Gabriel Fauré and *l'organisation du mouvement*:
Poetic prosody and rhythmic continuity
in the songs (1861–1921)

Volume 1

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Abstract

The songs of Gabriel Fauré form a significant part of the recitalist's repertoire and have been the subject of in-depth musical analysis, particularly from the middle of the twentieth century to this day. However, relatively little has been written about the relationship between poetic and musical rhythm in Fauré's *romances* and *mélodies*. This is especially important in light of Fauré's very personal compositional style in the songs, namely forward motion based on the musical pulse. This thesis investigates the origins of this motion from the angle of French poetics, drawing upon the work of Henri Meschonnic and Gérard Dessons as they consider *l'organisation du mouvement* (the organisation of motion) in poetry. In applying a similar approach to consider the way in which Fauré creates, controls and sustains musical motion and intensity in his songs, this thesis sheds new light on the role of French speech rhythms and versification in the *mélodie.*

Through analysis of text, musical excerpts and discussion of select sound recordings, this thesis highlights the means by which Fauré achieves expressive prosody in his songs as his settings reflect the changing poetic practice of the second half of the nineteenth century into the early twentieth century through the Romantic, Parnassian and Symbolist poetic styles. Whilst forward motion on the pulse remains central to his concept of musical motion, analysis reveals that Fauré responds to poetic innovations by moving away from vocal lyricism to an expressive recitation of the poetic text using a limited

number of processes; chief among them is the near neutralisation of musical metre and accentuation in order to prioritise the durational stresses in French language.

By integrating speech rhythms and poetic prosody into his songs, Fauré attests to his lifelong aim of accurately expressing the poet's voice and mind into musical recitation. However, Fauré's musical *organisation du mouvement* bears important implications for the performance of his *mélodies* and of French song in general, since metre and regular accentuation are replaced by irregular note values and the reduced tessitura of a declamation-based *mélodie.* More specifically, Fauré achieves a complete transformation of the genre: through his understanding of poetic processes and stylistic transformations, he contributes to changing the role of the singer from that of a vocalist to a *récitant*, that is, one who recites.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my appreciation and sincere thanks to my thesis supervisors, Professors Christopher Dingle and Deborah Mawer, as well as to Professor Ron Woodley who helped launch this life-changing project. Without their encouragement and high standards, this thesis would not have reached this stage. I would also like to thank Dr Helen Abbott, whose input was instrumental in the shaping of my ideas. Alan Smith's excellent musical engraving and Jill Barrett's efficient proof-reading provided invaluable help in completing my work.

To pupils, friends and family here and in Canada, my sincere thanks for their constant support. And finally, to my husband Paul, and to our children Olivia, Simon and Laura, my gratitude for their infinite patience and for their undying faith in my ability to bring this project to fruition.

Note on Translations

All translations of texts and poetry within this thesis are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924) is aptly described as a traditionalist innovator by the music theorist Françoise Gervais (Gervais, 1971, p. 19). Educated in Renaissance and Baroque musical styles and techniques as well as in church music practice, Fauré was also introduced to works of contemporaneous composers such as Robert Schumann (1810–56), Franz Liszt (1811–86) and Richard Wagner (1813–83) by pianist and composer Camille Saint–Saëns (1835–1921) who taught at the school founded for church musicians by Louis Niedermeyer (1802–61) and attended by Fauré from 1854 to 1865.

Throughout his long career, Fauré preserved a strong link to past musical forms and processes while constantly seeking new musical means of expression. Nowhere more than in his songs are Fauré's aesthetic values of continuity committed to renewal so apparent: the literary transformations of the nineteenth century, moving from Romanticism through Parnassianism and on to Symbolism, provided Fauré with a wealth of poetic material to fulfil his quest for compositional renewal. More significantly, prosodic rhythms and expressive recitation grew in importance in Fauré's songs through contact with changing literary styles, while lyricism, a major feature of his early *romances* and *mélodies*, became an occasional mode of expression in the late song cycles after 1900.

1.1: Poetry and music: *l'organisation* du *mouvement*

This thesis focuses equally on words and music, particularly on poetic texts and on their role in musical structure, expression and recitation in Fauré's songs. In so doing, it sheds new light on Fauré's musical prosody and its processes through analysis of poetic metre and rhythm, along with prosodic devices and sonorities, keeping in mind the poet's voice as the first reciting voice of a text. In order to achieve this, two questions are explored:

1. What relationship exists in Gabriel Fauré's songs between, on the one hand, poetic rhythm and, on the other hand, musical rhythm and metre?

2. What does this relationship reveal about poetic prosody and musical declamation?

Several authors have focused on distinct characteristics of Fauré's prosodic style, for instance acknowledging the continuous flow of recitation on the pulse (Tait, 1989, pp. 207–09 and Nectoux, 2008, p. 317), highlighting the irregularity of rhythms within a stated metre (Caballero, 2001, p. 229) or bringing out hemiolas and syncopations to draw attention to prosodic irregularities (Howat & Kilpatrick, 2011, p. 265 and Ober, 2012, pp. 141, 147, 175). However, few have investigated systematically the strong relationship between Fauré's musical prosody and French poetic prosody. This thesis begins from the premise that poetic rhythm, verse[1] and language provide

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[1] For the purpose of this thesis and when addressing poetry specifically for analysis, verse' refers to a succession of words arranged according to natural or recognized rules of prosody and forming a complete metrical line; one of the lines of a poem or piece of versification' (OED, 2017, online).

energy to Fauré's songs: in other words, versification and syntactical stresses in the French language translate into speech and song as durational stresses, rendering the regular reiteration of musical metrical signals such as downbeats less relevant and musically weaker. Fauré's most effective solution to the notorious problem of French prosody' (Caballero, 2001, p. 236) is to move rhythm forward on the pulse, in effect equalising stresses and, by using fluid harmonies, postponing resolution and repose until the appropriate poetic and prosodic moment.

This thesis investigates the techniques used by Fauré to overcome the challenges presented by French prosody, focusing in particular on the arrangement of rhythms, note values and, to a lesser extent, melodic and intensity factors to recite French verse musically and expressively. It further highlights the significant influence brought upon the *mélodie* by the rhythmic elements in poetry and brings clearer insights into the musical means utilised by Fauré to translate poetic declamation expressively into song.

My own background as a native French-speaker provides me with a unique affinity with the linguistic and semantic understanding of French poetry. In combining these skills with my professional performance experience as a singer, I am able to discern from within the textual and musical subtleties in Fauré's *mélodies* in relation to this study's investigation into musical prosody.

In order to maintain a poetically-based analytical stance, Fauré's songs are considered from within three main literary stylistic periods: the songs on Romantic and Parnassian texts (1861–87) in Chapter 3, settings of Paul Verlaine poems (1887–94) in Chapter 4 and Symbolist song settings and

cycles (1894–1921) in Chapter 5. In each chapter relevant to a particular period, a discussion on the poetic movement, its socio-cultural context and its characteristics, particularly versification and rhythmic features, defines the environment within which poetry and music flourished. These stylistic components form the basis for a detailed examination of representative passages from Fauré's compositions from that period, highlighting both poetic features and Fauré's rhythmic and expressive declamation techniques. In addition, selected commercial recordings are used as exemplars to highlight or contrast specific analytical findings in relation to practice. Preceding these three investigative chapters (Chapters 3–5), an initial chapter on French versification and the development of French prosodic and rhythmic techniques presents background material essential for understanding the issues surrounding French poetry and the *mélodie* (Chapter 2).

Underpinning this study is Gérard Dessons and Henri Meschonnic's theory of poetic rhythm, a theory of continuity, in contrast with the traditional fragmented binary method of understanding versification, originating from dance-like descriptions of movements (hence terminology such as pied', levée' and descente' applied to poetry).[2] Dessons and Meschonnic base their theory on the work of French structural linguist Émile Benveniste and the distinction he draws between language and discourse. In the development of their ideas on language (independent of context) and discourse (within a given context), summarised in their 1998 *Traité du rythme*, Dessons and Meschonnic define rhythm as *l'organisation* du *mouvement* (the organisation

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[2] Foot, lift, descent

of motion), marking the actualisation of a subject through its discourse (Dessons & Meschonnic, 2008, p. 75). This organisation supposes the interaction of prosodic and discursive accents in a continuum, producing each time a single and unique interpretative voice, the first of which is the poet's creation. This is significant, not only for the understanding and elucidation of the verse itself but also for the investigation of Fauré's musical settings of poetry. The theory of continuity enables the accumulation (or isolation) of prosodic stresses and shows how tension ebbs and flows between already existing markers of rhythm (such as a *césure* or the end of a line of verse) and the poet's own organisation of motion as a subject in the creative act of writing. Dessons and Meschonnic, in their redefinition of rhythm as the organisation of motion in discourse (Dessons & Meschonnic, 2008, p. 74), propose a new analytical framework for words and for words with music, now seen as unique and varied voices of a poetic work. This thesis investigates the extra source of organisation and tension added by Fauré's setting of poetry into *mélodie* and the degree to which Fauré's own subjective voice creates continuity or controls motion in its interpretation of the poet's verse.

     Two other authors contribute important background to this research. Central to the present study is Carlo Caballero's monograph *Fauré and French Musical Aesthetics* (2001), particularly the conclusions on the relationship to metre and rhythm in Fauré's music. In his discussion on Fauré's prosody, Caballero, himself inspired by Harald Krebs's *Fantasy Pieces* (1999) on mobile layers of rhythms in German music, argues that phrases in Fauré's songs may be divided multivalently in groups of various

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(and variable) lengths, from brief two- or three-word locutions to hyper-metrical groups made up of several bars (Caballero, 2001, pp. 223–28). These may then be combined in numerous ways, producing varied rhythmic effects at each performance. Although an attractive proposition to explain Fauré's prosody (particularly in the case of so-called faulty accentuation), Caballero's argument overlooks three essential points:

1. Basing the grouping of words on implied metrical changes in musical declamation necessarily entails the introduction of points of accentuation (if not of actual emphasis), thus altering Fauré's careful prosody on the pulse.

2. The varying of rhythmic groups in each performance by recombining metrical markings may well contradict Fauré's own musical setting, which already exists as a performing voice of the poetic text.

3. French prosody and versification rules, producing durational rather than accentual stress patterns, require continuity rather than fragmentation for effective declamation.[3]

This thesis, drawing upon Dessons and Meschonnic's theory of *l'organisation du mouvement*, brings new understanding into the way in which verse and *mélodie* interact for expressive declamation. Song analysis reveals that rhythmic continuity rather than fragmentation better suits French declamation and forms the basis of Fauré's prosody in his *mélodies*.

In 1989, Robin Tait published a major study into Fauré's musical language, providing an in-depth outlook on formal, melodic, harmonic and

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[3] The question of accentuation in French language and poetry is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.

rhythmic processes used by Fauré for expression. Tait brought essential insights into factors affecting rhythm and metre, such as the role of harmony in conjunction with continuous motion on the pulse. His analysis usefully charts stylistic transformations affecting these processes throughout Fauré's long career, providing a departure point for more specific research into poetic and musical rhythms in Fauré's songs. Of particular interest is Tait's evidence of rhythmic continuity on the pulse, present in all genres composed by Fauré.

Another author borrows elements from Latin scansion to explain Fauré's treatment of prosodic rhythm. Pierre Fortassier (1976) adapts the traditional Latin metrical system to categorise particular recurring rhythmic patterns, such as two semiquavers followed by a quaver and interpreted as an anapaest, found in a large number of Fauré's *mélodies*. While Fauré's songs unquestionably incorporate recognisable and recurring rhythmic patterns, their origin lies less in an ancient and foreign poetic scansion than in the ebb and flow of nineteenth-century French poetic prosody which Fauré translates into musical recitation. Moreover, historical evidence, discussed in section 2.1 of Chapter 2, reveals that the use of pre-determined feet within set poetical metres (as in Latin scansion) contradicts the durational and variable accentuation of French speech and poetry; this discrepancy becomes even more apparent with the *vers libres* of Symbolism at the end of the nineteenth century. Using his analytical technique, Fortassier identifies the rhythmic variations introduced in the verse by Fauré. Nevertheless, the grouping of feet into prescribed metres and the ensuing fragmentation may well create additional musical stress points (or, at the very least, pre-determined

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declamatory groupings), contradicting Fauré's forward motion on the pulse. For these reasons and in the light of the recent linguistic research by Dessons and Meschonnic on poetic continuity, Fortassier's approach is not well adapted to a thorough investigation of musical prosody in Fauré's songs and does not figure prominently within this thesis.

Mary E. Ober, in her 2012 unpublished thesis on expressive prosody and the historical antecedents to Fauré's *mélodies,* brings yet another outlook on the relationship between rhythm and text. Ober argues that the prosodic approach practised by Fauré still retains a fairly strong connection with musical metre and is linked to sixteenth-century *chant mesuré* through to eighteenth-century *airs* from stage works. Ober resolves discrepancies in accentuation between text and music by downbeat displacement', that is, a shift in stress patterns enabling the text to receive its proper accentuation, effected through frequent and implied metrical changes. In this way, Ober's argument ties in with Caballero's multivalent analysis since it seeks to retain a metrical environment to explain prosody and to structure musical and poetic phrases. Although taking into account poetic metres and internal rhythmic groups, by focusing on changes in musical metre to solve accentual conflicts between text and music, Ober fails to recognise fully the fundamental qualities of the French language (flowing and fluid, directed to end-accented goals) and the many rhythmic relationships within the line of verse inherent to its metrical structure. This in effect weakens the argument: using implied musical metrical variations to accommodate prosodic irregularities could, in principle, create stresses at the beginning of phrases and compete with the natural stress

patterns of the French language (see Chapter 2, section 2.2). Text analysis applied to Fauré's songs, along with sound recordings, support a subtle approach to declamatory stresses in the French song melodic line and illustrate repeatedly the quality of forward motion found in Fauré's music.

1.2: Fauré: past and present research

Not one to surround himself with a coterie of admiring disciples, Fauré was nevertheless held in high esteem among fellow musicians, increasingly so as he approached the end of his career. Early French biographical material on Fauré (written after his death in 1924) is somewhat scarce up until the second half of the twentieth century and generally includes a survey of Fauré's works along with accounts of his life (Charles Koechlin, 1927; Georges Servières, 1930; Émile Vuillermoz, 1960). While of limited use when compared with more extensive modern scholarship, these documents nevertheless provide background information on the social and musical climate during Fauré's lifetime. Philippe Fauré-Fremiet's biography (1957) supplies much first-hand detail on his father's outlook and compositional processes, while appearing at times to draw a protective screen around Fauré. However, it offers a unique glimpse into his thoughts and into his close relationship with his son with whom he shared ideas and insights. In addition, the thirty-nine year correspondence between Fauré and his wife Marie, assembled by Fauré-Fremiet, provides invaluable clues into Fauré's mind and character.

Jean-Michel Nectoux, with his seminal and detailed biography of the

composer (2nd ed., 2008), stands out as the foremost contemporary French Fauré scholar. His contribution to the body of knowledge on Fauré includes a compilation of his correspondence and numerous journal articles and papers. A collection of a number of letters exchanged with Camille Saint-Saëns, school friends, singers and wealthy patrons, edited by Nectoux, reveals not only the composer's daily concerns but also his evolution among supporters and fellow musicians. Fauré's cordial relation with the English public is highlighted by biographical surveys of his works (Suckling, 1946; Orledge, 1979; Duchen, 2000). Analyses and commentary on thematic material by Robert Orledge are particularly useful for uncovering connections between Fauré's works across various genres.

Nectoux's ongoing research has sparked welcome in-depth investigation into Fauré's musical works and style, gradually filling in gaps in our knowledge about this most discrete of musicians. In addition to Tait, valuable analysis is provided by Françoise Gervais (1971). Her study details Fauré's harmonic language, drawing attention to his particular approach to modulation as well as to the ever-present modal influences. The scope and depth of both Tait's and Gervais's investigations undeniably opened the way to further scholarly research and provide important background information for this thesis.

Recent works about Fauré's harmony, in contrast with Gervais's comprehensive and detailed analysis, tends to focus on the effect produced by overarching harmonic movements. Harmonic ambiguity is highlighted in James W. Sobaskie's paper Allusion in the music of Gabriel Fauré' (1999),

using a Schenkerian analytical framework and mapping out points of tension between local and long-range harmonic events. Karl Johansen's article, also focusing on harmonic ambiguity (1999), brings out the role of harmony in creating Fauré's famous ongoing motion. By sustaining ambiguity and delaying resolution, notes Johansen, Fauré expands harmonic possibilities without resorting to atonality while controlling musical intensity in response to the poem's drama (Johansen, 1999, p. 79). Johansen's study provides a particularly useful discussion on the management of dramatic intensity through harmony, of special relevance to prosody in Symbolist poetry.

Musicological and investigative research in the last fifty years has paved the way for two recent critical editions of Fauré songs: the first, *Mélodies et duos, premières mélodies: 1861–1875* (2010), edited by Jean-Michel Nectoux and Mimi Daitz, contains comprehensive source lists, including alternative performing options taken from the various extant editions and manuscripts. The most recent, *Gabriel Fauré. Complete Songs, Vol. 1: 1861–1882* (2014), and *Gabriel Fauré. Complete Songs, Vol. 3: The Complete Verlaine Settings* (2015)*,* both edited by Roy Howat and Emily Kilpatrick, include a wide range of complementary factual and contextual information alongside the customary sources for the songs. These ground-breaking editions feature in-depth research and present an array of manuscript and first edition sources, contributing significant evidence for the shaping of the analyses in this thesis.

All musical excerpts of songs by Fauré in this thesis (except for a small number of examples) are taken from the Hamelle three-volume high-voice

collection (Volume 1, 1879 by Choudens, subsequently ceded to Hamelle; Volume 2, 1897; Volume 3, 1908); and the Hamelle high-voice edition of *La Bonne Chanson* (1894). The four last song cycles come from the following editions: *La Chanson d'Ève,* 1910, Heugel; *Le jardin clos,* 1915, Durand; *Mirages,* 1919, Durand; *L'horizon chimérique,* 1922, Durand. All these editions, while originally dating from Fauré's lifetime, are still published and in use at the present time. While it may have been useful to adopt a wider range of sources to illustrate the scope of Fauré's exploration of prosody in his songs, the unavailability of a complete critical edition at the time of writing[4] presented the problem of consistency in the availability of evidence from manuscripts, presentation copies, single editions and collections. It was therefore judged that, in the absence of more complete data, coherence (in terms of publishing house and year, voice type and song collection) would provide some degree of consistency. Any discrepancies, omissions or obvious errors found in these editions and believed to be pertinent to the argument in this thesis have been researched in the critical editions available at the time of writing. Most musical excerpts in this thesis, being fairly brief, are incorporated directly within the body of the text, complemented by a footnote translation. A selection of complete songs can be found, along with their translations, in Volume 2, Appendix C. All the editions in use in this thesis are listed in the musical scores section of the Bibliography.

Valuable background material, particularly on socio-cultural issues and music, assists in contextualising this study within French society at the end of

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[4]   Howat and Kilpatrick's critical edition, *Gabriel Fauré: Complete Songs,* published by Peters, has released two of the projected three volumes.

the nineteenth century. Michel Faure and Vincent Vivès (2000) provide a study of the *mélodie* from its origins, identifying it, among other things, as a manifestation of changing social mores. Frits Noske's classic study of French song from Berlioz to Duparc (1970) contributes helpful factual resource material, covering both musical and social elements. Finally, Graham Johnson's volume on Fauré's songs and their poets (2009) brings together his extensive knowledge and performing experience to produce a detailed and thorough reference book.

In-depth, comprehensive research into Fauré's use of metre and rhythm in his songs represents a fairly recent development. This thesis combines the study of literary and musical rhythmic features to gain a deeper understanding of Fauré's *mélodies* within the broader French socio-cultural context. As a consequence, it leads to a greater awareness of the processes underpinning Fauré's prosody.

1.3: Rhythm and French versification

A survey of the development of French linguistic rhythms leading to systems of versification constitutes the first part of Chapter 2. The groundwork for investigation in the fields of rhythm and versification begins with the earliest known written definition of rhythm in French, found in *La Deffence et illustration de la langue françoyse* (Du Bellay, 1549), which includes various attributes based on a Latin precept, that of the counting of syllable values in a line. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Dictionnaire de musique* (1768) reflects a

similar approach to the role of rhythm, and draws a direct link to Greek poetry. English-language dictionaries contribute their own definitions to test linguistic and cultural differences. Early sources either supply little information (Blount, 1656) or present a confusing array of spellings and cross-referencing information of linguistic and medical origins (Philips, 1608). Contrary to the French definitions, the distinction between rhythm and rhyme in English dictionaries is often unclear, at least until Sheridan's 1789 *Complete Dictionary of the English Language*, where rhythm appears to join the ranks of music, away from its connection to rhyme in poetry.

French and English sources concord at the end of the nineteenth century to provide a multiplicity and diversity of definitions, as well as an apparent agreement on poetic rhythm, understood as a succession of strong-weak series of syllables (Littré, 1874; Webster, 1898). Twenty-first century dictionaries bear witness to the great increase of meanings given to rhythm by present-day society. Crucially, linguistic identities come to the fore in defining poetic rhythm: pre-determined metres and feet remain part of English verse, vestiges of past Latin and Greek influences (Oxford, 2010), whereas the irregular prosodic rhythms inherent to spoken French, based on durational rather than accentual stress points, are acknowledged in *Trésor de la langue française* (2012).

Having established the broad background of meaning for this thesis, it is useful to turn to nineteenth-century primary sources, the poets themselves. A limited amount of background material may be found in Jules Lemaître's 1886 study and critique of contemporaneous poets, *Les Contemporains:*

études et portraits littéraires (in eight series), accompanied by condensed biographical information. Likewise, Catulle Mendès's 1903 report to the minister of education and fine arts, *Le Mouvement poétique français de 1867 à 1900,* contains his extended account on the state of poetry in France at the end of the nineteenth century, along with the names of poets, a list of their works to date and series of fulsome letters, excerpts of official speeches, odes and complimentary messages from fellow poets. Studies or reports such as these may be of limited value, except by indicating indirectly the writers' biases; for instance, Lemaître includes Verlaine only as part of a collected list of writers, not granting him a separate entry. Writings by poets on their art or that of contemporaries takes the form of introductions to their own works, such as Charles Baudelaire in *Les fleurs du mal* (1857) or press articles (Verlaine in *La Revue d'aujourd'hui*, 15 March 1890).

In addition to the reflection of poets on their art, a more objective analytical stance is necessary to appreciate the impact of change (literary and socio-cultural) on nineteenth-century French versification. Maurice Grammont's 1911 systematic study of French versification still constitutes a valid reference in the field. A similarly methodical format is contained in Jean Mazaleyrat's 1974 *Éléments de métrique française*. However, Mazaleyrat integrates subjective elements of declamation and interpretation into objective descriptions of structure and form. This may potentially introduce confusion, inasmuch as it weakens the distinction between the written work and an individual interpretation, which is subject to variation. No such bias guides Michèle Aquien's clear and concise 2010 textual analysis of versification which

brings together traditional poetry and examples from modern works.

These guides to poetic analysis effectively informed the reflection for this thesis on prosody, metre and rhythm, eventually leading to the conclusion that Dessons and Meschonnic's theory of continuity (*l'organisation du mouvement*) represents a unique and appropriate analytical approach with respect to the texts of Fauré's songs as well as his own rhythmic processes.

1.4: Scope of the thesis

In the process of setting out the boundaries of this research, the subject of voice as an aesthetic and poetic notion has been touched upon from time to time. However, this thesis is not intended for the exploration of the wider implications of this idea, such as voice and body or the philosophical implications of vocal aesthetics; this would amount to according undue attention to a tangential subject in the present context. Likewise, questions surrounding performance are limited to the contextualisation of research findings within commercial recordings, either to illustrate or to contrast a specific argument. The broader issues of poetic voice, of style in poetic recitation or in the performance of the *mélodie* are beyond the scope of this thesis.

To immerse oneself in Fauré's songs is to seek the process by which he attempts to express that which [he] is hardly able to realise himself' (Fauré-Fremiet, 1951, p. 78). It is the aim of this thesis to arrive at a fuller understanding of Fauré's prosodic techniques by entering into his songs

through the poetry which inspired him from the outset. In his biography, Fauré-Fremiet brings his own insight into his father's outlook. Referring to three early songs, he writes:

> C'est avec *Chant d'automne*, *L'absent* ..,. *Au bord de l'eau*,
> que Gabriel Fauré affirme sa libre conception de la mélodie,
> synthèse lyrique, mariage du mot et de la note. Pas de
> superposition, pas de marche parallèle entre les deux arts,
> musique et poésie; la pensée du compositeur doit s'identifier
> à celle du poète. L'oeuvre musicale doit être inséparable de
> l'oeuvre poétique... La Musique ainsi ne dira rien *qui ne doive*
> *être dit* [author's italics] (Fauré-Fremiet, 1957, pp. 44–45).[5]

Fauré-Fremiet describes the close union between word and music arising when expression ventures beyond words, into l'indicible', that is, into the realm of the inexpressible. Yet, it is at first through the very physical act of reading, speaking and singing that we begin to comprehend Fauré's songs in their entire voiced richness. The next chapter assembles a number of elements central to a better understanding of the workings of French poetry, essential features for the study of prosody and rhythm in this thesis.

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[5] It is with *Chant d'automne* (Autumn Song), *L'absent* (The absent one)..., *Au bord de l'eau*
(At the water's edge) that Gabriel Fauré states his free notion of *mélodie*, a lyrical
synthesis, a union of word and note. No overlap nor parallel progression should exist
between these two art forms, music and poetry; the composer's mind should be identical to
that of the poet... Thus, Music will state nothing which should not be said.

Chapter 2: Contextualising Rhythm in French Verse
and in Fauré's Prosodic-musical Style

Fauré's rhythmic-prosodic style in the *romances* and *mélodies* developed within the historical, linguistic and social context of French poetry, during a period of significant transformation in literature. Starting with poetic Romanticism in 1861 with his first song *Le papillon et la fleur,* through Parnassianism and on to Symbolism in the early twentieth century, Fauré remained committed to refining his compositional technique and constantly searched for musically appropriate poetry (qui appelle la musique', Fauré-Fremiet, 1951, p. 223). With the decline of the monarchy and of the status of the nobility during the nineteenth century came a widespread democratisation at many levels in French society. Increased opportunities for travel facilitated the discovery of new and exotic cultures; the growth in scientific knowledge as well as rapid industrialisation forever altered the social order and rendered urban life more attractive. These factors inspired a transformation in the arts, as contact with new cultures provided renewed inspiration for writers and poets. In the midst of this social and artistic effervescence, Fauré contributed to the evolution of the *mélodie* by adapting traditional musical elements, such as metre and rhythm, to translate poetry into song and by adapting to evolving poetic forms, as the analysis in this thesis demonstrates.

To provide the background for the study of rhythm in Fauré's songs, this chapter explores two main topics central to the understanding of Fauré's prosodic rhythmic practice: firstly, French verse as both a poetic language

likely to change and evolve and as a literary form subject to its own rules and structures; secondly, the principal techniques used by Fauré to translate poetic rhythms, prosody and mood into the musical elements of metre and rhythm. The last section of this chapter consists of an explanation of the analytical methodology and its variants used throughout this thesis.

2.1: From the quantitative to the qualitative French line of verse

The language known today as French owes at least part of its origin to the influence of Latin during the expansion of the Roman Empire to *Gallia Transalpina* (Transalpine Gaul), from the middle of the first century BC to the fifth century AD (Flower & Tuppen, 2015, online). Along with the inevitable consequences of conquest, such as the subjugation of the inhabitants to the conquering power or the eventual adoption of social and other customs, came the absorption into the vernacular of linguistic elements from the formerly foreign tongue. Thus, Latin, its vocabulary, speech rhythms (as still heard in English nowadays, for instance) and literary art forms dominated in the ruling and educated classes.

The subsequent influx of other cultures such as the Visigoths, starting from the fifth century AD, made its own contribution to the linguistic environment of ancient France, but Latin remained the language of the Church and of administration. Perhaps precisely because of the increased incursion of features from other languages, a change occurred around the fifth to the

seventh century, according to Mylène Dubiau-Feuillerac: A l'époque en effet,[1] de même que dans l'antique poésie grecque, il n'y avait pas d'opposition entre le chant, la poésie et la danse. Il s'opère un bouleversement vers le Ve–VIIe siècle, la poésie n'est plus quantitative mais qualitative.' (Dubiau-Feuillerac, 2008, p. 14).[2] In effect, a significant transformation had affected both language and poetry: meaning and order now determined word and phrase stresses, rather than pre-existing metrical groups.

Dubiau-Feuillerac introduces one essential distinction in accentuation between Latin and French poetry – indeed, between French and languages featuring set tonic word accents. In brief, French accentuation (and this is made more evident in poetry) evolved to a system whereby stresses became durational (qualitative) and dependent upon a word's position in a line of verse, rather than on predetermined accents (quantitative). This system is exemplified again and again in Fauré's songs and highlighted throughout this thesis as the foundation of his approach to metre and rhythm.

Latin prosody consisted of a precise system of strong-weak and long-short accentuation patterns within a given measure. A long syllable was worth two short syllables in length; words consisted of set strong and weak accents and were arranged in pre-determined metrical feet, such as a dactyl (long-short-short or strong-weak-weak) or an iamb (short-long or weak-strong). English still retains some of the rhythmic and metrical features of Latin and may therefore serve to illustrate the distinction between quantitative and

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[1] Here, Dubiau-Feuillerac refers to the period in which French poetry was still modelled on Latin rhythms (Dubiau-Feuillerac, 2008, p. 14).

[2] In fact, at the time, as in ancient Greek poetry, no opposition existed between song, poetry and dance. A major upheaval occurring around the fifth to the seventh century meant that poetry was no longer quantitative but qualitative.

qualitative accentuation. Thus, an iambic pentameter consists of five iambs (weak-strong). The following line of verse by John Keats (1795–1821) presents a clear example of this rhythmic scheme:

Example 2.1: *To Autumn* (1820), J. Keats

Verse: To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells.
Scans as: u   -   u   -   u   -   u   - u   -

This line is stressed in two ways: the dash refers to an accented syllable and ' u' to an unaccented syllable. Additionally, a stressed syllable lasts twice as long as an unstressed syllable. As in Latin verse, English poetic metres determine the arrangement of various combinations of long-short (strong-weak) syllables in a line of verse. Words, themselves made up of a series of strong-weak syllables, are then selected to correspond to the metre, imparting their own rhythmic energy to the line.

It is probable that at least some of the Latin internal rhythmic organisation of the verse remained in early French poetry, and perhaps even later, particularly in the formal stage declamatory style of the tragedies. The reference to numbers, measure or regularity found in the more ancient dictionary definitions of rhythm can be traced directly to the Latin prosodic system. Joachim Du Bellay (1522–60) in his 1549 *La Deffence et illustration de la Langue Francoyse* is probably the first French-language source where rhythm is specifically mentioned. In his discussion, Du Bellay attributes the Greek origin *ruthmos* and the Latin *numerus* to rhythm. He establishes the importance of movement in a line of verse and comments on the wealth of

meanings associated with the word: Ainsi les vers, encores qu'ilz ne finissent point en un mesme son, generalement se peuvent appeler rythme: d'autant que la signification de ce mot *ruthmos* est fort ample, & emporte [comporte] beaucoup d'autres termes, comme ... *reigle, mesure, melodieuse consonance de voix, consequution* [enchaînement], *ordre & comparaison'* (Quoted in Dessons & Meschonnic, 2008, p. 12).[3] Du Bellay's definition appears to show an early indication of rhyme as a rhythmic component in a line of verse, as were recurrence and repetition.

In fact, the deep-seated changes mentioned above by Dubiau-Feuillerac and which moved linguistic and poetic speech accentuation away from set metres likely came into use gradually after the fifth century, when the last Roman ruler in Gaul was defeated in 486 by Clovis (Drinkwater, 2016, online). As French prosodic rhythm developed into a system consisting of syllables of the same value (that is, without pre-set stresses or durations), accentuation linked to factors other than syllabic stress featured more prominently in poetry. For example, the end of the line bore the main stress, not by virtue of a performed accent but by an increase in dramatic intensity and the need for resolution produced by equalised syllabic values.

With the emergence of end-of-line assonance, the sonority of the last syllable (or of the penultimate syllable, in the case of an *e caduc* – the mute e') became an additional focal point and rhythmic goal in the line. More importantly, individual words no longer carried accentual patterns of their own;

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[3]   Thus the verses, even while not ending with the same sound, may still be known as rhythm, particularly since the meaning of the word ruthmos is extensive, and includes many more words, such as … *pace, measure, melodious consonance of the voice, sequence, order, correspondence.*

instead, several other factors, including the position of the words in the line, their syntactic role and their prosodic weight, now determined whether a particular word or a word group would be stressed in any way. For example, stresses vary in the following locutions: Un grand **hom**me; Un homme **grand**'.[4] In general, words, word groups and lines of verse are end-accented, hence the distinct accentual shift in the two locutions cited above.

Dessons and Meschonnic establish a clear distinction between the written poetic work and the subjective act of performing this work. En français, depuis le Moyen Âge, la longueur des syllabes correspond à la réalisation individuelle des discours,[5] elle n'est pas un fait de langue. Elle n'oppose pas deux morphèmes (anglais: *bit* et *beat*), mais deux modalités de discours, oui' et ouiii' ' (Dessons & Meschonnic, 2008, p. 145).[6] In other words, the principle of syllable equalisation remains a fundamental rhythmic pre-requisite of the line of verse, to be structured externally by versification rules and prosodic processes. At the same time, performance adds its own rhythmic variants.

