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An Internationalist Composer in a Nationalist Society:
The Violin Sonata (1932) of Frank Bridge

by

Sonja Maria Worth Harasim

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APPROVED, THESIS COMMITTEE:

Richard Lavenda, Chair
Professor of Composition and Theory Director of Graduate Studies

David Ferris
Associate Professor of Musicology

Kenneth Goldsmith
Professor of Violin

Cho-Liang Lin
Professor of Violin

Marc A. Robert
Professor of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering

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Abstract

AN INTERNATIONALIST COMPOSER IN A NATIONALIST SOCIETY:
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This document investigates the influences on Frank Bridge’s compositional style in his late chamber music works, with an emphasis on his Violin Sonata (1932). I begin with a brief biographical background and a discussion of his musical environment in England before and during his career. In my analysis of his mature chamber works, I compare his style to that of his British and Continental contemporaries. The penultimate chapter will focus on his Violin Sonata and how the styles of other composers are manifested in the work. Lastly, I will present the strengths and challenges of the work and the effect that these have on developing an interpretation.
Dedications

In memory of my late grandfather, Donald Traverse Worth (1918-2005), whose infectious love for music and relentless optimism continues to inspire me every day.

To my parents, Paul Houck Harasim and Janet Worth Harasim, who have always encouraged me to pursue my dreams and who provide me with constant love and support.
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This project was dreamed up from the incredible experience I had researching and performing at the Library of Congress (LoC) in Washington, D.C. I want to thank Rice professors James Dunham, Norman Fischer, Kenneth Goldsmith, and Cho-Liang Lin for selecting me to be a part of that once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to discover the LoC’s rare and vast collections. Thank you to the LoC Music Division library staff, who so graciously let us invade their space for almost a week, introduced us to the manuscript of Frank Bridge’s Piano Trio No. 2, and helped me locate various manuscripts and correspondences during each of my visits. Many thanks to Nicolai Jacobsen and my Coolidge Trio colleagues, Lachezar Kostov and Andrew Staupe, for sharing in the
exhilarating experience of exploring and dissecting the uncharted territory of Bridge’s little known masterpiece.

I am grateful to my many friends and colleagues who have so graciously agreed to learn and perform various chamber works by Bridge with me and have done so with enthusiasm: Whitney Bullock and Emily Herdeman Kelly (Trio Rhapsody); Philip Martin, Whitney Bullock, Allyson Goodman, Lachezar Kostov, and Clara Yang (Sextet); Viktor Valkov and John Roberts (Violin Sonata (1932)); Jane Linde Capistran, Kate Hamilton, and Gregory Hamilton (String Quartet No. 2); Whitney Bullock, Louis-Marie Fardet, and Andrew Staupe (Phantasie Piano Quartet); Stephen Sulich (Violin Sonata (1904)); and Jane Linde Capistran, Tim Nelson, Elise Buffat Nelson, and Tyler Wottrich (Piano Quintet).

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mentorship and encouragement in my efforts to pursue my passion for new music and hidden gems are all reasons for which I am grateful to have studied with him.

I am also thankful to my former teacher, Mr. Kenneth Goldsmith, for his many years of mentorship in both violin and pedagogy. His philosophy of approaching all music as “new,” along with his incredible knowledge, musicianship, and dedication to his students and the Shepherd School community are unending sources of inspiration.

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Thank you to my family, friends, and colleagues who have supported me in life and music, and who have engaged in many a conversation over the past several years about my latest “discoveries” about Bridge and his music. Thank you to my colleagues at Concordia College for their support as I juggled two lives. I’d like to extend a special thanks to my uncle and aunt, David and Amy Worth; my parents-in-love, Donald and Tonya Bosca; Patricia Paschal-Harasim, Cameo Paschal Fair and the rest of the Worth, Bosca, and Harasim families for their support over the years.

I am and will forever be grateful to my father, Paul Houck Harasim, for his unending love and support, for encouraging me to pursue my doctorate and for instilling a love for deadlines. I feel beyond lucky to have grown up observing his commitment to excellence as a journalist, author, and public relations director. His continual quest for self-improvement, as well as his zest for life inspires me daily. I can trace his impact in every facet of life.

I am beyond thankful to my mother, Janet Worth Harasim, for being my “dissertation buddy” at any and all times, day or night and for enrolling me in anything
under the sun that would support my pursuits. Her commitment to lifelong learning is clear, as she is always pursuing new interests and seeking to master old ones – things I plan to emulate. I am eternally grateful for her love and support in all that I do that has granted me the freedom to pursue my dreams.

Lastly, but certainly not least, I wish to express my gratitude to my “everything,” Ryan Bosca, whose brilliance as both a scientist and musician, paired with being a compassionate and generous life partner and human being, is a constant source of support and inspiration.
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Introduction

In the Fall of 2009, cellist Lachezar Kostov, pianist Andrew Staupe, composer Nicolai Jacobsen, and I were selected by Shepherd School faculty members James Dunham, Norman Fischer, Kenneth Goldsmith, and Cho-Liang Lin to participate in a special project at the Library of Congress. We were to explore the rich and vast holdings that the music division had to offer, culminating in performances that showcased our findings both at the Library of Congress and at the Shepherd School of Music. When we arrived at the Library, we were shown a handful of manuscripts of piano trios, a small fraction of their large collection. Nearly all of the manuscripts were by composers we all knew, but one was by a composer we knew very little about: Frank Bridge. My only prior knowledge of Frank Bridge was my experience playing Variations on a Theme by Frank Bridge by Benjamin Britten.

Not catching our attention at first, we sifted through many trios in their stacks, but after a day of searching, we had not found the perfect fit for our trio’s program. I decided to search for a recording of Bridge’s Piano Trio No. 2 and, after listening to the first few measures of his piece, I was convinced that this little known composer had written a gem of a piano trio with a very distinctive and captivating sound world. That initial encounter with the piece piqued my curiosity about this composer, and I was inspired to explore his compositional output. Bridge is known primarily as Benjamin Britten’s composition teacher; it was through this experience with his Piano Trio No. 2 that I realized that he should be known for his own body of work, not simply for mentoring Britten. This document will explore the distinctive stylistic characteristics of Bridge’s chamber music between 1926-1932, the maturation and transformation of his compositional voice over
the course of his career, and the influences, both locally and abroad, that contributed to
the evolution of his compositional style. It will pay particular attention to his Violin
Sonata (1932), a work that exemplifies all of these topics. The document will be divided
into five parts: a brief biography; a discussion of the styles of his predecessors and
contemporaries, as well as the musical culture in England; his stylistic influences and
their effect on the compositional traits of his mature compositional style; the Violin
Sonata as a culmination of his evolved style, as well as analysis of commonalities with
Continental compositional influences; and lastly, from my own performer’s perspective, a
discussion of the work’s strengths and challenges and how they can be enhanced or
overcome to produce a successful performance in today’s concert halls.

The first chapter will present a brief overview of Frank Bridge’s life and career
for historical context. This will include both a short biography as well as a discussion of
the musical climate in England, including references to his musical influences and a
comparison with his British contemporaries. This chapter will include Bridge’s personal
letters extracted from the Library of Congress’ Coolidge Collection that help illustrate his
close friendship with his benefactor, Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge. Their correspondence
is a strong indicator of her dedication to making Bridge’s artistic freedom possible
through her patronage, rather than him having to please the public or concert promoters
for financial reasons. Bridge’s personal and musical philosophies will also be discussed.

The second chapter will delve more deeply into Bridge’s musical surroundings in
Britain. In an effort to understand where Bridge fits into British music history, I will
present a brief overview of the England’s contributions to western art music, as well as
the period preceding its renaissance, when its musical contributions lay virtually dormant.
The backgrounds of specific composers of stature and their styles will be presented, as well as a discussion on England’s quest for finding a national style and how that may have contributed to Bridge’s unpopularity and the subsequent inauspicious fate of his musical legacy.

The third chapter will include an in-depth look at his late musical style. Special attention will be paid to identifying those musical characteristics that evolved and matured because of an affinity for the work of several Continental composers, while acknowledging that certain other characteristics remained consistent throughout his career. Topics covered will include: a discussion of which structural and formal features remained consistent throughout his career and which matured; developmental techniques and transformation of material; prominent textural traits; and the evolution of his sound world. These musical elements will be presented through specific musical examples from important chamber works between 1926-1932. Excerpts from applicable works will be analyzed to illustrate the topics listed above, and to compare them with both Bridge’s British contemporaries and his Continental influences.

The fourth chapter will focus entirely on an analysis of his *Violin Sonata* (1932). This work was chosen as a primary focus because it contains many of the musical features that make Bridge’s style unique as discussed in Chapter Two. Rather than doing a harmonic or structural analysis of every note of the piece, I aim to connect specific examples within the work that reference influences from local sources and those abroad. Though many have labeled Bridge’s mature works as being radicalized, I will present evidence that several of his stylistic traits from his earlier years develop to create a cohesive evolution of style.
The fifth and final chapter is dedicated to performance related topics. I have performed the piece on five occasions, which gives me a performer’s perspective. I will make a case for why I believe the work deserves to be programmed in today’s concert circuit and present my solutions to its technical and musical challenges. The insights that this approach offers makes this document unique, and will perhaps be of some interest to other performers interested in delving into Bridge’s chamber music.

It is my hope that understanding how his style evolved and what his influences and philosophies were will lead to more informed and enjoyable performances of Bridge’s chamber music. Personally, I find it extremely unfortunate that Bridge’s music is not performed more often; my hope is that this document will provide the information and inspiration to change exactly that.
CHAPTER ONE

Frank Bridge: A Brief Biographical Overview

When composer Frank Bridge passed away in January of 1941 during the dark period of World War II, there was a schism over his contribution to Britain’s musical culture. Critics pejoratively labeled his compositional style “smooth and well written,” “effective,” and at best “eclectic,”¹ while performers and patrons mourned their loss with tributes and celebrations of his life and works. In England, his orchestral work, Rebus, was premiered by the London Philharmonic under the baton of Sir Henry Wood that February, and in March, Sir Adrian Boult led the Royal Philharmonic in a performance of There is a Willow Grows Aslant a Brook for one of its Society Concerts. At the National Gallery, the Menges String Quartet performed his String Quartet No. 2 in G Minor and his Sextet in E-flat Major during one of the Dame Myra Hess Lunchtime Concerts. That month, the BBC dedicated an entire program to Bridge’s works, which included his unfinished Suite for String Orchestra, Rebus, and The Sea. The Frank Bridge Society began a concert series at the Brighton Art Gallery, although after fourteen concerts, the series came to a close in 1942 because of World War II. Also mourned in America, his close friend, and the sponsor of many of his works, Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge presented a memorial concert at the Coolidge Auditorium at the Library of Congress. Two of Bridge’s favorite American artists performed his Violin Sonata, violinist William Kroll and pianist Frank Sheridan, whose performance of the work in 1938 in Washington

D.C. he had greatly admired. His *Sextet* and *String Quartet No. 2* were also programmed. Despite these performances, whether it was due to the unfortunate timing of his death and its coincidence with the final years of the war, or because conservative English music critics disliked his modernist aesthetic, Bridge’s music never seemed to enter the repertory, and his legacy became almost solely associated not with his music, but as Benjamin Britten’s composition teacher. If audiences today find Frank Bridge to be at all familiar, it is probably due to Britten’s musical tribute to his teacher in his popular piece for string orchestra: *Variations on a Theme by Frank Bridge* (1938).

Frank Bridge offered much more to the musical world than his pedagogical skills. An accomplished chamber musician, he performed as a violist with the English String Quartet, a post that would influence his preference for writing works for smaller ensembles. He was a well-known and highly regarded conductor, often filling in at important performances at the last minute. Most importantly, he was a composer whose works, to this day, undeservedly remain under the radar in most musical circles. Britten was only ten years old when he first heard Bridge conduct his orchestral tone poem, *The Sea*, at the 1924 Norwich Triennial Festival and was “knocked sideways.”

Unfortunately, audiences are not given the opportunity to feel as Britten did about Bridge’s music because very few performances are given of his works. Just as Mendelssohn reintroduced Bach to audiences after a hundred years of neglect, it is my

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hope that there will be a revival of Bridge’s works that will lead to a greater awareness of his compositions by performers and audiences alike.

Like many musicians, Bridge came from a musical household. He was born in Brighton, England on February 26, 1879 to William Henry Bridge, a lithographer, and Elizabeth Warbrick, the third wife and mother of William Henry’s twelve children. Frank Bridge’s exposure to music was a result of his father’s career change to his true calling: music.5 He taught violin lessons out of their home and served as the musical director of Brighton’s Empire Theatre. Frank was one of three siblings who would become professional musicians.6

Bridge began violin lessons at the age of twelve at the Brighton School of Music.7 After mastering basic violin technique, he was invited to perform with his father’s orchestra, even substituting on other instruments and arranging music if the need arose. At the age of seventeen, he was accepted as a violin student at the Royal College of Music in London.8

His musical life while at the Royal College of Music was a well-rounded one. As a performer, he worked his way up from the back of the second violins to leading the section from its principal chair. Bridge also played a vast amount of chamber music, with significant exposure to the works of Brahms and Dvořák. His first chamber music performance at the Royal College was of his own Piano Trio in D minor, composed in 1900. Due to his experience conducting his father’s orchestra, Bridge was granted the

5 Bray, p. 1.
7 Bray, p. 2.
8 Little, p. 3.
opportunity to conduct the premieres of two of his works, *Berceuse* (1901) and *The Hag* (1902). A scholarship recipient, Bridge studied composition with Sir Charles Villiers Stanford. Stanford taught many of the most important English composers of the time, including Gustav Holst, John Ireland, and Ralph Vaughan Williams. Known as a highly critical and rigorous instructor, Stanford insisted that his students master tonal counterpoint before moving on to composing original works of their own. Skeptical of modernism, his philosophy was that all compositions should be written to “suit the medium for which they were composed,” and based much of his teaching on the conservative values he learned from Carl Reinecke in Leipzig, Germany. His conservatism is displayed in his own compositions as well as his orchestral programming. As conductor of the college orchestra, Stanford chose mainly romantic repertoire, with more performances of Brahms than Beethoven, Haydn or Mozart. While Bridge was a student, the college orchestra premiered works of Hubert Parry, William Hurlstone, Ralph Vaughan Williams, and Edward Elgar, conservative composers all. Though he had a wealth of experience as an orchestral violinist and conductor, most of Bridge’s compositions were for chamber ensembles. First performances of his *Piano Trio in D Minor*, *String Quartet in B-flat Major* (1900), *String Quintet in E Minor* (1901), and *Piano Quartet in C Minor* (1902) were given at the College, with all of these works reflecting the conservative training he received with Stanford. An excellent composition

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9 Little, p. 4.  
10 Ibid.  
11 Ibid.
student, he won two awards: the Arthur Sullivan prize for composition (1901) and the ‘Tagore’ Gold Medal (1903).\textsuperscript{12}

During his college years, he met his future wife and fellow violinist, Ethel Elmore Sinclair. She was an accomplished violinist in her own right, having won a scholarship in her native Australia to travel to London in 1899 to study at the College. She won the Hill and Sons violin prize (1903) and was a violinist in the ensemble that premiered Bridge’s \textit{Piano Quartet in C Minor}.\textsuperscript{13}

Though Bridge remained dedicated to composition, after graduation he continued his involvement in the London music community as a performer. He played his share of jobs with different theater orchestras, but mainly performed in chamber ensembles. As a second violinist, he performed in the Grimson Quartet, and as a violist, played with the Motto and English String Quartets. His work with the Grimson Quartet took him on tours to Belgium and France, while his work with the Motto and English String Quartets garnered him a reputation as a respected violist, so much so that in 1906 he was called to play one of the Brahms sextets with Joachim’s String Quartet on their British tour.\textsuperscript{14}

Bridge was heavily involved in the performance of contemporary chamber works, frequently participating in a concert series begun in 1907 by Thomas Dunhill (1877-1946) that was devoted to the second and third performances of contemporary works. The English String Quartet performed in a series sponsored by the Classical Concert Society, a group founded upon the death of Joseph Joachim by music patron Edward Speyer. Responsible for program selections, Speyer chose works from the Classical and Romantic

\begin{footnotes}
\item[12] Little, p. 4-5.
\item[13] Ibid.
\item[14] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
eras, though occasionally a work by Bridge was performed. Bridge also performed in Sir Donald Tovey’s Northlands Chamber Music Concerts.¹⁵

Until 1910, Bridge performed in most of Royal College of Music’s student chamber music concerts, including giving Debussy’s String Quartet in G Minor its first performance in England in October of 1904.¹⁶ Also during this time and the years following, he remained involved in the Royal College of Music Student Union, a group that often held events at members’ homes. These informal house concerts, “At Homes,” were a chance for members to socialize with their friends, in addition to hearing a variety of works performed. Many first performances of works by students at the college were on the programs, including Bridge’s Piano Quintet (1905) and its 1912 revision.¹⁷

These events, often an outlet for amusement rather than serious art, included works of a lighter nature. Bridge’s unpublished Scherzo Phantastick for string quartet proved to be highly entertaining with its upbeat, silly motif, full of grace notes, accents on the ‘wrong beat,’ and virtuosic scalar passages. The College Quartet, one of Bridge’s many chamber groups, performed at these events on a regular basis. This group came to be known as the “Chips Quartet” due to the improvised and amusing musical shorts they performed. Ivor James, a close colleague and cellist in the English String Quartet, recalled one of the Chips Quartet’s performances:

“We played tunes on four wood-winds, on four brass instruments, and Sweet and Low on four double basses, also a passionate love duet for two violins accompanied by viola and ‘cello, in which one of the violinists became so enraptured that he was unable

¹⁵ Little, p. 5.
¹⁷ Little, p. 5.
to hold his instrument, which slipped over his shoulder and shot up into the air behind him; we all rushed to save it, but down it dropped on the floor. In our anxiety to pick it up someone trod on it. I shall never forget the sound of that scrunch, nor the sight of the faces in the audience, all of which paled with horror. It was only later that they discovered it was a toy fiddle!"\(^{18}\)

Also in demand as a conductor, Bridge had opportunities to lead performances from the podium. His reputation was so auspicious that conductor Henry Wood called him to fill in for him last minute with the New Symphony Orchestra’s Promenade Concert. This was the start of Bridge’s reputation for being an “ambulance conductor.” In addition to conducting orchestral performances, he also conducted opera at the Savoy Theatre for the 1910-1911 season, including a positive review for his rendition of Gluck’s *Orfeo ed Euridice*.\(^ {19}\)

Neither conducting nor instrumental performance could outweigh his ability as a composer. He was a master of the romantic style, following in the footsteps of his teacher, Stanford, and the German composer Johannes Brahms. Bridge delighted the audiences and critics with his early compositional style. According to Rob Barnett, classical music editor of Musicweb International, the density in texture of his early style was reminiscent of early Schoenberg, Zemlinsky and Elgar. His second *Idyll* for string quartet, written in 1906, hints at a Viennese chromaticism that would pervade his later works. In contrast, Christopher Palmer described Bridge’s early style as being “derived loosely from Delius, Debussy and Ravel” in its light Gallic accent.\(^ {20}\)\(^ {21}\) This somewhat


\(^{19}\) Little, p. 6.


