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## ***Pièces pour Harmonium* by Cesar Franck**

### **A musical essay on composition and invention.**

#### ABSTRACT

The collection of Cesar Franck, commonly encountered under the misleading title “L’organiste,” consists of a series of compositions in groups of seven pieces, bound together in a progressive ordering by semitone in major and minor tonalities. The series was composed, according to an original annotation on the autograph manuscript, for the harmonium. The importance of these “small” compositions is great, especially because they reveal a neat image of what music education and music composition could have meant for C. Franck during the last years of his life. They constitute a summa of his art of composing. Inside the ordering progress of these groups the composer exploits, in a methodical way, some of the most characteristic elements of music composition. He, therefore, presents techniques and rudiments related to the form and the content of music composition, and to performance practices. An illustrative presentation is the purpose of this article which will try to expose, in an analytical manner, the construction of the ordering of these pedagogical rudiments, aiming to shed new light on the importance and authenticity of this collection.

## Introduction

The series of compositions by César Franck, which we often find under the erroneous title “L’organiste,” is probably among the most misunderstood works of the composer from the point of view of artistic quality. The first edition of César Franck’s “L’organiste” appeared in 1892 and was published by Enoch editions in Paris. Following this first edition, others appeared after the composer’s death in 1890: the second volume of the Enoch editions in 1905 annotated with the fingering of Charles Tournemire, Franck’s successor at the St. Clotilde church (Flor 1972, p. 395), the edition was still under the responsibility of Charles Tournemire in 1934 and 1935; the Schott edition in 1997 in which Gunther Kauzinger presented all the existing compositions of the collection (63 pieces), adding the last four compositions of the last completed series; and more recently the Leduc edition in 1998 by Joël-Marie Fauquet and Joris Verdin, which proposed an important supplement of critical notes in several languages (Near 2002, p. 459). The year of 1892, date of the publication of the first edition, was most probably the time when, historically, the pieces for harmonium acquired the erroneous title “L’organiste” since Franck himself had left a handwritten note in the autograph regarding this issue: “Pièces pour Harmonium”<sup>1</sup> (Tchorek 2007, pp. 337-397).

It would be possible to say that the reason for this lack of recognition was also due to the small size of the compositions included in this long series<sup>2</sup> (Graces 1922, p. 840), as will be shown in the following pages. With this, we can perhaps associate the notoriety of the instrument for which they were composed, the harmonium (compared to the organ or the piano), though the same instrument “enjoyed considerable popularity in the salons of French high society” (Near 2002, p. 459). Nevertheless, the musical reality of these salons apparently did not represent the main stream of composers of this era. Thus, the use of the harmonium was not particularly frequent outside

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<sup>1</sup> Today we know it more commonly with the title "The Organist" but apparently and as Fauquet and Verdin inform us, in page xiii of the autograph manuscript we find an annotation by the hand of the composer "Pieces for harmonium". I thus think that no misunderstanding can be perpetuated concerning the supposed title and in particular the essence of this collection: the 63 compositions were written for the harmonium. From the other hand, it is possible to argue, that Franck was able to create confusion on the score by providing the term “organ” even if the harmonium was concerned. It is the case of the arrangement of his prelude, variation and fugue.

<sup>2</sup> As H. Graces wrote in a clear way: “Every year we sit through dozens of orchestral works and scores of violin and pianoforte solos that are longer, duller, and of infinitely less value than the pick of Franck’s twelve organ pieces”. The situation does not seem to have changed greatly over the years”.

these salons, nor did it have “a high profile among music instruments,” as Near points out<sup>3</sup>. On the other hand, Franck was keen on composing music of larger dimensions and formal structures, fully integrating himself through his music language into the French Romantic period. Consequently, this series of small compositions may have appeared as minor, compared with the others on his list.

These are perhaps the most important causes that, although they permitted this collection of compositions to acquire some fame, did not allow their full appreciation vis-à-vis Franck’s other works. I may be permitted to argue that even today, the lack of an in-depth and focused music analysis continues to prevent recognition of this collection, though the same appears to change for Franck’s other works (Schneider 2008, pp. 241-244), which essentially remains hidden or out of reach of auditors, researchers and musicians. At the most, it is marginally taught inside an organ conservatory class to undergraduate students, but almost never outside the ranks of organists and their congregations.

Thus, I would like to make a modest contribution to a re-evaluation of this series of small compositions by César Franck. It is my conviction that these pieces for harmonium constitute a summa (a sort of manual) of compositional techniques and, in general, of the art of composing as perceived, professed and practiced by Franck. It should also be remembered that Franck composed this work during the last years of his life; and so I am of the opinion that they should be given the most appropriate attention because they represent the final style of Franck as a composer<sup>4</sup> (Roe 1980, pp. 690-691). I cannot elude the fact that a comparative analysis with Franck’s other works in his last days could significantly influence the results of research on this Harmonium collection. It would, therefore, be appropriate to conduct a parallel search with works such as *Fantasia*, *Cantabile*, *Pièce Héroïque*, the transcriptions for the organ, and the three Chorals. Having acknowledged this deficiency, however, may I be permitted to focus on the score without providing other comparative elements.

