LOUIS VIERNE’S *PIÈCES DE FANTAISIE*, OPP. 51, 53, 54, AND 55: INFLUENCE FROM
CLAUDE DEBUSSY AND STANDARD NINETEENTH-CENTURY PRACTICES

Hyun Kyung Lee, B.M., M.M.

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APPROVED:

Jesse Eschbach, Major Professor
Charles Brown, Related Field Professor
Steve Harlos, Committee Member
Justin Lavacek, Committee Member
Benjamin Brand, Director of Graduate Studies
of the College of Music
Warren Henry, Dean of the College of Music
Costas Tsatsoulis, Dean of the Toulouse
Graduate School

The purpose of this research is to document how Claude Debussy’s compositional style was used in Louis Vierne’s organ music in the early twentieth century. In addition, this research seeks standard nineteenth-century practices in Vierne’s music. Vierne lived at the same time as Debussy, who largely influenced his music. Nevertheless, his practices were varied on the basis of Vierne’s own musical ideas and development, which were influenced by established nineteenth-century practices. This research focuses on the music of Louis Vierne’s *Pièces de fantaisie*, Opp. 51, 53, 54, and 55 (1926-1927). In order to examine Debussy’s practices and standard nineteenth-century practices, this project will concentrate on a stylistic analysis that demonstrates innovations in melody, harmony, and mode compared to the existing musical styles.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION
Purpose and Significance of Research

The purpose of this research is to document how Claude Debussy’s compositional style was used in Louis Vierne’s organ music of the early twentieth century. In addition, this research explains standard nineteenth-century practices in Vierne’s music. This research focuses on the music of Louis Vierne’s *Pièces de fantaisie*, Opp. 51, 53, 54, and 55 (1926-1927). In order to examine Debussy’s practices and established nineteenth-century practices, this project will concentrate on a stylistic analysis that demonstrates innovations in melody, harmony, and mode compared to the existing musical styles. Also, this project will examine how Louis Vierne’s *Pièces de fantaisie*, Opp. 51, 53, 54, and 55 blend Debussy’s new style with established nineteenth-century practices.

Debussy’s compositional style was significantly different compared to the previous Romantic era and were considered as great innovations at that time. Debussy (1862-1918) used whole-tone scales, pentatonic scales, and chords in parallel motion. He advanced traditional tonality, applied the use of mode, and expanded harmonies such as ninth and eleventh chords.¹ Debussy’s music influenced French organ composers as well as many musicians beyond national lines.² Among them, Vierne’s works will be examined to understand how he used Debussy’s practices along with established nineteenth-century practices, especially how César Franck’s style was applied to creating Vierne’s own musical identity. Vierne (1870-1937) lived at the same time as Debussy and was largely affected by his music. Nevertheless, his practices were

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varied on the basis of Vierne’s own musical ideas and development. While research of Vierne’s organ music does contain standard nineteenth-century practices, existing research of Vierne’s music is lacking a comparative study focusing on the differences between Debussy and the nineteenth-century practices.
CHAPTER II
LOUIS VIERNE BIOGRAPHY

Louis Vierne (1870-1937) is one of the most renowned organists in French organ history. Born in 1870, he was raised by Henri Vierne and Marie-Joséphine Gervaz in Poitiers, department of Vienne. He was nearly blind as a child because of congenital cataracts. Charles Colin, his uncle who was an oboe professor at the Conservatoire de Paris and organist at Saint-Denis-du-Saint-Sacrement, first recognized Vierne’s musical talents and counseled his father to encourage his son to pursue a musical career. When Vierne was five years old, his sight was partially restored because of Dr. Wecker’s surgery. Because of this, he was able to recognize people, big letters, and objects.

Colin accompanied Vierne to listen to César Franck (1822-1890) at Sainte-Clotilde in 1880. Vierne was deeply inspired by Franck’s playing. Colin introduced the organ in Saint-Denis-du-Saint-Sacrement to Vierne and showed him organ playing and improvisation in April 1881. After Colin’s death in July of 1881, Vierne entered the Institut National des Jeunes Aveugles where Franck taught organ. And he enthusiastically concentrated on learning musical instruments such as piano, organ, and violin as well as studying solfège, harmony, and composition. In addition, he participated in an orchestra and string quartet. In 1886, his father died and that year, Vierne won a first prize in piano and violin in each division. Also, he received a first prize in organ and composition at the institution in July 1890. Franck recognized his musical talent and Vierne officially became Franck’s student at the Conservatoire de Paris in October 1890. However, Franck died only one month later. Although cut short, Franck’s