\(^{21}\) The term “Gallic” refers to traits stemming from a region in modern day France. The characteristics of the French nationalist style in the early twentieth century is described
unlikely juxtaposition of influences, heavy Germanic textural elements combined with light French textural elements, makes Bridge’s composition style unique. Further discussion of the compositional techniques that Bridge acquired from Continental composers will be presented in subsequent chapters.

A technical master of this style, he successfully submitted works written in this period to a series of competitions. In particular, several of Bridge’s well-known early pieces were created because he had entered a competition dedicated to music written in the form of a ‘phantasy.’ The pieces had to include parts of equal importance, lasting no more than twelve minutes and performed without a break, consisting of sections that vary in tempo and rhythm. More discussion on ‘phantasy form’ will be presented in Chapters 3 and 4. The first genre that founder Walter Wilson Cobbett specified in 1905 for the entered works was the string quartet. Bridge entered with his Phantasie in F Minor (1905) for which he was awarded second place and a performance in Bechstein Hall on June 22, 1906. His Phantasie in C Minor (1907) was written as an entry for the next year’s competition, this time devoted to the piano trio genre. This time Bridge placed first, while James Friskin and John Ireland placed second and third. Though Bridge did not enter this competition again, he was commissioned by Cobbett to compose his Phantasie in F-sharp minor, which he completed in 1910. Bridge submitted works to other competitions, too, including entering his String Quartet No. 1 in E Minor (1906) in


22 Little, p. 7.
an international competition sponsored by the Accademica Filarmonica in Bologna.

Nicknamed his “Italian” quartet, he received honorable mention honors. Bridge’s connection to the Royal College of Music continued to flourish, resulting in many of his works being performed at Patron’s Fund Concerts, events intended to promote first performances of up and coming young British composers. His works *The Hag* (1904), *Night Lies on the Silent Highways* (1904), *A Dead Violet* (1904), *A Dirge* (1903), and *I Praise the Tender Flower* (1906) all received their first performances at these concerts.

In the first decade of the 20th century, corresponding to his first decade of mature writing, he produced some of his most praised works, in large part because these works were in line with the views of the conservative English music critics. His compositional style between 1906-1912 consisted of “exceptionally fluent and logically ordered technique stemming from 19th-century German methods and tempered by Gallic clarity and lightness.” His *Three Idylls* (1906) were dedicated to his wife “E.E.S.” and perhaps influenced by his experience studying and performing Debussy’s *String Quartet in G minor*. The work received rave reviews, with a critic making obvious references to French influences, describing the work as “delicate impressionist sketches of a light and fantastic nature.”

By 1908, his early style had reached its full maturity with his *Dance Rhapsody* and *Isabella*, although neither work became an orchestra repertoire standard like his masterpiece, *The Sea* (1911). Critics described this work as being “among the

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23 Little, p. 7.
24 Ibid.
26 Little, p. 8.
most individual, imaginative, and pleasing of works.” His chamber music output was equally rich. Bridge revised his *Piano Quintet* (1904-1912) and composed his *String Sextet* (1906-1912). Eventually, though, the critics would not always write such positive reviews, and their responses became more and more negative as Bridge transitioned into a new sound world that reflected a new post-Great War world.\(^{27}\)

The years following World War I were tumultuous not only for the world at large, but for Frank Bridge on a personal level. These were years of immense societal transitions, some of which provoked compositional transitions for Bridge. A pacifist, he was deeply affected by the war, utterly devastated by its horrors. Heartbroken especially by the deaths of fellow musicians shipped off to war, and by child victims, he wrote his *Lament* (1915) for “Catherine, aged 9, Lusitania,” *Three Improvisations* (1918) for left hand only in honor of organist Douglas Fox who had lost his right arm in the war, and the *Piano Sonata* (1922-25) for Ernest Bristow Farrar who was killed in action in France.\(^{28}\) His works during this time reflect his mourning, and the haunting sounds he created infused even his later works.

Between 1913-1924, during what would come to be referred to by Bridge scholars Paul Hindmarsh and Anthony Payne as his compositionally transitional years, he continued to perform chamber music, though in fewer concerts with the English String Quartet. Several performances stand out as being influential experiences in Bridge’s performing life and might have influenced the compositions to come. In 1913, in a concert featuring the music of French composer Maurice Ravel, Bridge’s group performed Ravel’s *String Quartet in F Major* (1903) and *Introduction and Allegro*

\(^{27}\) Little, p. 8.

\(^{28}\) Ibid, p. 11.
(1905), the latter work conducted by the composer himself. The program also included piano works by Scriabin, another composer whose music would influence Bridge.

Another rare performance of importance was when he performed Gabriel Faure’s Piano Quartet, with the composer himself at the piano, on Speyer’s concert series in 1914.\(^{29}\) He joined the Ridgehurst Quartet, a group devoted to private performances, with typical personnel including Edward Speyer’s son, Ferdinand, Ethel and Frank Bridge, and Ivor James. Edward Speyer recalled that Bridge ensured “the utmost possible perfection of performance” and that “he has the conscience of a true artist.”\(^{30}\)

During this time, while remaining somewhat active in performing chamber music, Bridge increased his engagements with orchestras as a conductor. Bridge wrote to Speyer in 1916 that his hopes were that “after the war, some munition millionaire will put me [Bridge] in charge of a decent orchestra which will be in the position to devote a serious amount of rehearsing and knowing-upside-down every blessed thing it performs to the public.”\(^{31}\) To his misfortune, he was never appointed music director and continued his emergency fill-ins with various orchestras. Ivor James attributed his inability to obtain a permanent position to his personality:

“He had an exceptional sense of standard… but, this sense of standard made him intensely impatient of any shortcomings in others, either actual or imaginary, and being a bundle of sensitiveness, out would come some remark which probably the players would resent. If they could have understood that it was impossible for Bridge to wrap his pills in sugar, his recognition as a really fine conductor would have been assured.”\(^{32}\)

\(^{30}\) Little, p. 8.
\(^{31}\) Bray, p. 32.
\(^{32}\) Little, p. 8-9.
Even without a full-time position, he made his mark, filling in last minute for conductors Sir Henry Wood, Raymond Rôze, Sir Eugene Goossens, and Sir Landon Ronald with the British Symphony and Royal Philharmonic Orchestras. He not only filled in for a night, but also covered a season for Rôze at Covent Garden in 1913. In the decade that followed, Bridge’s successful emergency conducting stints gained him a very positive reputation. A reviewer at a 1922 performance praised Bridge, stating that the performance “for which he deserves to be held in remembrance.” In 1923, he conducted his own works on an American tour with the Boston and Detroit Symphonies, the Cleveland Orchestra, and the New York Philharmonic. He had grand philosophies and high standards for what a premiere performance should be, having little tolerance of any shortcomings of the musicians. In reaction to a poor first performance of an orchestral work of Elgar’s, Bridge reacted in a letter to Speyer:

“No wonder the public knows so little at a first performance. If a play were produced on the same lines - with the actors half mumbling and shouting their lines, others reading their parts, and some coming on the stage late and missing lines and cues - there wouldn't be a theatre open except the cinema!”

In addition to having limited, yet significant engagements as both a conductor and violist, he continued to have success as a composer. In 1915, he enter yet another Cobbett Competition with his second quartet and although he submitted it late, he still managed to impress the jury and take home the top prize. These successes led to his being selected as a member of the jury of the 1917 Cobbett competition, along with fellow composers Ireland and Dunhill. Another result of his achievements at the Cobbett competitions was

33 Bray, p. 32.
34 Little, p. 8-9.
36 Bray, p. 3.
that his chamber works would receive attention from publishers. Only the winning compositions, along with his \textit{Idylls} for string quartet, were published by 1913, but because of the increasing popularity of his works in the following decade, Augener published his new chamber works of this period, along with a backlog of works that had been neglected from his early period. The London String Quartet, who made a point to perform a British work on every program, chose to include Bridge’s \textit{String Quartet No. 1 in E Minor}, \textit{An Irish Melody}, \textit{Two Old English Songs}, \textit{Phantasie Piano Quartet in F-sharp minor}, \textit{Piano Quintet in D Minor} and the \textit{String Quartet No. 2 in G minor} for their programs in 1916. His older chamber works became more and more popular, with performances of his \textit{Novelletten}, \textit{Idylls}, \textit{Two Old English Songs} and \textit{An Irish Melody} being performed on the Philharmonic Quartet’s tour, including taking his \textit{Idylls} on their tour of France in 1919. By the early 1920’s, Bridge’s music had become popular among English audiences. While he began to go down a new path in his new compositions, his old works continued to receive repeat performances at prestigious events, including performances of his \textit{String Quartet No. 1} (1906) by the English String Quartet in 1920 and his \textit{String Quartet No. 2} (1914-15) by the London String Quartet in 1921 at the British Music Society’s Congress. Felix Salmond, who premiered Bridge’s \textit{Cello Sonata} in 1917, performed the work whenever possible, including a concert in Amsterdam in 1921. Other cellists who performed the sonata were Cedric Sharpe and Ivor James. Meanwhile in America, his \textit{Suite for String Orchestra}, \textit{Blow out you Bugles}, \textit{An Irish Melody}, and \textit{String Quartet No. 1} all received performances. His \textit{Phantasie}

\begin{footnotes}
\item Bray, p. 23-24.
\item Ibid, p. 29.
\item Ibid, p. 22.
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Piano Trio in C Minor and Piano Quintet received special attention at the Harvard Musical Association in April of 1922.\textsuperscript{40}

During this time, Bridge’s increasing popularity as a composer led to recordings of his works being made. Bridge himself recorded his Phantasie Piano Quartet with the English String Quartet, while also making recordings of his orchestral works Sir Roger de Coverly and Two Poems with New Queen’s Hall Orchestra. He recorded The Sea with the London Symphony Orchestra, but a significant portion of the fourth movement, The Storm, was cut out due to the limited time available in the 78 format.\textsuperscript{41} The popularity of his early works was due to its accessible style; however, his new works would prove to be a challenge for audiences and critics alike.

Bridge’s first work to displease critics during his period of compositional experimentation was his orchestral work, Dance Poem. The early style that he had been praised for no longer satisfied him as a sufficient means of expression, and he now began to explore new elements to expand his voice. Critics were harsh in reaction to his new style. The reception of Dance Poem was so poor that it would take twenty years before it would be performed for a second time. According to the Musical Times critic in 1914:

“As to Mr. Frank Bridge's new 'Dance Poem' - which, as the programme stated, is intended to depict the emotions which a dancer feels in her movements - with great regret we find it impossible to say that it afforded any pleasure. It is bizarre, and both as regards its form and material it is designed apparently to amaze and startle. No doubt this is to be well in the fashion, but all the same the friends of the composer will hope that he will revert to the style in which he has distinguished himself.”\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{40} Hindmarsh, p. 80
\textsuperscript{41} Bray, p. 26.
In 1917, his Two Poems for orchestra would receive a similar review by the Musical Times:

“Two Poems were listened to with interest if not complete satisfaction. It seems that this clever composer is acquiring idioms and a peculiar means of giving vent to his feelings that are not easy for ordinary folk to understand or enjoy. Of course this may be owing to the shortcomings of the ordinary folk.”

When the effects of the war were masked in works like his String Quartet No. 2, Summer (1916), and his Cello Sonata (1913-1917), critics became complimentary once again. He also wrote a large number of works for amateurs that were far from demanding on a technical or aesthetic level, making his Dance Poem and Two Poems look merely like experiments.

To make ends meet, Bridge took on a heavy teaching load at various schools in nearby towns, in addition to teaching from home. The lack of time available to devote to composing, paired with the increasingly negative reviews, perhaps dampened how prolific he was as a composer. These factors caused him to produce fewer large-scale compositions but to continue to write several salon-type works in a more accessible style. While on the surface he may have appeared defeated in his new style by the masses, his integrity as a composer was apparent in a 1923 interview:

“The true artist writes to express his own honest views, not to please the public… The self-criticism to which the artist subjects himself will prevent him from fostering an ill-prepared work upon the public. The true artist may be trusted to take that care, and the greater artist he is, the greater the care he takes. After that, the truth of his message must

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44 Bray, p. 28.
make itself known. If he is sincere, then all is well. It is sincerity of his work which is the real test.”

Just a year prior to this interview, Bridge struggled to find time to complete his Piano Sonata. His older works were being performed much more frequently than his new ones. At a gathering thrown by the publisher Winthrop Rogers that May, the Frank and Ethel Bridge immediately struck up a friendship with one of the greatest patrons of new music in American history, Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge (1864-1953). Her eventual financial support, which lasted throughout Bridge’s career, was enormously important, and enabled him to stay true to his musical aesthetic.

Coolidge invited the Bridges to be her guests for the Berkshire Festival of Chamber Music, a festival inaugurated by Coolidge in 1918 and held annually in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. The festival was dedicated to chamber music, with an emphasis on new works. This developed into the Berkshire Symphonic Festival at Tanglewood, which is now known as Tanglewood Music Festival. In 1920, before he had even met Coolidge, the festival hosted a performance by the London String Quartet of Bridge’s String Quartet No. 1. Coolidge chose Bridge, along with composers Rebecca Clarke and Eugene Goossens to participate in the 1923 festival. The Pittsfield audience gave his Sextet a warm reception, though Bridge found it to be inadequate due to poor conditions, rugged rehearsals, and tensions among the artists.

As houseguests of Mrs. Coolidge, the Bridges found her to be domineering, eccentric, and frustrating as a hostess. Coolidge often scheduled events and then changed

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46 Little, p. 9.
47 Hindmarsh, p. 80.
them on a whim, causing the Bridges to privately complain to each other and close friends. In a letter to their friend, Marjorie Fass, Ethel Bridge referred to Coolidge as the ‘Dowager Empress.’\textsuperscript{48} Perhaps these initial impressions were what caused Bridge to reject Coolidge’s repeated offers of financial help. Ethel Bridge later writes:

“She [Coolidge] took him [Bridge] out for a drive and on (the matter of) Francois [a nickname Coolidge endearingly gave Frank] refusing everything in the way of help or patronage, it has been decided that the subject in not to be mentioned again. Of course she means it all most kindly and it is tremendously generous of her but Margot—one couldn’t ever bear to feel we’d accepted such things from anyone.”\textsuperscript{49}

However, Bridge hesitantly accepted Coolidge’s offer to arrange conducting engagements of his works in the United States. After he completed a successful conducting tour of his music in Cleveland, Detroit, Boston, and New York, funded by entirely by Coolidge, followed by sightseeing and additional performances of Bridge’s works, the Bridges came to see the sincerity of her heart and were more understanding of her autocratic ways. When Coolidge sensed that the Bridges might want to stay in the United States after he had expressed his enjoyment of American life-style and his also being impressed with its musical life, she attempted, though unfortunately failed, to get him a professorship at the Eastman School of Music.\textsuperscript{50} Perhaps had Bridge been hired for this post, his reputation in America might have progressed more successfully as both a composer and pedagogue. Of course, while he might have had an influence on many of the next generation of American composers, he would have missed the opportunity to mentor and teach Britten in his youth. The Bridges then returned to England, where

\textsuperscript{48} Hindmarsh, p. xvi.
\textsuperscript{50} Hindmarsh, p. xvii.
reality set in for Frank Bridge. In regard to Coolidge’s generous offers, he expressed a change of heart in a letter to her in December of 1923:

“At this moment I see only your decision to help me out of the rut of my gray-haired professional existence, because you wanted to do this for me. I say only ‘Thank you’ – you know how much this really means.”

The added teaching he had taken on both because his royalty payments had suffered a post-war slump and his performing engagements were not as frequent could now be discontinued. Coolidge sent him annual birthday checks for $2,000, a perk that she never granted her other commissioned composers, who included Stravinsky, Bartók, and Hindemith, among others. Bridge expressed his gratitude for the birthday checks:

“I can’t refrain any longer from telling you how I shall never be able to describe that sense of release or that mental freedom that has resulted from the cessation of instrumental teaching.”

Bridge’s struggle to find the time to compose had come to an end with Mrs. Coolidge’s patronage. Their friendship gave him the freedom to focus on being creative, and the majority of works he produced from that point forward were either commissioned by or dedicated to Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge. These include the Violin Sonata (1932), String Quartet No. 3 (1925-27), String Quartet No. 4 (1936-37), and Piano Trio No. 2 (1928-29). With her financial support, he embarked on a new phase of his compositional style that satisfied him as an artist, although it displeased audiences and critics. The development and maturation, as well as the reception of Bridge’s compositional style in these works and his Trio Rhapsody, will be studied more in depth in the subsequent

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51 Frank Bridge to Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, December 7, 1923, The Coolidge Collection, Library of Congress.
52 Hindmarsh, p. xvii.
53 Bridge to Coolidge, April 29 1924.
chapters. It is this group of works, and the other works composed during this period, that express the pinnacle of his distinctive compositional style.

The premiere performance of his *Piano Sonata*, given by pianist Myra Hess in October of 1925, was a success. According to *The Times* critic, “Miss Hess’s playing showed extraordinary grip of the musical implications of every detail, and convinced us of the rightness of much which looked inexplicable beforehand.”

But in a performance by Alan Bush two years later, *The Times* critiqued that “at the end of it we felt we had never heard so great an expenditure of notes to so little purpose.” Thankfully for Bridge, the *Manchester Guardian* recognized the work’s innovative greatness:

“[In comparison with Irelands's Piano Sonata,] the Bridge Sonata, though different to the point of antithesis, runs it fairly close in quality. In some respects it may even score a higher number of points. Mr. Frank Bridge is more preoccupied with researches into new problems of sound, which lead him to a whole series of fascinating discoveries in the matter of harmony and rhythm ... Mr. Bridge has the more cosmopolitan culture, the wider sympathies of the eclectic, the more exclusively artistic temperament.”

