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Henri Dutilleux's Piano Sonata: The revival of French modernism

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Henri Dutilleux’s Piano Sonata: The revival of French modernism

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Henri Dutilleux developed a unique voice by synthesizing traditional, modern, nationalistic, and foreign elements in his compositions. In this document, I explore these elements in Dutilleux’s piano sonata with a thorough analysis, and search for its inspiration by looking into his formative years. Also, this document will illuminate how Dutilleux was able to formulate and maintain a distinct creative process during a period when diverse compositional styles, such as neoclassicism and serialism, were prevalent in Europe. To this end, this study will discuss such musical styles concurrent in Europe, and their influence on Dutilleux’s compositional process.
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Dutilleux’s oeuvre consists of only a handful of orchestral, piano, vocal, and chamber music pieces. Known to be highly self-critical, Dutilleux repudiated and destroyed most of his works written before the piano sonata (1947-48). The pieces that have endured such scrutiny reign as towering examples of the French tradition, as they exhibit mastery in harmonic sensuality, vibrant orchestral colorism and timbre. Dutilleux, however, disliked being conveniently labeled as a ‘quintessential’ French composer:

I am a little suspicious about being always presented as a quintessentially French composer. My reaction is rather a defensive one against a ready-made view of French music that is particularly prevalent outside France. People always advance the same notions of balance, elegance and wit and that seems to me highly restrictive. (Dutilleux, 2003, p. 99)

Dutilleux’s discontent for such categorization stems from the fear that his works would become mere pastiches of his French forebears, such as Ravel and Debussy – hence he repudiated much of his early works, which were largely influenced by them.

The piano sonata is a turning point in his compositional style and career. Dedicated to his pianist wife Geneviève Joy, the sonata demands technical virtuosity and features elements of his mature style. Dutilleux claimed the sonata to be his first opus, which is unusual given that he was already 32 years old when he completed it, relatively late for a composer to acknowledge the beginning of his catalogue (or early in Dutilleux’s case, considering the longevity of his life).

After winning the Prix du Rome in 1938, Dutilleux expressed that he felt ‘lost’ in his search to find a unique voice, and this internal conflict was due to two reasons: the first, as mentioned

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above, was the fear of being assimilated into the stereotypical French style. On many occasions Dutilleux expressed discontent regarding the prevalent French style during his formative years which was rooted in simplicity, charm, and wit, a dogma widely promoted by Jean Cocteau, Erik Satie, and the members of Les Six. The second was the emergence of diverse foreign musical styles. During the time when the sonata was being conceived, Messiaen completed his revolutionary *Vingt Regards sur l’enfant-Jésus*, Cage expanded the capabilities of the piano with Sonatas and Interludes for prepared piano, Boulez had begun his rather authoritative total-serialist style in his first Piano Sonata, and Pierre Schaeffer had pushed the boundaries of music itself with his experimentations in synthesizing new types of sounds based on electronical mediums. The simultaneous emergence of distinct styles, a phenomenon which the composers of the previous centuries never experienced, must have been taxing for Dutilleux’s creative and self-critical mind.

To develop a unique style, Dutilleux derived inspiration from other art forms, notably from French writers such as Proust and Baudelaire: Proust’s concept of time and memory influenced the formation of Dutilleux’s main compositional process known as ‘progressive thematic growth,’ and Baudelaire’s poems provided structural insights for the cello concerto *Tout un monde lointain*…. Dutilleux also acknowledges the influence of non-French composers on the formation of his mature style, such as Bartók, Lutosławski, and Russian composers such as Mussorgsky and Prokofiev. This study will investigate and organize aforementioned points into the following order: the first chapter is a historical overview of diverse musical dogmas current and in between the world wars and their influence on Dutilleux’s formative and mature

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years. The second chapter will closely investigate Dutilleux’s creative process and examine its evolution and influences deriving from literary and foreign elements. The last chapter will cover a thorough analysis of the piano sonata.
CHAPTER 1: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The First World War and the rise of Les Six

Few places can rival Paris for its eclecticism in music during the beginning of the twentieth century. Debussy premiered his revolutionary opera *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Stravinsky followed with his blockbuster ballets, and people flocked to cabarets to keep up with the rapidly changing trends in song and dance. The war years put an end to the vibrant social climate, and dogmatic beliefs in music, fueled by the increasing nationalist aesthetic, emerged. Arnold Schoenberg, in a letter to Alma Mahler, drew similarities between the German army’s assault on France to his assault on the French bourgeois values, criticizing the works of Ravel, Bizet, and Stravinsky: “Now comes the reckoning! Now [we] will throw these mediocre kitchmongers into slavery, and teach them to venerate the German spirit and to worship the German God”. Berg and Webern also joined in their rather zealous teacher’s footsteps.

Unlike the Germans, French composers lacked a centralized identity during this period. The *Société Nationale de Musique*, founded by Saint-Saens in 1871, suffered from an internal conflict that prompted Ravel to lead an exodus to form a new group, *Société musicale indépendante* in 1909. The war naturally provided the groups with a cause to reunite, but Ravel and his colleagues were indifferent to the idea. Vincent d’Indy, who represented *Société Nationale de Musique*, was angered by Ravel’s dismissal and openly criticized Ravel and his colleagues in an article published by *Le Courrier musical* in 1917. During the following year,

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3 Alex Ross, *The Rest is Noise* (New York: Picador, 2008), 71.
Debussy’s untimely death added to the growing instability among the French musical community. Numerous obituaries highlighted Debussy’s cultural value and the symbolic meaning of his death during the war. Jean Chantavoine, a musicologist, wrote:

But the elegance of [Debussy’s] fate is bereavement for the country. One senses it, like a pang in the heart…, in the universal fracas, the sudden silence of this exquisite voice. The cannon rumbles and we hear that the nightingale no longer sings.\(^5\)

Amidst the chaos, a new musical aesthetic was being formed in France, and it promoted terseness and simplicity in form, harmony, and expression. It sought to eliminate superfluous ornaments and emphasize accessibility, void of symbolism or ambiguity: it was a reaction against impressionism.\(^6\) Jean Cocteau, a poet and an activist, was a key promoter of this movement, and Cocteau found his beliefs best manifested in the compositions of Erik Satie.\(^7\) In general, Satie favored concise structure and rejected the concept that music should develop, be directional, or romantically expressive.\(^8\) He deliberately diverged from the predominant compositional trends, often by parodying popular melodies juxtaposed with unusual harmonies and accompaniments, or by inserting provocative titles and instructions, as seen in *Embryons desséchés* and *Sports et divertissements*. Satie’s compositions exhibit a deliberate rejection of academia, and this was partially due to the lack of a formal education during his formative


\(^7\) Satie’s compositional style is known to exhibit three distinct periods: from 1886 to 1895, the period of mysticism and mediaeval influences; from 1897 to 1915, the years of ‘clowning’ and eccentricities; from 1916 to his death in 1925, the period of the *musique d’ameublement* (furniture music) and works for the stage.

years. Even after the completion of his belated education at the Schola Cantorum, Satie’s rather rambunctious compositional style persisted. Soon after meeting Satie in 1915, Cocteau published a 31-page manifesto, *Le Coq et L’arlequin*, which criticized the conventional musical trend and praised Satie as the leader of the avant-garde movement:

Satie teaches what, in our age, is the greatest audacity, simplicity. Enough of clouds, waves, aquariums, water-spirits, and nocturnal scents; what we need is a music of the earth, every-day music. Germany is the type of an intellectual democracy, France of an intellectual monarchy.  

The relationship between Cocteau and Satie continued. Satie’s provocative compositions drew attention to Cocteau’s beliefs, and Cocteau regularly featured Satie in some of the most stylish and contemporary Parisian publications such as Vanity Fair, Vogue, and L’Élan. In 1917, their collaboration came to fruition with *Parade*, a one-act ballet commissioned by Diaghilev, with Picasso as designer of sets and costumes, and Massine as choreographer. *Parade* came as a challenge because none of its participants had worked on such a multifaceted project before. However, they came together under Cocteau’s concept for the scenario which promoted the principles of clarity, simplicity, and purity as the overarching aesthetic of the work. Satie’s concise and transparent orchestration featured oscillating ostinatos as the thematic material, paired with his unique harmonic narrative. Robert Orledge, in regard to Satie’s usage of chords, claimed that it ‘lacks harmonic perspective in much the same way that a cubist painting lacks

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9 Satie’s consciousness towards academia sprouted from his rivalry with Debussy. In order to be on the same plane as his rival, Satie felt the need for a formal education, hence he enrolled at the Schola Cantorum.


Satie also incorporated elements of popular music, especially jazz and cabaret tunes he had heard and played in Montmartre where he lived for several years. Georges Auric, in the original program notes written for *Parade*’s premiere, wrote:

[Satie’s] art, like Picasso’s does not try to seduce us through brilliant and romantic devices… he shows the individual at the height of his powers and portrays with clarity astonishing personages…

Satie’s music, together with Picasso’s bizarre designs, Massine’s unique choreography, and Cocteau’s surreal scenario, placed *Parade* at the forefront of the avant-garde movement. This unique coalition of modernists represented a philosophy that influenced the next generation of artists, a philosophy that rejected conservative, institutional, and solemn approaches to art.

Shortly after the premiere of *Parade*, a group of young composers — Georges Auric, Arthur Honneger, and Louis Durey — organized a concert in honor of Satie, and this homage led to the formation of *Les Nouveaux Jeunes*. They frequently presented joint concerts and organized weekly gatherings to further solidify their communal presence. By 1920, Germaine Tailleferre, Darius Milhaud, and Francis Poulenc had joined the group as well. During the same year, the group crystallized as *Les Six*, after being featured in Henri Collet’s famous article published in *Comoedia*, ‘Les Cinq Russes, Les Six Francais et Erik Satie.’ According to Robert Orledge, this was a carefully constructed maneuver by Cocteau, as he had dedicated a copy of *Le Coq* to Collet in 1919. With Collet’s article, the *Jeunes* were given a ‘corporate identity’, as Orledge calls it, and it served as a platform to advance the careers of the associated members; furthermore, it provided an opportunity for Cocteau to secure his position as the leader of the post-war avant-garde movement in Paris.

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13 Calkins, 11.
14 Orledge, 234.
Regardless of their ulterior motive, the members of Les Six inherited the spirit of Le Coq and the anti-academic stance taken by Satie and Cocteau. They collectively exhibited a sense of gaiety, facetiousness, and a lack of seriousness. During their weekly visits to the music-hall and the circus, the members of the group found purity in the movements of acrobat and clowns and sought to implement similar attributes to their own compositions. They found similar purity in jazz and the popular songs of the day, manifested in compositions such as Boeuf sur le toit by Milhaud.

The group’s collaborative effort peaked with the premiere of Cocteau’s ballet Les Mariés de la Tour Eiffel at Champs-Elysees in 1923, where each member of the group, with the exception of Durey, contributed a movement. Soon after the premiere, the seemingly vibrant bond shared among the members started to deteriorate. Durey had already left the group due to personal quarrels, and the musical aims of Milhaud, Poulenc, and Auric had shifted. According to Poulenc, ‘We had never had any common aesthetic and our musical styles have always been dissimilar. Our likes and dislikes were opposed. Thus, Honegger has never liked Satie’s music and [Florent] Schmitt, whom he then admired, was a pet aversion for Milhaud and me.’

Milhaud, in a letter to Paul Collaer, also revealed his discontent with the works by several members of the group. Referring to Honegger’s Le roi David as, ‘like a Prix de Rome cantata … made up of clichés, scholastic fugal exercises, developed themes, chorales and ready-made formulae’. Satie had publicly dissociated himself from the group in 1923 and promoted another group of young composers (Henri Cliquet-Pleyel, Roger Desormiere, Maxime Jacob and Henri

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Sauguet) who had named themselves as *L’Ecole d’Arcueil*, but failed to recreate the success he had seen with *Les Six*.

It is clear that the members of *Les Six* came together under the banner of dismantling the aesthetic of Debussy, Ravel, and Fauré, and Cocteau, and Satie had paved the road for them to conveniently march upon. The post-war ideal, sprouted from the unsophisticated melody and catchy-rhythms heard in café-concerts and cabarets, provided *Les Six*, and other like-minded composers, with a surplus of resources to incorporate in their own compositions. Christopher Lambert, in criticism to such style, claimed:

> The low-life exoticism of *Les Six* and the *Ecole d'Arceuil* started off, then, with a definitely sentimental handicap, a period lag which became more noticeable every year. [...] The post war composers, could only be evocative of the café-concert by deliberately aping its methods, producing a synthetic gaiety through means of association: thus, most of the tunes in the ballets of Poulenc, Auric, and Milhaud are not gay in themselves—they recall the type of tune played in places popularly supposed to be gay.¹⁷

Dutilleux’s formative years were being shaped during this time. Growing up and receiving musical training in Douai, a remote provincial town, shielded him from being influenced by the sweeping trend in Paris. In order to fully understand his compositional style and process, a close examination of his background is necessary.