5 Vierne, Memoirs of, 12.
teaching of counterpoint and improvisational techniques largely affected Vierne’s music.⁶ Vierne took classes such as organ, composition, improvisation, counterpoint and fugue, and plainsong at the Paris Conservatory. After winning the second prizes in organ in 1892 and 1893, Vierne finally received the first prize in 1894.⁷

Charles-Marie Widor (1844-1937) was appointed as the successor at the Conservatoire de Paris and Vierne became a pupil of Widor. Because Widor studied with Jacques-Nicolas Lemmens (1823-1881), Widor strictly trained Vierne in pedal technique, but also concentrated on legato techniques for manuals such as common tones, repeated notes, and strict legato in all parts. Widor also taught him organ based on Bach’s chorale preludes, which were not previously known to French organists. Vierne had a close relationship with Widor and dedicated his Symphony No. 1 (1898) to him.

Alexandre Guilmant (1833-1911) was also an important professor to Vierne. After Widor’s position changed to that of composition professor at the Conservatoire de Paris, Guilmant succeeded him as organ professor. Vierne learned technique and registration, as well as the application of symphonic style for organ from Guilmant.⁸ He also learned how to employ timbres such as mutations and mixtures rationally.⁹

In 1900, Vierne became the organist at Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris and worked there thirty-seven years until his death. He played a significant role alongside César Franck, Alexandre Guilmant, and Charles-Marie Widor in the development of French organ symphonic

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⁷ Vierne, Memoirs of, 7-11.
⁸ Vierne, Memoirs of, 6.
works and he succeeded in continuing the tradition of French symphonic organ works.\textsuperscript{10} From the late nineteenth century, the emergence of Impressionism in France resisted the emotionalism of Romanticism, and as a result of the emergence of this new style, Vierne’s compositional style also gradually evolved. When Vierne composed \textit{Pièces de fantaisie} between 1926 and 1927, his compositions freely reflected Debussy’s practices.

\textsuperscript{10} Kasouf, Edward J. "Louis Vierne and His Six Organ Symphonies." Order No. 7022717, The Catholic University of America, 1970. 1.
CHAPTER III

STUDY OF PIÈCES DE FANTAISIE, OPP. 51, 53, 54, AND 55

Influence from Debussy

Debussy was one of the most influential composers of twentieth-century music. Debussy’s stylistic innovations, compared to the previous Romantic era, included chords in parallel motion, whole-tone scales, pentatonic scales, use of mode, expanded harmonies, and the expansion of traditional tonality. Specifically, this chapter will concentrate on practices employed by Vierne from Debussy’s influence rather than traditional nineteenth-century practices.

Vierne composed Pièces de fantaisie for a fundraising recital to support restoration of the organ at the cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris. Each of four collections Opp. 51, 53, 54, and 55 consists of six movements. Vierne’s Pièces de fantaisie belongs to his latter period of compositions and shows a free use of various musical styles.

Parallelism

Debussy used parallelism in thirds, perfect fourths, perfect fifths, sixths, and octaves as well as minor and major seconds, sevenths, ninths, and tritones. The following examples display chromatic parallelism in major thirds (Examples 1, 2, 3 and 4).

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In the *Aubade*, Op. 55, parallelism in diatonic thirds is found in the manuals (Example 5).


Like Debussy and Ravel, Vierne frequently employed parallel fifths. Use of planing is one of the representative twentieth-century practices. For example, Satie used planing, which is defined as parallel motion by stacked chords (Example 6). In addition, Debussy’s *Pour le piano* is an example of contrary motion (Example 7). Kostka, in *Materials and Techniques of Twentieth-Century Music*, states:

Ravel makes consistent use of parallel 5ths in the lowest register. Parallel 5ths also occur in chordal parallelism, a very important development in twentieth-century music. Other uses of harmonic parallelism included parallel 07 chords and, less frequently, parallel ø7 chords. Harmonic parallelism, so typical of much twentieth-century music, is often referred to as ‘planing.’ Parallelism may be ‘diatonic,’ meaning that it uses only the white

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keys of the piano or some transposition of them, or ‘real,’ meaning that the sonority is exactly transposed.\textsuperscript{14}

Example 6: E. Satie, \textit{Le Fils des étoiles, La Vocation}, mm. 1

Example 7: Debussy, \textit{Pour le piano, Sarabande}, mm. 6-7

Vierne’s \textit{Andantino} appears in measure 5-6 (Example 8).