Though Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge’s patronage relieved Bridge of the need to rely on teaching to pay his bills, he still continued to teach a select number of students in the 1920’s. When Bridge visited Norwich in 1927 to conduct his work, *Enter Spring* (1926-27), his friend Audrey Alston introduced him to her thirteen-year-old viola student, Benjamin Britten. Hesitant to take on a new student at first, Bridge eventually accepted

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Britten as a student after looking over his compositions. Britten was already an enormous fan of Bridge, having been “knocked sideways” upon having heard The Sea in 1924 at the Norwich Triennial Festival.\textsuperscript{57} Stanford’s influence on Bridge’s detail-oriented compositional technique and complete professionalism no doubt influenced his teaching of Britten.\textsuperscript{58} According to Britten:

> “Even though I was barely in my teens, this was immensely serious and professional study; and the lessons were mammoth. I remember one that started at half past 10, and at tea-time, Mrs. Bridge came in and said, ‘Really, you must give the boy a break.’ Often I used to end these marathons in tears; not that he was beastly to me, but the concentrated strain was too much for me. I was perhaps too young to take in so much at the time, but I found later that a good deal of it had stuck firmly. This strictness was the product of nothing but professionalism. Bridge insisted on the absolutely clear relationship of what was in my mind to what was on the paper. I used to get sent to the other side of the room; Bridge would play what I’d written and demand to see if it was what I really meant. I badly needed his kind of strictness; it was just the right measurement for me. His loathing of all sloppiness and amateurishness set me standards to aim for that I’ve never forgotten. He taught me to think and feel through the instruments I was writing for: He was most naturally an instrumental composer, and as a superb viola player he thought instrumentally.”\textsuperscript{59}

Britten quickly became the Bridge’s quasi-adopted son. Bridge had an enormous impact on Britten as a person, having taken him under his wing during his highly impressionable years. The two discussed important topics over tea and tennis, including their shared views as pacifists. It is likely that these talks played a role in Britten’s later decision to compose the War Requiem.\textsuperscript{60} The two would attend concerts together: England’s premiere of Stravinsky’s Symphony of Psalms, Berg’s memorial concert with Webern conducting, and Schoenberg’s Pierrot Lunaire and Variations for Orchestra. Britten hardly missed an opportunity to see Bridge conduct, especially when it was one of

\textsuperscript{58} Bray, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{60} Little, p. 13.
Bridge’s compositions. Bridge introduced Britten to the seminal works of progressive continental composers of the time, an experience he might not have ever gotten studying with anyone else.

While teaching Britten, Bridge produced one chamber masterpiece after the next. His *String Quartet No. 3* (1925-27) marks the arrival of his mature style, separating him stylistically from his fellow English composers. The prevailing conservative musical aesthetic of the time was a result of the “English Musical Renaissance,” a musical education movement and group of composers who were dedicated to championing British music and whose unifying ideology was focused on musical patriotism. This movement, spearheaded by Stanford in his 1916 book, *History of Music*, stemmed from a reaction to England being labeled by German critic Oscar A. H. Schmitz as “the land without music” in his 1904 book, *Das Land ohne Musik – englische Gesellschaftsprobleme* (The Land Without Music – Problems of English Society). Evidence of this ideology are also present in earlier sources, including Reverend Haweis’ 1873 book, *Music and Morals*, in which he preached that the British “must not be content with foreign models” and that a national school must be formed whose expression is true to England’s tone and temper, just as “French music is to France, Italian music is to Italy, and German music is to Germany.” Supporters of the movement promoted the resistance of non-British musical idioms, and aimed to promote national composers, works, and genres. Due to political stances during World War I, it was taken so far as to ban German music from British

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concert halls, though it was not always upheld, and German musicians became referred to as “enemy aliens.” Because of these philosophies, when Second Viennese School composer Alban Berg passed away, in 1935, he was “little known and less understood” in England. At a time when nationalism in music was in style, Bridge had a very different philosophy, taking whatever techniques he believed would help him reach his greatest expression as a composer. This meant being influenced by composers on the Continent, such as Schoenberg, Berg, and Scriabin, from whom his English contemporaries shied away. Bridge’s musical environment will be discussed more in depth in Chapter Two.

As late as 1966, critics accused him of “uglifying his music to keep it up to date.” In a 1923 interview, Bridge expressed his view against England’s nationalistic attitude of the day:

“You cannot really speak of nationality in music, since art is world-wide. If there is to be any expression of national spirit, it must be the composer’s own thoughts and feelings, and must come from the promptings of his own inspiration; he cannot seek it, and any effort on his part to aim at it, as a national expression must end in failure.”

Bridge’s String Quartet No. 3 was originally arranged by Coolidge to be premiered by the Flonzaley String Quartet at the Library of Congress, but after receiving the score and parts, rejected it. A year later, after revisions had been made, the Kolisch Quartet took on the challenge and it was premiered in Vienna and Paris in 1927. The work’s first review was shockingly positive, though this is perhaps due to it being written by a forward-looking Viennese critic rather than a more conservative British one:

67 Hindmarsh, p. 138.
“Probably, Bridge has written nothing better.”68 A year later, it received its American premiere on October 30, 1928 in honor of Mrs. Coolidge’s 64th birthday.69

His *Rhapsody Trio* (1928) is an important work that fell victim to the Depression and did not receive a performance until it was revived at the Aldeburgh Festival in 1965. Coolidge’s income was greatly reduced during this time, resulting in fewer performance opportunities for his new chamber works; therefore, Bridge decided to give precedence to the larger scale work composed a year later, his *Piano Trio No. 2* (1929). Antonio Brosa, Anthony Pini, and Harriet Cohen premiered the work in a carefully crafted performance.70 This new contribution to the piano trio literature, also dedicated to and financially supported by Coolidge, confirmed Bridge as a composer of international significance.71 Its innovation would not come without a price; critic Herbert Hughes attacked Bridge’s compositional style in reaction to the November 4, 1929 premiere:

> “Mr. Bridge’s trio was a proposition of a different order. This was patently 1929 music – owing a great deal to Scriabin and more to Schoenberg. As it proceeded one wondered whether Mr. Bridge had not somewhat forced upon himself this style of writing, whether the great part of this trio had any real meaning, even superficial, to the composer himself. We are, or it seems to me, faced today, in this present international vogue of atonalism, with a new species of *Kapellmeistermusik*. Mr. Bridge is not the only instance of a composer on this side of the Channel having suddenly adopted a manner (as he did in his recent piano sonata) that bears no recognizable relationship to his own natural development – and, like so many others, he can no longer be regarded as a ‘young British composer’. It must be said that the work was beautifully played and admitted that at no point did it fail to hold the attention of a highly critical audience, even if it was not

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69 Little, p. 13.
70 Hindmarsh, p. 142.
71 Payne, p. 74.
at all clear what the composer was trying to convey. The idiom is no longer strange, and it should not be hard for a good craftsman to make himself understood.”

Bridge would not succumb to a feeling of depression in reaction to overwhelming criticisms, but remained steadfast in his convictions. In a letter to Mrs. Coolidge in reaction to Hughes’ comments, Bridge bitterly wrote:

“I see quite clearly that it is going to be increasingly difficult for people who have standardized their ideas as to what music is when they compare my work at 27 and that at fifty, but there can be any compromise between what is expected by others and what my instinct insists upon is an utter impossibility. The last few years have strengthened my mental powers – such as they are – to a degree that leaves them untouched by any outward manifestation. You will admit that it is a difficult moment when one reads the kind of personal slight that Hughes finds pleasure in doing out ad infinitum, but the effect is a momentary one. A kind of superficial sting in the flesh, but no more, and so – on with the next work.”

Mrs. Coolidge showed her belief in the work by sponsoring an autumn tour of the United States, which included bringing Bridge along for the performances. The work received a warmer reception than it had received from the more conservative English audience. She also financially backed the work’s European premiere in Paris in October of 1931.

His Violin Sonata (1926-1932), yet another work in the Library of Congress’ “Coolidge Collection,” was premiered by two of his dearest musical friends, Antonio Brosa and Harold Samuel, at a Royal Philharmonic Chamber Concert in 1934. The work had to wait two years for its premiere because of the economic slump that caused Coolidge to cancel or postpone multiple concerts. Bridge was particularly delighted by performances in the Berkshires by the leader of the Pro Arte Quartet, Alphonse Onnou,

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73 Bridge to Coolidge, November 8, 1929.
and pianist Alfredo Casella, and in Washington, D.C, by William Kroll and Frank Sheridan. Nevertheless, with each new work he composed, criticisms followed – the *Violin Sonata* did not escape this fate:

“It is the species of music which is called ‘contemporary,’ and only a brilliantly constructed Scherzo movement condescended to immediate attractiveness. After the return of the tortuous manner of the first Allegro produced a labored climax. Save for the Scherzo the two instruments seemed to be given very little of that opportunity for playing into one another’s hands which is the essence of the duet Sonata.”

Analysis and a discussion of stylistic influences on *Violin Sonata* will be discussed more in depth in Chapter Four.

In 1936, Bridge became gravely ill and had to postpone his composing. Acute bronchitis and acute hypertension resulted in doctor’s orders for bed rest. After falling into a coma for several days and then a six-month convalescence, Bridge’s creative spirit awakened and he completed his *String Quartet No. 4* (1937) in just four months. Mrs. Coolidge, whose financial circumstances had drastically improved since Bridge’s *Violin Sonata* completion, arranged for the Gordon String Quartet to premiere the work at the Berkshire Festival in 1938, where he was presented with the Berkshire and Washington Coolidge Medals for his services to chamber music, a highlight of his career. He was so pleased with the performance, but did express some ideas in a letter to Coolidge about what might make a premiere more successful:

“The Gordon performances were as near 100% as any composer would wish and I am sure that repeated performances would make more friends for No. 4. Some future occasion, and I sincerely hope there may be many, when you give the first performance of No. 5 for instance, I do wish you would try, in a festival for instance, to give the same

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74 Hindmarsh, p. 155.
76 Little, p. 15.
audience an opportunity of hearing a work a second time, say at the end of a concert…. I believe you would find it a very satisfying thing to do; for the players and the audience, as well as for the composer. Even a nail goes in a wooden wall much further with a second stroke of the hammer…. Isn’t it a nuisance that publicity counts – and it truly does.”

Bridge’s last chamber piece, *Divertimenti* for flute, oboe, clarinet, and bassoon (1934-38) was written for Coolidge’s birthday and intended for her Anniversary Concert in the Library of Congress on October 30, 1935. Bridge’s creativity was stifled due to a long-term illness. Following his recovery in 1936, Bridge was finally able to complete the work. Unfortunately, the work was not performed until 1940 at Coolidge’s Ninth Festival of Chamber Music, a premiere that Bridge was unable to attend. Coolidge wrote to him that the performance was a success, leaving Bridge very pleased across the Atlantic.

While in these years he focused mainly on chamber music, due to Coolidge’s interest in the genre, he still produced works for orchestra and fulfilled his duties as an ‘emergency conductor.’ The orchestral works *Impression: There is a Willow Grows Aslant a Brook* and *Rhapsody: Enter Spring* were composed in 1927 at his home in the beautiful Friston Field. Commissioned by the Norwich Festival, *Enter Spring* was his first orchestral commission since *The Sea*. Critics and audience did not warmly receive the works, resulting in few performances and more blows to Bridge’s psyche.

The effects of World War I still had a hold on Bridge. Difficult memories of personal loss had haunted him for years, manifesting itself in a concerto for cello and orchestra: *Oration* (1930). Originally titled, *Concerto Elegiaco*, Bridge changed the title to fit its portrayal of an outcry against the futility of war. Bridge had hoped that Mrs.

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77 Bridge to Coolidge, December 12, 1938.
78 Hindmarsh, p. 160-161.
Coolidge would facilitate a concert in Chicago with Felix Salmond as the soloist, but to his disappointment, the event did not come to fruition. Bridge struggled to convince an orchestra and soloist to perform and promote the difficult work, but after much postponement for a premiere, it was presented at the BBC in January of 1936 with Florence Hooton, a young cellist whose playing had impressed Bridge in her 1933 performance of his *Piano Trio No. 2* with the Grinke Trio, as the soloist.\(^79\)

Another work written around this time for soloist and orchestra, *Phantasm* (1931), was the only orchestral work dedicated to Mrs. Coolidge. *Phantasm* ‘inhabits a spectral world of dream-like images and ghostly illusions – at times merely atmospheric and at others positively nightmarish’.\(^80\) It was unfortunate for Bridge that Coolidge was unable to promote the work because she had already programmed the concert she was producing in Paris and there was no place on the program for Bridge’s new work. As with *Oration*, Bridge took on the duties of self-promotion due to the effect of Coolidge’s financial slump on her inability to sponsor anything but chamber music. Successful in procuring a premiere led by Bridge conducting with Kathleen Long and the BBC orchestra in January of 1934, Bridge expressed his elation and reaction to critics in a letter to Mrs. Coolidge:

> “Last Thursday’s papers were mostly monotonous in their complete disapproval – euphemistic expression of the concert on Wednesday, January 10\(^{th}\). But I have the greatest pleasure in saying the ‘Phantasm’, with Kathleen Long playing really brilliantly and sympathetically, plus the BBC Orchestra at the top of its form, was one of the very best performances of any work with orchestra ever I had…. You see by this I am quite happy about it. There remains only the necessity of living down the usual prejudice against anything that is not known. Not that there is ever – or seldom – universal approval of anything after its first performance….”\(^81\)

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\(^79\) Hindmarsh, p. 149.

\(^80\) Ibid, p. 152.

\(^81\) Bridge to Coolidge, January 14, 1934.
Before the outbreak of World War II, Bridge had an idea for an overture for orchestra that he originally titled *Rumour*. However, with the start of the war, he feared the title would immediately bring to mind the distressing emotions associated with war and he changed the title to *Rebus* (1939-40). Though its original title was lost, the work does convey how a rumor spreads – a simple idea that becomes transformed. Bridge would not live to see the premiere of this work nor receive its surprising critical success. Despite unanimous praise by the critics, undoubtedly due to its accessibility and reduced dissonance, the work received very few performances until its 1976 BBC revival.\(^{82}\)

In addition to having his health as a concern since his serious illness of 1936, Bridge was shaken to the core with fear of World War II’s imminence. Britten had left for America, but Bridge had chosen the slower British lifestyle as his home even after he might have had the opportunity to emigrate to the U.S. He might have been having second thoughts when he wrote Coolidge in 1936:

“Massachusetts just running through one's mind seems a more than peaceful spot in contrast to all the apprehension and disturbing conditions which bob up over here day after day. It seems impossible that a terrifying inferno will not burst upon everybody this side of the Atlantic. The only query appears to be 'how soon'? It is a depressing reflection that mass unemployment improves through intensive production of armaments. Often I think how tragically people like Ramsay Macdonald must feel on seeing all their long years of honest endeavour being jettisoned by the frantic efforts to re-arm as rapidly as possible.

Ethel has just been to see her sister in Hannover. A view there is 'what is England making such gigantic preparations for?' The postman hands in the letters with 'Heil Hitler' instead of 'Good morning'. What a queer state of mind, although the Germans adore being ordered to do anything, and everything, perhaps. There is an epidemic of fear so rampant that even some stupid accident may set everything ablaze.”\(^{83}\)

Bridge took precautions to protect his manuscripts by bringing them from London to Friston Field. Gas masks had been issued to the citizens and many Londoners had

\(^{82}\) Hindmarsh, p. 163.
\(^{83}\) Bridge to Coolidge, July 21, 1936.
evacuated to Friston. Composing was extremely difficult due to political circumstance, but he was able to produce several compositions despite his situation. In late 1940, he had begun a movement of his symphony for string orchestra, *Allegro Moderato*. Bridge believed this was his most significant work. Since the 1920’s, he had been waiting for an orchestral commission so that he could complete a large-scale symphonic work, but that day never came. On January 10, 1941, Bridge passed away before he could finish, leaving only a fragment of the work. In a letter to Benjamin Britten from the Bridge’s dear friend, Marjorie Fass, she recalled Bridge’s final day:

“What a sad, sad grief our telegram must have been to you. I am so deeply sorry for what you have lost in our lovely old Franco, with all his sweetness, his greatness and his gentleness. Thank heaven he was spared suffering – for his heart just stopped in his sleep. He had been out in the snow and bitter wind for a day or so and must have caught a chill on his tummy. He was his cheery dear self in the morning of Friday 10th and went out after lunch to fiddle with his car, and stopped out in the cold to have a word with Stella Churchill, and then went upstairs to his room. About three he said he felt sick and he was very sick for an hour, and nurse Baldock, who had been living there with them for the past three months, since her room in Eastbourne was bombed, looked after him and put him to bed, and then came down looking a little worried, but not realizing anything bad might happen. She told me Franco was sick and I asked her if she’d sent for the doctor, and she did, but the doctor was in Lewes. I didn’t realize there was any urgency. Nor did Eth., nor the nurse, as there were no cardiac symptoms, then, only near exhaustion after his sickness. Nurse gave him two aspirins and he went to sleep. During his sleep, about 7:30, nurse suddenly saw a change come over his face, and she knew by his colour his heart was failing. By the time another doctor came it was too late. But both his doctors, who were in the house before 8, said nothing could have been done… Lovely that during this war he could turn his mind with his beautiful world of sound, and write the Overture *Rebus*… and he was making a fair copy of a string symphony he liked very much – and he told Eth. That we would like. Alas the score isn’t finished – and how we long for our Benjy to look over the sketches and see what he meant to do. Perhaps you will some day…”

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84 Bray, p. 96.
85 Marjorie Fass to Benjamin Britten, January 23, 1941, quoted in Hindmarsh p. 192.
Britten never did, but Bridge expert Anthony Pople completed an edition that was published in 1979, the year of its premiere by the English Chamber Orchestra at the Aldeburgh Festival.\textsuperscript{86}

Frank Bridge was victim to being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Britain’s conservatism and emphasis on artistic nationalism never allowed for him to reap the rewards of his musical contributions. He is in good company – Beethoven’s late style, for example, was ridiculed, with critics blaming his stylistic development on his deafness. Now, his late opuses are some of the most cherished works in the literature.