**Dutilleux’s Formative years**

Henri Julien Dutilleux was born in Angers on 22 January 1916. Dutilleux’s family was originally from Douai, located in the Flanders region of France, but Dutilleux’s mother and his siblings took refuge in Angers during the height of World War I, while Dutilleux’s father was

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fighting at Verdun. In 1919, the family was reunited in Douai, and found their home and family business destroyed.\textsuperscript{18}

Henri Dutilleux’s paternal and maternal lineages had strong affiliations with the arts. Henri Joseph-Constant Dutilleux (1807-65), Dutilleux’s paternal great-grandfather, was a renowned painter and a lithographer who was a close friend of Eugène Delacroix and Camille Corot. He owned a few of their paintings, including Delacroix’s famous portrait of Chopin.\textsuperscript{19}

Upon finishing his studies in Paris, Constant Dutilleux settled down in Arras, a town 15 miles west of Douai, where he taught painting and established a printing business which was passed down to his sons. Constant Dutilleux certainly influenced the composer’s passion for the visual arts, though he never strived to become a painter. However, Dutilleux’s manuscripts exhibit impeccable penmanship as he considered the visual aspect of the score to be as important as the musical content, revealing the composer’s perfectionist approach to his craft.

The relationship between this visual dimension and the sound world is sometimes remarkable. Occasionally, there are even close connections between the physical appearance of a page of music (even a printed page) and an abstract painting. Take one of Schoenberg’s \textit{Five pieces for orchestra}, op.16, ‘Farben’ (‘Colours’); the pages of music look exactly like an abstract painting. Often, in my own work, if I am not satisfied with a page of orchestral music from a purely visual point of view, then I feel something is wrong.\textsuperscript{20}

Julien Koszul (1844-1927), Dutilleux’s maternal grandfather, had a direct influence on Dutilleux in pursuing music, as he was an organist, composer, and the director of the Conservatoire at Roubaix. He was a lifelong friend of Fauré, and studied with Saint-Saëns at the École Niedermeyer.\textsuperscript{21} During his tenure at the Roubaix Conservatoire, Koszul is known to have

\textsuperscript{19} Potter, 2.
\textsuperscript{20} Glayman, 15.
\textsuperscript{21} Potter, 2.
persuaded Albert Roussel to pursue a career in composition, as opposed to pursuing a career in
the navy. Koszul lived out the last years of his life with Dutilleux’s family and encouraged
Dutilleux, as well as his four siblings, to enroll at the Douai conservatoire.\textsuperscript{22}

Dutilleux’s father, Paul Dutilleux (1881-1965), was an amateur violinist who inherited
the family printing business, and Thérèse Koszul (1881-1948), Dutilleux’s mother, was an
amateur pianist.\textsuperscript{23} The parents often organized chamber music concerts in their home, performing
a variety of repertoire by French composers such as Franck, Faurè, Lekeu, Piernè, and
Debussy.\textsuperscript{24} Henri Dutilleux was attracted to the piano, despite his father’s wishes for him to play
the violin, because of its ability to produce chords. In addition, he was fascinated with the
carillon of Douai, the sound of which he tried to reproduce in his compositions, such as the
opening measures of the last movement of the piano sonata. Upon declaring his desire to become
a composer, his parents gifted him the score of Debussy’s \textit{Pelléas et Mélisande}, a piece which he
considered as the most important twentieth century composition in any genre.\textsuperscript{25} As one can
surmise, Henri Dutilleux was born into a cultured and artistic family. His family provided a
nurturing environment that valued tradition and education, elements which would shape the
formation of Dutilleux’s compositional process.

In 1924, Dutilleux enrolled in the Conservatoire at Douai while attending the local \textit{lycée},
or secondary school. Young Dutilleux endured a rigorous academic schedule: the solfèège class at
the Conservatoire began at 6:30 in the morning followed by classes on general subjects in the
secondary school, then he would return to the Conservatoire to take lessons and practice his

\textsuperscript{22} Potter, 2.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 205.
instrument. Victor Gallois, the director of the Conservatoire, recognized Dutilleux’s talent and taught him harmony and counterpoint almost simultaneously, which was considered uncommon as students first had to achieve a certain mastery in harmony before being able to study counterpoint. Gallois also encouraged Dutilleux to participate in the orchestra, where he played percussion and piano. In an interview, Dutilleux fondly recalled Gallois:

I did not study piano at the Conservatoire [Paris], nor did I study organ. I received my technique in the provinces. The Director of Douai tutored me well, which is why I was at a very good level when I entered the Conservatoire [Paris]. With my solid training, I was encouraged to enter the Prix de Rome very soon, which is why I did not study there long enough.  

During this time, Dutilleux was well exposed to the works of the popular Western European – mostly German and French – composers such as Schumann, Wagner, Berlioz, Chopin, and Liszt. He especially admired the works of late Fauré for their abstract qualities, and revered the works of Debussy, seen by his admiration towards Pelléas et Mélisande. According to Dutilleux, he was not yet exposed to the works of the composers such as Bartók, Prokofiev, and the members of the Second Viennese School since he grew up in the provinces. Dutilleux composed his first composition during this period, La Fleur, a song in which he was particularly proud of the final modulation.

In 1933, Dutilleux left Douai to enroll in the Paris Conservatoire, where he studied until 1938. Dutilleux studied harmony, fugue, history, and composition with Jean and Noël Gallon, Maurice Emmanuel, and Henri Büsser, respectively. Dutilleux particularly enjoyed the

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27 Glayman, 9.
28 Potter, 3.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
teachings of Maurice Emmanuel, who stressed the importance of Greek rhythms and ancient modes.\textsuperscript{31} Under the tutelage of Henri Büsser, who emphasized the importance of simplicity in form and creative instrumentation, Dutilleux composed a string quartet, songs, piano pieces, and a septet for winds and piano, works which he later destroyed.\textsuperscript{32} The training at the Conservatoire provided Dutilleux a foundation to hone his craft, enabling him to win the first prize in harmony and fugue in 1936. However, in retrospect, Dutilleux regretted that the curriculum did not include an analysis class and that he was prematurely pushed to enter the Prix de Rome by Henri Büsser.\textsuperscript{33} Furthermore, the Conservatoire’s education was heavily Francocentric and lacked opportunity to be introduced to contemporary composers such as Bartók, Stravinsky, and the members of the Second Viennese School – a persistent problem since his days in Douai. This was partially attributed to the German occupation of France as the Nazis imposed a ban on music that they deemed unfit from concert halls. During the interwar period, the Parisian concert programs featured the standard repertoire of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, and prominent French composers such as Ravel, Debussy, and Poulenc. The opera houses mainly produced the works of Wagner and the standard 19th-century French repertoire.\textsuperscript{34} It was only after the war that Dutilleux was exposed to the diverse range of contemporary repertoire.

From 1936 to 1938, Dutilleux entered the Prix de Rome each year, winning the Second Grand Prix in 1936 and winning the Premier Grand Prix in 1938.\textsuperscript{35} The cantatas which he submitted each year, \textit{Gisele, La belle et la bete}, and \textit{L’anneau du roi}, exhibit the strong influence

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\begin{align*}
\textsuperscript{31} & \text{Emmanuel’s emphasis of Greek rhythms had a more direct effect on Messiaen, who also studied at the Paris Conservatoire few years prior to Dutilleux.} \\
\textsuperscript{32} & \text{Potter, 4.} \\
\textsuperscript{33} & \text{Ibid., 3.} \\
\textsuperscript{34} & \text{Obi-Keller, 27.} \\
\textsuperscript{35} & \text{Potter, 4.}
\end{align*}
of Debussy as they use ‘parallel root position chords and consecutive open fifths.’\textsuperscript{36} The scores of these compositions were later destroyed; only the sketches of excerpts currently remain.

Winning the Prix de Rome was an important milestone in Dutilleux’s life as it bridged the years as a student to a new period as an independent composer. Dutilleux left for Rome in 1939 to fulfill the traditional four-year residency at the Villa Medici, as a part of the award given by the concours. However, the residency was shortened to only four months due to the rising tension in Europe. Dutilleux enjoyed his shortened stay at the Villa Medici regardless, although he had expressed that he would have been more interested in travelling to other countries, such as Germany.\textsuperscript{37} Despite being exposed to the rich Italian culture, he was horrified by the growing fascist sentiment and the Nazi regime, and he felt isolated by the anti-French demonstrations. Upon returning to France, Dutilleux was called to serve in the military as a stretcher bearer. Before his unit was to be stationed in North Africa, France signed an armistice with Germany, and Dutilleux was discharged from the military in 1940.\textsuperscript{38}

**Early works and the piano sonata**

The student years at the Douai and Paris conservatoire equipped Dutilleux with a technical foundation that became an integral part of his compositional process. The systematic approach of the conservatoire’s curriculum appealed to Dutilleux’s meticulous nature, perhaps seeding a subconscious reservation towards the anti-tradition stance taken by the members of the *Les Six* during the early stage of his development. After being discharged from the military, Dutilleux returned to Paris as a freelance musician. To make ends meet, he taught counterpoint

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid, 30.
\textsuperscript{37} Glayman, 17.
\textsuperscript{38} Potter, 4.
and harmony lessons, accompanied singers, and made arrangements for night clubs. He also conducted the student choir of the Institut d’Art, and served as chef de chant for the Paris opera, a position he disliked due to the restrictive repertoire assigned by the Nazis. In 1941, Dutilleux was summoned to Cimiez, a neighborhood in Nice, by the Vichy government and the Prix de Rome institution to fulfill the remainder of the residency, but he felt the isolation was counter-productive to his growth and promptly returned to Paris against the institution’s orders.

Back in Paris, Dutilleux joined the musical division of the Front National, a political group sympathetic to the resistance movement, and he was introduced to a network of musicians such as Roger Désormière, Claude Delvincourt, Georges Auric, and Marcel Mihalovici. Through them, Dutilleux was introduced to the works of Bartók and the Second Viennese School. During this period, Dutilleux struggled to find an individual aesthetic, and the sudden exposure to the diverse compositional styles presented a challenge to Dutilleux as his education was mainly Francocentric. Dutilleux recalled this period in an interview with Glayman:

We have to remember that a whole section of international repertory, both of the past and of the twentieth-century, had been eliminated […] Contemporary classics such as Stravinsky, Bartók, Schoenberg, Hindemith, and Prokofiev also reappeared at the same time. It was certainly a rich diet, but it did present a danger. It was both too late and too much all at once. The risk, for young composers like us, was that we might take the most striking elements from this composer and that, and effectively turn into eclectics.