\textsuperscript{14}Kostka, Stefan M. \textit{Materials and Techniques of Twentieth-Century Music}. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Prentice Hall. 2011. 75
The expression of wisps is reminiscent of impressionist piano pieces using chromaticism, linear melody, fast rhythm, as well as chromatic tertian planing of half diminished seventh chords (Example 9).


Also, the chromatic parallel practice defines the sonority being played: diminished and half diminished seventh chords (m. 103) and dominant seventh chords (mm. 104-105) in the manuals over the trilling in the pedal at the end of *Étoile du soir* (Example 10).

The use of parallel quartal harmonies in the manual is used as the main feature in the beginning of *Les cloches de Hinckley* (Example 11).


*Sur le Rhin* begins with a majestic sound and uses planing in measure 92-95; however, it feels empty because of the omitted thirds (Examples 12).

![Whole-tone scale example](image)

Whole-tone

The whole-tone or pentatonic scales are characteristic features used in Debussy’s music. Debussy used melody in innovative ways. When he developed a theme, he knowingly departed from traditional practices making his themes feel more vague and suggestive. Innovations that Debussy used were the whole-tone scale, pentatonic scale, and a resurgence of the church modes. Nineteenth-century practices were still continued but only employed in different and new manners.¹⁵ The following examples by Debussy show the whole-tone scale moving in parallel major thirds (Example 13) and the whole-tone scale in parallel octaves (Example 14). Whole-tone scales by Vierne also convey a mysterious mood (Example 15). Another example of the whole-tone scale and alternating whole-tone motives appear in *Feux follets* (Examples 16 and 17).

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Example 13: Debussy, *Prelude, Book I, Voiles*, mm. 1-4

Example 14: Debussy, *Images, Reflets dans l’eau*, mm. 44-47


Use of Mode

Mode is one of Debussy’s compositional characteristics that was used to blend tonality and modality. Vierne selectively employs the use of the modal scales. A main theme of Caprice consecutively appears in various parts such as soprano, tenor, and bass, indicating D Aeolian mode. Meanwhile, the parallel quartal and quintal harmonies appear in the left hand (Example 18). The Aeolian mode is regarded as the natural minor scale in modern usage. The formula is 1, 2, flat 3, 4, 5, flat 6, and flat 7 of the major scale. Thus, D Aeolian mode is D-E-F natural-G-A-B flat-C natural. There is no raised leading tone in measures 1-5 (C natural instead of C sharp).

Example 18: Vierne, Pièces de fantaisie, Op. 51, Caprice, mm. 1-5

Also, the main theme in Requiem aeternam shows a modal scale. For example, the subject in the pedal at the beginning shows G Aeolian mode in mm. 2-14 (Example 19). In addition, the inverted subject in the pedal in mm. 26-33 indicates the E-flat Aeolian mode (Example 20).

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16 Frazier, Maurice Duruflé, The Man, 110.
On the other hand, the soprano scale in *Naïades* shows an E Lydian modal scale (Example 21).


The pedal scale in *Les cloches de Hinckley* shows a C Phrygian modal scale (Example 22).
Extended Harmonies and Added Chord Tones

Debussy did not treat tertian harmonies, like seventh and ninth chords, as dissonant harmonies (Examples 23 and 24). Schmitz, in *The Piano Works of Claude Debussy*, states:

> Our understanding, then, of consonance and dissonance in Debussy, as in any composer, will be based on what the harmonic ‘norm’ of the particular passage under observation is, and not on a preconceived notion, which already in the romantic movement would not have held true. For the seventh and ninth chord, already in powerful effect in Schumann, invade the Wagnerian harmony, with the capital difference that these ‘dissonant’ chords are now treated as consonances, as resolutions, as conclusions and cadences.\(^\text{17}\)

Example 23: Debussy, *Rêverie*, mm. 11-12

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\(^{17}\) Schmitz, *The Piano Works*, 24
Example 24: Debussy, *Prelude*, Book II, *Canope*, mm. 30-33

![Example 24: Debussy, *Prelude*, Book II, *Canope*, mm. 30-33](image)

Vierne occasionally uses extended tertian harmonies, such as the seventh, ninth, and eleventh. He extends the E chord by adding the ninth at the end of the phrase in *Andantino* (Example 25).


Vierne also uses a B-flat extended chord in *Intermezzo* (Example 26).