Unfortunately, though 21st century ears have largely caught up to Bridge’s style, his music is still a surprise to most audiences. It is certainly more accessible than many works of his influential German contemporaries – Schoenberg and Berg. One reason for this lack of recognition could be that his music was not promoted by his own people because he did not fit the model of a British composer during a time when both World Wars left the British people frightened that the political horrors on the Continent could spread to their home. Had he moved to America, as did Britten, where his music was warmly received and promoted by Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, perhaps his music would not have fallen under the radar for so many years and his music might be a staple of the repertoire. Research by Anthony Payne, Paul Hindmarsh, and Peter Pirie on Bridge’s musical contributions, paired with Britten’s devotion to his former teacher make studying, performing, and listening to Bridge’s music possible today. Many scores are available by Steiner and Bell, though mass production of his later scores does not exist and one must wait for it to be printed on request. His stylistic development makes him

\textsuperscript{86} Hindmarsh, p. 164-165.
one of the most fascinating composers of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century – his music should be studied and admired for years to come.
CHAPTER TWO

Frank Bridge: His British Predecessors and Contemporaries

At the turn of the 20th century, England gained a reputation as being the “Land Without Music.” This was in large part due to its cultural climate at the time, in which little support was given to its native composers and where its citizens most often chose to place their interest in football and salon music, rather than Western Art music. 87 This resulted in a virtual creative silence in the field of music composition from the Tudor to the Edwardian Eras. England had contributed greatly to the development of music in the Medieval and Renaissance eras, with composers such as Dowland, Byrd, Gibbons, and Morley, and in the Baroque era with Purcell, but in the years following was preoccupied with warfare, commerce, industry, and trade, its music relying heavily on influences from Continental Europe. 88 Following Purcell’s untimely death in 1695, the English compositional style was a cosmopolitan one, with composers drawing from German, French, Italian and Russian compositional techniques, including trends in harmony and form. In fact, the dominant figure in the Baroque era was a transplant: German-born George Frideric Handel. In the Classical and Romantic eras, Franz Josef Haydn and Felix Mendelssohn spent a great deal of time in England, with the latter having had a profound influence on British musical life. Many British music students went on to study at the Leipzig Conservatory, which had been established by Mendelssohn. 89 The lack of

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88 Ball, p. 71.
89 Ball, p. 75.
contributions to the genre of native English music during the Georgian and Victorian eras resulted in music becoming somewhat of “an imported good, placed on par with tea, sugar and cigars.”\footnote{Ibid., p. 72.}

Interest in art music in England increased dramatically between 1880-1920, coinciding with a movement towards finding a national style of music. Composers who built momentum for the popularity of British music during this time were Sir Edward Elgar (1857-1934)\footnote{Pirie, Peter J. \textit{The English Musical Renaissance}, p. 18.} and the first generation of the “English Musical Renaissance”: Hubert Parry (1848-1918), Alexander Mackenzie (1847-1935) and Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924). Parry, Mackenzie, and Stanford combined to exert a supreme influence over the future of English music; as professors at the Royal Academy and Royal College of Music, they oversaw the early careers of many British composers. After years of neglecting the native composer, and an ongoing infatuation with foreign composers such as Mendelssohn, Brahms, Wagner, Schumann and Strauss,\footnote{Ball p. 73.} it was the hope within British music circles that the new generation of English composers would include a composer of prophetic genius who could put their country’s art music back on the map; however, what would constitute a representation of British music would be up for debate. Would Elgar’s self-taught, cosmopolitan approach to composition be the musical direction England wanted to take or would the quest for a truly English musical idiom be the standard? Is it more English to be cosmopolitan in one’s compositional approach due to its recent musical history or must a strictly English sound be established? How did these composers and critics define a strictly English musical idiom? These are
among the questions that up and coming composers in England were faced with as they created their art. Composers representing both philosophies made it possible for a blossoming of musical creativity in England, paving the way for the generations that followed. Bridge belongs to a generation of British composers who were influenced by the above composers and who came into maturity between World War I and World War II. With Britain’s geographic isolation perhaps contributing to its inability to develop a distinct “British” musical style since Purcell, these composers were divided into two camps: those that wanted to establish a national style and those composers who set out to draw from established composers, regardless of nationality. Music critics, writers, and composers most likely instigated the call for a national style as a reaction to the country’s musical dormancy. The aftermath of World War I further supported the quest for an English musical idiom, due to a high level of societal “British protectionism,” which rejected foreign and Continental influences. This chapter will present the characteristics that define the English musical idiom, provide biographical and compositional information on Bridge’s British predecessors and contemporaries and provide a context for Bridge’s musical environment in the late 19th and early 20th century.

The “English Musical Idiom”

According to William Scott Ball, England’s musical history, combined with its roots in folk-song tradition and the temperament of its people, were the origins of the ‘nationalists’ approach to founding an English musical idiom. In pursing this national style, some composers looked backward to the Tudor era, an era that was thought by Ralph Vaughan Williams, among others of his generation, to be the last time that there
was a true English “school” of composers.\textsuperscript{93} Forms, such as the distinctly British inventions of the Anthem and Glee, were studied by the new generation in order to establish an English identity with native roots.\textsuperscript{94} The Italian inspired madrigal and oratorio were also a source of pride for the English.\textsuperscript{95} In addition to developing early forms, nationalists looked to Dunstable’s use of counterpoint. His style is most famous for its full, rich harmonies, which resulted from the frequent use of parallel thirds and sixths (referred to as \textit{la contenance angloise} or “the English countenance” by French poet Martin le Franc), that would be highly influential on the Burgundian School. Finally, it is Purcell, whose instrumental fantasy forms were derived from earlier vocal motets,\textsuperscript{96} establishing a precedent for how the English language is set to music.\textsuperscript{97} According to Murray Lefkowitz, this spawned other composers’ contributions to the form that would become “one of the most vital genres in the history of chamber music.”\textsuperscript{98}

Vaughan Williams believed that the heart of the English style was the incorporation of folk tunes.\textsuperscript{99} According to Mackenzie, folk tunes reflected England’s prosperity, characterizing them as having a “comfortable, pastoral sentiment, little found

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{93} Ball, p. 77.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., p. 91.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., p. 94.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{97} Ball, p. 96.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{99} Ball, p. 82.}
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in the music of nations that had experienced tragedy and trouble in their history.”

In comparing English to German folk song, English melody shows a “sense of freedom of movement between the highest and lowest notes of the range,” as well energetic 6/8 or 5/4 meters or measures with five or seven beats in contrast to the “stodgy” rhythm of German folk songs. Important melodic and harmonic features of folk-tunes include modality and diatonicism, as well as the utilization of both false relations and mediant and supertonic triads in chord progressions.

Capturing the English temperament was also a contributing factor in establishing a national style. According to Newman, the British song, “Sally in Our Alley” (which Bridge set for string quartet and string orchestra) reflects the British temperament in that it is “strong and healthy like the race itself, breathing of good living and an open-air life, with no great spiritual and emotional profundity, but of a simple honest beauty, like an English landscape under the spring sun.” Adjectives, such as “dignified,” “manly,” “honest,” “straightforward,” among others, were frequently used to describe these temperamental English characteristics in the period prior to World War I.

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102 Ball, p. 108.

103 The Oxford Dictionary of Music defines “false relation” as the following: “In harmony the appearance of a note with the same letter-name in different parts (or ‘voices’) of contiguous or the same chords, in one case inflected sharp or flat and in the other uninflected (e.g. F-natural and F-sharp). American term is “cross-relation.” (Kennedy, p. 286).


105 Ball, p. 105.
The First “English Renaissance” Generation

In the mid-to late eighteenth century, a significant musical trend in Continental Europe was the establishment of national musical identities. Parry, Mackenzie, and Stanford aimed to establish the same in England, resulting in their campaign to promote indigenous sounds. Parry believed in the recovery of English folk-tunes in order to find an authentic national voice, stating: “in true folk songs there is no sham, no got up glitter, no vulgarity.”

It is interesting to note that the founders of this movement all received extensive musical training in Germany. Through their influences as faculty at the Royal College of Music and the Royal Academy of Music, these composers conveyed their quest for a quintessentially British style to their pupils, many of who outshone their teachers as composers. As with Bridge, the legacies of Parry, Mackenzie, and Stanford rest on having taught pupils who became famous, rather than for their own ouvrres.

It was Sir Edward Elgar, an exemplar of the cosmopolitan approach to composition, who put England’s musical contributions back on the map. Elgar had hopes of attending the Leipzig Conservatory, but his father could not afford it. He became a voracious reader, which led him to Hubert Parry’s articles in the *Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*; these would serve as great inspiration to him. Even with this influence, he did not share in Parry’s philosophy that England must find its own authentic voice, preferring instead to draw many of his influences from Continental Europe. Like

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Bridge, Elgar believed that one’s approach to composition should not be limited to composers of the same nationality. Nevertheless, and perhaps ironically, he wrote some of England’s most popular works, and he was -- and still is -- often regarded as the quintessential English composer. His most famous piece is, of course, *Pomp and Circumstance, Op. 39 No. 1*, whose melody was turned into the song, “Land of Hope and Glory,” and used for the coronation of Edward VII in 1902. Essentially self taught, he was able to travel to Paris and Leipzig, gaining exposure to the music of Saint-Saëns, Schumann, Brahms, Wagner, and Rubenstein, all of whom would influence and inspire the development of his own musical style. The clarity of his orchestration was a result of his nineteenth century French influences, whereas his chromaticism and expansive structural designs were the result of the German Romantic tradition.\(^{107}\) He was disdainful both of folk music and of earlier English compositions, referring to music by William Byrd and others as “museum pieces.”\(^{108}\)

While it is unclear as to whether Bridge and Elgar met in person, there is correspondence that supports the notion that they were admirers of each other’s musicianship. Bridge attended an underwhelming performance given by the London Philharmonic on November 27, 1916 of Elgar’s *Symphony No. 2* and following the event, expressed empathy for Elgar in a letter to his friend, Edward Speyer:


“Poor Elgar – The orchestra positively scrambled through the Symphony as they had never before seen it. If it had been a work of mine I should have gone home and vowed ‘never again without three long rehearsals.’ In fact, as I had never heard the work before I felt quite sick about it. Performances of this kind do far more harm than good.”¹⁰⁹

In a letter to Bridge a decade later, Elgar expressed his support of Bridge’s musicianship and conducting, stating:

“I have always been regretting that you do not have the chance to conduct more than this heathen and wholly inartistic country (or should I say generation?) permits you. It is a loss to art which many of us feel.”¹¹⁰

Another prominent British composer from Elgar’s generation was Frederick Delius (1862-1934). Britain’s first internationally renowned conductor, Sir Thomas Beecham, championed his works.¹¹¹ Like Elgar, Delius’ musical influences came from beyond England’s shores. He studied at the Leipzig Conservatory, where he met the Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg. Grieg served as a great inspiration to Delius’ early music, resulting in Delius incorporating folk melodies and depictions of nature. In Delius’ music, one can also hear traces of the influences of Debussy and Ravel, presumably the result of the eight years he lived in Paris. Other influences include Chopin, Percy Grainger, and Richard Strauss. In 1929, The Times critic wrote: “Delius

belongs to no school, follows no tradition and is like no composer in the form, content or style of his music.\textsuperscript{112}

The philosophies and practices of these composers spawned the birth of several generations of British composers. Some of these composers rose to great acclaim, while others remain obscure or only recently were revived in concert halls with the performance of their music. Similar to the lively debate of absolute verses program music in the nineteenth century, these composers were divided into two philosophical camps: Nationalist and Internationalist composers. Some followed in the footsteps of Stanford, Parry, and Mackenzie, while others developed styles that were a melting pot of foreign influences, much like Elgar and Delius. The next sections will provide a background on the most prominent composers from each camp.

**Bridge’s Contemporaries: Nationalist Composers**

Stanford, Parry, and Mackenzie’s efforts to found a purely English musical idiom was successful in that several composers in Bridge’s generation chose to pursue the goals of their professors by incorporating local folk melodies and techniques of Tudor composers,\textsuperscript{113} thusly utilizing elements that would distinguish their music from anything being written on the Continent. In an attempt to pinpoint what makes music


\textsuperscript{113} Antokoletz, p. 132, [https://books.google.com/books?id=qrkTAwAAQBAJ&pg=PA132&lpg=PA132&dq=en
glish+music+incorporating+tudor+composers&source=bl&ots=AU75XyPhA4&sig=iLsz SAIS8sJ5OJm8JO35NPif1Url&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0CDEQ6AEwA2oVChMIt2hps_Wy AIVCT8-Ch3u8AsS#v=onepage&q=english%20music%20incorporating%20tudor%20composers &f=false].
quintessentially English, Peter Ackroyd writes in *Albion: The Origins of the English Imagination*: “Pleasure and melancholy, lyrical beauty and desolation, are thus uniquely aligned in true English synthesis. Other defining qualities include references to nature and mysticism.”¹¹⁴ ¹¹⁵ This description applies to the styles of England’s nationalist composers: Ralph Vaughan Williams, George Butterworth, Gustav Holst, and Herbert Howells.

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958), whose works are frequently programmed in today’s concert halls, studied at the Royal Academy of Music with Stanford and Parry. Although his aim was to succeed his former teachers in developing a British musical style, Vaughan Williams spent a short while studying abroad with Max Bruch and Maurice Ravel, with the latter having a significant influence on his orchestration.¹¹⁶ What Bartók did in recording and incorporating Hungarian and other Eastern European folk musics passed down via aural traditions, Vaughan Williams did for England. He collected English folk music and songs in his *English Hymnal*,¹¹⁷ where, in collaboration with Percy Dearmer, he also edited and arranged music he found, and composed several original hymn tunes inspired by his findings, including the famous *Sine nomine* for the hymn *For All the Saints*.¹¹⁸ He also served as president of the English Folk Dance and

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¹¹⁸ Antokoletz, p. 133.
Song Society. John Alexander Fuller Maitland observed that in Vaughan Williams’ style “one is never quite sure whether one is listening to something very old or very new.”¹¹⁹

Vaughan Williams had a profound affect on his friend and classmate at the Royal College of Music, Gustav Holst (1874-1934). Also a student of Stanford, Holst’s influences included Richard Wagner and Richard Strauss, though his additional interest in English folk songs, Indian Mythology, and the music of Maurice Ravel led him to develop his own style.¹²⁰ Other than his most famous work, The Planets, still an orchestral repertory staple, nearly all of his music fell into neglect in part because of his evolved style, which many of his contemporaries found to be austere and cerebral.¹²¹ According to his daughter, Imogen Holst, his over-intellectual approach and “naïve obstinacy” were his worst faults, while W.R.A, critic for the Musical Times, claims that his unresolved, psychic fear of emotions stood in his way.¹²² His music differed from many of his peer composers in his use of unconventional time signatures and rising and falling scales,¹²³ but like Bridge, he made use of ostinato and bitonality. For a short while, Holst appeared to veer towards Schoenbergian late romanticism; however, his

¹²³ Holst makes frequent use of ascending and descending scale figurations.

George Butterworth (1885-1916) is a name that does not come up as often as Vaughan Williams or Holst in part because of his death at age thirty-one while serving in World War I. He was a pupil of Parry’s at the Royal College of Music and friends with Vaughan Williams and folk song collector Cecil Sharp; all of these relationships would influence his style of composition. Butterworth collected over 450 folk songs on trips to the English countryside with Vaughan Williams, which had a profound effect on his compositions.\footnote{Michael Barlow, *Whom the Gods Love: The Life and Music of George Butterworth* (London, UK: Toccata Press, 1997), p. 81.}

**Bridge’s Contemporaries: Internationalist Composers**

Even with the popularity of the quest for a national musical voice, many composers who received their education from one of the two conservatories in London rebelled against the teachings of their professors Stanford and Parry and searched for influences elsewhere, just as Elgar and Delius had previously. These composers included Arthur Bliss, Arnold Bax, John Ireland, and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor.

Sir Arthur Bliss (1891-1975) was the son of a New England businessman father and an English amateur pianist mother. His heritage, combined with living in California for a time, perhaps influenced his international cultural outlook. Like Bridge, he had little in common with his teacher, Stanford, with whom he studied at the Royal College of
Music, but was an admirer of his classmate, Herbert Howells. Other accomplished classmates included Eugene Goossens, Ivor Gurney, and Arthur Benjamin. Bliss’ music draws influences from many different Continental sources. After serving and suffering an injury in World War I, he produced what were considered startling new compositions to British audiences, drawing ideas and techniques from Stravinsky, Ravel, and Les Six. After using a more modern idiom in the 1920’s, Bliss’ music turned back towards Elgarian romanticism after World War II. In a concert review, a contemporary critic of the *Musical Times* wrote of his style:

> “Bliss has wisely cleared his idiom of modern harmonic astringency. He uses quite a lot of common chords and progressions; in fact, he has gone back to the harmony of the musical gods. The result, inevitably, is a certain air of reminiscence.”

What was to be considered his old-fashioned style of composition would be eclipsed by the next generation of British composers, most importantly William Walton and Benjamin Britten. However, Bliss’ music has been recorded extensively, with the Library of Cambridge University holding 281 recordings, some of which were conducted by Bliss himself. On the one hundredth anniversary of Bliss’ birth, Byron Adams wrote of his legacy: “Of the smaller stars that shone in the ample firmament of twentieth-century

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127 Sam Ellis, liner notes to *Bliss, Davies, Bowen Violin Sonatas*, Rupert Luck and Matthew Rickard, EMR CD001, CD, 2010.  
http://www.oxforddnb.com/index/30/101030827/.
130 Cambridge University Library, s.v. “Sir Arthur Bliss: Recordings and CD’s,” last revised June 2015, accessed October 5, 2015,  
http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/Departments/Music/Bliss/Recordcd.html.
English music, the light that coruscated with the greatest brilliance was Sir Arthur Bliss.”

Unlike his contemporaries, Arnold Bax (1883-1953) was a man of privilege, allowing him to pursue whatever career path he chose. He spent his college career studying composition with Wagner enthusiast Frederick Corder at the Royal Academy of Music. Other early influences included Strauss and Debussy and at the turn of the century he became interested in Celtic music, leaving some of his German influences behind. Travelling to the Russian empire led him to the new influences of the Russian Five; Lewis Foreman describes his early style as “a musical magpie, celebrating his latest discoveries in his new compositions.” Bax was vocal against both the trends in using folk music in compositions and the development of serialism. In regards to the twelve-tone technique, Bax wrote in 1951:

“I believe that there is little probability that the twelve-note scale will produce anything more than morbid or entirely cerebral growths. It might deal successfully with neuroses of various kinds, but I cannot imagine it associated with an healthy and happy concept such as young love or the coming of spring.”