To avoid this danger, Dutilleux studied various scores and treatises extensively, including the treatise by Vincent d’Indy, which Dutilleux disliked despite helpful remarks regarding early

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39 Glayman, 19.
40 Potter, 5.
41 Glayman, 19.
42 Potter, 5.
43 Ibid.
44 Glayman, 21.
music, the renaissance polyphonsists, and religious music.\textsuperscript{45} The most influential catalyst for the invention of his creative process, however, was the freelance lifestyle that pressured Dutilleux to compose for diverse occasions. One of his earliest commissions was from Charles Panzéra, a baritone who had sung in Dutilleux’s Premier Grand Prix cantata.\textsuperscript{46} Dutilleux composed some eight songs for Panzéra and only half of them remain published. Dutilleux set poems of various poets such as Pierre de Ronsard, Permette de Guilhiet, Paul Fort, and André Bellesort. While these poems exhibit distinct styles, they similarly focus on the idea of duality, an element which Dutilleux further developed with his discovery of Baudelaire, whose philosophy played a central role in Dutilleux’s mature compositions.\textsuperscript{47} Of all the songs Dutilleux composed for Panzéra, he acknowledged only \textit{Fantasio} and \textit{Pour une amie perdue} to be included in his catalogue. Besides these songs, Dutilleux additionally set four of Jean Cassou’s \textit{Trente-trois sonnets composés en secret} to music. Cassou had written the sonnets during imprisonment in Toulouse for Resistance activities, and the sonnets were published under his pseudonym, Jean Noir.\textsuperscript{48} Dutilleux was always sympathetic to the Resistance movement, as seen with his joining the \textit{Front National}, and to the Jewish composers who composed under harsh circumstances during the Occupation. Furthermore, Dutilleux was fond of Cassou’s work as they ‘contained lyricism, profundity, and a certain abstract quality’.\textsuperscript{49} \textit{La Geôle}, the third song of the set, is dedicated to Dutilleux’s brother, Paul, who spent five years as a prisoner in Stalag VIIC.\textsuperscript{50} \textit{La Geôle} shows budding signs of Dutilleux’s mature style as it features rhythmic and structural incorporation of ‘added note’ and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 19.
\item \textsuperscript{46} Potter, 33.
\item \textsuperscript{47} Potter, 33.
\item \textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 40.
\item \textsuperscript{49} Glayman, 22.
\item \textsuperscript{50} Potter, 40.
\end{itemize}
pedal tones acting in a pivot function – compositional techniques that were to become more prevalent in Dutilleux’s mature works.\textsuperscript{51}

The Paris Conservatoire also helped Dutilleux by commissioning him to orchestrate the songs written for Panzéra. Claude Delvincourt, the director Conservatoire, also a member of the \textit{Front National}, had asked Dutilleux to write several works for wind instruments for the conservatoire’s annual exams.\textsuperscript{52} This enabled Dutilleux to explore the various capacities of the instruments as Delvincourt had requested the works to incorporate ‘traps and technical difficulties’.\textsuperscript{53} The \textit{Sarabande et Cortège} (1942) for the bassoon and piano is widely recognized among the Bassoon repertoire, and the \textit{Sonatine} for flute and piano (1943) is perhaps the most played piece among his catalogue, although he disapproved of performances and recordings in France as they do not fully represent him.\textsuperscript{54} The Oboe Sonata (1947) and \textit{Choral, cadence et fugato} for trombone and piano (1950) share similar reservations from the composer as well.

Dutilleux also composed incidental music for plays, films, and theater. This provided Dutilleux with a chance to experiment with orchestral writing as well as the ability to compose under time constraints. His film scores such as \textit{La fille du diable} (1946) and \textit{Le café du Cadran} (1948) proved that Dutilleux, seemingly conservative in nature, was more than capable of writing lush, sentimental, and pastiche-style compositions. The score for \textit{Les hauts de Hurlevent} (1944-45), a play based on Emily Brontë’s novel, exhibited elements which foreshadow his First Symphony (1950-51).\textsuperscript{55} Dutilleux was hired at the French Radio in 1943 as \textit{chef de chant}, composing incidental music for several plays, and he was appointed as the Head of Musical

\begin{footnotes}
\item[51] Ibid., 41.
\item[52] Glayman, 21.
\item[53] Ibid., 21.
\item[54] Glayman, 21.
\item[55] Potter, 8.
\end{footnotes}
Illustrations in 1946, a position which he held for almost two decades. His department oversaw the development of a new genre that combined the elements of theater with radiophonic characters, as opposed to the traditional illustration of theater scattered with incidental music.

Dutilleux’s tenure at the French Radio coincided with the emergence of Musique Concrète, led by Pierre Schaeffer and the members of GRM (Groupe de Recherches Musicales). Schaeffer’s experiments with electronic sounds began as early as 1944, and they quickly gained attention. Dutilleux was involved in the early stages of its development, but his interest dwindled as he was fully occupied with his own department as well as securing time for his own compositions. In addition, Dutilleux found the early products of the experiments vulgar and disorganized. However, the influence of Music Concrète, though faint, can be traced in his later works, including the piano sonata which will be addressed in the subsequent chapters.

Prior to writing the piano sonata, Dutilleux composed a collection of miniature pieces for piano, titled Au gré des ondes. It was written for the ORTF (Office de Radiodiffusion Télévision Française) as fillers to bridge the silence between the programs, hence the rather nonchalant title, ‘At the Whims of the Waves’, suggesting a play on words. Dutilleux detested the publication of this piece, claiming it as ‘nothing but stopgaps of an entirely functional and anonymous character and some of them were merely pastiches.’ Rightfully so, the six short movements, mostly in simple ternary form, exhibit vivid influences of Debussy, Ravel, and Poulenc. Despite the composer’s attitude towards the piece, Au gré des ondes reveals the early

56 Potter, 7.
57 Ibid., 7.
58 Potter, 10.
59 Glayman, 93.
60 Ibid., 121.
61 Ibid.
62 Potter, 47.
stage of Dutilleux’s compositional inclination and the noticeable influence of Ravel, which will be further discussed in the subsequent chapter. The tonal ambiguity employed throughout the piece is reminiscent of Ravel’s treatment of harmony, which is also visible in the sonata as well. Furthermore, the layout of the piece recalls Ravel’s *Le tombeau de Couperin*, also a collection of six miniature pieces. Each movement was dedicated to friends whom Ravel had lost during the First World War. Along a similar tangent, in *Au gré des ondes*, composed after the Second World War, Dutilleux dedicated each movement to friends who had survived the war. The last movement of *Au gré des ondes*, ‘Etude’, was dedicated to Dutilleux’s wife, Geneviève Joy.

Dutilleux married Geneviève Joy in 1947, and she was a major influence in Dutilleux’s personal and musical life. She studied piano at the Paris Conservatoire with Yves Nat, and she was known for her technical virtuosity and the ability to sightread complicated scores. Naturally, the ‘Etude’ and the piano sonata, both dedicated to Joy, incorporate technically brilliant passages to best illuminate her abilities.

The Second World War and the commotion with the Prix de Rome institution may have delayed the timeline of Dutilleux’s quest for achieving an individual aesthetic; however, his life as a freelancer exposed him to diverse opportunities that aided his development in a timely manner. Caroline Potter speculates that Dutilleux’s exclusive interest in song during the early stage of his career was ‘dictated by a need for a precise source of inspiration which could act almost as a peg on which to hang his music’. Indeed, the reliance on the extra-musical rhetoric is evident in other compositions from this period, as seen with the instrumental works that are

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63 Potter, 47.
64 Ibid., 36.
tailored to the Conservatoire exam, and scores for film and theater fitted according to the plots and character settings.

To this end, the Piano Sonata (1947-48) rightfully deserves its designation as the first opus as it is an independent, full-fleshed, multi-movement piece. Dutilleux claimed that the piano sonata was a turning point in his life as he had a more precise vision of his compositional aesthetic. Through the piano sonata, Dutilleux gained the ability to compose larger forms and develop unique harmonic designs that anticipate his First Symphony, which is considered his first masterpiece.

Dutilleux’s mature compositional aesthetic sprouted from a blatant discontent in regards to the stereotypical French style prevalent during the interwar period:

The piano sonata is a transitional work within the larger context of my music. Throughout the sonata and my early works in general, I avoided a trend that did not correspond to my nature: a certain spirit or “French Fashion” that is often mistakenly confined to elegance, charm and wit. At every epoch of music history, certain different and sometimes opposed tendencies appear. Mine was a reaction against the tendencies of certain musicians who preceded me. For example, it is obvious that the musicians in the group Les Six demonstrated ambitions strongly opposed to my own. Despite these aesthetic differences, this did not keep me from having a rapport with certain members of the group.

Dutilleux likely questioned the seemingly nonchalant attitude harbored by the members of Les Six and the depth and originality of their compositions which were highly evocative of café-concert, often shifting in regards to the changing trend of popular music. For this reason, the piano sonata was a deliberate attempt to oppose the divertissement style, exhibiting large-scale

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65 Dutilleux did write a one movement orchestra piece in 1942, Danse Fantastique, to be a part of Symphonie de Danses, but it was never completed and left as a single movement piece.
structure and a complex narrative. Dutilleux had always admired the abstract qualities seen in the works of late Fauré and Debussy, and Cocteau’s dogma, as manifested in *Le Coq*, sought to abolish such qualities. Therefore, Dutilleux perhaps felt aesthetically offended as the members of *Les Six* seemed to undo the work of his revered French forebears.

Dutilleux, however, did not resort to a mere stylistic revival of his predecessors to retaliate. When asked about the merits of tradition, Dutilleux stated:

> I do not want to expand on the idea of ‘tradition’ and I distrust the word and everything it is associated with, such as habit, the cult of the past, academies, the Institute, affiliation, heritage and prejudices. […] Traditions must be frequently violated, and what is most stimulating and nourishing often comes from outside, from foreign countries.  

Therefore, Dutilleux was under immense pressure to reconcile conflicting aesthetics during the time he conceived the piano sonata. The search for originality, unhindered by trend and stereotype while preserving integrity, was likely an agonizing process considering his perfectionist personality. The solution to such a dilemma, as previously mentioned in his statement, was to look for foreign influences.

> Whatever roots artists may have, they find new life through contacts with foreign influences and in so doing actually regenerate their national characteristics […] Being as I am a French composer, I feel foreign influences have been beneficial for me.  

Thus, Dutilleux was never hesitant to incorporate the large-scale form inspired by the Austro-German tradition, seen by the title of the second movement, ‘Lied’, which is most unusual for a Frenchman to adopt after the German Occupation. He also imbued the compositional techniques of non-French composers such as Lutosławski, Bartók, and Prokofiev

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68 Potter, 56.
69 Glayman, 98.
with his unique harmonic design. In addition, as will be discussed in the next chapter, the usage of non-musical sources, namely the works of Proust and Baudelaire, further contributed to Dutilleux’s compositional process. Ultimately, the inspiration drawn from foreign elements did not result in a hodgepodge of unrelated ideas or evoke a caricature of exotic elements but produced an original aesthetic born from a deep understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures and philosophies.
CHAPTER 2: CREATIVE PROCESS

An overview of Dutilleux’s catalogue

In order to better understand Dutilleux’s stylistic transformation, a brief survey of his catalogue is necessary. Dutilleux’s metamorphosis is subtle and gradual, unlike the distinct stylistic periods exhibited by composers such as Schoenberg and Stravinsky. A unique aspect of Dutilleux’s transformation is that he often recalled certain ideas from his prior compositions, as if the ideas themselves experience a sense of growth through the various works over time. For example, Daniel Humbert pointed out the thematic resemblance between the finale of the First Symphony (1951), the theme of Métaboles (1964), and the opening of the finale of the Second Symphony (1959). Furthermore, Humbert shed light on the close relationship between the theme of the second movement (Lied) of the Piano Sonata and the ‘theme of the wolf’ in Le Loup (1953) and such resemblances occur throughout his catalogue.

This process, however, should not be mistaken as a convenient means to recycle ideas, as seen with Bach’s recurring use of his materials to ease the burdening responsibility as the Cantor, to give a blunt example. Francis Bayer best explained Dutilleux’s process in his article:

Since his Piano Sonata in 1948, each new work represents a deepening of his style compared with the work that immediately precedes it; each time, Dutilleux tries to move a step forward, but at the same time he continues in a direction from which he does not deviate. This loyalty to himself does not mean at all that the composer does not renew himself; each work is different from the others, but they all seem to belong to a single work which is being gradually elaborated over the years, a work whose unity encompasses the variety of the constituent parts as its identity encompasses their differences.

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70 Potter, 56.
71 Ibid., 56.
72 Ibid., 70.
As Bayer pointed out, the macroscopic relationship found in Dutilleux’s catalogue molds Dutilleux’s output into a single organism, closely reacting to one another. Furthermore, such transformative processes are found in the microscopic level of his compositions with the integration of ‘croissance progressive’ (progressive growth), Dutilleux’s unique compositional process, which will be discussed in detail. To this end, it is somewhat difficult to categorize Dutilleux’s compositional transformation into distinct periods. Nevertheless, for the sake of this study, a general categorization would help to organize his catalogue as follows:

The first phase encompasses the pieces which were conceived during the 1940s through the 1950s. These pieces, which have been discussed in the previous chapter, show the influence of Ravel, Debussy, and Fauré and rely on traditional form and structure. Notable works include the Piano Sonata, *Première Symphonie* (1950-51), and the *Deuxième Symphonie “Le Double”* (1955-59). Dutilleux was most prolific during this period, composing a substantial number of songs, instrumental music, and *Danse Fantastique*, a movement of an orchestra piece *Symphonie de Danses*, a work which he never finished. However, Dutilleux destroyed and repudiated the majority of the pieces from this period, acknowledging only a handful of songs, the piano sonata, and the two symphonies.

