FRANK BRIDGE AND THE TWO PIANO TRIOS: AN ANALYSIS OF FORM, STYLE, AND EXPRESSION.

by

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INTRODUCTION:

At the age of 45 years old, just one generation younger than Frank Bridge, British composer Hugh Wood made an interesting and humorous observation, today painfully relevant to us graduate students:

> Temperamentally I distrust the endless discovery of Unjustly Neglected Composers. When the writer Mr. X is spoken of as the 'persuasive advocate for' composer Mr. Y, the phrase itself suggests the lawyer doing too good a job, and that the client so skillfully defended is in fact guilty- of lack of distinction anyway, if not lack of talent.[1]

Indeed, with the exponentially increasing research dedicated to the music of Frank Bridge, it should not seem like one must become a 'persuasive advocate' for the composer Frank Bridge. While it is true that Bridge's music fell into neglect following his death in 1941, the efforts of Benjamin Britten, the Frank Bridge Trust, Paul Hindmarsh (who first published his "Thematic Catalogue" in 1983 and revised it in 2016), Karen Little, Fabian Huss and many more, have coherently revived interest for Bridge's music. It is paradoxically astonishing that with such academic quality devoted to Bridge, his music is still not often featured on concert programs. That isn't to say that all of his music is neglected; on the rare occasion that his music is programmed, it will most commonly feature his well-known *Phantasy Piano Quartet in F# minor*, or on some occasions perhaps the *Phantasy Trio in C minor* or the *Piano Quintet in D minor* (the only three chamber works by Bridge that I have found to be featured on an official Indiana University Jacobs School of Music recital in the past ten years). Bridge's music composed after 1924 (when the *Piano Sonata* was composed) remains largely under-programmed. Even considering all the modern scholarship dedicated to Frank Bridge, it remains a difficulty to contextualize Bridge's music within the larger canon of Music of the Western Art Tradition. This could be explained perhaps because his complete musicianship in so many ways could have interfered with our perception of Bridge as primarily a composer. Indeed, Fabian Huss, in his book *The Music of Frank Bridge* argues that:

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[1] Hugh Wood, "Frank Bridge and The Land Without Music." *Tempo*, No. 121 (June 1977) p. 8.

> Bridge's reputation as a performer had detrimental implications for the reception of his music, and he became acutely aware that his image as an accomplished instrumentalist obstructed an appreciation of his compositions, at least in some quarters. His technical refinement and polished style did nothing to counteract such reservations; on the contrary, they contributed to an image of professionalism and facility that could be problematic for a serious creative artist. Thus critics were quick to praise Bridge's craftsmanship, but often implied (or, in later reviews, complained explicitly about) a lack of substance.[2]

Herbert Howells, in a tribute to Bridge written for *Music and Letters* in 1941 (the year Bridge died), believes that Bridge's versatile abilities as an instrumentalist, chamber musician, conductor and teacher all contributed to his compositional style. He writes the following:

> Frank Bridge is a disconcerting claimant to fame, at any rate in his own country. For which of his notable selves is to be appraised? Shall it be the man who, at twenty-seven, could take an equal place in the Joachim Quartet when Wirth for a time was forced to lay aside his viola? Might it not be the man who, summoned at a moment's notice, could assume command of a Queen's Hall orchestral concert as proxy for a more famous but not more musical conductor from Vienna or Berlin, Paris or New York? […]
> In this note the emphasis will be upon the composer. Yet there were at least four discussable Bridges: even a fifth, the teacher – with Benjamin Britten as the bright particular witness to the fact. There can be no true approach to Bridge the composer except by the broad road of his own all-round skilled, natural musicianship. His viola-playing was no isolated force in him. It affected all his writing for strings. His instincts for conducting were intimately related to his style and manner as a creative musician. His pronounced aptitude for chamber-music performance powerfully affected the whole process of his thought. It is the total effect of these three factors that approximates Bridge the composer[3]

Although Howells' suggests that the many talents of Frank Bridge all contributed to his status as a composer, Bridge is mostly remembered today as Britten's teacher. One could even argue that Bridge's most famous and most performed work is in fact Britten's Opus 10: *Variations on a Theme by Frank Bridge.* Is the fact that Bridge's music remains under-programed then a validation of the perception of his music as 'clever but lacking substance'? Certainly, Britten did not believe this to be the case. The composer who at the young age of eleven years old had been amazed at a performance of Bridge's *The Sea*, took upon himself to champion and feature his teacher's music repeatedly.

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[2] Fabian Huss, *The Music of Frank Bridge*, pp. 47-48.
[3] Herbert Howells, "Frank Bridge." *Music and Letters*, Vol. 22 No. 3 (July 1941), p. 208.

One might suggest that because Bridge's most comprehensive compositions are chamber works, our perception of him as an instrumentalist and chamber musician foremost is reinforced. This would be despite the fact that Bridge wrote a non-negligible amount of orchestral works, vocal works, piano and organ works, salon pieces, and even an opera. It is however undeniable that it is in his chamber music compositions that we can find Bridge's deepest form of expression. By therefore delving into Bridge's continuous stream of chamber music compositions between the years 1904-1937, we will be able to observe Bridge's ever-growing endeavor to develop a unique form of creative expression through the strictest and most concise standards. While this paper will establish a somewhat linear progression of Bridge's chamber music compositions, the focus will be on two distinct works _The *Phantasy Piano Trio* (1907) and the *Second Piano Trio* (1929)_ , which illustrate the composer achieving the peak of his creative powers in both his early and late creative periods. While it would have been possible to offer a similar outlook on Bridge's musical style using compositions for a different medium (particularly his contributions to the string quartet repertoire), it is because of his unique approach to form, texture and sonority in both piano trios that I have chosen these particular works as representative examples of Bridge's constantly evolving musical language. The creation of his *Phantasy* style, and the complete assimilation of bitonality and other 'modernist' concepts in his later works will be discussed to suggest that by the end of his life, Bridge had in fact achieved a musical expression that was distinctly unique, unparalleled by his British contemporaries, and perhaps to some degree misunderstood. The first two chapters will discuss the primary influences that helped shape Bridge's musical language, establishing a linear chronology of his chamber music works. Chapter 1 will consider the student works, his early maturity compositions, and the development of the *Phantasy* style. Chapter 2 will discuss the influences of the First World War, Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, and Bridge's transition into a more chromatic and dissonant musical style, beginning with his *Piano Sonata* (1924) and culminating with the enigmatic and much neglected *Second Piano Trio*. The third chapter of this paper will rationalize the external influences on Bridge instead pointing out Bridge's consistent and personal development to his writing style. It will also consider the music of composers relatively contemporary to Bridge, their use of bitonality and how it largely differs from Bridge's music.

Chapter 1: BRIDGE EARLY MUSIC, AND THE PHANTASY TRIO

Chamber works before the Phantasy Trio

Frank Bridge's early chamber music output and compositional style is often contextualized with two significant influences: His studies at the Royal College of Music under the tutelage of Charles Villiers Stanford, and to a much greater extent; the Walter Cobbett Musical Competitions. Stanford's notoriously strict teachings at the RCM were understood to be centered around a well drilled and established technical foundation. As Fabian Huss explains: "Bridge and his contemporaries at the RCM, as student of Stanford, were instilled with a strong sense of the importance of complete technical control and logical construction."[1]The musical models used for study seem to have been drawn extensively from the Germanic tradition although not exclusively. Huss details the various composers programmed in the RCM's student orchestra's concerts (conducted by Stanford himself):

> Brahms, Beethoven, Schumann and (increasingly) Dvorak featured most often on RCM concert programmes, with Mozart and Schubert also appearing regularly. The prominence of Brahms and Dvorak highlights the fact that much of the repertoire performed was relatively recent: Tchaikovsky and Franck were only recently deceased, and Brahms and Chausson had died during Bridge's early years at the college. Dvorak, Grieg, Bruch and Saint-Saëns were still alive, and Fauré and Glazunov were at the height of their powers. Debussy was gradually become known, and had yet to compose much of his greatest music, while Ravel and Rachmaninov were only beginning to approach maturity.[2]

Bridge's compositional output as a student reveals a notable preference for chamber music as a medium of expression. Between 1900 and 1902, Bridge wrote a *Piano Trio (H.1)*, a *String Quartet (H.3)*, a *String Quintet (H.7)*, and a *Piano Quartet (H.15)*, all of them significant four movement works in the conventions of late 19th century sonata form. Other student works from that period include isolated works for strings and piano as well as several works for voice.

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[1] Huss, *The Music of Frank Bridge* p. 13.

[2] Ibid p. 10.

However, the prevalence of works for strings in his early output clearly establishes his preference for writing for that instrument group. This is very likely a consequence of Bridge having been a proficient violinist (and later a violist), taught first by his father. As one can expect with student works, Bridge may not have been quite satisfied with his chamber music compositions. Paul Hindmarsh details in his thematic catalogue on the music of Frank Bridge that the student works were "suppressed once he had established himself as a professional viola player and composer."[3] Of all the composers being studied and programmed at the RCM, Brahms, Fauré and César Franck seem to have been the most significant compositional inspirations for Bridge. *The Piano Quartet in C minor (H.15)* is a striking example of those influences and seems to have been modeled in some aspects after Brahms's third *Piano Quartet op. 60*: "The opening resembles Brahms's *Piano Quartet* in the same key, where a subdued initial statement, principally by the strings, is followed by a more emphatic statement by the piano in octaves, with string accompaniment; the influence of the Brahms work resurfaces in the slow third movement, with its E major tonic and protracted cello melody."[4] Fabian Huss also traces influences from Fauré _most notably in the scherzo movement_ and Franck in the overall textural writing[5]. Considering the scarcity of repertoire for piano quartet, it is perhaps unsurprising that Bridge would draw influences from both Brahms and Fauré (both of whom contributed significantly to the genre and composed piano quartets in c minor). Anthony Payne notes however that Bridge's musical language retains a strong originality despite his influences: "If Bridge's Germanic predilections arose from the Brahmsian training of his teacher Stanford, his early language is certainly not slavishly imitative. It rarely sounds like Brahms and a personal identity, although as yet pale in outline is nearly always evident."[6] The *Piano Quartet* also displays Bridge's unique approach to form which look forward to his more mature chamber works. This is particularly apparent in the structure of the first movement in which Bridge experiments with what Huss describes as a "Prototypical sonata-arch form"[7]. The combination of arch-form with sonata elements will later become an essential stylistic feature throughout Bridge's chamber music compositions. In the last movement of the piano quartet, Bridge recalls thematic material from the first movement thus giving the entire work cyclic unity:

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[3] Hindmarsh, Paul. *Frank Bridge A Thematic Catalogue*, p. 10.
[4] Huss, p. 23.
[5] Ibid. p. 23.
[6] Payne, Anthony. *Frank Bridge: Radical and Conservative* p. 13.

> Interestingly, the transition to and return of the tonic minor revert to material from the first movement, with only slight references to the finale material. The transferral [sic] of resolution to first movement material is a considerable advance on Bridge's earlier instances of cyclic unity and points towards later experiments with this procedure, most notably the Cello Sonata.[8]

Stanford's rigorous and conservative teaching will have without a doubt imposed certain restrictions on Bridge's chamber music compositions. Karen Little describing Stanford's teaching explains that "He stressed that compositions were above all written to suit the medium for which they were composed."[9] Combined with the ideals of "complete technical control, and logical construction", the chamber music works of Brahms, Fauré and Franck must have influenced Bridge in the use of certain formal conventions: the tendency for works to be in a four-movement large scale form with a first movement in sonata form, as well as the cyclical treatment of thematic materials. *The Piano Quintet in D minor (H.49)* is an example of Bridge struggling with those conventions.