In his memoir, he published a quote from composer Guy Warrack, perhaps expressing his common opinion of folk culture: “You should make a point of trying every experience once, except incest and folk-dancing.” In Bax’s later years, his compositions fell into

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neglect. Though many recordings of his vast output have been made, it is not matched by the number of performances of his works in the concert hall. In a 2007 issue of The Guardian, the music critic Stephen Moss wrote: “Bax is considered the promotional kiss of death.”

As a student of Stanford at the Royal College of Music, John Ireland (1879-1962) received a strong training in the music of Beethoven and Brahms. Like many of his contemporaries, Debussy and Ravel served as strong influences in his early years, and he also gained inspiration from the works of Stravinsky and Bartók, developing his own brand of “English Impressionism.” While his music contains lilting melodies, changing meters, and modality that share qualities with Vaughan Williams, Ireland maintained that he had not been influenced by folk tunes. Later a professor at his alma mater, Bridge sent Britten to study with Ireland in college, though Britten did not speak highly of his experience: “I studied at the RCM from 1930-1933 but my musical education was perhaps more outside the college than in it. Although my teacher for composition was John Ireland, I saw Frank Bridge almost daily and I showed him every ‘major’ work.”

Also a participant in the Cobbett Competition, as was Bridge, Ireland’s Phantasie Piano Trio came in second place to Bridge’s Phantasie Piano Trio in 1908.

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912) was a great success in his day. His music was more popular than that of Delius, Vaughan Williams and Holst, but after his

premature death at the age of thirty-seven, his music received fewer performances and his music was all but forgotten.\textsuperscript{138} Like his biggest influences, Dvořák and Schubert, he was an impulse composer, leading to a rhapsodic approach to composition and an emphasis on melody.\textsuperscript{139} Yet another pupil of Stanford, Coleridge-Taylor impressed his professor with his Clarinet Quintet, leading to Stanford showing it to Joseph Joachim.\textsuperscript{140} English born, but of Creole descent, Coleridge-Taylor strived to do for African music what Dvořák had done for Bohemian music and Brahms had done for Hungarian music. His interest in his paternal heritage led him to make three trips to the United States to research African-American history, as his father was a descendent of African-American slaves freed by the British after the American Revolutionary War.\textsuperscript{141} While his music is not frequently performed, there are many recordings devoted to his works and several elementary schools in the United States are named after him.

Of this era, there are many other British composers of note, including Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979), Dame Ethel Smyth (1858-1944), Ethel Barns (1874-1948), York Bowen (1884-1961), Sir Eugene Goossens (1893-1962), among others; however, exploring them in detail goes beyond the scope of this paper. While none of the composers of this era in Britain have become household names like Mozart or Beethoven, there is a distinction in the legacy of those composers supported by English critics and

\textsuperscript{140} Michael Bryant, liner note to \textit{British Clarinet Quintets}, Siegenthaler, Leipziger Streichquartett, CPO 777 905-2, CD, 2015.
society and those who were not. Music critics and established composition faculty at Royal College of Music and Royal Academy of Music aimed to develop and support composers whose music strived for a distinct British musical style, leading to many composers of that era being forgotten. Perhaps the effect of the First World War on the citizens of England instilled nationalist leanings in British culture, affecting the fate of many of these composer’s legacies. Bridge and many discussed in this chapter failed to get the support that Vaughan Williams and Elgar had both gotten in their lifetimes and after their deaths. This has a direct effect on whose music has been programmed more frequently in the 20th century and today.
CHAPTER THREE

Bridge’s Stylistic Roots, Compositional Development, and Influences

It is difficult to evaluate the significant development and additions to Bridge’s style without first looking to his early influences. Bridge’s late style is a culmination of many important compositional techniques that he incorporated into his music from composers whom he admired along the way. His training at the Royal College of Music with Charles Villiers Stanford, a British composer who received his training in Leipzig, Germany with Carl Reineke, most certainly contributed to Bridge’s Brahmsian motivic and thematic developmental procedures, which in his later works he used in ways similar to Schoenberg’s “developing variation.” This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four. His experience performing Brahms, Beethoven, Schumann, and Dvořák and his exposure to Glazunov, Grieg, Franck, and Fauré, led to him to develop an early compositional style incorporating a variety of essential stylistic attributes. The abrupt modulations between remote key areas, as well as added pitches to dominant chords seen in his third Idyll for string quartet, are most likely the result of the influence of Grieg’s String Quartet in G Minor No. 1, Op. 27. A stylistic influence of German composers, specifically Strauss, can be detected in his early Violin Sonata (1904). The link between the violin sonatas of Strauss and Bridge will also be discussed more in detail in Chapter Four. On the whole, Bridge performed relatively conservative repertoire with the English String Quartet, but it is evident through his subsequent compositional output that

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143 Huss, p. 74.
the group’s 1904 British premiere of Debussy’s *String Quartet in G minor, Op. 10* had a lasting effect. Later, Debussy’s *Preludes* and other piano works were influential, as were Scriabin’s piano works, though Bridge’s musical kinship with Debussy makes it difficult to determine specific compositional elements that were the direct result of Scriabin’s influence. As his harmonic language developed, the influences of Schoenberg, Berg and Bartók seem certain, but are often difficult to distinguish from one another.\(^{144}\) It is the combination of a lifetime of music making, as a composer, conductor, and violist that informed his distinctive compositional style. While analyzing his stylistic procedures over the course of his career goes beyond the scope of this study, it is important to know the foundation of his compositional aesthetic due to their prominence and development in his later style.

Bridge’s studies with Stanford gave him a foundation of German Romanticism, showcased through his predilection for assigning his musical themes opposing characters, genre, and musical logic. This German intellectual foundation was crucial to his compositional development, paving the way for him to incorporate some of the techniques of the Second Viennese School. It is the combination of his quasi-German musical heritage with the modern French-Russian influences of Debussy, Ravel, and Scriabin that helps to explain several aspects of his post-tonal idiom. Bridge’s attentiveness to certain technical procedures in early works reveals the origins of his later chamber music aesthetic.\(^{145}\)\(^{146}\) Bridge’s chamber music oeuvre from 1926-1932 includes his *String Quartet No. 3* (1926), *Rhapsody-Trio* (1928), *Piano Trio No. 2* (1929), and

\(^{144}\) Huss, p. 9.
\(^{145}\) Ibid, p. 10.
\(^{146}\) Payne, p. 12-13.
*Violin Sonata* (1932). These works are representative of Bridge’s most mature voice. His use of conservative techniques in combination with the more radical procedures found in these chamber works are distinguishing features of his musical aesthetic. Below is a discussion of several key stylistic features of these chamber works (with the exception of the *Violin Sonata*, which is the subject of a more magnified analysis in Chapter Four) that were developed from his early years, along with modern compositional elements attained from Continental influences.

**Form and motivic development**

Though the chamber music of Bridge’s late period has been referred to as radicalized and modern, several of his early influences remained intact. Bridge’s compositional technique from the outset was “exceptionally fluent and logically ordered,” stemming from Mendelssohnian and Brahmsian methods he learned from his studies with Stanford. In addition to studying German compositional approaches, much of the chamber music he performed at the Royal College of Music was by German or Austrian composers, with a few French or English exceptions. Stanford’s insistence on masterful technique in his student’s compositions, coupled with his absolute sincerity in his art, made an impression on Bridge:

> “It may be that the perspective of an early impression is altered by the march of time, or indeed by the present day enthusiasms which inevitably dominate one’s point of view, but after a period of more than twenty years there remains the conviction that in Sir Charles Stanford we all had a master-mind at work. Whether during a composition lesson or at an orchestral rehearsal, one was conscious of the power and sincerity with which he exercised his art. His complete sympathy with the classics and their traditions was an outstanding quality, which he happily

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147 Payne, p. 12.
148 Little, p. 4.
imparted to all who came under his refining influence. Who can forget his unfailing contempt for the meretricious and the vulgar, or, faced with a youthful harmonic indiscretion, the softened grin as he would say "It won't do, me bhoy"!"\textsuperscript{149}

In another reflection of Stanford’s teaching, Bridge wrote:

“That from tuition grounded with staunch belief upon the classics so many composition pupils should have achieved distinction on self-willed paths, is a noteworthy testimony to the soundness of his training and guidance. An extraordinary versatility and interest in all forms of musical art enabled him to solve their problems with facility and shrewd insight. He possessed a continuous inspiration of technical resources with which he administered first-aid. His firm insistence that we should not embark on an orchestral score which required so-called ‘extra’ instruments may perhaps have been a relic of his own youthful student days abroad. It was undoubtably a deep-rooted conviction, and his own works prove how unconcerned he was with the mere exploitation of instrumental technique. On one occasion a song with orchestra evoked a severe lecture, and although I recall feeling rather bruised, the experience of its public performance made me realize the truth of his criticism.”\textsuperscript{150}

Though he disagreed with the conservative Stanford on several fronts, later rebelling by incorporating modern techniques, Bridge embraced the German-based prescribed manner of thematic argument, an important component of his compositional style not only for his early works, but his entire career. This aspect of his compositional foundation separates him from his British contemporaries Vaughan Williams, Ireland, and others whose compositions strived for a strictly “English musical idiom,” and paved the way for his assimilation of Second Viennese School expressionist techniques, in


particular that of Schoenberg and Berg. A more detailed look at his motivic and thematic development will be discussed later in this chapter and in Chapter Four.

Cobbett’s influence on form in Bridge’s early and late chamber works

Bridge’s organization of his musical ideas also has its roots in his early years. In 1905, he entered a chamber music composition competition that influenced his personal structural principles and stimulated his approach to form for the remainder of his career. Founded by lawyer and philanthropist W.W. Cobbett, the mission of this competition was to stimulate the creation of a new repertoire of chamber music from younger British composers and to encourage the composition of works written in “phantasy” form, as opposed to the standard sonata form. Through a single episodic framework, the objective in this alternative approach was to abide by the structural principle of “unity within diversity.” The works were to contain a variety of moods and textures all while maintaining a thematic unity. Cobbett wanted to get back to a quintessentially English form, reminiscent of works for viol consort titled “fancies” by composers during the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras, specifically Thomas Ravenscroft, Richard Deering, John Ward, William Lawes, Matthew Locke, and Henry Purcell. In a

151 Payne, p. 13.
152 Ibid., p. 15.
lecture given at the Royal Academy of Music in 1911, Cobbett expressed the philosophical motives behind the requirements of his competitions:

“I reflected that in literature there are the lyric poem and the epic poem, the short story and the novel; but in chamber music there is only one form that counts… And I concluded that a new type suited to the needs of the chamber music composer was needed…. [A] new convention is wanted to stand side by side with the old one [sonata form], which, though conceived on a less ambitious scale is deemed worthy of academic sanction…. It was stipulated that the Phantasy was to be performed without a break, and to consist of sections varying in tempo and rhythm; in short, to be (like the ‘Fancies’) in one movement form, and to last no more than twelve minutes. The parts were to be of equal importance.”

The three early chamber works Bridge composed for the Cobbett Competition show the experimentation and development of his structural invention. They are the Phantasie String Quartet (1905), the Phantasie Piano Trio (1907), and the Phantasie Piano Quartet (1911). The quartet received second prize, the piano trio received first prize, and the piano quartet was commissioned by the competition. Through these compositions, Bridge developed and mastered a form that merged the sonata allegro form principles with episodic elements existing in ternary or rondo forms that achieved the utmost balance.

According to Paul Hindmarsh, “Bridge’s ‘phantasy arch-form’ was ‘simple in concept – a sequence of thematically integrated and symmetrically balanced episodes – yet effective and flexible in practice. It informed much of his musical thought from the grandest of his orchestral works (Oration, H. 180) to the most concise of his chamber works (Rhapsody Trio, H. 176).” In looking at many of his works, “the structure consists of arch-shaped sonata and phantasy structures, ternary forms and the thematic recurrence of the first movement material in subsequent movements, revealing his acute sense of

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154 Hindmarsh, p. 35.
musical proportion and formal balance. Indeed cyclic unity between individual episodes and movements were a constant preoccupation from the earliest of his large scale works, the String Quartet in B-flat (H. 3), to the Violin Sonata (H.183) of 1932.\textsuperscript{155}

The Phantasy Quartet of 1905 was Bridge’s first attempt at blending structural tradition with innovation. The overall structure of the work is ternary and its three movements are connected by transitional material. It consists of an arch-like sonata allegro, a slow section in ternary form, and ends with an abridged sonata form.\textsuperscript{156} Even at this early date, the work contains the characteristics that would seep into many of Bridge’s works: the opening and closing movements are in an arch-like sonata form, in which the second subject precedes the first in the recapitulation, and the final movement refers to first movement materials.\textsuperscript{157}

Bridge used his second Cobbett Competition entry as an opportunity to evolve the form. The Phantasy Trio of 1907 merges sonata form and phantasy form in a slightly different manner. The form of this work foreshadows the form of his Violin Sonata in that the entire work is built on the outer sections serving as a sonata exposition and recapitulation, with the two-part middle movement being an andante and scherzo based on material from the opening motivic cell. Like his Phantasy Quartet, all sections of the work are linked with transitional material.\textsuperscript{158}

Of his early works, the form reached its most developed and refined in the Phantasie Piano Quartet in F-sharp Minor. This work shows yet another variation of the ‘phantasy form.’ Instead of beginning in allegro tempo, he begins with an andante,

\textsuperscript{155} Hindmarsh, p. 35-36. 
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid, p. 56. 
\textsuperscript{157} Payne, p. 14. 
\textsuperscript{158} Payne, p. 14.
shifting the balance of the arch. The outer sections of the work are an *andante con moto*, followed by an *allegro vivace*, with the order of the movements reversed when they return. The heart of the work is its trio section, a *L’istesso tempo* filled with long phrases, which contrasts with the other sections of the work.¹⁵⁹ Each of these early works were strong influences on structures of his later chamber music, including the *Violin Sonata*, which will be discussed in depth in Chapter Four.

Bridge’s late chamber works are imaginative in their incorporation of ‘phantasy principles’ used in his early Cobbett works. On the surface, his *String Quartet No. 3* appears to be in a standard three-movement format, consisting of a movement in sonata form, a ternary slow movement, and a rondo finale. According to Payne, “the work is dominated by modifications of the sonata principle.” However, Bridge incorporates the “phantasy principle” by favoring an arch-shape in each of the movements and a rondo refrain in the finale.¹⁶⁰

His *Trio Rhapsody* for two violins and viola is the most expansive of his single-movement forms. The work is a hybrid of the arch-like phantasy form and a traditional sonata-binary form. It’s outer A sections contain an introduction and coda, its B sections act as an exposition and recapitulation, and its C section introduces a pastoral theme and serves as a development of previous material.¹⁶¹ Unlike Bridge’s previous phantasy-sonata hybrids, the first and second themes appear in their original order instead of the mirror image one might expect.¹⁶²

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¹⁵⁹ Payne, p. 16-17.
¹⁶⁰ Payne, p. 66.
¹⁶¹ Huss, p. 259-260.
¹⁶² Payne, p. 73.
The Piano Trio No. 2 is different from his other works in that it consists of a pair of interlocking movements. The first movement is a formal rarity for Bridge, in that it does not make reference to sonata form as his other multi-movement works did. Fabian Huss links the trio’s form to that of Bridge’s Phantasy Piano Quartet, asserting that there is an opposition between an A and B theme, “resulting in an unorthodox but convincing structure.” The scherzo movement begins without pause, linking the movements. As to be expected, the Scherzo is ternary form: the A section is expository, the B section is rhapsodic and developmental, and the return of the A material is somewhat of a mirror to the opening due to its return of its opening motives that disappear, yet are full of energy. The third movement is ternary form, whose static harmonies and repetitive motives give the character somewhat of a stagnant or dead feeling. The Finale is also a ternary form, though much more complex due to outer sections also being in ternary form. Within A’, themes from the first movement return throughout, but particularly in its closing section.

The table below summarizes the structure and forms of these pieces:

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163 Huss, p. 287.
164 Huss, p. 290.
Early Chamber Works and the Late Chamber Works: 
A Comparison of the “Phantasy” Formal Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>B'</th>
<th>A'</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phantasy String Quartet</strong></td>
<td>Allegro moderato</td>
<td>Andante moderato - poco piu mosso - tempo primo</td>
<td>Meas. 1-252</td>
<td>Meas. 252-303</td>
<td>Allegro moderato + Andante + (Coda/return of Introduction material)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phantasy Piano Trio</strong></td>
<td>(Introduction) - Allegro moderato</td>
<td>Andante</td>
<td>Allegro scherzando</td>
<td>Andante</td>
<td>Andante con moto + Coda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phantasie Piano Quartet</strong></td>
<td>Andante con moto</td>
<td>Allegro vivace</td>
<td>L’istesso tempo (Trio)</td>
<td>Allegro</td>
<td>Andante con moto + Coda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>String Quartet No. 3</strong></td>
<td>Mov. I Andante moderato (arch-shaped Sonata Form)</td>
<td>Mov. II Andante con moto (Ternary Form)</td>
<td>Meas. 1-256</td>
<td>Meas. 1-129</td>
<td>Meas. 1-458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trio Rhapsody</strong></td>
<td>Allegro molto (Introduction)</td>
<td>(Exposition)</td>
<td>(Pastoral/Development)</td>
<td>(Recapitulation)</td>
<td>(Coda/return of themes from Introduction)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Piano Trio No. 2** | (Introduction) - Mov. I Allegretto ben moderato | Mov. II Molto allegro (Scherzo - ABA"
| 972 Measures     | Meas. 1-239                     | Mov. III Andante molto moderato (ABA"
|                                | (Scherzo (Development)          | Mov. 12 nd theme) + Coda (recalls Introduction) |
| **Violin Sonata** | (Introduction) - Allegro energico (Exposition) | Andante molto moderato (Development) | Scherzo (Development continued) | Allegro energico (Recapitulation) + Coda (return of Introduction material) | Meas. 1-281                     |

Table 3.1: A Comparison of the “Phantasy” Formal Structure in Bridge’s early and early and late chamber music
Bridge, whose procedures for motivic and thematic integration align with those of Beethoven and Brahms, ran into problems with this technique in his earliest music because his lyrical themes did not always lend themselves to successful motivic development. As with the German tradition, the expectation of producing an elaborate development section made some of his first works in sonata form unsuccessful. In using phantasy form in combination with sonata form, as in the above discussion, Bridge was able to avoid this problem and thereby to successfully develop his motives and themes in a way that worked with his material.  