Dutilleux’s compositional style started to materialize with the piano sonata and was fully realized by the time he composed the two symphonies. The second phase of his compositional transformation takes place during the 1950s through the 1970s, and he expanded on the harmonic, formal, and timbral aspects which he cultivated with the two symphonies. This is the period where Dutilleux acknowledged the explicit use of his compositional process based on Proust’s aesthetic. In addition, he drew inspiration from other non-musical sources such as the writings of Baudelaire and Van Gogh’s painting, *La nuit étoilée*. The notable pieces include
Métaboles (1959-64) for orchestra, Tout un monde lointoin... (1967-70) for cello and orchestra, Ainsi la nuit (1973-76) for string quartet, Figures de resonance (1970) for two pianos, and Timbres, espace movement ou La nuit étoillée (1976-78) for orchestra.

His compositional style during the 1980s to 1990s is an extension from his previous period but with more focus on portraying the abstract qualities and composing for less common instrumentation. Notable works include the violin concerto L’arbre des songes (1979-85), Mystère de l’instant for twenty-four strings, cimbalom and percussion (1985-89), Diptyque: Les Citations for oboe, double bass and percussion (1990-91), and The Shadows of Time for orchestra and children’s voices (1997).

Dutilleux composed well into his nineties, similar to Elliott Carter, who exhibited several ‘late periods’ due to his longevity. In 2002, Dutilleux composed his last instrumental work, the nocturne for violin and orchestra, Sur le même accord. The last genre in which Dutilleux composed before his passing was the song cycle, a form in which he had not composed for almost four decades. Correspondences (2003) and Le temps l’horloge (2006-09), written for soprano and orchestra, marks the end of his catalogue.

Influence of the past

The investigation of Dutilleux’s formative years revealed that he was most prolific during the first phase of his compositional transformation. However, Dutilleux destroyed the majority of the works from this period with great diligence. Of the few pieces that survived such scrutiny, Dutilleux sanctioned a ban on productions of recordings and performances. Why was Dutilleux so obsessed with covering his footsteps? If the concern was to hide any compositional

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73 In 2010, Dutilleux added a third movement to Les citations.
shortcomings, the pieces from this period, especially the compositions for wind instruments, would not be studied and performed as frequently as they are today, even against the composer’s will.

As mentioned before, Dutilleux’s greatest fear was to be considered as a generic extension of the French ‘tradition’. Despite his guarded stance in regards to tradition, his admiration for Debussy, Ravel, and Fauré is not in doubt, and their influence on the formation of Dutilleux’s aesthetic is evident:

Ravel made a great impression on us and I must say that, in my own case, his influence was too exclusive during a certain period. It was somewhat to the detriment of other important sources, such as Berlioz. I didn’t know his music in its entirety. Now I accept it all, even with its faults and errors; in my view Berlioz was the great French composer of the 19th century. So, I had to disentangle myself from certain influences. In my earlier works there’s also an influence of Fauré – his music made a great impression on me when I was young.74

As seen from Dutilleux’s interview with Roger Nichols, Ravel had a lasting influence on Dutilleux’s early period, more so than any other composer. During the 1930s, Dutilleux attended several concerts that featured the music of Ravel, and he was able to attend one of the rehearsals of Ravel’s Concerto for the left hand. In the same interview with Roger Nichols, Dutilleux further claimed that meeting Ravel was one of his most cherished memories.75 The two most noticeable elements that Dutilleux inherited from Ravel is the usage of harmony and virtuosic pianism.

\[74\] Nichols, 88.
\[75\] Ibid.
Example 2.1 Ravel, Symphonie Espagnole, mm 6-10. (reduction for 2 pianos)

Ravel frequently exploited having a vague establishment of a tonal center in his compositions to evoke certain colors, and he utilizes the resulting tension as a narrative tool. The excerpt seen above serves as a harmonic backbone to the first movement of Ravel’s Symphonie Espagnole, where the tonal scheme is mystified with the oscillating resonances between $A_b + B_b$ and $A^\# + B^\#$. The oscillation, paired with the falling tetrachord in the background, creates a harmonic suspension that drives the movement’s narrative until its resolution to A major in the end. Another example can be seen in example 2.2, where Ravel deliberately deviates from setting the tonal center by clashing $E_b$ with a $D^\#$, creating a rather sensual harmonic resonance which is resolved in measure 5.

Example 2.2 Ravel, The opening of Forlane from Le Tombeau de Couperin, mm. 1-5
In the opening measures of Prélude en Berceuse, the first movement of Au Gré des Ondes, Dutilleux exhibits harmonic treatment similar to that of Ravel’s method, seen by the alternation between F♯ and F♮ (ex. 2.3). A similar harmonic treatment is found in the opening measures of the piano sonata as well (ex.2.4). The top voice outlines an F♯ minor triad as indicated by the use of A♯, and the middle voice simultaneously outlines F♯ major with the use of A♯, provoking a clash major and minor sonorities that cause tension and instability.

**Example 2.3** Dutilleux, Prélude en Berceuse, from Au gré des ondes, mm. 1-4

![Example 2.3](image)

**Example 2.4** Dutilleux, Piano Sonata, movement1, mm.1-3

![Example 2.4](image)

While harmonic ambiguity is a characteristic of French music in general, Dutilleux’s connection to Ravel is unmistakable, considering the structural similarities between *Au gré des ondes* and Le Tombeau de Couperin. Further evidence of Ravel’s influence on Dutilleux can be found in the piano writing. Unlike Debussy, Ravel incorporated highly virtuosic passages in his piano works and produced a few of the most technically challenging pieces in the piano
repertoire, such as *Gaspard de la nuit* and *Miroirs*. Dutilleux, having composed his early piano pieces at the time of marrying Geneviève Joy, who was a virtuoso pianist and an adept sight-reader, tailored the piano works to her technical prowess. As seen from the examples below, the sixteenth-note texture from ‘Etude’ exhibits a striking similarity to the last movement of Ravel’s *Le Tombeau de Couperin*.

**Example 2.5** Dutilleux, *Etude* from *Au gré des ondes*, mm.1-4.

![Example 2.5](image1)

**Example 2.6** Ravel, *Toccata* from *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, mm. 41-45.

![Example 2.6](image2)

Geneviève Joy, who also studied at the Paris Conservatoire, was certainly familiar with the works of Ravel, given the institution’s Francocentric training, and Dutilleux’s lush piano writing in the sonata likely felt familiar to her fingers.
Example 2.7 Ravel, *Jeux d’eau*, mm. 44-45

Example 2.8 Dutilleux, Piano Sonata, 2nd movement, mm. 68-69

The passage from Ravel’s *Jeux d’eau* (ex.2.7) depicts a turbulent push to the climax of the piece with a cascade of fast-moving notes in the right hand accompanied by the varying rhythmic figuration in the left hand. The notes that initiate each of the four-note pattern form a group of ascending chromatic tetrachords, [B♯, A♯, C♯, B♯] [B♯, A♯, B♯, C♯] [D♮, C♮, E♭, D♮] [D♮,
C, D, E♭], which evoke a sense of urgency. Similarly, example 2.8 illustrates a passage from the second movement of the piano sonata where the quintuplets in the right-hand gain momentum into the climax of the movement. The right-hand notes that initiate each quintuplet groups also form a chromatic pattern, [F♯, E♯, F♯, F♯] [F♯, F♯, G, F♯] [G, A♭, F♯, G♯], which is accompanied by the duple figuration and the melodic material in the left hand. All in all, the similar influences of Ravel’s pianism are found throughout the sonata, further proving Dutilleux’s ties to the French tradition.

Janet Obi-Keller concluded that the foundation of Dutilleux’s musical success was based on the robust historical lineage of musical traditions and institutions that Dutilleux had been exposed to during his youth. By juxtaposing the works of Ravel, Dutilleux’s early works exhibit a number of similarities on the surface level. However, as we shall further investigate, such tendencies are only a small part of Dutilleux’s sophisticated compositional aesthetic.

**Foreign Influences**

After winning the Prix de Rome in 1939, Dutilleux searched for an individual aesthetic. In an interview with Martine Cadieu, he stated that ‘I remember how much I felt at sea, uncertain of my direction. I said to myself: I’ve won the Prix de Rome, but I know nothing’. To this end, Dutilleux studied various scores and treatises which may have helped him to reevaluate his French heritage and to find a way forward. Dutilleux’s aesthetic started to take shape after the Second World War, when a sudden surplus of foreign music had been introduced in Paris with

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the help of Henri Barraud’s Radio broadcasts that featured the music of Stravinsky, Bartók, Schoenberg, and Berg, among others. As mentioned before, Dutilleux claimed that in order to preserve a true sense of national identity, one must look for foreign inspirations. To further illustrate his point of view, Dutilleux often cited André Gide, a French writer who promoted the presence of foreign elements in French literature.

I referred to Gide and to the phrase he uses in his *Journal*, ‘foreign leavening’, when he says that a national art is no less national if it profits from ‘foreign leavening’. He applies this to literature and remarks […] that ‘given the qualities of the French (clarity, order, balance, perfection) no other people are in so much need of what is foreign’. (Dutilleux, 2003, p.98)

Dutilleux likely felt that the genius of his forebears (Fauré, Debussy, Ravel) had restricted his artistic boundaries; therefore, he searched for ‘yeast’ or leavening’ agents that would inspire his imaginations. To this end, Dutilleux sought inspiration from various composers from Central and Eastern Europe, notably Schoenberg, Berg, Bartók, and Lutosławski, for their insights into composing in large-scale forms that combined complex harmonic language with explorations of timbre in orchestration. The importance of the aforementioned composers is also evident in Dutilleux’s design for a class that he taught at the École Normale, exhibiting a stark difference compared to the Francocentric education that he had received at the Paris Conservatoire. Francis Bayer, one of Dutilleux’s known pupils at École Normale, recalled that the majority of Dutilleux’s class was spent on analyzing the excerpts of *Wozzeck* and *Tristan and Isolde*, Berg’s *Altenberg Lieder*, Bartók’s *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*, and Beethoven’s String Quartet op.132.

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78 Rae, 433.
79 Ibid.
80 Potter, 15.
Dutilleux was never shy about his admiration of the Austro-German composers, transcending the nationalistic dogma that fueled the conventional French idealism. Dutilleux opined that the ‘timbral magic especially in the style of orchestration’ was more apparent in the music of the Second Viennese School than that of the French composers from the period of Les Six.\(^1\) Dutilleux, on numerous occasions, cited Schoenberg’s *Farben*, from *Five Pieces for Orchestra*, Op.16, as an ideal model of orchestral colorism as well as pointing out its abstract visual appearance.\(^2\)

Dutilleux was attracted to Berg’s lyricism, rhythmic flexibility, and the ability to incorporate serial techniques into his musical language without rejecting tonality.\(^3\) In recent years, Dutilleux’s affinity for Berg was unveiled by Caroline Potter and Caroline Rae. Rae highlighted the brief paraphrase of the last moment of Wozzeck’s drowning, portrayed by the ascending chords in the orchestra, in the last movement of *Le temps l’horloge*. Potter also discovered a note in the manuscript of *Tout un monde lointain*... that alluded to Wozzeck’s final moments.\(^4\)

Furthermore, Potter pointed out the structural similarities between Berg’s *Lyric Suite* and Dutilleux’s *Ainsi la nuit*, both multi-movement pieces for string quartet, in the use of palindromic passages and the symmetrical layout of the movements. Rae further elaborated on the striking gestural and textural similarity found in the closing moments of *Tout un monde loinain*... and the *Lyric Suite*; both works are void of a double bar and direct the instruments to evaporate into silence with oscillating figurations, as shown in the following examples.\(^5\)

\(^{81}\) Glayman, 100.
\(^{82}\) Caroline Potter, 122.
\(^{83}\) Rae, 437.
\(^{84}\) Ibid., 435.
\(^{85}\) Ibid.
Example 2.10 Berg, the end of *Lyric Suite* (1926)

Example 2.9 Dutilleux, the end of *Tout un monde Lointain...* (1970)
The aesthetical similarities between Dutilleux and Berg originate from their shared admiration of the sensual and melancholic writings of Charles Baudelaire. Berg had set excerpts of Baudelaire’s *Les fleur du mal* to his song *Der Wein* (1929) and quoted Baudelaire’s *De profundis clamavi* in the manuscript of the Largo movement of the Lyric Suite. Similarly, Dutilleux conceived *Tout un monde lointain*... under the influence of Baudelaire’s writing, as he titled each movement of the cello concerto after a passage in Baudelaire’s poetry.

Although the Piano Sonata well predates the middle period pieces such as *Ainsi la nuit* and *Tout un monde lointain*..., the German influence is present nonetheless. The most noticeable influence is the form and structure of the sonata: the first movement is in a traditional sonata-allegro form, and the last movement is a chorale with four variations. The second movement, Lied, contains a direct influence from German tradition as seen from its title. It is written in ternary structure with a cadenza-like section in the middle and a coda. The first theme of the second movement, unlike a conventional French *melodie*, recalls a melodic contour similar to that of a Berg or Schoenberg lied, where the contour treads for a longer period of time, exhibiting a syllabic emphasis on the downbeat of a measure.