Similarly, the 2012 *Trésor de la langue française* contrasts the rhythm of versification, for instance metrical features such as caesura and rhyme, with the rhythm in French prosody, which is perceptible on reading or hearing a text. The extensive definition refers to prosodic processes (assonance and alliteration, for example) and to the expressive and varied grouping of words (*Trésor de la langue française*, 2012, online). However, such groupings in

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[4] A great man; a tall man.
[5] Dessons and Meschonnic refer here specifically to the meaning of discourse in linguistics, i.e. The form of words by which something is communicated' (OED, 2016, online).
[6] In French, since the Middle Ages, syllable length corresponds to the individual performance of discourse, it is not borne out of the language. It does not place two morphemes in opposition (in English, *bit* and *beat*), but opposes two forms of discourse: yes' and yeees'.

Classical and later poetic styles no longer form part of pre-set rhythmic groups (feet) as in ancient metres modelled on the Latin; rather, syntax, prosody or style (among others) determine the groups' place in a line of verse. Poetry from the second half of the nineteenth century and beyond, as heard in most of Fauré's songs, belongs to this type.

2.2: The French line of verse and its rhythms

The French line of verse, in its evolution away from the distinct scansion of Latin poetry, developed its own versification rules, periodically challenged and altered. One significant feature of this evolution is French poetic metre, based solely on the number of sounded syllables in a line of verse. Other rhythmic elements include assonance, alliteration and word repetition which increase dramatic tension and create effects of sonority and rhythm. Examples taken from Fauré's poets in this thesis illustrate possible rhythmic interactions in a line of French verse.

The descriptive text in Table 2.1 from Paul Verlaine's 1870 *La Bonne Chanson*, the poetic account of his courtship of Mathilde Mauté, is taken from the first song in Fauré's cycle of the same name. The first two lines, in octosyllabic metre (8 syllables per line), display a solid and rhythmically varied structure. The *césure*, a customary line break in verses of eight syllables or more, occurs in opposite locations in the two lines. The location of this secondary rhythmic goal in the line of verse – the principal goal being the end-of-line rhyme – is generally determined by the presence of a significant word,

perhaps bearing a certain amount of stress in performance. In these two lines, *césures* are located on the two nouns describing Mathilde's qualities (**Sain**te', châte**lai**ne'). Both these words end with an *e caduc*, followed by a word beginning with a vowel; therefore, the *e caduc* is elided to the following vowel, and this elision adds up to one syllable only in the total syllable count in the line. Similarly, the feminine verse ending of the first line (auréo**le**', a word ending with an *e caduc*) is not a counted syllable, a poetic convention for all feminine verse endings.

Table 2.1: Une Sainte en son auréole' (*La Bonne Chanson*, 1870), P. Verlaine, first stanza, rhythmic groups, alliteration and word repetition

First stanza (excerpt)	Rhythmic groups, alliteration and word repetition		
Une Sain- // te en son auréole,[7]	3+5	[n] [s] [t]	une
Une châtelai- // ne en sa tour[8]	5+3	[n] [t] [s]	une

Thus, these two octosyllabic lines of verse are rhythmically varied with *césures* in reverse order (3+5 and 5+3); the rhyme scheme is made up of *rimes plates*, that is, straight alternating rhymes (abab, auréole' and tour', rhyming in the next two lines with parole' and amour'). Moreover, the alternation extends to feminine and masculine rhyme endings throughout: a feminine rhyme and word ending features an unstressed syllable and an *e*

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[7] In French, syllables are divided by sound rather than by syntax as in English; moreover, syllables generally begin with a consonant and end with a vowel, although exceptions are common. Thus, auréole' is divided as: au-ré-o-le'; double consonants are split as in bel-le'; two different consonant side-by-side are divided in this way: mer-le'.

[8] A Saint in her halo, / A noblewoman in her tower

caduc (e.g. feminine ending: aoréole'; masculine ending: tour'). This constitutes the basic rhythm of these 8-syllable lines of verse.

The apparent simplicity of these two lines from Une Sainte' belies their rhythmic complexity. Line segments before and after the *césures* are related rhythmically by the number of syllables in the words. Une Sain(te)' corresponds to en sa tour' in the second line with monosyllabic words or parts of words, whereas en son auréole' and Une châtelai(ne)' each contain at least one word of more than one syllable. These related segments are also comprised of the same number of syllables each. This arrangement guided Fauré in the setting of the rhythm in these segments: the five-syllable groups contain more quavers, changing the pace of declamation, whereas the three-syllable sections are made up of longer note values, underlining rhythmic distinctions in declamatory patterns.[9] Throughout this thesis, analytical results repeatedly demonstrate the close correspondence of Fauré's song settings to poetic prosody.

Words and their sonorities add their own rhythmic interaction in this couplet. The consonant [n] occurs in both lines and in all segments, while [s] and [t] are each repeated in one line and echoed once in the other. Finally, une' occurs at the beginning of both lines, featuring the slight stress of a glottal attack on [y]. Each repetition of the word is set by Fauré on the rising interval of a third, no doubt to bring out the repetition as well as to link the lines in their fervent admiration of Verlaine's fiancée. Thus, in addition to the basic canvas of metre and *césure*, incorporating the main accentual goal of

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[9]   See translation and complete score in Volume 2, Appendix C.

the line end and the secondary goal at the *césure* (both stress points also adding a possible rhythmic pause), elements of sonority and meaning add an extra layer to the rhythm in the line of verse.

Verlaine's highly rhythmic organisation of the verse in the present example is confined nevertheless to the traditional form of the octosyllabic metre. To increase dramatic and rhythmic intensity, poets create discrepancies between traditional line boundaries and internal word groups, as in the following example from *L'horizon chimérique*:

Table 2.2: Je me suis embarqué' (*L'horizon chimérique,* 1920), J. de la Ville de Mirmont, third stanza, rhythmic processes

Third stanza (excerpt)	Rhythmic processes
Je ne veux que la mer, // je ne veux que le vent	6+6 rejet
Pour me bercer, | comme un // enfant, | au creux des lames.[10]	4+4+4 trimètre *or*
	6+6 enjambement

This couplet is excerpted from the second poem in Fauré's last song cycle, *L'horizon chimérique*, composed in 1921, three years before his death. Here, two lines of *alexandrin* verse (12 syllables per line) demonstrate varied word groupings. In the first line, the classic *césure* location at the line's mid-point at que la mer, // je ne veux' separates the line in two equal *hémistiches*, while the next line features what appear to be two *césures* at bercer' and enfant', word groups well-defined by commas. As the most prevalent metre in French

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[10] I want only the sea, I want only the wind / To rock me, like a child, amid the waves.

verse, the *alexandrin* has been the subject of a number of attempts at reform and this excerpt demonstrates one common rhythmic alteration. The pattern in the second line above is often called *alexandrin romantique* or *alexandrin trimètre*. This 4+4+4 pattern alters the rhythmic movement of the line, a usage which became more prevalent at the end of the nineteenth century.

> La révolution' romantique tend à disloquer' l'alexandrin,
>
> principalement par l'affaiblissement ou l'effacement de la
>
> césure, ce qui peut produire un trimètre (3 x 4), mais aussi
>
> des vers marqués par la mise en relief de ruptures anormales
>
> (5 + 7 par exemple), ou dont le mouvement dynamique tient
>
> précisément à l'effacement de toute marque ponctuelle
>
> intérieure. L'oreille affranchie d'un compteur factice connaît
>
> une jouissance à discerner, seule, toutes les combinaisons
>
> possibles, entre eux, de douze timbres' (Mallarmé)
>
> (Larousse.fr, n.d., online).[11]

However, other schools of thought offer an alternative view on the subject of the so-called *césure mobile* (movable caesura) in the *alexandrin*. While poets pushed the boundaries of Classical versification after the middle of the nineteenth century to include changes to the location of the *césure,* the traditional metres and rhythmic goals remained, albeit as subconsciously operating elements of the verse. In poetry from this period, their tacit presence

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[11] During the Romantic revolution', there tended to be a breaking up of the alexandrine, primarily by weakening or eliminating the caesura, producing a *trimètre* (3x4), but also lines of verse characterised by unusual breaks (for instance 5+7), or whose dynamic movement is precisely the result of the removal of all regular internal points of reference. The ear, liberated from an artificial count, derives its own pleasure in discerning all possible combinations of the twelve sounds from one another' (Mallarmé).

creates yet more rhythmic interactions within lines, stanzas and entire poems, and constitutes an added rhythmic effect, an opposition between syntax and metre in the verse (Dessons & Meschonnic, 2008, p. 91). For analytical purposes, this thesis retains the traditional line breaks in the verse, as do Dessons and Meschonnic in their consideration of the multiple rhythmic interactions within the verse. This allows for the co-existence of traditional and innovative versification styles and takes into consideration a greater number of rhythmic possibilities in the line of verse. As the next three chapters illustrate, this is equally true in Fauré's songs, where prosodic stresses vary, not only according to tradition or poetic styles, but also in relation to syntax and word order.

Table 2.2 above also exhibits two ways in which poets may disrupt the regular metrical structure of a line of verse. The first twelve-syllable line is extended further by a *rejet,* a rhythmic process by which a brief line segment is displaced into the next line (in this case, que le vent / Pour me bercer').[12] The second line gains added rhythmic interest if the mid-line *césure* is maintained, according to Dessons and Meschonnic's concept of *l'organisation du mouvement*. As the line progresses through the 4-syllable groups made distinct by punctuation, the tacit (and, in practice, barely acknowledged) *césure* becomes yet another line break, albeit a subtle one. Additionally, this discordance between metre and syntax produced by the mid-line *enjambement* constitutes yet another level of meaning in this couplet. While

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[12] Conversely, the *contre-rejet*, another process extending one line of verse to the next, consists of a brief segment continuing to a longer phrase into the next line. For instance (*contre-rejet* is underlined): Bonne forêt! promesse ouverte / De l'exil que la vie implore... (Good forest! open promise / Of exile craved by life); *Dans la forêt de septembre*, C. Mendès.

the three 4-syllable segments illustrate the rocking motion of the sea, the disregarded *césure* at un // enfant' possibly symbolises the passage of time for the sailor and his impossible desire to return to a carefree childhood.

Conversely, when linguistic (that is, syntactic) and metrical accents coincide, a model Classical-style verse ensues:

Table 2.3: Puisque mai tout en fleurs' (*Les chants du crépuscule,* 1836)*,* V. Hugo, last two lines, rhythmic groups

Mai (last two lines)	Rhythmic groups
Fassent épanouir, // comme une double fleur,	6+6
La beauté sur ton front // et l'amour dans ton coeur.[13]	6+6

In these two final lines from a poem by Victor Hugo on which Fauré composed *Mai* (1862)*,* one of his first *romances*, the syntactic structure of each line is consistent with the *césures* and with the end-of-line stresses. This balanced rhythmic scheme agrees with the poet's description of beauty, that of his beloved and of a day in May. In addition, the rhythmic stability of these lines creates a harmonious ending, removing any tension produced by preceding *rejets* or *enjambements* and consistent with the meaning of the text. Comparing this excerpt with the lines from *L'horizon chimérique* seen earlier (Table 2.2) reveals a clear rhythmic and structural contrast between the two examples of *alexandrin* verse as well as a stylistic shift brought about by the eighty-year interval separating the two poems. Both couplets exhibit different

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[13]   Allow to bloom like a redoubled flower, / Beauty on your brow and love in your heart.

rhythmic features while depicting the meaning of the text with sonorities, word repetition or rhythmic processes.

The interaction of word groups with poetic metre produces significant rhythmic effects when associated with sonorities – what poets describe as the musicality of the verse. Recurring consonant and vowel sounds (alliteration and assonance) as well as the repetition of words or of parts of words constitute yet further means of increasing rhythmic interplay in the verse, of unifying a text by means of sound or of depicting meaning with sonorities. The following example, taken from Il pleure dans mon coeur' (*Romances sans paroles: Ariettes oubliées*), demonstrates Verlaine's skill with the rhythmic arrangement of sonorities for the greatest effect.

Table 2.4: Il pleure dans mon coeur' (*Romances sans paroles: Ariettes oubliées*, 1874), P. Verlaine, third stanza, sonorities, repeated words and rhythmic process

Third stanza	Sonorities,repeated words and rhythmic process
Il pleure sans raison	[œ] [s] [z] [ ] sans raison rejet
Dans ce coeur qui s'écoeure.	[œ] [s] [k] coeur/s'écoeure
Quoi! nulle trahison?	[a] [k] [z] [ ]
Ce deuil est sans raison.[14]	[œ] [s] [z] [ ] sans raison

This stanza contains highly rhythmic arrangements of sonorities, typical of Verlaine's style, and considered in more detail in Chapter 3, dedicated to

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[14]   Tears fall without cause / In this sickened heart. / What! no unfaithfulness? / This grieving is without cause.

Fauré's songs on poetry by Verlaine. In addition to using rhythmic interactions, Verlaine translates into sound the prevailing mood of the words. Lines 1, 2 and 4 are characterised by the sounds of the neutral [œ], the sibilant [s] and the contrasting voiced [z] as well as by the monotony of repeated words. Only in line 3 do the more open [a] and bright [i] vowels change the sound colour: here, the poet rouses himself momentarily from his melancholy, realising that his sickened heart ails for no reason whatsoever.

Line length also adds to the atmosphere of the poem, as the hexametrical lines (6 syllables per line) reflect the moody speech of the dejected poet. The *contre-rejet* from the first to the second line may appear to extend the first six syllables to a total of twelve (as in a mock *alexandrin*). In fact, Verlaine is also creating a monotonous series of rhythmic patterns: ...sans rai**son** / Dans ce **coeur** qui s'é**coeu**re' (syllabic group goals are indicated in bold). This series of 3+3+3 syllables culminates on s'écoeure' which could be understood in two ways: the spleen of the sickening heart, or the loss of one's heart. Fauré's setting of this stanza follows the poet's cue (as described in more detail in section 4.3.1 of Chapter 4), with repetitive rhythms in the first line of text, altered only by the third line exclamation and by an upward shift in melodic contour, rapidly abandoned to return to a lower vocal tessitura and to a more predictable rhythmic scheme in the next line.

One further larger-scale rhythmic division consists in the arrangement of lines into stanzas. Poems in the Classical tradition (such as works from the Romantic or Parnassian movements) generally exhibit clearly marked structures; nevertheless, even Symbolism, with its freer structure, contains

groups of lines which may be brought out by recitation or in musical compositions. One of the aims of this thesis concerns the role of rhythm (for instance, pattern variations or harmonic rhythm) in defining stanza boundaries as translated in Fauré's songs; classic poetic forms such as the *sonnet* appear to exert a lesser influence on musical form in Fauré's songs, however.

As the preceding examples show, poetry may vary significantly from the rules established by François de Malherbe (1555–1628) in the seventeenth century. His was a clear, rigorous and grammatically correct verse, without *enjambements* or other infringements to the line. From these rules originate the mid-line *alexandrin césure* and the alternation of masculine and feminine rhymes (Rousselot, 1976, p. 39). The advent of Romanticism at the turn of the nineteenth century initiated the decline of Malherbe's versification norms and the widespread exploration of techniques for varying poetic form and rhythm. The next three chapters examine the three major poetic movements of the nineteenth century, Romanticism, Parnassianism and Symbolism, in greater detail in relation to Fauré's prosodic song rhythms.

2.3: Main features of Fauré's rhythmic-prosodic style

The two preceding sections of this chapter show how rhythm in language, and particularly the rhythm of poetry, has been defined according to the linguistic origins of the verse. For instance, in Latin verse and in word-accented languages such as English or Italian, prosodic rhythm exhibits the opposition of strong-weak and long-short syllables which may include pre-set patterns

(feet) in metrical lines or set word accents, as well as rhythmic repetitions or interruptions. In general, speech rhythms in these languages are well-marked.

Sections 2.1 and 2.2 have also considered the French language, distinguished by its particular end-directed phrase and line of verse, phrases without strong linguistic accents, fixed syllabic stresses or fixed durations. Supporting these features in his writings on structural linguistics, Benveniste returns to the early Greek notion that flow can also be associated with rhythm.[15] He stresses the fluid character of rhythm as an ever-changing, unfixed arrangement of elements, and as having significant implications for conceptualising language (Benveniste, 1966, p. 333).[16] This same rhythmic flow (or continuity) is of paramount importance in Fauré's settings of poetic texts, as this thesis demonstrates in the next three chapters.

Nectoux highlights a number of characteristics associated with motion in Fauré's music:

> À l'analyse, l'oeuvre de Fauré révèle un véritable travail sur le
> principe de continuité... Par ailleurs, il faut souligner que c'est
> la pulsation qui est régulière chez Fauré et que c'est dans le
> cadre de ce battement régulier qu'il organise les rythmes et
> diversifie les accents, car le *cantabile* fauréen n'est pas
> réitération amorphe, il s'anime d'accents déplacés, de
> rythmes contrariés, et l'on peut même avancer que le

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[15] This idea also figures in the etymology of rhythm' in the 1898 edition of *Webster's International Dictionary of the English Language* (Porter, 1898, online).

[16] Dessons and Meschonnic base their concept of rhythm on Benveniste's work, thus opening up the semiotic, syntactic, prosodic and expressive possibilities of both poetry and prose.

musicien pratique une sorte d'art du décalage (Nectoux, 2008,

pp. 316–17).[17]

This thesis demonstrates the particular quality of motion described by

Nectoux, supported by Dessons and Meschonnic's notion of *l'organisation du*

mouvement and found throughout Fauré's *mélodies*. Karl Johansen further

clarifies the relationship of motion to metrical stresses in Fauré's music: Il

semble que Fauré se préoccupait beaucoup de la continuité, surtout dans ses

dernières oeuvres. Ceci se révèle non seulement par le mouvement

harmonique continu, mais également par le rythme, qu'il maintient en

mouvement constant par le renforcement des temps faibles et l'amortissement

des temps forts' (Johansen, 1999, p. 91).[18] Johansen rightly points out Fauré's

attention to continuous motion in his later works, and this thesis further

underlines the relevance of this quality of motion for expressive declamation

in Fauré's mature cycles.

Both Nectoux and Johansen stress the quality of continuity in Fauré's

music, along with the necessity of equalising beats to sustain this motion; this

allows the inclusion of the durational stresses of French prosody. Ober

provides additional insight into the management of end-accented word and

phrase stresses in Fauré's vocal music:

---

[17] Analysis of Fauré's compositions reveals genuine work on the notion of continuity...
Moreover, it is significant that, with Fauré, pulse is the regular element and that it is within
the framework of this regular beat that he arranges the rhythms and various accents, for
the Faurean *cantabile* does not consist of passive reiteration, but is instead enlivened by
displaced accents and contrary rhythms, and we might even surmise that the composer
elevates discrepancies of time into a kind of art.

[18] It appears that Fauré was much absorbed by continuity, particularly in his late works. This
is demonstrated not only by continuous harmonic movements but equally by the rhythm,
maintained in continuous motion by the strengthening of weak beats and the weakening of
strong beats.

Fauré appears to have grasped, early in his career, that the
phrasing of the French language is inherently at odds with
traditional music notation: where the spoken French phrase
typically begins with a weakly stressed syllable and
progresses to a strongly accented one at the *close* of the
prosodic unit...musical notation is marked off in measures with
an *initially* strong beat. Fauré's downbeat displacements' thus
reflect the progressive nature of French prosodic phrasing in
the spoken language (Ober, 2012, p. 113).

Ober correctly notes the discrepancy of stress patterns between spoken
French and musical metre, an important distinction equally noted by Dubiau-
Feuillerac in her study of Verlaine settings by Claude Debussy (Dubiau-
Feuillerac, 2008, p. 27). On the other hand, referring to a suppressed first-beat
accent as a downbeat displacement', where poetic stresses may well occur
on other beats of the bar, only serves to maintain (or, at the very least,
assume) a tacit metrical framework in phrases where Fauré evidently wished
to equalise beats for the purpose of durational prosodic accentuation. Fauré
does include clear metrical, harmonic and prosodic accents in his expressive
palette; they occur comparatively rarely, but their simultaneous appearance
signals an important prosodic goal in the line, the stanza or the entire poem,
as noted in song analysis in the next three chapters.

As this thesis shows, sustaining continuity for recitation and for
maintaining dramatic intensity in the *mélodies* remained one of Fauré's main
concerns, as observed above by Nectoux and Johansen. This feature became

increasingly more important as the major changes effected by Symbolist poets such as Charles van Lerberghe (1861–1907) and, to a lesser extent, by Verlaine, altered the structure of the line of verse. A number of the techniques employed by Fauré to sustain continuity are now examined briefly prior to proceeding in the following chapters to a detailed study of his rhythmic-prosodic vocal writing in relation to the poetry he selected for his songs.

2.3.1: Fauré's techniques involving the ongoing pulse

In the context of continuity on the pulse, the equalisation of metrical signals in the bar involves the irregular lengthening of note values in three ways: the placement of long notes on unstressed beats in the bar (for example, the second beat in quadruple and in triple metres), the use of ties, either in the middle of a bar or over the bar-line and the unpredictable use of syncopation. These methods are occasionally combined for further effect, as in L'hiver a cessé' (*La Bonne Chanson*). Verlaine's highly rhythmic verse inspires Fauré to experiment with metre and rhythm (considered in more detail in Chapter 4). In Example 2.2, the long note tied over the bar-line reflects the meaning of the text (L'hiver a cessé; Winter has fled'): like the interminable season of Verlaine's separation from Mathilde, the singer declaims a seemingly endless note on L'hiver'. In the same way, ties creating long notes become more widely used in Fauré's late song cycles, starting with *La Chanson d'Ève* (1906–10), with the advent of the highly variable Symbolist *vers libre* (free verse)*.* At that point in Fauré's career, the stated musical metre appears more as a canvas on which to depict the increasingly more changeable verse of the

Symbolists rather than as a clear structure with recurring stresses, a feature illustrated by musical analysis in Chapter 5. Fauré's fluid *recitando* style in the late songs is enhanced by the flexibility of the note-lengthening techniques of ties and varied note values.

Example 2.2: L'hiver a cessé' (*La Bonne Chanson,* 1892–94), bb. 9–13[19]

2.3.2: Fauré's techniques involving metre

While it may be said that note-lengthening techniques impact on metre by emphasising continuity to the expense of regularity, the downbeat as an important locus of prosodic and musical stress remains part of Fauré's musical language. However, the regular occurrence of downbeats gives way in the songs to occasional yet meaningful first-beat stresses. Furthermore, continuity gives metrical accents, when they occur, an added significance, as in this excerpt (Example 2.3) from the cycle *Le jardin clos* (1914). In the last nine bars of Dans la pénombre', only lines 2 and 4 of the *quatrain* (4-line stanza) end on the downbeat, and tonality returns to the tonic key of E major in bar 38. Up to this point, harmonies wander to natural keys, passing through the tonic minor and touching upon the flattened second degree, accompanied by a chromatic bass line in rhythms alluding to duple groupings, all suggesting

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[19]   Unless stated otherwise, all examples are taken from works by Fauré.

the wandering thoughts of the young woman at the spinning wheel. The return to the tonic key is made clear by directing the verse ending to the downbeat (pensée') while harmonies remain firmly in E major for the last three bars.

Example 2.3: Dans la pénombre' (*Le jardin clos*, 1914), bb. 33–40[20]

This passage is a typical example of Fauré's gathering of the threads at the very end of a rhythmically varied song in which harmonies had previously ventured to distant tonalities. The conjunction of harmony and metrical signals becomes less frequent but more significant in the late songs, as evidence from analysis demonstrates Fauré's use of harmony to reflect form and changes in dramatic intensity.

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[20] Through the golden foliage / Among the lilies of her thoughts.

This excerpt illustrates two of the other means by which Fauré handles metre along with stressed and unstressed beats in his songs. In bar 33, the first line of verse ends on the third beat of the bar and is prolonged by tied notes to bar 34, thereby making use of an unstressed beat to set a poetic metrical goal, a technique much used by Fauré in his late song cycles. Moreover, duple note groups appear in the melody in bars 33–37, (Example 2.4), separated by downward-pointing arrows:

Example 2.4: Dans la pénombre' (*Le jardin clos,*1914), duple rhythmic groupings in triple metre, bb. 33–37

À tra-vers les feuil-la-ges d'or,   Par-mi les lys...

These groupings present a more subtle structure than the straightforward hemiola-like passages from earlier songs such as can be found in *Au bord de l'eau* (1875). In Example 2.4, note values vary to lengthen syllables for expression. Significantly, neither the *césure* nor the end-of-line stresses figure on a downbeat, maintaining the linear quality of the phrases. Fauré frequently groups note values in rhythmic patterns, appearing to contradict the stated time signature or to create a new metre for a few bars in order to render musically the durational stresses of French speech and of verse rhythms. These rhythmic units, discussed in more detail in Chapters 3 and 5, are affected by a number of factors, including poetic metre and style, rhythmic events in the line of verse and syntax. A single song habitually includes a

limited number of these units (usually two or three), which are then repeated throughout to declaim the text musically.

In his 1976 article on rhythm in Fauré's songs, Fortassier offers a similar analytical interpretation of rhythmic groupings. However, his systematic use of Latin feet (such as iambs and anapaests) to describe Fauré's interpretation of poetic prosody runs the risk of imposing an external structure, which Fortassier likens to *vers mesuré*, on music characterised by forward-going motion and the suppression of metrical stresses (Fortassier, 1976, p. 261). There is no doubt that recurring rhythmic groups are in evidence in Fauré's melodic lines, but their presence is a direct consequence of his interpretation of poetic and prosodic rhythms, in *mélodies* freed from the four-bar phrase structure of the *romance* and supported by fluid harmonies. Changes to versification at the end of the nineteenth century lead to Fauré's creative adaptation of musical metre and rhythms, including rhythmic groups, to maintain expressive declamation in a legato line (see Chapters 3 and 5).

As the lyrical Romanticism of the early songs gradually gave way to the *recitando* manner of later years, metrical signals between the voice and accompaniment no longer necessarily coincided with each other, to the extent that downbeat stresses decreased in importance while the melodic line and the complex harmonies of the piano part became more prominent. Chapter 5 charts Fauré's association with the poetry of Symbolist poets and the means he employs to produce and foster forward motion on the pulse.

2.3.3: Fauré's techniques involving harmony

The suppression of clear cadences in the tonic key as well as chromaticisms and frequent fleeting modulations constitute some of Fauré's chief means of prolonging and maintaining dramatic and musical intensity along with forward motion. Johansen explains: L'équivoque harmonique est donc très étroitement liée à la continuité musicale, car en repoussant constamment la détente harmonique, Fauré diffère notre attente de résolution, parfois même jusqu'à la cadence finale' (Johansen, 1999, p. 91).[21] By controlling harmony, Fauré also controls dramatic intensity and supports continuity by organising motion (*l'organisation du mouvement*). Fauré's harmonic palette is characterised by subtlety rather than by explicit statements or predictable progressions, a manner reminiscent of Verlaine's *Art poétique*: Pas la Couleur, rien que la nuance!'[22] Augmented and half-diminished chords as well as inversions or series of seventh chords are commonly found, the former two constituting favoured means of modulation to foreign keys. Fauré's training in harmony followed the principles formulated in Gustave Lefèvre's *Traité d'harmonie* in use at the École Niedermeyer, where Fauré received his musical education. Lefèvre advocated modulating to other keys via a single common note shared between two chords and this explains in great part the ease with which Fauré moved from one key to another, even to tonalities considered unrelated harmonically in traditional harmony (Fauré's music is replete with modulations from the tonic to the third, sixth and flattened seventh

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[21] Harmonic ambiguity is thus very closely linked to musical continuity, for by constantly delaying harmonic release, Fauré postpones our expectation of a resolution, at times up until the final cadence.

[22] Not Colour, but only nuance!

degrees). Additionally, training in Renaissance and Baroque choral traditions may well have contributed to the linear quality of Fauré's harmonic writing, where individual voice movements create momentary harmonic alterations and chromaticisms. In her study of Fauré's harmony, Gervais reports Niedermeyer's belief that good harmony simply consists in the simultaneous combination of four separate melodies (Gervais, 1971, p. 22). The following three bars from the cycle *La Chanson d'Ève* illustrate this linear quality in the accompaniment of the fourth song, Comme Dieu rayonne'. The linear and rhythmic interactions in this accompaniment, where some lines move in quavers while others proceed more slowly in crotchets, result in one of the most harmonically daring passages in Fauré s song literature.

Example 2.5: Comme Dieu rayonne' (*La Chanson d'Ève,* 1906–10), bb. 7–9

2.4: Methodology

Fauré seeks to penetrate the poet's verse so that, as Fauré-Fremiet explains, the composer's mind is identified with that of the poet to the extent that the musical and poetic works become inseparable (Fauré-Fremiet, 1957, p. 45).

To gain a deeper understanding of this process, selected excerpts or entire songs by Fauré are investigated from the point of view of two principal angles: at the outset, the poetic text is examined according to various criteria, then the musical score is analysed, with a particular focus on the vocal line and on various features, including rhythm, prosody, tessitura, dynamics, harmony and so on. These two components are then examined jointly so that the mechanism of expressive musical declamation may be understood for each excerpt. Finally, in a number of representative cases, commercial recordings illustrate how Fauré's music and the poetic text have been understood by singers from various generations and cultural backgrounds.

Text analysis generally comprises the following: a translation, located in a footnote (except in the case of entire songs, which may be found in Volume 2, Appendix C), the indication of *césure* or line break positions if appropriate, as well as rhythmic groupings and recurring sonorities and/or words within a line and from one line to the next. Throughout, the International Phonetic Alphabet system of phonetic transliteration (IPA) is used for precision in the rendering of vowel and consonantal sounds. A chart detailing symbols and their associated sounds is found in Appendix A.

A representative example of the text analysis method used in this thesis is seen in Table 2.5. In general, the poetic text with its accompanying graphic and explanations precedes the musical example so that essential rhythmic and textual relationships may be determined prior to the musical analysis. Line boundary alterations, such as *enjambements* or *rejets* also form an integral part of this examination of verse structure, as they constitute important

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elements of rhythmic change and may potentially affect musical settings.

Table 2.5: *Le secret* (1882)*,* A. Silvestre, first stanza (excerpt), rhythmic groups and recurring sonorities

First stanza (excerpt)	Rhythmic groups and recurring sonorities	
Je veux que le jour // le proclame	5+3	[ ] [ ] [l] [m]
L'amour qu'au matin // j'ai caché[23]	5+3	[ ] [a] [m]

In this thesis, musical excerpts serve to illustrate Fauré's rendering of the poem's rhythms and meaning into music. They also explain the relationship of a particular rhythmic or interpretative technique to the text. For instance, long notes in the middle of a bar, in disrupting or negating metrical accentuation, may also represent a lengthened line of verse or a change of declamation pace. In other words, Fauré's musical gestures, particularly in the rhythmic and expressive recitation of poetic verse, seldom happen by chance; rather, they are the result of applied skill, experience and constant re-examination of the relationship of text to music . As Fauré himself wrote to his wife in August 1903: Je vais toujours si *lentement*. Je n'ai jamais su (cela vaut peut-être mieux) ne pas lécher et relécher mon ouvrage et m'y attarder infiniment!' (Fauré-Fremiet, 1951, p. 75).[24]

Representative recordings include early as well as recent recordings, featuring singers of various nationalities, francophone and non-francophone

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[23] I wish that the day would proclaim / The love which I concealed from the morning.
[24] I always go at such *a slow pace.* I have never known (and this is probably best) how not to polish my work again and again or to avoid lingering over it indefinitely!

alike. Three main criteria direct the selection of excerpts: the illustration of an argument made in the context of a particular analysis, a special quality, manner or performance worth mentioning or a contrasting presentation in the context of one of Fauré's techniques. Listening to singers offering diverse interpretative and stylistic approaches also proves useful in supporting or challenging analysis results and adds an extra layer to the study of Fauré's prosodic recitation.

Each of the three main analytical chapters (chapters 3–5) covers a particular period in the literary development of French verse; hence, a brief survey of the social and literary environment of the time precedes the analysis of verse and music in Fauré's songs to gain a better understanding of the context in which these art forms flourished and to discern connections with the wider world.

This chapter has surveyed the development of poetry in France from its metrically controlled quantitative line of verse, predominantly of Latin origin, to the present qualitative line, made up of subtly accented syllabic durations leading to the end-accented phrase and verse. Within this poetic context, Fauré developed musical techniques to control and alleviate the recurring stresses of musical metre and bar-line boundaries, in order to promote expressive and clear vocal declamation. This thesis brings out and charts the development of Fauré's musical declamation techniques through textual and musical analysis, with the additional input of sound recording illustrations.

The next chapter situates Fauré's beginnings in song composition within the context of societal change in France and of the musical renewal of

the Romantic movement. Fauré's role in the establishment and growth of the new *mélodie*, inspired by the German *lied,* is investigated through his songs on Romantic and Parnassian verse, songs which lay the prosodic foundations for his late-style *mélodies.*

Chapter 3: Fauré's Songs on Romantic

and Parnassian Poetry (1861–87)

Up until the middle of the nineteenth century, the *romance* in its various forms had been the most popular solo vocal music genre in France outside of the theatre, having penetrated all levels of society. However, the *lied*, imported from Germany by enthusiastic performers, soon transformed French vocal music, and the simple but often artistically lacking *romance* gave way to a national art song genre, the *mélodie*.

In this chapter, Romanticism and Parnassianism, two poetic movements instrumental in shaping Fauré's early solo vocal music, are considered from their thematic and structural aspects. The *romance* and the *lied* are studied as both forerunners of the *mélodie* and as part of the French general musical culture in the middle of the nineteenth century. In the main body of this chapter, Fauré's means of achieving a flowing and expressive musical declamation (that is, the ways in which he organises rhythmic and prosodic movement) are examined in the light of his growing experience in the composition of *romances* and *mélodies*. In particular, this chapter explore his treatment of poetic and musical accentuation and the ways in which they enhance declamation while maintaining the characteristic Faurean forward motion. Furthermore, textual and musical analysis of song excerpts investigates how recurring rhythmic patterns, evident during these formative years, help Fauré achieve a declamatory pace adapted to Romantic and

Parnassian styles. Finally, a discussion on the role of poetic form and rhythmic motion highlights the part played by harmony and accompaniment in Fauré's *organisation du mouvement*.