As previously mentioned, Stanford’s insistence on complete “technical control” and “logical construction” in his student’s compositions instilled the tools that would allow Bridge to successfully and cohesively evolve his style. It is Bridge’s complete command of form and motivic development that paved the way for incorporating modern tonalities. Arnold Schoenberg, founder of the Second Viennese School, was adamant about the importance of structural coherency and passed this concept down to his pupils. Alban Berg, a student of Schoenberg, passed down the same principles to his students. Theodor Adorno, a pupil of Berg’s, stated his teacher’s compositional philosophy as such: “The main principle he conveyed was that of variation: everything was supposed to develop out of something else and yet be intrinsically different.”

165 Huss, p. 10.
166 Huss, p. 11.
According to Anthony Payne, Bridge shared Schoenberg and Berg’s philosophy and “realized the significance of a pervasive motive working as a support for developing argument in the absence of orthodox tonality, and extended the principle to the point of integrating vertical and horizontal aspects of the music.”

One example of Bridge’s late works founded on these principles is his *String Quartet No. 3*. In the use of three notes, motivic and harmonic information is born. According to Payne’s analysis of the work, the opening melodic motive of an ascending tritone (B-flat-E) and its neighboring perfect fifth (F) serve as important melodic and harmonic information for the entire work (Example 3.1). This chord is known as the “Schoenberg Chord,” which is perhaps strong evidence of Bridge’s exposure to his music. This motive is transposed and inverted throughout the work, including its first transposition in the cello in measures 5-6. The scale that follows the opening statement in measure three is founded on a perfect fifth and tritone relationship from the opening motive, but builds on the motive by the addition of a C and an accented passing tone (C#). In its context, the C serves as the third of a triad and foreshadows the all-important motivic variation that serves as a harmonic foundation for the piece. In the two preceding measures before rehearsal 3, this motive is introduced in the form that it will be recreated, transposed, and developed for the rest of the work (C-E-flat – G-F-sharp), including the opening motive of the final movement. It is important to note that these pitches are of special motivic importance in their ties to the interlocking of major and minor thirds,

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169 Payne, p. 66.
170 Ibid., p. 66-67.
171 Ibid., p. 66-67.
reminiscent of Bartók’s style, and the ‘Bridge chord,’ a prominent harmonic feature of Bridge’s music that will be discussed in the next section.

\[ \text{Copyright 1928, by Augener Ltd.} \]

\[ ^{172} \text{Payne, p. 65.} \]
Example 3.1: Bridge, *String Quartet No. 3*, Mov. I, meas. 1-18
Bridge’s introduction of fragments of the motive with a solo violin in the opening, as well as his continuous development of motivic material, is similar to the Introduction of the *String Quartet, Op. 3* by Berg, though it is not clear if his compositional procedures were influenced by the work on a conscious level.\(^{173}\) (Examples 3.2 and 3.3)

\[\text{Example 3.2: Bridge, String Quartet No. 3, Mov. III, measures 1-6}\]

\[\text{Example 3.3: Berg, String Quartet, Op. 3, measures 1-4}\]

It is important to note that his use of motivic elements produces a wide range of moods, from the hypnotic, static, mechanical ostinato to an appassionato, rhapsodic, gypsy-like outburst, both seen in the slow movement of his *Piano Trio No. 2* (shown in

\(^{173}\) Hogan, p. 9.)
Examples 3.7 and 3.4 respectively).\textsuperscript{174} The rhapsodic passage in the Bridge brings Ravel’s \textit{Tzigane} to mind, due to the abundance of ornamentation in both works that spirals around a somewhat stagnant harmony. Each of these excerpts is saturated with augmented 2nds, an interval that more frequently appears in music with Eastern European roots.

\textsuperscript{174} Huss, p. 287.
Example 3.4: Bridge, *Piano Trio No. 2*, Mov. III, meas. 24-28
Bridge’s Sound World

Bridge’s sound world is the result of an amalgamation of influences; it shares certain similarities with the music of Debussy, Scriabin, Berg, and Bartók. In describing his harmonic language between 1926-1932, it is important to note that Bridge moved beyond chromaticism and the functional chord progressions found in his early and middle periods, except in rare circumstances, and into a sound world that prioritizes octatonic and whole-tone scales, bitonality, and, in some instances, modality. Anthony Payne describes Bridge’s post-tonal language as “Schoenbergian in the sense of pantonality, but the lack of semitonal dissonance in the chord spacing and the tendency to select whole-tone and dominant formations give it an individual flavor.” What follows is a discussion of these harmonic features, their interval content, and how Bridge uses them in his music.

175 Huss, p. 242-243.
176 Pantonality is defined in the Oxford Dictionary of Music as a “synonym for atonality, preferred and coined by Schoenberg who considered the latter term nonsensical.”
177 Payne, p. 65.
In Bridge’s post-tonal harmonic language, the whole-tone and octatonic scales are both prevalent.  

![Figure 3.1: Whole tone scales](image1)

![Figure 3.2: Octatonic scales](image2)

In addition to using these scales to create motives and themes, Bridge uses these symmetrical scales to form vertical pitch collections, resulting in major-minor-seventh formations that produce harmonic instability and somewhat unpredictable chord progressions. Bridge’s use of these scales points back to the influence of Debussy and Scriabin, both of who used these scales frequently. Though whole-tone and octatonic scales can be found in Bridge’s music in their purest form, they often appear altered, just as neighbor tones and passing tones are found in tonal music.

In his *String Quartet No. 3* (see Example 3.1), Bridge’s affinity for use of the octatonic scale is clear. Measure 3 introduces a quasi-octatonic cell in the notes G-sharp, A, C, C-sharp, E-flat, E and an octatonic harmony in measure 4. In his *Piano Trio No. 2*, Bridge combines octatonic and whole tone scales in the c theme of the *Finale* (see Example 3.6).

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178 Huss, p. 243.
179 Ibid., p. 243-244.
180 Ibid., p. 252-253.
181 Ibid., p. 295.
Example 3.6: Bridge, *Piano Trio No. 2*, mov. 4, meas. 178-185

Another feature of his late style is bitonality, the use of two keys simultaneously. His affinity for one polychordal combination in particular resulted in it being called the “Bridge chord,” a combination of a minor and major triad with roots a whole step apart (see Figure 3.3).\(^{182}\)

![Figure 3.3: The “Bridge Chord” and its extended versions](https://example.com/figure3.3.png)

\(^{182}\) Payne, p. 67.
In the *Andante molto moderato* in his *Piano Trio No. 2*, bitonality serves as the foundation for the entire movement through the introduction of repetitive harmonic cells. These bitonal cells alter between the ‘Bridge chord’ and stacked major and minor triads that share the same mediant.¹⁸³¹⁸⁴ The first measure begins with a major triad (B – D# - F#) overlapping with a minor triad whose root is a half step higher (B# - D# - G[F double-sharp]) in beats 1-3 and an extended form of the Bridge Chord, a minor triad with an added minor third (F#-A-C#-E) paired with a major triad a whole step higher (G#-B#-D#) follows in beats 4-6. The juxtaposition of these two types of chords continues throughout much of the passage (Example 3.7).¹⁸⁵

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¹⁸³ Payne, p. 77.
¹⁸⁴ Huss, p. 290.
¹⁸⁵ (Christopher Walczak, December 16, 2015, email message to author)
Example 3.7: Bridge, *Piano Trio No. 2*, Mov. III, meas. 7-15

Here, the “Bridge chord” comes in an extended form of a septachord, where its minor triad has an added seventh. According to Huss’s analysis, these chords frequently are a point of stability, as in the *Piano Trio No. 2*, where he adds a seventh to each of the triads, forming an eight-note collection. Bridge also uses other bitonal chords with
frequency, such as chords and keys a half-step and tritone apart. In the case of the chords built a tritone apart, it creates minor chords with a major seventh and augmented fourth with an eleventh.\textsuperscript{186} The use of interlocking major and minor thirds are also a hallmark of Bartók’s harmonies, though it is unclear whether his music was an influence on Bridge or that they just have coincidental commonalities.\textsuperscript{187}

Tonal and modal materials appear in each of the late works with increasing frequency, playing major roles in the \textit{Trio Rhapsody} and the \textit{Violin Sonata}. In the case of the \textit{Trio Rhapsody}, tonality and modality are at the very center of the work, with its theme recalling the “English pastoral” tradition, perhaps with a touch of irony.\textsuperscript{188} Its lilting melody in compound meter, based on the Phrygian mode\textsuperscript{189} (with G-sharp as its tonic), and its parallel motion (here the violin and viola are heard in canon a perfect fourth apart) give the melody its “English Pastoral” qualities. This passage is much more in line with what was deemed acceptable to British audiences, although Bridge does not allow himself to go all the way into Vaughan Williams territory, adding the \textit{ponticello tremolo}\textsuperscript{190}, which tarnishes the melody somewhat. (Example 3.8)\textsuperscript{191}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{186} Huss, p. 245.
\item \textsuperscript{187} Huss, p. 239.
\item \textsuperscript{188} Ibid., p. 248.
\item \textsuperscript{189} According to the Oxford Dictionary of Music, the Phrygian mode is defined as: The third of the ecclesiastical modes, represented by white keys of the piano beginning on E.
\item \textsuperscript{190} Ponticello tremolo is the combination of the bow having contact with the string on top of the bridge (ponticello) and moving the bow as rapidly as possible (tremolo).
\end{itemize}
Example 3.8: Bridge, *Trio Rhapsody*, meas. 328-338

As this theme develops (reh 31-33), it does share some features with Ralph Vaughan Williams’ *Lark Ascending* in its bird-like use of trills and rhapsodic violin cadenza.\(^{192}\) Below is a comparison of an excerpt from *Trio Rhapsody* and a passage from Vaughan Williams’ *Lark Ascending* (see Examples 3.9, 3.10. and 3.11).

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\(^{192}\) Hopwood, p. 261-262.
Example 3.9: Bridge, *Trio Rhapsody*, meas. 352-366
Example 3.10: Vaughan Williams, *Lark Ascending*, opening cadenza (meas. 4)
Example 3.11: Vaughan Williams, *Lark Ascending*, 4 meas. before rehearsal O - 2 meas. after rehearsal O

In Bridge’s late style, octatonic and whole-tone collections are sources of instability, where as “Bridge Chords” are sources of stability. These juxtaposing sonorities are the basis of dissonance and consonance. This is combined with a strong gravitational pull towards important pitches and rare areas of tonality within the music and is the basis for Bridge’s sound world.\(^{193}\)

**Texture**

In addition to form, harmony, and motivic and thematic development, texture plays a prominent role in setting Bridge apart from his British contemporaries and aligns

\(^{193}\) Huss, p. 243.
him with composers on the Continent. His vast range of textures, modeled on the dense textures in the music of Schoenberg and Berg, as well as the transparent textures of Debussy, combined with widely varied articulations and bow techniques, make for a wide range of colors and moods throughout his chamber music from this period. The most significant of these textural features are ostinatos and extended techniques for stringed instruments.

Bridge uses ostinatos extensively, not only as a rhythmic gesture, which is, of course, their usual role, but as a textural element, as well. His use of ostinatos are inextricably linked to his early style and almost certainly influenced by Debussy and Ravel. In his *String Quartet No. 3*, his use of a widely spaced triplet ostinato in the lower strings recalls similar techniques in his *String Quartet No. 2*, a work that has many textural roots in the modern French idiom (see Example 3.12). The string quartets by Debussy and Ravel are certainly an influence on the prominence of the ostinato arpeggio figure as an accompaniment for a lyrical theme (see Examples 3.13 and 3.14).
9 Poco a poco animato
a tempo,
p espress.
rit.
p pizz.
pp arco

pp dolce
cresc.

mf espress.

appass.
Example 3.12: Bridge, *String Quartet No. 3*, Mov I, meas. 77-90
Example 3.13: Debussy, *String Quartet in G Minor*, mov. 1, meas. 161 (reh. 6)-167
Example 3.1: Ravel, *String Quartet in F Major*, mov. II, meas. 120-123
As an accomplished violist, Bridge was familiar with the extended left and right hand techniques such as *ponticello* and left-hand *pizzicato*\(^{194}\) which serve as enhancements to the music’s color and mood. It is possible that these techniques were influenced by the music of Berg, though, of course, many composers prior to the Second Viennese School used them. *Ponticello* was an anomaly in British music at this time; Bridge’s use of it sets him apart from his generation of British composers: Holst, Ireland, Dyson, and Coleridge-Taylor.\(^{195}\) As discussed previously, Bridge occasionally uses *ponticello* and *tremolo* together, creating a haunting affect. In *Trio Rhapsody* (Example 3.7), the optimism of the pastorale theme is darkened by the appearance of this texture in the first violin and viola. He also uses this technique in his *String Quartet No. 3* (Example 3.15).\(^{196}\)

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\(^{194}\) According to the Oxford Dictionary of Music, *pizzicato* is an instruction in the music to produce sound by plucking the string rather than by bowing it.

\(^{195}\) Hogan, p. 12.

\(^{196}\) Ibid., p. 12.
Left-hand pizzicato, a technique usually associated with virtuosic violin showpieces, such as Paganini’s Caprice No. 24 or Ravel Tzigane, appears in the scherzo movement of Piano Trio No. 2, giving the movement its most playful texture (Example 3.16). Ravel and Berg also utilize this technique in their pieces for violin and orchestra, although in a different way (see Examples 3.17 and 3.18). The left-hand pizzicato takes Bridge’s highly articulated eighth and sixteenth notes, reminiscent of scherzo movements in his previous works that resemble what Bridge scholar Fabian Huss calls a Mendelssohnian lightness, a step further.¹⁹⁷ This technique is not found elsewhere in

Bridge’s chamber music, but is a testament to his creative use of articulations and techniques.

Example 3.16: Bridge, *Piano Trio No. 2*, Mov. II, meas. 343-349
Example 3.17: Ravel, *Tzigane*, reh. 11 - reh. 12

Example 3.18: Berg, *Violin Concerto*, Mov. II, meas. 64-73
The combination of a broad array of influences on his structural, motivic, harmonic, and textural features are what set Bridge’s music apart from his British contemporaries. While this chapter provides merely a snapshot of compositional traits of his chamber music during this period, the next chapter will take a closer look at these features and how they come into play in his *Violin Sonata*. 
CHAPTER FOUR

Stylistic Influences of 20th Century Continental Composers on Bridge’s Violin Sonata (1932)

The Violin Sonata is the last piece Bridge wrote before taking an illness-induced hiatus from composition. The sonata exemplifies most of the stylistic influences of his other late chamber music, with the addition of a connection to the music of Richard Strauss and a more refined use of the “Bridge Chord,” thus producing the distinctive sound world of the Violin Sonata.198 This chapter will be a discussion of each of these influences on the sonata.

Traces of Bridge’s Straussian Violin Sonata (1904) in his late Violin Sonata (1932)

When analyzing the Violin Sonata (1932), similarities can be found to his first attempt for the same instrumentation, the incomplete Violin Sonata in E-flat Major (1904). In each work, he writes almost identical character instructions, labeling his early work, “con passione” and his later work, “appas.” or appassionato, which both translate to play “with passion” or “passionately.” The call and response of a heroic dotted rhythm motive that, in both works, are introduced by the violin in an anacrusis, create protagonist-like characters that are reminiscent of Strauss’ Violin Sonata in E-flat Major. (see Examples 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3) The similarity of motivic material and character, paired with the early ascension into a climactic high note in the violin and subsequent descent in

198 Huss, p. 112.
both works, indicates that Bridge’s late sonata is perhaps completing the concept of his first attempt at a violin sonata in his newly developed modernistic approach.¹⁹⁹

Example 4.1: Frank Bridge, *Violin Sonata in E-flat Major* (1904), Mov. I, meas. 1-3

Example 4.2: Frank Bridge, *Violin Sonata* (1932), measures 1-6

¹⁹⁹ Huss, p. 74.
Expressionist and Impressionist traits within the Violin Sonata

The Violin Sonata is very unusual because of Bridge’s incorporation of what many scholars define as opposite “isms” of the era, namely, Expressionism and Impressionism. Huss writes: “where impressionism commodifies the pleasurable experience, expressionism pursues a more complex undercurrent, a more philosophical exploration of the uncertainty beyond the sensually pleasurable environment.” Oxford Music Online defines the expressionist musical language as taking “Wagner’s chromatic melos and harmony at its starting-point, but largely avoids cadence, repetition, sequence, balanced phrases and reference to formal or procedural models.” Oxford elaborates on the subject:

“This ‘inner reality,’ as Kandinsky was fond of calling it, was associated in the expressionists’ minds with ‘truth,’ a truth that demanded emancipation from the lie of convention and tradition. Schoenberg’s version of the same fundamental idea, with its roots on Greek philosophy and a prolific flowering in a 19th-century German idealism, set ‘truth’ as a principle opposed to the cult of ‘beauty’ in post-Wagnerian music.”

Expressionism is defined by Grout’s A History of Western Music as:

“The artistic movement which embraced the subconscious and its free outpourings, unfiltered or edited by the conscious mind. The artistic movement carries with it a fascination with the outpouring of strong emotion, of darkness and night-time, of the subconscious, and how our actions effect the environment and our perception of it. Expressionism’s themes seem to be related to the inner feelings of conflict and tension with the outside world. Expressionistic art is characterized both by desperate intensity of feeling and revolutionary modes of utterance.”

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In contrast, the term Impressionism was first used by Jules-Antoine Castagnary to describe paintings that were focused on “not the landscape but the sensation produced by the landscape.” Translated into music, composer Paul Dukas defined impressionism as “a series of sensations rather than the deductions of a musical thought.” Impressionist compositions characteristically paint a musical picture of the artist’s surroundings. Most often the music “attempts to explore the fleeting moment” and seeks musical equivalents of nature, such as water, fountains, fog, clouds, and nighttime.