**Example 2.11** Dutilleux, Second movement of the Piano Sonata, mm. 1-4

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86 Rae, 435.
Despite the substantial influence of the Second Viennese School, Dutilleux refused to incorporate the ideals of the twelve-tone technique in his compositions. At times he recalled the overwhelming dominance of serialism in the 1950s and 60s as a form of musical terrorism, alluding to Boulez’s rather blatant dogmatism. Dutilleux’s unacceptance of the twelve-tone system, however, had more to do with his compositional principle of incorporating ‘anchor’ notes and chords as referential points to narrate his musical rhetoric. In regard to the usage of the twelve-tone technique, Dutilleux stated:

As far as this system is concerned, I have honestly never been able to accept the abolition of every form of hierarchy (in the ordering of the degrees of the chromatic scale) which is its fundamental principle: in my music, there are many references to this idea of hierarchy, because I use pivot notes, pedal points, ‘obsessional sounds’, and chordal themes. This shows that, not only do I accept hierarchies, but by natural inclination I cannot deprive myself of the idea of polarity in music. These reference points can be modal, polytonal, atonal and why not? Even tonal.

The usage of pivot notes is a defining characteristic of Dutilleux’s mature works, where a note is either sustained or repeated for a short period of time to function as a structural pillar in a seemingly abstract context. The idea of using a note or a chord as a referential point is seen as early as the piano sonata, notably in the second movement. The second theme, as shown in example 2.12, operates around E-natural as its referential point, where its sonority is introduced over multiple voices. This sonority returns in the middle section, acting as an anchor point which holds the section together, shown in example 2.13.

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87 Potter, 119.
Example 2.12 Dutilleux, Second movement of the Piano Sonata, mm.10-20

Example 2.13 Dutilleux, Second movement of the Piano Sonata, mm.41-49
Along with the composers of the Second Viennese School, Bartók had an explicit influence on Dutilleux’s growth and output. Dutilleux’s homage to Bartók is witnessed in the instrumentation of Mystère de l’instant (1989), written for string orchestra, cimbalom, and percussion; and Dutilleux had recalled Bartók as one of the most important influences of his youth.\textsuperscript{89} Ironically, Dutilleux’s inclination to search for foreign inspirations in Bartók’s music returned Dutilleux to the shadow of his forebears. Bartók, in order to find his individual aesthetic, and to escape from the pervasive influence of the Austro-German tradition, sought his answers in France, notably in the music of Debussy and Ravel.\textsuperscript{90} The influence of Debussy is vividly seen in \textit{Duke Bluebeard’s Castle} with the usage of expanded modal tonality and the abstract atmosphere produced by the unique orchestration, alluding to the brooding and nocturnal sound world of \textit{Pelléas et Mélisande}. Bartók, by imbuing the elements of the French innovation with his own aesthetic, produced a new compositional style that influenced not only the Central Europeans, like Lutosławski, but also French composers who were in search of inspiration, such as Dutilleux, Ohana, and Messiaen.\textsuperscript{91} Besides the French masters, it is widely known that a substantial part of Bartók’s compositional process was influenced by the folk music of Hungarian, Slovak, Romanian, Bulgarian, and other local regions in the vicinity. However, Bartók’s rhythmic and melodic inspirations from folk music are not evident in Dutilleux’s piano sonata.

Bartók’s prominent compositional aesthetics originate from his fascination with the mathematical beauty and the symmetry found in nature. As a result, Bartók had codified several compositional devices that exhibit symmetry, which is observed in both the micro and macro

\textsuperscript{89} Rae, 441.
\textsuperscript{90} Rae, 441.
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid.
levels of his compositions. In his “The Problem of the New Music,” Bartók illustrated several chords that are symmetrically built on an axis representing an example of mirror symmetry, as seen in the example below. Another well-known symmetrical phenomenon is seen in the fugal entrances in the first movement of *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* (1936), where each of the headnotes of the subjects form a divergence of expanding fifths in an alternating manner (example 2.15).

**Example 2.14** Bartok, “The Problem of the New Music”

![Example 2.14](image)

**Example 2.15** Bartók, *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta, First movement*, mm.1-27, A summarization of headnotes of successive fugal entrances

![Example 2.15](image)

The incorporation of mirroring passages and the fan-shaped structures are crucial to Dutilleux’s musical language. The symmetrical allusions are scattered throughout Dutilleux’s compositions, whether it be the palindromic opening of the *Ainsi la nuit* (horizontal mirror
symmetry), or the large-scale symmetrical scheme found in *Métaboles* and *Tout un monde Lointain*... both of which are constructed according to a symmetrical five-movement structure. \(^92\)

The piano sonata contains no shortage of such manifestations. Perhaps the most important occasion is witnessed in the construction of the thematic unit which is gradually built across the movements. The uninterrupted presentation of the thematic material occurs in the beginning of the third variation in the third movement, evidently coinciding with the golden section of the movement. \(^93\)

**Example 2.16** Dutilleux, Piano Sonata, 3\(^{rd}\) movement, mm.405-407

The five-note material, \([C \ D\ B\ A\ D\#]\), outlines a triad built on a tritone, forming \([A\ C\ D\#]\), which forms a symmetrical chord with the C as an axis. The remaining notes, \([B, D]\), fill up the gap between the notes outlining the triad, completing a part of an octatonic scale. An example of fan-shaped writing is also present in the third movement, where both hands

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\(^92\) Rae, 442.

\(^93\) Another popular element of Bartok’s musical concept is the presence of the Golden Section, which is also found in the compositions of Debussy and Ravel. Dutilleux’s works also exhibit this phenomenon, although the composer was oblivious to its existence.
simultaneously exhibit contrary oblique motion outlining a cascade of chromatic chords, creating a unique atmosphere (ex.2.17).

Example 2.17 Dutilleux, Piano Sonata, 3rd movement, mm.348-359

In a similar vein, there are a number of passages in the sonata that exhibit parallel symmetry, where the thematic group is presented in a distorted, diminutive syncopation, as shown below.

Example 2.18 Dutilleux, Piano Sonata, 3rd movement, mm.58-69
Progressive Growth

It is evident that Dutilleux drew inspiration from various sources to formulate compositional building blocks in regards to harmony, texture, and instrumental writing. What is unique to Dutilleux is his method of combining and developing such elements into a cohesive narrative. Dutilleux’s defining organizational method, known as ‘croissance progressive’ (progressive growth), originated from the work of Marcel Proust.

In Proust’s magnum opus, À la Recherché du temps perdu (In Search of Lost Time), the reader witnesses the protagonist’s journey to understanding the meaning of life and the realization of self through the recollection of scattered memories over time.94 The work itself is a manifestation of structural genius as its large and small-scale structure cohesively unfolds in a non-linear, multi-dimensional fashion over the course of seven volumes. Though Proust had been criticized for the overtly complex and ambiguous plot of Recherché, its influence on Dutilleux’s compositional aesthetic remains easier to understand.

In general, Dutilleux was interested in translating the interconnected concepts of time and memory in Proust’s work into a musical form, realizing the relationship between a musical object (central idea) to sound events (episodic, recurring) and their organization within the scope of a work.95 In an interview with Roger Nichols, Dutilleux explained his structural concept as such:

Intuitive tendency not to expose a theme in its definitive state from the beginning. It is not cyclic form, that is different; in cyclic form, the theme is determined from the start, as in Debussy’s quartet. That is not the case in my music: I use small cells which are gradually developed. Perhaps I was influenced by literature – by Proust – concerning the concept of memory. It is difficult to explain this, but it is

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95 Utzinger, 12.
also important because it is a central preoccupation of mine from the First Symphony. When I started to use this ‘procedure’, if you want to call it that, I was not entirely conscious of it. I became aware of it later, and I have gradually exploited it.  

To summarize, Dutilleux’s concept of progressive growth involves a steady and gradual transformation of a given idea over the course of a section, movement, or work. On the surface level, Dutilleux’s procedure resembles the nineteenth century Franckian cyclic form, where the thematic material is transformed and developed throughout the piece. The key difference between the ideas is that Dutilleux was never explicit on introducing the thematic material. Nineteenth century composers, such as César Franck and Franz Liszt, focused on the clarity in presentation of the thematic material, even when transformed. In contrast, Dutilleux disliked the reliance on obvious memorability. For this reason, Dutilleux expressed his distaste for the Wagnerian leitmotif, stating, ‘the leitmotif can become very irritating. It is immediately identifiable, as if it says “Hello, it’s me again!”’ Furthermore, in Dutilleux’s music, the ‘growth’ of the central idea is not easily traceable as the transformed idea seldom exhibits the original quality of its previous form. To this end, Dutilleux further elaborates his procedure in regards to Métaboles:

In each of the five movements there’s an element destined to undergo the process of “progressive growth,” and an element which will recur and develop in the movement that follows. At the end of the first movement, you find the opening of the second… or rather, the other way round… you could compare it with the way tiles overlap on a roof. This element undergoes a succession of changes, of metamorphoses, until, after a certain number of them, as with insects, you find that there’s an essential change in its nature: the original idea is almost unrecognizable.

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96 Nichols, 89.
97 Potter, 61.
98 Nichols, 89.
Proust’s known contribution to philosophy through *Recherché* is the codification of memory into two categories, voluntary and involuntary. Proust viewed the conscious retrieval of events, or voluntary memory, to be inferior to the involuntary, unconscious recalling of a memory. Proust believed that the voluntary memory was equivalent to a photo, because it is only capable of capturing a single moment in time, lacking context and dimensionality of the recalled moment. In contrast, involuntary memory is triggered by an association with a certain element in the present moment, enabling all facets of the past experience to coexist in the present, ultimately placing the past and present in a single dimension.\(^9\)\(^9\) The interplay of voluntary and involuntary memory is made clear in *Recherché* when the Narrator, walking on an uneven paving outside the Princesse de Guermantes’ home in Paris, is reminded of an incident in Venice when he treads on a similar uneven paving in St. Mark’s Square, and the involuntary action of recalling the past event triggered the reminiscences of Venice far more effectively than did the Narrator’s voluntary attempts to remember his visit.\(^1\)\(^0\)

Dutilleux’s incorporation of progressive growth and referential devices exhibit correlations with Proust’s concept of voluntary and involuntary memory.\(^1\)\(^1\)\(^1\) Dutilleux’s usage of progressive growth produces a musical dimensionality reflective of Proust’s concept of involuntary memory, where the recalled musical object is given life by its transformation and coexists with the preexisting material at the given moment. On the other hand, Dutilleux’s referential devices, like voluntary memory, lack dimensionality, as seen in the second movement of the piano sonata (example 2.13). The referential material is made of isolated musical structures, a musical snapshot that only gains structural significance through reiterations.

\(^9\) Utzinger, 131.  
\(^1\) Potter, 61.  
\(^1\) Utzinger, 29.
Although Proust believed that involuntary recalling of memory is superior than the recalling of voluntary memory, both of the corresponding compositional aesthetics are necessary to Dutilleux’s process, as they serve distinct functions in his musical narrative.

As Dutilleux himself stated, the incorporation of progressive growth is evident with his *Première Symphonie* and onwards, gradually realizing the full potential of his newfound method in his middle period pieces. Therefore, the whole notion of the ‘croissance progressive’ has not yet materialized in the Piano Sonata, but the early signs of its formation are clearly present. As previously mentioned, the sonata operates with the development of a five-note unit, [C D B A D♯], that permeates all three movements of the sonata (ex.2.16). This primary idea takes a different form and shape each time it is reintroduced, always hidden in the melodic or rhythmic contour, alluding to Dutilleux’s subtle metamorphosis of musical objects seen in his later compositions.

The following instances represent only a few of the many iterations of the primary idea observed across the Piano Sonata. They are scattered in major thematic groups and transitory sections, often disguised under various textures and temporal displacements. In contrast to the first two movements, the iterations of the primary group are clearly visible in the third movement, which is in variation form.
Example 2.19 The thematic group of the first movement

Example 2.20 The second theme of the first movement

Example 2.21 First thematic group of the second movement
**Example 2.22** The second theme of the second movement

![Example 2.22](image)

**Example 2.23** The opening of the third movement

![Example 2.23](image)
Example 2.24 Variation 1 of the third movement

Example 2.25 Variation 2 of the third movement, the theme is portrayed in the middle voice
Example 2.26 Variation 3 of the third movement.

