonant centre of the keyboard.⁹

⁹ Nectoux, Jean-Michel. 1991. *Gabriel Fauré: a musical life*. Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, p. 45.

These words about Fauré may be also somewhat applicable to Duparc; such equal distribution of textural layers between the two hands has been developed in the accompaniments of his later *mélodies*. It is important to note that exploration of such intricate writing started in the fourth piece from *Feuilles volantes* and evolved in the later compositions of Duparc, to be discussed in more detail in relevant sections of this document.

1.3 Harmony

Duparc's piano writing in this early set is quite distant from the dense layouts of some of his song accompaniments. However, already in this early composition we can discover some of the most significant features of Duparc's harmony that he would employ throughout the period of his compositional activity. These features are: audacious tonal plans with modulations to distant keys; wide use of seventh chords, often outside their usual employment, for example, as applied dominants, sometimes with added or suspended tones and alterations; special resolutions of augmented-sixth chords; chromatic chord progressions and enharmonic reinterpretation; a rich variety of deceptive and plagal cadences; and, tonic and dominant pedal points underlying particularly chromatic passages.

It is important to note that Duparc's harmonic language exemplifies to an extent a fusion of French and German traits. This unique equilibrium is essential to the understanding of the composer's style.¹⁰ In such songs as *Soupir* (1869), *Romance de Mignon* (1869) and *Extase* (1874) we can trace the Wagnerian influence through the chromatic chord progressions, and wide use of enharmony. It is worth mentioning that like some of his contemporaries, Duparc was under the spell of Wagner's music despite the tense political climate at a time.¹¹

However, in such songs as *Phidylé* (1882), *Chanson Triste* (1868), and *L'invitation au voyage* (1870), the affiliation of his harmonic language with the French tradition is revealed

¹⁰ Johnson, Graham, and Richard Stokes. 2000. *A French song companion*. New York: Oxford University Press, p. 136.

¹¹ Davies, Laurence. 1970. *César Franck and his circle*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co, p. 164.

through such elements as chains of unresolved dominant harmonies with added or suspended tones, French and German augmented-sixth chords, and plagal cadences. Already in Duparc's Op. 1 we can notice some of these features of his harmonic language.

Tonal plans with modulations to distant keys can be observed in all five pieces from the set. Table 1 shows the tonal plan of the second piece; note the modulations to distant keys within the B section.

Table 1: Duparc, *Feuilles volantes*, Op. 1 No.2, tonal plan

Section	Measures	Key
A	1-17	G major
B	17- 47	D major F-sharp major E major
A	48-60	G major

One of Duparc's most consistently used devices in this set is the modulation to the major mediant key from a major home key as, for instance, from C major to E major in the first piece as seen in Example 10, or from D major to F-sharp major in the second piece as seen in Example 11. A similar type of modulation can be found in the music of Robert Schumann, for instance, in his *Album for the Young*, Op. 68 (1848, Example 12), which might have been a possible inspiration for Duparc.

Example 10: Duparc, *Feuilles volantes*, Op. 1 No.1, mm. 1-16

Vite et avec fraîcheur.

1

Sordine.

Example 11: Duparc, *Feuilles volantes*, Op. 1 No.2, mm.14-27

fu forte.

Example 12: Schumann, *Album für die Jugend*, Op. 68 No.21, mm. 1-8

Langsam und mit Ausdruck zu spielen. $\text{♩} = 88.$

21. p

Langsamer.

Modulating to the major key on the seventh degree of the scale in major (e. g. D major to C-sharp major in the third piece) is another instance of a significantly bold modulation as seen in Example 13.

Example 13: Duparc, *Feuilles volantes*, Op. 1 No.3, mm. 7-16

7-16

Regarding the tonal relationships, the general tonal plan of Duparc's set (see Table 2) is also worth noting.

Table 2: Duparc, *Feuilles volantes*, Op. 1, tonal plan of the set

Piece Number	Tempo Indication	Key
1	<i>Vite et avec fraicheur</i>	C major
2	<i>Allegretto</i>	G major
3	<i>Andante un poco agitato</i>	D major
4	<i>Andante</i>	F major
5	<i>Andantino con tenerezza</i>	A major

Duparc follows a cycle of fifths pattern within the keys with sharps, with the only exception being the fourth piece in F major, which stands outside this pattern. However, the tonal relationship between the fourth and the fifth pieces is akin to major tonic to major mediant, with A major being a chromatic mediant key for F major. In performance it is possible to emphasize this colourful juxtaposition of keys by playing these two pieces *attaca*, with almost no break in between. As opposed to taking a bigger pause, this choice of timing may help unify the overall performance of the set.

Duparc's execution of modulations is of particular interest. For example, in bars 9-13 of the first piece in C major we can see F major being the target of preparation (Example 10). However, the modulation to E major, which is the chromatic mediant key for the home key of C major, takes place instead and is realized by the smooth progression by semitone. It is executed by means of the common-tone resolution of the German-sixth chord (see measures 13 and 14 of Example 10). It is a task for the performer to highlight this instance of 'surprise' modulation by changing the timbre and possibly allowing some extra time for the sake of the listeners' perception and appreciation of this significant moment.

Within the same piece we can come across the interplay of major and minor mediants (E major – E minor in the home key of C major) as seen in Example 14.

Example 14: Duparc, *Feuilles volantes*, Op. 1 No.1, mm. 15-28



The two keys are linked by the use of the C natural in the harmony, which is the lowered sixth degree in E major. The simultaneous use of raised third and lowered sixth is quite unusual for a common tonality (see measure 17 of Example 14), thus it creates rather interesting colouristic shading and accentuates the modal interplay. It is worth noting that Duparc employs the mixture of the same degrees in the second and the fourth pieces from the set, and this colourful effect should be considered while performing.

In Faure's Op. 17 No.1 we can observe a 'surprise' factor similar to Duparc's in the move from E-flat major to D-flat major as seen in Example 15. Similarly to Duparc, Fauré accomplishes it by means of the common-tone resolution: in this case a diminished-seventh chord in measure 27 that could be resolved in F minor – a key that is closer to E-flat major – is instead resolved in D-flat major.

Example 15: Fauré, *Romances sans paroles*, Op. 17 No.1, mm. 25-28



From the interpretative standpoint, recognizing all these harmonic shifts helps to shape the structure of the piece. Since in the first and the fourth pieces from the set there are almost no indications of dynamics or phrasing, and the texture is homogenous, harmonic narrative appears to be the main guide through the phrase structures. Thus, the harmonic aspects discussed above have a direct impact on one's interpretative choices.

The use of chromatic chord progressions is another significant feature of Duparc's harmonic language. The following section from the fifth piece serves as a good example (Example 16).

Example 16: Duparc, *Feuilles volantes*, Op. 1 No.5, mm. 14-29

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a piano piece. The first system, spanning measures 14 to 21, features a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a harmonic accompaniment. Dynamics include *s* (piano), *ff* (fortissimo), and *dim* (diminuendo). The second system, spanning measures 22 to 29, continues the piece with dynamics *p* (piano) and *pp* (pianissimo). A rectangular box highlights the chord progression in the bass staff from measure 22 to 25, which is the focus of the subsequent analysis.