3.1: A survey of the Romantic and Parnassian poetic movements

The second half of the nineteenth century saw the emergence of Parnassian poetry in France amid the decline of Romanticism and of its emotionalism and self-conscious awareness. Rousselot sums up the main characteristics of the literary Romantic style: Libre cours donné à l'expression des passions, à l'épanchement du rêve et de l'imagination, affirmation d'un «je» qui, jusqu'alors, s'étranglait dans les tacites obligations de l'objectivité, victoire du sentiment sur la raison, du mystère sur la clarté' (Rousselot, 1976, p. 63).[1]

Romanticism had initiated a revolution, not only by the thematic content of its various literary forms (for instance, theatre, poetry and prose) but also by linking literature with social and political activism (one famous example being Victor Hugo's self-imposed nineteen-year exile after his public opposition to Napoleon III in 1851). In terms of structure, Romantic poetry remained rooted in its Classical past, yet poets increasingly transgressed traditional versification rules: regular *césure* locations were weakened by other line divisions; more frequent *rejets* or *contre-rejets* lengthened lines of verse; lines

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[1] [Romanticism] gives free rein to the expression of passions, to the outpourings of imagination and dreams, it affirms the I' which, up to that point, had been stifled by the tacit obligations of objectivity; it is the victory of sentiment over reason, of mystery over intelligibility...

of different metres could be found in the same poem. Arguably the most prominent and prolific writer of this period, Hugo (1802–85), overshadowed most of the nineteenth century with his talent and with the sheer abundance and diversity of his output. A highly-skilled poet, Hugo is also credited with the introduction of transgressions to established versification into his verse. Seul Victor Hugo ...montrera – montrera seulement – le chemin d'une libération prosodique en variant la coupe de l'alexandrin et en multipliant les enjambements' (Rousselot, 1976, p. 67).[2] These occasional rhythmic changes in Hugo's poetry assist Fauré in composing his first songs with solidly structured verse incorporating rhythmic challenges and prosodic variety.

The third stanza of Dans les ruines d'une abbaye' (*Chansons des rues et des bois,* V. Hugo, 1850) demonstrates various rhythmic options within regular metrical structures, punctuated by recurring sounds.

Table 3.1: Dans les ruines d'une abbaye' *(Chansons des rues et des bois,* 1850)*,* V. Hugo, third stanza, recurring sounds and rhythmic processes

Third stanza	Recurring sounds and rhythmic processes	
On est tout frais mariés.	[ ] [a] [r]	
On s'envoie	[v] [a]	contre-rejet
Les charmants cris variés	[ ] [a] [r] [v]	rejet
De la joie.[3]	[a]	

Hugo combines seven- and three-syllable lines of verse and links lines 2–4 with a *contre-rejet* followed by a *rejet*. The low syllabic count in both metres energises the text, as lines rush along, reflecting the newly-wed couple darting to and fro amid the ancient ruins. Repeated sonorities ensure unity in the stanza and provide further rhythmic interaction between lines of verse. Fauré's first seven songs, all on texts by Hugo, display the typical thematic content favoured by Romantic writers: nature (*Mai*), love (*Puisque j'ai mis ma lèvre*), love and loss (*La tristesse d'Olympio*).

In the middle of the nineteenth century, a number of poets turned away from Romanticism and its excesses, in particular the individualistic self-indulgence and the political themes present in the works of many writers like Alphonse de Lamartine (1790–1869) and Alfred de Musset (1810–57). Instead, this new generation of poets favoured a more measured expression of sentiments. Thus, poets also steeped in philosophy and imbued with the ambient taste for foreign lands and exotic beliefs founded the Parnassian movement, based on Greek ideals of balance and beauty, a poetic movement contemporaneous with Fauré's generation, contrary to the rapidly declining literary Romanticism. Parnassianism was inaugurated in 1866 with the publication of a first collection of poems, *Le Parnasse contemporain*. Contributors to this first instalment included Charles Baudelaire (1821–67), Stéphane Mallarmé (1843–98), Théophile Gautier (1811–72) and Paul Verlaine (1844–96), not to mention Leconte de Lisle (1818–94), chief figure in the movement. De Lisle, acting as mentor to the younger generation, voiced clear views on the qualities required of the Parnassian poet:

Si le poète, disait-il, est avant tout une nature riche de dons

extraordinaires, il est aussi une volonté intelligente qui doit

exercer une domination absolue et constante sur l'expression

des idées et des sentiments, ne rien laisser au hasard, se

posséder soi-même, dans la mesure de ses forces. C'est à ce

prix qu'on sauvegarde la dignité de l'art et la sienne propre

(Quoted in Martino, 1967, p. 53).[4]

De Lisle voices almost completely contradictory views to the definition of

Romanticism given by Rousselot and cited at the beginning of this section:

self-control rather than dreams and sentiments freely out-poured, self-mastery

rather than unrestricted self-expression along with an awareness of one's

dignity and of the nobility of art. Themes inspired by Greek ideals of perfection

and form govern this poetry based on the precept of Art for Art's sake' (L'Art

pour l'art'), despite accusations of impersonality and of a lack of lyricism from

its detractors.

A classic example of verse from this period is Leconte de Lisle's Lydia',

from his *Poèmes antiques* (1852). The title and vocabulary, typical of verse

from this period, incorporate thematic content inspired by Hellenistic and

philosophical ideas: Lydia', éternelle tombe', odeur divine', jeune déesse'.[5]

The verse, formed of eight-syllable lines *(octosyllabes),* is solidly structured

with *rimes embrassées* (abba) in lines rhythmically varied by the *césure*

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[4] Whilst the poet, said he, is first and foremost a character enriched with extraordinary gifts, his is also an intelligent will which must exert an absolute and constant control over the expression of ideas and sentiments; nothing is left to chance and the self is mastered according to one's strengths. Only at this cost may we safeguard our own dignity and that of art.

[5] eternal tomb, divine odour, young goddess

placement and masculine and feminine rhyme endings, as in the third stanza:

Table 3.2: Lydia' (*Poèmes antiques,* 1865), Leconte de Lisle, third stanza, rhyme scheme, rhythmic divisions and processes

Third stanza	Rhyme scheme, rhythmic divisions and processes		
Un lys caché // répand sans cesse	a	4+4	contre-rejet
Une odeur divi- // ne en ton sein;	b	5+3	
Les déli- // ces comme un essaim	b	3+5	rejet
Sortent de toi, // jeune déesse.[6]	a	4+4	

As well as the rhyme scheme, the line breaks follow a precise arrangement, combining balance with variety. There is consistency in the lexical choices and in the rhyme type (*rimes suffisantes,* where two elements form the rhyme, e.g. c**esse** and dé**esse**), with a feminine rhyme at (a) (that is, words ending with an *e caduc'*), and the masculine (b) rhyme made up of nouns (sein', essaim'). Finally, de Lisle has placed significant words on rhythmically important locations: (odeur) divine' at the second line césure and (jeune) déesse' to end the stanza's final line. The rhythmic arrangement of *césures,* consisting of lines 1 and 4 being divided evenly (4 + 4), while the two middle lines invert their *césure* locations, illustrates the balance of form typical of this style. The well-proportioned verse of the Parnassians provides a fertile terrain for Fauré's vocal writing, where expressive yet restrained recitation within carefully structured lines brings out meaning and sonorities.

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[6] A concealed lily unceasingly releases / A divine odour from your breast; / A multitude of delights flows out of you, / O youthful goddess.

3.2: The *romance* and the *lied*

Fauré's vocal music is closely linked to the emergence of the *mélodie* in France in the middle of the nineteenth century. Two other genres preceding the new form, the *romance* and the *lied*, exerted their own influence on its development and warrant a brief review.

3.2.1: The romance

The common thread running through the history of the *romance* is connected with its text which originally consisted of a simple narrative, unrelated to any musical setting: Mot tiré de l'Espagnol, & qui signifie, Une sorte de Poësie en petits vers, contenant quelque ancienne histoire' (Académie Française, 1718, online).[7] In his 1997 study on the *romance*, David Charlton notes that, right from the beginning, no clear terminological distinction existed between the poetic and musical forms of the *romance* (Charlton, 2000, p. 46). The *romance* acquired its musical notoriety through its frequent inclusion in *opéras-comiques*. The terminology in use in musical scores in the eighteenth century pertaining to a song in the style of a *romance* could well include *air, chanson* or *couplet* (Charlton, 2000, p. 43). These songs all shared the common traits associated with the early nineteenth-century *romance*: a simple, naïve style and an engaging narrative.[8]

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[7]   A word of Spanish origin signifying a type of poetry in short verses recounting some ancient tale.

[8]   Il faut qu'il y ait une action intéressante, & que le style en soit naïf.' (The plot must be interesting and in a naïve style.) (Moncrif in *Seconde partie, Choix de Chansons,* 1756).

By the second half of the eighteenth century, the sung *romance* had

become well established in stage works, as described in Jean-Jacques

Rousseau's 1768 *Dictionnaire de musique*: L'Air doit répondre au caractère

des paroles; point d'ornemens, rien de maniéré... Il n'est pas nécessaire que

le Chant soit piquant, il suffit qu'il soit naïf, qu'il n'offusque point la parole, qu'il

la fasse bien entendre, & qu'il n'exige pas une grande étendue de voix'

(Rousseau, 1768, online).[9]

The *romance*'s novelty and interest lay in its uncomplicated narrative,

retaining in part some of the pastoral themes of seventeenth-century stage

airs. The simpler melodic line, unadorned by improvisation, made possible the

intelligibility of the text in all the verses. However, as in former stage genres,

the accompaniment remained fairly plain despite being fully written (as

opposed to the figured bass scoring of previous genres), merely providing

harmonic support for the narrative. The *romance* in its most popular form,

bearing the attributes described above in Rousseau's *Dictionnaire de*

musique, was still in use at the time when Fauré composed his first songs.

The attraction of a simple air, expressing sentiments to which many

could relate, is a plausible explanation for the *romance*'s popularity and

promotion as a separate solo genre, as it gradually became distinct from its

opéra-comique origins. Among the great number of *romances* composed,

sung and discarded in a season,[10] a small number have withstood the test of

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Charlton quotes Daniel Heartz's study (1981–82, The Beginnings of the Operatic
Romance: Rousseau, Sedaine and Monsigny in *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 15 (pp. 149–
178).

[9]   The air must reflect the attributes of the text; no ornamentation nor affectation... there is no
need for the singing to be original, it is sufficient that it should be naïve, not contrary to the
words, intelligible, and possessing a restricted vocal range.

[10] Apropos the *romance*'s popularity, David Tunley writes: Romances were by nature

time due, for the most part, to their artistic qualities, for instance, *Plaisir d'amour* (1780?) by Jean-Paul Martini (1741–1816). Unfortunately, these qualities were rarely shared by the innumerable commercial *romances* produced during the nineteenth century.

3.2.2: The romance and society

The *romance,* in its naïvety and simplicity, heralds and symbolically portrays the social and political changes effected by the French Revolution of 1789 and continuing past the turn of the nineteenth century. Artistic and musical patronage moved for the most part to the new bourgeoisie, initiating a general democratisation of the arts. This was a time of great amateur music-making fuelled by the people's aspirations for a better life and reflected specifically in the artistic world by the growth of the number of composers and poets, both professional and amateur. Widespread distribution of new music was assured by the mass marketing of compositions in the large number of weekly publications specialising in salon music. David Tunley comments on the context of the times:

> Perhaps, nowadays..., we tend to draw a line between
>
> commercial and fine music, whereas the worst excesses of
>
> the (commercially-driven) sentimental romance were often
>
> confused with real art. The proliferation of salons at all levels
>
> of the social scale gave impetus to what became a veritable

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ephemeral, fashionable for a season and then put aside like last year's hats'. It appears that up to 500 new romances were published every year at the height of their popularity, with a print run of 500,000 (Tunley 2002, pp. 61, 68).

industry of uninspired romance composition by amateurs and

musicians of no true creative talent, reflective of a society in

which money and artistic discrimination did not often go hand

in hand (Tunley, 2002, p. 68).

.

3.2.3: L'aimer toujours et puis mourir: *a typical romance*

Several examples of careless prosody make up *L'aimer toujours et puis*

mourir by Frédéric Bérat (1801–55), set with guitar accompaniment realised

by Jean-François Barthélemy Kocken (1801–75).[11] The three stanzas, on

lyrics written by Bérat himself, contain numerous instances of faulty

accentuation, at times even brought out by *marcato* expression markings.

However, the thematic content is typical of the genre: the female protagonist

sings of broken promises, unrequited but eternally faithful love and of a life of

grief which only death can relieve. The second stanza is representative of the

entire song (Example 3.1):

Problems involving musical prosody abound in this excerpt. For

instance, the rhythm in bar 2 (Il me disait...'), whether interpreted in duple or

triple metre, cannot remove the awkward stress of the personal pronoun me'

on the downbeat, particularly as this strong position is reinforced by a tonic

chord in the accompaniment. In bars 5–7, the emphatic Moi', which should

receive a slight lengthening by virtue of the consonantal attack, the

subsequent comma and its prosodic significance, is inserted in the repeated

first line rhythm, thereby removing from it all expressive power.

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[11] Guitar accompaniments for the *romance* were less frequent but not unusual. Pierre Jélyotte, an eighteenth-century singer at the Paris Opéra-Comique, would occasionally perform while accompanying himself on the guitar (Charlton 2000, p. 44).

Example 3.1: *L'aimer toujours et puis mourir* (n.d.), F. Bérat, bb. 1–23

The six-syllable lines of verse in the second section of the stanza (starting at 'Puis, dans ma joie extrême', bb. 9–19) suffer from their melodic contour. The intentions of the composer remain unclear, as the sudden upward leap of a fifth (bb. 9–10) followed by a sixth (bb. 10–11) along with *marcato* markings (bb. 10–13), produce undesirable accents on unimportant parts of speech or unstressed words in the verse.

Prosodic weaknesses as well as poetic and melodic languages lacking in originality, as exemplified by *L'aimer toujours,* are entirely typical of the commercial *romance*. However, the success of the genre was undeniable, lasting up until the middle of the nineteenth century.

3.2.4: The romance, the lied and the mélodie

A certain amount of disagreement exists regarding the effect that the *romance* ultimately produced on the emergence of the *mélodie* as a distinct song genre. Co-authors Michel Faure and Vincent Vivès each present contrasting views on the origins of the *mélodie*. Vivès favours discontinuity between the two genres, on the basis of literary tradition in contrast with modernity:

> Il ne faut pas concevoir la romance comme une étape
> liminaire à la constitution de la mélodie française. La mélodie
> établit son autonomie esthétique à la fois dans une continuité
> historique et dans une rupture poétique face à la romance,
> genre qui avait développé des caractéristiques musicales

ainsi qu'une rhétorique repérables (Faure & Vivès, 2000,

p. 21).[12]

In a contrasting view, Michel Faure situates the *mélodie* as a direct successor to the *romance*, in the particular social and historical context of the times. Définir de façon cohérente la mélodie avant 1870 est chose impossible. Ce genre de musique vocale se distingue encore mal de la romance dont il procède. L'ancienne et la nouvelle forme coexistent, si elles ne se confondent pas' (Faure & Vivès, 2000, p. 57).[13] For Nectoux, the *mélodie* belongs to the realm of scholarly creations (une création «savante»') (Nectoux, 2008, p. 115), that is, as an artistic product of literary and musical cultures. Nevertheless, a further combination of factors must be considered: the ubiquity and increasing triviality of the *romance*, the expansion of cultural exchanges between nations, leading to the introduction of the *lied* in France. Included in this equation is the need to create an indigenous vocal music genre to become the *lied'*s cultural equivalent in a country bruised by the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. Frits Noske discusses some of these factors in his 1970 study of the *mélodie, French Song from Berlioz to Duparc.* His research, in agreement with Michel Faure's ideas, demonstrates that the new genre not only co-existed with the *romance*, but also mingled with it at the onset, thereby creating confusion in discerning the *mélodie'*s source and in

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[12] The romance must not be conceived as a preliminary stage in the establishment of the French mélodie. The aesthetic autonomy of the mélodie is based both upon its historical continuity and on a poetic distinction from the romance, a genre which had developed identifiable musical characteristics as well as its own rhetoric.

[13] It is impossible to define the mélodie coherently prior to 1870. This vocal music genre still resembles the romance on which it is based. Both forms, the old and the new, co-exist and may well be confused with each other.

naming it appropriately (Noske, 1970, p. 25). The views on the origins of the *mélodie* put forth by Faure and Noske are consistent with the evidence of this thesis: whilst Fauré's first songs undoubtedly belong to the *romance* genre (by virtue of their simple strophic nature and of Fauré's musical treatment), *Lydia* (1870) represents a conscious shift to the *mélodie*, exhibiting some of the attributes of the new genre yet not radically different from previous compositions (see Examples 3.15 and 3.16).

The *mélodie* is musically and artistically indebted to the *lied* while remaining culturally distinct from it. The popularity of the *lied* in the Parisian salons, particularly the songs of Schubert, raised the standard of chamber vocal music. Interest in the *lied* was first brought about by Franz Liszt's piano arrangement of Schubert's *Erlkönig*, heard by tenor Adolphe Nourrit (1802–39), who subsequently became an enthusiastic proponent of the *lied* in France. Following the first performance of Schubert *lieder* in French in January 1835, translations of a number of the composer's more popular songs spread rapidly through the fashionable salons (Noske, 1970, p. 28).[14] The literary value of the original poetry, the attention given to the musical setting of the texts and the innovative close partnership between singer and accompanist created favourable conditions, in the words of Faure, for the invention of the *mélodie'* (Faure & Vivès, 2000, p. 43). Roland Barthes (1915–80) sums up the *mélodie* as a uniquely French phenomenon: Le sens historique de la mélodie française,[15] c'est une certaine culture de la langue

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[14] For instance, *Chant du cygne* (*Schwanengesang), La Truite (Die Forelle), Nuit et songe (Nacht und Träume)*; (Schubert, n.d., p. 1).

[15] Barthes bases his argument, in common with Nectoux (Nectoux, 2008, p. 115), on the apparent link between the *lied* and popular song, noting the dissemination of many *lieder* through all levels of German society, aided by recurring references to the imagery in the

française' (Barthes, 1982, p. 242).[16] Barthes highlights the near inseparable union of text and music in French song, where each genre supports and enhances the other. As discussed in Chapter 5, Fauré's last songs culminate in a true embodiment of this unique relationship between word and music.

In real terms, the *mélodie* represents more than a mere cultural adaptation of a foreign art song genre or even a manifestation of cultural nationalism. Through the influence of composers initially modelling their work on the *lied*, it superseded the *romance* which, aside from its more serious expanded versions such as the *scène* or the Romantic *romance*, had attracted little interest from serious composers. The salon milieu, as a meeting-place for musicians, artists and writers where new music thrived, contributed in great part to the *mélodie*'s expansion and to its growth as a valid recital alternative to operatic or sacred works. The *mélodie* brought together two art forms, poetry and solo vocal music, to produce a new musical genre which eventually became synonymous with refinement and distinction.

3.3: Musical characteristics of Fauré's songs on Romantic and Parnassian texts

The first twenty-five years of Fauré's compositional career, starting in 1861 with *Le papillon et la fleur*, cover the end of his musical education at the École

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collective unconscious, whereas the *mélodie* rapidly acquired the status of art song due in part to more self-consciously literary and elite musical contents.

[16] A certain culture of French language forms the historical meaning of the French *mélodie*.

Niedermeyer (1854–65), his first post as church organist in Rennes (1866–70) and his return to Paris as organist at Notre-Dame-de-Clignancourt, a post he was to occupy briefly until his nomination in 1871 to Saint-Sulpice in the same capacity. His friend and mentor Camille Saint-Saëns introduced him to salon culture, where many of his compositions were premiered, often by musicians of renown.

3.3.1: Early song settings in context

The poetry of Hugo and, to a lesser extent, that of Gautier,[17] exemplify the versification changes which occurred during the Romantic period in literature (roughly, from the end of the eighteenth to the middle of the nineteenth century). As seen earlier in this chapter, increasing experimentations with *enjambements* and *rejets* and with the varied sonorities of words (notably alliteration and assonance) contributed to a more varied expression of the poets' ideas: their individualism and sentiments, but also their social and political ideals. Typically, Romantic poetry set by Fauré in the early years (1861–70) remained within the realm of the human experience of love or of the contemplation of nature, as in *Mai* (1862?) or *La tristesse d'Olympio* (1865), both on texts by Hugo. The small number of poems by Gautier set by Fauré also reflect themes common to this period, such as the direct and personal expression of emotion and allusions to foreign lands, as in *Seule!* (1871) and *Les matelots* (1870). Whilst Hugo's considerable output and fame

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[17] Gautier's oeuvre spans not only Romanticism but also the Parnassian movement at its inception; he remains a transitional figure whose style evolved through the years.

may appear to overshadow Gautier's technical abilities, the latter's

contribution to versification changes leading to Parnassianism is evident in the

frequent use of *rejets* and in the careful choice of sonorities. The following four

lines taken from Ma belle amie est morte' *(La Comédie de la mort,* 1838)

illustrate Gautier's careful planning of vowel colour and alliteration:

Table 3.3: Ma belle amie est morte' *(La Comédie de la mort,* 1838*),*

T. Gautier, fourth stanza (excerpt), recurring sounds and alliteration

Fourth stanza (excerpt)	Recurring sounds and alliteration	
Ah! comme elle était belle	[ ] [l]	[m] in each line
Et comme[18] je l'aimais!	[ ] [l] [ ]	[m]
Je n'aimerai jamais	[ ] [ ]	[m]
Une femme autant qu'elle.[19]	[l] [ ]	[m]

Recurring sounds echo from line to line, in particular the consonants [m] and

[l]; the open frontal vowel sounds[20] [a], [e] and [ ] are consistent with the

extroverted expression of sorrow in this text. The six-syllable metre imparts an

almost truncated shape to the lines, similar to half an *alexandrin* uttered by

one weakened by grief. As a transitional literary figure, Gautier embraced the

expressive style of Romanticism while joining in the Parnassians' quest for

beauty and well-crafted verse.

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[18] Fauré changes the word to combien', possibly to avoid repetition and alliteration. The second-syllable accentuation in com**bien**' is also an inversion of the accentuation of **com**me', a further way of avoiding repetition.

[19] Ah! how lovely she was / And how I loved her! / I shall never love / Another like her.

[20] Frontal vowel sounds have the most resonating space at the front of the buccal cavity.

Fauré's first *romances* on texts by Hugo are clearly distinct from the ephemeral commercial compositions still in vogue at the time. *Puisque j'ai mis ma lèvre* (1862), most probably Fauré's second song,[21] is a strophic and lyrical setting, prefiguring the later *mélodies* in madrigal style, such as *Sérénade du bourgeois-gentilhomme* (1893), and featuring a plucked-lute staccato accompaniment (Johnson, 2009, p. 43). The first stanza includes some of the challenges encountered by the young Fauré in this song: a *rejet* between lines 3 and 4 and an *enjambement* at the *césure* in both lines.

The vocal line in Example 3.2 closely follows Hugo's rhythms: the end of the third line is barely acknowledged with a crotchet on the accented syllable of haleine' and the singer then launches into the last line of the stanza with a series of quavers to skim over the *césure,* giving the passage an ardent and youthful character (bb. 20–24). Despite the *enjambement* in line 3 (j'ai respiré // parfois'), Fauré acknowledges the *césure.* Two reasons may justify this choice: the end-of-line *rejet* (haleine / De ton âme') and the subsequent stronger *enjambement* (parfum // dans l'ombre') in addition to the crossing of the *césure* in the first line would produce a long phrase requiring an equally long breath on the part of the singer; in prosodic terms, pausing on respiré' for a breath in fact subtly depicts the meaning of the text.

A similar treatment is given to lines 7 and 8 (bb. 32–40), this time without the *enjambements.* In this imaginative setting of *alexandrin* rhythms in

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[21] The oldest extant manuscript of *Puisque j'ai mis ma lèvre* is dated 8 December 1862 (in Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris), whereas an undated manuscript of *Mai* has also been tentatively dated to 1862 (in Reinecke Rare Books and Manuscripts Library, Yale University), using other sources as well as letters from Fauré to Hugo to secure his authorization for the use his poems.

the second stanza, uniting the last *hémistiche* of one line to the first of the next, Fauré mirrors Hugo's *rejet* by pausing only at the *césures*. Unstressed syllables on downbeats coupled with large upward intervallic leaps in the vocal line (bb. 16–17, as well as 33–34 and 52–53) produce the few instances of awkward prosody in this song, presumably the result of a melody geared to vocalism rather than to accurate recitation. However, lyricism and charm compensate for the weaknesses of this one-of-a-kind early *romance*.

Table 3.4: Puisque j'ai mis ma lèvre' *(Les chants du crépuscule,* 1835)*,*

V. Hugo, first stanza (excerpt), rhythmic processes

First stanza (excerpt)	Rhythmic processes
Puisque j'ai respiré // parfois la douce haleine De ton âme, parfum // dans l'ombre enseveli;[22]	enjambement, rejet enjambement

Example 3.2: *Puisque j'ai mis ma lèvre* (1862), bb. 16–24

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[22] Because I have sometimes breathed in the sweet breath / Of your soul, perfume concealed in the shadows.

Table 3.5: Puisque j'ai mis ma lèvre' *(Les chants du crépuscule,* 1835)*,*

V. Hugo, second stanza (excerpt), rhythmic process

Second stanza (excerpt)	Rhythmic process
Puisque j'ai vu pleurer, // puisque j'ai vu sourire Ta bouche sur ma bou- //che et tes yeux sur mes yeux.[23]	rejet

Example 3.3: *Puisque j'ai mis ma lèvre,* (1862) bb. 32–40

In his extensive biography of Fauré, Nectoux considers how the songs following the early *romances* and starting in 1870 with *Lydia*, freed from straight repetition, derive their unity from a new relationship with the accompaniment, which both supports and interacts with the voice (Nectoux, 2008, pp. 113–14). For Robin Tait, Fauré's musical settings constitute translations of the poetic text into music rather than mere reactions to it. The musical means of translating text to music becomes the piano accompaniment, and the vocal line allows the words of the poem to express themselves, rather than attempting strongly to interpret their sense

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[23] Because I have seen you weep, because I have seen you smile / Your mouth upon my mouth and your eyes upon my eyes.

melodically' (Tait, 1989, p. 289). In other words, the accompaniment (and, by extension, the harmony) sets the stage while the vocal line receives rhythms and melodic contours suitable for expressive poetic recitation. Whilst this may be true of Fauré's late songs in their declamatory simplicity, further expressive elements found in the Romantic and Parnassian settings as well as in the Verlaine songs are brought out in this thesis and examined in detail in both this chapter and the next.

3.3.2: Poetic and musical stresses in Fauré's songs

During the formative years when he composed his early songs, Fauré experimented with prosody in the context of musical metre and rhythm. He also developed a distinctive harmonic language to support his emerging recitation style based on continuous motion on the pulse. The evidence from text and song analysis in this chapter demonstrates Fauré's growing awareness of poetic rhythms and techniques, used as firm foundations for expressive and prosodically effective *mélodies*.

The techniques developed by Fauré in his early song settings persisted as essential features of his vocal music style throughout his life. With each successive poetic movement and, often, each new poet, Fauré emphasised specific features or created new techniques to assist recitation as he aimed to express the poet's mind more clearly. Consistency and innovation, both founded on tradition, remained the principles guiding his creative energy throughout his career. Indeed, Caballero notes how Fauré's passion for

innovation acted in conjunction with his interest in music from the past to shape stylistic change, particularly his penchant for mixing tonality and modality (Caballero, 2001, p. 71). As this thesis shows, this firm commitment to renewal within continuity also applies to prosody, in Fauré's creative return to rhythmic units in his late cycles, similar to earlier patterns yet adapted rhythmically to a new poetic environment (see Sections 3.4 and 5.4.2).

Fauré's understanding of poetic stress points and rhythmic features is already present in his very first songs as poetic accentuation leads him to begin overlooking the stated musical metre to focus instead on a pulse-centred musical recitation. End-of-line and syntactic stresses, energising the musical phrase, gradually replace the four-square phrase structure of the *romance*. During Fauré's early career, techniques to neutralise metrical regularity to approximate French speech rhythms in music are formulated and progressively become habitual.[24]

Chapter 2 described how French verse rhythm is dynamically geared to an end-accented goal in a line of verse. In a musical realisation taking this into account, the intensity in a musical phrase ought to be directed in a similar fashion. A classic example of this model is the first line of Hugo's *Mai* (1835) which consists of an *alexandrin* metre with a standard *césure* at its mid-point (Table 3.6).

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[24] It is worth noting that Fauré's teacher and lifelong friend Saint-Saëns appears not to have exerted a significant influence on the composition of Fauré's songs. A prolific composer, Saint-Saëns wrote *romances* and *mélodies* throughout his career yet remained attached to a lyrical vocal style characterised by memorable melodies, wide vocal ranges and a fairly consistent use of downbeats for word or line stress. Songs such as *Aimons-nous* (1891) and *Le vent dans la plaine* (1912), a truncated version of Paul Verlaine's *C'est l'extase langoureuse*, are still recognisably Romantic in their melodic and harmonic approach.

The first line is made up of a traditional rhythmic scheme, with internal divisions by groups of three syllables, a first syntactic and rhythmic goal at the *césure* (fleurs'), and the main emphasis of the line on ré**cla**me'. Hugo has ensured the end-of-line build-up of intensity in at least three ways: the poem begins with puisque', a conjunction syntactically linked to the next line in an inverted sentence; the word fleurs' at the *césure,* concluding the first *hémistiche*, raises expectations for a subsequent clarification of meaning; finally, Hugo places the first verb at the end of the line (réclame'), giving it a triple rhythmic charge: réclame' ends a series of one-syllable words with its own two (voiced) syllables, it is the long-awaited verb of the syntactic unit and, above all, it carries the end-of-line stress.

The next line presents a more varied internal rhythmic scheme, with an initial emphasis on the second-person imperative verb Viens', set off by a comma and reinforced by the next verbal locution ne te lasse pas', which ends the first *hémistiche*. The return to a classic 3+3 rhythmic division after the *césure* completes this more subtly accented line.

Fauré's setting of this couplet reflects Hugo's rhythmic variations. The first *hémistiche* in the first line replicates the poetic stress points, with an entire bar dedicated to the *césure* (fleurs')*,* while the next six syllables cleverly lead to the final line stress with a series of quavers, leaving behind the initial crotchet on dans', a rhythmically unimportant word and a potential location for unintended accentuation for singers. The first half of the next line mimics almost exactly the rhythms in the previous *hémistiche*, this time accurately

emphasising with the crotchet the poet's invitation on Viens'.

Table 3.6: Puisque mai tout en fleurs' *(chants du crépuscule,* 1835)*,* V. Hugo, first stanza, first two lines, rhythmic divisions

First stanza, first two lines, with end-of-line and inner stresses shown	Rhythmic divisions
Puisque **Mai** tout en **fleurs** // dans les **prés** nous ré**cla**me,	6+6 (3+3) // (3+3)
Viens, ne te **las**se **pas** // de mê**ler** à ton **âme**... [25]	6+6 (4+2) // (3+3)

Example 3.4: *Mai* (1862?), bb. 3–10

The second *hémistiche* has a rather interesting history. Daitz and Nectoux report a variant in their critical edition of early Fauré songs (Daitz & Nectoux, 2010, p. 170). The 1890 Hamelle edition in both high and medium voices sets bar 9 as in Example 3.5, proof that Fauré struggled to find the best recitation rhythms and accentuation for his first songs.

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[25]   As May all in bloom calls us to the meadows / Come, never be weary to take into your soul...

Example 3.5: *Mai* (1862?), b. 9

de   mê-ler   à   ton

A more sophisticated prosodic treatment characterises *Adieu* (1878; Charles Grandmougin, n.d.). Fauré uses Grandmougin's mixed-metre poem, consisting of alternating eight- and two-syllable lines, to shift accentuations away from the downbeat. Stresses in the shorter lines are found for the most part on the third beat of the 4/4 bar, regardless of their close syntactic relationship with the preceding octosyllabic line produced by a *rejet.* In this way, longer lines of verse always lead to the shorter, as in the first stanza (Table 3.7).

Fauré appears to invert prosodic logic in this passage, with la rose' on the downbeat, while déclose', the prosodic goal of the first-line syntactic group, completes the bar on the last two beats (b. 6, Example 3.6). In fact, by adhering to classic poetic accentuation at the end of the first line, at the same time observing the *rejet*, Fauré neatly achieves a subtle interpretative effect. Déclose' is given a melodic contour depicting the meaning of the text in a rising tessitura, accompanied by a *diminuendo* (the dying rose). Furthermore, the isolated two-syllable line receives minimal harmonic support with a progression from the fourth degree to a minor seventh chord on the second degree of the scale, an unresolved progression.

Table 3.7: *Adieu* (n.d.), C. Grandmougin, first stanza, first two lines, prosodic groups

First stanza first two lines with word group accents	Prosodic groups	
Comme tout meurt **vi**- // te, la **ro**se	5+3	rejet
Dé**clo**se[26]	2	

Here, not only does Fauré suggest the text with melodic and harmonic means, but he also manages the prosody with an apparent conflict of accentuation between text and music. In fact, the shifting of stresses between text and music urges the recitation onwards to the next lines of verse, in effect neutralising the potential loss of momentum in the two-syllable lines of verse.

Example 3.6: 'Adieu' (*Poème d'un jour,* 1878), bb. 5–6

One further example demonstrates how Fauré again links lines of verse for continuous declamation, this time without the presence of a *rejet* to create a strong rhythmic connection between lines. The first two lines of *Ici-bas* (1874; Sully Prudhomme, 1865) combine poetic stresses on the beat in the

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[26]   How swiftly everything passes, the rose / In bloom

2/4 bar with continuous recitation which includes an unimportant word on the downbeat (Table 3.8 and Example 3.7 below).