Example 2.27 The final variation of the movement, the primary notes are inverted.
CHAPTER 3: SYNTHESIS OF ELEMENTS

I wanted to write a substantial piano piece which would be both virtuosic and sensuous. I sought an alluring, voluptuous piano sound, and sometimes the texture of this work is even rather over-abundant. Finally [...] at the stage I felt the need to write large-scale pieces.\textsuperscript{102}

As mentioned before, Piano Sonata (1947-48) is Dutilleux’s first attempt at composing a large-scale work that exhibits sophisticated structural narrative and diverse colorism. After the Second World War, Dutilleux began to internalize the various compositional methods and strategies of traditional and contemporary styles. Therefore, in a way, the piano sonata was a proving ground for Dutilleux to assess the boundaries of his knowledge and originality - a first step in realizing his full artistic potential.

There are only a handful of piano works by Dutilleux, namely the piano sonata, \textit{figures de résonances} (1970) for two pianos, and three preludes (\textit{D’ombre et de silence, Sur un même accord, Le jeu des contraires}) (1973-88). The piano sonata is the most involved among his piano works in regards to its narrative scope and technical brilliance. Dutilleux featured sophisticated contrapuntal and fugal elements in the sonata. In an interview with Claude Glayman, he stated that, ‘I have never regretted doing a lot of strict counterpoint and fugue: I enjoyed that kind of mechanistic thinking.’\textsuperscript{103} In another interview with Roger Nichols, Dutilleux related his inclination towards contrapuntal writing to his Flemish ancestry, making connections to Flemish contrapuntists such as Josquin and Ockeghem: ‘I liked fugues a lot when I was young, and I must say that perhaps this is because I come from Flanders.’\textsuperscript{104} Therefore, Dutilleux’s inclination for ‘mechanistic thinking’ is evident throughout the sonata.

\textsuperscript{102} Potter, 48.
\textsuperscript{103} Glayman, 20.
\textsuperscript{104} Potter, 4.
What is unique to the sonata, along with the strong contrapuntal tendencies, is the influence of the vibrant and virtuosic piano writings of Sergei Prokofiev. There are no explicit sources that link their affiliations, nor has Dutilleux admitted Prokofiev’s influence in any interviews. Dutilleux has only mentioned Prokofiev in passing, stating that he was an ‘imaginative, highly original composer’ who was considerably mistreated.\(^\text{105}\) While Dutilleux’s harmonic sensuality and the ability to create an abstract atmosphere is distinctly his own, the sonata seems to share textural and pianistic elements similar to that of Prokofiev’s piano sonatas, especially the ones he composed upon returning to the USSR, commonly known as the ‘War Sonatas.’ The following analysis will closely examine Dutilleux’s said characteristics along with speculations towards the influence of Prokofiev.

\(^{105}\) Glayman, 48
First Movement: Allegro con moto

Example 3.1 Dutilleux Piano Sonata, First movement, mm.1-12

From the opening measures, there is a predilection for tonal ambiguity. According to the key signature and the bass line, the piece seems to be in F♯ minor. However, there is a clash of A♯ and A♮ between the melodic and textural voices, effectively evoking tonal tension and uncertainty, which is unique to Dutilleux’s harmonic writing. Dutilleux had claimed that the sonata was conceived more modally than tonally,106 and if that is the case, the D♯ in the tenor voice gains prominence as the raised sixth degree function in juxtaposing F♯ dorian [F♯ G♯ A♯ B

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106 Glayman, 31.
C♯ D♯ E] or F♯ mixolydian [F♯ G♯ A♯ B C♯ D♯ E] scales, considering the chromatic alteration on A. Besides the traditional church modes, Dutilleux incorporates synthetic modes as well, perhaps more often than the traditional modes, by utilizing fragments of chromatic, octatonic, and whole-tone scales to construct thematic and transitory materials, as seen with the scale in mm. 6.

The first movement, Allegro con moto, is mainly constructed in sonata-allegro form (table 1). The opening, exhibiting an abstract atmosphere fueled by the juxtaposition of tonal and modal elements, is followed by a series of scale patterns that add to the abstract nature of the opening, connecting the opening material to its reiteration in m. 7. Following the presentation of the first theme, an unusually long transition takes place from m.13 to m.32. The transition begins with an elaboration on the first theme, where the melody is doubled by thirds and the tonal center (F♯) further disrupted by the alternation between B and F♮ in the bass (ex.3.2). This elongated transition is of great importance, because it contains materials that develop throughout the movement.

**Example 3.2** The elaboration of the first theme, mm.13

There are three materials worth mentioning in the first transition, and the first one occurs in m. 16 as a series of short eighth notes that contrast the homogenous texture of the opening (ex.3.3). These short bursts of eighth notes, reminiscent of the articulation prominent in Prokofiev’s piano works, are written in 7/8, further providing instability and tension. This
material serves as the overarching texture for transitory materials throughout the movement. Therefore, the movement in general exhibits a dichotomy of textures witnessed in the thematic group, homogenous and fluid, and the transitional section, jagged, and brilliant in nature.

**Example 3.3 Transition Material I**

![Musical Example](image)

The second element is seen in m. 22 as a series of major sevenths (ex.3.4). The major sevenths, or minor seconds when inverted, produce a dissonant sonority that adds to the textural dichotomy, as the thematic material is mainly comprised of thirds and whole tone scales. This material is further developed in the closing section of the exposition with disjunct motion, seen in mm. 91 (ex.3.5).
Example 3.4 Transition Material II

Example 3.5 Variation of the transition material II

The last element in this section is a series of fast-moving sixteenth notes that bridges the transitory section and the reprise of the first theme, and it will be commonly used to bridge sections throughout the movement (ex.3.6).
Example 3.6 Transition Material III

After the introduction of these elements, the reprise of the first theme occurs in mm. 33. The 11-measure thematic reprise is not altered, but the transition that follows the theme has been developed. The thematic material seen in m.13, is further elaborated with octaves, and the transitory material seen in m.16 is developed as a cascade of eighth-note patterns that bridges the first section to the second theme (ex.3.7)

Example 3.7 The development of the transition material I

Compared to the first theme, the second theme exhibits more robust and active contours and textures, alluding to the dichotomy of the first and second thematic groups seen in traditional 19th-century sonatas (ex.3.8). The tonal/modal interplay on F♯ is continued in this section, and
the bass line adds to the harmonic instability by outlining \([A\# D\# A\# E A\# D\#]\). These notes are assigned a series of half notes with accents, foreshadowing the half note texture to be seen in the development.

**Example 3.8** The second theme

The second theme is essentially a pattern of melodic contours that increase in register as the tension of the music rises (ex.3.9). The starting notes of each contour outline an F\# major chord, although its harmonic implication is lost with the thick chromatic texture in the lower voices. As the tension rises through the melodic patterns, the texture in the lower voices becomes more sophisticated, turning into a series of fan-shaped chromatic scales starting in m.77 (ex.3.9).

**Example 3.9** Second theme melodic pattern and the fan-shaped scale in the middle voices
The closing theme of the exposition is a combination of the second and third transition materials. The seemingly complicated leaps are only a broken iteration of sevenths (or seconds) seen in the previous transition (ex. 3.5), and they are ornamented with sixteenth notes reminiscent of the third element of the transition. The closing section tumbles down to C#, which is an elongated pedal tone, that connects the exposition and the development. C# alludes to the tonic-dominant relationship, but no strong harmonic centers are present in this movement. This is likely an early instance of utilizing referential or ‘pivot’ notes, a structural device that is further developed and used frequently in Dutilleux’s later compositions, as discussed in the previous chapter concerning Proust’s idea of voluntary memory. The transition between the exposition and the development features fragments of the second theme and second element of the transition, distorted over the pedal tone in the bass (ex.3.10)

Example 3.10 Transition to the development section
The development begins with a transparent and mysterious atmosphere, supplied by the pedal tones with quartal and quintal intervals in the upper voices. The development is essentially a gradual transformation from an abstract and somber texture to an outburst of violent and passionate energy towards its end, much like the end-weighted formal design seen in his orchestral works written after the piano sonata. The development consists of three layers: the bottom layer that binds the structure together with elongated pedal tones, the middle layer providing rhythmic ambiguity, and the top layer comprised of repetitious five-note patterns (ex.3.11). The contour of the top voice, as shown in the example 3.11, loosely foreshadows the five note thematic group presented in the last movement. Albeit Dutilleux was not yet consciously using his method of ‘progressive growth’ in the sonata, his subconscious effort to bind the entire work under a unifying narrative progression is evident.

Example 3.11 Various levels of layers seen in the development
The development can be divided into two smaller sections. In the first section, mm.112-159, the harmony and the texture remain transparent. The rhythmic dispositions of the chordal texture add to the abstract and timeless characteristics. In the second section, mm.160-205, the textures become dense as the bass line becomes more active, and the chordal texture gains momentum through repetition, together leading to the climax of the section in m.182. The climax of the development centers around B♮, as heard with its definitive arrival in m.182, but the sonority is dispersed after several measures (ex.3.12). In m.206, transitory material appears in the form of a homogenous eighth-note texture reminiscent of the opening measures (ex.3.13). The melody oscillates between A♮ and F♮ anticipating the first two notes of the main theme until its smooth transition into the recapitulation in m.227 (ex.3.14).

Example 3.12 Climax of the development
Example 3.13 The transition to the recapitulation

The tonal/modal design of the development seems vague due to the layers of dissonant textures. However, Dutilleux highlights the points of structural interest by repeating a bass or a melody note to signal its significance. The first structural point is witnessed in the beginning of the section, shown as the pedal tone on C# (ex.3.10, m.112). The next point of interest occurs at the climax of the section in m.182 with B♭ (ex.3.12). The final reference is seen in the transition into the recapitulation, as A♭ in the melody line (ex.3.14).

Example 3.14 The repetition of A♭
The previous chapters revealed that Dutilleux’s usage of referential notes serve as devices that provide structural unity to a piece, and they can be manifested in any register. To this end, by connecting the said points, an *Ursatz* of C♯-B-A is formed, loosely completing the dominant–mediant relationship and hinting a resolution to the F♯ major/minor ambiguity.

The recapitulation exhibits a similar layout as the exposition, except for the omittance of the first transition. The second theme is transposed up a major third before leading into the most interesting section of the movement. In a traditional sonata-allegro form, the second theme would lead its way to the closing theme or a coda. What is unique to this movement is that Dutilleux introduces a whole new section, almost cadenza-like, which is highly virtuosic and sophisticated (ex.3.15). This section utilizes every thematic and transitory element and their elaborations seen thus far, as if Dutilleux was trying to summarize the movement – and perhaps to showcase his compositional mastery. The rapid succession of contrasting textures is reminiscent of Prokofiev’s toccata, and the frenzied rhythmic disposition resembles that of Bartók’s common rhythmic figuration (ex.3.16, ex.3.17).

**Example 3.15** An excerpt of the cadenza-like section
Example 3.16 Dutilleux, Rhythmic disposition

Example 3.17 Bartok, Violin Rhapsody No.1, last movement
The coda (m.333) is an extension of the previous section, comprised of a fast-paced-quarter-note texture reminiscent of the climactic passage of the development. The ending of the movement confirms the key of F♯ minor, as he favors A♭ in the final measures of the movement (ex.3.18).

Example 3.18 The end of the first movement

The first movement of the piano sonata exhibits the most dense and extensive compositional scheme out of the three movements. While following the standard sonata-allegro form, the first movement exhibits expanded transitions and a unique cadenza-like section towards the end, where all of its compositional elements are showcased simultaneously. The elements that make up the transitions are developed throughout the piece, providing various textures. It has been mentioned that the first movement is a dichotomy of varying textures apparent in the thematic groups and the transitory sections, where lush and sonorous writing is contrasted with agile and jagged eighth note textures. A similar textural scheme is also found in Prokofiev’s Piano Sonata, namely the eighth sonata, which was written in 1944. Dutilleux had mentioned that he discovered the music of Prokofiev around the same time when he discovered the music of Bartók, around 1940.\textsuperscript{107} Considering Prokofiev had written the War Sonatas numbers 6, 7, and 8 in the years 1940, 1942, 1944, it is likely that Dutilleux and Geneviève Joy

\textsuperscript{107} Glayman, 9.
were already familiar with the piano works of Prokofiev. As previously mentioned, Prokofiev and Dutilleux exhibit vastly different styles, but it is worth noting a few cases of textural similarities exhibited in the two sonatas. The first instance can be found in the opening material where both of the sonatas involve an alternating bass line in half notes, a quarter note melody, and an eighth-note texture in the middle voice (ex.3.1, ex.3.19). The second instance, where the similarity is more pronounced, occurs in their respective climactic passages (ex.3.12, ex.3.20). Both pieces feature an emphasis on the repeated quarter-note texture that is supported by the slow-moving bassline. The melody is emphasized by half notes in both instances, and the rapid arpeggiated ornaments in the lower voice share vivid similarities.