In bar 22 a diminished-seventh chord of the dominant is followed by a diminished-seventh chord of the tonic. Thus, the resolution of the first chord has been elided. Similar compositional devices are employed by Duparc in some other pieces from the set. The latter chord receives its resolution in E major in bar 23, after which another version of diminished-seventh to the dominant occurs. In bars 24-25 the German-sixth chord resolves by common tone to the tonic of the A major, the piece's home key.

For the interpreter it is sensible to follow the bass line motion in this fragment: it contributes to the choice of phrase organization and balancing of the voices. It is likewise important to distinguish the moments of harmonic tension and release within this passage.

The chromatic line in the bass and the middle voices of Example 16 signifies a certain trait of Duparc's style that is to be found in some of his song accompaniments. For example, in one of Duparc's earlier songs, *Soupir* (1969), a similar chromatic progression can be seen in bars 29-35 (example 17).

Example 17: Duparc, *Soupir*, mm. 29-36

The image shows a musical score for the song 'Soupir' by César Franck. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment for measures 29-36. The vocal line has lyrics: 'Mais ces pleurs tou - jours les ré -'. The piano part features a prominent chromatic descending line in the bass. The second system continues the vocal line with lyrics: '-pandre, Tou jours l'aimer...'. Performance markings include 'expressif' at the beginning, 'poco rall.' above the piano part in the second system, and 'a Tempo' above the vocal line in the second system.

In this excerpt, through the falling chromatic chain, one can sense the influence of Wagner.

Duparc was one of the most notable proponents of his music, having met Wagner in person and having travelled to hear his operas on numerous occasions.¹² Martin Cooper traces the influence of Wagner (notably his *Tristan*) and Liszt rather than Franck here, as well as in Duparc's enharmonic passages in general. In Cooper's view, Duparc very rarely uses "a chromatically

¹² Davies, Laurence. 1970. *César Franck and his circle*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co, p. 164.

slipping bass” - a device that, on the contrary, was very commonly used by Franck.¹³ However, as in the case with *Feuilles volantes* (Example 16) this excerpt can possibly also be suggestive of César Franck’s writing style. The bass moves quite intensely in this particular passage, notably the semi-tone sliding motion occurs, and it suggests Franck’s musical language. More unusually, in measures 4 and 5 of the example, the bass moves at the interval of augmented second between the D-flat and the E. This is a quite atypical shift for the bass line, and clearly demonstrates Duparc’s rather bold use of harmonic means.

In support of the relation of Duparc’s harmonic language to that of his teacher’s, César Franck, the last three bars of the piano introduction to Franck’s *La Procession* (1888) serve as a good example for comparison (Example 18). Note the chromatic moves in several voices and the progression of unresolved chords.

Example 18: Franck, *La Procession*, mm. 13-15



We can also observe a progression of unresolved chords similar to Duparc’s (Example 16) in the first piece from Fauré’s set, *Romances sans paroles* (Example 19).

¹³ Cooper, Martin. 1961. *French music, from the death of Berlioz to the death of Fauré*. London: Oxford University Press, p. 63.

Example 19: Fauré, *Romances sans paroles*, Op. 17 No.1, mm. 33-39

We are in the key of C minor here; the first chord is a German-sixth chord with a semi-tone move in the upper structures, it is followed by a secondary dominant-seventh chord with a chromatic move in the top voice that touches the ninth of the chord. In bar 37 the bass moves a half-step up, thus creating a diminished-seventh chord that receives its resolution in A-flat major by common tone in the following bar – a type of resolution often employed by Duparc. It is worth pointing out the chromatic moves within bar 38 that anticipate the resolution to the tonic of the home key.

Duparc's use of pedal points is another distinct feature of his style that can be found in *Feuilles volantes* and that is largely present in the *mélodies*. It receives primary attention in such songs as *L'invitation au voyage* and *Phidylé*. It is interesting to observe its appearance in the fourth and the fifth pieces from *Feuilles volantes*. In the fifth piece the return of the A section is marked by a dominant pedal point, while the other voices are left unchanged compared to the beginning of the piece (compare Examples 6 and 20).

Example 20: Duparc, *Feuilles volantes*, Op. 1 No.5, mm. 22-29



A rather unusual case of tonic pedal employment can be observed in the concluding measures of the third piece, in D major, where the tonic harmony is sustained in the upper structures while the bass moves down by scale degrees as seen in Example 21.

Example 21: Duparc, *Feuilles volantes*, Op. 1 No.3, mm. 61-66



Another instance of pedal point employment can be found in Fauré's first piece from *Romances sans paroles*, namely in the Coda, where the tonic pedal point is used throughout. However, in Fauré's case the pedal point occurs in the bass (Example 22).

Example 22: Fauré, *Romances sans Paroles*, Op. 17 No.1, mm. 51-67

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system (mm. 51-54) shows a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The dynamics are marked 'f' and 'sempre f', and the instruction 'espressivo' is present. The second system (mm. 55-60) features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line with chords. The dynamics are marked 'f' and 'dimin.'. The third system (mm. 61-67) includes a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line with chords. The dynamics are marked 'f' and 'ppp', and the instruction 'perdendosi e rall.' is followed by 'a tempo'.

Little known and rarely performed, *Feuilles volantes* exhibit several characteristic features of Duparc's compositional style. The harmony in particular relates this early set to Duparc's songs, which will be discussed further in the document. The piano textures are to become yet more complex in the song accompaniments; however, this sole surviving example of Duparc's writing for piano solo is of great value to the admirers of Duparc – performers, researchers and audience alike.

Role of the Accompaniment in Duparc's *Mémoires*

According to the most current knowledge in the field, Henry Duparc's art song canon consists of only sixteen works.¹⁴ Some of these have been rediscovered in more recent years, while others have held a solid and distinguished position in the repertoire of singers from Duparc's time, throughout the twentieth century, and up to the present day. Regardless of the relatively small quantity, these works prove crucial for the development of the genre of French *mélodie* towards the end of the nineteenth century. A pupil and disciple of César Franck, an admirer of Wagner and Liszt, and a contemporary of Fauré, Henri Duparc managed to develop his own unique musical language despite these considerable influences while simultaneously paying homage to them.

As Duparc's piano writing truly flourishes in his *mémoires*, these provide a fruitful area for the discussion of his piano writing. The significance of Duparc's approach to the function of the piano part in his *mémoires* lies in his inclination to go beyond the scope of the genre and create at times either a *quasi* operatic scene such as *La vague et la Cloche* (1871) and *Le manoir de Rosemonde* (1879) or a symphonic poem in miniature such as *Phidylé* (1882). The piano parts of Duparc's *mémoires*, as opposed to *Feuilles volantes*, are characterized by dense multi-layered textures that are usually varied within one song. Due to such textural density they often call for a rather complex approach to the sound concept.

Among Duparc's song output there are eight *mémoires* that exist in both piano and orchestral versions. Table 3 shows the chronology of Duparc's songs and the orchestration information where relevant, according to Martin Cooper.¹⁵

¹⁴ Kimball, Carol. 2006. *Song: a guide to art song style and literature*. Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, p. 173.

¹⁵ Cooper, Martin. "Duparc, Henri." *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press, accessed August 4, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/subscriber/article/grove/music/08338>.