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<sup>3</sup> Near gives the names of some, few, well known composers that have written music for this instrument, or have arranged music for it: Hector Berlioz, Louis Vierne, Charles-Marie Widor, Camille Saint-Saens, René Vierne, Alexandre Guilmant as well as Antonín Dvořák,

<sup>4</sup> Franck has been active until the last days of his life. The three organ chorales and their later sketches dated 30 September 1890 are a consistent proof of this fact.

A manual of composition.

The importance of these small compositions is inestimable from various points of view, but above all, they give a clear idea of what music teaching and music composition could have meant for Franck. In his progression with work he methodically presented all those elements of teaching that were important to him, in a cyclical way. Elements that concern both form and content (techniques) of composition as well as performance practice are systematically and methodically exposed. It may seem inappropriate to point out that every composer, in a personal way, always associates himself or herself intrinsically with the compositions he or she brings to light. This personal link lends different hues to one's works that are difficult to define precisely and to comprehend from the results of a music analysis. In the case of this collection, however, the attention of the composer is focused on the presentation of compositional techniques, having at his disposal elementary and reduced music forms, so as to make their didactic aspect even more evident. Franck did not want to create a music-riddle for the reader. This is why he methodically arranged different kinds of compositions as well as compositional techniques in a clear and progressive way. He intended to deliver a clear message.

It should not be necessary to thoroughly analyze the compositions in order to acknowledge that their writing style is not precisely meant for the organ (though they can be played extremely well on it and perhaps they did). Several elements are able to demonstrate this fact, for example, the absence of the pedal and of harmonically rich and consistent backgrounds, which are present on the contrary in his organ works. The instrument, Gabriel-Joseph Grenié's "expressive organ" as perfected by the Mustels (Tchorek 2007, p. 338) (August Victor during the years of César Franck and later Alphonse) was already expressive (notably because of its free reeds) and Franck did not need to enhance it through his writing. Nevertheless, despite the clear instrumental destination of this collection (as stated by the composer), we find in the score elements that concern specific performance practices—piano accompaniment, choral writing or organ invention—appropriate for other keyboard instruments (Figure 1). This assertion may be considered as an element that demonstrates the multi-faceted objective of this collection. Franck intentionally composed in different writing styles. Figure 1 presents some of the most characteristic writing styles that are

exploited in the series; and among others, it is possible to find a clear pianistic writing style (accompanied melodies), contrapuntal writing style (fugato and canons) and an organ-choral style.



a. Melodic accompaniment (piano type), a5.



b. Choral writing, g6.



c. Contrapuntal writing with pedal imitation (organ type), f3.



d. Two voice-invention writing, f5.



e. Contrapuntal writing (accompanied canon), e6.

The musical score consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system features a treble clef staff with a single chord and a bass clef staff with a melodic line starting on a half note, followed by eighth notes. The second system shows more complex contrapuntal textures with multiple voices in both staves, including sixteenth-note passages and sustained chords.

f. Contrapuntal writing (fugato), a7.

The musical score is a short fugato in common time. The treble clef staff contains a rapid sixteenth-note melodic line with a dotted rhythm. The bass clef staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and a steady eighth-note bass line.

g. Prelude writing, f7.

Figure 1. Different types of performance and composition practices.

In the later years of Franck's life, the harmonium was able to perform melodic lines (thus replacing monophonic solo instruments) and served as an accompanying instrument as well. Present in the salons and also in some of the parishes that could not afford an organ, its usefulness doubled. Nevertheless, the questions remains, for which specific harmonium did Franck compose his works and for what purpose? It is rather impossible to answer this question as it could have given us

elements to better understand the purposes of this collection which undeniably constitutes an exemplary style of composing of César Franck. A pedagogical work? A work for posterity? A work for the ordinarium? A summa of César Franck as a composer? I think that we can with some hesitation accept the synthesis of these four hypotheses as the ultimate goal of this collection. Yet, it should not be forgotten that Franck was primarily an organist and church musician and, therefore, the religious context of this collection should not be lost sight of (Grace 1922, p. 842).

### The constitution of the series

The series consists of nine groups of seven compositions each, with a supplement of four manuscript compositions that were first included by Kauzinger in the 1997 edition. These groups are arranged chromatically from the tonality of C to that of Ab (Figure 2), although originally Franck planned to compose one hundred pieces. The collection is made up of 63 compositions, which today are listed in four existing sources, and apparently Franck did not have the time to complete it. Thus, the collection remains incomplete. The series is composed of short pieces which, even if short, cannot be considered humble as stated recently (Near 2002, p. 460). Apparently, the initial drawing would have foreseen the completion of the cycle with at least all the tones of an octave, from C to B. Thus, those in A, Bb and B should be considered at least as the missing part of the collection. The construction of each group progresses in a similar way and is finalized in the last piece of each one of them (often called “offertoire” or “sortie”) in which Franck uses a technique that he greatly appreciated: that of the addition of preceding elements often called “cyclisme” (Figure 3).