In the years 1905-1906, Bridge was experiencing frustration with the large scale works in sonata form: the previously mentioned *Piano Quintet* proved unsatisfactory by the composer's standards. Originally written in 1905, "Bridge withdrew the quintet after its initial performances." He would eventually revise the quintet in 1912, making significant alterations to the form of individual movements and general structure of the work. Similarly, *the String Sextet (H.107)* that he began writing in 1906 was not completed to his satisfaction until 1912, the same year that his revisions for the *Piano Quintet* were finalized. Bridge was however successful with one four movement sonata structured work: his *String Quartet in E minor (H. 70)*. Nicknamed the "Bologna" quartet, this work was Bridge's entry for a competition in Bologna organized by the Accademia Filharmonica. The *String Quartet in E minor* was reportedly awarded a "mention d'honneur" but was however not performed until 1909 when Bridge performed it himself with the English String Quartet. In this quartet, the evolution of many of Bridge's stylistic characteristics can be observed. Payne notes that "It is a work that tells us much about the newly emergent composer, an exceptionally adroit craftsman for a 25-year-old at this period in English music, yet also cautious in what he expects of his players and listeners."[10] Bridge seems to have very carefully worked on not only on his treatment of form, but more importantly his treatment of musical motives and approach to functional harmony. Huss observes that "An increased individuality is evident from the very outset. More varied and dynamic phrase structures and a consistent avoidance of the tonic chord result in an unprecedented fluidity of material."[11]

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[7] Huss, Fabian. *The Chamber Music of Frank Bridge* p. 57.
[8] Ibid. p. 68.
[9] Little, Karen. *Frank Bridge: A Bio-Bibliography* p. 4.

In 1905, a famous amateur violinist and musical patron Walter Willson Cobbett created a competition for chamber music compositions in a particular "Phantasy" style. The title of this specific and new genre is described by the New Grove as "a name Cobbett chose as a modern analogue of the Elizabethan viol fancies, in which a single movement includes a number of sections in different rhythms – or as Stanford defined the genre, a condensation of the three or four movements of a sonata into a single movement of moderate dimensions."[12] The goals that Cobbett was hoping to achieve by commissioning such a competition was to promote a new genre of chamber music that could depart from the restrictions of large scale sonata form. The requirements of entry for the compositions were “that the Phantasy was to be performed without a break, and to consist of sections varying in tempo and rhythm; in short, to be in one movement form, and to last no more than twelve minutes. The parts were to be of equal importance.”[13] While the first prize was awarded to William Hurlstone, Bridge’s entry, the *Phantasie String Quartet in F minor* (H.55) was awarded a special prize from the Jury (Huss corrected the previous misconception that Bridge was awarded the second prize for that competition[14]). At the risk of using a well-known cliché, the first Cobbett competition would prove to be a turning point in Bridge’s career.

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[10] Payne, p.18.

[11] Fabian Huss, *The Music of Frank Bridge, p. 52.*

[12] https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000006006?rskey=6klEjN accessed 7/17/21.

The *Phantasie String Quartet* offered to Bridge the opportunity to experiment with a different approach form: the *Phantasie Quartet* uses an ABC form of three short movements combined into one with cyclical elements. Fabian Huss discusses the form as “relatively autonomous miniature movements, the outer sections using short sonata-arches,”[15] he also highlights one of benefits that this new medium gives Bridge: the ability to “avoid the problems of meandering development and weak recapitulation that occasional mar the student works” with “its clear structural divisions and simple harmonic relationships.”[16] In his analysis of the quartet, Huss also identifies what later becomes a major stylistic tool of Bridge’s palette; while most chamber works written by Bridge are in the minor mode (with the exception of the *String Quartet in B flat major (H.3)*, and the *Sextet*), Bridge often will reintroduce first subject material in the parallel major in climactic sections of his works creating what Huss describes as an “enhanced tonic, transcending the original tonic minor and the rigidity associated with it.”[17]This technique is not only useful as an expressive device, but also facilitates the incorporation of cyclical elements allowing Bridge a greater versatility within the form of his compositions.

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[13] Hindmarsh quoting a transcript from a Lecture by Cobbett, p. 35.
[14] Huss, *The Music of Frank Bridge,* p. 37.
[15] Huss p. 37.
[16] Huss. p. 37.
[17] Ibid. p. 38.

The various chamber works composed between 1905-1906 are part of what Payne and Huss describe as Frank Bridge's "early maturity." While his pre-occupation with form on a large scale as well as within an individual movement can be traced to his student works, the devices he employed in 1902 such as the sonata-arch structures, motivic fragmentation, and cyclical treatment of motives appearing across movements are much improved on, and paired with new expressive tools like the avoidance of functional harmonies (avoidance of tonic chords, destabilization of dominant harmonies), and the enhanced tonic harmony in the parallel major. The next work discussed will showcase Bridge at the height of his compositional early maturity through his mastery of the phantasy style, and the culmination of all his solutions to composing in a late romantic style dominated by the expectations of form and aesthetics.

The Phantasy Trio

In 1907, Bridge composes a new work for the Second Cobbett Competition. While a string quartet was the prerequisite in 1905, the Second Cobbett Competition required the compositions to be for piano trio. Bridge had not written for piano trio since his student years in 1900, and very little is known about the work since the whereabouts of the manuscript are unknown (Hindmarsh details that there are only two known performances of the work in 1900 and 1902).[18] The *Piano Quartet in C minor (H.15)* and the first version of his *Piano Quintet in D minor (H.49)* were then the only other two chamber music compositions Bridge had written for keyboard and strings. The *Phantasy Trio in C minor (H.79)* earned a first prize in the Second Cobbett Competition, and is often considered as a tremendous achievement in Bridge's early career.

In the *Phantasy Trio*, Bridge improves on the previous success of his *Phantasy Quartet* and drastically revises the form of the movement. With a similar idea of episodic content, rather than use an ABC ternary form that he previously employed, Bridge creates an arch form of small movements (ABCBA). The first movement material (A) labeled *Allegro Moderato Con Fuoco* is in the key of C minor. The second movement (B) is an Andante in A major, and the Scherzo (C) section is in A minor. Following the scherzo section, the second movement material returns (B') in the key of C major before inevitably returning to the first movement material (A') first in C minor but then transcending into C major (the "enhanced tonic" previously referred to by Huss). From an architectural plan, the form of this work constitutes a real tour de force; while the arch structure of the movement can clearly be identified, this work can also be interpreted both structurally and harmonically as a large-scale sonata form movement. The first movement material (A) contains both the primary theme elements (in C minor) as well as a second theme elements (in Eb Major), the combination of the second movement material (B and B') and scherzo material (C) would then act as the development section of the work with both A major and A minor acting as the tonal center. Finally, the return of the first movement material (A') would act as a recapitulation starting in C minor but ending in C major.

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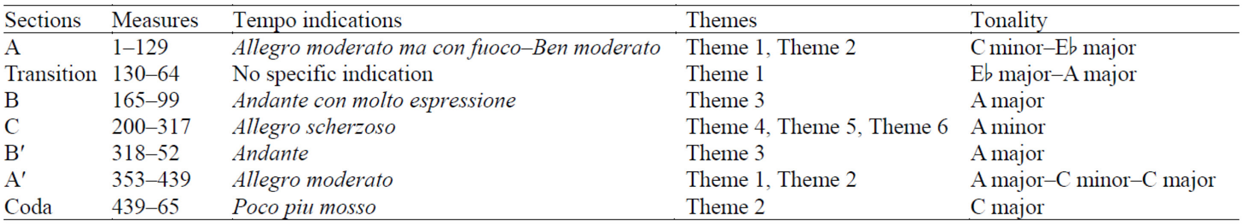
[18] Hindmarsh, p. 1.



Sections	Measures	Tempo indications	Themes	Tonality
A	1–129	*Allegro moderato ma con fuoco–Ben moderato*	Theme 1, Theme 2	C minor–E♭ major
Transition	130–64	No specific indication	Theme 1	E♭ major–A major
B	165–99	*Andante con molto espressione*	Theme 3	A major
C	200–317	*Allegro scherzoso*	Theme 4, Theme 5, Theme 6	A minor
B′	318–52	*Andante*	Theme 3	A major
A′	353–439	*Allegro moderato*	Theme 1, Theme 2	A major–C minor–C major
Coda	439–65	*Poco piu mosso*	Theme 2	C major

Table 1.1. Hui Ping Hsu's Arch Form Structure Table for the *Phantasy Trio*[19]

In her dissertation *Form in Frank Bridge's Three Phantasies* Dr. Hui Pin Hsu however cautions the reader about interpreting the form of the *Phantasy Trio* as a strict sonata movement suggesting instead a "two-dimensional sonata"[20] with ritornello like elements. Hsu argues that the combining of (B) and (C) materials does not act like a conventional development section if the movement is to be understood as a sonata form movement, particularly due to the absence of "thematic rotation" and of "tensions arising from unstable tonalities."[21]

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[19] Hui Pin Hsu *Form in Frank Bridge's Three Phantasies,* p. 44.

Aside from the development of the arch-form/sonata form hybrid, Bridge also makes considerable developments to his textural writing. The only two works written for strings and keyboard prior to 1907 (the *Piano Quartet* and the first version of the *Piano Quintet*) were both deemed to be unsatisfactory to Bridge. The *Phantasy Trio* would prove to be a groundbreaking composition, as it would have a lasting influence for all his subsequent compositions for that instrumentation. The first and most notable innovation is Bridge's treatment of the keyboard role, especially in the beginning sections of his work. Bridge creates a turbulent yet flowing ostinato texture in the keyboard writing, which has a tremendous effect on the mood of the composition as well as the balance between the keyboard and strings.

As can be seen in the score of the *Phantasy Trio* starting from m.11, the keyboard part has no less than 47 measures of ostinato (with of course alterations based on the harmonic progression) which is layered under an unsettled and lyrical writing for the violin and cello. Huss likens this textural approach as somewhat of a French influence: "A number of stylistic features point to French influences – the flowing accompaniment patterns and imitative string parts are reminiscent of Fauré, and there are occasional similarities with Debussy in harmony and texture."[22] This ostinato idiom becomes prevalent in all of Bridge's subsequent works for keyboard and strings. It serves as an essential expressive tool which will also allow the keyboard, by contrast, to command particular attention when introducing secondary theme material as will be seen in the revised version of the *Piano Quintet (H.49a)*, the *Phantasy Piano Quartet (H.94)*, and much later, the *Second Piano Trio (H.178)*.

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[20] Hsu, p. 58.
[21] Ibid. p. 52.
[22] Huss, *The Music of Frank Bridge,* p. 57.

The introductory dramatic and passionate (Huss describes it as "violent") outburst, nearly in unison, is also a device that Bridge relied on many times. It can be found as early as in the student *String Quintet* in *E minor (H.7)*, but also in the *Phantasie Quartet*, the 1905 version of the *Piano Quintet*, and later in the *Phantasy Quartet*). The flowing ostinato, always immediately subsequent to the outburst, offers in return a stark contrast and a sense of momentum to the allegro movements. Huss argues that this particular compositional style was not without concern for how his work was received. Indeed in his most recent book, *The Music of Frank Bridge*, Huss delves into an interesting explanation on how the aesthetics for music would have been shifting at the time in contrast with self-consciousness regarding sexuality and early modernist thinking.[23] This relates to the composition of the Phantasy Trio "In using opposing forces articulating violent instability, restrained melancholy, and gentle lyricism, Bridge was emphatically rejecting the ideal of 'healthy', manly music, and hence risked an interpretation of his music as effeminate or unhealthy."[24]

While the disparity between the unison outburst and the flowing imitative instrumental entrances are obvious, Bridge connects the two thematically which then becomes an important cyclical element throughout the piece. In the case of the *Phantasy Trio*, Huss explains: "The introductory material and first subject are based on the same material, the first two bars of the latter being identical in interval structure to motif *a*, apart from the addition of a third note, Bb. The consequent phrase is derived by inversion *(a2)*, while the ostinato accompaniment pattern is similar to *a* in rhythm."[25]

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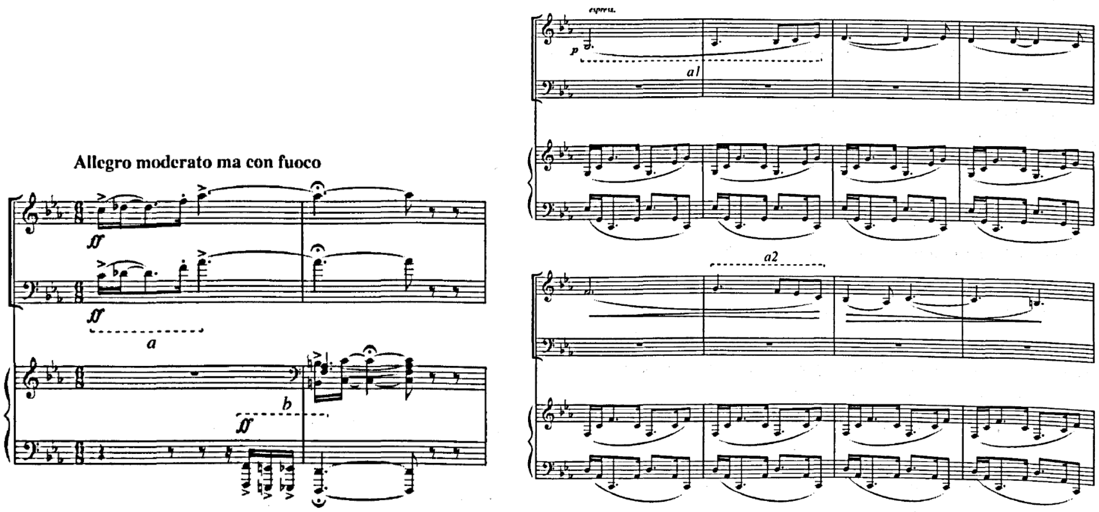
[23] Huss, pp. 48-49.
[24] Huss, *The Chamber Music of Frank Bridge,* p. 143.
[25] Ibid. p. 135.