Table 3: Duparc, *Mémoires*, dates of composition in chronological order and orchestration information

<i>Mémoire</i>	Year of Composition	Orchestration	Year of Orchestration
<i>Chanson triste</i>	1868	yes	1912
<i>Soupir</i>	1869		
<i>Le galop</i>	1869		
<i>Romance de Mignon</i>	1869		
<i>Sérénade</i>	1869		
<i>Au pays où se fait la guerre</i>	1869-70	yes	1876, revised 1911-13
<i>L'invitation au voyage</i>	1870	yes	1892-95
<i>La vague et la cloche</i>	1871	Originally for voice and orchestra	
<i>Elégie</i>	1874		
<i>Extase</i>	1874		
<i>Le manoir de Rosemonde</i>	1879	yes	1912
<i>Sérénade florentine</i>	1880		
<i>Phidylé</i>	1882	yes	1891-1892
<i>Lamento</i>	1883		
<i>Testament</i>	1883	yes	1900-01, revised 1911-13
<i>La vie antérieure</i>	1884	Originally for voice and orchestra	

It is noteworthy that in the case of *La vague et la cloche* and *La vie antérieure* the orchestral versions came first, while the other six songs that exist in two versions – *Chanson triste*, *Au pays où se fait la guerre*, *L'invitation au voyage*, *Le manoir de Rosemonde*, *Phidylé*, and *Testament* – were first written for voice and piano and orchestrated by Duparc at a later

stage. Since the composer himself created both piano and orchestral versions, it can be argued that the two facets are connected and that Duparc's orchestral way of thinking might have influenced his piano textures.

From a historical point of view, it is interesting to note that two of Duparc's songs, *L'invitation au voyage* and *La vague et la cloche* were written in 1870 and 1871 respectively, therefore during the period of Franco-Prussian war and the Siege of Paris. In this light it is quite symbolic that the first one represents the journey to an ideal land – thus, away from the terrifying events of the reality; while the second one depicts a horrifying and disturbing scene, possibly somewhat related to the cruel reality of the war. As will be seen, these contrasting emotional states are directly reflected in the piano parts.

Chapter 2. *L'Invitation au Voyage*

2.1 Impact of Orchestration

L'invitation au voyage is set to a poem of Charles Baudelaire. The protagonist invites his lover on an imaginary journey into an idealized land. Thus, the accompaniment in *L'invitation au voyage* represents the sea; it is characterized by the homogeneity of oscillating figuration and the pianistic nature of the texture (Example 23). Some similar employment of harmonic figurations can be found in the two earlier songs of Duparc – *Chanson triste* (Example 24) and *Sérénade* (Example 25).

Example 23: Duparc, *L'invitation au voyage*, mm. 1-6

The image displays a musical score for the song "L'invitation au voyage" by Frédéric Chopin. It is divided into two systems. The first system shows the vocal line (CHANT) and the piano accompaniment (PIANO). The tempo is marked "Presque lent" and the mood is "Doux et tendre". The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 6/8. The piano accompaniment features a characteristic oscillating figuration in the right hand and a steady eighth-note pattern in the left hand. The lyrics for the first system are "Mon en -". The second system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics for the second system are "fant, ma sœur, Songe à la dou -". The piano accompaniment maintains the same oscillating figuration and eighth-note pattern.

Example 24: Duparc, *Chanson triste*, mm. 1-2

Lent, avec un sentiment tendre et intime

Toujours très lié

pp

très doux

Dans ton cœur dort un clair de

Example 25: Duparc, *Sérénade*, mm. 1-3

Andante.

p

Si j'étais, ô mon amou-

The piano has more of a supporting nature in *L'invitation au voyage*; however, studying the orchestral version and bringing out the orchestral timbres may add to the colour palette and enrich the interpretation. Some specific cases where the orchestration can be taken into account are: oscillating figurations in the first verse, quicker-paced figurations in the C-major section of the second verse, and countermelodies.

The impressionistic nature of orchestration with its trembling *pp* figurations of the violins and violas (Example 26) may inspire a specific timbre at the piano.

Example 26: Duparc, *L'invitation au voyage*, orchestral score, strings, mm. 1-2

The image shows a page of an orchestral score for strings. It includes parts for 1^{re} Violons, 2^{ds} Violons, Altos, Violoncelle Solo, Violoncelles, and Contrebasses. The music is in 3/4 time and features a complex rhythmic pattern of sixteenth notes. Dynamic markings include *pp* (pianissimo) and *div.* (divisi). The instruction "Tous droits réservés" is visible at the bottom right.

Inspired by Duparc’s orchestration, I chose to aim for light finger touch with very little weight and less clear articulation in the sextuplets by means of using the fleshier part of the fingers rather than only the finger tips. This technical approach allowed for a smooth and lightweight flow to impart the image of the moving water substance. It also proved to work better for the execution of the *pp* dynamic marking.

Quicker figurations in the C-major section (*Un peu plus vite*, Example 27) are played by the harp in the orchestral version (Example 28).

Example 27: Duparc, *L'invitation au voyage*, mm. 57-60

The image shows a page of a musical score for Example 27. It features vocal lines and piano accompaniment. The tempo instruction "Un peu plus vite" is present, along with the dynamic marking *mf* (mezzo-forte). The lyrics include "de.", "Les so.", "leils", "cou - chants", and "Re".

Example 28: Duparc, *L'invitation au voyage*, orchestral score, harp, mm. 58-60



The timbre of the harp has inspired me to look for a specific touch on the piano. As opposed to the previous sections of the song, I chose to change the touch here towards a clearer and more articulate one, applying the tips of the fingers as opposed to the fleshier part of the fingers employed in the figurations prior to this section. This choice is further complemented by some more frequent pedal changes and the use of half-pedals. The imagery of the sun sparkles on the water that may come to mind here is supported by the text of Baudelaire: “Les soleils couchants revetent les champs, les canaux, la ville entiere, d’hyacinthe et d’or...”¹⁶ The ringing timbre of the piano in its higher register may be used here to its full advantage for the benefit of reflecting this text.

2.2 Countermelody Employment

The wide use of countermelodies is another significant feature of Duparc’s song accompaniments that are possibly inspired by his orchestral thinking. There are not so many instances of countermelody employment in *L'invitation au voyage*; however, the ones that occur are quite timbre-specific.

The first time the countermelody occurs is in bars 50-53 (Example 29), and in the orchestral version it is played by oboe, cello, and horn.

¹⁶ “The setting suns cover the fields, the canals, the entire city with hyacinth and gold.” (Translated by author, TD).

Example 29: Duparc, *L'invitation au voyage*, mm. 50-53

The image shows a musical score for Example 29, consisting of three staves. The top staff is the vocal line, with lyrics: "C'est pour as - sou - vir. Ton moi - dre dé - sir Qu'ils vien -". The middle staff is the right-hand piano part, featuring a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The bottom staff is the left-hand piano part, featuring a melodic line with slurs. Dynamics include *più f* and *Cresc. molto*. The word *Expressif* is written below the left-hand part.

The singing tone of these three instruments should not be neglected when playing the left hand in this passage; it may be projected by the intensity of touch and the *legato* articulation.

Since the harmony in this passage is provided by the right-hand part, the role of the accompaniment in this episode is multi-functional: it creates a sense of dialogue with the voice by means of the countermelody and at the same time it provides the harmonic support with the oscillating chord figurations of tonic with an added raised sixth and secondary-seventh chords. It is noteworthy that the two melodic lines – the voice line and the bass line of the accompaniment – interact in a contrary-motion manner at certain points of this phrase, which is a common compositional device of Duparc as will be seen further.