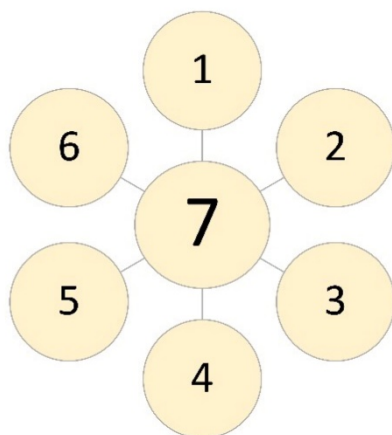
Series	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<b>Tonality</b>	<i>C +/-</i>	<i>Db+ /C#-</i>	<i>D +/-</i>	<i>Eb+/-</i>	<i>E +/-</i>	<i>F +/-</i>	<i>F#- /Gb+</i>	<i>G +/-</i>	<i>Ab +</i>
<b>Compositions</b>	<i>1-7</i>	<i>1-7</i>	<i>1-7</i>	<i>1-7</i>	<i>1-7</i>	<i>1-7</i>	<i>1-7</i>	<i>1-7</i>	<i>1-3 + 4</i>
<b>Totaling of compositions</b>	59								4

**Figure 2. The structure of the series.**



It is true that each series takes into consideration a specific element in order to exploit it, which I would characterize as “personal.” It is thus impossible for us to have a clear idea about how Franck interpreted his works, on the organ or on the harmonium (Archbold 1988, p. 59 ; Flor 1972, pp. 499-500). Although a musicological term could be attributed to this personal element (provided by music analysis), it would not always be appropriate because the evolution and development of the music discourse in the series often acquires more subjective connotations such as general mood, use of stops, intrinsic rhythmic progression, or other characteristic “piece titles” commonly in use during this period (Tchorek 2007, p. 331). However, in trying to decipher a global drawing, it is possible to acknowledge that Franck’s method of composition is based mainly on three points: form, compositional techniques and execution practice. His vision on composition is consequently global and embraces the totality of the series. That is, these three axes are taken under consideration for the entire cycle of compositions.

Each group is composed of seven compositions which find their apex in the last one, which always serves as a stand where part of what has been exposed so far (inside the series) can be reproduced, whether elaborated or not. Also, this in-group procedure does not preclude an exchange of material between different groups.



**Figure 3. Concentration of material inside the last composition of each group.**

Furthermore, the construction of every group is based on a different element (a specific technique, a rhythm, a melody, or a harmonic background), although within three parameters that seem to remain fixed for them: form, technique and performance. This means that Franck had a clear idea of the progression of the 63 compositions based on these three fundamental aspects. Consequently, in this arrangement of compositions we find different genres and forms (Figure 4). The method of approach for these three parameters remains unaltered, but the content (the specific technique) may differ substantially.

<b>Form</b>	<b>Technique</b>			<b>Performance</b>		
<i>ABA, AB, AA, A</i>	<i>Transformation</i>	<i>Combination</i>	<i>Evolution</i>	<i>Piano</i>	<i>Organ</i>	<i>Harmonium</i>
<i>Choral</i>	<i>Rhythm</i>			<i>Accompaniment</i>		
<i>Canon</i>	<i>Syncopation</i>	<i>Off-beat</i>	<i>Arpeggio</i>	<i>Orchestration</i>		
<i>Fugato</i>	<i>Diminution</i>		<i>Augmentation</i>	<i>Stops</i>		
<i>Prelude</i>	<i>Harmony</i>					
<i>Marche</i>	<i>Inversion</i>	<i>Reversion</i>	<i>Chromatism</i>			
<i>Variation</i>						
<i>Melody</i>						

**Figure 4. Techniques used in the series and the three basic parameters.**

In Figure 4, we see a synoptic array of the most recurrent elements used by Franck: the form (pre-established or invented), the compositional and elaboration techniques (on harmony, rhythm and writing style) and the performance practice (piano, organ or harmonium styles).

The compositions present simple structural forms (ABA, AB or AA) which often are applied on pre-established compositional outlines. Thus we find a constellation generated by chorals, canons, fugati, preludes, marches, and variations as well as compositions written on pre-existing melodies<sup>5</sup>. At the same time, the compositional techniques that are employed demonstrate an intention to create a summa, a kind of composition manual in miniature. Among the most important techniques, we find elaborations on rhythm (syncopations, off-beats) as well as harmony (double

<sup>5</sup> Some preexisting melodies that are being used are: *Chant de la Creuse* (16), *Vieux Noël* (20), *Prière* (31), *Air Bearnais* (43), *Chant Bearnais* (41), *Vieux Noël* (51), *Noël Angevin* (52 and 54).

counterpoint, inversions, reversions) and, more generally, an effort towards rhetorical progression of the musical discourse through continuous transformations and combinations of elements.