Though these musical styles have many opposing features, Daniel Albright suggests that they are not as different as many scholars assert: “Expressionism... is distilled and internalized Impressionism, the process of internalization allowing it to explore less stable emotional states,” indicating a common thread between the two. According to this statement, it is the artist’s impression of the outside world filtering through to his or her inner psyche that results in Expressionism. Perhaps this statement is true in the Violin Sonata: the impressionist reflections of the outside world feed the expressionist inner psyche and that inner psyche affects the artist’s (or protagonist’s) impression of the outside world. The use of both expressionist and impressionist compositional tools provides stark contrasts within the work, perhaps serving as a


reflection of Bridge’s outer and inner worlds. Bridge is able to marry the two successfully in this piece.

Influences of Debussy, Ravel, and Impressionist Philosophies

By the time Bridge composed the Violin Sonata, the influence of Debussy and Ravel was already so deeply embedded in his works circa 1907 that the compositional procedures he had in common with these composers were essential aspects of his style. The Violin Sonata is saturated with commonalities with Debussy, Ravel and Impressionist techniques, though Bridge manages to implement these techniques in a way that separates him from these composers.

Perhaps Bridge’s love of the English countryside contributed to his preference for creating music that evokes sensuous imagery of nature. Throughout the sonata, there is a certain sensuous quality to his music that is a result of Bridge’s predilection for using impressionist compositional techniques. Many of the harmonies used in the work reflect his affinity for these techniques through the use of whole tone, octatonic, and other synthetic scales. Throughout the introduction of the work, octatonic scales are used, sometimes with one note altered. As with earlier works, octatonic collections serve an unstable “quasi-dominant” role. At rehearsal 1, it is used without any alteration:

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207 Huss, 204.
208 Ibid., p. 243.
209 Ibid., p. 299.
Depicting a scene of nature is an Impressionist characteristic that makes its way into the Violin Sonata. While the sonata is not overtly programmatic, depictions of nature are still present. In the sonata, rehearsal 8 is one example of this in its water-like texture in the piano sixteenth notes and use of tonality. In this example, one can hear and see in the music a liquid contour in the sixteenth notes as they rise and fall like waves and elide from one voice to the other. This segment also illustrates arpeggiated parallel chords in measures 5-8 after rehearsal 8.
Example 4.5: Bridge, *Violin Sonata*, meas. 62-71
Debussy makes use of similar techniques in his violin writing that gives it somewhat of an aquatic texture through the use of a long ascending legato scale (rehearsal 3) and the use of rising and falling left hand tremolando (5-10 measures after rehearsal 3) in his *Violin Sonata*: 
Example 4.6: Debussy, *Violin Sonata*, Mov. III, meas. 100-115

Another example is Bridge’s use of chordal planing, the use of parallel chords moving in the same direction as opposed to the contrary motion tradition of the German musical tradition.

Example 4.7: Bridge Violin Sonata, Mov. II, meas. 227-229
Debussy uses a similar texture in the piano part of his *Violin Sonata*:

Example 4.8: Debussy, *Violin Sonata*, Mov. I, meas. 56-63

Ravel also uses this technique, though in a different manner, in his *String Quartet*.

Example 4.9: Ravel, *String Quartet*, Mov. I, meas. 77-80

Another technique he shares with his contemporaries in France is the use of ostinato. (Example 4.10) Though Bridge uses this technique even more prominently in his *Piano Trio No. 2*, he does incorporate this technique in his *Violin Sonata*:
Example 4.10: Bridge, *Violin Sonata*, Mov. II, meas. 215-220
In Debussy’s *Violin Sonata*, a similar affect in the violin’s melody, full of exoticism and embellishments, is achieved through an accompanying ostinato in the piano.

Example 4.11: Debussy, *Violin Sonata*, Mov. II, meas. 84-97

**Use of Quartal Harmonies**

The prominence of perfect fourth and tritonal intervals is yet another commonality between Bridge’s style in the *Violin Sonata* and his French influences. The *Scherzo* movement is based almost entirely on quartal harmonies, as seen in both chordal and arpeggiated forms:
Below, is an example of quartal harmony in a chordal texture, saturated with perfect fourths and tritones (spelled as diminished fifths), resulting in a minor second dissonance. The influence from Debussy’s use of quartal harmony is apparent, even in its placing of an interval of a second, though his use of dissonance in this texture perhaps points more towards Schoenberg or more distantly, Scriabin. A comparison of
Schoenberg’s use of quartal harmony with that of Bridge will be addressed later in this chapter.

Example 4.13: Bridge, Violin Sonata, Mov. II, meas. 175-177

In Pour le Piano, Debussy makes prominent use of stacking pitches a perfect fourth apart (the top interval of a major second is a result of doubling a pitch from the chord).

Example 4.14: Debussy, Pour le Piano, Sarabande, meas. 23-27

Use of Bitonality

Another important component of the sonata’s sound world is bitonality, though less so than his other chamber works from the era. A vital sonority of the ethos of his late style, the polychordal “Bridge Chord,” is used with less frequency and in its extended
form in the *Violin Sonata* (stacking major and minor seventh chords a step apart rather than triads). More crucial to the sonata is the interlocking of major and minor thirds (Example 4.15) and the use of stacked triads with tritonal relationships. (Example 4.16)\textsuperscript{210} 

Example 4.15: Bridge, *Violin Sonata*, measures 1-3

\textsuperscript{210} Payne, p. 78.
Example 4.16: Bridge, *Violin Sonata*, meas. 10-13

Bridge’s use of interlocking major and minor thirds is a stylistic trait that he has in common with Bartók. This is probably a coincidence and not the result of Bartók having an influence on Bridge since Bridge found Bartók’s music to have things in common with jazz, a genre that Bridge found to be unpolished.\(^{211}\)

Bridge’s affinity for the compositional techniques of modern French composers, Debussy in particular, and, to some degree, Ravel, had a substantial impact on the sonorities and texture in his music in many ways. He had heard this music during the first decade of the 20\(^{th}\) Century, and they obviously remained with him, continuing to evolve

\(^{211}\) Huss, p. 239.
even as his compositional style was influenced by other sources, including Schoenberg and the Expressionist movement.

**The Influence of The Second Viennese School and Expressionism**

Modern French music was a common influence on many British composers of Bridge’s generation, including Bax, Ireland, and Vaughan Williams; however, Bridge did not only respond to the French style. Indeed, he went much further, incorporating radical procedures he gathered from modern Viennese composers. The horrors of World War I had a strong effect on many creators of European and American literature, art, and music, and, as a pacifist, Bridge was especially affected. His post-World War I compositions reflect his reactions by adopting many Expressionist procedures.\(^\text{212}\) These include vertical semitonal dissonances and sparse textures. The *Violin Sonata* is a very good example of this, as detailed below. While on the surface, the war seems to have sent him down a radical compositional path, a more nuanced analysis is that the Expressionist devices gave him the means to express ideas that he had always had; his mature style is a development of his earlier style through the use of modern techniques that extend from and add to his early procedures.\(^\text{213}\)

**The Implementation of Expressionist Aesthetics Through Sonorities and Texture**

One of the signature qualities of expressionism is its aim of representing the inner psyche of the composer. The *Violin Sonata* exhibits expressionist qualities in its use of dissonant, atmospheric passages reminiscent of nighttime. They have a kinship with

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\(^\text{212}\) Huss, p. 235.

\(^\text{213}\) Ibid., p. 235.
Schoenberg’s expressionist piano writing. In the sonata’s *Lento* that follows the fiery opening, the influence of Schoenberg’s *Sechs Kleine Klavierstücke, Op. 19, No. 1* is apparent through a dissonant pedal chord and meandering melody (Example 4.18). The make-up of these two passages is very similar, even in their pitch content. The passage from Bridge’s *Violin Sonata* contains the pitches E-G#-B-(Bb)-D-F, while the passage from Schoenberg’s Op. 19, No. 1 contains the pitches E-G#-Bb-D-(D#)-F (Example 4.17).

*Figure 4.1:* Chord Similarities in Bridge *Violin Sonata* and Schoenberg, *Op. 19, No. 1*

Both passages share the minor second as an important relationship between chords. These expressionist passages seem to serve as commentary on the more sensuous impressionist influenced passages or the nostalgic tonal passages, which are reminiscent of the Romantic Era.
Example 4.17: Bridge, *Violin Sonata*, meas. 12-16

Example 4.18: Schoenberg, *Sechs Kleine Klavierstücke, Op. 19, No. 1*, meas. 15-17

Another example of a technique that Bridge shares with Schoenberg to create a haunting, tense atmosphere is his use of clashing minor seconds. Payne describes Bridge’s late style as “approaching Schoenbergian pantonality,” but lacks “semitonal dissonance in the chord spacing.”\(^{214}\) However, in the *Violin Sonata*, the minor second is essential to the essence of the piece, both melodically and harmonically, showing the growing influence of Schoenberg. The example above is one of the many examples from the sonata that reflects this.

\(^{214}\) Payne, p. 65.
While Bridge’s use of quartal harmonies could point toward the influence of modern French composers, they also point towards the Second Viennese School’s influence. The superimposition of perfect fourths and tritones throughout the sonata make for more dissonant quartal harmonies than the harmonies found in Impressionist works. In 1911, Schoenberg wrote of quartal harmony in his Theory of Harmony:

“The construction of chords by superimposing fourths can lead to a chord that contains all the twelve notes of the chromatic scale; hence, such construction does manifest a possibility for dealing systematically with those harmonic phenomena that already exist in works of some of us: seven, eight, nine, eleven, and twelve-part chords…the quartal construction makes possible…accommodation of all phenomena of harmony.”

In Example 4.19, Bridge stacks both perfect fourths and tritones through parallel chords, while Schoenberg implements quartal harmony in a completely different manner. In his Chamber Symphony, Op. 9, Schoenberg’s use of fourths (C-F-Bb-Eb-Ab) spans horizontally and vertically for the first two measures, manifesting itself in an arpeggiated spelling in the opening horn solo in measure 5 (Example 4.20).

Example 4.19: Bridge, Violin Sonata, meas. 175-177

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215 Payne, p. 65.

In Schoenberg’s *Sechs Kleine Klavierstücke, Op. 19, No. 6* (Example 4.21), quartal harmonies include both perfect fourths and tritones, just as Bridge does in his *Violin Sonata* (Example 4.19).
Example 4.21: Schoenberg, *Sechs Kleine Klavierstücke, Op. 19, No. 6, meas. 1-9*

Though modern Viennese composers may have influenced him in his choice of sonorities and technical procedures, Bridge keeps one foot in tradition by continuing to
use triads in both tonal and bitonal contexts, giving his music a different sound from his Viennese contemporaries.217

**Structure**

Another major influence on the *Violin Sonata* is the idea of “developing variation,” a term coined by Arnold Schoenberg that labels a principle with roots in Brahms’ compositional techniques which Schoenberg continued and expanded.218 Through this compositional procedure, a basic idea, including its rhythmic and intervallic make-up, is continuously modified through transformation of its contents, using inversion, fragmentation, extension, and displacement to avoid monotonous repetition.219 Schoenberg defined “developing variation” as:

“Music of the homophonic melodic style of composition, that is, music with a main theme, accompanied by and based on harmony, produces its material by, as I call it, *developing variation*. This means that variation of the features of a basic unit produces all the thematic formulations which provide for fluency, contrasts, variety, logic, and unity on the one hand, and character, mood, expression, and every needed differentiation on the other hand – this elaborating the idea of the piece.”220

Perhaps being aware of Schoenberg’s use of continuous variation reinforced Bridge’s long-standing preference for it. Bridge had used this technique in various ways and to different degrees throughout his career, but uses it prominently in the *Violin Sonata*.

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217 Huss, p. 248.
218 Payne, p. 66.
The opening two measures of the *Violin Sonata* are of utmost significance motivically in their use of interlocking major and minor thirds (meas. 2: D# (Eb)-E-G), prominence of minor seconds (opening anacrusis, etc.), and tritonally related bitonal chords (meas. 1, beat 2: G#-D) (Example 4.22).²²¹

![Example 4.22: Bridge, Violin Sonata, meas. 1-6](image)

From this, the motive for the first theme is created, which influences the harmonic and melodic content throughout (Example 4.23). The first two measures of rehearsal 2 features a motive whose contents are tied to the opening in its dotted rhythms and vertical tritonal relationship (C#-G). The motive’s melodic perfect fourth is reminiscent of

²²¹ Payne, p. 78.
measure 3 (C#-F#), while the second measure’s vertical elements pave the way for later textural passages, where the violin part’s fragmented transitional material relates to the opening in its prominent use of thirds, fourths, fifths and sevenths. (Example 4.24).²²²

Example 4.23: Bridge, *Violin Sonata*, meas. 17-30

²²² Payne, p. 79.
Example 4.24: Bridge, *Violin Sonata*, meas. 62-65

The exposition’s second theme relates directly to the first theme in contour and intervals. Like the first theme, it begins and ends with the same pitch (C# in the first theme and G# in the second theme) and its first melodic interval is a tritone. The first theme’s head motive has a range of a perfect fourth, where as the second theme’s head motive expands to a more expressive major seventh. Perfect fourths and their inversion of a perfect fifth are utilized, as well as interlocking major and minor thirds (Example 4.25).\textsuperscript{223}

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\textsuperscript{223} Payne, p. 79.
The second movement’s head motive also relates to the opening motive in its prominent use of interlocking major and minor thirds (also diminished fourths), minor seconds (also minor sevenths), perfect fourths and tritones. It is also related in that its motivic rhythm is a variation on the head motive’s dotted rhythm.\textsuperscript{224}

The \textit{scherzo} movement’s motive is also tied to the other themes in its prominent use of perfect fourths (and their inversion) and tritones (Example 4.27).\textsuperscript{225}

\textsuperscript{224} Payne, p. 79-81.
\textsuperscript{225} Payne, p. 81.
The final movement, which also serves as recapitulation to the first movement, is flooded with motives and themes from the exposition, though they never are brought back in their original form. The first theme, for instance, is embellished, though it still revolves around its C# axis as it did in the exposition (see Example 4.28 and Example 4.29).
Example 4.28: Bridge, *Violin Sonata*, meas. 416-419

In keeping with the Sonata-Phantasy hybrid form, themes are brought back, though never in the same way, in keeping with Schoenberg’s developing variation procedures. A form of the opening motive can be found dispersed throughout, including being used in the trio of the *scherzo* (Example 4.29).

Example 4.29: Bridge, *Violin Sonata*, meas. 368-375
While most expressionist works do not follow traditional forms, Bridge takes from the genre what works for his musical ideas. His traditional means of combining “tried and true” forms with modern aesthetics perhaps points to similarities with Berg. Though he drew from impressionist and expressionist techniques and philosophies, the manner in which he uses them makes his music truly unique because he finds a way to combine these methods with his earlier style, making his music perhaps less radical than many critics suggest and more of an organically evolved version of his younger self.

**Scriabin as a possible influence**

As mentioned in Chapter One, Bridge had some exposure to Scriabin’s music, having played concerts that also featured Scriabin’s music. Bridge shares some commonalities with Scriabin in his pitch organization. These similarities include use of quartal harmonies and occasional use of a variant on Scriabin’s calling card, the “Mystic chord,” which is also built on what music theorist Allen Forte categorizes as 6-34 harmony. The “Mystic chord” is built on different flavors of fourths and is related to octatonic, whole tone, and French sixth pitch collections. Though Bridge does not use “Mystic chord” specifically in the *Violin Sonata*, Bridge makes use of a collection of pitches built on 6-34 harmony. At the *Largamente*, a measure of ultimate tension before the return of the second theme, traits of functional harmony are imposed in its inclusion of the dominants of the sonata’s opposing A and E-flat key areas. (Example: 4.30).²²⁶ ²²⁷

²²⁷ Huss, p. 304.
Example 4.30: Bridge, *Violin Sonata*, meas. 511

Figure 4.2: “Mystic chord”

Pinpointing Scriabin’s music as a definite influence is more difficult, as many of the procedures he incorporates into his late style overlap with other composers. Bridge brilliantly weaves these techniques into his music, making for a style that sets him apart from his British and Continental contemporaries.
CHAPTER FIVE

The Violin Sonata: Developing an Interpretation for a Successful Performance in Today’s Concert Halls

Bridge’s Violin Sonata is largely unknown and underperformed today. It is unfortunate, but understandable, that this work did not gain popularity during Bridge’s lifetime in part because of the cultural and political mindset in England at the time of its premiere and in the years following. The call for artistic patriotism by the conservative majority made it challenging for Bridge, the ‘international’ composer, to promote his music in England. In a hostile review from a critic from The Morning Post expressed his disdain for the work the day after its premiere:

‘I fear that Mr. Frank Bridge’s Sonata, like so much of his music nowadays, proved rather disappointing. It sounded tortured. The attractive personality that the composer used to show in his earlier chamber music seems to have disappeared completely; there is so little spontaneity, so little charm.’

Another review was equally critical in The Times:

“Mr. Samuel and Mr. Brosa realized that Bridge's new sonata is not a work to be taken lightly. Its jagged opening theme Allegro energico sufficiently announces its character, and it is a work of great complexity which demands the utmost skill in its interpreters. It is of the species of music which is called 'contemporary', and only a brilliantly constructed Scherzo movement condescended to immediate attractiveness. After this the return of the tortuous manner of the first Allegro produced a laboured climax. Save for the Scherzo the two instruments seemed to be given very little of that opportunity for playing into one another's hands which is the essence of the duet Sonata.”

However, there was one critic who recognized the work’s mastery in The Musical Times:

“Frank Bridge’s Sonata proved a vigorous example of its composer’s mature style—very individual, very masterful in its treatment of the material and very effectively written for the instruments. Structurally it is close-packed, containing the essential four movements of cyclic form compressed into one, which, far from sounding rigid, gives an

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228 Hindmarsh, p. 155.
229 Bray, p. 88.
impression of energetic order and freedom. It was extremely well played by Antonio Brosa and Harold Samuel, and the composer was called to the platform at the close.\textsuperscript{230}

With the exception of the lone review with a complimentary tone, the overall impression of the work was negative, leaving Bridge’s legacy damaged. Very few violinists know about the work, and of those who do know about it, only a small fraction of them perform it. No “major” violinists, such as Joshua Bell, Hilary Hahn, Jascha Heifetz, and Anne-Sophie Mutter, have recorded this work. Renowned British violinists Daniel Hope, Tasmin Little, and the late Yehudi Menuhin also never recorded the work, though Tasmin Little has Bridge’s unfinished \textit{Violin Sonata (1904)} listed in her repertoire.\textsuperscript{231} However, there are recordings by Marianne Thorsen and Ian Brown, Charles Libove and Nina Lugove, Mireille Jardon and Lydia Jardon, and John McLaughlin Williams and Diane Huling. A live performance by John Liebeck and Katya Apekisheva exists on YouTube and a performance by pianist John Roberts and myself is uploaded on Ustream. It is even more difficult to find it programmed on a concert. For an eight decade-old work of its caliber, this is astoundingly few. The interest in the work is so low that the publisher, Stainer and Bell, will only print new copies upon receiving an order.