On a structural level this countermelody links the second verse with the first one, where the same melodic fragment appears in the vocal part on the words “Aimer à loisir, aimer et mourir” (Example 30).

Example 30: Duparc, *L'invitation au voyage*, mm. 10-15

The image shows the first system of a musical score for Example 30. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in a treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 3/4 time signature. The lyrics are: "ble, Ai - mer à loi - sir, Ai - mer et mou - rir Au pa - ys qui te res -". The piano accompaniment is in a bass clef and features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and a more complex pattern in the left hand. The system is divided into three measures.

Thus, we can conceptualize this melodic fragment as a cyclic motive of the song. Duparc has been noted for using such compositional device extensively, particularly in his longer settings. According to James Husst Hall, “Cyclic motive is a favored device of Duparc for unifying his amply spaced song forms.”¹⁷ Wagnerian influence can be traced through this aspect of Duparc’s writing: Wagner’s extensive use of *leitmotif* is one of significant features of his approach to the opera genre.

Another instance where the cyclic motive appears as a countermelody is in the second refrain; however, it is not employed in its unity here but is divided into two segments as seen in Examples 31 and 32.

Example 31: Duparc, *L'invitation au voyage*, mm. 75-76

The image shows the second system of a musical score for Example 31. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in a treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 3/4 time signature. The lyrics are: "Là, tout n'est qu'ordre". The piano accompaniment is in a bass clef and features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and a more complex pattern in the left hand. The system is divided into three measures. The piano part includes the instruction "Cantabile" in a box.

¹⁷ Hall, James Husst. 1953. *The art song*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, p. 164.

Example 32: Duparc, *L'invitation au voyage*, mm. 79-80

The image shows a musical score for the final measures of Chopin's 'L'invitation au voyage'. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in French and reads 'Lu - xe, cal - me'. The piano accompaniment is marked 'Sempre pp' and 'Cantabile'. The score is in 3/4 time and features a dense, arpeggiated texture in the right hand and a more melodic line in the left hand. The lyrics are 'Lu - xe, cal - me'.

It is interesting to observe that the orchestration of these two segments is different: the first melodic fragment is played by oboe and viola, and the second one by cello and horn. In the piano score both instances are marked *mf cantabile* as seen in Examples 31 and 32; however, hearing the colours of these different timbres may bring some variety to the interpretation. I chose to make the second segment more intense in the sound by means of a weightier touch, as suggested by the timbres of cello and horn. This choice allows me to bring another dimension to the interpretation.

From these examples of countermelody employment, we can see what a significant role the accompaniment of this song plays in shaping its structure. Thus, from the interpretative standpoint it is important to highlight every new appearance of a cyclic motive and make it sound diverse by changing the timbre.

2.3 Voice and Piano Interaction as Timbres

The melodic interaction between the voice and the piano discussed in section 2.2 in connection to countermelody employment will also be discussed in relevant sections in relation to the other songs. However, in *L'invitation au voyage* we can hear another significant feature of Duparc's accompaniments – their timbral interaction with the voice.

For example, we can observe an interesting instance of interaction between piano and voice parts in the song's climax (Example 33).

Example 33: Duparc, *L'invitation au voyage*, mm. 69-72

The image displays a musical score for the final measures of Duparc's 'L'invitation au voyage'. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line has the lyrics: 'dort Dans u ne chau de lu'. The piano accompaniment features a complex, arpeggiated texture in the right hand and a descending bass line in the left hand. The second system continues the vocal line with the lyrics 'mie re!' and the piano accompaniment. The piano part includes dynamic markings such as 'Cresc.', 'molto', and 'Poco a poco dim.'. The score is written in a key signature of one flat and a 3/4 time signature.

While the melody gradually ascends from a lower G to a higher G on the words “Dans une chaude lumière,” the figurations of the piano make a contrary-motion descending move that results in a low-register bass octave (see measure 71 of Example 33). This device employed by Duparc creates a feeling of space in the texture and reinforces the sense of climax related to the words.

It is noteworthy that the bass of the piano and the high G in the voice (ringing vowel in the word “lumière”), however far apart in register, form an interval of a fifth, further contributing to the sense of amplitude. Thus, the bar-long ringing vowel in “lumière” on the top G of the voice line, the resonant low bass octave of the piano a fifth apart and the ongoing figurations of the right hand form a significant example of expressive interaction between the voice and the piano as timbres, in this case at the climactic point on a *fortissimo* sonority. On a side note, the interval of a fifth is quite significant for this song: the tonic-dominant pedal point forming an

interval of a fifth is constantly present throughout a good half of the setting and makes a brief return towards the end.

For a pianist the execution of the climax presents a significant challenge as to balancing the piano part with the voice. On the one hand, the piano part should support the voice, thus, the bass octave in measure 71 (Example 33) has to resonate, benefitting from its location in the low register of the instrument. On the other hand, despite the general *fortissimo* indication, the piano part should not overpower the voice line. After trying out various possibilities, I came to the conclusion that it is sensible to highlight the bottom C in the left-hand octave thus further emphasizing the registral distance with the top G in the voice part. Such an approach allows for an interesting acoustic effect and prevents from overpowering the voice. In the meantime, I chose a little softer dynamic for the figurations in the right hand to make them sound as though being ‘inside’ the resonant bass. Such choice is supported by the song’s orchestration, where the sustained chord on the first beat of measure 71 is played *tutti*, while the figurations are continued to be played by harp only.

2.4 Harmony

The general harmonic nature of *L’invitation au voyage* deserves consideration. The wide use of seventh chords, French augmented-sixth chords resolved by common tone in the beginning of each verse (as in measures 2 and 3 of Example 23) and a tonic-dominant pedal point consistently present throughout the first half of the song (Example 23) are devices already employed by Duparc in his first published work, *Feuilles volantes*, discussed in section 1.3.

However, what is particularly significant about the harmony of *L’invitation au voyage* is that it is plagal in its nature for most part. Thus, the dominant-function chords are not employed throughout the entire first verse; the single perfect authentic V-I cadence in the dominant key of G major occurs in bars 54-57 (Example 34).

Example 34: Duparc, *L'invitation au voyage*, mm. 54-57

The image displays a musical score for Example 34, featuring a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in treble clef with lyrics: "nent du bout du mon de." The piano accompaniment is in bass clef, marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic and includes a *Dim.* (diminuendo) marking. The score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 54-57, with the vocal line starting on a half note 'nent' and continuing with 'du', 'bout', 'du', and 'mon'. The piano accompaniment features a complex texture of chords and arpeggiated figures. The second system shows the vocal line starting on a half note 'de.' and the piano accompaniment continuing with similar textures. The score is marked with 'V' and 'I' at the bottom of the systems.

Andrew Pau observes the connection of the usage of harmony to the poetic nuance and explains this authentic cadence in the following way:

This sole instance of dominant-to-tonic motion in the entire song accompanies a description of ships arriving from the ends of the earth, in other words, a description of action rather than contemplation.¹⁸

The character of harmony and the textures employed create a special ambience in this song, and by observing all the nuances of harmony and tone-colour a performer can significantly contribute to the interpretation of the poetic text. Thus, the complex and intricate nature of Duparc's accompaniments is revealed even in this relatively transparent one.