![Example 26: Vierne, *Intermezzo*, mm. 2](image)
Marche nuptial shows continual extended chords by adding the seventh, ninth, and eleventh over the melodic pedal line (Example 27).


Even though theorists like Rameau recognized that an added tone like the sixth, already appeared in the eighteenth century, chords with added tones, frequently seconds or sixths rather than fourths, became part of the harmonic language during the twentieth-century. Vierne also used added chord tones (Example 28).

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*Fantômes* is clearly marked “for concerts only” and Vierne was excluding this piece from liturgical use. This piece is divided conceptually by sections imitating dialogues between seven characters. The main musical features represented are parallelism, unison, and extended tertian harmonies (Example 29).


![Example 29: Vierne, *Pièces de fantaisie*, Op. 54, *Fantômes*, mm. 1-6](image)

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Expanding Upon Tonality

*Andantino* starts in A minor and ends in A major, the parallel major. The melody in the first section shows a melodic minor scale. Subsequently, even though tritones blur the tonality as a dissonant harmonization of the A minor scale, a minor tonality is not completely destroyed because of the coexistence of the melodic minor scale (Example 30).


The whole-tone scale, one of the characteristic features of impressionism, appears in Debussy’s music. The tonality of B minor in *Feux follets* becomes ambiguous because of a vast amount of dissonant sounds by using tritones (Example 31).
The ending of the first A section in F-sharp major in the *Résignation* features the planing of two distinct sonorities, which enharmonically represent half diminished seventh chords and French sixth chords in measures 28-29. Vierne notated them without regard to common practice tonal function, as appropriate to this passage. And the ending clouds the tonality by using tritones in measure 30 (Example 32).


On the other hand, contrasting chords vertically coexist in some sections. These practices are called “bichords or polychords.”\(^{20}\) Also, the use of bitonality is employed in the opening of

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Debussy’s *Brouillards* (Example 33).\(^{21}\) Kostka, in *Materials and Techniques of Twentieth-Century Music*, states:

A polychord combines two or more chords into a more complex sonority, but it is crucial that listener be able to perceive that separate harmonic entities are being juxtaposed if the result is to be a true polychord. Any 11\(^{\text{th}}\) or 13\(^{\text{th}}\) chord could be explained as a combination of two simpler sonorities, but this would be an incorrect analysis if we do not hear them that way.\(^{22}\)

Example 33: Debussy, *Prelude*, Book II, *Brouillards*, mm. 1

![Example 33](image)

Vierne’s *Hymne au soleil* in measure 92 uses a D augmented dominant chord of G in the manual with a C chord in the pedal before returning to G (Example 34).


![Example 34](image)


\(^{22}\) Kostka, *Materials and Techniques*, 68.
Finally, the relationships between symbolism in literature and Impressionism in painting and music were inextricably connected and influenced each other greatly. Impressionism applied to the French visual arts in the late nineteenth century and spread throughout both literature and music. Artists did not describe detailed image contours but momentary impression; in the same way, musicians sought moods and feelings inspired by the subject rather than a meticulous tone-picture. Impressionism is regarded as a significant artistic movement in the early twentieth-century. Even though the term Impressionism in French visual art initially emerged through critical reviews by a traditional art group, it became a huge epochal trend in the arts. The representative artists of this trend such as Camille Pissarro (1830-1903), Edouard Manet (1832-1883), Edgar Degas (1834-1917), Claude Monet (1840-1926), and others had disregarded traditional styles and challenged themselves to create a new visual approach. Not only had they deviated from portraying an object in detail, but they also described artists’ instantaneous impression in order to express spontaneity and novelty. In addition, they had abandoned drawing in studios to emphasize the role of sunlight. They were interested in conveying the objects’ nature through sunlight, so weather and time are the most important variables to consider when describing a momentary impression. Also, the painters used new color combinations to portray the momentary changes.

In literature, symbolism was linked to literary Impressionism and spread among the French poets in the late nineteenth century. In the same way as painters, Symbolists pursued a new approach different from Romantic literature: Symbolists redefined the word itself under a more free-form by deviating from the existing meaning of each word and concerning themselves with the nuance of words more than the contents of languages. They used a suggestive method to

express a mystic world symbolically rather than a realistic description. They employed ambiguous and connotative expression through symbolic words and were interested in rhythm and pitch in combination with other words. According to Stefan Jarociński’s, *Debussy Impressionism and Symbolism*, the French symbolists reinstated the true role of words as the Impressionists had done with color. The symbolists tried to use language in a skillful way with unorthodox relationships and highly regarded not only a word’s meaning, but also its sound.