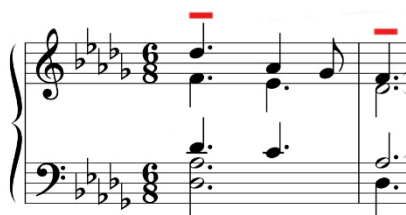
Regarding the overall structure of the series, I would like to bring in as an example the second group as it is rather characteristic of Franck and represents his method of composition (Figure 5).

Overall N°. of Series	Tonality	In Series N°. & Elaboration of preceding material	Characteristics	Techniques	Form	Grouping in sections	
<b>b</b>							
8	Db / C#	Db	1	Chant, Interval inversion	Rhythm	AB	1 <sup>st</sup>
9		Db	2 (1)	Harmony & Voices inversion	Rhythm	ABA (canon)	
10		Db	3(1)	Variation, Elaboration of cadences	Rhythm (x2)	ABA'	
11		C#	4	Minuet (piano), Voices inversion	Rhythm		2 <sup>nd</sup>
12		C#	5	Prelude (piano)	Rhythm		
13		C#	6 (1) (5) (6)	Prelude, Harmony, Rhythm, Interval inversion	Rhythm	AB	
14		Db	7 (1) (1+4) (2+4) (6) (4) (1)	All elements, Inversion & Reversion (1)			

Figure 5. Overall structure of the second series (b).

In this group, Franck decided to work mainly the rhythmic aspect of the compositions particularly by making use of the technique of inversion and reversion, the latter being the exchange of the positioning of the voices (flipping). The seven pieces included in this group are divided into three sections (1–3, 4–6 and 7) and each one of them re-elaborates material especially from its own section. As has already been said, exception is made to the seventh and last piece which re-elaborates eventually elements from all the other pieces of the group. In order to give some vivid examples, I present some elaborations as they can be found inside the b7 which represents the apex

of the entire group. These examples show only some parts of the relocated material inside the b7 (Figure 6).



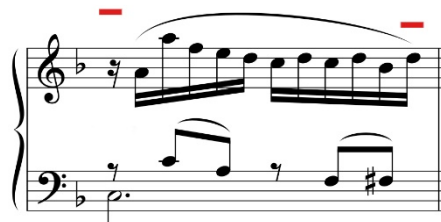
a. Presentation of the opening of b1 (bb. 1–2, b7).



b. Presentation of material of b2 (bb. 22–24, b7).



c. Presentation of material of b2 in red signs and of b6 in green signs (bb. 28–29, b7).



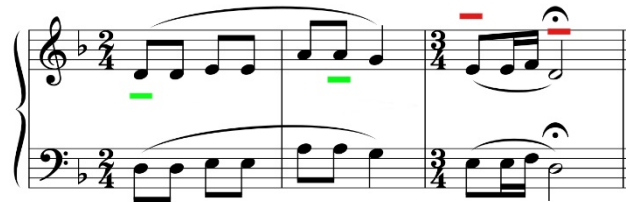
d. Presentation of material of b4 (b. 40, b7).

Figure 6. Elaboration techniques inside the b7.

Generally, as far the whole series is concerned, the elaboration of a common element inside a group can bring to the fore different characteristics that are not always easy to individuate as they can be subject to interpretations. Nevertheless, every group presents a clear evolution of the music discourse which in the case of the third one (in D) is based on a melodic elaboration. That is, a characteristic melodic pattern is taken up and exploited in several pieces of the group. In this way, Franck succeeds in creating an internal global unity, at the same time by elaborating a single technique: melodic invention. The examples in Figure 6 show the method of elaboration of a basic melodic pattern, which is examined through its rhythmic effects (the anapest in red signs in Figure 7) and the direction of its intervals (especially at the end of a phrase). The green signs indicate an arpeggio effect (as direction) common in c2 and c5, which could be found with a looser interpretation in c1 and c3 as well.



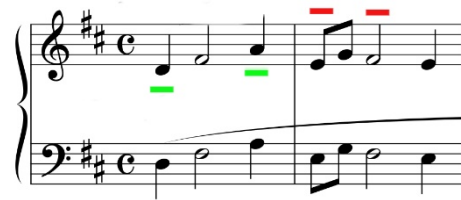
a. (c1).



b. (c2).



c. (c3).



d. (c5).

Figure 7. Melodic relation among different pieces of the same group (c, 1, 2, 3 and 5).