¹⁸ Pau, Andrew. 2016. "Plagal Systems in the Songs of Fauré". Paper delivered at the Joint Annual Meeting of the American Musicological Society and the Society for Music Theory in Vancouver, B.C., Canada on November 6 2016, p. 7.

Chapter 3. *La Vague et la Cloche*

3.1 *La Vague et la Cloche* as an Opera Scene

In comparison with *L'invitation au Voyage*, *La vague et la cloche* is an example of a more complex type of accompaniment dictated by Duparc's apparently operatic treatment of this song. Frits Noske points out the narrative quality of François Coppée's poem; he also links *La vague et la cloche* with *Le manoir de Rosemonde* due to their operatic nature and comments on both:

In setting them to music Duparc made true *scenes* of them and without suggesting the theater, they still are somewhat removed from his other songs.¹⁹

The operatic dimension of some of Duparc's songs is not coincidental. César Franck, Duparc's teacher, stated that his pupil's "temperament and dramatic feeling were so marvelously suited to the theatre."²⁰ Being fascinated by Wagner and having travelled to Bayreuth and Munich to hear his operas, Duparc was naturally affected by Wagner's compositional language and the grandeur of his creative undertakings. As mentioned above, Duparc himself had not created a single opera; however the qualities of his artistry referred to by Franck and the impact of Wagner's music inspired him to create true *scenes* within some of his songs.

As to the embodiment of his theatrical thinking, it is reflected in *La vague et la cloche* in the changing mood of the episodes (a consequence of the through-composed form principle, rather uncommon to song repertoire), long pauses between the sections, and exaggerated contrasts of mood and dynamic that follow the text. Among Duparc's other songs that exhibit his

¹⁹ Noske, Frits, and Rita Benton. 1970. *French song from Berlioz to Duparc: the origin and development of the mélodie*. New York: Dover, p. 289.

²⁰ Northcote, Sydney. 1949. *The songs of Henri Duparc*. London: D. Dobson, p. 47.

operatic thinking, Laurence Davies points at the direction of *Le pays où se fait la guerre* as an example of “imitation of the operatic scène” that follows one of the forms into which the genre of romance has evolved.²¹ Thus, such a significant approach allowed Duparc to realize his operatic aspirations within the song genre.

Bearing in mind the operatic nature of the song, the texture of *La vague et la cloche* is not homogenous. Unlike in some of Duparc’s earlier songs (*Chanson triste*, *Soupir*, *Sérénade*, *Romance de Mignon*, *L’invitation au voyage*) and most songs by Gabriel Fauré, it changes from section to section, contributing to the expressivity of every turn of the narrative and reflecting the disturbed emotional state set by the text. It is such textural diversity and intensity of the piano writing explored by Duparc in his later songs that makes his accompaniments stand out from the song repertoire.

In *La vague et la cloche* a nightmare of the protagonist is depicted: he first finds himself on a stormy sea at night, in complete darkness without a beacon, and then on an old bell tower riding a ringing bell. Thus, the two key images in the song – of the sea in the first section and of the bell in the second one – are conveyed by means of accompaniment. The accompaniment creates a sinister ambience by its harmonic unsteadiness; it features a dense multi-layered piano texture, signified by the remarkably wide use of registers and an impressive diversity in the vocabulary of piano techniques, such as chords, octaves, tremolos, arpeggios, and fast runs. Such virtuosic writing requires a considerable amount of skill from a pianist.

It would be safe to assume that such features of complex piano writing in this song might have been influenced by the fact that the orchestral version of the song appeared first. It can be further stated that due to the chronology of versions Duparc intended the piano to recreate an orchestral sonority in this song. Also, as mentioned above, the emotionally charged atmosphere and somewhat theatrical component bring an operatic dimension to this *mélodie*, thus reflecting Duparc’s life-long passion for the opera genre and his admiration of Richard Wagner.

²¹ Davies, Laurence. 1970. *César Franck and his circle*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co, p. 168.

In further support of the assumption of Duparc's operatic thinking in this song, it is worth pointing out an often overlooked connection between Duparc and Wagner. For instance, looking at the vocal score (or a piano reduction) of Wagner's *Lohengrin* one may find textural devices that are similar to Duparc's *La vague et la cloche*, such as tremolos, big and sudden shifts in dynamics, double-dotted rhythms, fast runs etc. (Examples 35 and 36).

Example 35: Duparc, *La vague et la cloche*, mm. 15-19

Plus large
je voguais sans fanal dans la nuit, Morne rameur,
n'ayant plus l'espoir du rivage...

Plus large
fp
cresc.

Example 36: Wagner, *Lohengrin*, two excerpts from Act 1 (arr. Karl Klindworth)

Ein wenig belebter im Zeitmass.
no-ble knight I saw, His look sublime and
Rit-ter nah - - te da, so tu-gendli-cher
ten-der in-spired my soul with awe. His gold-en
Hei-ne ich kei-nen noch er-sah. Ein gol-den

p
Fl., Ob., Cl., Hp., Tps.
Fl., Ob., Cl., Hf., Tromp.
sempre lo stesso pp
immer gleichmässig pp

— will not let me stoop to such a course! Here stand I with my
 — stünde wahrlich übel meinem Stolz! Hier steh' ich, hier mein

sword! Which of you dares to take up arms against my hon.oured
 Schwert! Wer wagt von euch zu strei-ten wi-der mei-ner Eh-re

It is noteworthy that this piano reduction of Wagner's opera was made by Karl Klindworth, composer and virtuoso pianist, a pupil of Liszt and a contemporary of both Wagner and Duparc.

Piano reductions of Wagner's operas were very popular at the time; it is known that in one Parisian music salon, Vincent d'Indy and the future Mme Duparc played Wagner's *Lohengrin* and *Tannhäuser* in a piano four-hands version.²² Thus, it is safe to assume that Duparc could have been inspired not only by Wagner's compositional language, but also by the way his orchestral textures have been transferred to and adapted for the piano. Duparc would likely have had access to such piano scores even more easily than to the actual orchestral scores or even their live performances.

Before discussing the orchestration of the song in more depth, it is worth summarizing the harmonic features of *La vague et la cloche*. The harmony in the song supports the restless emotional state of the setting and contributes to creating the sinister ambience. The notable harmonic features are: harmonic instability, unresolved seventh chords (predominantly of diminished or half-diminished quality), augmented-sixth chords, use of alterations, tonal juxtapositions, and the use of pedal points – both tonic and dominant. Thus, Duparc remains true to the compositional devices that were discussed in the relevant sections above.

²² Stricker, Rémy. 1996. *Les Mélodies de Duparc: essai*. Arles: Actes Sud, p. 32.

3.2 Orchestration

Due to its complex texture, *La vague et la cloche* demonstrates that knowledge of its orchestration may inform and facilitate the pianistic execution of the accompaniment. Sydney Northcote points out the “boldness of orchestration” in the song.²³ Indeed, the orchestration of this *mélodie* is quite dense; Duparc employs a full brass section, including four horns, two trumpets and three trombones. Northcote also draws parallels between *La vague et la cloche* and the symphonic poem *Lénore* (1874) after the ballad by Burger that appeared several years later. The features of orchestration and the motivic elements reveal some of the characteristics that became part of *Lénore* several years later.²⁴ Thus, it is worth emphasizing to what extent Duparc’s symphonic thinking dictated the compositional language he chose for this setting.