Allegro moderato ma con fuoco
ff
ff
a
b
ff
espress.
p
a1
a2

Example 1.1. Opening of the *Phantasy Trio* with motives highlighted by Huss[26]

Hsu argues that Bridge's intense treatment of motives lends an understanding of the *Phantasy Trio*'s structure with a 'Ritornello design' with thematic materials from the opening frequently reoccurring throughout the work in various forms (with inversions and transformations).[27]

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[26] Huss, p. 134.
[27] Hsu, p. 37.

Divisions	Measures
R1 (motives *a*, *b*)	1–10
Theme 1	11–65
R2 (motives *a*, *b*, *a*', *a*", *b*')	66–90
Theme 2	91–125
R3	
motives *a*'	125–29
Transformed Theme 1 + motives *a*'	130–46
motives *a*'	147–64
[Sections B–C–B]	165–352
R4 (motives *a*, *b*)	353–62
Theme 1	363–414
R5 (motives *b*, *b*')	414–19
Theme 2	420–39
R6	
motives *a*'''	439–42
Theme 2	443–53
motive *a*'''	454–65

Table 1.2. Hui Ping Hsu's Ritornello design table.[28]

After the Phantasy Trio

The success of the *Phantasy Trio* is without argument a significant milestone in the development of Bridge's musical language. This can be seen in the design of the next two chamber works composed several years later. *The Phantasy Piano Quartet in F# minor (H.94)* was written no longer for a Cobbett Competition, but rather as a commission by Cobbett himself.[29] On a large structural plan, the *Phantasy Piano Quartet* appears to share many similar designs to the *Phantasy Trio* with the same arch design comprising five sections (ABCBA). Like in the *Phantasy Trio*, the work opens with an impassioned unison introductory outburst immediately followed by a flowing lyrical section with an ostinato texture in the keyboard part.

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[28] Ibid. p. 37.

[29] Hindmarsh, p. 66.

Huss's "Heightened Tonic" concept also applies to the end of the piece which ends peacefully in F# Major.

The most notable difference between the two Phantasy works are the B sections. While in the *Trio*, the lyrical *andante* in A major exhibits the traits of a slow second movement, the B section of the *Piano Quartet* is a lively scherzo movement in D minor marked *Allegro Vivace*. The C section in Eb Major can be understood as a trio to the B scherzo evoking thematic material from A. In terms of balance the scherzo occupies a much larger proportion of the work compared to the Phantasy Trio which is more balanced towards the lyrical andante. The structure of the Phantasy Piano Quartet is much more symmetrical than that of the Phantasy Trio's, even on a harmonic plan. While in the Trio, the return of the second movement material in C major allowed both (B' and A') material to act as a broad "recapitulation" section for the work, in the Piano Quartet the B' and A' sections begin in D minor and eventually transition back to F# minor thus obscuring the process of a clear recapitulation section in the sense of a sonata form. Although there are still some traces of sonata elements to the structure of the work, it is much more viable to understand this work purely in the context of arch form. Huss suggests that the arch-form is rather an alternative than a complement to a sonata form structure:

> The arrangement of harmonic areas, which emphatically avoids sonata procedures, accentuates the formal arch, providing a strong sense of symmetry that is ultimately offset by the emergence of the tonic major, while the mysterious calm after the melodramatic outburst suggests a new-found harmony following cathartic expression. The basic harmonic structure is simple enough, but in the final progression to F# major, Bridge reveals an arch-form that is a viable alternative to sonata form in its structural logic.[30]

Dr. Hui Pin Hsu argues that "In the Quartet, the most critical failure with regard to fulfilling the requirements of sonata form is the lack of tonal contrast in the exposition […] with these anomalies in the exposition and the fact that the S theme in the presumptive recapitulation of the *Quartet* remains in the non-tonic key, violating again the normative sonata principle, the prototypical sonata tonal conflict in a sonata is lacking in the *Quartet*. "[31]

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[30] Huss, *The Music of Frank Bridge* p. 61.

In the revised *Piano Quintet in D minor (H.49A)* completed in 1912, Bridge once again turns to his mastery of the arch-form acquired through his Phantasy style, and drastically transforms the form of his work previously written in 1905. The most noticeable change is Bridge's reworking of the middle movements. Originally in four movements, Bridge combined the middle two movements into one central movement keeping however their respective thematic material as well as the *Adagio ma non troppo* and *Allegro con brio* titles. As Hindmarsh details in his catalogue "The revision of the Piano Quintet amounted to a substantial re-writing of most of the original material […] The first movement was almost completely re-written, the second and third drastically shortened and combined and the finale also reduced in length. Throughout, the piano part was substantially revised after the phantasy model."[32] The first two movements are salient with features from Bridge's two previous Phantasies. Both movements employ a loose arch-form to their structure and several other devices that as we have seen earlier are typical elements of early Bridge maturity. The first movement *Allegro Moderato* (originally *Allegro Energico*) features the dramatic introduction (although no longer a unison outburst as in the previous version) containing an augmentation of what will serve as the primary thematic material for the movement. Unsurprisingly, the introduction is followed by a low register turbulent and flowing ostinato section in the piano part introducing the primary theme. The ending of the movement returns to the somber introduction, thus confirming the arch-form outline that are now common in Bridge's chamber works. Huss describes the general form of this movement as "a unique compromise between sonata-arch and conventional sonata form."[33] The reliance on arch-form ideals is even more clear cut in the revised second movement, now combining the slow movement and the scherzo, giving the movement a ternary form (ABA) that is certainly not uncommon in sonata-form works, but clearly influenced by the Phantasies.

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[31] Hsu, p. 80.
[32] Hindmarsh, p. 77.
[33] Huss, *The Chamber Music of Frank Bridge*, p. 173.

Conclusion

Bridge's preoccupation with the restrictions of sonata form, and the incorporation of motivic development and cyclical unity can be traced in over a decade of work from his student days to his early compositions as an established chamber musician and composer. Although Bridge had already been experimenting with sonata-arch principles, the three Phantasies written for Walter Cobbett proved to be a springboard for the development of a unique compositional and aesthetic style which would profoundly affect his future compositions. While the *Phantasy Quartet* is often considered to be the most mature and inventive work of Bridge's early maturity, the *Phantasy Trio* can be considered to be the most influential composition on his career. The Trio is the most comprehensive example of intense motivic development, cyclical unity, and the versatility of his arch-form. As will be seen in the next chapter, various elements of the *Phantasy Trio* will be traced even to his later works, where Bridge's musical language will drastically change departing from the late romantic idioms and transition into modernist aesthetics.

Chapter 2: BRIDGE'S "LATE MATURITY," AND THE SECOND PIANO TRIO

As discussed in Chapter 1, Bridge's early influences stemmed principally from the training he received at the RCM, and his success with the Cobbett competitions would help him establish a creative approach to form that would influence all of his subsequent chamber works. Defining exactly the influences in Bridge's musical language after 1921 presents a much more difficult challenge. Undoubtedly, the devastation of the First World War had a lasting and profound influence on Western Music aesthetics. There are however other elements to consider when discussing Bridge's shift towards a post-tonal language. His experimentation with the *Piano Sonata* (H. 160) and later with the *Third String Quartet* (H. 175), the only two chamber works to be composed between 1921-1927, could be considered a catalyst to Bridge's development of his new musical language. Hindmarsh notes that "If the *Piano Sonata* reveals the extent of Bridge's stylistic transformation between the years 1920 and 1924, the *String Quartet No. 3* markes [sic] his final emergence from the years of transition into the relatively short period of his final maturity (1925-41)."[1] The long-term patronage of Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge is the other significant influence on the development of Bridge's new compositional approach. Not only did her financial support in the form of an annual stipend free Bridge from his strenuous schedule of teaching, performing and occasionally conducting; her appreciation of his music and her consistent promoting of his works in the United States as well as in continental Europe gave Bridge the means and inspiration to creatively expand on his late musical language. Developments in music across Europe, some of them seemingly drastic at the time, will have without a doubt influenced Bridge on his compositional output. It is however rather difficult to exactly pinpoint direct influences. In this chapter, we will briefly consider Bridge's transitional works and note the role they played in forging his post-tonal language. We will also discuss what stylistic elements contribute to Bridge's post tonal music language as well as observe the developments made to the *Piano Sonata* and the *Third String Quartet*, the influence of Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, and contextualize the *Second Piano Trio* (H. 178) and its many parallels to the *Phantasy Trio* within his chamber music oeuvre.

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[1] Hindmarsh p. 138.

A Transitional Period:

As briefly mentioned earlier, the devastation of the First World War engendered a distinct shift in musical aesthetics worldwide. Bridge was clearly affected emotionally, and this was reflected directly and sometimes indirectly in his music. Some of his compositions were written in relation to personal loss such as the *Lament for Strings* (H. 117) written "in memory of Catherine, a young friend, who with her family had drowned in the Lusitania disaster,"[2] or the *Three Improvisations* (H. 134) on the piano for left hand, written for his friend Douglas Fox (a fellow student of Stanford at the RCM) who had lost his right arm. During those years, Bridge's aesthetics _according to Huss' article on Bridge in *Grove Music Online*_ were influenced by "a type of consolatory pastoral mysticism that has parallels in the work of many contemporary British artists."[3]

In the *Cello Sonata* (H. 125), originally begun in 1913 but not completed until 1917, one can observe a subtle stylistic shift in Bridge's musical language. The sonata is structured in two movements: the first *Allegro ben moderato* is extremely lyrical and very much in the Phantasy style that Bridge had recently mastered. The second movement *Adagio ma non troppo* uses similar concepts to the revised *Piano Quintet*, in that it combines elements of a slow movement and a scherzo movement *Molto Allegro e agitato*. The two movements are very much contrasting not only in mood, but in the musical language where Huss points out the tonal ambiguity of the second movement[4], alternatively described by Payne as a "Baxian threnody"[5]. Quoting a letter written to Hindmarsh by the cellist Antonia Butler, it is explained that Bridge was "in utter despair over the futility of war and the state of the world generally."[6]Huss advises however not to observe the uniqueness of the second movement only in the context of the war, suggesting instead that "the process of stylistic expansion culminating in these late works is firmly rooted in Bridge's earlier music, the outgrowth of a continuing engagement with modern music […] the role of the war in accelerating this process should be treated with caution."[7] The influence of Debussy is of particular note at the beginning of the second movement in which Huss finds "the use of parallel chords with added sevenths lends the beginning of the passage a Debussian sense of pan tonality"[8] emphasizing the tonal ambiguity of the movement. Very much still under the influence of the *Phantasies*, Bridge makes once again use of arch structures, not only in the first movement, but by reintroducing first movement material at the end of the second movement (a process which once again recalls the techniques employed in the *Phantasy Trio*). Huss details an element of the second movement coda that will later become crucial in our understanding of the *Second Piano Trio*:

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[2] Hindmarsh, p. 91.

[3] https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.proxyiub.uits.iu.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-90000361257?rskey=14oN3v accessed 7/13/21.

> The coda , through its key and use of first movement material, extends an existing arch-form (the first movement) to encompass another (the second), in a sense changing our perception of the original structure; the style of the second movement affects our recollection of the first: after the experience of the second movement, the return of first movement material sounds like a reference to the past rather than a continuation in the present (despite the varied treatment of material).[9]

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[4] Huss, *The Chamber Music of Frank Bridge*, p. 222.
[5] Payne, p. 45.
[6] Hindmarsh, p. 97.
[7] Huss, *The Chamber Music of Frank Bridge* p. 222.
[8] Ibid. p. 227.
[9] Huss, *The Chamber Music of Frank Bridge*. p. 231.