A similar effect takes place in the group in G (h), in which the melodic evolution of its fragments creates the same result as in the third one (Figure 8), that is an evolution of the melodic fragment based on development and elaboration. Figure 8 shows in colored signs the relation among the basic melodic segments (especially the h1) inside different compositions of the same group (h). This segment appears inverted (h1 to h4), elaborated (h1 to h2 and h3), and elaborated as well as inverted (h1 to h5).

Figure 8 consists of five musical examples, labeled a through e, illustrating the evolution of a melodic fragment. Each example is presented in a grand staff (treble and bass clefs).

- a. (h1, basic element):** Shows a melodic fragment in G major, 2/4 time. The treble clef contains a sequence of notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter). The bass clef contains a simple accompaniment. Red horizontal lines are placed above the first two notes (G4 and A4) in the treble.
- b. (h2):** Shows the fragment in G minor, 3/4 time. The treble clef contains: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter). The bass clef contains a simple accompaniment. Red horizontal lines are placed above the first two notes (G4 and A4) in the treble.
- c. (h3):** Shows the fragment in G major, 3/4 time. The treble clef contains: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter). The bass clef contains a simple accompaniment. Green horizontal lines are placed above the first two notes (G4 and A4) in the treble.
- d. (h4):** Shows the fragment in G major, common time. The treble clef contains a more complex, rhythmic elaboration of the fragment. The bass clef contains a simple accompaniment. Red horizontal lines are placed above the first two notes (G4 and A4) in the treble.
- e. (h5):** Shows the fragment in G minor, 3/8 time. The treble clef contains: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter). The bass clef contains a simple accompaniment. Red horizontal lines are placed above the first two notes (G4 and A4) in the treble.

Figure 8. Melodic evolution and relation among different compositions of the same group (h, 1–5).

Besides the use of a specific technique in each piece or group, Franck has also elaborated the overall morphological structure of each series as a whole. These composite and sometimes

complex outlines indicate the premeditation level of the composer, as they present a calculated scheme of relocation of the same material inside a single group. By these means, Figure 8 shows a simple use of this artifact, that is, an almost mere relocation (whether slightly elaborated or not) of several parts of other compositions inside the last one of the group in F (f). Apparently, the form that better allows Franck to use this relocation process is the three-part form in ABA.

<b>Series &amp; piece</b>	<b>Internal parts</b>	<b>Material used</b>
<b>f7 Sortie</b>	<i>A</i>	<i>from f4, f2, f1</i>
	<i>B</i>	<i>from f3, f2</i>
	<i>A</i>	<i>from f4, f2, f1</i>

**Figure 9. Elaboration of material inside a final (7<sup>th</sup>) ABA form, f7.**

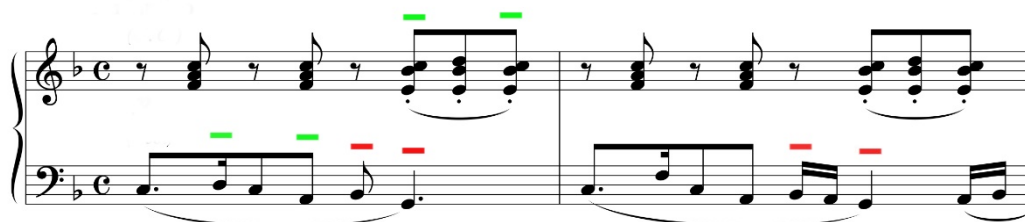
In the above figure (9), we can see the relocation of elements of preceding compositions of the group, which have been used inside the last one (the 7<sup>th</sup>). In this particular case, the relocation has been made to specific and predetermined parts of the last composition (ABA) as well. That is, Franck decided what to relocate and where to relocate it. The seventh piece of the group uses an ABA form and every part of this form uses elements that can be found in preceding pieces of the same group (f4, f2, f1 in A, f3 and f2 in B and f4, f2, f1 in the final A). A thoroughly detailed representative table or figure would be needed to show the interrelation of all the elements (or patterns in a broad sense) that have been relocated inside f7, mainly because they can be found everywhere. Franck does not only relocate a specific element from a preceding composition to the final one in order to elaborate it. He also elaborates it while he advances from the first composition to the last one. By these means, a basic element (pattern), which has its origin in the first composition of the group, can be found in any other (elaborated or not) before being relocated to the last one. Thus, he succeeds in creating a continuous procedure of elaboration (evolution) inside the whole group, which gives unity to the group and the evolution of the musical discourse.

In the f group (and in order to present some characteristic examples, figure 10) the anapest rhythm accompanied by syncopation (bb. 24-25, f1) is being reintroduced in an elaborated form in f2 (the syncopation in b. 1 and the anapest in b. 2). The anapest continues as the most relevant rhythmic pattern in f3 (bb. 2-17). The syncopation and the repeated notes (found in b.1-end in f1

and b. 1-end in f3) constitute the main characteristic of all the f4. It should be observed that a more detailed analysis will certainly reveal stricter relations among the compositions. In this way, a pattern, before reaching its final destination in the seventh composition, has already been significantly elaborated during the progression of the group. That is why, even if a pattern has not yet been relocated inside the final composition of a group, some of its structural characteristics can already be found inside it (as a natural evolution of their elaboration). The actual method of relocation stands as a clear sign of repetition of a pattern; but on the other side, the continuous elaboration of a pattern can be acknowledged as more concealed.