Needless to say, the piano cannot compete in its resonance with such powerful instrumental forces at certain points of the song; however, the ultimate goal of the pianist is to cleverly distribute the amount of intensity and energy in the layers of the texture in order to create an illusion of turbulence coming from the poetry without smashing the instrument and overpowering the voice. Thus, the study of orchestration is a helpful tool for conceptualizing the soundscape of this song; the orchestral timbres need to be taken into account and included in the sound picture here in order to recreate the sense of scope that is unique for this song.

It is interesting to note that piano is actually included in the orchestration of this song; thus its timbre is meaningful for the composer also in the case of the orchestral version. However, its employment is saved until the ‘bell’ section in order to use the characteristically percussive and ringing timbre of the piano to its full advantage.

An interesting example of orchestration occurs in the ‘bell’ section of the song: in the orchestral version of the section the instruments gradually add up, each continuing to play its

²³ Northcote, Sydney. 1949. *The songs of Henri Duparc*. London: D. Dobson, p. 94.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

own pattern. This creates a considerable dynamic build-up that leads to the powerful *tutti ff* in bar 79, when the sinister bell is in its full swing in the song's climax (Examples 37 and 38).

Example 37: Duparc, *La vague et la cloche*, mm. 78-83

The image displays two systems of musical notation for Example 37. The first system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment for the first three measures. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "lourd ba.lan - cement." and features a melodic line with eighth notes. The piano accompaniment consists of a complex rhythmic pattern of triplets in the right hand and a more rhythmic bass line in the left hand. The second system continues the piece, with the vocal line starting at "Pour - quoi n'as - tu pas" and the piano accompaniment featuring a dynamic marking of *mf* and a *dim. molto* instruction. The piano part includes several triplet figures and a *p.* marking in the bass line.

Example 38: Duparc, *La vague et la cloche*, orchestral score, mm. 79-82

The image displays a page of a musical score for Example 38, consisting of two systems of staves. The first system includes staves for various instruments and voices, with dynamic markings such as "dim. molto" and "pp". The second system includes staves for voices and instruments, with dynamic markings such as "dim. molto" and "pp". The score is written in French and includes the instruction "Un peu plus large" at the beginning of each system. The tempo is marked "dim. molto". The score is for measures 79-82 of the piece.

Since all of those orchestral voices could not be included in the piano version, it is important to cleverly balance the existing layers of the piano texture in order to sustain the gradual *crescendo* on the one hand, and not to overpower the voice with the percussive tone of the instrument on the other hand. It is likewise important for the performer to make the climax of the song (bars 79-81) sound powerful to the utmost extent; since in this instance the voice does not sound, the question of balance does not ask for any compromise. The climax requires the use

of the full weight of the arm in order to achieve the biggest possible sonority inspired by the orchestral *tutti* from the orchestral version.

Another interesting instance in terms of orchestration can be observed in bars 40-41; here too the orchestration may inspire finding specific timbres on the piano (Examples 39 and 40).

Example 39: Duparc, *La vague et la cloche*, mm. 40-43

Musical score for Example 39, showing vocal and piano parts. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The piano accompaniment is in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The vocal line includes the lyrics "Puis, tout chan-gea..." and "suivez". The piano part includes dynamic markings such as *piu p*, *mf*, and *pp*. A box highlights a specific passage in the piano accompaniment.

Example 40: Duparc, *La vague et la cloche*, orchestral score, mm. 40-43

Orchestral score for Example 40, showing various instruments. The score includes parts for Flutes (1st and 2nd), Clarinet in B-flat, Bassoons (1st and 2nd), Horns (1st and 2nd in C, 3rd and 4th in F), Trumpets (1st and 2nd in C), Trombones (1st, 2nd, and 3rd in F), Piano obbligato, and Double Bass. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mf molto*, *pp*, and *dim. molto*. A box highlights a specific passage in the Trombone 1 part. The vocal line at the bottom includes the lyrics "Puis... tout chan-gea..." and "suivez".

The first long chord is marked *ff* and in the orchestral version is executed by the brass instruments, while the second one is marked *piu piano* and is executed by woodwinds as seen in Example 40.

From a performance standpoint, instead of measuring how exactly quieter the second chord should be in relation to the first one, I decided to imagine or ‘hear’ the juxtaposition of the brass and the woodwind timbres of the orchestra through these chords of the piano. It proved to be a helpful interpretative solution in finding the right timbre on the piano by means of distinguishing the attack. I apply a weightier touch and pedal on the first chord, while using a more precise finger attack and releasing the pedal on the second one, thus allowing for more clarity and precision of tone. As a result, the two chords are treated in a different way as though they were played by different instruments - an interpretational nuance that could only be inspired by the orchestral version of the song. The example of this fragment shows that knowing the orchestration and trying to hear the orchestral timbres through the resonance of the piano might be a helpful interpretational strategy in such a complex accompaniment as Duparc’s.

3.3 Role of the Accompaniment in Shaping the Structure

Like in *L’invitation au voyage*, the accompaniment in *La vague et la cloche* fulfills a task of shaping the structure of this large-scale song. Piano prelude, interludes and postlude play a significant role in the structure of the song; they set the scene before each section and make links between sections, thus shaping the structure of this lengthy *mélodie*. As mentioned above, the through-composed form principle, quite uncommon for the *mélodie* genre is used here, reflecting the narrative quality of the text.

It is interesting to observe the structural aspect of the accompaniment on the example of the ‘bell’ motive that can be conceptualized as a cyclic motive in this song. The motive’s very first appearance in bar 42 represents the switch from the first nightmare scene on the sea to the

second one on the bell tower. It is the first time when the recognizable double-dotted rhythmic pattern of the bell appears. This switch in the texture supports the text: “Puis tout changea” (Examples 39 and 40).²⁵

The second time this characteristic double-dotted rhythmic motive appears in bar 55, directly before the start of the ‘bell’ section (Example 41).

Example 41: Duparc, *La vague et la cloche*, mm. 55-56



The same motive then plays a key role in the build-up to the climax of the song, being consistently present in the texture of both orchestral and piano versions and symbolizing the horrifying inescapable bell in its full swing (Example 42).

Example 42: Duparc, *La vague et la cloche*, mm. 60-62



²⁵ “Then everything changed.”(Translated by author, TD).

It then briefly appears in the last section of the song in measures 86-87 as an ominous memory (Example 43) and finally in the postlude, where it is marked *piano* and thus sounds as a distant echo, concluding the sinister setting (Example 44).

Example 43: Duparc, *La vague et la cloche*, mm. 84-89

dit, o rêve, où Dieu nous mène?..

Pour - quoi - n'as-tu pas

dim. molto

sffz

Example 44: Duparc, *La vague et la cloche*, mm. 99-106

a Tempo *poco rit.* a Tempo

-mai ne!

a Tempo a Tempo

suivez

p

ppp

From the interpretative standpoint it is important to reveal each appearance of this ‘bell’ motive as it cements the structure for the biggest part of the setting. It is likewise crucial at any dynamic level to sustain the double-dotted rhythmic nature of the motive using the percussive nature of piano to its full advantage.