While the tonal language is undoubtedly more obscure and experimental in the second movement of the *Cello Sonata*, the work is still in the style of Bridge's "first maturity." In the subsequent works such as the transitional piano works, the *Piano Sonata* and the *Third String Quartet* will demonstrate Bridge's development of his post-tonal musical language.

Influences on Bridge's post-tonal language, tone collections, and the 'Bridge Chord'

Bridge's reliance on sonorities that are more distant from more traditional tonal implications reveal the influence of composers such as Debussy and Ravel, which Bridge would have been well acquainted with through his performances with the English String Quartet (He had after all performed one of the earliest performances of Debussy's *String Quartet* in England in 1904). In the music for piano, the most notable influences were once again Debussy as well as Scriabin. Later, influences from Schoenberg, Berg, and to some degree Bartok would also play a significant role in Bridge's mature style, although it has been difficult to document exactly how much exposure Bridge may have had with those composers' works. The common thread amongst many of those composer's musical language, is the use of symmetrical tone collections such as whole-tone and octatonic scales. Both whole-tone and octatonic scales offered Bridge notable versatility in his sound world. Huss explains that Bridge used a simple technique of altering one note in any of those collections to develop a chordal and intervallic palette that included "a huge array of subsets, including all of the following: major and minor triads, diminished seventh, half-diminished seventh, augmented triad, French sixth, major-minor seventh tetrachord (or the 'dominant seventh'), all-interval tetrachord, major-minor tetrachord, and major triad with sharpened fourth and/or minor sixth."[10]

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[10] Huss, *The Music of Frank Bridge,* p. 135.

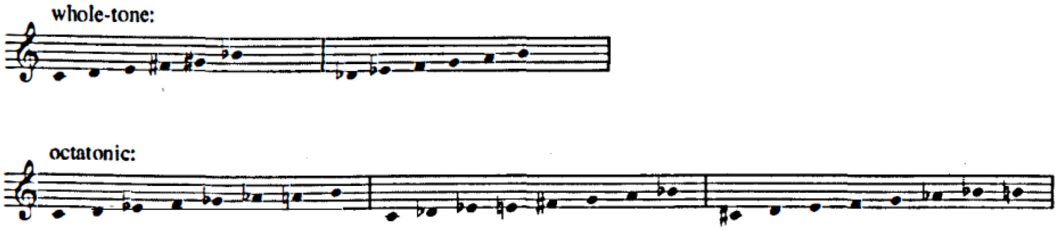

Figure 2.1. Whole-tone and octatonic collections[11]

The use of 'bitonality' or bitonal harmonies is the trademark of Bridge's post-tonal language. It is defined in *Grove Music Online* as "The simultaneous, superimposed presence of two distinct tonalities. In practice the term is applied not only to compositions which employ two unambiguously diatonic keys, but also to those which superimpose contrasted modal segments, or two conventionally unrelated triads without other elements of diatonic progression."[12]As we will see in some of his piano works before 1921, and later in the *Piano Sonata*, the progressive use of bitonal idioms will play an increasing role in his compositions, eventually becoming an essential textural and musical characteristic of his late music. Bridge was certainly not the only composer to take interest in the possibility of bitonal elements; Anthony Payne notes that "Several of Bridge's English contemporaries were sooner or later to enjoy the frisson obtained from bitonal aggregations, but generally these procedures only resulted in a temporary blurring of some unambiguous tonal outline and were simply a form of chromatic decoration."[13] Amongst his peers however, Bridge was the only one to make full use of the possibilities afforded by bitonal structures, including his repeated use of a particular polychordal material now referred to as the

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[11] Huss, *The Chamber Music of Frank Bridge*, p. 243

[12] https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.proxyiub.uits.iu.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000003161?rskey=C7GJej accessed 7/1/21.

[13] Payne, p. 69.

'Bridge chord', which is prevalent in most of his later music, most particularly the *Second Piano Trio*. As defined by Huss: "the so-called 'Bridge chord' (due to its pervasive use in his post-tonal music), formed a minor triad combined with a major triad whose root is a tone higher, for example C minor and D major […] that is almost always presented in an emphatically polychordal layout […] giving it a strongly individual flavour that Bridge exploits as a relatively stable referential harmony."[14]

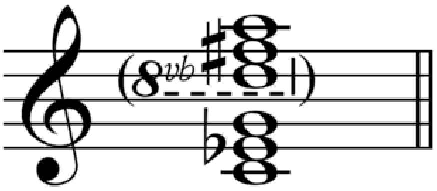

Figure 2.2. Bridge Chord in C[15]

Progressive piano works, Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge and the *Piano Sonata.*

The *Piano Sonata* is the first large scale work by Bridge to fully adopt his post-tonal musical language, although he had already experimented with many elements of that language in earlier works. Bridge seems to have used his short piano works as an experimental ground to test some of the striking sonorities heard in the *Piano Sonata*. In works such as the *Four Characteristic Pieces* (H. 126) of 1917 and *The Hourglass* (H. 148) of 1920, sonorities that would play a more central role in the *Piano Sonata* can be found. Suggestions of bitonality are already appearing, with Huss pointing out the appearance of a 'Bridge Chord' in the first movement of the *Characteristic Pieces*: *Water Nymphs*,[16] as well as "shifting dissonant tetrachords over a dominant pedal" in the second movement *Fragrance*.[17]The third movement *Bittersweet* as explained by Jed Galant in "The Solo Piano Works of Frank Bridge" is the most dissonant of the four pieces: "Ringing g's in the right hand, above sustained harmonies, and the singularly dissonant atmosphere of the composition foreshadow the opening of the *Piano Sonata*."[18] Huss adds that *Bittersweet* is "more unorthodox in its harmony with a considerable degree of whole-tone content and suggestions of shifting dominant formations with added degrees that look ahead to much music of the later period."[19]In *The Hourglass* Bridge refines his use of unconventional sonorities, the first movement *Dusk* described by Huss as "the most impenetrable of the set, its mixture of pentatonicism, chromatic movement, and colouristic treatment of chords (often suggesting sequence) creating a suitably unsettled atmosphere."[20] Galant describes the movement's main melody, restated at m.16 as "supported by the bitonal underpinning of independent major-minor-ninth arpeggiated figures similar to that in *Water Nymphs*."[21] This new reliance on arrays of successive major-minor chords with added sevenths or ninths is also evident in the last movement of the set *The Midnight Tide* which "consists almost entirely of major-minor seventh chords."[22] Huss also notes Bridge's "free use of appoggiaturas to primary sets in order to create considerable dissonance, a procedure familiar from earlier piano works and one which is taken to new heights in the post tonal music."[23] The transitional piano works remain however somewhat rooted in a more traditional tonal language, and the new sonorities that Bridge explores in those works are not yet used consistently. The *Piano Sonata* is therefore the first work to sound distinctly different from Bridge's earlier works.

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[14] Huss, *The Music of Frank Bridge,* p. 137.
[15] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bridge_chord. Accessed 12/09/21
[16] Huss, *The Music of Frank Bridge,* p. 109.
[17] Ibid. p. 110.

The *Piano Sonata* was originally begun in 1921, but Bridge had difficulties in composing it, and would not complete it until 1924. Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge would prove influential in his completion of the work. Bridge met with Coolidge in 1922 at an afternoon tea party organized by Mary Winthrop Rogers, the wife of Bridge's publisher. In his chapter dedicated to Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, Huss explains in a footnote that it is likely that Rebecca Clarke (a close friend of Coolidge and well acquainted with Bridge through their time at the RCM under Stanford) is likely to have recommended Bridge to Coolidge who was seeking to offer patronage to British artists for her music festival in Pittsfield, Massachusetts.[24]

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[18] Galant, Jed. *The Solo Piano Works of Frank Bridge*, p. 103.
[19] Huss, *The Music of Frank Bridge*, p. 110.
[20] Ibid. p. 110.
[21] Galant, p. 118.
[22] Huss, p. 111.
[23] Ibid. p. 111.

The friendship between Coolidge and both Frank and Ethel Bridge developed quickly as only several weeks after first meeting, Coolidge invited the Bridges on a motoring tour of France. In his essay *"Too much of an Albion"? Mrs. Coolidge and Her British Connections*, Stephen Banfield humorously notes that "By the end of the French holiday which took place at the beginning of August, the Bridges and Mrs. Coolidge were on first name terms – or rather they were calling her Susie, and she was calling Frank Twozee."[25] In 1923, Coolidge invited the Bridges to America for her festival in Pittsfield where she had programmed a performance of his *Sextet*. During that time, she had approached Bridge with an offer of patronage that he originally refused. However, Bridge's difficulties in composing while maintaining his professional obligations as a violin teacher, chamber musician and guest conductor eventually led him to have a change of heart. On his way back to Europe, Bridge wrote a letter to Coolidge accepting her gift of 'material freedom.'[26] As Huss notes: "Bridge is the only composer she supported with an annual stipend; her patronage usually took the form of commissions, competitions or performances."[27]

Free from his teaching and performing obligations, Bridge who had already drafted large sections of the *Piano Sonata* was finally able to complete it in March of 1924. As Hindmarsh notes: "its completion heralded the emergence of the full force of his creative powers and marked the end of over ten years of linguistic development."[28] The *Piano Sonata* is indeed noticeably different from all the works that Bridge had composed so far, fully embracing elements of his new musical style. Payne observes that "what made the *Piano Sonata* such an extraordinary achievement was the energy and determination with which Bridge withstood the pull of conventional tonal language, and developed logically a bitonal harmonic texture throughout large-scale structures."[29]While the tonal language is most striking in this composition, it is also important to note Bridge's constant reliance on motivic integration and the constant development of his thematic material throughout the work which we will have been familiar with in the *Phantasies* in particular. In discussing the difference between Bridge's progressive piano works, and his difficulties around writing the *Piano Sonata*, Huss argues that:

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[24] Huss. p. 153.

[25] Banfield, *"Too much of an Albion"? Mrs. Coolidge and Her British Connections, p. 64*

[26] Ibid. p. 71.

[27] Huss, p. 154.

> In a larger work, particularly one incorporating several movements, the expressive and technical implications that are unproblematic in the context of a 'short character piece' need to be integrated into a larger and more abstract design, a far more complex proposition, and one that presented Bridge with evident challenges to be overcome. His difficulties in completing the *Piano Sonata* (documented in his correspondence) were thus not primarily due to the development of a 'new language' from which to create material, but the difficulty of constituting and arranging material in a satisfyingly logical way.[30]

As is the case with his chamber music compositions since the *Phantasy Trio*, The *Piano Sonata* employs arch-form structures throughout as Galant explains: "Each of the three continuous movements in the piece is in arch form and so constructed, with the return of first-movement material in the last movement, as to create an arch form in the manner of his earlier large-scale "phantasy" works."[31] This dual use of arch-form structures recalls procedures that Bridge employed in his *Cello Sonata*.

The sonata opens in a haunting and anguishing mood with a ten-measure ostinato of G# octaves introducing at m. 4 the first motive of the work; a series of first inversion minor triads in the left hand. The second motive at mm. 11-12 is a contrasting melodic fragment outlining C# major, which fully references the use of bitonal devices previously mentioned in this chapter. In discussing the interpretation of the second motive Payne explains: “The chord sequence here might be explained as a piquant chain of dominant discords. But to Bridge the interval content of the chords suggested opposed tonalities: triads underpinned by alien seconds.”[32] These two motives play a crucial role in the structure of the piece, as Galant observes that: “All the material to be utilized in the piece is contained in the introduction, which lasts through measure 41. Virtually every measure of music that follows owes its genesis to the two main ideas presented here.”[33] Huss notes that “the presentation of several conflicting prioritised pitches, harmonic areas and collections leads to a progressive exploration of prioritised areas throughout the exposition, in a manner that is unusual in Bridge’s music.”[34] Huss also mentions the use of the opening motive (the first inversion chords which were previously paired with the G# octaves ostinato) at the beginning of the exposition as a way to lead the movement to “the first emphatic appearance of B minor,” which he believes to be the “eventual ‘tonic’” of the work.[35] He continues by explaining that “this asserts itself to varying degrees throughout the rest of the exposition, and the flattened second degree observed in Ex. 4.6b (the opening of the exposition at mm. 42-4) is explored further on several later occasions.”[36]The use of the tonal area of B minor must be considered in relation the second motive of the work which outlined C# Major, and indeed this combination plays an important role at the end of the first movement where once again Huss points out the bitonal forces at play: “Characteristically, the end of the movement crystallises a number of primary features, focusing on a harmony on B minor, both with a flattened second and in a Bridge chord combination with C# major.”[37]

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[28] Hindmarsh, p. 122.