According to Paul Henry, music brings an image, the image leads to mood, and the mood is effused in the title. These relationships are well depicted in music such as *Clair de lune* in Vierne’s *Pièces de fantaisie*, Op. 53 (Example 35).

Example 35: Vierne, *Pièces de fantaisie*, Op. 53, *Clair de lune*, mm. 82-87

![Example 35: Vierne, Pièces de fantaisie, Op. 53, Clair de lune, mm. 82-87](image)

Vierne expresses the melody lyrically in *Clair de lune* while he uses regular motion in the left hand over a pedal tone.

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25 Cooksey, Impressionistic Aspects, 7-8.
Even though Debussy is considered the most representative Impressionist composer, Debussy rejected the term “impressionism.” Frazier states in *Maurice Duruflé: The Man and His Music*:

Early studies of impressionism delineated parallels between color and sound, it is true, such that a connection could be seen between impressionism in art and impressionism in music. The critic Camille Mauclair suggested, for instance, that ‘light is used in Impressionist painting in the manner that a theme in music is symphonically developed.’ He continues, ‘The landscapes of Claude Monet are in fact symphonies of luminous waves, and the music of Monsieur Debussy, based not on a succession of themes but on the relative values of sounds in themselves, bears a remarkable resemblance to these pictures. It is Impressionism consisting of sonorous patches.’ But the word impressionism, as a musical term, began as a pejorative, and Debussy considered it ‘a useful term of abuse.’

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CHAPTER IV

INFLUENCE OF STANDARD NINETEENTH-CENTURY PRACTICES

Vierne’s Pièces de fantaisie, Opp. 51, 53, 54, and 55 use standard nineteenth-century practices such as style, form, contrapuntal techniques, and registration. Franck, Widor, and Guillemant were three organists who influenced him. \(^{27}\) First of all, Vierne was greatly affected by his teacher, Franck, especially through his musical style, forms, contrapuntal techniques, as well as manual techniques such as thumb glissando and fingering crossings used for the right hand ascending passages (5-4-5). Franck is one of the most influential musicians in French organ history. Other important students of Franck include Ernest Chausson, Alex de Castillon, Henri Duparc, and Charles Tournemire. \(^{28}\) Frazier, in Maurice Duruflé: The Man and His Music, states:

In Franck’s case, on the contrary, melody predominates over texture, as it does in most works by nineteenth-century composers. Franck’s organ works may be performed only upon the organ, and with the registrations indicated by the composer. It is impossible to transcribe them for another instrument without changing their character. \(^{29}\)

In fact, Vierne indicates the registration himself and the emphasis on melody can be found anywhere in Pièces de fantaisie.

Contrapuntal Techniques

Canon is a technique used by many composers such as J. S. Bach, Haydn, and Franck. The canon technique in Franck’s music can be seen in the following examples. A canon clearly appears in Fantaisie in C, the second theme of the first section. It also shows the practice of the combining of themes, which was used by Beethoven. The other theme starts in the soprano in measure 29 (Example 36).

\(^{27}\) Frazier, Maurice Duruflé, 31.
\(^{28}\) Cooksey, Impressionistic Aspects, 3.
\(^{29}\) Frazier, Maurice Duruflé, 112.
Example 36: Franck, *Six pièces, Fantaisie in C*, mm. 17-40

The *Andante* of *Grande Pièce Symphonique* has a short canon in manuals over the pedal (Example 37).
Vierne learned canon from Franck and it is one of the most common practices in Franck’s compositions. Wright, in *The Musical Contributions of Five French Organ Composers from Widor to the Present Time*, states, “To Franck, Vierne owed his excellent treatment of the modern French idiom, his skillful use of canonic imitations, and his ingenious combining of themes.”⁴⁰ A theme in the B section of Vierne’s *Étoile du soir* is developed by the use of a canon (Example 38).

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⁴⁰ Wright, Mary Elizabeth. *The Musical Contributions of Five French Organ Composers from Widor to the Present Time*. 1941, 43.
In the middle section of *Les cloches de Hinckley*, canon is employed in the right hand and pedal.

Additionally, Vierne’s *Pièces de fantaisie*, Opp. 51, 53, 54, and 55 include occasional fugato techniques. Fugato has been used since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and usually contains only an exposition.\footnote{1} For example, a theme in *Cathédrales*, Op. 55 is used in the pedal in measures 3-11 and measures 24-32, starting on the A as the tonic of A major. The real answer begins on E, the dominant of A in the soprano part in measures 43-50, and the last subject develops in measures 90-102.