Table 3.8: 'Ici-bas' *(Stances et poèmes,* 1865*),* Sully Prudhomme, first stanza (excerpt), rhythmic divisions, recurring sonorities and words

First stanza (excerpt)	Rhythmic divisions, recurring sonorities and words		
Ici-**bas**, // tous les lilas **meu**rent,	3+5	[i] [a] [u] [l]	tous
Tous les chants des oi**seaux** // sont **courts**;[27]	6+2	[u] [ ] [z]	tous

Example 3.7: *Ici-bas* (1874), bb. 3–6

Fauré's setting appears fairly straightforward at first glance. All rhythmic goals (*césures* and ends-of-line) are located either on the second beat, rendered more important by the note durations (indicated in bold in table 3.8) or on the downbeat in the case of the final word in the second line (courts'), an indication of this syllable's relative importance within the couplet. The one accentuation exception, pointing to a twinning of the lines and to ongoing recitation, is the definite article les (chants)' on the downbeat in bar 4 which should receive no prosodic stress. Fauré's subtle setting matches Sully Prudhomme's less orthodox *césure* location in the second line, as the second

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[27] Here below, the lilacs all die, / All birdsong is brief;

syllable of oiseaux' is lengthened, followed by the brief locution sont courts',

mirroring the meaning of the text and brought out by its brevity and rhythm

and by the change to a lower tessitura. In this brief excerpt, Fauré equalises

beats between significant rhythmic goals and transforms melody into a vehicle

for expressive declamation, techniques which are characteristic of the songs

from this period.

3.3.3: Neutralised musical metre and bar-line boundaries

A major element of Fauré's treatment of prosody is his frequent disregard for

the stated musical metre. This is a direct consequence of the shifting of poetic

stresses to non-accented beats so that the durational, non-accentual stresses

of French speech may be better translated into music. This has a direct effect

on stresses within bar-lines and from one bar to the next. When bar-line

boundaries are neutralised, internal note groupings can be made to link more

closely with prosodic and syntactic word groups. In his study of Fauré's

musical language, Tait remarks apropos the composer's use of bar-lines: It

seems...that the bar-line exists merely as a point of reference, although it

usually coincides with cadence points' (Tait, 1989, p. 220). Caballero provides

an insightful contribution to the understanding of Fauré's approach to

accentuation and metre.

> The weakening of metrical downbeats within his phrases
>
> provides a solution to the notorious problem of French
>
> prosody. French tends to equalize syllabic stress and create

accents almost entirely through longer duration at the ends of

syntactic groups or phrases. Fauré's deliberate suppression of

the downbeat allows all those evenly spaced, unaccented

French syllables to tumble smoothly through the melodic line

until they reach a point of proper emphasis (Caballero, 2001,

p. 236).

Whilst Caballero contributes valuable insights to the understanding of French

speech rhythms within a musical context, this thesis demonstrates the rich

subtleties found in the declamation of French prosody in Fauré's treatment of

internal line rhythms. In practical terms, the suppression of regular metrical

accents in order to translate poetic prosody more accurately into melody

creates fluidity built upon the pulse rather than on the expectation of metrical

regularity. Whilst Caballero speaks of evenly-spaced syllables', the reality is

that French poetic declamation is a far richer and subtler art, one which Fauré

addressed by various means, which are highlighted throughout this thesis with

analysis, musical examples and recordings.[28]

With regard to French poetic metre rendered into music, this element

probably constitutes the greatest point of divergence with English-language

poetry and musical settings, a difference which has been demonstrated in the

second chapter. Unlike English, few recurring or regular rhythmic patterns

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[28] Contrary to Fauré, Ernest Chausson (1855–99) included time signature changes in his early songs, a practice he gradually abandoned in favour of rhythmic declamatory techniques similar to those of Fauré in his later *mélodies*. For instance, time signatures alter frequently in *Le charme* (1879), whereas in the later song *Cantique à l'épouse* (1896) Chausson varies the location of phrase endings, either in mid-bar or on the downbeat, the latter often attenuated by changeable harmonies. Tied notes over bar-lines, varied note lengths for verse endings and diatonic melodic movements further point to similarities with Faurean prosodic techniques, although do not permeate the melodic fabric to the same extent as in Fauré's late songs.

within prescribed metres can be relied upon as frameworks to control phrasal direction or accentuation in French declamation.

From the beginning of his career, Fauré used a variety of means to set prosody into musical rhythm. These may well be perceived as alterations to the stated musical metre, as hemiolas, as displaced metrical accents or even as prosodic errors. In fact, these techniques constitute small- and large-scale manipulations of the rhythmic flow on the pulse, making use of selected metrical accents to bring out important prosodic goals.

The 1873 *Barcarolle* (Marc Monnier, 1872) features a 6/8 time-signature which Fauré's groupings make equally singable in 3/4 time. While the piano part, mainly in the inner voices and the left hand, firmly states the rocking motion of the 6/8 metre in dotted crotchets, the right hand echoes the vocal line one bar later. As a result of note groupings, the melody appears to be written in simple time triple metre (3/4) against the typical duple metre 6/8 pattern heard in the accompaniment.

The return to compound time in all the voices features clear statements in 6/8 time (bb. 17–19, Example 3.9) emerging amid the equivocal triple- or duple-metre bars (bb. 15, 33). This song features long passages of ambiguous metrical treatment, cleverly engineered for vocal prosody while exhibiting the barcarolle style; the vocal line, in particular, demonstrates Fauré's ability in this respect. *Barcarolle* also displays the stylistic poise he acquired during his five years in the salon of famed mezzo-soprano Pauline Viardot (1821–1910), who coached him in the Italian vocal style.

Example 3.8: *Barcarolle* (1873), bb. 1–6

Example 3.9: *Barcarolle* (1873)*,* bb. 15–19

In a slightly earlier song, *Les matelots* (1870; Gautier, 1841), phrases appear to shift momentarily from 3/4 to 2/4. A closer inspection of the text reveals Fauré's varied response to syntactic groups in the first and second stanzas. Here, Fauré experiments with pacing, particularly as the brief six-syllable line of verse does not traditionally warrant a *césure* but only an optional line break on a stressed syllable. Lines 1 and 3 occupy two entire bars and are scored clearly in 3/4 time (bb. 3–4 and 7–8), while lines 2 and 4 end on the downbeat of their second bar with a minim or a dotted minim (bb. 5–6 and 9–10). This alternating pattern occurs in the first four lines of each stanza and the implied metrical change to 2/4, when present, is found in the shorter, more rhythmically compressed even-numbered lines. Thus, in the first stanza, Nous allons voyageant' and D'un sillage d'argent', with recurring pattern ♪♪♩, are grouped in 2/4 against the equivocal accompaniment scored in groups of three quavers. It is reasonable to assume that Fauré intended a hemiola at this point in the song, given the note group discrepancies between voice and piano parts; however, in the present case, the text plays an important part in dictating rhythm and pacing, and a hemiola (as a solely musical event) could introduce additional and unwanted stresses. Words like Sur l'eau bleue' or environnant' require more phonation and articulation time than D'un sil**la**ge' or Nous al**lons**', and these two locutions are clearly directed to their stressed syllables, speeding up recitation pace. In the second stanza, only two lines display this rhythmic contrast, and Fauré maintains an identical setting to that of the first stanza.

Table 3.9: 'Les matelots' (*Poésies nouvelles,* 1845), T. Gautier, first and second stanzas (excerpts), line breaks

First stanza (lines 1–4)	Line breaks
Sur l'eau bleue | et profonde,	(3+3)
Nous allons | voyageant.	3+3
Environnant | le monde	(4+2)
D'un silla- | ge d'argent.[29]	3+3
Second stanza (lines 3–4)	**Line breaks**
À notre vieil- | le mère,	(4+2)
À nos jeu- | nes amours.[30]	3+3

Other lines vary in their prosodic rhythms, as do rhythms in Fauré's setting. This is found, for instance, in lines 1 and 2 of the second stanza (Table 3.9), where text rhythms no longer warrant allusions to another metre to accommodate syntactic groups (Nous pensons à la terre / Que nous fuyons toujours'[31]). Therefore, the inclusion of a hemiola-like pattern in the first-stanza lines below reflects Fauré's growing sensitivity to text rhythms and is unlikely to relate to musical considerations.

In these early songs, as Fauré moves away from the four-square phrase structure of the *romance* to a more personal approach to musical prosody, a pulse-based declamation begins to appear in response to French prosodic rhythms.

---

[29] On the deep blue waters / We travel onwards. / Circling the globe / With a silvery trail.
[30] (We think) Of our aged mothers, / Of the loves of our youth.
[31] We think of dry land / Which we ever flee.

Example 3.10: *Les matelots* (1870), bb. 3–10

Example 3.11: *Les matelots* (1870), bb. 25–29

3.3.4: Note-value lengthening techniques

Displaced accents (which are in effect neutralised stresses) and tied notes

over the bar-line and in the middle of the bar also serve to attenuate metrical

regularity and stresses in Fauré's music, moving musical phrases towards clearer statements of prosodic goals. Bars 43–50 of *Les roses d'Ispahan* (1884; Leconte de Lisle, 1884) is a typical Faurean setting of an *alexandrin,* smoothly declaimed on the pulse.

Table 3.10: 'Les roses d'Ispahan' (*Poèmes tragiques,* 1884), Leconte de Lisle**,** third stanza (excerpt), rhythmic groups and process

Third stanza (excerpt)	Rhythmic groups and process
Ô Leïlah! depuis // que de leur vol léger	4+2 // 4+2 enjambement
Tous les baisers ont fui // de ta lèvre si douce[32]	4+2 //3+3

In this couplet, Fauré attentively follows a classic *alexandrin* pattern*.* Pausing at the poetic apostrophe (O Leïlah!'), at the end of both lines of verse (léger' and douce') and at the second-line *césure* (fui'), he also observes the *enjambement* at the first-line mid-point (depuis // que').[33] The originality of the setting lies in the treatment of prosodic stresses: the only acknowledgement of the first *césure* is the placement of the second syllable of depuis' on a downbeat which, in performance, need not be stressed in any way.

---

[32] Oh Leïlah! Now that with their airy flight / All kisses have left your sweet lips.

[33] Writers on French versification disagree on the location of the *césure*, particularly in Romantic and later poetry, as seen in Chapter 2. For instance, Mazaleyrat allows the *alexandrin* to be freely divided not only in the traditional two *hémistiches* of equal lengths (6+6), but also into three parts (4+4+4: the *alexandrin romantique or trimètre*) to reflect syntactic and / or recitation structures (Mazaleyrat, 1974, pp. 18–19). Conversely, Gérard Dessons confirms the regular position of the mid-point *césure*, being of the opinion that this traditional location then provides a prime source of tension between syntax and metre: *enjambements, rejets* or *contre-rejets* then cause increased tension unique to the subjective voice, ultimately leading to a point of release (Dessons, 1991, p. 87).

Example 3.12: *Les roses d'Ispahan* (1884), bb. 43–59

Fauré assigns the end-of-line prosodic goal lé**ger'** to the metrically weak second beat, followed by a tie over the bar-line (bb. 46–47); the two next *hémistiches* are handled in the same manner. Specifically, these two lines of verse (bb. 43–51) prepare the next couplet (bb. 52–58) describing the starkness of the garden without Leïlah's affections, translating in rhythm the destabilising effect of losing one's love. The ties and neutralised stresses also press the text and music towards the next lines of verse. This approach to prosody not only calls for a subtle performance of the *mélodie* and of its prosodic rhythms, but it also provides an insight into Fauré's understanding of broader poetic structures.

Linguistic differences appear to characterise singers' declamation styles in recordings of this song. Non-francophone singers Felicity Lott (2005c, CD), Janet Baker (1989b, CD) and, chief among them, Elly Ameling (2006e, CD), approach the song from the musical angle, aiming above all for an impeccable legato line. Excellent diction prevails while the song proceeds smoothly

forward, with the piano providing a consistent support on the pulse.

Francophone singers exhibit a more text-centred interpretation as well as

variety in terms of tempo and of attention to the composer's markings. The

tempo in performances by Hugues Cuenod (2004c, CD) and Karine Deshayes

(2009d, CD) occasionally varies slightly according to the text despite few such

indications in the score, whereas Nathalie Stutzman (2003b, CD) proceeds at

a pace approaching an *Allegretto* rather than at the stated *Andantino*.

However, one factor unites these three singers: all treat the semiquavers more

freely than their non-francophone colleagues, engaging with the text from the

point of view of French speech rhythms. This is not to say that legato is

absent; rather, declamation is more closely related to natural speech, with the

note preceding the semiquavers slightly lengthened and the shorter note

values appearing rushed – in fact, a slight rhythmic freedom produced by

diction. As these three singers are from different generations and French-

speaking cultures, it appears that this approach to French sung declamation

cannot be traced to particular regions or to transient fashions.[34] Moreover, the

declamation style adopted by the three francophone singers suggests that

Fauré's rhythms are entirely suited to natural speech patterns, even within a

musical context.

While Fauré makes a more sparing use of ties to counteract the

accentual regularity of the bar-line in his early songs (as opposed to their

frequent appearance in his late cycles), ties appear from time to time, as in

Les roses d'Ispahan considered above and in *Le voyageur* (1878?; Armand

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[34] Cuenod (1902–2010) was of Swiss origin, while Stuntman (b. 1965) and Deshayes (n.d.)
    are both French and were born in the second half of the twentieth century.

Silvestre, 1880[35]). Fauré was to set ten more poems by Silvestre, a number

exceeded only by his sixteen songs on Verlaine poetry and by his two late

song cycles on texts by Charles van Lerberghe.

Whilst ties do not figure prominently in *Le voyageur,* nevertheless their

appearance heralds a more systematic use in future songs. Ties serve two

functions in *Le voyageur*: they lengthen stanza endings in order to heighten

intensity (bars 40–41 and 49–50); and they downplay metrical accents (bars

6–7 and 45–46), where a minim tied to a crotchet over the bar-line

momentarily appears to halt the traveller's steady step: Dans l'or vibrant de la

poussière' and Saignant de son amour fidèle' (see Examples 3.13 and

3.14).[36] As a result of the strophic nature of the first and last stanzas from

which these two excerpts originate, the rhythmic change produced by the tie is

possibly more effective with the text of the last stanza, where fidèle' carries

the long note, as this accords more closely with textual meaning (amour

fidèle' – the endurance of the traveller's faithful love). Furthermore, the sudden

destabilising effect of long notes on the second beat of a 3/4 bar mimics the

traveller's weary yet determined resolve. Whilst the use of ties to disrupt

metrical regularity is not an essential characteristic of Fauré's early songs, it

becomes a regular feature in the later cycles with the altered prosody of the

vers libre.

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[35] It is probable that Silvestre's poem appeared in a newspaper or magazine before being
   published in a collected volume of verse, and Fauré would have had access to these early
   sources, or might even have had direct contact with Silvestre himself, hence the
   discrepancy in the dates.
[36] In the shimmering golden glow; Bleeding from his faithful love.

Example 3.13: *Le voyageur* (1878?), bb. 3–7[37]

Example 3.14: *Le voyageur* (1878?), bb. 43–46

3.4: Rhythmic patterns in Fauré's songs

Chapter 2 reported how Fauré developed brief rhythmic patterns to reproduce the rhythms of spoken French while maintaining forward motion on the pulse. In the songs composed between 1861 and 1887 (up to Fauré's songs on Verlaine texts), these patterns reflect the structured and controlled versification style of Romantic and Parnassian poetry. A single song typically includes two or three recurring patterns, representative of the specific prosodic pace and rhythms of the poem.

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[37] O Traveller, where are you going, / Trudging along in the shimmering golden glow?
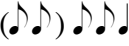
Broadly speaking, Fauré's rhythmic practice in his songs aims to achieve two main goals: the translation of French prosody into musical rhythms and the generation, alteration and support of motion on a steady pulse – *l'organisation du mouvement*. The first may be said to be a general aim, shared by preceding and contemporaneous composers with varying degrees of success, while the second constitutes a more personal application of prosody and declamation to musical processes. This section explores Fauré's use of rhythmic patterns in songs up to his first Verlaine setting *(Clair de lune,* 1887) and examines the way in which musical declamation on the pulse progressively becomes his preferred technique to translate into song the stresses and nuances of the French language.

Vivès describes the subtle prosodic changes in Fauré's *mélodies* during the years prior to 1887:

> Une des caractéristiques du discours fauréen des années
>
> 1870 est la mobilité rythmique: la fluidité de la déclamation
>
> avec usage de la syncope enjambant les barres de mesures,
>
> les accents de longueurs, le déplacement des temps forts sur
>
> les temps faibles, c'est-à-dire autant de facteurs qui offrent
>
> une variation de l'expression, court-circuitent l'immuable
>
> forme strophique et introduisent des éléments hétérogènes
>
> dans un discours qui offre par ailleurs tous les signes d'une
>
> forme immuable (Faure & Vivès, 2000, p. 127).[38]

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[38] Rhythmic mobility constitutes one of the characteristics of the Faurean musical language in the 1870s: fluid declamation with syncopations over the bar-line, accentuation using long note values, accented beats displaced to unaccented locations, that is to say, a number of factors creating diverse means of expression to bypass the immovable strophic form and

Vivès makes one important point by bringing out the multiplicity of means used by Fauré to induce fluidity inside fairly fixed forms. These forms include not only the traditional poetic frameworks of line or stanza, but also inherited musical structures such as metre or bar-lines. The changing poetic environment provided Fauré with the stimulus to further experiment with established musical elements such as rhythm, metre, melody and harmony, resulting in *mélodies* like *Ici-bas* or *Les roses d'Ispahan.* By highlighting these significant techniques, Vivès points to Fauré's personal approach to declamation; likewise, the findings of this thesis, among them the rhythmic patterns modelled on speech rhythms, confirm Fauré's creative prosodic and rhythmic techniques.

In 1870, Fauré composed *Lydia* (Leconte de Lisle, 1852), a song many consider to be his first genuine *mélodie* and featuring a new flexibility in rhythmic declamation.[39] The strophic form of the Parnassian octosyllabic poem is built on simple rhythmic patterns to bring out the text in expressive recitation leading up to the end of each stanza: (a) (♪♪) ♪♪♩ and (b) ♩♪♪♩ .Venturing beyond the constraints of the four-square phrase structure, Fauré sets de Lisle's text sensitively, making use of both downbeat stresses and of ongoing motion on the pulse in subtle poetic accentuation. Rhythmic patterns

introduce heterogeneous elements in a discourse presenting an otherwise immutable form.

[39] As well as citing a June 1870 letter to Julien Koszul where Fauré refers to *Lydia* specifically as a *mélodie* (Nectoux, 1980, p. 26), Nectoux bases his assertion about *Lydia* as Fauré's first *mélodie* on stylistic considerations, for instance, the control of a more compact form along with a new depth of expression (Nectoux, 2008, p. 113). Graham Johnson considers the song as nothing less than a breakthrough' (Johnson, 2009, p. 64). Robert Orledge points out that *Lydia* contains many of the features typical of Fauré's vocal music style: a smooth vocal line with narrow intervals, sparse accompaniment, inspired simplicity (Orledge, 1979, p. 50).

bring out prosodic rhythms and assist in establishing the mood of the poem by controlling the pace of musical recitation. In Example 3.15, Fauré uses pattern (a) ♪♪♩ to which other elements are added to harmonise with the various syntactic groups in the lines of verse.

Example 3.15: *Lydia* (1870), first stanza (excerpt), text and rhythms

Fauré's rhythmic setting, supported by an ascending melody with passages in the Lydian mode (b. 4, Example 3.16), follows the main poetic stresses at the *césures* and at the end of the lines with longer note values (e.g. Lydi**a**', **jou**es': bb. 4 and 5). However, main stresses no longer appear consistently on the downbeat or on other stressed beats but occasionally occur in the middle of the bar. Thus, both the *césure* and end-of-line stresses in the first line feature a minim on the second beat of the 4/4 bar (bb. 3–4), blurring metrical accents with a syncopation. This had already been initiated in

the piano introduction by a minim as the starting note on the second beat, followed by a series of five identical crotchet tonic chords. The voice part then carries on in this fashion, with the melody proceeding on the pulse until the second line of verse (bb. 5–6), where poetic and metrical stresses then converge: frais' on beat 3 of bar 5 and blanc' on the downbeat of the next bar.

Example 3.16: *Lydia* (1870), bb. 1–10

Effortless rhythmic settings such as this, where durational stresses occasionally combine with musical accentuation, point to a new understanding of prosody on Fauré's part and open the way for a greater and more flexible

use of rhythm without the framework of musical metre. In addition, rhythmic patterns reflect Fauré's exploration of the prosodic potential of music, so that a more natural style of recitation may be achieved.   Another *mélodie* using simple rhythmic means with a high degree of expression and intensity is the 1881 setting of *Le secret* (A. Silvestre, 1882).[40] Two patterns recur throughout

the song, (a) ♩♪ and (b) ♪♪♪ ; (a) also occurs in augmented form in bars 10, 19 and 27, (♩.♪) while (b) is inverted to ♪♪♪, for example in bars 5 and 8. Contrary to *Lydia*, most poetic stresses in *Le secret* are located on the downbeat and longer note values indicate end-of-line stresses. At first glance, therefore, this song may appear quite unimaginative with its regular two-bar phrase structure. In actual fact, Fauré writes his recitation as freely as the limitations of standard notation allow, using various combinations of rhythmic patterns (a) and (b). This freedom is also evident in the way he controls the strophic style: each stanza contains recurring material combined with new rhythmic and melodic segments tailored to the rhythms and meaning of the text. The accompaniment provides fluid harmonies with the consistent rhythmic support of steady crotchet chords.

The rhythm of the second stanza, coupled with a melody proceeding chiefly diatonically, reflects a declamatory style entirely in keeping with the mood of Silvestre's text, shifting between exaltation and introspection.

Unlike *Lydia,* where Fauré appeared to be carefully avoiding downbeats except at major prosodic goals, all ends of lines and a number of inner verse stresses are located on the downbeat in *Le secret*. Yet, continuity on the pulse

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[40]   As with *Le voyageur*, considered earlier in this chapter, it is probable that Fauré had access to the poem prior to its inclusion in the poet's published collection *Le pays des roses*.

is not compromised by this apparent regularity. Fauré alters rhythms between stress points by the augmentation and diminution of rhythm (a) and by variously combining rhythmic patterns (a) and (b). In addition, constant harmonic changes and chord inversions ensure that recitation is directed towards its prosodic goals.

Table 3.11: 'Mystère'[41] (*Poésies nouvelles,* 1880–82), A. Silvestre, second stanza (excerpt), rhythmic divisions and process

Second stanza (excerpt)	Rhythmic divisions and process	
Je veux que le jour // le proclame	5+3	rejet
L'amour qu'au matin // j'ai caché,	5+3	
Et, sur mon coeur ouvert // penché,	6+2	
Comme un grain d'encens // il l'enflamme.[42]	5+3	

Example 3.17: *Le secret* (1881), bb. 12–20

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
[41]   Silvestre's original title, changed by Fauré to *Le secret*.
[42]   I wish the day would proclaim / The love I concealed from the morning, / And, bowing over my bared heart, / Would ignite it like a grain of incense.

The first two lines of the second stanza are made up of four occurrence

of rhythmic pattern (b) ♪♪♪ (bb. 12–13), while pattern (a) ♪ ♪ is featured

twice in augmented form (♩. ♪) in the next two lines (bar 19) to lengthen vowel

sounds as the end of the stanza approaches (according to Morier's law of

progression).[43] Fauré breaks the impending rhythmic monotony at the third

line by closely following punctuation and accentuation patterns, and by

allowing a slight pause at the *césure* (coeur ouvert') with the clever placement

of a crotchet on the second half of the first beat. This line also contains

varying and overlapping combinations of pattern (b) and of its inversion:

♪♪♪ ; ♪♪ ♩ (b) inverted and augmented, bb. 15–16:

 Et, sur mon'; (coeur ou-)vert, penché'

♪♪♪ ♪♪♪ (b) twice in a row, bb. 14–15

 (L'amour) qu'au matin j'ai caché'

Finally, the last line leads to the end of the stanza with a series of

quavers, ending with a typical lengthening of note values at the end on the

poet's passionate appeal. The melody progresses diatonically and

incorporates elements of the harmony (voice-leading, raised fourth degree in

the first and third stanzas in bb. 3, 5, 22, 24) and transient modulations. This

feature of the melody as an emanation of the harmony'[44] becomes

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[43] La loi de progression qui règle la durée des voyelles à l'intérieur d'une mesure rythmique polysyllabe détermine une longue à la finale et des protoniques relativement brèves, mais dont la durée augmente au fur et à mesure qu'elles approchent de la finale' (Morier, 1989, p. 906). (The law of progression (law of progressive lengthening') that regulates the length of the vowels within a polysyllabic rhythmic word group [*mesure*] creates a long syllable at the end, and protonics [i.e. the syllables that precede the repose] that are relatively short but whose length increases as they approach the final syllable.) (Quoted in Ranum, 2001, p. 74).

[44] The insight of Françoise Gervais in her ground-breaking study on harmony in Fauré's *mélodies* provides an invaluable analytical foundation for this thesis: Sa mélodie, toujours chantante et vivante à l'intérieur de la trame harmonique, sera cependant indissociable de

increasingly more important in Fauré's later songs, particularly in the Verlaine settings and in van Lerberghe's *La Chanson d'Ève.*

Contrasting performances of this song are offered by Janet Baker (1989a, CD) and Nathalie Stutzman (2003a, CD). A slow but steady pace, consistent legato and wide contrast of dynamics characterise Baker's interpretation, resulting in a reflective mood punctuated by moments of heightened emotion. Stutzman's performance creates a different atmosphere: a more rapid tempo with occasional variations (accompanied by fairly jaunty dotted rhythms in the piano part) suggests a restless mood; in her declamation, Stutzman brings out small word groups by subtly undermining legato in the phrase (for example, Je veux | que le matin'). Already encountered in Section 3.3.4, this text-centred declamation is by no means unique to *Le secret* and appears directly linked to a singer's linguistic origins.

Two other songs include rhythmic patterns, elegantly managed to bring out a prosodically faithful declamatory pace, yet unencumbered by the limitations of recurring musical stresses. The first of these is *Nell* (1878), on a text by Parnassian poet Leconte de Lisle (1852) and inspired by the lyrics of Robert Burns (O my love is like a red, red rose'; Ta rose de pourpre...'). The poem's publication date is the same as that of *Lydia* (1878), but formal Hellenistic beauty is replaced here by a rather more passionate exuberance. For Graham Johnson, *Nell* represents a real step forward...: melody, harmonic texture, depth of feeling, the matching of the literary means to the

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celle-ci, dont elle constituera en quelque sorte une «émanation»' (Gervais, 1971, p. 19). (His melody, forever lyrical and lively within its harmonic framework, is nevertheless inseparable from it, and becomes, in a certain sense, an emanation' of the harmony.).

musical' (Johnson, 2009, p. 121).

Table 3.12: Nell', (*Poèmes antiques,* 1852), Leconte de Lisle, first stanza, metres, recurring sonorities and words in lines and throughout the stanza

First stanza	Metres, recurring sonorities and words in lines and throughout the stanza		
Ta rose de pourpre // à ton clair soleil,	10	[a] [o] [ ]	rose
Ô Juin, étincelle // enivrée,	8	[o] [e] [ ]	
Penche aussi vers moi // ta coupe dorée:	10	[o] [ ] [a] [e]	
Mon coeur à ta rose // est pareil.[45]	8	[a] [o] [ ]	rose

Example 3.18: *Nell* (1878), bb. 1–9

The *mélodie* includes the now-familiar (a) ♩♪♪♩ and (b) ♩ ♪♩♪ rhythmic patterns, in addition to (c) ♪♪♪♪♩ . Leconte de Lisle's adept versification offers ideal rhythmic material for Fauré to combine in lively declamation. The first nine bars are in keeping with Fauré's rhythmic treatment of the entire song.

---

[45] The red rose in your bright sunshine, / O June, enchanted brilliance, / Incline to me also your golden cup: / My heart is like your rose.

Leconte de Lisle's poem alternates ten- and eight-syllable lines; in his setting, Fauré assigns two bars to each line, regardless of its poetic metre. With various combinations of the rhythmic patterns, prosodic rhythms come alive in this exuberant song. The two quavers on the second beat in bar 2 may even be said to belong to two patterns simultaneously: rose de' (b) and (ro)-se de pour-(pre)' (a), ensuring ongoing motion on the pulse. These combined patterns are followed by (c) ♪♪♪♪♩ (à ton clair soleil'), ending the line of verse on a minim on the second beat of the 4/4 bar. Poetic metrical stresses in the third line are displaced to weak beats as Fauré disregards the stated metre to control pacing. Poetic and musical accentuation agree again in line 4, the last line of the stanza, with rose' at the *césure* on beat 3 and pareil' ending the line and the stanza on the downbeat.   A further, more subtle rhythmic scheme can be found in de Lisle's controlled use of sonority. One example in *Nell* is the vowel [o], occurring solely in the first part of each line. In Fauré's setting, the sound is placed on the beat in lines 1 and 4 and on the second half of the beat in lines 2 and 3. Whether Fauré intended this arrangement or not, it constitutes yet another rhythmic element in this stanza, present at first in the verse and then arranged in musical phrases to further enhance rhythmic interplay between the lines. In the fourth stanza, rhythmic patterns serve more complex purposes.

Table 3.13: Nell' (*Poèmes antiques,* 1852)*,* Leconte de Lisle, fourth stanza
(excerpt), rhythmic divisions and process

Fourth stanza (excerpt)	Rhythmic divisions and process	
La chantante mer,// le long du rivage,	5+5	rejet
Taira son murmu- //re éternel[46]	5+3	

Example 3.19: *Nell* (1878), text and musical rhythms, bb. 29–32

La chan-tan-te mer, le long du ri-va- ge,tai-ra son mur-mure é-ter- nel,

In the excerpt above (Example 3.19), pattern (c) ♪♪♪♪♩ begins on the
downbeat and is altered by the dotted quaver and semiquaver on the second
beat (La chantante mer'); the same pattern, this time unaltered, occurs on the
fourth beat, crossing the bar-line; finally, two consecutive statements of
pattern (a) ♪♪♩ (son murmure éternel') are found in bars 31 to 32, the last
crotchet being altered to a dotted minim (this last alteration corresponds both
to the typical lengthening of the end of French verse and to a subtle illustration
of the word éternel').

In these four bars (bb. 29–32), patterns are separated by longer note
values indicating prosodic line goals (mer, rivage / taira, murmure').
Furthermore, Fauré observes the *rejet* between the two lines of verse by
maintaining rhythmic movement in a sweep of ascending melody to Gb. At the

---

46 The singing sea, along its shore, / Will hush its everlasting whisper.

same time, the traditional prosodic goal of the tenth syllable on ri**va**ge', being

part of the *rejet*, is displaced to the unstressed second beat while the syntactic

goal of the locution (La chantante mer...tai**ra**') is directed to the downbeat by

the highest pitch of the phrase. Analyses of later songs (considered in the next

two chapters) show that similar displaced poetic accents are frequently used

by Fauré to pace movement and to control declamation stresses in his

mélodies.

A look at a number of brief excerpts from *Les roses d'Ispahan* further

illustrates Fauré's control of recitation to reflect mood and poetic style by the

combination of rhythmic patterns. Bars 16–22 include three patterns: (a) ♪♪♪,

(b) ♪♪♪ and (c) ♪ ♪

Table 3.14: 'Les roses d'Ispahan' (*Poèmes tragiques*, 1884), Leconte de Lisle,

first stanza (excerpt), rhythmic divisions

First stanza (excerpt)	Rhythmic divisions	
Ont un parfum moins frais, // ont une odeur moins douce,	6+6	(4+2)+(4+2)
O blanche Leïlah! // que ton souffle léger.[47]	6+6	(2+4)+(3+3)

This passage immediately follows a description of the rich fragrances of a

Middle Eastern garden, and Fauré puts across Leïlah's sweetness by

breaking with previous metrical regularity to introduce various combinations of

rhythmic patterns (a), (b) and (c). These combinations generate a pulse-

centred declamation, where downbeat stresses seem to disappear even while

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[47] Are not so freshly perfumed, their odour is less sweet, / O pale Leïlah! than your light
      breath.

bearing the main prosodic goals (*césure* and end-of-line) in each line of verse
(**frais'**, **dou**ce'; Leï**lah'**, lé**ger'**).

Example 3.20: *Les roses d'Ispahan* (1884), bb.16–22

In this excerpt (Example 3.20), Fauré creates variety in each bar
through his ability to arrange rhythmic combinations suited to the poet's own
prosody and to speech rhythms in general. As in *Nell* (Example 3.19), longer
note values inserted between the various rhythmic patterns not only confirm
line goals and secondary stresses, but they also simulate more natural speech
rhythms. Syncopations in the vocal line, as highlighted earlier by Vivès, along
with those in the accompaniment, impart a Middle Eastern sensual
nonchalance to what is in actual fact a highly organised composition, another
example of Fauré's *organisation du mouvement.*

Within the carefully structured Parnassian verse, rhythmic patterns (as
musical manifestations of French speech and recitation rhythms) help Fauré
achieve a degree of freedom from musical metre and its recurring stresses.
The findings of this thesis with regard to rhythmic patterns provide new insight
into Fauré's lifelong process of compositional renewal as well as his prosodic

approach, inspired by speech rhythms. As demonstrated in Chapter 5, these same patterns, in the transformed context of Symbolist free verse, constitute the foundation of the *recitando* vocal style in Fauré's late songs at the turn of the twentieth century.