As we can see from the discussion, the fact that the orchestral version of the song appeared prior to the piano version is likely to have influenced its large-scale structure and its dense textures. The intensity of emotion and the contrasts in mood indicate that Duparc might have conceived it as an operatic scene. Thus, the unique scope of this song and the complexity of its accompaniment make it stand out from the song repertoire.

However, there is some controversy in reception of this song. Cooper claims that this is one of Duparc’s songs that seemed, “to suffer from the typically Franckian failing of elaboration for its own sake.”²⁶ Davies concludes his generally favourable analysis of *La vague et la cloche* by stating that “there is nothing quite like it in the entire literature of the voice.”²⁷ In my opinion, in this song Duparc successfully reconciled his large-scope orchestral and operatic thinking within the relatively small frame of the song genre. Using the compositional devices and sonorities applicable to larger compositions, he created the work of utmost emotional intensity in the genre of a song.

²⁶ Cooper, Martin. 1961. *French music, from the death of Berlioz to the death of Fauré*. London: Oxford University Press, p. 63.

²⁷ Davies, Laurence. 1967. *The Gallic muse*. London: Dent, p. 40.

Chapter 4. *Phidylé*

4.1 Duparc and Fauré

Phidylé is a later composition of Duparc. It is a setting of a poem of Leconte de Lisle, in which the protagonist is watching his beloved one in her sleep on the countryside and anticipating the moment of passion after the sunset. The song is distinguished by the richness and sensuality of the harmony and the intensity of melodic expression.

In order to put this work in context it is worth pointing out that, according to Hall, the introduction of *Phidylé* relates Duparc with Fauré more than any other case.²⁸ This is not a mere coincidence, as Fauré's early *mélodies* were in a sense exemplary for Duparc. Duparc was known, for instance, for his admiration of Fauré's *Lydia* (1870).²⁹ Although these two composers' creative output is seemingly different in terms of quantity and style, there are some common features in their writing, as was discussed in Chapter 1 in connection to works for piano. Thus, an instance of their similarity can be found through the examples of the piano introductions and the general mood at the beginnings of the above-mentioned *Lydia* by Fauré and *Phidylé* by Duparc (Examples 45 and 46). Not only are the emotional mode and the simplicity of the textural layout similar, but we also can observe a similarity in the use of the raised fourth in bars 4 and 5 of both examples. This is Fauré's signature melodic device attributed to his frequent employment of the Lydian mode.

²⁸ Hall, James Husst. 1953. *The art song*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, p. 165.

²⁹ Stove, Robert James. 2012. *César Franck: his life and times*. Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press, p. 138.

Example 45: Fauré, *Lydia*, mm. 1-7

Andante.

Ly-di-a sur tes

Andante.

sempre dolce.

Ped. *

roses jon - es Et sur ton col frais et si blanc, Roule é

Example 46: Duparc, *Phidylé*, mm. 1-6

Lent et calme *doux et sans nuances*

L'herbe est molle au sommeil — sous les frais peupliers, —

PIANO

p

Aux pen-tes des sour-ces moussu - es, Qui dans les prés en

However, here the similarities end. The complexity of Duparc's writing reflected in the song's bold tonal plan, multi-layered textures and diverse pianistic vocabulary makes *Phidylé* stand outside the more traditional frame of the *mélodie* genre as expounded by Fauré. Such a

simple and transparent beginning of the song is quite deceptive – it suggests a more modest continuation than the one that follows.

4.2 Structural Organization by Means of Accompaniment

Laurence Davies refers to *Phidylé* as to “the most symphonic of all the composer’s sixteen melodies.”³⁰ In relation to this view, several key observations as to the role of the accompaniment in the song’s structural organization are noteworthy. They relate *Phidylé* to the examples from symphonic repertoire and attest to the idea of Duparc’s primarily orchestral thinking in some of the *mélodies*.

The first one is related to the pacing in the piano part, which in its turn is closely connected to the poetry and its depiction of either more static or more active stages of the narrative. The song starts with a quarter-note accompaniment and goes into the eighth-note pulse in the refrain (“Repose, o Phidylé”); it is then followed by one bar of triplet-note pulse and an extended section of sixteenth-note flow in the accompanying voices as seen in Table 4.

Table 4: Duparc, *Phidylé*, pacing of the piano part

Note values – pulse	Measure numbers
Quarter-note	1-10
Eighth-note	11-21
Eighth-note triplet	22
Sixteenth-note	23-39
Eighth-note triplet	40
Eighth-note	41-48
Quarter-note	49-53
Thirty-second-note	54-76

³⁰ Davies, Laurence. 1970. *César Franck and his circle*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co, p. 172.

According to Barbara Meister, the sixteenth-note pace in measures 23-39 creates “an effect of increased movement”³¹ and it supports the poetic text that depicts the humming bees and the birds acting in their natural habitat. It is noteworthy that the harmonic pulse, however, is not fast; in the sixteenth-note fragments the harmony only changes either one or two times per bar. Starting from bar 40, as seen in Table 4, the pulse changes go in the opposite direction – from sixteenth notes to triplets, then to eighth notes – until the piano interlude in bars 54-56 where the thirty-second-notes appear in the texture leading to the song’s climax.

This rhythmic pacing cements the structure of the song, making its various sections sound unified. From the interpretative standpoint it is important to follow all these rhythmic nuances without changing the tempo, unless otherwise indicated by Duparc. As can be seen from the score, the composer is very precise in his tempo markings. Strict adherence to them would make the performance more convincing from a structural point of view.

4.3 Cyclic Motive

The use of a cyclic motive is another significant aspect of structural organization by means of accompaniment. As can be seen on the examples of the previous songs, this compositional device was one of Duparc’s favourites; however, in *Phidylé* it reaches its height. Not only does the cyclic motive appear in both refrains of the song, but it serves as a basis for the extended postlude.

The cyclic motive in *Phidylé* presents a significant example of accompanimental interaction with the voice line in the refrains of the song, where it acts as a countermelody. It starts off and develops from where the voice finishes its phrase (Example 47).

³¹ Meister, Barbara. 1980. *Nineteenth-century French song: Fauré, Chausson, Duparc, and Debussy*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, p. 262.

Example 47: Duparc, *Phidylé*, mm. 10-15

The musical score for Example 47 consists of two systems. The first system (measures 10-15) includes a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "liers. Re - po - se," and ends with "ô Phidy - lé." The piano accompaniment features a "rall." marking in measure 10, followed by "A tempo très doux" in measure 11, and "pp" in measure 12. The second system (measures 16-21) continues the piano accompaniment with the marking "expressif et soutenu".

Moreover, Duparc employs contrary motion in these instances: the voice concludes its line in descending motion by four scale degrees from the subdominant to the tonic (see measures 13-14 of Example 47), while the countermelody in the accompaniment displays an ascending motion either by semi-tone, as in bars 13-14, or by scale degrees from the subdominant to the tonic, as in bars 19-20 of Example 48.

Example 48: Duparc, *Phidylé*, mm. 19-21

The musical score for Example 48 shows measures 19-21. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "vite au som. meil." The piano accompaniment features a "vite" marking in measure 19 and "som. meil." in measure 20. The score is in B-flat major and 3/4 time.

Particularly in the latter case, a significant two-octave distance between the two registers is formed due to this contrary motion on the F in measure 20. Thus, the two lines – the melody of the voice and the countermelody of the accompaniment – demonstrate an expressive timbral interaction through this juxtaposition of registers.