The main theme of *Requiem aeternam* starts on B (the third scale degree of the G Aeolian mode) in the pedal in measures 2-14 and repeats the subject in the soprano part in measures 14-

26 (refer back to Example 19). Vierne inverts the theme using an E-flat Aeolian mode in the pedal in measures 26-38 as a tonal answer (refer back to Example 20). Finally, the subject appears in unison in the manual and develops through measures 51-78. Like *Requiem aeternam*, Vierne includes inverted melodies in *Prélude*, Op. 51. After the first theme of *Prélude* in the pedal in measures 3-23, an inverted melody appears in measures 51-74 (Example 39).

The first note of the subject in the pedal, B, in *Les Cloches de Hinckley*, Op. 55 is the dominant of E major in measure 11. An inverted melody starts on F in measure 16 as the real answer, the subject again appears in the pedal in measure 21, and the tonal answer begins in C as it shows the inverted melody in measure 26.

**Sectional Form and Tonal Relationship**

Vierne’s *Pièces de fantaisie* are mostly divided by small sections in each movement and usually have an ABA form. Mood and texture are usually contrasted in the A and B sections and he follows late nineteenth-century tonal relationships like parallel key and chromatic mediant relationships.

section A and B moves from E minor to E major, and then goes back to section A, ending in E minor.

Second, Vierne’s music often modulates to the chromatic mediant.

Table 1: Sectional form and chromatic mediant relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Key relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Prelude, Op. 51</em></td>
<td>A: C major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B: E major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A: C major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Intermezzo, Op. 51</em></td>
<td>A: F major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B: D major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(submediant of F major)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A: F major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Marche nuptiale, Op. 51</em></td>
<td>A: B-flat major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B: G major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A: B-flat major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Hymn au soleil, Op. 53</em></td>
<td>A: G major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B: E-flat major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A: G major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Clair de lune, Op. 53</em></td>
<td>A: D-flat major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B: A major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(bVI enharmonic submediant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A: D-flat major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Dédicace, Op. 54</em></td>
<td>A: A-flat major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B: F major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A: A-flat major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sur le Rhin, Op. 54</em></td>
<td>A: E-flat minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B: G minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A: E-flat minor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of these sectional composition practices were commonly used in Franck’s music. Franck also employed mediant modulation, which was pioneered by Beethoven in his middle period, and further developed by Schubert.

Vierne’s *Pièces de fantaisie*, Opp. 51, 53, 54, and 55 use the twelve major and minor key signatures. Even though Vierne at times, clouds the tonality during the music by using extreme chromaticism, parallelism, and augmented chords, as well as the use of tritones and polychords,
each section clearly shows tonality in the beginning and at the end of each piece. For example, in *Prelude*, Op. 51, Vierne begins an ostinato in the manual through I7 chords in C major. A theme in the pedal clearly represents the tonality, emphasizing the tonic and dominant notes. After the theme ends in V7 as a half cadence in measure 21, a harmonic transitioning progression shows iiø7/e m-V/EM in measure 25, and starts the B section in E major in measure 26. Before returning to the A section in C major, Vierne uses IV7-Gr+6 of C in measures 50 and then returns to C major. In *Marche nuptiale*, Op. 51, he begins the A section in B-flat major by use of pandiatonic technique. Pandiatonicism uses only notes from a diatonic collection but is not reliant on tonal chord progressions. After returning to the A section (from measure 91), he uses a perfect authentic cadence (V7-I) in measures 114-115. He extends the V7 chord by adding the flat-ninth and thirteenth in measure 114. This slightly blurs the tonality but do not break it. These practices, although used in the twentieth century, are based on nineteenth century tonality. Even though Vierne uses extreme chromaticism in the B section, the tonality of G major is often heard such as in measures 73-74 (I-V7) or I7 chords in measures 82-83. Before the returning A section in B-flat major, Vierne uses V7 in measure 84 and the continuous dominant note of B-flat, F in measures 87-90. Vierne ends in the tonic chord of G in *Hymn au soleil*, Op. 53 by showing sequential movement of diatonic chords even though the polychord blurs the tonality right before the cadence. The progression of the IV to I in the pedal shows a plagal cadence in measures 92-93.

The term, diminution, has been used since the Renaissance period. It is a kind of embellishment when a long note in the melody is split into a shorter value. Greer and Robert, in *Grove Music Online*, write, “the statement of a theme or melodic fragment in note values that are

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shorter (usually uniformly so) than those originally associated with it."