[29] Payne, p. 69.

[30] Huss, *The Chamber Music of Frank Bridge,* p. 201.

[31] Galant, p. 139.

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[32] Payne, p. 69.
[33] Galant, p. 140.
[34] Huss, *The Music of Frank Bridge,* p. 140.
[35] Ibid. p. 140.
[36] Ibid. p. 140.

In a work that is saturated with bitonality and dissonance, Payne however notes a particular section of the second movement which recalls Bridge’s previous style. Referring to mm. 14-22 (the first iteration of the B theme in his ABCBA arch form structure), Payne reflects that: “occasionally the chromatic manner of an earlier Bridge emerges to suggest a past beyond recall, producing in the slow movement one of the most poignant phrases in all his work, a magically still centre round which the sonata’s storm rage.”[38] When the B material returns at m. 57, it is now accompanied with a triplet ostinato that adds a much more dissonant flavor to the melody dismissing any of the nostalgy previously encountered at the first iteration. This use of what Huss would refer to as a ‘stabilising element’ in a way seemingly evocative of nostalgy is a process that Bridge used earlier in the coda of the second movement of the *Cello Sonata*. Huss suggests that these ‘stabilising’ moments of tonality are “no longer essential in actively shaping and articulating structure in line with a conventional, functional paradigm, but seem rather like a local stylistic trope.”[39]

Although still considered an experimental work, the *Piano Sonata* is groundbreaking in Bridge’s compositional output, as it is the first large scale work to effectively combine the older aspects of Bridge’s chamber music compositions (such as the reliance on arch-form structures and his constant reworking of motives across movements) with the idioms of his post-tonal musical language. Without using traditional tonal idioms that stemmed from sonata form principles, Bridge was able to incorporate his constant preoccupation with cyclical form by using the possibilities of bitonality and dissonance through what Huss previously referred to as ‘prioritised areas’.

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[37] Huss, p. 143.
[38] Payne, p. 70.
[39] Huss, p. 124.

The Third String Quartet (H. 175)

The *Third String Quartet* is the first chamber work to adopt Bridge's post tonal language. Bridge originally began writing this work in 1925 but would not complete it until 1927. Hindmarsh explains that Bridge was having tremendous difficulty completing his quartet and "found its progress slow and laborious,"[40] particularly with the last movement. Much like the *Piano Sonata*, the *Third String Quartet* is organized in three movements each with an individual arch-structure. While many aspects of the post-tonal language are similar to the *Piano Sonata*, the *Quartet* appears to be less focused on bitonality as the prevalent force but rather octatonic and whole-tone collections which gives the piece a strong dissonant and distinct sonority. Payne's description of the language is as follows: "In the vertical aspects of his textures, Bridge approaches a Schoenbergian pantonality, but the lack of semitonal dissonance in the chord spacing and the tendency to select whole-tone and dominant formations gives an individual flavor."[41] Payne also notes that "the superimposition of tritones and fourths favored by the Viennese school becomes a new characteristic, as do tense Bartokian chords formed from interlocking major and minor thirds."[42] In some ways, the Quartet does suggest a similar style to Bartok's music and in terms of sonority; this would not be so surprising as their reliance on whole-tone and octatonic collections of pitches is a common trait in both composers. While in later works, the reliance on sonata form structures gets more obscured (as will be seen in the *Second Piano Trio*), the first movement of the *Third String Quartet* employs an elaborate sonata-arch structure similar to some of his earlier chamber works, with the secondary material recapitulated before the primary material and eventually ending with a short coda. Once again, the reliance on short motives developed constantly throughout the movement recall the same process as with the *Piano Sonata* with the use of a short introduction to present the different motives of the movement (another trope in Bridge's late music). The first subject of the first movement is rather fragmented, building on the short motives that were introduced in the first ten measures. The character is anguished and unsettling; a principal motive is introduced in mm. 1-2 and transformed at m. 17 to become the driving force of the movement (and the entire quartet) along with another motive first introduced at m.10. In the absence of functional tonality, Bridge has to slightly alter his approach to the treatment of secondary material. Rather than using a harmony as an indication of new material, Bridge employs texture and sonorities to suggest the arrival to the secondary material. Huss notes: "The interruption of texture and introduction of an unprecedented voicing, with parallel major triads in first inversion moving around a sustained note, give the outset of the transition the illusion of inhabiting a completely new sound-world."[43] Huss uses the term 'illusion' for his description, because the material used for this transition is according to Huss "directly related to previous harmonic material."[44]

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[40] Hindmarsh, p. 138.
[41] Payne, p. 72.
[42] Ibid. p. 72

The second movement of the Quartet is somewhat unique in Bridge's output, Huss observes that "while there are some similarities with Bridge's familiar 'lyrical' and 'intermezzo' styles, there are no immediate precursors in the earlier music." [45] In the preface to the *Musikproduktion Höflich* reprint of the score, Casey A. Mullin notes that "comparisons with the "night music" of Bela Bartok's string quartets are apt."[46]As expected, the harmonic language displays once again the prevalence of octatonic and whole tone collections, and most importantly the Bridge chord. In his dissertation *The Four String Quartets of Frank Bridge*, Bryan Wade describes the harmonic idiom of the movement as such:

> The second movement exemplifies the compositional technique of "harmonic unity"; that is, the establishment of a particular harmonic sonority which is then maintained throughout the movement with little variation. This technique provides a unity and

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[43] Huss, *The Chamber Music of Frank Bridge*, p. 258.
[44] Ibid. p. 258.
[45] Ibid. p. 266.
[46] Mullins, *Preface Musikproduktion Höflich*, p. II.

> coherence to the musical discourse. The Bridge chord is defined in the opening measures as the underlying harmonic formation for the entire movement.[47]

As Wade describes, there is a certain stillness to the movement that is created by the ostinato accompaniment in the cello and viola parts which delineates the outer sections of the movement's ternary form. The ostinato comprised of plucked eighth notes and a still bowed half note paired with the lyrical exchanges between two instruments (usually the two violins, or sometimes with the viola) in octatonic passages is perhaps what gives the first and last sections a distinct Bartokian flavor to the movement. Brief references to motives of the first movement can be identified at m. 57 for example as well as the tritone in the cello part at m. 81.

Much like the first movement, the third movement of the *Quartet* is marked by a turbulent exclamatory mood. It begins with the principal motive of the first movement, fist in augmentation in the cello but answered by the other three instruments in its original rhythmic value. Bridge's continued reliance on cyclical unity is once again apparent as Huss links the thematic material of the last movement to that of the first: "The second segment of the second subject resembles the transition section of the first movement, exemplifying the type of subtle interconnections favored by Bridge in his mature music, particularly the derivation of finale material from earlier movements."[48] Wade explains how the material from the other movements interacts with the original material from the last movement noting that: "the structure is consistently articulated by the thematic process – a process which presents three original themes and incorporates thematic material from the first and second movements into the musical discourse."[49] The form of the movement is once again an arch-shaped movement which is similar to the first movement, however Payne describes the third movement as "arch shaped […] and with a rondo refrain,"[50] and with the absence of a traditional development section (according to

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[47] Wade, *The Four String Quartets of Frank Bridge*, p. 390.
[48] Huss, *The Music of Frank Bridge*, p.151.
[49] Wade, p. 400.
[50] Payne p. 73.

Wade).[51]While the *Third String Quartet* is not a strict arch-form as a whole (such as the *Phantasy Trio* or *Piano Quartet*), the conservative use of motivic material and how it is appears in various forms throughout all three movements suggests a very abstract arch form.

An interesting aspect in the treatment of previous movements' thematic material in this quartet is that it does not appear to evoke nostalgy as was observed in previous works such as the *Cello Sonata* the *Piano Sonata*, and the *Piano Quintet*. Instead, Huss explains that the thematic materials from the first and second movement and the original thematic material of the last movement are used interchangeably to create points of stabilization, particularly in the coda of the last movement where motivic material from the second movement appears.[52] He continues to explain that "this stabilisation of expressionistic elements contrasts strongly with the nostalgic retrospect found in the conclusion of the *Cello Sonata*, suggesting that Bridge had worked through some of the more challenging aspects of his aesthetic outlook"[53].

The *Third String Quartet* is undoubtedly a unique composition within his chamber music output. In terms of form, it relies more openly to sonata-form structures than his previous chamber music compositions (with the exception of the *Piano Quintet*) while still making use of his favored arch-structures. In terms of the musical language, while it consistently relies on octatonic, whole tone collections and the Bridge chord, it does not sound nearly as bitonal as the *Piano Sonata* or later the *Second Piano Trio* instead bearing more resemblance in terms of sonority to the music of Bartok and the Second Viennese School.

The Second Piano Trio (H. 178)

The *Second Piano Trio* is one of Frank Bridge's most singular chamber work in term of form. It was influenced in many ways by the *Phantasy Trio* as well as the other chamber music for piano and strings (such as the *Phantasy Piano Quartet* and the *Piano Quintet*) mainly in terms of the textural writing. The form however is more abstract than the other chamber music compositions; comprising of two sets of interlocked movements (the first and the second movement played without interruption, then the third and the fourth). This type of form certainly has precedent, it can be found for example in two of Saint-Saëns' works: The *Organ Symphony Op. 78* and the *Violin Sonata in D minor Op. 75*. In the *Trio* however, Bridge parts ways with sonata form, employing loose ternary arch structures for each of his movements. The avoidance of sonata form and the unique structure of the work makes it challenging to give a precise analysis of the piece. Payne reflects on the uniqueness of the *Trio* writing that "as so often in this work, and throughout late Bridge, it is easy to demonstrate the compositional mastery behind a process, but not the sheer individuality of the sonority and the thinking, whose rarified passion is difficult to relate to any other composer."[54] Indeed, when considering other piano trios composed roughly around the same period (the Trio was written in 1929), very few notable compositions for Piano Trio come to mind, except perhaps for the works of Frank Martin (the *Trio sur des mélodies populaire irlandaises* of 1925) and Fauré (his *Piano Trio in D minor* Op. 120 was written in1923). In the case of Bridge's British contemporaries, composers such as Rebecca Clarke (1921), Amy Beach and John Ireland (both in 1938) and Arnold Bax (1946) all wrote for the medium as well. By comparison, Bridge's Second Piano Trio presents a distinctly individual sonority and approach to modernist aesthetics that is singular in the output of compositions for Piano Trio written in Europe at that time.

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[51] Wade, p. 400.
[52] Huss, *The Music of Frank Bridge*, p. 151.
[53] Huss. p. 152.

The opening of the movement is reminiscent of the *Phantasy Trio* in many ways. The opening motive played first in the cello is similar in contour to the violin motive in the third measure of the *Phantasy Trio*'s *Ben Moderato* section.

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[54] Payne, p. 82.

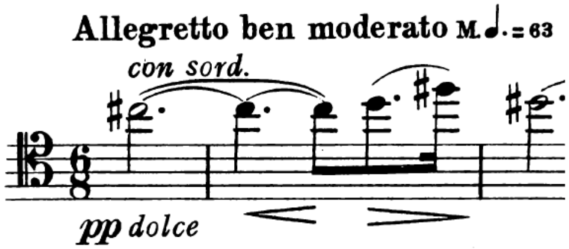

Figure 2.3. Mm. 1-4 of the *Second Piano Trio.*

Huss notably highlights the “subdued lyrical first subject, with sustained, often imitative melodic string parts and a stabilizing piano ostinato”[55] which recall exactly the first section of the *Phantasy Trio* but also found in the *Phantasy Quartet* and the *Piano Quintet*. The departure from the earlier style is instead in the tonal language. By using pitch class set classifications, Huss is able to identify Bridge’s repetitive use of 6-34 collections (whole tone scale with one note altered) and 8-27 collections (octatonic scale with one note altered)[56] which will be present throughout the *Trio*. As in the *Piano Sonata*, the first nine measures of the *Trio* introduce us to the principal motives of the entire work, with the first motive in the cello (motive *a*) answered with a variation on the motive in the violin part (motive *a2*) and finally the second motive at m.6 (motive *b*) which is centered on a bitonal relationship between E major and Eb major in second inversion. The ostinato in the piano part which begins at m. 11 seem to suggest a tonal center of C#; while the ostinato parts in the *Phantasy Trio* and the *Piano Quintet* fulfilled the purpose of giving the movement momentum and an unsettled turbulence, the rhythmic regularity as well as the hollow sonority of the ostinato in the *Second Piano Trio* resembles more the opening four measures of the *Piano Sonata* in its stillness. In the absence of tonal harmony to guide the piece towards the structurally important points of the movement, the ostinato part makes use of chromaticism and its pedal notes to lead the variations and exchanges on the lyrical motive in the strings. The ostinato at m. 30 for example, accompanying the *a* motive in the strings emphasized in *forte*, shows chromatic motion in pairs of two measures (despite the first two notes of each ostinato measure outlining the fourth of C# and F#) with each subsequent note played half a step higher in the next measure.