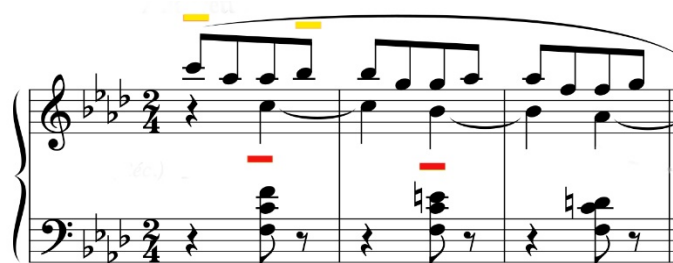
a. (f1, bb. 24–25).



b. (f2, bb. 1–2).



c. (f3, bb. 1–2).





d. (f4, bb. 1–2).

**Figure 10. Elaboration of material inside the f group, rhythmic evolution. Anapest and syncopation (red), repeated notes (yellow), three notes pattern (green).**

Most frequently, this kind of relocation considers harmonic modulations, melodic elaborations and interval modifications of the original patterns, though it is not uncommon for Franck to relocate a specific structure (an original pattern) without modifying it. Although it could be difficult to define precisely the terms “pattern” or “structure” that are being relocated, usually they can be designated as polyphonic environments, characteristic harmonic successions, characteristic melodic and rhythmic patterns and segments or a combination of all of them. The example of the f group (in F+/F-) constitutes a rather simple model that exploits the technique of relocation, because in other groups this same technique (of relocation) and elaboration creates structures of major complexity and premeditation.

It is the case of the g group in F#/Gb (figure 11) which stands as one of the most elaborated in the whole collection. The overall structure of the seventh composition of the group is again an ABa form, though more elaborated with the addition of a Coda. Franck creates a miniature three-part form which is based on the grand ABA' one. I believe that the didactic subjacent objective of the exploitation of the ABA' form should be considered as certain in this case and generally in the whole collection.

Series & piece	Form	Material used from (relocation and/or elaboration)	Technique
<b>g 7</b>	<i>A</i>	<i>g5, g2, g4</i>	<i>g5, g2, augmented</i>
	<i>B</i>	<i>g4, g6</i>	<i>g6 in binary</i>
	<i>a</i>	<i>g5, g2, g4</i>	
	<i>Coda</i>	<i>g6, g4</i>	<i>g6, g4 in diminution and inversion &amp; reversion</i>

**Figure 11. Structure of the seventh (last) composition of the g group in F#-/Gb+.**

An examination of the above figure makes evident the level of premeditation required in the construction of the last composition of this group. Franck has foreseen a tripartite structure (Aba) with the addition of a final Coda. Thus, the construction of each one of its sections (ABa Coda) contains elements of the previous compositions of the group (A of g5, g2, g4, B of g4, g6, etc.). The composer is not, however, limited to a simple relocation of elements of the previous compositions (g1–6) inside the last one, but he elaborates (transforms) them in a very significant way. More precisely in A, the elements taken from g5 and g2 are partially augmented. In B, the elements taken from g6 are transformed into a binary tempo and those used for the coda (notably of the g6) are diminished and inverted by employing also a reversion of voices. In this way, Franck not only relocated previous material in the last composition of the group, but he also focused on the following actions:

Creation of the Aba + Coda, form.

Distribution of previous elements inside the new form in a coordinated manner (5, 2, 4 – 4, 6 – 5, 2, 4 & 6, 4).

Choice of a specific technique for each section (Aba + Coda): Augmentation (A) – tempo modification (B) – elaboration (a) – diminution/inversion/reversion (Coda).

It should be noted that due to the small size of the pieces, the application of these compositional techniques may seem elementary. In other words, Franck does not have the space to expand these

processing phenomena. They are, therefore, applied on segments and on very small elements, and the interpretation of which can sometimes be debated. Nevertheless, the highly elaborated structure of these small compositions cannot in any way be considered a coincidence even if it is subject to interpretations.

## Conclusion

With this analytical approach, I hope that I have been able to give a clearer idea of the complexity and premeditation with which Franck created this work. It is worth mentioning that the entire collection of compositions is homogeneous and a factor of this unity is always a specific element in each of the groups. It is therefore difficult to define in precise terms the substance of this progression (its manifestation) without the risk of making a subjective interpretation. This unity becomes evident especially when one plays the compositions. Often, Franck examines an element (a rhythm, a phrase, a technique, or a melody) which becomes a vehicle of unity and connection within each group. In this way the compositions, although different in form and in genre, acquire a relation within the same group so as to create the impression of one composition divided into parts. Moreover, the continuous interchange of elements taken from the different compositions of each group enhances their already strengthened relation.