Example 3.19 The opening of Prokofiev’s 8th piano sonata
Example 3.20 The climax of the first movement, mm.138-150
**TABLE 1**

Dutilleux Piano Sonata, Mvt. 1: structural analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPOSITION</th>
<th>DEVELOPMENT</th>
<th>RECAPITULATION</th>
<th>‘CADENZA’</th>
<th>CODA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(mm. 1 – 111)</td>
<td>(mm. 112 – 226)</td>
<td>(mm. 227 – 274)</td>
<td>(mm. 275 – 332)</td>
<td>(mm. 333 – 366)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The presentation of</td>
<td>A gradual transformation</td>
<td>A shortened version of the</td>
<td>A virtuosic section that</td>
<td>The movement ends in F#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>theme and transition</td>
<td>of somber and transparent</td>
<td>of the exposition</td>
<td>showcases all of the</td>
<td>minor, ending the tonal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>materials that develop</td>
<td>textures into a passionate</td>
<td></td>
<td>materials seen in exposition</td>
<td>ambiguity evoked by the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>throughout the movement</td>
<td>climax</td>
<td></td>
<td>and development</td>
<td>juxtaposition of A# and A♭</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition material 1 (m.15)</td>
<td>The transition materials seen in the exposition are not visible</td>
<td>Development I (m.112-160) - half-note texture in the RH foreshadowing the Chorale theme in the 3rd movement</td>
<td></td>
<td>seen in the exposition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- short, linear eighth-note Texture</td>
<td></td>
<td>Development II (m.161-226) - textures become thicker, reminiscent of Prokofiev’s piano sonata</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition material 2 (m.22)</td>
<td>Development I (m.112-160) - half-note texture in the RH foreshadowing the Chorale theme in the 3rd movement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- intervallic texture outlining major sevenths</td>
<td></td>
<td>Development II (m.161-226) - textures become thicker, reminiscent of Prokofiev’s piano sonata</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition material 3 (m.27)</td>
<td>Development II (m.161-226) - textures become thicker, reminiscent of Prokofiev’s piano sonata</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- fast moving sixteenth-note texture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tonal/Modal center:</strong> F#</td>
<td><strong>Anchor notes:</strong> C#-B-A</td>
<td><strong>Tonal/Modal center:</strong> F#</td>
<td><strong>Tonal/Modal center:</strong> F#</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 2
Dutilleux Piano Sonata, Mvt. 2: structural analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTION A</th>
<th>SECTION B</th>
<th>SECTION A’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(mm. 1 – 40)</td>
<td>(mm. 41 – 79)</td>
<td>(mm. 80 – 97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The theme is comprised of all twelve pitches of the scale, exhibiting no tonal center. However, a vague reference to the key signature (D♭ major) is seen in the intervallic texture of the LH.</td>
<td>Does not reflect the materials seen in the A section. A row that incorporates all twelve pitches of the scale is introduced, but it does not follow the rules of the twelve-tone technique. The row is developed in the manner of inversion and fragmentation.</td>
<td>The reprise is shortened by omitting the second theme. The movement ends with a D♭ major chord.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The key signature changes to E major in m. 10, signaling a chromatic-mediant relationship to the key signature in the beginning.</td>
<td>The contrapuntal texture is dissolved in m. 64 where a series of cascading RH patterns spiral into the climax of the movement. The texture is reminiscent of Ravel’s Jeux d’eau.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The second theme, m.10, highlights E♭ by repetition over several voices. However, no tonicization is apparent throughout the movement.</td>
<td>E♭ pedal tone is sustained through the first half of the section.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The theme is developed and inverted in m.21 with added textures.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 3

Dutilleux Piano Sonata, Mvt. 3: structural analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chorale</th>
<th>Variation I</th>
<th>Variation II</th>
<th>Variation III</th>
<th>Variation IV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The chorale theme is made of five notes, [B C# A# G# D#], and they are a part of an octatonic scale.</td>
<td>The variation of the chorale theme is seen in the left hand.</td>
<td>The interplay of contrasting textures are continued in this variation, but in a quicker fashion. Written in 6/16, fast triplet texture juxtaposed with duple texture (m. 297) create increasing level of tension.</td>
<td>The theme is portrayed as a cantus firmus, surrounded by fleeting chordal textures that evoke a transparent atmosphere.</td>
<td>The final movement with fast-moving eighth-note texture that feature the theme. The texture is soon transformed into a texture of sixteenth notes reminiscent of the last of movement of Ravel’s piano concerto.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sonority of the octatonic scale has been heard throughout the first two movements, in the form of melodies and various textures.</td>
<td>The variation exhibits seen contrasting textures: one that is rhythmic and punctual, in the beginning, and another more melodic and textural, seen in m. 32.</td>
<td>The variation exhibits a constant drive and crescendo until its climax, and the built up energy is suddenly dissipated with a series of chromatic arpeggios cascading down as seen in m. 348 (‘calmato’)</td>
<td>The voices exhibit contrapuntal texture reminiscent of late Fauré, further seen by incorporation of church modes, locrian, in mm. 424-426.</td>
<td>The chorale theme returns at the end, and the piece ends with a thunderous F # major chord that completes the harmonic arch of the piece that began with an F # major/minor sonority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The chorale movement exhibits contrapuntal texture, where the fragments of the theme are written in a canon across different registers. In doing so, the rhythm of the theme is distorted, mostly in diminutive manner, and this process also visible in the transitional passage to the first variation.</td>
<td>Contrasting textures are juxtaposed in an alternating manner (ABAB), before transitioning into the second variation.</td>
<td>The voices exhibit one that is rhythmic and punctual, and another more melodic and textural, seen in m. 32.</td>
<td>The theme returns at the end, and the piece ends with a thunderous F # major chord that completes the harmonic arch of the piece that began with an F # major/minor sonority.</td>
<td>The final movement with fast-moving eighth-note texture that feature the theme. The texture is soon transformed into a texture of sixteenth notes reminiscent of the last of movement of Ravel’s piano concerto.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Second Movement: Lied

The first movement showcased Dutilleux’s ability to combine various textures and timbres under an expansive structural scheme. The second movement, though short in duration, similarly features his meticulous structural planning and expressive depth. The movement is written in a ternary form the A section exhibits simple intervallic and chordal textures that enable a clear presentation of the theme in the upper voice. The B section, in contrast, mainly features linear and abstract textures that build up to the climax of the movement.

At a glance, the layout of the key signatures seems to align with the key scheme of a traditional sonata form. The movement begins with the key signature of D♭ major, or enharmonically C♯, hinting at the tonal continuity from the first movement. The key signature of the second theme (ex.3.22) and the B section suggests E major, exhibiting a chromatic mediant relationship to the ‘tonic’ key.

However, the movement is far from having any semblance of tonality. Throughout the movement, Dutilleux utilizes all twelve pitches of the scale to construct melodic or textural units. For example, the right-hand melody of the first theme group, mm.1-10, exhibit all twelve pitches to avoid establishing tonality (ex.3.21). Furthermore, the twelve pitches are used to evoke an abstract atmosphere, as seen in the transition between the A and B sections (ex.3.23). However, it should be noted that the pitches do not exhibit any sort of serialization adhering to the rules of Schoenberg’s twelve-tone technique.
Example 3.21 The opening theme of the second movement

Example 3.22 The second theme group
Example 3.23 The utilization of twelve pitches in mm.34-39

Although tonicization is not apparent, Dutilleux highlights certain notes to outline a structural progression according to the key signatures. For example, the opening theme emphasizes D♭ while the tenor voice provides a constant A♭ sonority (ex.3.21). In the second theme, as mentioned in the previous chapter, E♮ is highlighted among several voices, and it serves as an elongated pedal tone in the B section. The transition at the end of the B section emphasizes A♭, which is the fifth scale degree of D♭, anticipating the reprise of the A section. Therefore, Dutilleux loosely binds the overarching structure with reference notes that exhibit vague tonal relationships. However, without implementing specific functions to harmony, nor adopting a system such as the twelve-tone technique, Dutilleux is at odds with achieving structural unity at a local level. To this end, Dutilleux uses layers of tetrachords that serve as the basis for melodic and textural development.

The various tetrachords are not bound by a unifying system, but the majority of them are built on fragments of chromatic or octatonic scales. The first theme is constructed with
arrangements of several descending tetrachords, namely \([D_b, C_b, B_b, A_h], [E_b (D), C_h, C_b, B_b(A)], [F_h, E_h, D_h, D_b],\) as highlighted in example 3.21. The left hand, in contrast, exhibits an ascending tetrachord \([C, D_b, E_b, F].\) The repetition of the tetrachord in the bassline is broken in mm.4, and the tenor voice highlights a series of chromatic pitches \([B_b, A_h, B_b, B_h, B_b, B_h],\) and these notes become the basis for the textural pattern in the B section (ex.3.24).

**Example 3.24** The iteration of the bassline as the textural guidance in the B section

The second theme is accompanied by chromatic chords that highlight tetrachords \([C_h, C\#\),
\(D_h, E_b]\) and \([C_h, C\#, D\#\), \(E_h]\) (ex.3.22). Following the second theme, a brief elaboration on the first theme occurs, where the theme is presented in a fragmented and inverted fashion (ex.3.25).
Example 3.25 A brief variation on the thematic group

The closing section features the first four notes of the theme juxtaposed with descending octatonic scales that provide abstract texture. The descending intervallic texture in m.30 is constructed from juxtaposing tetrachords in parallel and contrary motion, as shown in example 3.26.

Example 3.26 Various tetrachords forming intervallic texture in a transition
The first three measures of the B section present a subject or a ‘row’ that contains all twelve pitches of the scale. Again, the organization of the pitches do not follow the rules of the twelve-tone technique, as many notes are often repeated. After the presentation of the subject, a descending chromatic pattern in unison, which is essentially a chromatic scale with embellishing notes, transitions into the second entry of the subject, which is transposed up a perfect fifth. The transposed theme is imitated in the lower voice a measure later, exhibiting an exact canon until mm.50 (ex.3.27) In mm.57, fragments of the theme, now inverted, begin another canon with the lower voice. The lower voice is an inversion of the inverted subject in m.57, and the canon continues until its dissolution in mm.63, where a series of cascading quintuplets spiral upwards to the climax of the movement (ex.3.28, ex.2.8).

Example 3.27 The opening of the B section, the presentation of the subject
Example 3.28 The subject, fragmented and inverted. An inverted version of the inversion is shown in the left-hand

The structure of the A’ is a simpler and shortened version of the original A section. The introduction of the thematic material is immediately followed by the closing section, leading its way to the final chords in D♭ major, bringing a closure to the vague tonal narrative in regards to the key signature (ex.3.29).

Example 3.29 The ending of the second movement

The usage of the various contrapuntal techniques recalls much of the compositional process utilized by the composers of the Second Viennese School. Caroline Potter speculated
that the second movement, despite its German title, had taken its inspiration from Fauré, citing the slow treading of the theme and its modal/tonal ambiguity.\textsuperscript{108} However, her speculations are easily challenged. To begin with, the second movement does not harbor any tonal or modal implications, as seen by the dense layering of the chromatic and octatonic scales. Potter also drew similarities between the opening theme to the theme of Fauré’s First Nocturne and the \textit{Theme et Variations}: they do not exhibit any similarity other than the slow tempo, as their compositional processes vastly contradict each other. Lastly, although Fauré often incorporated contrapuntal textures, he seldom used fugal technique such as retrograde inversion, a technique which appears exclusively in the music of Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern.

\textbf{Third Movement: Chorale et Variations}

The last movement begins with a chorale theme that is developed through a series of four variations. Dutilleux mentioned that the four variations ‘could be viewed as the four sections (movements) of a sonata’, alluding to the idea of ‘a sonata within a sonata.’\textsuperscript{109} However, it is evident that the movement was conceived under a unifying narrative that exhibits a gradual transformation across the variations. In general, the movement undergoes a continuous build up towards the climax in the second variation, where the energy is suddenly dissipated by the fan-shaped texture that transitions into the third variation (ex.3.30). The third variation is a slow movement that evokes transparent and ethereal atmospheres reminiscent of Fauré’s late works. The tension picks up again in the last movement, driving the piece to its exultant ending.