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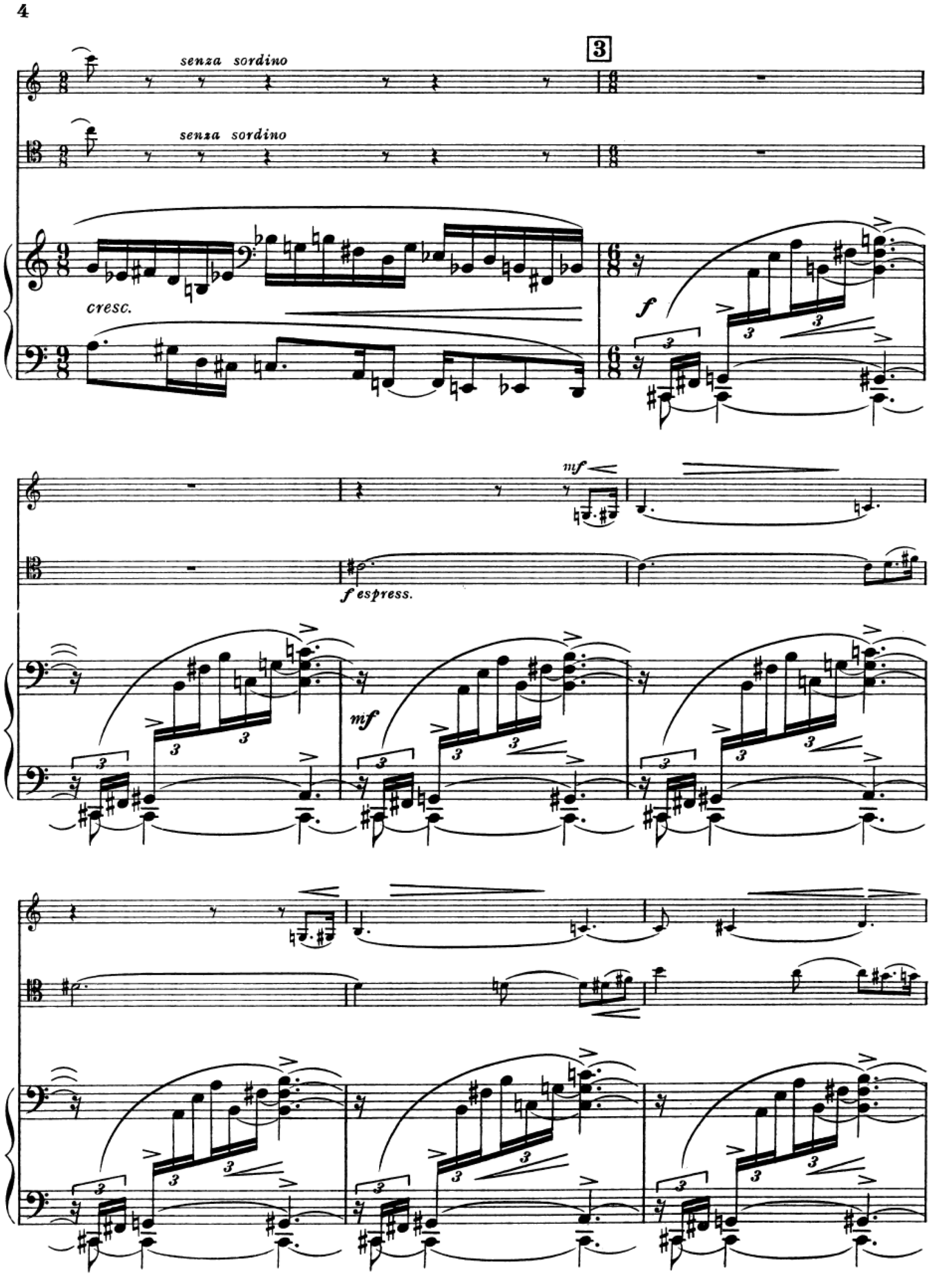
[55] Huss, *The Chamber Music of Frank Bridge*, p. 283.
[56] Ibid. p. 244.


4
3
senza sordino
senza sordino
cresc.
f
mf
f espress.
mf

Example 2.1. Mm. 29-36 of the *Second Piano Trio*.

Later, at m. 40, the ostinato breaks away from the C# pedal harmony with a gradual bass motion starting on D in the bass at m. 40 followed by E at m. 42, F at m. 43, G at m. 46, G# at m. 47 finally arriving on A at m. 48. The *b* motive also exploits chromatic motion giving it a fleeting and unpredictable quality. This can be observed starting at m. 75 where the keyboard is responsible for the presentation of the *b* motive in complete phrases rather than small fragments. The culmination of the *b* motive happens at m. 207 where the strings play the motive in a *cantando fortissimo* unison, an expressive device that once again remind of the *Phantasies* and the *Piano Quintet*. The movement ends however in *pianissimo* with references to the *b* motive slightly altered. While the ending might suggest a return to tonal stability with a low C# pedal in the bass both in the keyboard and cello parts (with the added fifth G#), the low B in the violin part as well as the keyboard outlining a second inversion G major triad with an added F# slightly destabilizes any notion of a more traditional tonal structure.

The second movement *Molto allegro* is a scherzo movement which is very spritely in character and somewhat evocative of Mendelssohn. As Huss observes: "the scherzo is in many ways characteristic of Bridge's 'scherzo with piano' manner, again inviting occasional comparison with the *Phantasies*. There are also similarities of construction with earlier scherzos, although the fluidity of treatment of the material here is even greater than in previous instances."[57] The 'fluidity of treatment' that Huss refers to is indeed an interesting aspect of this movement. Unlike previous 'scherzo' movements such as in the *Phantasies* or the brief 'scherzo' episode in the second movement of the revised *Piano Quintet*, the form appears more complex. A typical Bridgian scherzando movement would employ an ABA ternary structure that would differentiate the A & B sections with a clear change in harmony and mood (typically the B section emulating a 'trio' with more lyrical elements.). In this movement, the sections of the movement are not so clearly defined. Mm. 1-10 and 15-20 of the second movement present short and fragmented motives between all three parts which are tightly knit together; these little motivic fragments are contrasted with the more lyrical motive at mm. 37-44, the first of which seem to establish a tonal center of G minor. These two contrasting elements interrupt each other throughout the movement immediately answering one another, introducing the appearance of new material from m. 132 which references the *a* motive from the first movement (for example at m. 146 in the violin line).

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[57] Huss, *The Chamber Music of Frank Bridge*, p. 287.

A clear Trio section is not obvious, although there is a notable change of texture at m. 191 where the violin and cello share a unified melody (once again derivative of the *a* motive) until m. 218 paired with a flowing piano accompaniment much less percussive than in the rest of the movement. Huss notes that "the characteristic juxtaposition of fragmentary motivic units and larger melodic spans here seem to reinforce the sense of an unusual ternary design, where the first section is expository and the central section is developmental with some rhapsodic tendencies."[58] Contrasting with the playful scherzo, the third movement begins the second part of the piece with a serious and somber tone. The first four notes in the keyboard part are a derivation from the *b* motive of the first movement (that specific derivation appears in m. 104 of the first movement), it forms what Huss refers to as the "all interval tetrachord"[59] an arrangement of four notes which can contain all possible intervals depending on its formation.

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[58] Huss, *The Chamber Music of Frank Bridge*, p.290.

[59] Ibid. p, 249.

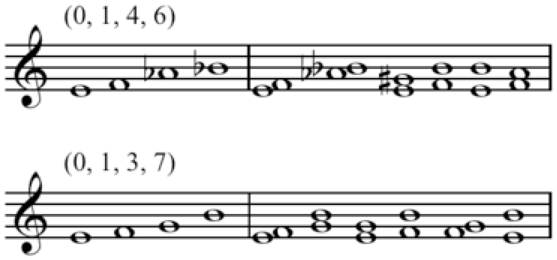

Figure 2.4. All Interval Tetrachord[60]

This tetrachord is the underlying motor of this movement paired with an ostinato accompaniment in the left hand beginning at the end of m. 6. References to motives *a* and *b* from the first movement are ripe throughout this slow movement with the two variations of the *a* motive appearing as early as mm. 3-4. The constant presence of ostinati, as well as the scarcity of new motivic material makes the ternary design of this movement once again difficult to identify; Huss identifies the ABA' with coda structure of the work largely by analyzing the harmonic subsets that are being introduced: "While harmony derives largely from a single superset, the types and presentation of subsets used in A and B sections are distinct, with A presenting subsets as minor chords with added degrees (derived from the 'shared mediant' polychord and Bridge chord), and B using subsets such as 6-34 and 6-21[61] approximating major-minor-seventh formations."[62] The B section would therefore begin at the pickup to m. 16 and the A' section would be at m. 34 where the ostinato that originally was in the keyboard part is now played in the cello part with a new ostinato in the keyboard part until the coda. At the center of the movement is a very short rhapsodic phrase played by the violin from mm. 24-28 where the *b* motive appears with its intervallic content unaltered, this is supported by the cello referring to the *a* motive. The coda section beginning at m. 46 is saturated with the *a* motive in the strings, which also featured at the beginning of the movement, before fading away into soft ponticello tremoli.

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[60] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All-interval_tetrachord. Accessed 12/09/21
[61] Whole-tone collections with one or two notes altered.
[62] Huss, *The Chamber Music of Frank Bridge*, p.290.

As established earlier, the fourth movement *Allegro ma non troppo* is a direct continuation of the third movement. It begins with a soft *saltando* triplet motor in the violin and cello introducing the main theme of the movement at m. 9 which will serve as an "idée fixe" of some sort continuous throughout the movement. This motive bears some resemblance to the consistent *a* motive of the first movement although the interval spans a major third rather than a perfect fourth; in his analysis of the movement Huss notes the harmonic arrangement of a Bridge chord on the first beat of m. 10 and the 6-34 subset (whole tone with one note altered) on the second beat of the same measure. [63] There is a texture change at m. 34 where Huss highlights a "walking bass" accompaniment in the keyboard part[64], as well as clear references once again to the *a* motive in the violin and cello parts. At m. 47, the violin and cello parts reiterate the main motive of this finale movement in quasi-unison fashion and the *b* motive of the first movement is referenced in the violin part at mm. 62-62 as well as in m. 71. The central episode of the movement (the B section of a larger ABA form) begins at m. 76 with contrasting and lyrical new material in the keyboard part over a flurry of ricochet *saltando* triplets in the strings; once again the *b* motive appears, this time in the keyboard part at mm. 96-97.

As has become expected in the last movements of Bridge chamber works, a return of material from the first movement seems inevitable. While it has been established that quotations and derivations of the *a* and *b* motives of the first movement were constant throughout the work much like an "idée fixe", the individual musical material of the second, third and last movements always prevailed. At m. 186 however, Bridge quotes directly the beginning of the first movement. Huss considers this an interruption within the fourth movement and "essentially outside the action of the finale serving as a forceful reminder of the character and content of the principal first-movement material."[65] This quotation of the Trio's opening recall once again the devices seen in the second movement of the *Piano Sonata* and the last movement of the *Cello Sonata* where the return of previous material could be meant as a nostalgic idea. This return to first movement expository material is also evocative of the *Phantasy Trio* where similarly the first movement opening material returns to signal the final section of the work, creating a certain feeling of inevitability and gravitas. *The Second Piano Trio* is however not in a strict arch form like the *Phantasy Trio*, and the material from the first movement will instead be synthetized with the material from the last movement in a Bridge compositional tour de force. Following the first movement interlude, the secondary material from the last movement reappears at m. 197 with the "walking bass" keyboard part, eventually returning to the principal material at m. 222 played in the violin and cello parts in *forte*. The *a* motive returns in unison in the violin and cello at m. 246 and culminates at m. 257 in a *fortissimo* iteration of the *b* motive again in unison in the strings with a b derivation in the keyboard part. If considering the *b* motive to fulfill the role of "secondary theme" in a sonata form, this climax is then very similar to the Phantasy Trio and the Piano Quintet where the secondary themes of the first movement return in a triumphant climax. In the case of the Second Piano Trio, Payne rationalizes that "there is a sense of heroic attainment here, but the victory is hardly a comfortable one and the music withdraws poignantly to the heights it had occupied at the outset."[66]

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[63] Huss, *The Chamber Music of Frank Bridge*, p. 292.
[64] Ibid. p. 293.