In order to obtain an image of this collection as a whole, I believe that attention should be given to Franck's improvisation skills. It is my opinion that many of the compositional techniques employed by Franck are essentially related to his mastery of improvisation. By this I do not mean to exclude or even minimize his premeditated compositional strokes in the series. What in musicology is defined as an elaboration of a pattern may have been for Franck a free inventiveness during improvisations (literally during playing time). The rhetorical continuity of his musical discourse (the evolution and development of all the musical elements) betrays a natural way of improvisation that sometimes may seem abrupt (especially in regard to harmony), but it always has a rhetorical direction to an end. The rhythmic evolution and development comes naturally and passes from one composition to another without insinuating a premeditated process of composition, though it always exists.

Today, we do not have sufficient information on these novel compositions for an appreciation and evaluation of this collection; and understandably, many questions about it have not yet been answered (or even posed). Among them I may mention: Which is the ultimate purpose of the collection and for which precise instrument were they composed? I believe we can admit the fact—as already mentioned by others—that these compositions have a place in the religious sphere, as is evident from their characteristic titles and as can be found in their sources (offertoire, sortie, or known melodies). Thus, we are not in a position to argue about the religious background of the collection. It has been documented that Franck as a musician had a religious background despite having a relative lack of knowledge of religious and polyphonic music as a composer (Schneider 2008, p. 244).

Unfortunately, I cannot affirmatively react to this statement. For Franck, that was a late composition and represented his mature compositional style. It must be mentioned that Franck remained active and a prolific composer until the last years of his life (quartet in D, sonata for violin in A, and various pieces for organ); so the hypothesis that these small compositions might represent the style of a composer in his declining years must be discarded.

The *Pièces pour Harmonium* is a collection of free forms based on elements of different nature, where progression and relation is manifested by the use of a precise element for each group. Inside the collection we find a constellation of techniques and practices that follow one another, ordered by semitone. The outline of the groups inside the series and the relation among the compositions inside each group are highly premeditated; so are the techniques that are employed each time. We must not forget that among the qualities of Franck, we must also recognize those of a music teacher (having had many illustrious disciples). In my opinion, more than pedagogical, the purpose of this collection is perhaps that of a personal *summa* of the art of composing, left to us by the composer. I may be permitted to translate it into French as “L’Art de Toucher la Composition.” However, the way the material is presented (in short, defined pieces) also adds to the collection a strong didactic connotation that cannot in any way be neglected. It seems to me highly improbable for a composer (especially an organist), after Bach, to compose a keyboard collection of pieces by semitone without necessarily alluding to an educational purpose.

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Annex<sup>6</sup>.

N°	Tonality	Number	Characteristics	Techniques	Form	
<b>a</b>						
1	C +/-	C+	1	Prelude	x2, Counterpoint	ABA
2		C+	2	Free	x2, Counterpoint	ABA
3		C+	3	Harmony		AB
4		C-	4 (2)	Rhythm (2)		AA
5		C-	5	Accompaniment, A + elaboration. (piano)	Subject	A → Elaboration
6		C-	6 (5) (1)	Inversion (5), rhythm (1)		A → Elaboration
				AMEN		
7	C+	7 (1) (5+1) (6)	OFFERTOIRE – Choral, variation 1,2, elaboration double (5+1), melody + rhythm, FUGATO	Elaboration	A-Fugato-A	

N°	Tonality	Number	Characteristics	Techniques	Form	
<b>b</b>						
<b>INVERSION</b>						
8	Db+ / C#-	Db+	1	Canto, interval inversion	Rhythm	AB
9		Db+	2 (1)	Harmony, elaboration rhythmic (1) canon with voice inversion	Rhythm	ABA Canon "all'ottava"
10		D+	3 (1)	Variation (piano) elaboration of the cadences	Rhythm (binary)	ABA'
11		C#-	4	Minuet (voice inversion)		
12		C#-	5	Prelude (piano)	(Rhythm)	
13		C#-	6 (1) (5) (6)	Prelude, harmony, rhythm, interval inversion, AMEN, interval inversion	Rhythm Rhythm	AB
14		D+	7 (1) (1+4) (2+4) (6) (4) (1)	All elements, inversion, cancer mvt. (1)		

N°	Tonality	Number	Characteristics	Techniques	Form	
<b>c</b>						
<b>MELODY</b>						
15	D +/-	D+	1	Introduction	Rhythm	AB
16		D-	2	CHANT DE LA CREUSE	Rhythm (16)	A → Elaboration
17		D+	3 (2)	Rhythm, (piano)	Rhythm (16)	
18		D-	4	New Ouverture, chorale, variation, fugato	Fugato	AB
19		D+	5 (2)	Rhythm (known melody)	Rhythm	A → Elaboration
20		D-	6	VIEUX NOEL (known melody), rhythm		AB
21		D+	7 (1) (5) (2) (1+3+5) (1) (2) (5) (1+7)	OFFERTOIRE, All elements, AA variation, inversion AMEN, elements		