\textsuperscript{108} Potter, 51.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., 53.
Before delving into the details of the movement, one might speculate on the movement’s inspirations. The emphatic chordal opening of the Chorale is unique among Dutilleux’s early works for its registral scope and sonority. The juxtaposition of the thematic material with thunderous chords in the bottom register share similarities to the middle section of Prokofiev’s piano sonata (ex.3.31, ex.3.32).

**Example 3.30** The fan-shaped texture in the second variation

![Example 3.30](image)

**Example 3.31** Prokofiev, Piano Sonata No. 8, mm.166-172

![Example 3.31](image)
Example 3.32 Dutilleux, the opening of the Chorale

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the five-note chorale theme is constructed from an octatonic scale; therefore, the theme exhibits a strong tritone sonority. The tritone sonority, paired with the contour that insistently features D♯, create an exotic atmosphere similar to the opening of Stravinsky’s Les Noces (ex.3.33). Considering that Dutilleux had explicitly quoted the iconic rhythmic opening of The Rite of Spring in the second movement of the Oboe Sonata (1946), this speculation is not so farfetched.\textsuperscript{110}

\textsuperscript{110} In addition, Dutilleux had cited Les Noces as one of the ten most important works of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century.
Chorale

The opening octaves present a five-note theme that had been faintly recalled in the first two movements (ex.3.32). Here Dutilleux frequently utilizes unresolved tritone and octatonic scales as building blocks for melodic and textural units to create tension and evoke an abstract atmosphere. Therefore, the tension has been accumulating over the course of the first two movements. Dutilleux releases such tension in the last movement by presenting the theme in its intended form and by resolving them. The cadences are unique because they are resolved directly on the tritone, instead of resolving down a half step following the tritone leap (ex3.34). Because the tritone sonority is prevalent throughout the piece, the cadences exhibit a ‘brighter’ quality in
comparison to the sonority of the traditional dominant-tonic cadence. In addition, the added non-chord tones, showcasing polytonal tendencies, add to the grandeur of the cadences.

**Example 3.34** various examples of cadences on the thematic group

After the presentation of the theme, an episode of contrapuntal variation on the theme occurs in m.10. The episode leads to another cadential point that resolves in Db major, hinting at the tonal arch from the previous movements (ex.3.35).
Example 3.35 The resolution into D flat Major

First variation

The variation begins with a fragmented, mechanistic presentation of the theme in the left hand, which is carried over to the right hand in m.45 up a tritone. The fugue-like texture is supported by the short bursts of intervals that provide rhythmic energy (ex.3.36). The stark atmosphere of the opening material is contrasted by improvisatory material that exhibits linear texture (ex.3.37). This portrayal of opposition and duality has been a consistent theme throughout the piece, as seen in the opposing textures in the first movement and the contrasting characteristic of A and B sections in the second movement. This aesthetic is also found in the early songs that he composed for Panzéra, and it is further developed in his later compositions as well.
Example 3.36 The fugue-like opening of the first variation

Example 3.37 Linear representation of the choral theme
Another overarching aesthetic of the sonata is the idea of constant development. In the first movement, the theme and the transitions were constantly renewed in its reiterations with textural and rhythmic disjunctions. Furthermore, the theme of the second movement was developed with more precise methods by incorporating fragmentation, retrograde, and inversion. To this end, Dutilleux is clearly experimenting with the broader idea of progressive growth. In the case of the first variation, the opposing ideas are developed, alluding to the idea of ‘variation within a variation’, in alignment with the macroscopic narrative of the movement, which Dutilleux referred to as a ‘sonata within a sonata.’ The developing thematic ideas in the first variation resemble the narrative of the Franckian cyclic form as the thematic materials are more vividly transformed.

After the presentation of the distinct thematic textures, the two ideas are combined in m.78, where the upper voice exhibits a linear portrayal of the theme, and the left hand inherits the short bursts of rhythmic energy seen in the beginning of the variation (ex.3.38) The combined idea is yet again transformed, exhibiting a more linear accompaniment in the left hand that features a compound rhythmic juxtaposition to the upper voices (ex.3.39), before transitioning back to the juxtaposition of opposing thematic ideas seen in the beginning of the variation. The reiteration of the opposing themes is developed yet again, but only with minor changes. Therefore, in a sense, the variation loosely follows a ternary form, considering the presentation of the opposing ideas as A, their combination and development as B, and the return of the ideas as A’. The A’ is interrupted by a trumpet-like triplet texture that signals a transition into the second variation. The transition exhibits a series of accelerating D major scales supported by the fragmented thematic material in the bassline (ex.3.40).
Example 3.38 The combination of the opposing textures

Example 3.39 The combined textures developed

Example 3.40 The transition into the next variation
**Second variation**

The second variation exhibits a scherzo-like characteristic, much like an inner movement of a traditional sonata. Written in 6/16, it exhibits faster rhythmic pacing compared to the first variation, which is written in 2/4. The second variation is an early example of Dutilleux’s construction of end-weighted form that fully materializes in his later compositions. It exhibits a formal structure of ABC, where each subsequent section exhibits heightened tension and speed compared to the previous section. The build-up suddenly dissipates in the C section with the fan-shaped ‘calmato’ passage mentioned previously (ex.3.30).

Each of the three sections exhibit different manifestations of the theme, but the musical elements that bind the three sections together are introduced in the A section, much like how the first movement was constructed - Dutilleux first lays out various materials that are transformed as the movement progresses. The A section is comprised of four distinct elements in the following order: the short sixteenth-note figuration in the opening (ex.3.41), sixteenth-note texture that outline various triads (ex.3.42), arpeggiated texture outlining perfect fourths and tritone juxtaposed with the theme in the middle voice (ex.3.43), and transitional material that require rapid alternation of hands (ex.3.44). The A section is then repeated, exhibiting an A’ section, where the opening figuration is developed into alternating octaves (ex.3.45).

**Example 3.41** The opening of the second variation, short eighth notes figurations
Example 3.42 The triadic arpeggio

Example 3.43 Quartal arpeggio comprised of perfect fourths and tritone

Example 3.44 The transition that requires rapid alternation of hands
Example 3.45 The variation of the sixteenth notes figuration from the opening

The B section exhibits a dense layering and juxtaposing of all of the aforementioned elements. As seen in example 3.46, the short eighth note figuration outlines the theme with a chordal texture, and the transition material is reused in m. 273 and m.278. From m.279 to m.286, all of the elements are stacked together: the top voice outlines the theme, the middle voice exhibits fragments of the quartal arpeggio, the bass line recalls the energetic gesture, and it is transitioned by triadic arpeggio in m.283. The rest of the B section showcases a similar representation of various building blocks. The C section begins with an abrupt interruption of the B♮ bass with cascading intervalllic figure that outlines a fragment of octatonic scale (ex.3.47). The intervalllic texture evolves into the juxtaposition of triadic and quartal arpeggios in the right and the left hands respectively (ex.3.48), which leads to the calmato passage. After the dissolution of the accumulated energy, a drawn-out, transparent transition takes place, made of alternating sixteenth notes depicting chromatic sonority [D, D♯, E, F] that accompanies the theme in an inversion (ex.3.49).
Example 3.46 An amalgamation of various elements

Example 3.47 Intervallic texture that outlines a fragment of octatonic scale in the top voice

Example 3.48 The juxtaposition of triadic and quartal arpeggios
Example 3.49 The transparent transition before the third variation

Third variation

The slow and transparent third variation presents an uninterrupted version of the chorale theme in the middle staff that acts as a cantus firmus. The chorale theme, as seen in the first eight bars of the opening, is augmented over thirteen measures, and it is embellished by floating chromatic and quartal intervals (ex.3.50). The variation is assigned a key signature of F# major, in contrast to the previous variations which were largely atonal due to the presence of strong chromatic and octatonic sonorities. Although F# major is not established in the beginning of the variation, the chromatic and quartal textures enshroud the theme with diatonic harmonies, as seen in mm. 413-417, and the manifestation of the chorale theme ends on a quintal chord built on
C♯ in m.417, hinting at its dominant function (ex.3.51). After the presentation of the theme, Dutilleux annexes four additional measures comprised of fragment of the chorale theme that ends on a clear F♯ major sonority, completing the tonal trajectory in m.423.

Following the cadence, a brief four measures long postlude occurs, and in my opinion, it is the crux of the variation, or the piece at large (3.51). Fragments of the theme is portrayed in the ‘cantus’ in m.423-426, and Dutilleux breaks away from ornamenting the theme with intervallic textures and proceeds to implement a contrapuntal texture reminiscent of late Fauré, especially the nocturnes. The four-measure long contrapuntal episode beautifully highlights A♯ aeolian and A♯ locrian sonorities, and it exhibits a completely contrasting aesthetic to the rest of the piece. The placement of such an episode before the final variation showcases Dutilleux’s admiration towards his forebears.

**Example 3.50** The opening the third variation
Example 3.51 The third variation, m.413-426
Fourth Variation

In conjunction with the previous variations, the narrative of the last movement exhibits a constant build up towards the ending, where the emphatic chorale theme returns to mark the grand finale. The variation interrupts the somber atmosphere evoked in the third variation with terse eighth note articulations in 6/8 that exhibit a familiar thematic representation seen in the second variation (ex.3.52). The meter is soon changed to 2/4 after the introductory section that set the mood, and rapid sixteenth notes embellish the fragments of the theme in the left hand. This texture is reminiscent of the ‘Etude’ from Au gré des Ondes (ex.2.5), and the sixteenth note figuration is further developed throughout the variation, making up the majority of the variation’s virtuosic textures (ex.3.53). After the introductory build up, the thematic material is presented under rapid arpeggios in the upper voice (ex.3.54). The transition that follows the thematic material largely resembles the texture seen in the finale of Prokofiev’s 6th sonata, as shown in examples 3.55 and 3.56.

Example 3.52 The opening of the fourth variation

Example 3.53 The sixteenth note pattern reminiscent of Au gré des Ondes
Example 3.54 The presentation of the main theme with sixteenth note texture

Example 3.55 The transitional material in the fourth variation of the Dutilleux’s piano sonata

Example 3.56 The transitional material seen in the finale of Prokofiev’s piano sonata No.6
As the analysis revealed, the piano sonata is a mixture of old and new influences and serves a middle ground between Dutilleux’s early and mature styles. After an arduous journey through a sea of tritone and chromatic sonorities, the work ends with a thunderous F♯ major tonic chord, finally giving the listeners, and the players, a sense of refuge and satisfaction. The cadence is portrayed by IV – ii\(^7\) (half-diminished) – I cadence, shrouded by various non-chord tones (ex.3.57). The overall tonal progression from the modal/tonal F♯ minor of the first movement to the final chord is reminiscent of the nineteenth century idea of the ‘struggle and triumph’, as established by Beethoven in his fifth symphony.

**Example 3.57 The ending of the piano sonata**
The Piano Sonata was the first work that brought Dutilleux to international attention. It was received enthusiastically after its performance at the ISCM festival in Palermo in 1949. After the festival, a number of American pianists frequently performed the piano sonata, namely Jeffrey Siegel, Joan Ball, Evelyne Crochet, David Lively, Gail Delente, and Brian Ganz, raising an awareness of Dutilleux’s music in the United States.\textsuperscript{111}

The sonata was composed during a period when Dutilleux was searching for an individual aesthetic. Dutilleux wanted to develop a style devoid of the rebellious clichés of \textit{Les Six} and beyond the traditional values of French music. To this end, Dutilleux sought to compose a large-scale piece that was innovative in harmony, texture, and structure. It should not be mistaken that Dutilleux was adamantly against the French tradition as he had an immense admiration for Debussy and Ravel. However, in order to be free of their influences, Dutilleux sought inspiration in the music of foreign composers, notably Bartók, Prokofiev, and the composers of the Second Viennese School. The piano sonata is a transitional work, and it manifests a perfect balance between elements of the traditional, modern, nationalistic, and foreign. Moving forward, a study his later piano works such as Figures de resonance (1970) and three preludes (1994) would further reveal the progression of Dutilleux’s compositional process. The crux of Dutilleux’s compositional aesthetic owes to his meticulous and self-critical mind that maintained a perfect balance between the strong stylistic influences that he had witnessed. Such discipline originated from years of training in the Douai and Paris conservatoires, made possible by his family that had its roots deep in education and the arts. Dutilleux’s efforts to seek

\textsuperscript{111} Glayman, 31.
originality resemble the efforts of his forebears such as Debussy and Ravel, both of whom
derived their originality from foreign influences to escape from the pervasive Austro-German
influence during the turn of the century. To this end, Dutilleux’s aim is aligned with his
forebears, effectively making him the heir to the French tradition.
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