3.5: Techniques employed by Fauré for generating, altering and sustaining motion

Fauré's focus on accurate and sensitive declamation is highlighted by singer Claire Croiza (1882–1947) who performed with Fauré and sang the title role in his opera *Pénélope* in 1913 at the Théâtre de La Monnaie in Brussels. Croiza emphasised the need to link spoken and sung rhythms in Fauré's vocal music: I could never overstate the importance of working the texts in rhythm without singing them. Intelligently spoken, they reveal the simplicity and the truth of a work' (Quoted in Nectoux, 1999, p. 389). When addressing singers, Croiza would note Fauré's forward motion and his metronomic fidelity to tempo (Nectoux, 1980, p. 195). This agrees with the findings of writers Tait (1989, p. 190) and Caballero (2001, pp. 236–37) who link Fauré's distinctive treatment of rhythm and metre to a pulse-centred rhythmic movement invested with ever-present energy. This thesis brings further insight into the musical manifestations of Fauré's forward motion, in particular the presence of recurring rhythmic patterns to energise pulse-centred phrases.

Examples in section 3.4 show how simple, repeated or recombined

rhythmic patterns in music reflect poetic rhythms for recitation and pacing in Fauré's songs prior to the Verlaine years. By joining these patterns together in various ways to mirror the text, Fauré achieves ongoing motion beyond the boundaries of musical metre and of its recurring accents within bar-lines to accommodate French declamation based on syllabic duration. There is a possible link between this pulse-centred recitation style and some aspects of Fauré's musical education at the École Niedermeyer in Paris. Set up to train future church musicians, the school included regular performances of plainsong and choral repertoire from the Renaissance and Baroque eras in its curriculum. In addition, Gustave Lefèvre's technique of free modulation to distant tonalities by way of common notes, considered unorthodox by the traditionally-minded Paris Conservatoire, laid the foundations for Fauré's own harmonic language, consisting of fluid and shifting tonalities to sustain dramatic and musical intensity.

The means employed by Fauré to translate prosody and speech rhythms into musical rhythm may be said to control musical movement by generating, altering and sustaining motion,[48] and rhythmic patterns assist in this control. *L'aurore*, composed in 1870 (V. Hugo, 1835), provides an early example of uncomplicated methods used to great effect. In this song, Fauré employs a repeated pattern to generate motion towards the end of the five-syllable lines: ♪♪♪♪ (♩). While text and melody combine to produce a simple song, the result is far from simplistic. The straightforward *romance,* coloured

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[48] The French word allant', used by Claire Croiza to define the forward-moving quality of Fauré's music, seems to best describe motion which is essentially directed to an ending: a phrase, a section, a stanza or, indeed, an entire *mélodie* (Bannerman. 1989, p. 79).

by a Faurean raised fourth degree (bb. 7, 15, 21) musically recites Hugo's text, yet avoids complete melodic uniformity by modulating to the dominant in the second stanza. In addition, the note values concluding the rhythmic pattern constantly vary to suit the text and its stressed or unstressed syllables. The unchanging core of the single rhythmic pattern ♪♪♫♪ (♩) remains as the unifying factor in this early *romance*.

Example 3.21: *L'aurore* (1870), bb. 1–9

A further technique used by Fauré to create movement is the repetition of identical note values. Some evidence of this has already been seen in the addition of quavers to the original rhythmic pattern of ♪♪♩ in *Lydia* (Example 3.15). The effect is one of continuous motion, structured only by the inclusion of longer note values: Lydi**a**, sur tes roses **joues** / Et sur ton col **frais** et si **blanc** (longer note values indicated in bold). Fauré proceeds in the same manner in *Aurore* (1884; A. Silvestre, 1880–82). Metre is neutralised by series of quavers varied by melodic direction and supported by a chordal accompaniment comprised mainly of inverted chords.

Table 3.15: 'Matutina IV' (*Poésies nouvelles,* 1880–82)*,* A, Silvestre, first

stanza (excerpt), hémistiches, secondary stresses and rhythmic process

First stanza (excerpt)	Hémistiches, secondary stresses and rhythmic process
Des jar**dins** de la nuit // s'en**vo**lent les étoiles,	6+6 (3+3)+(2+4)
Abeilles d'**or** qu'atti- // re un invi**si**ble miel.[49]	6+6 (4+2)+(4+2) enjambement

Example 3.22: *Aurore* (1884), bb. 1–7

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[49] The stars flee from the gardens of night, / Golden bees attracted by an invisible honey.

In the first line of the couplet, the longer crotchet note values coupled with the faster-moving quavers accurately bring out poetic and inner line stresses. The series of quavers in the second line (bb. 5–6, Example 3.22) urge diction forward, and the change in melodic direction on 'qu'attire' cleverly takes into account the mid-line *enjambement* while possibly illustrating the text (the attraction of the invisible honey). By the effective use of repeated quavers, Fauré enables the expressive declamation of text on the pulse and encourages singers to favour textual over musical stresses.

In the same manner, the last line in the first stanza, Trame de fils d'argent // le manteau bleu du ciel' (bb. 11–14, Example 3.23),[50] tumbles downward from the top G by a series of quavers, deftly leading the singer towards the rhyme (ciel'), away from the downbeat stress on d'argent'. Fauré subtly signals the *césure* with a repeated A (b. 12), but the final word and rhyme of the stanza take precedence in this *alexandrin* crafted in the Classical style. It is worth noting that repeated notes also figure prominently in Fauré's late songs, in the changed context of Symbolism. In that altered poetic environment, repeated note values combine with reiterated pitches for expressive declamation, where the lyricism of the Parnassian songs has given way to a *parlando* vocal line.

Another way in which Fauré treats repeated quavers in conjunction with longer note values to bring out poetic stresses is to assign the longer values to unaccented beats. Bars 8–12 of *Le voyageur* feature stresses systematically placed on the second beat of the 3/4 bar. Rhythmic motion leads to the final

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[50] Covers with silvery threads the sky's blue mantle.

rhyme of the stanza, located on the downbeat (lumière'); on the other hand,
the corresponding rhyme (poussière'), two lines earlier, is found on the
second beat. In this way, Fauré sustains forward motion by avoiding clear
metrical and harmonic signals until bars 10–11, where the end of the stanza
coincides with a perfect cadence on the dominant. Tait notes this trait of
Fauré's musical language, where cadences and metrical stresses finally
coincide at the end of extended passages of chromatic harmonies having, for
a time, neutralised the metre by introducing harmonic instability. (Tait, 1989, p.
191). In *Le voyageur* and in other excerpts examined in this chapter, analysis
also brings out the important contribution of rhythm (patterns, repeated note
values and long note values) to the weakening of metrical and harmonic
stresses.

Example 3.23: *Aurore* (1884), bb. 8–14

A number of musical elements to sustain forward-going motion receive
a more sophisticated treatment in bars 19–28 of *Nell* (Example 3.24). Here, as
in *Le voyageur*, prosodic goals, such as the ends-of-line enflammé' (b. 20)

and vive' (b. 24) and the mid-line douce' (b. 23), occur on the second beat of

the 4/4 bar, effectively avoiding clear prosodic and metrical stresses.

Table 3.16: Nell' (*Poèmes antiques,* 1852)*,* Leconte de Lisle, third stanza,

rhythmic divisions and process

Third stanza	Rhythmic divisions and process	
Que ta perle est dou- // ce au ciel enflammé	5+5	
Étoi- // le de la nuit pensive!	2+6	
Mais combien plus dou- // ce est la clarté vive	5+5	rejet
Qui rayon- // ne en ton coeur charmé![51]	3+5	

Example 3.24: *Nell* (1878), bb. 19–28

Repeated quavers in an angular melodic line in bar 21 impart a degree of

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[51] How sweet is your pearl in the brilliant sky / Star of the contemplative night! / But sweeter
still is the vivid light / Which shines in my enchanted heart!

restlessness to the phrase, supported, as in the rest of the song, by a *moto perpetuo* semiquaver pattern in the accompaniment. The piano part ensures continuous harmonic movement, alive with passing notes, fleeting accidentals, fluid progressions and brief modulations cleverly inserted within the busy semiquaver rhythms. Fauré ends the stanza by combining poetic and musical stresses (as in *Le voyageur*) and by returning to a clear statement of the tonic of Gb major in bar 29. In this excerpt, the inclusion of series of quavers in an angular melodic line, featuring prosodic goals on weak beats and restless harmonies, helps to neutralise musical metre for a pulse-centred declamation.

In *Tristesse* (1873; Théophile Gautier, 1838), Fauré controls pace and mood by the use of rhythms appearing to alter the stated metre (Example 3.25). The ♪♪♪ pattern, repeated twice in the 6/8 metre phrase (bb. 4 and 5), sounds fleetingly in 2/4 time and creates a purposely awkward rhythm. Between bars 4 and 6 (and in corresponding places in the next stanzas), the semiquavers starting with the words La première des roses' appear as an anacrusis to the quaver, creating a series of duple metre declamation patterns. Obvious changes in metrical accentuation such as these are comparatively rare in Fauré's songs; *Barcarolle*, composed the same year, presents a similar metrical ambiguity (see Example 3.8). It must therefore be assumed that recitation rhythms and the aim to translate the despondent mood of the poem inspired Fauré in the deliberately equivocal rhythmic setting of *Tristesse*. Bars 7–14 in the vocal line, clearly in the stated 6/8 metre, bring out the contrast between the forced gaiety of the poet and the reality of his grief. In this potential conflict between musical and poetic rhythms, performers need to maintain the forward-going energy of the French text to avoid overly

strong emphases on recurring patterns: their repetition is sufficient to

underline the poet's fixation on his dark thoughts.

Example 3.25: *Tristesse* (1865), bb. 3–10[52]

Three singers offer distinctly varied interpretations of this song.

Geraldine McGreevy (2005, CD) favours the use of rubato and vocal colour,

particularly in the first ten bars; the third stanza is also sung at a slower tempo

than the rest of the song, possibly to suggest the languor of the lovers' moonlit

embraces. In this version, the rhythmic contrasts discussed above are

downplayed in favour of a descriptive approach. Nathalie Stutzman (2003c,

CD) offers a different interpretation, strongly highlighting the 2/4 and 6/8

metrical duality. A fairly rapid tempo with a progressive *accelerando* during the

stanza, along with unevenly sung semiquavers, gives a *parlando* effect to the

song, particularly in the sections preceding the recurring refrain: 'Hélas! j'ai

dans le coeur / Une tristesse affreuse!'[53] Gérard Souzay (2006e, CD) opts for

an overall legato interpretation, the varied rhythmic groups thus being

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[52] Avril est de retour, / La première des roses, / De ses lèvres mi-closes, / Rit au premier beau jour, / La terre bienheureuse / S'ouvre et s'épanouit, / Tout aime. tout jouit. (April has returned, / The first of the roses / With half-opened lips / Smiles on the first lovely day, / The blessed earth / Sends forth its blossoms, / Everything loves and rejoices.).

[53] Alas! In my heart / Is a terrible sorrow!

absorbed into the linearity of the phrases. Souzay also performs this song at a slower pace than either McGreevy or Stutzman, imparting a melancholy mood to the *mélodie.* Of these three performances, two rhythmically contrasting interpretations also convincingly emphasise different aspects of the poet's mood: Stutzman's speech-like declamatory pace brings out the poet's changeable emotions, while the slow tempo and legato singing in Souzay's version focus on the poet's heartache.

In order to generate, alter and sustain motion, Fauré uses simple yet effective means, as highlighted by the analysis in this section. Again, poetry brings about this creative use of rhythm: patterns, repetitions, apparent alterations to the stated metre and the careful placement of long notes to neutralise bar-line stresses. Increased melodic and harmonic fluidity, built on the pulse, support expressive declamation on rhythmic approximations of speech in the Faurean *organisation du mouvement*.

3.6: Forward motion on the pulse in Fauré's songs

A significant feature of Fauré's prosodic style is the feeling of continuity on generally unstressed beats. On this subject, James Kidd states in his thesis that Fauré sought a quality of strong, undifferentiated motion, motion with an underlying forcefulness and unstoppable momentum, motion of calm intensity' (Quoted in Caballero, 2001, p. 237). Nectoux further qualifies this Faurean constancy and control of movement:

[La régularité du tempo] doit se comprendre dans un

mouvement souplement rythmé reposant sur une sorte de

tension intérieure. La musique de Fauré est en effet de celles

qu'il faut impérativement «soutenir»: en bannissant toute

rupture, tout alanguissement du mouvement, toute

déformation des lignes qui la sous-tendent. On pourra voir

dans cette continuité du flux musical un reflet de sa longue

pratique de la musique d'église, du grégorien en particulier

(Nectoux, 2008, p. 613).[54]

Nectoux's insight is consistent with Fauré's background in Renaissance polyphony. His disregard for regular metrical stresses and bar-lines as well as the long-range planning of phrases and harmonic progressions belong to a conscious understanding of musical movement to which other elements are directed. This organised and ongoing movement is particularly apparent in the Verlaine settings and in the last four song cycles, as seen in Chapters 4 and 5.

Rhythmic fluidity built on the musical pulse had already been present in a number of songs by other French composers, either predecessors or contemporaries of Fauré. His contribution to this approach to musical prosody, however, is unique. By maintaining an almost constant motion on the beat to support speech rhythms and by adapting other musical elements (like harmony and phrase length) for this purpose, he created his own strand of the

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[54] A flexibly rhythmic movement based on a kind of internal tension explains [Fauré's steady tempo]. It is essential that continuity in Fauré's music be maintained: any interruption, any languor in the movement, any distortion of the underlying lines must be avoided. This continuous musical flow is a possible reflection of his long experience of church music, and of Gregorian chant in particular.

mélodie, one where *l'organisation du mouvement* is an essential feature. In order to grasp more fully the various rhythmic approaches which may be applied in setting particular poetic rhythms to music, an excerpt from Théophile Gautier's 'Lamento' (*La Comédie de la mort*)[55] is now examined as set by three nineteenth-century composers: Hector Berlioz, Charles Gounod and Fauré.

Table 3.17: 'Lamento (La chanson du pêcheur)' *(La Comédie de la mort, 1838)*, T. Gautier, third stanza (excerpt), possible line stress locations, rhythmic process

Third stanza (excerpt)	Possible line stress locations Rhythmic process	
Ah! comme elle était belle	2+4	
Et comme je l'aimais! (Fauré: Et combien je l'aimais!)	2+4	(3+3)
Je n'aimerai jamais	4+2	rejet
Une femme autant qu'elle.[56]	3+3	

Théophile Gautier's poem Lamento (La chanson du pêcheur)' is set as part of the song cycle *Les nuits d'été* by Berlioz (1803–69), composed between 1840 and 1841); the song is renamed Sur les lagunes' by Berlioz. Throughout most of the *mélodie*, which is set to a slowly rocking 6/8 metre,

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[55] Stephen Rumph, in his article Fauré and the effable', reminds us of Gautier's borrowing of the poem's refrain (Que mon sort est amer...') from an Italian folk-song inscribed on the frame of a painting by Karl Wilhelm Kolbe, which transforms the grieving fisherman into a performer within the poetic narrative (Rumph, 2015, pp. 507–510).

[56] Ah! how beautiful she was / And how I loved her! / I shall never love / Another woman as I have loved her!

poetic stresses coincide with the duple metre, without any hint of implied metrical change or re-groupings. However, a few bars of the melody near the end of the song (bb. 88–97) point to a more flexible rhythmic scheme. While a clearly-defined phrase structure, built on musical metrical stresses, is easily discernible in Berlioz's songs, some instances of a freer approach to rhythm are present, announcing future transformations in solo song, as seen in Example 3.26.[57]

In this passage, Berlioz suddenly shifts the prosodic stresses of l'ai**mais**' and ja**mais**' (bb. 92, 94) to the second beat of the bar, opting to use the downbeat to bring out the personal pronouns elle' in the first line of text and je' in the second and third lines (bb. 90, 92, 93). This seemingly conflicting prosody translates the poet's distress by destabilising metrical organisation. With these simple means, Berlioz mirrors the disorientation of the poet's despair with displaced stresses and tied notes to momentarily neutralise metre.

Example 3.26: Sur les lagunes' (*Les nuits d'été,* 1841), H. Berlioz, bb. 89–97

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[57] According to Noske, Berlioz was the first French composer to use the word *mélodie'* to describe a piece of solo vocal music (Noske: 1970, p. 23).

Another setting of the same text by Charles Gounod (1818–93), *Ma belle amie est morte* (1872), presents a contrasting treatment, yet still preserves the main prosodic stresses on the first and third beats of the stated 12/8 metre. The regular *barcarolle* motion is somewhat disrupted in this section (Ah! comme elle était belle'), as was the 6/8 metre in the Berlioz setting. Here, Gounod begins the first two lines on the weaker position of the second beat, in contrast with the rest of the song where phrases begin either on the downbeat or with a preceding anacrusis. In addition, Gounod combines the two last lines into one, in effect creating an *alexandrin* out of two hexametrical (six-syllable) lines.[58] In this way, Gounod acknowledges the *enjambement* he has created (b. 32), but he also shifts the listener's attention to une femme' by lengthening its initial syllable and by inserting a rest after femme', despite jamais' being on the downbeat.

Example 3.27: *Ma belle amie est morte* (1872), C. Gounod, bb. 18–23

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[58] The printed score appears to indicate this alteration by Gounod by the omission of the capitalisation at jamais / **u**ne'; whether this is an intentional type-setting decision or a typographical error needs to be investigated further. Gautier's poem is in hexameters throughout, except for the repeated last line of each stanza, which is a *décamètre* (10 syllables): Ah! sans amour s'en aller sur la mer!' (Ah! To go unloved on the sea!).

As in Berlioz's *Sous les lagunes*, tied notes on Ah...' and Et...' disrupt pulse regularity and minimise metrical stresses.[59] *Ma belle amie est morte* preserves many of the four-square phrase characteristics, in particular the placement of the main prosodic goals on the downbeat (e.g. belle' and l'aimais', bb. 19 and 21). In this respect, the song is closer in prosodic terms to the *romance* than to the more musically sophisticated *mélodie*.

Composed the same year as the Gounod setting, Fauré's version of this song, *La chanson du pêcheur (Lamento),* is characterised by several differences from the two preceding excerpts (Example 3.28). The stated metre is 4/4 (although, as seen later in this chapter in section 3.7.3, incursions into compound time abound); the song contains a significant amount of unrepeated musical material despite the presence of the poetic strophic form; the four-square phrase structure gives way to declamation on forward-going motion. In the present excerpt, Fauré pairs lines of verse, creating continuity while observing the *rejet* (bb. 40–41)*.* The rhythmic writing, featuring series of quavers, connects the four lines into a poetic segment, leading to the repeated Que mon sort...'. This is achieved by neutralising some of the metrical stresses and by shifting end-of-line goals to beats other than the downbeat: belle' on beat 4, l'aimais' ending on beat 3, jamais' on beat 4 and qu'elle' on beat 3. Most of the lines (excepting the third) begin on the downbeat, but all the accentuation displacements call for unaccented initial beats in performance. The sole exception in this passage might be the exclamation, Ah!' given a crotchet note value and traditionally a poetically accented word

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[59]   The similarity with *Sous les lagunes* in this passage is striking, and could be the result of Gounod's familiarity with Berlioz's score.

(b. 38). By displacing a number of the poetic rhythmic accents away from the downbeat, Fauré directs phrases to the repeated refrain; moreover, he ensures forward motion on the pulse, a characteristic which contributed significantly to the attenuation of traditional metrical structures in his songs.

Example 3.28: *La chanson du pêcheur (Lamento) (1872), bb. 38–41*

Whilst analysis points to certain similarities between Berlioz, Gounod and Fauré in the treatment of these lines from Ma belle amie est morte', namely the alteration of accentuation patterns in the vocal line to disrupt regular stresses, evidence indicates that Fauré's approach exhibits more metrical and rhythmic flexibility, geared to the expressive declamation of this early song. As examples in this chapter illustrate, Fauré goes on to develop further his prosodic techniques, utilising a number of means to control motion without the restrictions of metrical regularity.

3.7: Fauré's techniques for shaping forward motion

In his early *romances* and *mélodies*, Fauré begins experimenting with the shaping of forward motion (in particular, with the control of recitation pacing) by using various means to neutralise musical metrical accents and bring out durational prosodic stresses. Whilst it may be argued that youth and inexperience could explain the relative paucity of innovative techniques during the formative years up to the 1880s, poetic prosody from the Romantic and Parnassian movements also contribute to shaping Fauré's vocal music style. At the same time, increasing experimentation with versification and prosody by poets like Baudelaire encourage Fauré to adopt forward motion on the pulse to support expressive declamation.

3.7.1: The use of tied notes in the early songs

Section 3.3.4 touched briefly upon the use of tied notes in the context of forward-moving declamation. This feature of Fauré's pulse-centred rhythmic writing is examined here as a logical extension of the neutralising of metrical stresses. *La rançon* (1871?; C. Baudelaire, 1866) illustrates the use of ties over the bar-line to minimise the stated 3/4 metre. Three lines in particular prefigure the largely pulse-centred rhythms of the late song cycles: the last line of the first stanza and the first two of the second stanza.

   Whilst Fauré's prosody is far from perfect (in particular, the crotchets on the two initial prepositions Pour' give extra weight to a word already

emphasised by repetition), the *césures* in each of the three lines of octosyllabic verse are marked with tied notes over the bar-line. The ties not only dissolve musical metre, but also create what could be perceived as fleeting hemiolas made up of Fauré's precise prosodic groups. In the first case (Avec le fer...'), the tied note is a dotted crotchet, appearing to insert into the stated 3/4 metre an implied 2/4 metre with two-beat groups in response to the text (see Table 3.18 for rhythmic groups).

Table 3.18: 'La rançon' (*Les fleurs du mal,* 1857), C. Baudelaire, first and second stanzas (excerpts), rhythmic groups

Stanzas one and two (excerpts)	Rhythmic groups
Stanza one: Avec le fer // de la raison;	(2+2) +4
Stanza two: Pour obtenir // la moindre rose,	4+4
Pour extorquer // quelques épis[60]	4+4

The next two lines (the first two of the second stanza) are made up of virtually identical rhythms, matching the syntactic groups, again with accentual shifts hinting at a duple division of the beat pattern. Furthermore, these lines are combined into a larger unit, both lines ending on the weak third beat of the bar. The only instances of a line ending on a downbeat in the stanza are found

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[60] With the tools of reason; / To gain the merest rose, / To extract a few ears (of grain).

in bars 25 and 29–31, where harmony eventually leads to a lengthened

perfect cadence. The use of ties over the bar-line to undermine metrical

regularity is a stylistic aspect yet to be perfected. Fauré sets Baudelaire's

intense verse in a creative manner, reflecting poetic rhythms and portraying

the poet's lofty ideals. However, as some of the rhythms indicate (crotchets on

'Pour', for instance), Fauré struggles with Baudelaire's philosophical concepts

embodied in a powerful poetic technique.

Example 3.29: *La rançon* (1871?), bb. 14–22

Table 3.19: 'Ici-bas' *(Stances et poèmes,* 1865)*,* Sully Prudhomme, first
stanza, césures and recurring vowels and words

First stanza	Césures and recurring vowels and words		
Ici-bas // tous les lilas meurent,	3+5	[i] [a] [l]	tous
Tous les chants des oiseaux // sont courts,	6+2	[u][ ]	tous
Je rêve aux étés // qui demeurent	5+3	[ ] and [œ] [e]	
Toujours...[61]	2	[u]	

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[61]   Here below, all the lilacs die, / All birdsong is brief, / I dream of summers which go on /
Forever...

The tie in *Ici-bas* (1874) in bar 5 (and repeated in b. 15) serves at least two functions. Its presence alters the fairly even prosodic progress of the first two lines of verse while its lengthening effect on rêve', momentarily halting rhythmic motion, depicts the poet's dreaming, suspending time and yearning for everlasting bliss.

Example 3.30: *Ici-bas* (1874), bb. 3–8

Likewise, in bars 43–51 of *Les roses d'Ispahan,* composed ten years after *Ici-bas*, ties over the bar-line appear to alter forward motion on the pulse as if to depict the destabilising effect of Leïla's absence on the poet's life.

Example 3.31: *Les roses d'Ispahan* (1884), bb. 43–51

As Fauré becomes more skilled in translating poetic mood and verse rhythms into song, there is an increased refinement in his ability to venture beyond traditional musical metrical boundaries, and this includes the use of ties to exploit durational emphasis for effective recitation. The next section explores further techniques employed by Fauré to neutralise metre: the use of long note values and of syncopations on various beats of the bar to create a smoothly flowing vocal line while controlling and assisting forward motion.

3.7.2: Mid-bar long note values

Another rhythmic device much used by Fauré to undermine metrical accents and to sustain motion is the placement of long note values in the middle of a bar. In his late *mélodies* on texts by Symbolist poets, these long notes often support end-of-line words or syllables as part of a varied rhythmic palette. In his early songs, with the occasional four-square phrase and the more structured poetry of the Romantic and Parnassian styles, long note values feature in specific works to change metrical accentuation patterns rather than to respond to the irregular phrases or *vers libres* found in Symbolist poetry.

Seule (1871; Théophile Gautier, 1845) is the first song in which Fauré systematically assigns a long note value (a minim) to the second beat of the 4/4 bar. This location corresponds to the end-of-line stress of the octosyllabic verse and constitutes a radical departure from the standard practice of placing important prosodic stresses on the downbeat. Gautier's rhythms mirror the protagonist's dejected mood with mid-line *césures* (4+4) in the eight-syllable

lines, a less common placement for a rhythmic break in this metre. As all eight-syllable lines display this symmetrical structure, one may assume that Gautier wished to depict rhythmically the dreary loneliness experienced by the poem's central figure. Fauré responds with his own repetitive motif and uses the mid-bar minim, faintly reminiscent of the distant tolling of bells (perhaps in reference to Sainte-Sophie in the fourth stanza, a rare text illustration by Fauré)[62] to establish the poem's backdrop. In most of the phrases where this syncopation occurs, a *rejet* links one line of verse to the next. The long note values also establish and sustain ongoing motion leading to the end of the next line, thus combining prosody and interpretation.

Example 3.32: *Seule!* (1871), bb. 3–6[63]

Dans un bai-ser l'onde au ri-va - ge Dit ses dou-leurs!

In *Le voyageur*, the long note values on the second beat of the 3/4 bar (bb. 13 and 14; Ex. 3.33) fulfil a different role. Their presence alters the nature

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[62] In a letter to his wife dated 11 September 1906, Fauré makes the only acknowledged reference to the musical evocation of a sound, inspired by an early memory of distant tolling bells, in his 1886 Second Piano Quartet, op. 45.

[63] With a kiss, the flowing waters to the shore / Recount their sorrows.

of the triple metre by closely following prosodic rhythms, often at odds with the stated musical metrical stresses. The ♪♪♩ pattern closely follows recitation rhythms, effectively neutralising the strong musical stresses of the accompaniment. Perhaps the rhythmic discordance between textual and musical metres is Fauré's evocation of the poet's painful march in his final quest to sleep in the sun's radiance' (Pour m'endormir dans la lumière.').

     The two techniques used by Fauré for sustaining forward motion considered in sections 3.7.1 and 3.7.2 involve momentary disruptions of the musical metre to neutralise accentual regularity; the next method concerns the regrouping of note values for ornamentation or prosody.

Example 3.33: *Le voyageur*, (1878?), bb. 12–14[64]

3.7.3: Triplet use in the early songs

Triplets in simple metre figure to a limited extent in Fauré's early *romances* and *mélodies*. Their purpose seems to be either decorative or motion-related.

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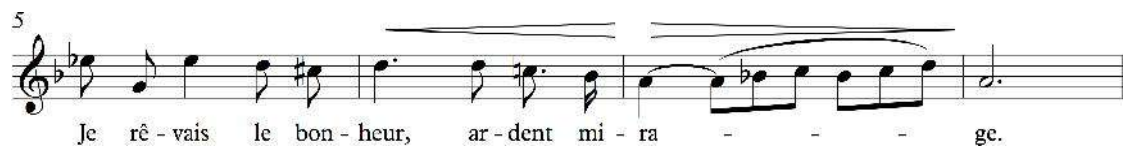
[64]   For I lived, knowing but one God.

The light ornamentation added by triplets is associated mainly with the songs composed while Fauré was closely associated with Pauline Viardot's Paris salon (1872–77). At the time, the mezzo-soprano and teacher steered Fauré towards a more Italianate and lyrical vocal style.[65] Accordingly, *Après un rêve* (1877; Romain Bussine, translator, n.d.), observes Graham Johnson, is a cornucopia of melodic plenty: the music unfolds organically from beginning to end, each phrase leading ineluctably to the next' (Johnson, 2009, p. 102). This lyrical abundance which includes soaring lines, large intervals and dramatic contrasts in dynamic levels, also features triplets used for decorative and prosodic purposes. Extended note values are transformed into triplets, as in bars 6–7 (Example 3.34) or 21–22 (Example 3.35) (ardent mirage', vers la lumière'). Elsewhere, triplets offer both expressive and rhythmic diction, as well as a change of pace from duple rhythmic groups made up of the familiar ♪♪♩ pattern. This is found, for instance, in bars 5–7, where the duple rhythmic pattern precedes the long note transformed into a decorative triplet on mirage'. Often denigrated as an exhibition of vocalism (and unfortunately performed as such), *Après un rêve* best demonstrates the Italianate qualities in Fauré's early vocal music: constantly unfolding lines supported by subtly-changing chordal harmonies, dramatic control by means of melodic contour along with an understanding of the demands of the Italian vocal style through the use of tessitura and dynamics.

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[65] Pauline Viardot endeavoured to guide the young Fauré, urging him to compose more rapidly and to venture into the operatic genre (Nectoux: 2008, pp. 60–64). Her efforts, while influential in shaping Fauré's melodic style and in his choice of poets, did not come fully to fruition. As Fauré's son Philippe relates in his biography, his father's reserve and early aversion to opera was met with incomprehension in the Viardot household, where it was believed that to compose operas led to success and fortune (Fauré-Fremiet, 1957, p. 55). Fauré finally applied his considerable skills and experience to opera with the story of *Pénélope*, his sole effort in the genre, composed between 1907 and 1912.
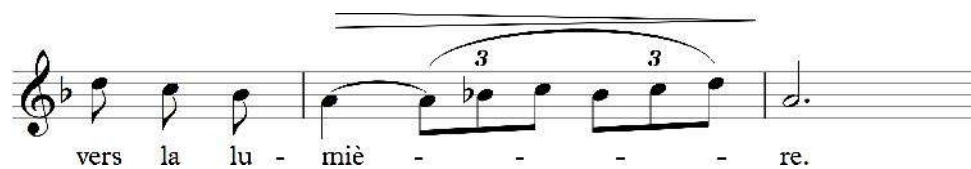
Example 3.34: *Après un rêve,* (1877), bb. 5–8[66]

Je rê - vais le bon - heur, ar - dent mi - ra — — — ge.
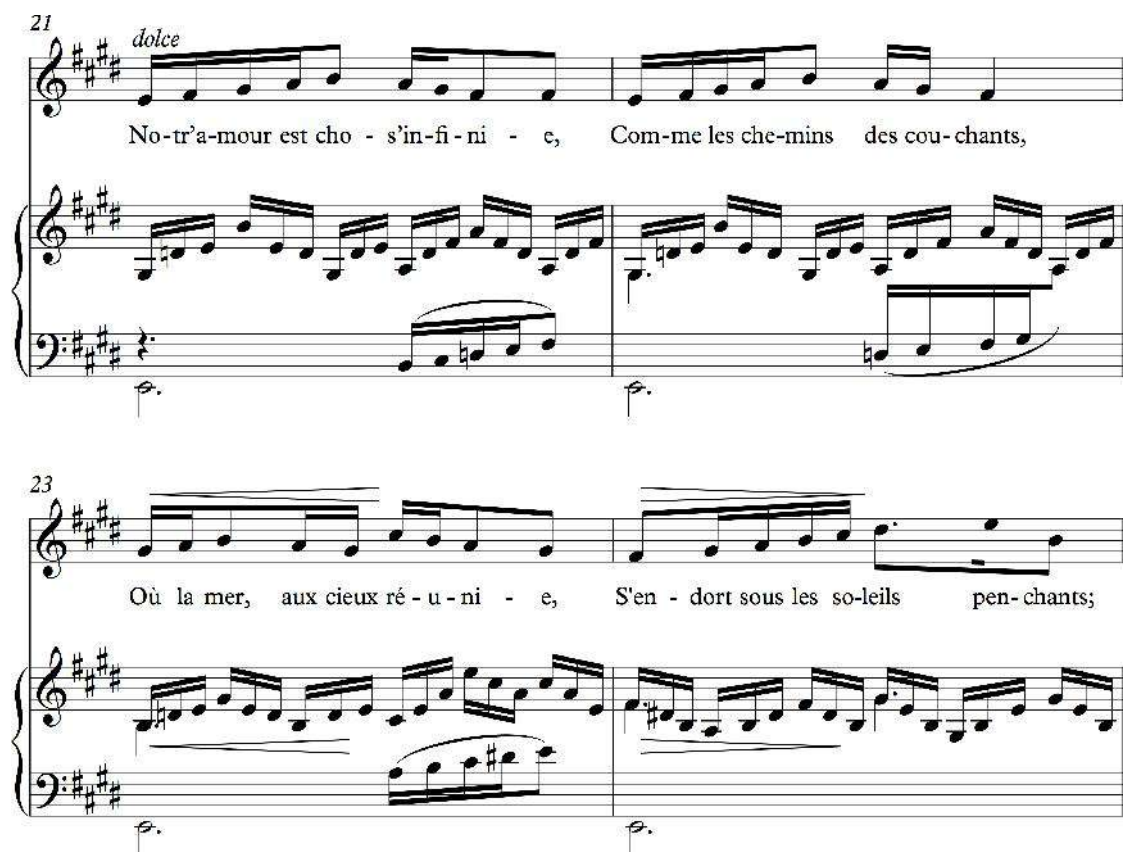
Example 3.35: *Après un rêve* (1877), bb. 21–23[67]

vers la lu - miè - — — - re.

Example 3.36: *Notre amour* (c. 1879), bb. 21–24

No-tr'a-mour est cho - s'in-fi-ni - e, Com-me les che-mins des cou-chants,

Où la mer, aux cieux ré - u - ni - e, S'en - dort sous les so-leils pen-chants;

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[66] I dreamt of bliss, fervent illusion.
[67] To flee with you to the light.