The end of the movement is particularly impressive, following the climax the music turns to introspection with the texture thinning out and rhapsodic scales passed between the violin and cello contrasting with a gradual slowing down of the tempo. Huss's description of the coda is particularly convincing:

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[65] Huss, *The Chamber Music of Frank Bridge*, p. 295.
[66] Payne, p. 85.

> Thematic and harmonic material continues to relate to *b*, with increasingly extravagant melodic outgrowth in all instrumental parts counteracting the ‘mechanical’ character of the previous melodic material (defined by its rigorous motivic economy), recasting it as lush and romantic, its treble trills and elaborate figurations suggesting an ecstatic pastoral idyll. Although a complete liberation from the icy rigidity of the first movement is not possible, a ‘softening’ and transcendence of the initial character has been achieved. A single last appearance of the finale theme closes the movement (complete with Bridge chord and 6-34 harmony, pivoting around a final pedal note, the strings’ held B).[67]

The feeling of “transcendence” that Huss describes so accurately is evident starting from m. 274 till the end, where the musical language is much more tonal. B major seems strongly suggested in a passage that sounds almost Respighian in its color, at least until m. 279 where the appearance of the finale theme marked *Calmato* and *delicato* slightly destabilizes the B major resolution; nevertheless, the B pedal remains in the strings. The bitonal relationship between the key areas C# minor in the first movement and the ending in B strongly recalls the *Piano Sonata* where the relationship was between B minor and C# major.

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[67] Huss, *The Chamber Music of Frank Bridge* pp. 295-6.

Chapter 3: THE SECOND PIANO TRIO IN RELATION TO THE PHANTASY TRIO: CONTEXTUALIZING FRANK BRIDGE'S MATURE MUSICAL LANGUAGE.

The *Phantasy Trio* of 1907 and the *Second Piano Trio* of 1929 both were written at a time where Frank Bridge was experiencing a breakthrough in his compositional style. The Cobbett competitions, and the patronage of Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge provided the opportunities for Bridge to approach composition from a different perspective than in his earlier years at the Royal College of Music. While the amateur musician Cobbett wished to encourage the development of a national style of chamber music, Coolidge on the other hand simply afforded Bridge a creative license that would allow him to compose as he pleased. In both instances, Bridge's approach to composition remained the same: a coherent logical structure both emulating and dispensing of sonata form structures, and a well-developed cyclical treatment of musical motives. Chapters 1 and 2 provided a linear context for the development of Frank Bridge's musical language in chamber music, this third chapter will reflect on Bridge's compositional consistency of well-crafted musical material (a result of his strict musical education at the RCM) in conjunction with his development of a unique musical language so significantly different than any other British contemporary of his time. In the *Phantasy Trio* and *Second Piano Trio*, the compositional approach as well as the recurring musical material will be analyzed and contextualized within the contemporaneous developments to music.

Remnants of Sonata form, influences of the Phantasies:

In both the *Phantasy Trio* and the *Second Piano Trio*, a distancing from sonata form is evident. As noted in Chapter 1, the *Phantasy Trio* adopts a large-scale arch form (ABCB'A') in which each section comprises small movements linking seamlessly with each other. The A sections which contain the first movement material do contain a Primary Theme and a Secondary Theme, yet the absence of a formal development section is the most notable departure from sonata form. The omission of a development section in the *Phantasy Trio* is unprecedented in his chamber music output before 1907 and has had a notable influence on most of Bridge's later chamber works.

In the *Second Piano Trio* sonata form is also notably absent. Following the composition of the *Piano Sonata*, all of Bridge's subsequent chamber music compositions favor instead ternary arch-formed movements which break away from the traditional constraints of sonata form. Huss notes that "the first movement [of the *Second Piano Trio*] is Bridge's first opening to a multi-movement chamber work eschewing obvious references to sonata form, instead using a simple ternary design."[1] The use of ternary arch form structures is clearly a result of Bridge's re-working of form within the *Phantasy* model, while Bridge had used the ternary design on a large scale for those works, he then began to apply those concepts to the individual form of movements in his later music.

Both the *Phantasy Trio* and the *Second Piano Trio* thus highlight Bridge's need to break away from the conventional sonata form movements. This does not however mean that Bridge completely abandons a sonata form oriented mindset on a larger scale. As detailed in Chapter 1, the multiple movements of the *Phantasy Trio* are often analyzed in a large-scale sonata form mindset, considering however Hui Pin Hsu's observation that the combination of the B, C, and B' sections does not qualify as a formal development section in relation to the "first movement" material. The same large-scale thinking can be applied to the overall structure of the *Second*

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[1] Huss, *The Music of Frank Bridge,* p.186.

Piano Trio which comprises two sets of interlocked movements (unprecedented in Bridge's chamber music compositions). The character of each individual movements (a moderate first movement, a quick scherzo, a slow movement, and a transition into a faster finale with a return of first movement material in the coda) lends into a sonata form oriented mindset. As highlighted briefly in Chapter 2, the use of two interlocked movements forming on a large scale a two-movement work was a concept that was used in the past, particularly in Saint-Saëns' music. Within the movements, remnants of sonata form ideals can still be traced. In the first and last sections of the *Phantasy Trio*, the distinction of "primary" and "secondary" material are obvious with the "primary" theme (starting from m. 11) in C minor, and the "secondary" contrasting theme (starting at m. 91) in the relative Eb major. When this material returns in A' both the "primary" material returning at m. 363 is as expected in C minor and the "secondary" material (m. 420) is stabilized in C major with a Coda (m. 439) reinforcing and confirming the C major ending to the work. While distinctions between "primary" and "secondary" material is much more obscure in the first movement of the *Second Piano Trio*, a contrast between the prominence of *a* motive (m. 1) and the *b* motive (which first appears at m. 6) can suggest a vague sonata form approach. From mm. 1-63, the *a* motive is the one which gets more developed while the *b* motive is given its full iteration at m. 75 and is developed throughout until m. 168.

Bridge's approach to form either on a large-scale plan or within isolated movements thus reveals that in both compositions, a departure from previous traditions is not entirely realized, which explains how contemporary analysis of his works would still ascribe to his compositions a classical approach. This will be discussed later in this chapter.

Coherence of musical motives, and cyclical material.

Frank Bridge consistently relied on well-crafted musical motives frequently recurring across the work lending a cyclical nature to each of his pieces. This continuous use of cyclical material is undoubtedly the result of Bridge's studies under Charles Villiers Stanford where, as highlighted in Chapter 1, the works of Brahms, Franck, Fauré, Saint-Saëns, Debussy, Tchaikovsky and Glazunov were intensely studied. All of those composers were relatively modern to a young Frank Bridge, and cyclical compositions were not entirely outdated as can be seen in the works of all the composers listed above, but in Franck, Debussy and Fauré's music most notably. In Bridge's music, the motives used are noticeably versatile in their affective and structural qualities. They will often be introduced at the beginning of the work in quick succession and later develop either in inversion, augmentation, or appear transformed (derivation). Most typically, the primary motive introduced at the beginning of a work will appear in the finale (whether in a one movement or a multi-movement work) usually transformed to produce a climactic effect and a feeling of transcendence, or to evoke nostalgically a return to the past.

Motives in the *Phantasy Trio*

The very first measure of the *Phantasy Trio* introduces the two main motives that will appear continuously throughout the piece: the ascending motive in the violin and cello parts (motive *a*) answered by the descending motive in the keyboard part (motive *b*). Following the ten-measure long introduction and two measures of the ostinato texture in the keyboard part, the first soft lyrical motive played in the violin part (mm. 13-14) can be interpreted as a derivation of the opening motive which was played in a unison *fortissimo* with a strikingly similar intervallic content. This motive can quickly be found in inversion at m. 18. The lyrical exchanges between the stringed instruments repeatedly use derivation of the *a* motive until the outburst at m. 62 where the *b* motive appears for the second time in the keyboard part. Bridge particularly relies on his two main motives during important transitional moments in the work, as can be seen with the transition into the "secondary" theme area where a derivation of the *a* motive can be observed beginning at m. 83 "in both inversion and retrograde."[2]

Yet another derivation of the *a* motive appears at mm. 130-132 and in retrograde at mm. 142-143 transitioning the end of the A section into the B section. Another important moment of transition is the "trio" section of the Scherzo (C) movement at m. 220 where the lyrical ascending line in the violin and cello parts can be interpreted as a derivation of the *a* motive. A rare reference to the *b* motive appears from m. 252 where the motive is both in the keyboard part and in the strings in inversion. This derivation of *b* is repeated and used as a transition tool to lead into the *fortissimo* return of the scherzo at m. 266. In the coda section of the work (starting at m. 439), the *a* motive is transformed in true cyclical fashion, played in C major as if the result of transcending the drama of the A sections and the *b* motive is omitted completely as its dramatic character is unsuitable in the coda instead opting for impassioned scales.

Motives in the *Second Piano Trio*

Once again, Bridge introduces the principal motives of the work in the very first page of the score. The very opening of the piece in the cello line introduces the main *a* motive which is continued in the violin part (*a1* at mm. 1-3, and *a2* in mm. 3-4.). The *b* motive emerges from the piano part at m. 6 and will play the most central role in the first movement of the trio.

The first large section of the first movement features continuous iterations of the *a1* and *a2* motives exchanged between the violin and cello over the keyboard ostinato. Once again, inversions of the *a* motive can be found at m. 25 in the violin or at mm. 61-62 in the keyboard part. The *b* motive is not fully developed until m. 75 where it is played in its entirety for the first time. Slight derivations of that *b* motive can be noticed at m. 103 in the keyboard part then answered by the violin at m. 105. This slight alteration of the *b* motive is done by changing the order of the intervals, this *b2* motive is in fact an “all-interval” tetrachord defined by Huss as “the smallest collection to contain all possible intervals.”[3] Starting from m. 124, when the *b* motive is played in the violin, Bridge begins to combine his *a* and *b* motives, having kept them rather isolated beforehand. The *a* motive appears first in the cello at m. 128 and once again emerges from the violin part at m. 132. The climax of the first movement beginning at m. 202 is another example of Bridge’s motivic economy pairing the unison iteration of the *a* motive in the strings with a motive that was previously used at mm. 64-67, but nowhere else in the movement. The *a* motive leads to a climactic iteration of the *b* motive once again in unison in the strings at m. 207 which is a benchmark for pieces in cyclical form. The ensuing *Allegro* section at m. 209 displays a derivation of the *a* motive in the strings paired with a derivation of the piano ostinato from the beginning of the movement.

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[2] Huss, *The Chamber Music of Frank Bridge*, pp. 136-137.

The appearance of the first movement motives is predictable in Bridge’s scherzo movement. As in the *Phantasy Trio*, the *a* motive of the first movement appears during the “trio” section of the scherzo movement at mm. 142-149, and later in the cello at mm. 171-181. Contrastingly to the scherzo, the *Andante molto moderato* movement is full of references to the first motive and features much less original material. The first measure of the movement features the altered *b2* motive (all-interval tetrachord) in the keyboard part which is answered at mm. 3-4 by the *a* motive in the violin and cello parts respectively, recalling the somber and cold mood of the first movement. The *b* motive is referenced again at m. 26 in the violin part with a derivation of *a* in the cello. References to the *a* and *b* motives are delayed in the fourth movement, appearing in important moments of transition, such as m. 155 where the *a* motive appears in augmentation in the cello part leading to a gradual slowing down of the movement until reaching at m. 186 the *Andante ben moderato* which openly replicates the opening of the first movement until m. 197.

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[3] Huss, *The Music of Frank Bridge* p. 137.