N°	Tonality	Number	Characteristics	Techniques	Form	
<b>d</b>						
22	Eb +/-	Eb+	1	Introduction, arpeggios, choral	Major - Minor	Free
23		Eb+	2	Harmony, pianistic, accompaniment		A → Elaboration
24		Eb-	3 (1)	Choral, harmony		AA'
25		Eb+	4	Accompaniment, stops, (diphony)		AB
26		Eb+	5 (1)	Accompaniment (piano), arpeggios, (diphony)		A → Elaboration
27		Eb-	6 (1) (6) (1)	Choral AMEN		AB
28		Eb+	7 (1) (4) (5) (1)	OFFERTOIRE, All elements, inversion, harmony	Major - Minor	

<sup>6</sup> These tables provide information about the general morphological structure of each group, together with related material in regard to the tonality, main characteristics and techniques as well as the form. They do not constitute an exhaustive source and are subject to interpretation. They should therefore be considered as an analytical guide.

N°	Tonality	Number	Characteristics	Techniques	Form
<b>SYNCOPE</b>					
<b>e</b>					
29	E-	1	Accompaniment, Albertini, x2, pianistic	Syncopation	ABA
30	E-	2 (1)	Syncopation	Syncopation	
31	E-	3	PRIERE, choral, harmony	Syncopation	
32	E+	4 (1)	AB, orchestration, choral	Syncopation	A → Elaboration
33	E+	5 (4) (1) (2)	Inversion, elaboration	Syncopation	ABA
34	E+	6 (3)	Canon "all'ottava", x2		
	E+	(6) (3)	AMEN		
35	E-	7 (3) (1) (1+3) (6) (1+2+3) (4)	OFFERTOIRE (COMMUNION), harmony, canon, x2	Mixed, Syncope,	

N°	Tonality	Number	Characteristics	Techniques	Form
<b>OFF-BEAT - PIANISTIC</b>					
<b>f</b>					
36	F+	1	Introduction, prelude		A → Elaboration
37	F+	2 (1)	Piano, dipphony, accompaniment	Off-beat	ABA
38	F-	3	Piano, counterpoint	Off-beat	AB
39	F-	4	Piano, syncopation, accompaniment	Off-beat	AB
40	F+	5	Piano, accompaniment	Off-beat	
41	F-	6 (4) (5)	Harmony (melody)	Off-beat	
	F+	(1) (6)	AMEN		
42	F+	7 (4) (2) (1) (3) (2) (4) (2) (1)	SORTIE, elaboration, canon, syncopation, counterpoint		Grand ABA

N°	Tonality	Number	Characteristics	Techniques	Form
<b>MELODIE (ABA)</b>					
<b>g</b>					
43	F#-	1	AIR BEARNAIS		AA
44	Gb+	2	CHANT BEARNAIS, Albertini, accompaniment, Piano		ABA
45	F#-	3	Accompaniment, piano, Rhythm, x2		ABA
46	Gb+	4 (2)	Choral, harmony, x2, inversion		
47	F#-	5 (3)	Piano, dipphony, rhythm, accompaniment, 16, piano,		ABA
48	Gb+	6	Syncope		ABA
	F#-	(4)	AMEN		
49	F#-	7 (5) (2 (4) (4+6) (4+6) (5) (2) (4) (6+4)	OFFERTOIRE FUNEBRE, elaboration Rhythm, elaboration mixed		ABA

N°	Tonality	Number	Characteristics	Techniques	Form
<b>COUNTERPOINT</b>					
<b>h</b>					
50	G+	1	Prelude, Free form		Free
51	G-	2	VIEUX NOEL	Counterpoint	AB
52	G+	3	NOEL ANGEVIN, pedal, Siciliana	Counterpoint	AB
53	G+	4 (1) (3)	Inverse, prelude-harmony	Counterpoint	ABA
54	G-	5 (3)	NOEL ANGEVIN, piano, variation		AB
55	G-	6 (4) (5) (1)	Pedal, Siciliana, Rhythm		AB
	G+		AMEN		
56		7 (3)(5) (4) (3+6) (3+5) (5)	Elaboration		

N°	Tonality	Number	Characteristics	Techniques	Form
<b>j</b>					
57	<b>Ab+</b>	1	<i>Rhythm, grave</i>	<i>Rhythm</i>	AA
58		2	<i>Harmony</i>		AB
59		3	<i>Piano, diphony accompanied</i>	<i>Counterpoint</i>	ABA
<i>(ms)</i>					
60	<b>Ab+</b>	4			
61		5			
62		6			
63		7	OFFERTOIRE		

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