For example, Vierne’s use of diminution appears in *Sur le Rhin*, Op. 54. The half notes and quarter notes of the theme in the soprano in the beginning change to quarter notes and eighth notes in pedal in measure (Example 40).


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Programmatic Issues

Programmatic music is music that tells a story that is spread out throughout the entire piece, which tries to impose an extra-musical idea without relying on text. The most well known piece of programmatic music is Hector Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*. Programmatic music was applied to music with a narrative as well as to music intended to describe a character or set a scene.

In *Étoile du soir*, Op. 54, Vierne expresses evening stars, each of four stars appears in regular succession, and then they gradually begin to shimmer (Example 41).

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In *Fantômes*, Op. 54, Vierne titled the piece, “Phantom,” and clearly states “for concerts only.” It presents dialogues between seven characters: the evoker, the young esthete, the old pedant, the negro, the monkey, the beggar, and fate. The evoker asks, “Who then prepares the future?” as the music feature represented is extended tertian harmonies in measures 1-2. The young answers, “It is I... I am free!” by using unison in measures 3-4 (refer back to Example 29). The old pedant also says, “It is I... I maintain the tradition!” and the music consists of a chromatic motive in 9-10. Following this, the negro says, “Future belongs to the dancer,” and the rhythmical sixteenth notes are lightly played in the manual over the pedal. The monkey and the beggar in measures
59-75 answer each other, “Future is in the hands of fancy,” and “It belongs to misery...solo mio.” In the end of piece, fate concludes, “It is nowhere and everywhere,” and the music ends quietly. In addition, Requiem Aeternam, Op. 51, quietly starts unison in the manual over the theme in the pedal and uses chromatic planning, reinforcing the dark mood of the funeral mass.

Registration

From the middle of the nineteenth century, organ building in France changed after Cavaillé-Coll. Influenced by the symphony orchestras’ predominance at that time, Cavaillé-Coll concentrated all his efforts in building an instrument that allowed for greater dynamic range. Innovations by Cavaillé-Coll included multiple-pressure bellows for wind, expression pedal, some free reeds, harmonic flute stops, ventil systems, use of Barker level, some imitative organ stops from the orchestra, double pallet boxes, and combination pedals. In addition, larger organs have reed stops (16’, 8’, 4’) on all manuals as well as in the pedal for a powerful chorus.

The organ at the cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris was built in 1868, the second largest of Cavaillé-Coll’s masterpieces after Saint-Sulpice, and Vierne played there from 1900. The huge organ, having 88 stops on five manuals, is characterized by powerful reeds and non-repeating mixtures. Vierne composed *Pièces de fantaisie* for recital and required a big organ, having at least three keyboards. His registration used Cavaillé-Coll’s orchestra instrument stops. Also, his music concentrated on program music and affected his composition titles, which are closely related to registration. In Vierne’s *Pièces de fantaisie*, the most frequent use of registration is the use of flutes with string stops (gamba), sometimes adding a reed as seen in *Prélude*, Op. 51.

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Also, he often employs *Flûte*, *Bourdon* and *Salicional* for the manual. Vierne uses French harmonic flute stops like Octavin (harmonic flute 2’) in *Intermezzo*, Op. 51. On the other hand, Widor uses much stronger registrations with reeds than Vierne’s registrations for *Intermezzo* movements. While Widor favors reeds, Vierne favors the use of flutes with string stops, the mutations, and 2’ stops.

Table 2: Comparison of registrations for scherzo movements between Vierne and Widor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Vierne</th>
<th>Widor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P. Bourdon 8’, Flûte 4’, Flageolet</td>
<td>GPR Anches et cornets 8’ 4’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G. Flûte 8’, Bourdon 8’, Salicional 8’</td>
<td>Ped. Fonds 16’ 8’, accouplés aux Claviers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ped. Flûte 16’ 8’, claviers accouplés Ped. R.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G. Bourdon 8’</td>
<td>R. Anches 8’ 4’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ped. Bourdon 16’ 8’, R. accouplé au G.</td>
<td>P. Anches 8’ 4’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G. Bourdon 8’</td>
<td>Ped. Fonds 16’, Anches 8’ 4’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ped. Basse douce 8’, R. accouplé au G.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A stop, *Cor de nuit*, found in French organs after 1880 (German; Nachthorn), was used with Flute and *Voix humaine* in the swell in *Feux Follets*, Op. 53. In Vierne’s music, the most powerful registration is all of the foundation stops with reeds in every manual at the same time such as the registrations for *Hymne au soleil*, Op. 51, and *Toccata*, Op. 53. At times, Vierne indicates all the foundations and *anches préparées* (reeds ready) in some specific manuals in *Sur le Rhin*, *Carillon de Westminster*, Op. 54, *Cathédrales*, and *Les Cloches de Hinckley*, Op. 55.
When playing a Cavaillé-Coll organ, *appels d’anches* are a typical French pedals controlling wind and it allows the organist to use his or her choice of stops. The Cavaillé-Coll organ facilitates moving from *pp* to *fff* without stopping the music to handle stops. The organist can make a crescendo in the following way:

1. Begin Récit Foundations (only Récit coupled to Barker division)
2. Couple Fonds Positif to Barker
3. Couple Fonds Grand-Orgue to Barker
4. Add Anches Recit
5. Open Recit
6. Add Anches Positif
7. Add Anches GO
8. Add Anches Pedale

Decrescendo: Reverse above directions

**Legato Playing**

Vierne learned strict legato playing in all parts as well as pedal technique from Widor who was a student of Lemmens. Longhurst states, “legato touch was the norm for Vierne.” He also mentions, “Vierne adhered to Widor and Guilmant’s practice of the repeated note losing half its value (in moderato tempo).” In addition, Frazier states, “Duruflé himself wrote that Vierne’s teaching was situated in the tradition of Widor.” In fact, performers, who play Vierne’s pieces, need to keep the proper value of repeated notes and play legato strictly in all parts, even within the inner voices except when a specific articulation is indicated, such as staccatos.

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41 Longhurst, A Pedagogical Study, 63.
42 Frazier, *Maurice Duruflé*, 32.
Clair de lune, Op. 53, was influenced by Widor’s Symphonie gothique, Andante sostenuto, Op. 70, which opens with a lyrical melody on the Flute Harmonique 8’ in the right hand while the left hand plays in regular motion over the long pedal tone. It’s very similar to Vierne’s Clair de lune in measures 82-87 (Example 42 and 43).

Example 42: Widor, Symphonic gothicque, Op. 70, Andante sostenuto, mm. 1-4
Example 43: Vierne, Pièces de fantaisie, Op. 53, Clair de lune, mm. 82-87
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

Vierne lived at the same time as Debussy, who largely influenced his music. Nevertheless, Debussy’s practices varied on the basis of Vierne’s own musical ideas and development, which were influenced by standard nineteenth-century practices. Features in Vierne’s Pièces de fantaisie, Opp. 51, 53, 54, and 55 are seen as follows:

1) Vierne used various register combinations to create colorful sounds. In fact, Debussy’s orchestration and timbral combinations were important influences in Vierne’s music. Additionally, Vierne applied many of Debussy’s favorite devices for colorful harmonies such as extreme chromaticism, parallelism, augmented chords, and higher tertian chord, quartal, quintal, clusters. Tonal obscurity is a result of all these traits. Vierne frequently employed parallel fifths and octaves as well as parallel thirds and sixths. In addition, he used higher tertian harmonies such as ninths and elevenths. He expanded upon traditional harmonic norms from the Romantic period through the use of tritones and polychords.

2) To convey imagery or express mystic mood, Vierne used church modes and whole-tone scales. Because the whole-tone scale is constructed of whole step relationships, it does not allow for perfect fourths or fifths, which are essential elements in common tonality practice. Debussy employed this technique often to expand the tonality. Vierne often expanded chords by adding tones to create colorful effects. For vagueness of tonality, Debussy omitted the third scale degree and consecutively used parallel fifths. This practice is also employed in Vierne’s composition.

3) Even though Vierne employed many of Debussy’s practices in Pièces de fantaisie, Opp. 51, 53, 54, and 55, Pièces de fantaisie could not be regarded as fully impressionist works.
Vierne still adhered to standard nineteenth-century practices such as forms, key relationships, contrapuntal techniques, and style as practiced by Franck. In addition, Vierne used performance techniques from Widor’s teaching such as pedal technique, legato technique for manuals including common tones, repeated notes, and strict legato in all parts as well as technique and registration from Guilmant.

In this way, Vierne adopted new practices from Debussy based on standard nineteenth-century practices in his Pièces de fantaisie, Opp. 51, 53, 54, and 55. As a result, these pieces have a unique character, mixing the twentieth-century practices with nineteenth-century practices, rarely found in other French symphonic organ works.
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