Elsewhere, such as in *Notre Amour* (c. 1879; Armand Silvestre, 1880), triplets in the accompaniment control the quality of motion. Each quaver beat in the piano right hand is made up of its own semiquaver triplet and the motion is thus enhanced by this fluttering arpeggiation. These right-hand triplets are modified only by a keyboard echo of the five-note ascending motif of the vocal part from the first phrase (Notre amour est chose...') in strict 6/8 time (bars 21–23, Example 3.36, as well as bars 25–27 and 36–37). In the last two stanzas, the right-hand triplets, in contrast with the strong 6/8 rhythm in the left hand, give the illusion of a broadening tempo, bringing out the more exalted mood at the end of the song.

La chanson du pêcheur (Lamento), considered in Section 3.4, presents an early example of triplets used in conjunction with note values in simple time to approximate speech rhythms (Examples 3.37 and 3.38). While the accompaniment essentially retains its 12/8 patterns with quaver triplets scored in the 4/4 time signature, the vocal line incorporates both simple and compound divisions of the beat, as Fauré attempts to translate speech rhythms by means of note values. The unaccompanied segments of this song nevertheless retain a dramatic and recitative-like flavour (see, for example, bb. 4–5 in Example 3.38). By the use of two- and three-quaver note groups, Fauré effectively and subtly controls recitation pace in a comparatively early song.

The combination of straight quavers with quaver triplets in bars 22–25 is particularly effective as Fauré maps out declamation in this stanza. For instance, bars 22–23 (La colombe oubliée...') and their ongoing triplets differ from the vehement expression of the quaver series in bars 24–25 (Mon âme

pleure...'), while the triplet at the end of bar 25 appears to decrease the momentum, altering the emotional intensity by means of a *diminuendo*. Here, Fauré's sensitive use of triplets looks ahead to later songs where these rhythmic groupings contribute to effective and controlled sung recitation.

Ober suggests that, at least in the first few phrases, *La chanson du pêcheur* is made up of both stated and implied triplets (Ober, 2012, pp. 148–49). Whilst this can be a useful approach in establishing prosodic groups for performance, it runs the risk of undermining the duple- and triple-note group contrast (as discussed above) and may create a large number of metrical group boundaries. Instead, the analysis in this thesis indicates that natural-sounding declamation originates from end-accented phrases and verses rather than from recurring patterns and stresses arising out of musical metre. Fauré's sparse scoring as well as the notational equivalent of flexible recitation rhythms point to a text-based setting, and his free use of quavers and quaver triplets is clearly an attempt to notate the plasticity and subtleties of French speech rhythms.

Example 3.37: *La chanson du pêcheur (Lamento) (*1872*)*, bb. 22–26[68]

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[68]   The forsaken dove / Weeps and dreams of its absent love / My soul weeps and feels incomplete!

Example 3.38: *La chanson du pêcheur (Lamento)* (1872*)*, bb. 1–15[69]

In Example 3.38, Fauré has carefully planned and controlled pace and motion. The free alternation of quaver pairs and triplets in the first two lines assists sensitive declamation: first, a plain statement of fact in straight quavers (Ma belle amie est morte', b. 1), then the poet's despair in emphatic triplets (Je pleurerai toujours', b. 2). The second pair of lines bears the same contrast of sentiment brought out by similar rhythmic means (bb. 3–4). In lines 5 and 6, two bars of triplets (bb. 5–6) assist in quickening recitation pace, then momentum eases with the inclusion of crotchets and quavers in lines 7 and 8 (L'ange qui l'emmena...', bb. 7–8). This rhythmic pacing gives a more deliberate declamation to the last two stanza lines as the poet reflects on his fate. Overall, these eight lines convey the impression, at first, of halting

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[69] My lovely lady-friend has died, / I shall weep forever! / In the tomb she takes with her / My soul and my love./ Without waiting for, to heaven / She returned. / The angel who carried her away / Left me bereft. / How bitter is my fate! / Ah! to go unloved on the sea!

progress followed by a subtly-controlled sustained motion, leading to the

refrain: Que mon sort est amer! / Ah! sans amour s'en aller sur la mer!'.[70]

These examples (Example 3.37 and 3.38) illustrate Fauré's sparing yet

effective use of triplets in his first songs: while ornamentation does figure to

some extent, prosodic concerns are rarely absent in Fauré's imaginative

settings of Romantic and Parnassian poetry.

3.7.4: Combining techniques for ongoing motion

Fauré occasionally combines several methods to sustain ongoing motion

towards a point of resolution, be it a perfect cadence, an important prosodic

goal on a downbeat or the return to the main tonality after a period of

transitory modulations. *Aurore* (1884) includes all these techniques in its first

twelve bars (Example 3.39). Right from the start, in the first stanza of

alexandrins, Fauré creates motion with alternating crotchet chords on I and II[7]

(with an extra note on the fourth degree), starting the introduction on the weak

second beat of the 4/4 bar, as does the vocal line one bar later. In so doing,

Fauré subtly avoids a downbeat stress on the first word, the unimportant

indefinite article Des' which initiates a descending melodic line. The line ends

in bar 4 with a perfect cadence, but the restless accompaniment, still in

crotchets, continues with inverted chords, hinting at a passing modulation to

the dominant which does not materialise until bar 7. Meanwhile, the second

line of verse ends on the fourth beat of bar 6 during the brief appearance of

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[70]   How bitter is my fate! / Ah! to sail the seas unloved!

the key of D major. Whilst the third and fourth lines of verse end on downbeats, only the last line concludes with a perfect cadence in the main tonality of G major on the first beat of the bar.

Example 3.39: *Aurore* (1884), bb. 1–12

The way in which Fauré begins and ends lines of verse in *Aurore* points

to a new freedom from former structures, a sign that the four-square phrase

has been abandoned (none of the first four lines of the song begin on the

downbeat and lines 2 and 3 start on the second half of the beat). The ends of

lines, while lengthened in the usual fashion to acknowledge the last accented

syllable, are treated with more variety, at times tied over the bar-line (bb. 6–7)

or with a brief quaver rest for a breath between two lines to observe a long-

range *rejet* (b. 11). In these twelve bars alone, Fauré demonstrates the ease

with which he handles metre, rhythm and harmony to translate speech

rhythms, prosody and poetic meaning into vocal music.

3.8: Hemiolas and rhythmic patterns

The subject of hemiolas in Fauré's songs presents particular issues for

prosody and performance. Some authors, like Ober (Ober, 2012, pp. 156–57)

and Howat and Kilpatrick (Howat & Kilpatrick, 2011, p. 267) highlight the

presence of hemiolas when text rhythms induce musical rhythms to re-group

into other, implied metres. The arrangement of note values to equate syntactic

or poetic rhythmic groups often produces transient changes which may be

understood as hemiolas. These groups alter the musical accentual patterns so

that a new metre seems to appear for a short time. Technically speaking,

these rhythmic changes may indeed be perceived as hemiolas; however,

treating them as such in the performance context of the *mélodie* and, more

specifically, in Fauré's songs, can be problematic for reasons of linguistic stress patterns. Regular or infrequent stresses disturb the forward-going and durational accentuation of the French language and introduce possible unwanted metrical accents in performance. For this reason, the combination of syntactic groups with brief non-metrical rhythmic groups, variously combined to approximate speech without accentual impulse (rhythmic patterns), is the option adopted in this thesis. Patterns describe and reveal Fauré's notation of speech rhythms without imposing metrical boundaries. Patterns also assist performers to focus on the text as the primary generator of Fauré's prosodic and rhythmic organisation.

Table 3.20: 'Au bord de l'eau' *(Les vaines tendresses,* 1875)*,* Sully Prudhomme, first stanza (excerpt), rhythmic groups

First stanza (excerpt)	Rhythmic groups
S'asseoir tous deux // au bord du flot qui passe,	4+6 (2+2+2)
Le voir passer,[71]	4

One song, *Au bord de l'eau* (1875; Sully Prudhomme, 1875), contains brief passages of rhythmic re-groupings producing an apparent metrical change in the vocal line. Fauré alters motion in the first two lines of verse in bars 1–6 by scoring the four syllables before the first-line *césure* in the stated 6/8 metre and the remaining six syllables in groups suggesting an implied 3/4

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[71]   To sit together at the edge of the flowing waters, / To watch them pass by.

metre. The next line, made up of four syllables, returns to 6/8. If spoken on the musical rhythm, the words also allude to the text: the leisurely compound time groups and slurred notes in S'asseoir tous deux' contrast with the syllabic setting of the moving quavers mirroring the flowing river, au bord du flot qui passe'. Thus, the present excerpt could be rendered as in Example 3.40.

Example 3.40: *Au bord de l'eau* (1875), bb. 1–6, with altered time-signatures

In practical terms, however, the only prosodically valid approach to this line is to avoid any form of stress, in compound or simple time, and to perform it as a continuous melodic ribbon up to the tenth counted syllable, **pas**se'.

Otherwise, a metrical conflict arises with the piano part where implied simple metre bars do not entirely coincide with those in the melody. Certainly, metrical discordance between the vocal line and the accompaniment are fairly frequent in Fauré's songs; however, bringing out the implied simple metre against the piano in compound metre creates an interpretative conflict with the text as it depicts the lovers' calm retreat, undisturbed by the world. A metrical conflict such as this risks creating extra performing challenges, producing new musical stresses unintended by Fauré (as, in principle, he could have explicitly stated the metrical changes) or by the poetic text itself. Instead, Fauré supports prosodic freedom by remaining in 6/8 time and by setting accurate rhythms approximating poetic prosody which singers simply recite on a lyrical melodic line.

For the most part, recordings of *Au bord de l'eau* support the stance adopted in this thesis on implied changes of metre in Fauré's songs. Performances favour either a legato melodic line shared between voice and piano (Elly Ameling, 2006a, CD) or a text-based declamation (Sarah Walker, 1992a, CD and Hughes Cuenod, 2004a, CD). However, Walker and Cuenod differ significantly in the way in which they approach recitation: Walker subtly colours and shapes phrases and words to depict mood, while Cuenod declaims the text fairly freely on Fauré's rhythms, employing a more *parlando* style of singing, similar to his recording of *Les roses d'Ispahan* discussed in Section 3.3.4. Cuenod's style at times resembles that of the *chansonnier*, a singer of French contemporary song, where free and speech-like recitation constitutes the essential characteristic of the music.

Ultimately, the discovery of a hemiola in Fauré's music clearly constitutes a point of musical interest. Nevertheless, performance considerations, such as the voice-piano relationship, the play of sonorities or the overall mood of a song as well as declamatory style must necessarily prevail over purely musical elements such as hemiolas, which can potentially distort style or prosody.

3.9: Harmony and accompaniment

Much has been said about Fauré's unique handling of harmony. Gervais sums up his place in the nineteenth-century musical lineage: Gabriel Fauré apparaît comme un *traditionaliste* qui se rattache fortement au passé récent dont il ne rejettera aucune formule, mais dont il fera évoluer considérablement le langage' (Gervais, 1971, p. 19).[72] One outstanding trait of Fauré's musical language, highlighted by Tait, is the fusion of tonality and modality. From the first, Fauré's attraction for ambiguous harmonies within a tonal framework contributed to the unique qualities of his works (Tait, 1989, pp. 18, 35). James William Sobaskie discusses nuance, a term which may be applied to evocative elements of pitch structure which stimulate the listener's imagination and arouse expectation'. Sobaskie also makes reference to tonal implication as the allusion to elements of tonal voice-leading structure, either absent, forthcoming, or already past' (Sobaskie, 1999, pp. 164, 171). Orledge

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[72] Gabriel Fauré emerges as a *traditionalist*, strongly attached to the recent past and rejecting none of its practices, at the same time contributing considerably to the evolution of its language.

considers Fauré as a harmonist first and foremost (Orledge, 1979, p. 235), while Nectoux highlights the manner in which phrases are generated from one another, brought about by the Faurean harmonic drift (la dérive harmonique'). Nectoux also deems composers from the Renaissance more significant to the development of Fauré's harmonic style than his immediate predecessors like Gounod (Nectoux, 2008, pp. 302–05). Here, Nectoux appears to contradict Gervais by introducing a wider historical context to support his claim. In fact, evidence from this research suggests that Fauré appears as a harmonic colourist, collecting the various historical strands of musical language and weaving them into new patterns and nuances, ever evocative of their origins. In the course of this thesis, the role of harmony in supporting prosodic and musical rhythm and in *l'organisation du mouvement* is considered, with the contribution of the elements of tradition and innovation brought to light by Gervais and Nectoux.

Table 3.21: 'Mystère' (*Poésies nouvelles,* 1880–82)*,* A. Silvestre, third stanza, sonorities

Third stanza	Sonorities	
Je veux que le couchant l'oublie	[ ][u]	([ã])
Le secret que j'ai dit au jour,	[ ]	([o] [u])
Et l'emporte avec mon amour,		([ ] [ã] [u])
Aux plis de sa robe pâlie.[73]	[i]	([o] [ ])

A brief excerpt taken from *Le secret* (1881) helps to understand the

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[73] I would like the sunset to forget / The secret I revealed to the day, / And that it should take it away with my love / In the folds of its faded garment.

supporting role of harmony in the musical realisation of prosodic rhythm.

Harmonic movements in bars 23–30 are comprised almost entirely of seventh chords (with over half in inverted position); the only clear statement of the tonic key (F major) appears in bars 29–30 with the V^7–I cadence. The third stanza, made up of one entire sentence, grows in intensify to the very end (sa robe pâlie', bb. 28–33), assisted by the conjunction of prosodic, melodic and harmonic elements. Series of seventh chords constitute one of the habitual ways in which Fauré creates and sustains dramatic intensity by postponing a clear statement of the tonic for as long as possible.

Example 3.41: *Le secret* (1881), bb. 22–31

Fauré establishes a new relationship between the voice and piano parts with his signature chordal and arpeggiated accompaniment patterns. Indeed, there is no intrinsic originality in these techniques: numerous arias, recitatives, *romances* and other vocal works were supported harmonically in this fashion. However, Fauré innovates and exploits the potentialities of chordal structure by subtly and constantly altering harmony in chords or arpeggios in order to control prosodic rhythm and to add nuance. With *Le secret*, what could have been a strophic and musically repetitive song on a pleasant text becomes the sensitive translation of a lover's ambivalence sustained by a long series of unresolved progressions leading up to the final perfect cadence. To paraphrase Gervais, the originality of Fauré's musical language lies in new meanings given to past formulas (Gervais, 1971, p. 19).

Example 3.42: *Dans les ruines d'une abbaye* (1868), bb. 1–2

Starting with his early songs, Fauré began using repeated chord and arpeggiated motifs to generate and sustain forward motion. While the arpeggio accompaniment may be said to provide harmonic support in *Mai* (1862?), it is probably in *Dans les ruines d'une abbaye* (1868; Victor Hugo,

1865) that the typical repetitive pattern emerges (Example 3.42).

Example 3.43: *Nell* (1878), bb. 14–15

In *Les matelots* (Example 3.10), Fauré composes an equivocal arpeggiated pattern of quavers seemingly grouped in threes as in 6/8 within a 3/4 time signature, with duple prosodic groupings in the vocal line. Fauré begins to use the broken chord pattern to its greatest advantage in *Nell* (1878, Example 3.43). The restless semiquavers constantly and subtly alter the harmony, with passing notes which often produce momentary harmonic changes or fleeting modulations.

Après un rêve (1877), with its continuous chordal pattern, also includes subtle passing notes, creating suspensions as well as augmented, diminished and half-diminished chords in rapid succession. In this way, as with *Aurore,* considered in Example 3.22, motion is sustained until resolution occurs in a clear statement of the original tonality reinforced by downbeat stresses. In his later songs, Fauré frequently withholds this return to the tonic key until the

very end of a *mélodie*. As seen in the previous chapter, Karl Johansen argues

that the feature of continuity is closely related to harmonic ambiguity. He

points out that, by constantly delaying resolution, Fauré sustains intensity and

motion (Johansen, 1999, p. 91). While ambiguity features less prominently in

the Romantic and Parnassian song settings, the role of delayed harmonic

release to favour forward motion and end-accentuation cannot be denied.

Johansen reminds us of the interaction between prosodic and harmonic

rhythms in Fauré's *mélodies*. In the songs under consideration in this chapter,

harmony takes on two main functions: it generates or alters motion and is

used to define form. Constantly changing or non-resolving harmonies support

end-accented recitation by sustaining dramatic tension. Modulations and

modal episodes, which direct the listener away from the tonal centre, as in the

raised fourth degree in *Lydia* (a frequent modal alteration in Fauré's songs),

also provide the necessary movement away from the tonic to sustain motion.

In *Lydia*, with its chorale-like accompaniment and a moderate tempo, constant

harmonic change heightens dramatic intensity until the release at the clearest

statement of the perfect cadence in bars 18–19 (fleeting V-I cadences occur

before this point, for instance in bars 6 to 7, with at least one of the chords in

inverted position, another means of ensuring continuity; see Ex. 3.16).

Fauré also maintains harmonic fluidity through voice-leading (as in

Lydia or *Aurore*) and by means of rapidly changing or chromatic passing notes

in arpeggiated accompaniments (as in *Nell* or *Notre Amour*) to sustain or

control movement. Moreover, the technique of using one common note to

modulate from one tonality to another, no matter how distant the target tonality may be from the original, results in a much varied harmonic palette, in sustained forward motion and in considerable tonal freedom.

In addition to sustaining motion on the pulse, harmony in Fauré's songs also serves to define form. A classic example of this in the pre-Verlaine settings is *Aurore*. Comprised of three stanzas, the *mélodie* depicts the dawn in Silvestre's highly stylised language, with the sparkling star-like dew paying homage to the poet's beloved. Fauré differentiates the stanzas by the simple means of modulating to the tonic minor for the second stanza.

A similar structure is employed for *Le secret*. Beginning in F major in the first stanza, the exaltation of the second stanza is translated by means of an initial change to F minor (the tonic minor), ending the stanza on Ab minor for one beat. This is rapidly changed to the dominant seventh of the tonic in the next beat (bb. 19–20), to return to F major for the third and final stanza.

In his later songs, Fauré employs harmony for structure in more sophisticated ways, prefigured by *Le secret*: stanzas may be characterised by at least one modulation to distant keys, by series of seventh chords or by highly changeable and unstable harmonies. The common thread remains Fauré's deliberate use of harmony to structure and pace a song (a further use of *l'organisation du mouvement*) as well as to allude to its mood. Whether by means of chordal or arpeggiated patterns, by voice-leading or by intentional modulatory episodes, Fauré's harmony remains wholly personal, a vehicle for the support of expressive prosody and the evocation of a song's atmosphere.

3.10: Chapter Conclusion

The songs leading to the settings of Verlaine's poetry are an integral part of Fauré's formative years in composition. The Romantic and Parnassian poems on which they are based still follow to a large extent the traditional rules of versification, at the same time striving to find new means of expression through rhythm and poetic technique as well as concepts and words. As structure and form are still very much part of the fabric of poetry, this exerts a direct influence on Fauré's musical settings: at first, the four-square phrase, a relic from the fading *romance*, seems to rule musical form, but the influence of the *lied* as well as changing poetic rhythms create the need for a freer approach to phrasing and metre. Fauré's solution, as can be seen from analytical findings in this chapter, was to view musical metre as a basic canvas, using brief repeated rhythmic patterns to approximate French end-accented speech rhythms in melodic declamation. Indeed, metre served as a contributing source of tension between ongoing motion based on the pulse and on poetic prosody, and the varied rhythms and pauses in recitation, sustained by the arrangement of rhythmic patterns within a given poem. While Fauré explored metrical freedom, forward motion and the various means to achieve good musical prosody in these early years, poetic experimentations within the contemporary literary context created favourable conditions to the rise of the *mélodie*: in particular, the well-structured verse and high ideals of the Parnassians appealed to Fauré's discrete and reticent nature. His songs prior to 1887 are, in a sense, the singers' *mélodies',* with their lyrical and

memorable melodic lines, settings of descriptive or evocative poetry, where rhythmic movement remains within the fairly predictable framework of Romantic and Parnassian verse. Nevertheless, accompaniment and harmony create, sustain and control motion by means of increasingly more creative uses of tonality, chordal progressions and rhythm.

The next chapter explores how Verlaine's intensely personal poetic and rhythmic experimentations, while generally remaining within the context of metrical verse, captured Fauré's imagination to the extent that his melodic, rhythmic and harmonic writing changed profoundly.

Chapter 4: Fauré's Songs (1887–94) on Poetry by Verlaine

In 1887, Count Robert de Montesquiou introduced Fauré to the poetry of Verlaine with the collections *Fêtes galantes* (1869) and *Romances sans paroles* (1874). De Montesquiou's knowledgeable guidance brought about a genuine turning point in Fauré's career. Not only did the composer respond to Verlaine's innovative verse with changes in melody, harmony, metre and rhythm, but during this highly creative period Fauré concentrated his efforts almost exclusively on vocal music. Aside from his *Requiem* of 1887, the incidental music for *Caligula* in 1888 and a few small chamber works, the bulk of his musical output between 1887 and 1894 comprised solo vocal music and sacred motets for his choir at the church of La Madeleine in Paris.

The instrumental works immediately preceding the Verlaine period (the second, third and fourth Barcarolles and the Second Piano Quartet), along with the aforementioned works, give little indication of the transformations about to take place in Fauré's solo vocal music. Nectoux suggests one apparent cause for the stylistic transformation in the Verlaine *mélodies*: C'est la voix qui, ainsi que dans toutes les périodes de recherche et de changement chez Fauré, demeure au centre de ses réflexions' (Nectoux, 2008, p. 231).[1] It is probable that the strictures imposed on him by the rhythmical text within the brief form of the *mélodie* as well as the strong thematic content guided Fauré in his innovations. Moreover, the natural limitations imposed on him by the voice and piano as interpretative partners had been part of his musical life

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[1]   With Fauré, as in all his periods of exploration and change, the voice remains central to his reflections.

since his years at the École Niedermeyer, so that he was continually perfecting his skill at the vocal miniature, as Nectoux so aptly describes the *mélodie* (Nectoux, 2008, p. 289).

The sources of Fauré's innovations are not as clear for Caballero, who surmises that their origin might stem from increased harmonic sensibility or from more discerning realisations of French poetry. However', notes Caballero, it seems likely that if *meter* [sic; author's emphasis] had been his primary object of innovation, he would have been more careful or inventive in notating his ideas' (Caballero, 2001, p. 228). Perhaps Vladimir Jankélévitch captures the essence of the Verlaine years as he writes about Fauré's first major song cycle: La *Bonne Chanson*, parmi tant de musiques apolliniennes est l'oeuvre dionysiaque de Gabriel Fauré' (Jankélévitch, 1938, p. 134).[2] In other words, Verlaine brings out a kind of exuberant excess in Fauré, whose habitual state seems more akin to moderation and serenity.[3] The fact remains that Verlaine's innovative and highly personal poetic style led Fauré to new developments in his interpretation of metre and rhythm for prosody, leading to *mélodies* which arguably represent both the peak of his song output and a turning point in his oeuvre as a whole' (Howat & Kilpatrick, 2014, p. 286).

Dionysian qualities, poetic and harmonic refinement, the voice as the locus of experimentation: these diverse theories nevertheless contribute to our understanding of Fauré's process of innovation, one of progress built on consistency rather than on transient fashion or on a desire to please. Fauré's

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[2] The *Bonne Chanson*, in the midst of so much Apollonian music is Gabriel Fauré's Dionysian work.

[3] Definitions for Apollonian and Dionysian taken from *Trésor de la langue française informatisé.*

pupil Charles Koechlin comments on his teacher's sense of creative individuality: Tous les mouvements qui agitèrent l'opinion des snobs, [si Fauré] ne chercha point de les fuir (ce qui eût été un esclavage à rebours), du moins jamais ne le vit-on ballotté par leur remous. Être soi-même: à cette condition seule, l'on se montre divers, profond et vrai' (Koechlin, 1927, pp. 208–09).[4]

The previous chapter examined songs from the two decades during which Fauré perfected his skills as a composer of *mélodies,* starting with *Le papillon et la fleur* (1861), through contact with Pauline Viardot and her influential salon and the Parnassians Leconte de Lisle and Sully Prudhomme. During these formative years, as seen in the poetry and song analysis, Fauré constantly explored new means of translating the poet's mind, imagery and poetic rhythms into music. Song excerpts illustrated how the combination of non-predictable harmonic movements with pulse-centred rhythms increasingly enhanced the recitation of poetic texts.

With Verlaine's rhythmically original verse, further potential for innovation opens up for Fauré. In this chapter, an overview of Verlaine's style and a summary of the changes in Fauré's own techniques help to understand the significance of the poet's impact on the composer's *mélodies*. A number of complete songs are then studied from various angles, such as form, rhythm or harmony. However, before exploring these features in more detail, Fauré's transition into the nuanced world of the Symbolists is noted in two songs on texts by Decadent poet Villiers de l'Isle-Adam (1838–89; see Section 4.2).

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[4]   In the midst of the changeable opinions held by snobs, Fauré never withdrew (this would have amounted to a reverse enslavement), but neither was he ever affected by their turbulence. One may only be diverse, profound and true if one is truly oneself.

4.1: Overview of Paul Verlaine's poetic style

Much like Fauré's musical language, Verlaine's poetic voice retains structural elements from the past, and from this foundation emerge transformation and renewal. The exquisite craftsmanship of Clair de lune' (*Fêtes galantes*) and Chanson d'automne' (*Poèmes saturniens,* 1866), makes it easy to forget Verlaine's poetic apprenticeship in Hellenism and oriental exoticism in Leconte de Lisle's salon, or his avowed indebtedness to Baudelaire (Morice, 1888, p. 23), who sought further pleasures in sumptuous expressiveness (Martino, 1967, p. 86). Perhaps it is poet and author Jean Rousselot who best describes Verlaine's place in the post-1850 French poetic scene, arguing that his subtle, feminine and feverish nature' never truly embodied the more objective Parnassian impassivity (Rousselot, 1976, p. 84). For post-Parnassian poets, Verlaine's verse represented the revolt against the Parnassian ideal of Art for Art's sake: Une volonté de transformer le vers en une mélodie musicale de ligne assez incertaine' (Martino, 1967, p. 96).[5] Neither extroverted nor radical, Verlaine's revolt retains a rare intimacy, alluded to by means of musical effects of words and sonorities in rhythmic motion, focusing on the poet's inner life: [Verlaine] privilégie le repli sur la vie intérieure, sur une sorte d'intimité triste et tranquille... Ainsi, la recherche esthétique se concentre sur l'effet musical: une "bonne chanson" où le poète calme son angoisse. Il n'est pas étonnant que les poèmes de Verlaine aient attiré les musiciens, comme Fauré' (Darcos, 2011, p. 299).[6]

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[5]   A desire to transform verse into a somewhat uncertain musical melodic line.
[6]   [Verlaine] prefers to withdraw into an inner life, to a kind of sad and tranquil intimacy...
      Thus, aesthetic exploration is restricted to musical effects: a good song' by which the poet

4.1.1: Rhythmic elements in Verlaine's verse

Verlaine's poem Art poétique' (*Jadis et naguère,* 1874) likely embodies the most concise statement of his poetic ideals and this, despite a rare and forceful declaration in *La Revue d'aujourd'hui* sixteen years later: Après tout, JE N'AURAI PAS FAIT DE THÉORIE! (Verlaine's own capitals; quoted in Mourier, 1999, p. 193).[7] Despite Verlaine's ironical outburst, Art poétique' presents a number of the key principles governing Verlaine's style which must have immediately attracted Fauré to his verse. Martino sums up Verlaine's ideas as presented in Art poétique':

> Le vers doit être, avant tout, de la musique, une harmonie de
>
> sons qui font rêver. La rime, musique insuffisante et pénible
>
> contrainte, doit s'atténuer; on pourra la réduire à l'assonance
>
> des chansons populaires, qui suffit à donner un rythme. Les
>
> vers impairs, qui sont une musique nouvelle, sont plus
>
> propres que les autres pour les thèmes nouveaux.
>
> L'architecture solide du poème, l'éloquence et l'ordre,
>
> romantique ou parnassien, deviennent inutiles pour traduire
>
> l'imprécis, la nuance, les suggestions, les menues sensations,
>
> les inquiétudes, les malaises, les rêves... tout ce qui est la
>
> matière de la vraie poésie moderne. Avec un plan incertain,
>
> des mots vagues, des groupements de sons inattendus et
>
> évocateurs. (Martino, 1967, pp. 98–99).[8]

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calms his anguish. It is hardly surprising that Verlaine's poems have attracted musicians such as Fauré.

[7] After all, I HAVE NEVER CONSTRUCTED ANY THEORIES!

[8] Above all, the verse must be musical, a harmony of sounds conducive to dreaming. Rhyme, a burdensome and useless constraint, must decrease in importance, to resemble

Notwithstanding the apparent indeterminacy of Verlaine's poetic means, Martino brings out the clear purpose of his poetic experimentations: sound, rhythmic variety and imprecision take precedence over distinct structure and meaning. The parallel with Fauré is striking. Aside from a handful of examples such as *Fleur jetée* (1884) or *Au cimetière* (1888), Fauré gravitated towards intimate and lyrical poetic texts whose impressions could be reflected through a state of soul, rather than through realistic or descriptive details' (Caballero, 2001, p. 247). In an interview for the monthly magazine *Musica* in February 1911, more than fifteen years after composing *Prison* (1894), his last Verlaine *mélodie,* Fauré still spoke of his delight in setting the poet's texts:

> Verlaine est exquis à mettre en musique, déclare le musicien.
>
> Tenez, il y a de lui un court poème, *Green*, qui contient un
>
> paysage frais et mélancolique, mais ce paysage n'est que
>
> l'atmosphère, l'ambiance. Et l'harmonie devra s'attacher à
>
> *souligner* le sentiment profond que ne font qu'*esquisser* les
>
> mots' (quoted in Nectoux, 2008, p. 239).[9]

Deeply involved in his Symbolist song settings at the time of this interview (*La Chanson d'Ève* had had its first complete premiere the previous year), Fauré nevertheless evidently remembers the lasting effect of Verlaine's texts on his compositional career, as shown by the clarity of his recollections.

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the assonance of popular song, which is sufficient to produce rhythm. Odd-numbered lines of verse, bringing a new musicality, are more suitable than others for new themes. The well-crafted architecture of the poem, its Romantic or Parnassian order, are no longer suited to the expression of nuance, suggestion, delicate sensations, disquiet, malaise, dreams... the entire substance of modern poetry. With an indeterminate plan and vague words made up of unpredictable and evocative sound combinations.

[9] Setting Verlaine to music is a delight, states the musician. Look, he has written *Green,* a short poem consisting of a fresh and melancholy landscape, yet this landscape is but the atmosphere, the mood. And it is the role of the harmony to bring out the profound impressions barely outlined by the words.

Rhythm and sonority are two of the chief characteristics of Verlaine's style, his ties to the past as well as the focus of his experimentations. Only by maintaining the structure of the poem using traditional forms, verse lengths and inner shapes could he then extend these same structures to their limits with rhythmic irregularities side by side with classically crafted verse. Similarly, his use of vocabulary to allude rather than to describe, bringing out the musicality of sonorities with prosodic processes, contributed to a change of perspective in late nineteenth-century poetry, leading naturally to Symbolism from Parnassianism.

Verlaine's genius lies to a lesser extent in the development of new forms or in the creation of an individualistic poetic world (unlike his contemporaries Arthur Rimbaud (1854–91) or Mallarmé); rather, after a brief period with the Parnassians and their aspiration to formal perfection (the year of his *Poèmes saturniens* and of the first collection *Le Parnasse contemporain,* 1866), he challenges this aesthetic concept to explore the potentialities of rhythm and sound.

One example of this exploration is found in Verlaine's use of the *césure*: by routinely defying its privileged position, syntactic units are prolonged or abridged and rhythmic discordance ensues.

In the first line of the *alexandrin* metre below, the *césure* is strongly overwritten by virtue of the noun and its adjective, airs // ingénus', neatly straddling the traditional mid-line *alexandrin césure*, as well as by the *liaison* linking the two words. The rhythm is further disturbed by the *rejet* to the next line (je me dis / Qu'elle m'écoutera'). While the *césure* can be observed in the

second line, sans déplaisir' clearly belongs to the first *hémistiche*, but additional tension is created by the repetition of sans' in sans doute', thereby pairing the two locutions: sans déplaisir' and sans doute'. This is consistent with the equivocal nature of Verlaine's style: the line can be governed either by the *rejet* or by the word repetition – or by neither. Other linkages creating musicality, for instance, the repeated je (chanterai)' and je (me dis)' (as well as ingénus', creating an alliterative [ ] sound) or **d**éplaisir' and **d**oute' ([d]), among others, add to the complexity of these two lines, which appear at first glance as a naïve expression of hopeful love. These lines also demonstrate the extent of Verlaine's ability to juggle the old and the new, and the underlying stylistic subversion concealed beneath a seemingly artless nature.

Table 4.1: Puisque l'aube grandit' (*La Bonne Chanson,*1870), P. Verlaine, last stanza (excerpt), rhythmic processes

Last stanza	Rhythmic processes
Je chanterai des airs // ingénus, je me dis	enjambement, rejet
Qu'elle m'écoutera // sans déplaisir sans doute[10]	enjambement

Another source of rhythmic play is Verlaine's choice of words, resulting in controlled pacing, setting mood before meaning.

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[10] I shall sing naïve airs, I tell myself / That she will listen without displeasure, no doubt.