As in the *Phantasy Trio* the first movement material appears at the final climax of the last movement, played in unison in the violin and cello parts at m. 246 (the *a* motive) at first replicating the coda of the first movement (m. 257) but then developing into a new climactic outburst fading away into the movement's subdued B major/C# minor resolution.

The consistent use of cyclical procedures in Birdge's *Second Piano Trio* demonstrates that although Bridge may have made some alterations to the form of his work, his commitment to a more traditional cyclical approach is unchanged. The cyclical devices of the *Second Trio* are almost exactly similar as to the *Phantasy Trio* without the reliance on formal tonal procedures (minor mode themes being reintroduced in the major mode in the finale section, giving the effect of the "heightened tonic") nevertheless still giving the impression of transcendence of thematic material in climactic moments.

Bitonality and the Bridge Chord: a unique musical language

As observed above, the underlying structures in both trios in terms of form, motivic and cyclical approach are relatively similar. While the Second Piano Trio is undeniably larger in scale and in depth, its most distinct feature is without a doubt the sonority, or rather the musical language. A trademark of Bridge's mature style, bitonality plays a significant role in the *Second Piano Trio*, yet Bridge was not the only composer to experiment with bitonality or polytonality. Indeed, bitonal or polytonal devices were used in Stravinski and Ravel's music (both composers seemed to have an influence on Bridge style), and other composer's works. Stravinski's *Petrushka* famously superimposes C major and F# major triads (the so-called "Petrushka Chord"). Another example is the ending of Richard Strauss's *Also Sprach Zarathustra* which pairs B major and C major blurring any sense of resolution. Other English composers from Bridge's time would also experiment with polytonality, as Payne briefly mentions: "Several of Bridge's English contemporaries were sooner or later to enjoy the frisson obtained from bitonal aggregations, but generally these procedures only resulted in a temporary blurring of some unambiguous tonal outline and were simply a form of chromatic decoration."[4] A great example of Payne's description would be Elgar's *There is sweet music* from his *Four Choral Songs Op. 53* published as early as 1908. In this choral song, the men's voices sing in G major while the women's voices sing in Ab major. Although the key signatures clearly indicate bitonality, the voices often do not overlap, and when they do the dissonances are not nearly as striking as one would find in *Petrushka* or *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. Another English example is Gustav Holst's *Terzetto* for flute, oboe and viola written in 1925 but not published until 1944 (after Bridge's death). A fellow student of the RCM and of Stanford, Holst also experimented with the possibilities of polytonality in this chamber work. In this case, each instrument is scored in a different key: the flute is in A major / F# minor, the oboe is in Ab major / F minor and the viola is in C major / A minor. This work is certainly more dissonant than Elgar's part song, and occasionally invites octatonic sonorities. In the preface to the score from the *Musikproduktion Höflich* edition of this work, Phillip Brookes notes that:

> [Holst's] close friend Ralph Vaughan Williams noted that the different keys were "more seen by the eye than felt by the ear". This was not surprising since Holst's view of polytonality seems to have been to make the tonal centre of the work ambiguous, rather than to revel in any discordant clashes that emerged.[5]

Darius Milhaud is yet another example of a composer who used polytonality to great effect, and very consistently in his music. He was heavily criticized for doing so, particularly by the critic Fernand-Georges Roquebrune. In her book *Tradition and Style in the works of Darius Milhaud 1912-1939*, Barbara L. Kelly explains "Roquebrune contrasts Vuillermoz's ideas with Milhaud's practice; he questions the systematic and aggressive use of polytonality, criticizing the way in which Milhaud flouts the convention of allowing one tonality to dominate. This in his view, transgresses good taste."[6] Kelly also cites Milhaud's stance on polytonality, describing that: "He presented polytonality and atonality as the inevitable development of diatonic and chromatic tendencies, corresponding to Latin and Teutonic traditions respectively."[7] She continues by revealing that "In admitting that polytonality and atonality can produce de same effect, Milhaud revealed his preoccupation with the compositional process rather than the aural experience."[8]

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[4] Payne, p. 69.
[5] Brookes, Phillip: https://repertoire-explorer.musikmph.de/wp-content/uploads/vorworte_prefaces/1546.html (accessed 11/09/2021)

The critiques raised against Milhaud's compositional approach were certainly levied against Bridge as well, whose late musical style and approach to bitonality relied on dissonance rather than avoiding it. A famous quote often used in literature dedicated to Bridge, is found in Frank Howes' "The English Musical Renaissance" where Howes harshly criticizes Bridge's late style as such: "[Bridge] did what Bax, who was an even more conspicuous victim of the *Zeitgeist*, refused to do: he began to uglify his music to keep it up to date. In more polite terms this could be phrased as willingness to experiment with greater harmonic freedom, but the results sounded unnatural and unconvincing."[9] Another famous quote criticizing Bridge was written by the critic Herbert Hughes who in reviewing the premiere of the *Second Piano Trio* who wrote:

> We are, or so it seems to me, faced today, in this present international vogue of atonalism, with a new species of *Kappellmeistermusik*. 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.'[10]

The disdainful term "Kappellmeistermusik" bears a striking resemblance to D'Indy's reaction to polytonality describing it as a "style boche."[11]The reception of Bridge's music in the United States where his patroness Mrs. Coolidge resided could not be more different than in England. In the review of a performance of Bridge's *Violin Sonata H. 183* at Coolidge's festival at Pittsfield, Massachusetts, Alfred Frankenstein notes:

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[6] Barbara L. Kelly, "Tradition and Style in the works of Darius Milhaud 1912-1939," p.143
[7] Ibid. p. 145
[8] Ibid. p. 145
[9] Howes, "The English Musical Renaissance", p. 160
[10] From *The Daily Telegraph*, November 5th 1929, p. 8f in Hindmarsh p. 178
[11] Kelly, p. 142

> It seems to indicate that the composer, in the year of grace 1933, caught up at last with the "modernism" of 1915. It came as something of a shock to realize that a piece of music full of remote and recherché dissonances, capricious rhythms, and a twisting intangible line like captured lightning should sound old fashioned and out of date.[12]

Bridge's incorporation of bitonality in his musical language therefore proved to be a universally unpopular decision. To some like Howes and Hughes, it seemed like Bridge was superficially following a style that seemed in vogue in Western Europe; to others his style was already out of date. In comparison to the examples of Elgar and Host who used polytonality very sparingly (and relatively earlier than Bridge), Bridge's *Second Piano Trio* would sound in essence much more forward thinking and radical.

While Bridge's use of bitonality is not in essence an unparalleled innovation, it is how he uses it which gives his music, and the *Second Piano Trio* a very distinct flair. When considering the music of the *Second Piano Trio*, Bridge uses bitonality as an expressive tool very much mindful of the expectations associated with formal tonality. As briefly mentioned in Chapter 2, Bridge pairs his bitonal writing with clear tonal centers to create a sense of destabilization rather than strict dissonance. This can be seen for example with the full iteration of the *b* motive in the first movement of the *Second Piano Trio* starting at m. 75, where Bridge pairs the suggestions of Gb major and G major (in second inversion) layered on top of a low pedal in the cello part in E-flat. When this motive is continued in the violin part at m. 124, the bitonality is enharmonically shifted to F# major and G major and the tonal center has shifted to F#. Tonal centers are present throughout Bridge's work, confirming that the composer is not writing in a polytonal or atonal style, but rather in a tonal oriented mindset with continuous bitonal elements. It is therefore a pattern, regarding the approach to form and to sonority, that Bridge combines elements from a more traditional style (conventions of sonata form, and formal tonality), with his personal innovations (arch-form structures derived from the *Phantasies*, and his singular treatment of bitonality). The amalgamation of tradition and innovation reveals the very high technical standards that Bridge held himself to. Bridge's coherent handling of form, texture, sonority and expression in the *Second Piano Trio* resulted in an enthralling composition which Hindmarsh believes is "arguably his chamber music masterpiece."[13]

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[12] Alfred Frankenstein, "Festival at Pittsfield", *Modern Music*, Vol XII, No. 1, p. 42

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[13] Hindmarsh, Paul. *Frank Bridge: The Complete Works, Portraits of an English Composer in his time, with Full Thematic Catalogue of Works (1900-1941)* p. 13.

CONCLUSION

By establishing a linear chronology of Bridge's chamber music output and contextualizing the two piano trios within their respective creative periods, a better understanding of Bridge's contributions to the chamber music and the piano trio genres becomes possible. On one hand, we can observe Bridge's constant engagement with finding the means to achieve the highest form of expression through innovative solutions. On the other, we are faced with a composer who was criticized for "lacking substance" and to whom the praise of "clever" writing would have seemed as nothing more than a back-handed compliment. His abilities as a violist and conductor, his strong musical education at the RCM, his high standing as a chamber musician and his musical legacy in the hands of Benjamin Britten undoubtedly always played an important role in the perception of Bridge's compositions as Herbert Howells had noted. Therefore, once Bridge distanced himself from many of these aspects of his life (certainly in his activities as a conductor and chamber musician) in order to fully immerse himself in composition, so had the appreciation of his late compositions dwindled. Yet within the compositions of both the *Phantasy Trio* and the *Second Piano Trio*, one can find a refreshing originality and thought-provoking music that contrasted so sharply with what other British contemporaries had been writing. Even if the Cobbett competitions had the clear goal of developing a new national style of English music, Bridge avoided the temptation of writing in the folk idiom, instead relying on the many international influences he had delved into a student. Similarly, his strong ties with Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge had allowed him to compose in an uninhibited way, drawing once again on a great variety of influences and developing a truly unique musical language. Bridge's predilection for cyclical unity and motivic transformation as an expressive tool remained a constant in all of his compositions throughout his lifetime, which allowed him to use modernist-leaning ideals in a coherent and innovative way. If the initial debates about the reception of Bridge's music were whether his music was radical or conservative (or both as Anthony Payne had originally argued), my understanding of these two masterful piano trios in their own merit is that Bridge's music was expressing freedom of thought through intelligent discourse. In order to alleviate further needless speculation, I believe that this conclusion would benefit from a few words from the composer himself. In an interview for *Musical America* in November of 1923, Bridge addressed the English self-consciousness of using the folk-idiom in developing their musical national identity:

> 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 expression of the composer's own thoughts and feelings, and music comes from the promptings of his own inspiration; he cannot seek it, and any efforts on his part to aim it as a national expression must end in failure. This is precisely where, to my mind, those who are interested in folk-music are making a mistake in seeking to force that which should be spontaneous.[1]

The focus on personal expression is perhaps what was most important to Bridge. There are a few other quotes by Bridge in the interview where he discusses the need for a composer's music to be sincere yet thoroughly grounded in technical mastery and a profound understanding of the arts:

> The true artist may be trusted to take that care, and the greater the artist he is, the greater care he takes. After that, the truth of his message must make itself known. If he is sincere, then all is well. It is the sincerity of his work which is the real test. But any work, as I have said, must conform in its first principles to the canons of art. Unless it does, it cannot exist. No mere playing around in the colours and embroideries of some fashionable caprice will keep it alive. Some people talk of contemporary music as if it were the beginning of things – as if the music of the past could be ignored altogether. This is a wrong view. That which has nothing in common with the past is lifeless.[2]

Bridge's insistence on sincere and well-crafted materials is equally documented in the recollections of Benjamin Britten's composition lessons, who testified to the intensity and difficulty of his lessons in a touching tribute:

> The 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 if it was what I'd really meant. […] At about 18 or 19, perhaps naturally, I began to rebel. When Bridge played questionable chords across the room at me and asked if that was what I meant, I would retort, "Yes it is." He'd grunt back, "Well it oughtn't to be."[3]

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[1] P. J. Nolan, "An Interview with Frank Bridge", *Musical America* (November 1923), in Hindmarsh, pp. 27-28.

[2] P. J. Nolan, "An Interview with Frank Bridge", *Musical America* (November 1923), in Hindmarsh, p. 28.

[3] Britten, Benjamin. "Britten looking back." *Musical America*. Vol 10, no. 84 (February 1964): p. 4.

Does the fact that his music was highly personal and skillfully written however substantiate any argument in favor of programming Bridge's music more frequently? What has any of the recent scholarship dedicated to Bridge's work then accomplished? The goal of this document was to suggest that there is perhaps much to still be interpreted in Bridge's musical style, and that in a time when chamber music performances seem to invite and long for more varied programming, Bridge's contributions to chamber music repertoire, particularly through the two masterful piano trios, are works of art that deserve further interpretation.

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