The interpreter should be sensitive to the resonance that this timbral interaction produces and should convey the *legato* phrase of the countermelody as the continuation of the voice line. In terms of touch and articulation this poses a significant challenge for the pianist. Due to the layout of the texture, almost the entire melodic top line can be executed by the fifth finger only; therefore, this *legato* phrase is deprived of the possibility of literally connecting some of the notes with the fingers. Thus, the *legato* can only be attempted by means of the pedal and imagination of the performer. The latter calls for hearing the orchestral timbres through the piano line; this interpretative approach may help to create an illusion of connection between the pitches.

In the orchestral version of the song the cyclic motive, or the countermelody, is played by either the woodwind instruments (oboe in the motive's first appearance in bar 13, clarinet and bassoon in the second refrain, in bar 43) or a combination of a woodwind and a brass instrument (flute and horn in the first refrain, in bar 19). All these orchestral timbres inspire smooth connections between the notes of the melody, thus, a relaxed wrist position that allows for wrist flexibility is needed from the pianist to achieve this fluid quality in the countermelody.

The extended postlude is also based on the cyclic motive; it provides the climax of the setting and evokes yet again the multi-layered orchestral sonority of a symphonic poem. This postlude especially demonstrates that in terms of texture, colour and nuance, Duparc's thinking might have been inspired by the orchestral timbres in the first place and that this song is somewhat reminiscent of the genre of symphonic poem. The texture of this postlude consists of four layers, including the deep-bass tonic pedal point, tremolos and two-part melodic line as seen

in Example 49. The interpreter needs to distinguish these layers by means of touch and distribution of weight in order to recreate the sense of scope that this postlude presents.

Example 49: Duparc, *Phidylé*, mm. 68-77

The image shows a musical score for Example 49, Duparc's *Phidylé*, measures 68-77. The score is in 3/4 time, B-flat major, and consists of five systems of piano music. The first system includes a vocal line with the lyrics "- te!" and piano markings *f* and *poco a poco dim.*. The second system has *sempre dim.*. The third system has *sempre dim.*. The fourth system has *poco marcato* and *sempre dim.*. The fifth system has *pp* and ends with a double bar line and repeat sign.

4.4 Harmony and Tonal Plan

The harmonic features of the song are common for Duparc's style overall. These are: German-sixth chords, seventh chords, pedal basses, and colourful harmonic juxtapositions. There are two harmonies that reappear at several points in the structure, thus cementing the form. For

the interpreter it is important to recognize these moments, since they play a certain role in organizing the large-scale shape of the song.

These two harmonies (the German-sixth chord, resolved by common tone into the tonic) appear in the opening of the song (Example 50). The ending of *Phidylé* is based on the same combination of harmonies and is in fact a textural elaboration of the beginning (Example 52). The same harmonies also occur in bars 57-58, after a brief piano interlude leads into the final phase of the song's development (Example 51).

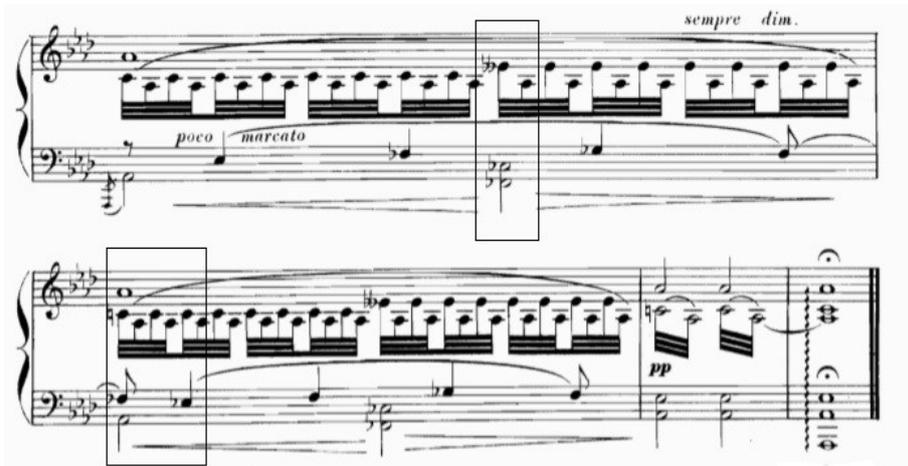
Example 50: Duparc, *Phidylé*, mm. 1-3

Musical score for Example 50, measures 1-3 of Duparc's *Phidylé*. The score shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The tempo is "Lent et calme" and the mood is "doux et sans nuances". The lyrics are "L'herbe est molle au sommeil sous les frais peupliers,". The piano part features a German-sixth chord in the right hand and a tonic chord in the left hand, which are resolved by a common tone into the tonic.

Example 51: Duparc, *Phidylé*, mm. 57-58

Musical score for Example 51, measures 57-58 of Duparc's *Phidylé*. The score shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are "l'Astre, in cli - - - né sur sa courbe é - cla -". The piano part features a German-sixth chord in the right hand and a tonic chord in the left hand, which are resolved by a common tone into the tonic.

Example 52: Duparc, *Phidylé*, mm. 74-77



Another significant aspect of this song is its bold tonal plan. This aspect relates *Phidylé* to *Feuilles volantes*, discussed in Chapter 1. The bigger outline of it can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5: Duparc, *Phidylé*, tonal plan

Measure numbers	Key
1-10	A-flat major
11-21	F major
22-25	E major
26-27	B-flat major
28-33	D major
34-40	E-flat major
41-77	A-flat major

As we can see from this outline, Duparc widely uses distant keys with both sharps and flats; he freely juxtaposes their tonal colours, often without organizing functional modulations. At times he employs common-tone connections between the harmonies, which makes these juxtapositions sound at once unpredictable and very organic. This significant feature of Duparc's style brings associations with his early piano pieces yet again.

Conclusion

In summary, I would like to stress again that in the genre of *mélodie* the complexity of the accompaniment and the various ways it shapes the structure reaches its height in Duparc's songs. According to Noske,

For Duparc the piano's role is no longer that of an accompaniment, since the instrumental part contributes as much to the poetic expression as the voice.³²

Having the composer's own orchestrations available for study is essential for a pianist, who can gain enormously from observing the orchestral timbres employed by Duparc and from trying to hear them through the piano accompaniments. The role of accompaniment in shaping the structure of the songs, particularly the more extended ones as *La vague et la cloche* and *Phidylé* is likewise unique for Duparc. As discussed above, such feature of his style comes from his symphonic and operatic aspirations and is reflected in the wide use of cyclic motives, countermelodies, and unifying harmonies.

Duparc's *Feuilles volantes*, the early set of pieces for piano, provided a good starting point for the discussion of his style and, more specifically, his piano writing. Thanks to these survived works, we can trace the evolution of Duparc's compositional technique and find the common features of his harmony between this early opus and his late songs. In my belief, these pieces deserve to be heard more often in concerts and recordings.

The scope of Duparc's songs and the grand scale of their piano parts are the features that make his contribution to the genre of *mélodie* a considerable one – if not in terms of the quantity of compositions, then surely in terms of their musical quality.

³² Noske, Frits, and Rita Benton. 1970. *French song from Berlioz to Duparc: the origin and development of the mélodie*. New York: Dover, p. 285.

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