In this chapter, I will present the reasons for why I believe this piece deserves to be lifted out of neglect and programmed. I will also address how certain elements of the piece pose challenges for the performer, and offer potential solutions for those challenges in the hopes of making a convincing argument for the \textit{Violin Sonata} to today’s audiences.


\textsuperscript{231} Tasmin Little, “Repertoire,” Tasmin Little Website, last modified 2010, accessed November 30, 2015, \texttt{http://www.tasminlittle.org.uk/pages/01_pages/pge01_set.htm}. 
Violin Sonata: Art of Value

One argument for why the piece deserves performance opportunities is that it fits many criteria for being art of value. For many audiences, beauty is an essential determinant of value; however, if beauty is in the eye, or in this case, the ear, of the beholder, how might beauty be defined? According to early Western philosophers Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas, beauty is exhibited in an object through order, unity, proportion, clarity, and complexity. The twentieth century American philosopher of art, Monroe C. Beardsley, defines aesthetic beauty as “resting on the interplay between unity, intensity and complexity.” Another important way of determining the value of a piece of music is argued by Leonard B. Meyer: the piece of music must set up expectations and delay their fulfillment, therefore magnifying the listener’s gratification by creating and overcoming obstacles.232 My analysis of the Violin Sonata, combined with my experience of performing it, has convinced me that the criteria presented by the above philosophers are met. Its neglect is not due to its lack of absolute value, but its value as assigned by British critics and audiences of the time.

It is my belief that Bridge’s Violin Sonata is obscure not because of its lack of value for today’s audiences, but because of its omission from concert programming. Though the lack of awareness is certainly not an auspicious quality, Bridge’s aesthetic has the opportunity to be fresh for audiences even though over eighty years have passed since its premiere. The sounds of Debussy and Berg have become more familiar to regular concertgoers for a century, preparing them to potentially appreciate Bridge’s unusual style. In sharing the piece with audiences today, it will give it the chance that it

did not have in the 1930’s – to become a part of the violin recital repertoire. Take, for example, Beethoven’s *String Quartet in F Major, Op. 59 No. 1*: it was reported by his student Carl Czerny that “when Schuppanzigh’s quartet played the F Major Quartet, they laughed and were convinced Beethoven was playing a joke on them.” Beethoven replied that the music was not intended for them, “but for a later age.” With this in mind, I believe that sharing unknown music to audiences should not be feared, but embraced; it is our duty as performers to frame and interpret works we believe in and project that belief clearly to our audiences.

It is our role as performers to share the music we value, whether it is popular or unpopular, and strive to convince others of its value. A work unknown to audiences is immensely more difficult to sell, especially if audiences are unfamiliar with the composer’s idiom. I find that the greatest strengths of the *Violin Sonata* provide the greatest challenges. In the following section, I discuss the elements of the work that contribute to its value, yet are problematic at times, and offer possible interpretive solutions for performance.

**Continuity vs. Contrast in the *Violin Sonata*: Can They Co-exist?**

The greatest strength of the *Violin Sonata* is that it is full of contrasts. As shown in Chapter 4, its sonorities, tempi, and textures are constantly fluctuating, making for a very complex path through its ‘sonata-phantasy’ structure. Its complexity is an asset because there are many opportunities for character changes, but it is also a challenge.

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because its mercurial nature distances us as performers and listeners from the overarching structure of the work. We as performers must aim to illuminate both the constant mood swings while providing a clear hierarchy that makes for a satisfying musical journey.

Another challenging aspect is the work’s many tempo changes. These tempo markings, labeled in Italian as per tradition, are more often than not accompanied by Bridge’s metronome markings. This is helpful, too, in distinguishing themes from one another, but because of these, it is easy to proceed moment by moment, making it difficult to portray the big picture. A solution for this is to perhaps look at many of the tempo markings as character markings and to simply use the metronome markings as a guide. By doing this, the individual performs at the tempo that she or he can use to best portray the character, guided by gesture and sonority, rather than feeling confined to a metronome marking. Performance venue and acoustic should also be determining factors in tempo decisions. In addition, it is important to evaluate which tempos are long-term and which ones are short-term, which tempo changes should be extreme and which should be subtle, and how false peaks and valleys can be avoided by refraining from reveling in transitory passages. One example of this is the importance of the overall pacing of the exposition and recapitulation. Though there are many tempo changes and instructions indicating rubato throughout, it is of utmost importance that the height of both of these sections is reached at rehearsal 20 and even more powerfully at its

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234 In Italian, “rubato” literally means “to rob.” In music, it is “a feature of performance in which strict tempo is for a while disregarded – what is ‘robbed’ from some note or notes being ‘paid back’ later.” Done well, in that the alteration of to allow an expressive quickening or slackening, usually without altering the overall pace, this gives a “sense of freedom and spontaneity to the music.” Oxford Dictionary, 2006 ed., s.v. “Rubato.”
mirroring passage at rehearsal 64, where Bridge marks “rinf.” (Example 5.1 and Example 5.2 respectively). In this arrival in the recapitulation, Bridge reinforces its importance beyond the climactic “rinf.” moment by the instructions “deciso” and a term rarely found in music, “ardentemente.”

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235 *Rinforzando*: Played with a sudden increase of force for special emphasis of a note, chord, or short phrase.
236 *With determination*
237 *Fervently, passionately.*
Example 5.1: Bridge, *Violin Sonata*, meas. 148-157
Example 5.2: Bridge, *Violin Sonata*, meas. p. 524-536
A hallmark of the piece is its contrasts of sonorities, from dense and delicate, no doubt a result of his interest in both the modern French and Viennese schools, among others. Bridge’s dynamics are a place to start, but the piece requires more variety in this regard than are put on the page. He will often go beyond the use of simple dynamics such as forte and piano, and will often add dolce\textsuperscript{238}, appassionato\textsuperscript{239}, sonore\textsuperscript{240}, (molto) espressivo\textsuperscript{241}, sempre\textsuperscript{242}, ben marcato,\textsuperscript{243} sostenuto,\textsuperscript{244} affrettando,\textsuperscript{245} tranquillo,\textsuperscript{246} deciso, ardentemente and rinforzando, in addition to the usual phrase markings common from this time period, to give more detailed instructions for the performer. Beyond Bridge’s descriptors, other contributing factors to one’s coloristic interpretation include the frequent variation in the harmony’s textural richness and lightness that requires its performers to draw from technical tools that reflect that its distinctive sonorities, such as increasing and decreasing the bow pressure and speed, used in combination with a variety of vibrato widths and speeds. Range is also a contributing factor in assigning and interpreting a color for a particular passage. The more distinctive one can make each theme and transition is in the exposition, the more memorable they are, and the more satisfying their developments and return will be in the recapitulation. This is of particular importance due to the fact that post-tonal melodies can be challenging to hold in one’s memory in the first hearing. For the violinist, one example of this is the importance of

\textsuperscript{238} Played in a gentle and sweet manner.
\textsuperscript{239} Impassioned; with passion or strong feeling.
\textsuperscript{240} Resonant, with rich tone.
\textsuperscript{241} (Very) expressively.
\textsuperscript{242} Always.
\textsuperscript{243} Well accented; emphatic.
\textsuperscript{244} Sustained.
\textsuperscript{245} Hurrying.
\textsuperscript{246} Calm.
distinguishing the atmospheric and fragmented first theme at rehearsal 2 with the
expressive, song-like second theme at rehearsal 19 (Example 5.3 and Example 5.4
respectively). One might consider using faster bow speed, with less pressure and vibrato
to create somewhat of a whisper in the first theme and slower bow speed and a wider
vibrato to mimic an operatic voice.

Example 5.3: Bridge, Violin Sonata, meas. 20-30
Example 5.4: Bridge, *Violin Sonata*, meas. 137-147

The work is tightly knit in its motivic development. The motivic material is never repeated in exactly its original form; the motives and themes may be repeated, but the texture coloring them is altered. As with the variety in tempi and sonorities, the continual differences in texture that range from fluid ostinati to dense counterpoint offer an opportunity for contrast. In locating the motive throughout, whether it is fractional, an
extension, or some variations thereof, the performer can highlight it so as to facilitate connections from one passage to the next for his or her audience. One place that poses a particular challenge because of its layered motivic content is Rehearsal 60 – 7 measures after Rehearsal 60 (Example 5.5). Bridge’s instructions are frequent and stacked on top of one another, making it difficult to project multiple characters simultaneously in a short window of time. He layers ornamented, fragmented material from the second theme, evolving it from its original mood of “espressivo” to a scherzo inspired “grazioso” character, while being accompanied by leggiero arpeggios. Two measures later, the second theme returns to its original espressivo character; however, the violin’s sixteenth note accompaniment, also borrowed from the scherzo, is marked marcato. This back and forth between the two instruments repeats before the espressivo character wins, and the fragmented, confused, and cluttered passage frees itself into length and lyricism. The performers are faced with the decision of whether each voice is equal in those moments of brief chaos, or if they would like to weigh one character with a heavier importance. From my experience, it is helpful to follow Bridge’s dynamic instructions and bring out the second theme material so as to connect it to the passage that follows.
Example 5.5: Bridge, Violin Sonata, meas. 479-493
Another challenge is highlighting the final motivic resolution. Just when the work feels like it has begun to exhale to a close, as Bridge does in his *Piano Trio No. 2*, it comes full circle, finding its way back to the tumultuous opening theme and exploding into chaos. The theme’s motive spirals into the stratosphere before leaping overboard to its final low A. The coda always seems to draw more questions than answers for me as both a performer and audience member. Questions that arise for me are: “Does this journey reach finality?” and “Is it possible to make this feel resolved, and if so, how can I make the ending sound more satisfyingly resolute?” In an effort to achieve a feeling of finality, I have experimented with different variables in tempo and pulse. While I have tried maintaining the *presto* tempo as Bridge indicates, I have also tried barreling to the end by adding an accelerando in the work’s final sequence. Additionally, I have experimented with various amounts of *largamente* or *luftpause* in the penultimate measure. Each time, all of these combinations seem to achieve the same result: lack of resolution. The extreme leap in range at the final cadence, combined with the paucity of longer note durations that are most likely intended to project finality in the final note, is a surprise. The lengthy journey of the sonata sets up a certain expectation, including that perhaps it will all be resolved in an equally drawn out conclusion. I am in no way saying that this is a flaw of the piece, but selling it is a challenge. Does one play up the surprise by making it as abrupt as possible or should the *largamente* be as expansive as possible, so as to prepare the audience for the work’s conclusion? While there is no evidence that explains Bridge’s intent in this regard, it is a very important interpretive choice that has a profound effect on its reception (See Example 5.6).

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247 With slowness and breadth.
248 Breath mark, affecting the duration of the preceding note and not the tempo.
Example 5.6: Bridge, *Violin Sonata*, meas. 552-end

While there are so many opportunities to immerse one’s self in the variety of sounds on a micro-level, the performers are faced with determining how much they can indulge in each moment, determining whether they will take a ‘sensual’ approach (piecing together a succession of micro moments as a basis for interpretation) or a ‘sensible’ approach (in which linear, macro structural elements are used as a basis for
interpretation). One could easily take one route or the other or use an infinite number of combinations of the two with this piece; it is how the performer hopes the audience will perceive the work that must help the artist determine his or her interpretation. The greatest challenge in this work is that it is very difficult to achieve both contrast and continuity without coming up a bit short on one side or the other. Perhaps both interpretive paths are not required for every performance or audience. How does one listen to Debussy versus Brahms? If one is listening for an ocean in Brahms’ Symphony No. 4 or sonata form in Debussy’s La Mer, one might be dissatisfied. As with all musical works, it is possible to have a successful performance of the Bridge Violin Sonata, as long as the performer’s interpretation and the audience’s expectations for contrast and continuity are on the same plane. One would think that if a piece of music has the potential to be satisfying on multiple planes, it is bound to be successful for most, if not all, audiences. On the contrary, the fact that it has so many layers and possibilities makes it immensely challenging for listeners to immediately understand what their expectations should be. Another way of looking at it is that if you give it more than one chance either to take you on a fulfilling journey or to give you moment after moment of beauty, this piece has the potential to give listeners the opportunity to hear it in so many different ways. As a performer, this is both a dream and a predicament because both paths are capable of immense fulfillment. This piece is an opportunity for a great amount of variety and spontaneity by its interpreters and how audiences choose to perceive it through each performance.

The chances are that each performance of this piece will be its first performance for that audience. It will also probably be the first time that most audience members will
hear anything composed by Frank Bridge. Though the *Violin Sonata* speaks for itself, I believe that it is the duty of the performer to inform the audience of the background of both the composer and the work, especially when it is a work that may have never been heard before. It is also important to draw as many connections through one’s interpretation tying this performance to styles of influential composers, as the work does not live in a vacuum. Repetition of not only the notes, but also the gestures and colors, will empower the audience because of their familiarity and relationships to music they already know. Connections can also be made through programming choices that will enhance the work’s connection to styles with which the audience is familiar. Perhaps pairing the sonata with his early *Violin Sonata* (1904), the violin sonatas by Strauss, Ravel and Debussy, and Schoenberg’s *Phantasy for Violin and Piano* (1949) could magnify the influences of these composers. Another approach could be to compare Bridge to his British predecessors and contemporaries’ works with similar instrumentation, including violin sonatas by Vaughan Williams, Bliss, Bax, Elgar, Goossens, among others.

As with the performances of contemporary music, the *Violin Sonata* is not boxed in by a standard interpretation as mainstream works by mainstream composers often are, freeing up interpretive possibilities for all taking part in the experience. The performer does not feel obligated to follow the interpretive path of legendary violinists because their performances have been imprinted in the minds of fellow musicians, audiences, and critics. For the audience, their expectations are based on all of their other musical experiences, but they do not feel disappointed or even satisfied if by how the live performance matches up to the “gold standard” recording. It is perhaps fortunate that the
*Violin Sonata* has not been recorded and widely distributed as of yet, as it makes for a truly unique performance experience because audience members do not have it in their CD or iTunes collection and do not hear it on the radio.

Over the years, some interpretations of Brahms or Beethoven sonatas have risen above the huge variety of interpretations and performers from which to choose. Some interpretations are popular for a while, appealing to the fads of the time, but may not appeal to an audience in one hundred years. Take for example, Jascha Heifetz’ interpretations of numerous works. While violinists often laud him as being the greatest violinist of all time, his use of portamenti is now considered old-fashioned. Today, violinists certainly revere him, but most certainly choose not to replicate his choices, as their interpretation might be seen as belonging of another era. I do, however, think it is important to bear in mind the style of playing from the era so as to understand what sorts of sounds might have been in the composer’s ear. Listening to recordings of the violinists Bridge composed for or admired, such as Samuel Brosa or William Kroll, certainly may fill in any questions one might have about elements that might have been expected by Bridge, however unmarked in the score. Even still, I believe in taking in that information, but, in the end, a performer must be authentic to his or her own style and interpretation, which is no doubt a product of the time. It is with this approach that a composition lives and evolves – that it isn’t simply a museum piece, frozen in time on display, but a reflection of how the composer’s world meets the individual performer from any subsequent generation. The Bridge *Violin Sonata* deserves the opportunity to live through many generations of interpretations so audiences may experience the many levels of beauty and fulfillment that this piece has to offer.
CONCLUSION

The goal of this document has been to achieve the following: firstly, to present biographical information on Frank Bridge; secondly, to depict British musical culture in Bridge’s predecessors and contemporaries to better understand the environment in which he created his art; thirdly, to investigate compositional influences from both local and international sources on his mature chamber music style; fourthly, to identify examples of these influences in his Violin Sonata; and fifthly, to discuss the work’s strengths and challenges and how interpretational procedures have the potential to facilitate a more communicative performance. Many of the topics discussed in this thesis contribute to the ultimate goal of this paper: to make a convincing argument that the Violin Sonata is a valuable piece of art for both the performer and the listener.

In writing this document, my own understanding of the work has consistently and rapidly increased. In researching biographical information for this thesis, it was my aim to bring awareness to Bridge’s well-rounded musicianship and search for life events and correspondence that might contribute to a better understanding of Bridge’s philosophies and creative process. In investigating the characteristics of and influences on his mature compositional style and comparing it with that of his predecessors and contemporaries, it is possible to identify and appreciate what distinguishes his music from that of his mentors and peers. Deeply exploring the Continental compositional traits implemented in his Violin Sonata has had a profound effect on my interpretation. This is due to my increased awareness of the combination of stylistic features that makes Bridge’s works
discernable from other composers of the Interwar Era, both in England and elsewhere. This level of analysis results in a more determined effort to highlight these stylistic features through various technical means described in Chapter Five so as to distinguish them from one another. In doing so, it is my hope that my interpretive choices (and of those who read this document) create and establish a potentially discernable “Bridge-ness” in performance through sound and style, just as one can most likely do with works by Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms. However, it is my opinion that a performer should never feel limited to pursuing one possibility and that he or she keeps an open mind and set of ears to continuously evolve in their interpretive process.

**Topics for Further Study**

A worthwhile topic to pursue in further study that would contribute to a deeper understanding and interpretation of Bridge’s *Violin Sonata* and other late chamber works that is beyond the scope of this project would be the comparison of various recordings throughout history held at both the Library of Congress and the Royal College of Music. Of particular interest would be the recording of performances by William Kroll and Frank Sheridan, since Frank Bridge held their interpretation in high regard. Hearing and studying it would certainly enlarge one’s interpretive possibilities. One might also consider interviewing living artists who have recorded or programmed this work in an effort to understand their process for interpretive decisions.

While it is highly unlikely that one can delve into a work with this depth for each piece they aim to interpret, the process sets a precedent for developing an interpretation for future pursuits. This study contributed greatly to my connection to the work and
strengthened my confidence in musical decisions made (albeit far from permanent). It is my view that the information gathered and analyzed in my research strongly supports the argument that Bridge’s *Violin Sonata* is a compelling composition worthy of being programmed and pondered.
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