Example 4.1: 'En sourdine' (*Fêtes galantes,* 1869), P. Verlaine, third stanza, first two lines

> Ferme tes yeux à demi,
>
> Croise tes bras sur ton sein[11]

Most of the vowels in the nouns and verbs in these seven-syllable lines are long sounds [, ø, a,], matching the languid sensuality of the text. A contrasting mood is evident in this excerpt from Green':

Example 4.2: Green' (*Romances sans paroles*, 1874), P. Verlaine, first stanza, first two lines

> Voici des fruits, des fleurs, // des feuilles et des ranches
>
> Et puis voici mon coeur // qui ne bat que pour vous.[12]

Several elements contribute to a rapid declamatory rhythm in this couplet: most of the words consist of one syllable, rarely of two; the enumeration drives the first line forward and onwards to the next for its conclusion, strongly introduced by Et'; the internal accentuation follows classic *alexandrin* patterns, with stresses at the *césures*, fleurs' and coeur' being strengthened by an internal rhyme; finally, the rhythmic scheme of the second *hémistiche* in the second line leads to the end with a regular 3+3 pattern, each group initiated by a strong alliteration on [k]: **qu**i ne **bat qu**e pour **vous**'.

Verlaine challenges classic poetic boundaries by the frequent use of

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[11] Half close your eyes, / Fold your arms upon your breast,
[12] Here are some fruits, some flowers, some leaves and some branches / And here is my heart beating for you alone.

odd-numbered metres; heptasyllabic verses (seven syllables) appear frequently in Fauré song settings, such as Mandoline' (*Fêtes galantes*) and C'est l'extase langoureuse' (*Romances sans paroles*). While Verlaine did not innovate with this practice, he extended and regularised the use of these metres. Their rhythm contributes to a feeling of incompleteness, of not quite being an octosyllabic line, as in the case of the heptasyllable. Verlaine also tends to include a larger number feminine verse endings with odd-numbered metres, thereby creating a further source of unresolved tension, with the unaccented (and uncounted) word ending, again hinting at an extra syllable, as in the following lines from Mandoline':

Example 4.3: Mandoline*'* (*Fêtes galantes,* 1869), P. Verlaine, first four lines

Les donneurs de sérénades

Et les belles écouteuses

Échangent des propos fades

Sous les ramures chanteuses.[13]

These lines also provide further insight into the various ways in which their interpretation illustrates *l'organisation du mouvement.* Pacing is affected by the truncated feel of the metre, and sonorities echo throughout the line: [l], [s] and [e] offer possible rhythmic interactions, as does the rich imagery of the allusive text. By bringing out various features of the text, performers (and this includes the composer) shape motion in a unique and expressive way.

---

[13] The givers of serenades / And the beautiful listening ladies / Exchange vapid words / Under the song-filled branches.

4.1.2: Sonority and musicality

Along with rhythm, sonority plays a major role in Verlaine's poetic voice, perhaps even more so than overt meaning. In reality, sound and sonority are inseparable from rhythm in Verlaine's verse. The notion of musicality', that is, the particular way in which sounds are arranged to create poetic harmony, is especially significant for Verlaine in his transitional role from the Parnasse to Symbolism: this is found in the rhyme, in the repetition of sounds or words and in the correspondence of sounds to meaning, exemplified here by the famous line by Racine (1639–99): Pour qui sont ces serpents qui sifflent sur vos têtes?' (Racine, *Andromaque*, Act 5, Scene 5). [14]

In Verlaine's verse, musicality is manifested in a multitude of ways. The two following examples reveal the structure beneath the art:

Table 4.2: C'est l'extase langoureuse' (*Romances sans paroles,* 1874), P. Verlaine, first stanza (excerpt), recurring vowel and consonantal sounds

First stanza (excerpt)	Recurring vowel and consonantal sounds
C'est vers les ramures grises Le choeur des petites voix.[15]	[ ] [r]; [v] and [ ] for the next line [ ]* [œ]* [v]; [ ] from the preceding line *[ ] and [œ] differ only in their duration

Here, Verlaine works on at least two levels: the recurrence of vowel sounds in close proximity (C'est vers les' [ ], Le choeur des petites' [ ]) and the echo effect of sounds from line to line (vers', voix' [v] and grises', petites' [i], as

---

14   For whom are these serpents hissing above your heads?
15   It is, towards the grey branches, / The chorus of tiny voices.

well as [ ]). As in much of Verlaine's poetry, atmosphere is alluded to through sonority and vowel colour ahead of the meaning of the words themselves. The first line quoted above (Table 4.2) contains mostly frontal vowel sounds: [ ], [a], [i], while the next line is made up predominantly of the neutral [ ], with four occurrences in the seven syllables. By the careful selection of words, Verlaine embeds meaning into the verse itself: the sound of subdued vocality creates intimacy and reflects the petites voix'.

Nowhere in the Verlaine poems set by Fauré does alliteration occupy as prominent a place as in *La Bonne Chanson*. An effective example of sound (French writers on poetry refer to it as noise' – le bruit'[16]) linked to rhythm, it is used to great effect to mould and control prosodic flow.

Table 4.3: 'J'allais par des chemins perfides' (*La Bonne Chanson,* 1870), P. Verlaine, third stanza, recurring sounds

Third stanza	Recurring consonantal sounds	
Nul bruit, sinon son pas sonore,	[n] [r] [s]	
N'encourageait le voyageur.	[r] [ ] [v]	[n] [k]
Votre voix me dit: Marche encore!'[17]	[v] [r] [m]	[k]

Again, the apparent simplicity of the octosyllabic text belies Verlaine's virtuosity in juggling words, colours, rhythms and meaning. In the excerpt

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[16] Poet and literary critic Maurice Mourier highlights the noise' of alliteration as a key element of Verlaine's aesthetics, and quotes Mallarmé in *Crise de vers* (1897): ...songeant aux amalgames de bruits et de sons, de consonnes et de voyelles, rhétoriquement infinis, qui peuvent être expérimentés par la poésie maintenant qu'elle a fait le saut dans l'inconnu.' (...[Mallarmé] reflecting on the combinations of noises and sounds, of consonants and vowels, rhetorically infinite, which poetry may support now that it has leapt into the unknown (Mourier, 1999, pp. 18, 203).

[17] No sound, save for his resounding step, / Spurred the traveller on. / Your voice said: Walk on!'

above (Table 4.3), not only do repeated consonants at times reverberate from one line of verse to another, but they also serve the dual purpose of marking verse boundaries and of controlling the pace of delivery, something which Fauré grasped fully in his setting of this poem, rhythmically grouping together words containing the same sonorities (Example 4.4).

Example 4.4: J'allais par des chemins perfides' (*La Bonne Chanson*, 1892–94), bb. 27–38

The repetition of a consonant near the beginning of a line of verse and again at the end is a sound device used frequently by Verlaine. In the first and third lines in Table 4.3, the poet creates an alliterative rhyme within the line itself: in the first line, [n] and [r] (Nul bruit', sonore') and in the third, [r] fulfil this role (Votre', Marche encore'). Thus, Verlaine not only devises a regular rhyme scheme (sonore' and encore'), but he also plans recurring sonorities within the line and from one line to the next.

The three octosyllabic lines from Table 4.3 also demonstrate how recitation pace may be manipulated by the text. The first line, made up predominantly of monosyllables, is directed to its main accent, sonore',

despite an early interruption produced by the comma after the second syllable (Nul bruit'). In fact, this momentary pause only serves to increase dramatic tension as, first, the sentence needs completion after the subject bruit', and then, the intervening nominal complement introduced by sinon' delays the statement of the verb and of the remainder of the sentence. Accordingly, the monosyllabic first line requires a quicker declamatory pace to arrive at the second line resolution.

Verlaine then slows down the pace in the second line in two ways: by the use of polysyllabic words and by the vocabulary he employs. Moreover, n'encourageait' and voyageur' require a good deal of articulation, with the combination of round (or back) vowels: [ã], [u], [ ], [œ] and of bright (or frontal) vowels: [a], [ ], as well as voiced: [n], [l], [r], [ ]. [v], [m] and unvoiced consonants: [s], [p], [k]. The predominantly negative connotation of the text (nothing save the sound of his own steps keeps the poet on his way) adds weight to the spoken text. Word stress is also a factor: with two important words in terms of syllabic count, (n'encourageait' and voyageur'), two natural accentual goals appear in the second line, and Fauré takes this into consideration in his setting with the use of longer note values in bars 32 and 33 (Example 4.4).

The third line, with a return to one- or two-syllable words, and incorporating a punctuated interruption much like the first line, is also paced differently. Here, Verlaine combines both manners: the more rapid delivery of the monosyllables (Votre voix me dit') leads to the solemnly sustained voice of the quasi mythical Mathilde, the poet's fiancée and Muse (Marche

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encore!'). It is worth noting that, to set off the two last words of the stanza, Verlaine includes no recurring vowels or consonants, save for a single [ ] and for the ubiquitous [r], which pervades the entire stanza. Thus, the deliberate selection of sonorities and their careful arrangement create rhythm, musicality and meaning in Verlaine's verse, leading Fauré to design new ways of translating words into *mélodie*.

4.1.3: Verlaine's transitional role from Parnassianism to Symbolism

Another feature of Verlaine's distinctive voice is the way he selects and manipulates words. This is perhaps where Symbolism, characterised by allusion and imprecision, combines with the sense of form dear to Parnassians in Verlaine's singular poetic style. Words are interwoven to create rhythms and colours, as seen in the previous section, and come together to form unexpected tableaux, to evoke vague and novel sensations or to induce dreams or malaise. The origins and features of poetic Symbolism are examined in more detail in the next chapter, sections 5.1 and 5.2.

The verse in À Clymène' (*Fêtes galantes*) is a rich source of these Symbolist correspondences, where senses appear to shed their boundaries and to complement each other in a rapturous contemplation of the loved one. While the overall tone of this poem, with its many correlations between the visual and olfactory senses, transports the reader into the Symbolist world, an echo of the Parnassian style is also discernible with the Hellenic theme of Clymène (Klymene), a nymph in Greek mythology. Here, Verlaine suggests a

picture made up of fleeting visions, of songs without words,[18] of odours and of subtle impressions. Underpinning these refined sentiments is a gradual build-up of intensity, sustained by the repetition of the conjunction puisque', and by the structure of the six-syllable metre in a poem conceived as a single sentence. Fauré responds to this verse with a continuous stream of quavers, passed seamlessly between the voice and the accompaniment in a correspondence all their own.

Example 4.5: À Clymène' (*Fêtes galantes,* 1869), P. Verlaine, stanzas 1, 2 and 3 (excerpts)

Stanza 1   Mystiques barcarolles,

                 Romances sans paroles...

Stanza 2   Puisque ta voix, étrange

                 Vision...

Stanza 3   Puisque l'arôme insigne

                 De ta pâleur de cygne...[19]

In this text, metre, syntax, word repetitions and sonorities produce uncertain perceptions, creating unease up until the very last line of the poem. Mourier explores the question of meaning in Verlaine's verse:

>L'un des secrets de la dislocation sémantique verlainienne et
>
>du charme de ses poèmes dont le sens est toujours plus ou

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[18] Verlaine borrowed this expression from Felix Mendelssohn's piano pieces (Mourier, 1999, p. 191).

[19] Mystical barcaroles, / Songs without words... / As your voice, strange / Vision... / As the extraordinary odour / Of your swan-like pallor...

moins suspendu, c'est que son écriture procède par

accumulation de quanta discrets (les mots) qui induisent non

une signification unique et claire par leur concaténation, mais

une gerbe de sens indécis, que l'on poursuit en vain, puisque

l'essentiel est ailleurs: dans le «rhythmique sabbat,

rhythmique, extrêmement / Rhythmique» (Mourier, 1999, pp.

197–98).[20]

Were one to apply the above description to Fauré's musical language,

particularly in relation to his *mélodies* on Verlaine's poetry, the similarity would

be remarkable: the dislocation' of standard tonal progressions, the frequent

 suspension' and deferral of tonality or of regular metre, the accumulation of

quanta' (individual chords with various tonal possibilities), with the core of the

subject, as with Verlaine, embedded in a kind of rhythmical rhythm', all these

characteristics chart Fauré's style, innovative yet indebted to tradition.

4.2: Fauré's transitional songs to the Verlaine settings

Two *mélodies* immediately preceding Fauré's first Verlaine setting, on texts by

Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, inaugurate the transition from the pure Parnassians to

the Symbolists via Paul Verlaine. It may be said that the Decadent poets (also

known as *fin-de-siècle*) constituted a transitional period to Symbolism,

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[20] One of the secrets of the charm and of the semantic dislocation in Verlaine's poems, the
meaning of which is always somewhat deferred, is that his style is based on an
accumulation of understated quanta (the words) which, rather than leading to a unique and
clear sense through their interconnectedness, produce an accumulation of uncertain
meanings which we seek in vain, since the substance is elsewhere: in the rhythmic
Sabbath, rhythmical, extremely / Rhythmical'.

characterised by a disheartened negation of preceding structures. Les Décadents ne sont pas une école littéraire. Leur mission n'est pas de fonder. Ils n'ont qu'à détruire, à tomber les vieilleries... La société se désagrège sous l'action corrosive d'une civilisation déliquescente. L'homme moderne est un blasé' (from a newspaper article in *Le Décadent,* 10 April 1886; quoted in Martino, 1967, p. 124).[21] The transient yet intense period of the Decadents in the late nineteenth century nevertheless set the stage for the developing Symbolist movement, of which clear traces can be found in the thematic content of de l'Isle-Adam's verse.

Poetic effects in *Nocturne* (1886; Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, 1883), such as the seven-syllable line of verse or words repeated for effect and meaning (autant...que', étoile(s)', fleur(s)', charmes / charmants / charmantes') point to Symbolist musicality. Two *rejets* (second stanza: On voit ses ombres dormantes / S'éclairer...'; third stanza: ...au sombre voile / N'a...') and two *contre-rejets* (first stanza: La Nuit... / entr'ouvre ses écrins bleus'; third stanza: N'a... / Qu'une fleur et qu'une étoile') increase line length and sustain dramatic intensity.

In his setting, Fauré adds his own alteration to the text with a change of title from the original *Éblouissement* (dazzling, amazement) to *Nocturne,* signalling a significant shift in atmosphere. A subtle and varied prosodic treatment controls dramatic intensity: the first *rejet* is observed (bb. 15–19, Example 4.6) by lessening the impact of the secondary line stress (ombres') to the second beat to draw attention to the ensuing *rejet* on dormantes /

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[21] Decadence is not a literary movement. Its mission is not to construct, but rather to destroy, to overthrow outmoded things. Society is falling apart from the corrosive action of a dissolving civilisation. Modern man is blasé.

S'éclairer'. The next *rejet* (bb. 28–33, Example 4.7) is more intriguing. At first glance, Fauré appears to overlook the strong syntactic link between ma nuit' (subject) and n'a' (verb). Closer inspection reveals that Fauré's interpretation extends further than the strong end-of-line stress separating the two words. Beyond the end of the line and the *rejet* lie references to the beloved, charme' and clarté', stressed by longer note values. The crotchet rest following voile' only serves, along with the rising tessitura, to mirror the increasing dramatic intensity as the poet leads his intended reader (his beloved) to the very last line and the *raison d'être* for the poem: Mon amour et ta beauté'.

Example 4.6: *Nocturne* (1886), bb. 15–19

Example 4.7: *Nocturne* (1886), bb. 28–33

By means of a limited dynamic palette, remaining within quiet dynamic levels (save for a brief episode leading to *forte* in the third stanza), and by a modest *andante* tempo, Fauré depicts an atmosphere of shadows and languor, where boundaries have lost their Parnassian precision of form and where the music seems to suggest rather than to define. This setting prefigures Fauré's later

Symbolist songs in a number of ways: the melody remains in a predominantly low tessitura, overt vocalism is merely hinted at in the final stanza and downbeat prosodic stresses occur less frequently.

Table 4.4: Éblouissement' (*Contes cruels,* 1883), Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, word repetitions and rhythmic processes

Éblouissement	Word repetitions and rhythmic processes	
La nuit, sur le grand mystère,	Nuit	
Entr'ouvre ses écrins bleus:		contre-rejet
Autant de fleurs sur la terre	Autant, fleurs	
Que d'étoiles dans les cieux!	étoiles	
On voit ses ombres dormantes		
S'éclairer, à tous moments,		rejet
Autant par les fleurs charmantes	Autant, charmantes	
Que par les astres charmants.	charmants	
	nuit	
Moi, ma nuit au sombre voile		
N'a, pour charme et pour clarté,	charme	rejet
Qu'une fleur et qu'une étoile:	fleur, étoile	
Mon amour et ta beauté![22]		contre-rejet

In *Nocturne* and in *Les présents* (1887; Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, 1883), Fauré has captured in his music the essence of de l'Isle-Adam's Symbolist language. Yet, the verse contains little rhythmic or textual virtuosity; rather, in

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[22] Night, within its great mystery, / Half-opens its blue caskets: / There are as many flowers on earth / As there are stars in the heavens! / Their sleepy shadows are lit up / Here and there, / As much by charming flowers / As by charming stars. / My sombre-veiled night / Has only the charm and brightness / Of one flower and one star: / My love and your beauty!

Les présents, the poet gradually develops his theme by the accumulation and juxtaposition of words, carefully designed to create melancholy and disquiet: mon coeur malade', espérance désabusée', la fleur des morts', partager mes remords'.

Table 4.5: Les présents' (*Contes cruels,* 1883), Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, rhythmic divisions and process

Les présents	Rhythmic divisions and process	
Si tu me par- // les, quelque soir,	4+4	
Du secret // de mon coeur malade,	3+5	
Je te dirai, // pour t'émouvoir,	4+4	
Une très ancien- // ne ballade.	5+3	
Si tu me par- // les de tourment,	4+4	
D'espéran- // ce désabusée,	3+5	
J'irai te cueillir, // seulement,	5+3	rejet
Des roses plei- // nes de rosée.	4+4	
Si, pareil- // le à la fleur des morts	3+5	
Qui se plaît // dans l'exil des tombes,	3+5	
Tu veux partager // mes remords...	5+3	
Je t'apporterai // des colombes.[23]	5+3	

In prosodic terms, Fauré again hints at future settings where musical metrical stress matters less than speech rhythms on the pulse. For instance, the last syllable of espéran**ce**', unpronounced in regular speech, is set on the

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[23] If, one night, you speak to me / Of the secret in my aching heart, / To move you, I shall recite / A very ancient ballad. / If you tell me of torments, / Of disillusioned hopes, / I shall only gather for you / Dew-drenched roses. / If, like the flower of the dead, / Which thrives in the tombs' exile, / You wish to share my remorse, / I shall bring you doves.

second beat in bar 16. Fauré minimises the effect by placing the syllable on a lower pitch than the preceding accentual syllable, further stressed by duration (esp**éran**ce'). Far from being exceptional, this rhythmic treatment is frequently seen in Fauré's late songs and constitutes a clear indication that linearity rather than overt accentuation define Fauré's melodic line. Similarly, ties over the bar-line support continuity in songs composed from 1900 onwards; an early example is found in bars 9–10 of *Les présents* (Example 4.9): Je te dirai // pour t'émouvoir'; perhaps, by drawing attention to the text, Fauré, like the poet, hopes to move his listeners.

Example 4.8: *Les présents* (1887), bb. 15–16

Example 4.9: *Les présents* (1887), bb. 9–10

Very few rhythmic processes disrupt the regularity of the octosyllabic verse, except for a *rejet* from the third to the fourth lines in the second stanza: J'irai te cueillir seulement / Des roses...'(Example 4.10), which Fauré brings out in bar 19 with a *crescendo* rather than by rhythmic means. In general, musical rhythms in *Les présents* preserve an almost naïve simplicity; lines of verse,

paired musically into couplets, are given downbeat stresses on the first word

or accented syllable and on the final syllable of the couplet. Not only does this

evoke the très ancienne ballade' of the first stanza, but it matches de l'Isle-

Adam's straightforward poetic rhythms.

Example 4.10: *Les présents* (1887), bb. 18–21[24]

Having briefly delved into the world of the Decadents with de l'Isle-

Adam's two texts, Fauré then discovers Verlaine's *Fêtes galantes* and

Romances sans paroles in the same year as the composition of *Les présents.*

4.3: Stylistic development in Fauré's *mélodies* during the Verlaine years

A number of key techniques guide Fauré's compositional approach to *mélodie*

during the Verlaine years. In particular, rhythm and harmony, notably prosodic

and harmonic rhythm, contribute significantly to the evocation of poetic

nuance and meaning in this period of Fauré's career. This section highlights

some of the means employed by Fauré to draw out the essence of a poet

whom he considered exquis à mettre en musique' – a delight to set to music,

as seen in the excerpt from the article quoted earlier in Section 4.1.1

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[24] As seen in other excerpts from the Hamelle editions, the score omits de l'Isle-Adam's
capitalisation on Des roses'; whether omitted by Fauré in his publisher's copy or a
typesetting error, it minimises the effect of the poet's one rhythmic process.

(Nectoux, 2008, p. 239). A detailed study of representative *mélodies* from this period follows this section.

In Chapter 3 (section 3.3.2), it was shown that Fauré's emancipation from the confines of the four-square phrase helped him to expand his interpretative palette. This freedom brought about the displacement of poetic stresses to beats other than the downbeat and the creation of rhythmic patterns to reflect speech rhythms, as well as the use of rhythms often perceived as hemiolas or syncopations for effective declamation. Crucially, these techniques made possible the typical Faurean forward motion on the pulse by neutralising the stated musical metre and overlooking bar-lines.

In moving away from the Parnasse to Verlaine's poetry, Fauré's change of approach resides less in the means he employs than in the manner in which they are applied. With the benefit of hindsight, it becomes clear that the songs prior to Fauré's introduction to Verlaine's poetry laid the foundations for this subsequent creative period, allowing him to perfect his rhythmic, harmonic and melodic skills within the structures of Romantic and Parnassian verse.

4.3.1: Changes in Fauré's management of rhythm in the Verlaine settings
As in Verlaine's verse (and very possibly because of it), rhythm becomes the driving force underpinning the structure of Fauré's *mélodies* during this period. Literature made up part of the curriculum at the École Niedermeyer (Nectoux, 1980, p. 17) and Fauré retained a lifelong interest in the subject, actively seeking texts suitable for setting to music. Verlaine's poetry marked a clear shift away from the charming but technically unremarkable texts by Silvestre

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set by Fauré no less than nine times prior to 1886.

The first stanza of Une Sainte en son auréole', the first song in Fauré's cycle *La Bonne Chanson* (1892–94) reveals the wealth of detail contained in a mere four lines of verse.[25]

Table 4.6: Une Sainte en son auréole' (*La Bonne Chanson,* 1870), P. Verlaine, first stanza, césures and rhythmic process

First stanza	Césures and rhythmic process	
Une Sainte // en son auréole,	3+5	
Une Châtelaine // en sa tour,	5+3	
Tout ce que contient // la parole	5+3	rejet
Humaine de grâce // et d'amour.	5+3	

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Aided by Verlaine's deliberate lexical choices, Fauré controls the octosyllabic metre to show clearly the *césures* in the lines of verse, using longer note values in the first part of the line than in the second part. Moreover, this distinction is designed to include the *césure* without the addition of lengthy pauses to mark its location as in earlier song settings. For instance, the two parts on either side of the *césure* in the first line remain well defined (bb. 4–6), with crotchets for Une Sainte', ending on the downbeat. This is followed by a series of quavers on en son auréole', leading to the end of the line lengthened to a minim, acknowledging the main stress of the line on the third syllable of auréole'. Meanwhile, the piano ensures continuity in the enumeration of Mathilde's virtues, with the reiteration of the descending theme (bb. 7–9) in the

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[25]   See translation and score in Volume 2, Appendix C.

right hand, a recurring feature in the cycle, noted by Nectoux (Nectoux, 2008, p. 253).

Another source of continuity in this stanza is the strong *rejet* between lines 3 and 4, uniting the substantive with its qualifying adjective, parole / Humaine', and notated with a series of quavers by Fauré (bb. 11–20). This could result in a problematic rhythmic declamatory effect in the fourth line, with three words attracting attention by their semantic importance and the length required for phonation, as well as by their position in the line: Humaine', grâce' and amour'. Humaine' completes the previous line's nominal segment (la parole humaine') and receives, in a sense, a displaced end-of-line stress which augments the octosyllabic line to 11 syllables. Hence, as Verlaine clearly wishes to retain traditional metrical patterns, this *rejet* is the source of a significant amount of tension, of a kind of rhythmic ambivalence between the end-of-line stress intended for parole' and the displaced Humaine'. Dessons and Meschonnic clarify this type of contradiction: Mais l'enjambement... n'est pas une négation du mètre, comme certains le croient et le lisent, il en est au contraire une forme de tension (c'est-à-dire de contradiction non résolue) qui le suppose et le maintient' (Dessons & Meschonnic, 2008, p. 66).[26] Viewing *enjambements* and *rejets* from this perspective enriches prosody by recognising and utilising rhythmic interactions within the verse to enrich declamation, reflecting *l'organisation du mouvement*.

After the *rejet* at parole / Humaine', which Fauré marks clearly with new note values to end Humaine' and followed by a two-beat gap, the text

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[26] But the enjambment ... does not negate metre, as some believe and perform it; on the contrary, it constitutes a form of tension (that is, a non-resolved contradiction) which assumes and maintains it [metre].

becomes more specific in its description of Mathilde's qualities. 'Grâce'

receives a secondary stress due to a lengthier [ ] vowel and to its position at

the *césure*; moreover, it nears both the end of a line and the end of a stanza,

and the longer note values highlight Morier's 'law of progression', as noted in

the previous chapter, Section 3.4 (Morier, 1989, p. 906). Fauré handles this

line of verse with great subtlety: 'grâce' appears to receive the greatest stress

with a total of seven beats, while only four beats are given to the last syllable

of 'amour'.

In fact, the text, as in the published poem, should conclude with a semi-

colon after 'amour', indicating that the poet's description of his fiancée

continues in the next stanza. In the Hamelle edition of 1894 still in use, there

are no punctuation marks at that point (this produces syntactical problems

with the following stanza, as it begins with a new idea, 'La note d'or' – The

golden note).[27] In addition, the Hamelle edition changes the capitalisation in

this same line of verse, maintaining a lower-case 'h' on humaine (thereby

linking the word to the previous line) and making 'De' the first word of the last

line, a violation of Verlaine's metrical scheme. Interestingly, a similar situation

occurs at the start of the next stanza: in this case, the first two lines, again

linked by Verlaine with a *rejet*, are combined in the Hamelle score into a

sixteen-syllable series of words by a lack of punctuation and capitalisation,

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[27] New editions, such as the 2015 *Gabriel Fauré: Complete Songs, vol. 3,* Peters Edition,
      edited by Howat and Kilpatrick, incorporate Verlaine's punctuation and capitalisation in the
      score. On the subject of punctuation, Dubiau-Feuillerac points out that so-called 'weak'
      punctuation, for instance a mark such as the comma, was often overlooked in the
      typographical process, since a traditional line of verse receives its primary rhythmic
      articulation from the *césure* and the all-important final stressed syllable (Dubiau-Feuillerac,
      2008, p. 170).

thus: La note d'or que fait entendre / le cor dans le lointain des bois'.[28.]

Possibly the result of absent-mindedness or of haste on Fauré's part,[29] these

discrepancies can create confusion for musicians and result in the elimination

of some of Verlaine's most skilful rhythmic processes. However, it does

appear that, while the Hamelle score lacks consistency with regard to

capitalisation and punctuation, Fauré's music respects Verlaine's verse and its

rhythms for the most part.

In Fauré's songs on texts by Leconte de Lisle or Sully Prudhomme,

during the period from 1870 to 1884, poetic stresses were increasingly

displaced to beats other than the downbeat to encourage forward motion and

the neutralisation of metrical accents. With Verlaine's poetry, there is

movement on a larger scale, where phrases and lines of verse combine

variously in the masterful use of durational accentuation. In two lines from

Spleen (renamed by Fauré from Il pleure dans mon coeur', *Romances sans*

paroles, Example 4.11), Fauré intentionally places four of the five repetitions

of coeur' (heart) on downbeats. The fourth repetition occurs in close proximity

to s'écoeure' and the latter word takes precedence as the line's final prosodic

goal. In this context, these might also be construed as wordplay: s'écoeure'

as meaning disgust, but also as the absence or removal of the heart, thus the

relegation of coeur' to the second beat. This typical Verlainian reiteration of

words and sounds is brought out in Fauré's setting by longer note values,

giving full attention to the phonated [œ], echoed (and depicted phonetically) in

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[28] The golden note sounded / by the horn in the distant woods.

[29] In the third volume of their *Gabriel Fauré: Complete Songs* series, Howat and Kilpatrick
trace the source of these omissions to Fauré's early autographs and engraver's copy of
the song (Howat & Kilpatrick, 2015, pp. 88–89).

the first stanza by pleure' and langueur' (weeps, languor).

Example 4.11: *Spleen* (1888), bb. 4–14[30]

As well as bringing out the [œ] sound on downbeats, Fauré uses the initial

beat of the bar for line endings, scoring the beginning of *Spleen* in a simple

manner to emphasise the poet's dejection. In a less systematic way than

previously, a familiar rhythmic pattern is glimpsed in this passage (♪♪♩).

Again, Fauré closely follows the mood of Verlaine's text as repeated rhythms

depict the monotony and melancholy of a London rainy day.

4.3.2: Rhythmic patterns in the Verlaine settings

Rhythmic patterns in Fauré's music play very specific roles in setting

Verlaine's distinctive poetic style. Whereas in Romantic or Parnassian verse a

limited number of patterns recurred throughout a single song, with Verlaine's

poetry patterns are associated with specific lines of verse and closely follow

the poet's rhythmically expressive text and its effects. Thus, it is no longer

possible, as in previous songs, to predict prosodic and recitation rhythms by

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[30] My heart weeps / Like the rain falling on the city. / What is this languor / Which penetrates into my heart?

means of recurring patterns; instead, Verlaine's is a transformed and changeable poetry in which highly rhythmic words or word groups affect meaning and performance more frequently at the level of the phrase. In Green', for instance, Fauré achieves two rhythmic goals at the beginning of the poem (Example 4.12): dotted quavers and semiquavers supply the basic rhythmic framework and endow the enumeration with a feeling of urgency.

Example 4.12: ˈGreen' (*Cinq mélodies de Venise',* 1891), bb. 1–4[31]

Fauré comments on his concept for this song in a letter to the Princesse de Polignac in July 1891: L'interprétation en est difficile: Lente de mouvement et agitée d'expression, heureuse et douloureuse, ardente et découragée' (Nectoux, 1980, p. 183).[32] The next *hémistiche of* the *alexandrin* line, made up of a series of semiquavers, adds dramatic contrast and leads more directly to the end of the line and its continuation in the next verse, to release the pent-up emotion from the previous line.

In Puisque l'aube grandit', from *La Bonne Chanson*, rhythmic repetition

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[31] Here are some fruits, some flowers, some leaves and some branches / And here is my heart, beating for you alone.

[32] Interpreting this song is difficult: Slow of movement and agitated in its expression, joyful and painful, intense and disheartened.

is directly based on the declaimed rhythms of the *alexandrin* verse.

Table 4.7: Puisque l'aube grandit' (*La Bonne Chanson,* 1870), P. Verlaine, first stanza (excerpt), rhythmic groups, recurring sounds, rhythmic processes

First stanza, excerpt	Rhythmic groups, recurring sounds rhythmic processes
Puisqu'après m'avoir fui // longtemps, l'espoir veut bien	(3+3)+(2+4) [ ] [s] [a] [p] [ ] [v] enjambement, rejet
Revoler devers moi // qui l'appelle et l'implore.[33]	(3+3)+(3+3) [ ] [v] [ ] [l] [ ] [a]

Example 4.13: Puisque l'aube grandit' (*La Bonne Chanson,* 1892–94), bb. 6–10

Again, Verlaine crafts intricate lines of verse: interwoven assonant and alliterative echoes link *hémistiches* and lines; an *enjambement* at the first-line *hémistiche* and an end-of-line *rejet* extends the traditional confines of the *alexandrin* in a lengthening effect, as interminable as time spent away from one's beloved (m'avoir fui // longtemps', l'espoir veut bien / Revoler'). The

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[33] After having fled for so long, hope returns at last / And flies to me who called and implored it.

effortless rhythmic technique of the second line conceals the poet's repeated

pleadings to Mathilde. Fauré, no less skilfully, moulds music to the text: the

enjambement (b. 6) and *rejet* (b. 8) are duly observed, and three beats

prolong and depict longtemps' until hope (l'espoir') reappears. A simple ♩ ♪♪

rhythmic pattern brings out the three-syllable groups, ending with a suitably

higher-pitched and longer note on implore', marking meaning and the end of

the line and of the couplet. The combination of Verlaine's text and Fauré's

melodic line produce a perfect *mode d'emploi* for the singer: contained in the

mélodie are the necessary instructions for an expressive and poetically

convincing performance.

It is worth noting that Verlaine's innovative and highly rhythmic poetic

style produced a complete about-face in Fauré's attitude towards alliterative

and assonant prosodic processes. In his early songs, as reported by Nectoux,

Fauré freely altered sonorities believed too repetitive or less aesthetic, judging

their effect amplified by the musical context. For instance, Laisse **tes** baisers

de colombe / Chanter sur **tes** lèvres' (de Lisle's verse), is changed by Fauré to

 Chanter sur **ta** lèvre' *(Lydia,* 1870), no doubt to avoid word and sound

repetition. Likewise, he attenuates the effect of the sibilant [s] in Gautier's *La*

*chanson du pêcheur (Lamento) (*1872*)* in this way: **S**ur moi la nuit immen**s**e /

S'étend comme un lin**c**euil' becomes Plane comme un lin**c**euil' (Nectoux,

2008, pp. 448–50). Later, Fauré clearly discerns the close connection between

text, sonority and rhythm in Verlaine's poetry and no longer considers

repeated sounds in close proximity to be unsuitable for setting to music. On

the contrary, Fauré's songs from this period indicate that he realises the

significant role played by assonance and alliteration in the musicality of Verlaine's verse.

The fourth song in Fauré's *La Bonne Chanson*, 'J'allais par des chemins perfides', abounds in the repeated consonants [r] and [l]. The following two lines illustrate Verlaine's mastery of words and sounds:

Table 4.8: J'allais par des chemins perfides' (*La Bonne Chanson,* 1870*),* P. Verlaine, fourth stanza (excerpt), alliteration

Fourth stanza (excerpt)	Alliteration	
Mon coeur craintif, mon sombre coeur	[k] [r] [s]	[œ]
Pleurait, seul, sur la triste voie;[34]	[l] [r] [s]	[œ]

Two features appear in this brief excerpt: Fauré brings out the first alliteration on [k] with a dotted rhythm (coeur craintif': ♩. ♪) modified to its rhythmically diminished form on sombre coeur' (♪. ♪) Additionally, the anticipated [s] consonant in the first line prepares its rhythmically alliterative use in the following line while the consonant [r] appears seven times in the couplet. The present excerpt is consistent with Fauré's practice of bringing out alliteration and assonance with repeated or neighbouring notes (for instance, in bb. 41–44, the neutral [œ] and nasalised [ ], rounder vowels in keeping with the darker mood of the two lines, sound within a restricted pitch range). Additionally, Verlaine's agile manipulation of sounds prepares the repeated

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[34] My fearful heart, my gloomy heart / Wept, alone, along the dismal road.

vowel sound [œ] at the end-of-line *rejet*: mon sombr**e c**o**eu**r / Pl**eu**rait, s**eu**l,'.

Example 4.14: J'allais par des chemins perfides' (*La Bonne Chanson,* 1892–94), bb. 41–47

Verlaine increases dramatic intensity in this fourth and last stanza, until it is finally resolved in the next two lines, introduced by more frontal vowel colours:

Table 4.9: J'allais par des chemins perfides' (*La Bonne Chanson,* 1870), P. Verlaine, last stanza (excerpt), alliteration and assonance

Last stanza (excerpt)	Alliteration and assonance	
L'amour, délicieux vainqueur,	[r] [d]	[a] [u] [œ] [i]
Nous a réunis dans la joie.[35]	[n] [r] [d]	[u] [a] [e] [i]

The penultimate line of the poem (the first line in Table 4.9) contains echoes of previously heard sounds, [s], [k], [œ], as seen in Table 4.8, which then disappear entirely in the last line, as if vanquished by the anticipation of shared love. Suddenly, tension eases, note values lengthen in clear triple

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[35]   Love, the exquisite vanquisher, / Has joined us together in felicity.

metre and, in a change of tonality to F# major (the tonic major), Fauré completes the depiction of hopeful love with upward sweeping scales in the piano and a higher tessitura for the singer (Example 4.15). Furthermore, vowel sounds brighten with the reiteration of [a] and the inclusion of the frontal vowel [i] and the neutral [œ]. The darker sounds and consonants used for alliteration in the preceding lines (Table 4.8) are absent from this last line (aside from the ubiquitous [r]).

Example 4.15: J'allais par des chemins perfides' (*La Bonne Chanson*, 1892–94), bb. 57–67

In his musical setting, Fauré sets the final line of verse by the use of longer note values scored in a higher tessitura. The *terza rima* poetic form[36] is thus reinforced by changes in sonority, vocal range and rhythm. In most cases, sonority and rhythm remain inseparable in Verlaine's poetry: words are deliberately selected and employed in regular metres for their impact on sound and rhythm. Likewise, Fauré fully engages with Verlaine's verse, creating and adapting rhythmic patterns to enhance prosody and sonority.

4.3.3: The melodic line in the Verlaine settings

Fauré's melodic lines from the Verlaine period form part of a stylistic transition from the earlier Romantic and Parnassian expressive vocalism to the *parlando* style of the post-1906 settings of Symbolist poets. The Verlaine *mélodies* combine lyricism with rhythmic declamation, so that both the voice and piano parts participate equally and interactively through melody, rhythm and harmony.

Earlier songs and their melodic lines contrast with the Verlaine settings in several ways: by their strophic form *(Le papillon et la fleur),* their memorable and often thematically repetitive melodies *(Tristesse),* their arpeggiated or chordal accompaniments (*Après un rêve*) or their simple overall harmonic scheme (*Aurore*). As seen in the previous two sections, Verlaine's more rhythmically and thematically complex verse necessitates careful phrase-by-phrase treatment and Fauré responds to this complexity by modifying the contour and treatment of his melodic lines.[37]

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[36] The *terza rima* is a fixed poetic form consisting of three-line stanzas and ending in a single line of verse which habitually sums up or resolves the situation described in the poem.

[37] Debussy, another composer whose music is closely linked to Verlaine's poetry, also brings

While *Prison* (1894), the last of the Verlaine songs, may be said to prefigure some features of the later Symbolist songs by partly adopting the tessitura and rhythms of effective declamation, a modified lyricism generally characterises Fauré's vocal lines during the Verlaine period. Range exploration (Green', *Cinq mélodies de Venise'*), vocalism (Mandoline', *Cinq mélodies de Venise'*), dynamic contrast and tempo changes (Avant que tu ne t'en ailles', *La Bonne Chanson*) and variations in tessitura (Puisque l'aube grandit', *La Bonne Chanson*) still define Fauré's vocal lines during this period. The essential difference with Romantic and Parnassian melodies originates in the poetic text: just as Verlaine's distinctive rhythms and lexical choices mark each line of verse, Fauré's musical phrases reflect each verse and each syntactic unit and their rhythms in a unique way, as analysis in this chapter indicates. Thus, melodies become less memorable as they achieve a closer union with the text and its nuances of meaning.

One striking example of this union is found in J'allais par des chemins perfides' (*La Bonne Chanson*).[38] No thematic content or recurring rhythms feature in this *mélodie*; moreover, voice and piano share in the depiction of the poet's despondency in the first forty-seven bars with chromatic harmonies, where the vocal line effectively acts as an additional harmonic voice. The

a highly personal style to his interpretation of the poet's works. In contrast to Fauré's typical forward rhythmic flow on the pulse, Debussy creates groups of prosodically expressive phrases, where rhythm and duration, tessitura and phrase contours form, with the keyboard motifs and the harmony, imagery in sound drawing upon Symbolist correspondences. Thus, the stylised declamatory intonations, the lingering notes on the ever-present clair de lune' and the evocation of the grands jets d'eau' by the repetitive pianistic motif and the high vocal tessitura are but a few of the symbolic representations which Debussy evokes in his second Clair de lune' (*Fêtes galantes*; 1891). However, both composers share one essential feature: each, in his own rhythmic and melodic style, seeks to set down a precise declamation of the poetic text: Fauré, with forward and rhythmic motion on the pulse; Debussy, by a precise arrangement of tessitura, rhythm and duration.

38 See translation and score in Volume 2, Appendix C.

melody spans the interval of a ninth and moves freely within this range, but angular phrase contours paired with Verlaine's highly rhythmic and alliterative text characterise Fauré's melodic writing in this song. Thus, Fauré retains features from previous songs (such as range exploration and high tessitura for emotional intensity) while transforming them to generate vocal lines where rhythm and contour reflect a highly expressive (and slightly exaggerated) declamatory style, paving the way for the Symbolist *parlando* melodic line.

4.3.4: The role of harmony in the Verlaine settings

In the same way as Verlaine's complex poetic means seek to communicate in ways exceeding traditional versification boundaries, Fauré's songs during this period venture outside of established metrical and harmonic frameworks in their evocation of poetic meaning. In his settings of Romantic and Parnassian verse, the voice and piano parts evolved into a complementary partnership typical of the mid-nineteenth-century *mélodie* and inspired by the German *lied.* In the Verlaine settings, voice and piano have become equals in declaiming the Verlainian verse. Indeed, in *La Bonne Chanson*, it is often difficult to discern the main voice amid the ambient harmonic complexity and pianistic virtuosity as Fauré translates nuance and imprecise thoughts into harmony. Bars 1–47 of J'allais par des chemins perfides' or bars 28–62 of Avant que tu ne t'en ailles', for instance, contain some of the more harmonically advanced music of this compositional period.

Harmony plays a three-fold role in Fauré's Verlaine songs: it contributes to setting the atmosphere, it structures lines and stanzas and sustains overall

motion on the pulse. Verlaine's choice of words and use of rhythm are responsible in great part for setting mood and embedding meaning within the verse itself. Fauré shares in this virtuosity by extending the limits of harmonic language and by manipulating rhythm, principally on the pulse, rather than within a recurring metrical structure.

In N'est-ce pas?' (*La Bonne Chanson*), an entire poem built on the poet's uncertain hope of love, Fauré sets most of the text in E minor with frequent and momentary changes of key: for instance, an allusion to Eb major in bar 28, then to a chord of D major in the next bar; a more stable section in G major (bb. 47–58) is followed by more fluid harmonic movements.[39] Fauré communicates the poet's timid hope, starting at bar 61, with alternating G major and G minor chords, and the song ends, as it began, on the words N'est-ce pas?'.

As seen in earlier songs such as *Lydia* and *Notre amour*, brief episodes of modality continue to form part of Fauré's harmonic language. From bar 79 to the end in Une Sainte en son auréole' *(La Bonne* Chanson), modality is used in a descriptive manner.[40] On the text Dans son nom Carlovingien', Fauré alludes to the ancient origin of Mathilde's name with the Lydian flavour of the raised fourth degree in the recurring motif in the piano right hand as well as in the bass line.

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[39] See translation and score in Volume 2, Appendix C.
[40] See translation and score in Volume 2, Appendix C.

Example 4.16: À Clymène' *(Cinq mélodies de Venise*', 1891), bb. 24–31

Example 4.17: À Clymène' *(Cinq mélodies de Venise*', 1891), bb. 53–57

Elsewhere, as noted by Gervais (Gervais, 1971, p. 27), Fauré modifies the seventh degree of the G major key from one bar to the next, alternating between F sharp and F natural in a fleeting allusion to the Mixolydian mode. In À Clymène' (bb. 25–29, Example 4.16), Fauré enters with Verlaine into the Symbolist world of correspondences: ta voix, étrange / Vision qui dérange / Et trouble l'horizon'.[41] Verlaine's voice itself disrupts the poetic horizon, it creates strange visions alluded to by Fauré in the restless movement of harmony, reflected by rippling arpeggios replete with accidentals and passing notes.

In the same song, a succession of seemingly unrelated seventh chords

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[41]   your voice, strange / Vision unsettling / And troubling the horizon.

subtly describe Verlaine's text. A sur d'almes cadences, / En ses correspondances'[42] (bb.53–57, Example 4.17) may well constitute part of the Symbolist manifesto, including both correspondances' and cadences' (rhythm). Indeed, Fauré's own musical correspondences in this passage allude to the strong link between rhythm and harmony: a series of four dominant-type seventh chords with a cadential flavour is finally rounded off with a diminished seventh chord, a handy modulatory tool placed, like a musical pun, on the poetic code-word correspondances'. A further linkage in this brief excerpt includes a common Bb note (A# enharmonically) in the chords (save in b. 54), enabling a smooth transition (correspondence) from one chord to the next.

Fauré often uses harmony to structure his *mélodies* at the local phrase level and to define stanzas. One notable example of descriptive yet phrasal harmony during this period is found at the beginning of J'allais par des chemins perfides'. Highly chromatic chord progressions linked either by a single common note or by passing notes depict the uncertain paths followed by the poet prior to his encounter with Mathilde. In the brief introductory section (bb. 1–4), Fauré alludes to the mood of the song with a series of constantly shifting chromatic chords, seemingly without direction, until the F# major tonic makes a fleeting appearance at bar 24, rapidly left behind by further chromaticisms. Only when the text shifts to the love shared by Verlaine and Mathilde does harmony begin to settle into F# major, the tonic major: L'amour, délicieux vainqueur'.

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[42] Has, on noble cadences, / In its correspondences.

Fauré takes a more structuring harmonic approach in *Prison* (1894; *Sagesse,* 1880).[43] Harmony and repetitive accompaniment motifs bring out the imprisoned poet's dejection as his world is reduced to a glimpse of the sky and to the far-off rumble of the city; here, Fauré controls harmonic movements to depict the timelessness of the poet's days. The first eight lines of verse remain within the Eb minor tonic key, punctuated by repeated chords on the beat. The interrupted cadence at the end of the eighth line (b. 14) signals a change of mood. A sudden shift to a higher vocal tessitura sounds the poet's despair, supported by the use of half-diminished chords (bars 15, 18, 21). A return to the original tonality and vocal range conclude the song on the words Qu'as-tu fait de ta jeunesse?'.

En sourdine' the second song from *Cinq mélodies de Venise'* (1891), demonstrates Fauré's control of motion to depict atmosphere.[44] This control lies less with the simplicity of harmonic movements (for Fauré's music seldom falls within this category) than with the pacing of the harmony, defining this song's seemingly peaceful mood with its undercurrent of desperate passion. Constantly rippling semiquavers sustain forward motion in the accompaniment, yet progressions move at a contrastingly languid pace.[45] In bars 1–4, harmony moves away from the tonic, beginning in the last two beats of bar 4; in bars 17–20, repeated chords and motifs appear to suspend motion itself. While time seems to stand still, the *moto perpetuo* of the

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43 See translation and score in Volume 2, Appendix C.
44 See translation and score in Volume 2, Appendix C.
45 A similar technique colours Joseph Szulc's (1875–1956) *Clair de lune* (1907), where rippling semiquavers in the accompaniment belie the often slow-moving harmonic progressions, for instance at l'amour vainqueur' and at Au calme clair de lune triste et beau'.

accompaniment, coupled with progressions venturing away from the tonic –
often with the added impetus of a seventh degree – sustain intensity and
ensure musical direction. Thus, by a careful control of harmonic pacing and
accompaniment figures, Fauré creates the illusion of an effortless control of
declamation, whilst movement, stillness and mood are embedded directly into
the music.

The song excerpts examined in this section have highlighted the
transformations in Fauré's musical style during the Verlaine years. Analysis
shows that rhythm is at the forefront of these changes as musical declamation
becomes ever more attuned to Verlaine's highly personal prosody. Alliteration,
assonance and, to a lesser extent, briefly repeated rhythmic patterns rise in
importance in melodic lines no longer quite as lyrical or memorable as those
from former years, but which often participate fully in harmonic progressions.
As the melodic line sheds some of its vocalism, harmonic complexity
increases; as always, however, the piano part continues to maintain forward
motion on the pulse, to pace and to structure text.

4.4: Analysis of selected Fauré songs on texts by Verlaine

The first part of this chapter considered the ways in which Verlaine and Fauré
adopt traditional elements and forms to expand the boundaries of poetry and
mélodie. By opting for word sonorities and rhythms in a subtle, allusive and
rhythmic manner, Verlaine creates a poetic environment in the half-light of
nuance and correspondences. Likewise, Fauré, equally attracted to

imprecision and impressions, enters into Verlaine's poetic world by means of melodies closer to expressive and declamatory contours, coloured by changeable and restless harmonies. Classical poetic metres and forms, challenged and enhanced by Verlaine's extrêmement / Rhythmique',[46] make possible Fauré's musical realisations based on *l'organisation du mouvement*, taking into account the myriad prosodic possibilities offered by the verse.

A study of a number of complete songs on Verlaine's texts forms the remainder of this chapter. Each song has been selected to highlight particular poetic and musical features emphasising techniques employed by Verlaine and Fauré to translate mood and nuance, as described in the first part of the chapter. These specific features then act as a starting point for analysis.

4.4.1: Clair de lune*: Rhythms of repetition and of textual ambiguity*[47]

With *Clair de lune* (1887, *Fêtes galantes,* 1869*)*, Fauré inaugurates not only a seven-year period of creative innovation, but also his association with Verlaine's poetry, an association most probably responsible for the remarkably swift change in the compositional style of his songs. Verlaine's *Clair de lune* is a stylised evocation of fêtes galantes', feasts of gallant and elegant expression of love. Verlaine, inspired by painter Jean-Antoine Watteau (1684–1721) and his stylised bucolic scenes, transforms them into Symbolist representations, the sensual correspondences of the impressions of a soul. Henri Scepi, a specialist of late nineteenth-century poetics, further interprets the context of *Clair de lune*'s nocturnal setting:

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[46]   Verlaine, P. Nuit du Walpurgis classique' (Paysages tristes IV', *Poèmes saturniens,* 1866).
[47]   Texts, translations and music for each song are found in Volume 2, Appendix C.

Clair de lune' n'est pas seulement le condensé d'une

esthétique de la fête galante comme genre et univers

imaginaire... La fantaisie de la vie festive et élégante se

convertit en *capriccio* nocturne et mélancolique... Clair de

lune' réalise cette conversion attendue en faisant de la

mascarade le masque d'un secret douloureux (Scepi, 2007, p.

131).[48]

In this metamorphosis of gallantry into a masque of ennui, Verlaine shifts the

perspective of the entire scene, as if viewed indistinctly from a distance. This

blurring of vision gives him access to correspondences into other spheres of

expression, namely those of rhythm and sonority. In his setting of the poem,

Fauré reveals a deep understanding of the Symbolist language and of its

originality. Fauré travaille sur l'ironie mêlée de tendresse propres aux

masques et bergamasques de la comédie verlainienne. La musicalité, le sens

de la ligne, la discrétion dans l'audace, la douceur navrante du spleen, toutes

ces données peuvent définir l'esthétique de Verlaine comme celle de Fauré'

(Nectoux, 2008, pp. 238–39).[49] Again, the similarities linking Verlaine and

Fauré emerge, brought out here as Nectoux focuses on the particular

commedia dell'arte attributes of *Clair de lune*.

In musical terms, the most original aspect of *Clair de lune* is

undoubtedly the complete independence of the voice and accompaniment

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[48]   Clair de lune' is not merely the summary of an aesthetics of gallant celebration as an imaginary genre and universe... The fantasy of the festive and elegant life is transformed into a nocturnal and melancholy *capriccio*... Clair de lune' achieves this awaited conversion by turning this masquerade into the dissimulation of a painful secret.

[49]   Fauré favours the tender irony specific to the masques and *Bergamasques* of the Verlainian comedy. Musicality, linearity, discretion in audacity, the depressing sweetness of ennui, all these characteristics may describe the aesthetics of both Verlaine and Fauré.

parts. Earlier songs, such as *Ici-bas* (1874) and *Au bord de l'eau* (1875), had merely hinted at a separate pianistic voice'. In those two songs, the melodic line was either shared between voice and accompaniment, or the independent melodic phrases of the piano were brief and often served as bridges between vocal phrases rather than as melodies in their own right, as in *Clair de lune.*

In his reading of *Clair de lune*, Fauré takes into account many of the rhythmic features of the poem, such as *enjambements, rejets,*and *césures*. Verlaine's art, as seen in Section 4.1, is a rhythmic interaction of these features within the classic poetic forms and with words as elements of sonority and further rhythmic play. Initially subjected to occasional transgressions, traditional line-of-verse rhythmic features became additional sources of dramatic intensity and poetic ambiguity with Verlaine (as in the first stanza, third line *rejet* on the equivocal quasi / Tristes'). Verlaine was to describe these qualities in Art poétique' fifteen years later after writing *Clair de lune*: Plus vague et plus soluble dans l'air, / Sans rien en lui qui pèse ou qui pose' (Art poétique', *Jadis et naguère,* 1884 in Mourier, 1999, p. 128).[50] Verse apparently freed from constraints or clearly defined limits, in constant motion and without the predictability of traditional metres: Verlaine's poetry appears as the perfect match for Fauré's music in the late 1880s, as the analysis in this chapter demonstrates.

Fauré sets the stage at the beginning of *Clair de lune* with an eleven-bar piano introduction, clearly stating his intentions: within the triple musical metre, he intends to manipulate inner rhythms flexibly, disregarding the stated

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[50]   More vague and more soluble in air, / With nothing in it that weighs or sets down.

3/4 time-signature. The adaptable triple metre, as in other Fauré *mélodies* (for example *Ici-bas* or *Soir*), flows with ease to duple metrical patterns (bars 1–8) or into triplets (bar 23), or to brief groupings suggesting 3/8 or 6/8 time (bars 18, 20–21, 51–53, 24–25). All of these unstated metrical shifts occur in the piano right hand, while the left hand provides harmonic support in the form of syncopated or arpeggiated chords. The overall effect is the evocation of a distant plucked instrument, its sound coming and going as if carried on the evening breeze.

Repeated motifs in the piano may be Fauré's way of translating the repetitive nature of these fêtes galantes', a kind of cycle in which the protagonists are caught up and destined to replicate the same songs, the same propos fades', the same roles night after night. The endless replay is finally interrupted by the reference to the moon, the calme clair de lune' at once sad and beautiful, a permanent and objective observer. In bars 37–45, Fauré breaks abruptly with the earth-bound tableau and suspends time with simple repeated pianistic arpeggios, an effect already noted in *En sourdine*, in Section 4.3.4. While the underlying musical movement continues (Fauré does not interrupt the flow of semiquavers), the absence of melodic contour in the piano part combined with stable harmonies contribute to an effective and sudden change of scene as well as to the illusion of timelessness.

As may be expected, performers have interpreted this unique piano score in various ways: some, like Dalton Baldwin (Souzay, 2006a, CD), bring out the quasi-indifference of the repeated motifs in a relentless pace with the merest hint of rubato to mark the end of a section (at bar 25, for instance);

Jean-Philippe Collard (von Stade, 1997, CD) gives a subdued role to the accompaniment, much like music muted by distance; on the other hand, Michaël Lévinas (Léger, 2008, CD) treats the keyboard part as a solo piece, with an uncertain and slow tempo, replete with rubatos. Yet, Fauré's score confirms that ongoing motion remains paramount, as the constant semiquaver patterns indicate. In bars 1–11, for instance, aside from repeated melodic motifs, the piano left hand is consistently scored in groups of arpeggiated semiquavers beginning with a rest of the same rhythmic value on the beat, in stylised imitation of a plucked instrument. Verlaine's words Jouant du luth, et dansant' (bb. 18–20) provide further insight into the quality of motion intended by Fauré, within the context of an evening of music, dance and seduction. Finally, there is Fauré's well-documented dislike of rubato where not indicated in the score.[51]

When the voice enters discreetly in bar 12 after the introduction, it seems to emerge from the piano part. It is worth noting that, while the accompaniment demonstrates a fair degree of metrical flexibility, the vocal line tends to make frequent and consistent use of the downbeat as a means of establishing stressed syllables and syntactic goals, providing contrasting stability against the pulse-centred accompaniment. In bars 31–36, for example, the piano right hand states the first motif heard at the very beginning of the song and grouped in duple rhythms, while the voice remains firmly in

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[51] As reported by Claire Croiza, acquainted with Fauré and a distinguished interpreter of French song: Fauré était un vivant métronome...Par-dessus tout, c'est en le ralentissant qu'on le déforme...Il a marqué souvent des diminuendo, presque jamais des rallentando. Or, presque toujours, on ralentit la fin de ses mélodies' (Fauré, 1980, p. 195). (Fauré was a living metronome...Above all, his music is distorted by being slowed down...He has often written in diminuendos, but rarely any rallentandos. Yet, his songs are almost always slowed down at the end).

triple metre. The overall effect is of an ongoing musical declamation on the pulse, since the voice and piano parts do not share downbeat stresses.

Verlaine creates remarkable relationships among sonorities with the careful selection and placement of words in the first stanza. The first line is unique in that there are few repeated sounds save for the voiced consonant [z] in ʻpaysageʼ and ʻchoisiʼ and the [, a] in ʻâmeʼ, ʻpaysageʼ and ʻchoisiʼ ([ ] and [a], while subtly distinct, still count as assonant vowel sounds).

In the first stanza, Verlaine's linguistic dexterity and poetic craftsmanship combine sound and rhythm to depict the soul of the beloved. Nearly all of the vowel sounds are central or frontal vowels: [a] [ ] [i]. These bright sonorities prevail throughout the first stanza which also forms a complete sentence. Verlaine establishes and maintains sound relationships among lines of verse and within the lines themselves: lines 1 and 2 are linked by [ ] in ʻchoisiʼ and ʻcharmantʼ; within line 2, [m] not only recurs three times (ʻcharmantʼ, ʻmasquesʼ, ʻbergamasquesʼ), but also participates in the ambiguous and playful repetition of ʻmasquesʼ (a masquerade) and ʻbergamasquesʼ (*commedia dell'arte* characters from Bergamo). There is a further ambiguity in line 2 involving ʻcharmantʼ: this word could be construed either as adjective or as present participle. This results in an intentional and fleeting confusion created by Verlaine, at least for the listener.[52]

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[52] An ʻsʼ would be required were ʻcharmantʼ used as an adjective, in order to agree with the plural ʻmasques et bergamasquesʼ; speech, naturally, does not indicate this.

Table 4.10: Clair de lune' (*Fêtes* galantes, 1869), P. Verlaine, first stanza, sonorities and recurring words

First stanza	Sonorities and recurring words	
Votre âme est un // paysage choisi	[, a] [z]	
Que vont charmant // masques et bergamasques,	[ã] [a] [m]	masques
Jouant du luth // et dansant et quasi	[ã] [y] [s]	et
Tristes sous leurs // déguisements fantasques.	[t] [i] [s] [ã]	

Mourier summarises this intentional confusion worked into Verlaine's verse: Rien n'est plus caractéristique de cette manipulation souveraine de la forme, gauche et remâchée afin de produire de l'informe, que la confusion voulue du vocabulaire, l'usage du pluriel, celui de la comparaison tautologique, le glissement entretenu de l'adjectif au participe' (Mourier, 1999, p. 196).[53] Once again, Verlaine highlights words and sonorities: repetition, ambiguity and seemingly awkward manipulations of poetic shape contribute to reforming verse and style much in the same way as Fauré's equivocal harmonies and forward motion based on the pulse alter the relationship of musical metre to rhythm, as seen throughout this thesis.

Lines 3 and 4 are closely linked by a *rejet* and by another favourite process in Verlaine's verse. The equivocal text features an enumeration using present participles jouant' and dansant'; Verlaine's clever use of the *rejet* leads us to expect a further participle, but we are thrown off balance by the adjective Tristes' and by the first inkling that this poem may not be a light-hearted *nocturne* after all.

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[53] Nothing better defines [Verlaine's] supreme command of form, awkward and reworked to arrive at formlessness, than the intentional lexical confusion, the use of the plural, that of the tautological comparison, the sustained shift of the adjective to the participle.

In a classic *décasyllabe* (ten syllables), *césures* occur typically at the fourth or sixth syllable. In *Clair de lune*, Verlaine often disregards traditional *césure* locations, making it impossible to pause, thereby adding to the line's rhythmic tension (Table 4.11). As seen in chapter 3, section 3.3.4, linguist Mazaleyrat has opted to allow the *césure* some mobility according to syntactic pauses, thus changing the equilibrium of the verse and, at times, redefining it to resemble prose. However, this thesis, in agreement with Dessons and Meschonnic's theory of continuity, retains historical poetic line rhythms to maintain the pauses from Classical verse in modern poetry, regardless of their awkward positions within new poetic forms. In this way, the performing voice, by organising motion in lines of verse, may access the full potential of ideas, mood and nuance of the text through the resulting ebb and flow of rhythmic tensions, without recourse to versification changes (Dessons & Meschonnic, 2008, p. 91).

The first and fourth lines of the first stanza in *Clair de lune* feature *césures* which, rather than marking the end of an accented phrase segment, create a consonantal accent on the next word: Votre âme est un // **p**aysage choisi' and Tristes sous leurs // **d**éguisements fantasques'. Moreover, the impossible' *césure* (i.e. a *césure* which cannot be observed without violating syntax) lends additional weight to the first word of the next segment, supported by the accent on the initial consonant. In a further rhythmic feature of this poem, the *rejet* between the two last lines of the first stanza prolongs the underlying rhythm of the third line: Jouant du luth // et dansant et quasi / Tristes' (4+3+4). This results in rhythmic discordance and imbalance between

the two lines due to lengthening by the *rejet*; however, it also results in the

rhythmic symmetry of the phrase segment.

Table 4.11: Clair de lune' (*Fêtes* galantes, 1869), P. Verlaine, first stanza,

césures and rhythmic process

First stanza	Césures and rhythmic process
Votre âme est un // paysage choisi	4+6 (3+3)
Que vont charmant // masques et bergamasques,	4+6
Jouant du luth // et dansant, et quasi	4+6 (3+3) rejet: 4+3+4
Tristes sous leurs // déguisements fantasques.	4+6 (3+3)

The interplay of word stresses and *césures* contributes to fluidity and to

rhythmic discordances within the verse. In the first line of the poem, Fauré

stresses the two nouns, âme' and paysage' either by duration or by a

downbeat stress (bars 13–14), while the end of the line receives the

customary pause regardless of the unfinished sentence; Fauré's subtle

concession to the ongoing line is the placement of the last syllable of choisi'

on the third beat of bar 14. The declamatory pace is unhurried, supported by a

combination of crotchets and quavers, and by the use of rhythmic pattern

♪♪ ♩. In the second line, the *césure* is observed with a crotchet on the second

syllable of charmant', and the rhythmic and repetitive nature of masques et

bergamasques' is brought out by crotchets on the identical sounds

(masques') as well as by pitches within the restricted range of a third in bars

16 and 17. Furthermore, the setting of masques' and of the accented third syllable of bergamasques' on the downbeat underlines Verlaine's sonorous word-play with simple rhythmic and metrical repetitions.

While it would seem logical to accentuate these features of the text, the most effective interpretation occurs when a singer recites the text precisely, clearly and rhythmically, but without extra stress or undue colouring. Two singers combine simplicity with clarity: Gérard Souzay (2006a, CD) and Felicity Lott (2005a, CD) both sing the entire *mélodie* with clear diction and in a straightforward manner, allowing the text and music to come through and to interact with the accompaniment. By bringing out the consonants slightly more than Souzay (perhaps a function of not being a native French-speaker), Lott manages to underline the consonantal sonorities just enough for rhythmic effect, for example on masques et bergamasques'. Contrasting with Souzay and Lott, a rather more languorous reading of the song by Sarah Walker (1992b, CD) results from brief and localised word or syllabic stresses in a fairly slow minuet tempo. While this interpretation may emphasise the lovers' intimacy in the shadowy half-light, it fails to translate the playfulness, or perhaps even the play-acting of the masques et bergamasques' who, despite their ennui, cling to their nightly dancing and singing to the sound of the lute.

Lines 3 and 4 of the first stanza, starting with Jouant du luth', follow Verlaine's groupings as described above in Table 4.11 (4+3+4), with the accented syllables all falling on the downbeat, including the *rejet* on Tristes' thus given more prominence. The last phrase of the stanza successfully avoids a downbeat accent at its start by beginning with a crotchet on the third

beat of bar 21 (sous leurs déguisements fantasques'), completed by a succession of quavers leading to a traditional lengthened ending on fantasques'. A number of recurring sonorities are brought out by the melody, namely [i] on quasi / Tristes', occurring on the same pitch (Db) and the alliterations on [s] in bars 20–23 all sounding within the range of a fourth (Ab to Db). Finally, Fauré's gentle humour cannot resist a musical pun at the postlude in bars 23–25, where leurs déguisements fantasques' become first a bar of semiquaver triplets, followed by two bars grouped as in 6/8, some of his own disguises for the triple metre *mélodie*.

The second stanza contains several points of interest related to the rhythmic use of sonority (Table 4.12). As previous examples have shown, sonorities in Verlaine's poetry may be used to characterise phrases or syntactic segments (in the second stanza, to identify the *césure* location in the first line and in the second half of the last line) or to colour a particular mood throughout an entire line of verse (lines 2–4). In this stanza as in the first, Fauré indicates clearly both the *césures* and the end of the lines of verse with longer note values (bb. 26–36). Similarly, assonant vowels and alliterative consonants are set on identical or neighbouring pitches: en chantant': [ã] (bars 26–27); le mode mineur': [ ] [m] (bar 27); chanson se': [s] (bars 34–35); se mêle au clair': [ ] (bar 35). The internal rhyme between mode mineur' and l'amour vainqueur' is a poetic device easily brought out by the singer as it occurs within the space of two bars and in a restricted vocal tessitura (bars 27–28).

Table 4.12: Clair de lune' (*Fêtes galantes,* 1869), P. Verlaine, second stanza, sonorities and repeated words

Second stanza	Sonorities and repeated words
Tout en chantant // sur le mode mineur	[ã] [ ] [m] [œ]
L'amour vainqueur // et la vie opportune,	[r] [v] [œ]
Ils n'ont pas l'air // de croire à leur bonheur,	[r] [œ]
Et leur chanson // se mêle au clair de lune,	[l] [s] [ ]　　　　(clair de lune)

Much has been made of Fauré's contrariness in setting sur le mode mineur' on major mode chords, a typical Faurean ambiguity (bar 27); perhaps', reflects Graham Johnson, this is a musical metaphor for the fact that the suave words of a courtier never mean exactly what they say' (Johnson, 2009, p. 199). In fact, the bars preceding and following the passage in question are either in the minor mode (bar 26) or leading back to it (bars 28–29). Again, Verlaine may well be juggling with words: the mode mineur' could also refer to a lack of interest in l'amour vainqueur et la vie opportune', hence the casual and perhaps half-hearted song of a blasé group of courtiers. The sentence begun in the second stanza concludes at the end of the third. Again, in this next excerpt, *césures* (4+6 in the last line) and word repetitions contribute to rhythmic discordance with traditional verse. The phrase clair de lune' is a direct reiteration, not only of the title, but also of the final words of the previous stanza. Fauré subtly highlights the link between the two statements, setting them within a perfect fifth: first outlining a downward F major triad (bb. 35–36), then on a minor third between G and Bb (bb. 40–41).

Table 4.13: Clair de lune' (*Fêtes galantes,* 1869), P. Verlaine, third stanza, sonorities and repeated words

Third stanza	Sonorities and repeated words
Au calme clair de lu-// ne triste et beau,	[o] [k] clair de lune (from the previous stanza); triste (from the first stanza)
Qui fait rêver // les oiseaux dans les arbres	[k] [ ]
Et sangloter d'exta- // se les jets d'eau,	[ ] [o] jets d'eau
Les grands jets d'eau // sveltes parmi les marbres.	[ ] [o] jets d'eau

The other recurring word in this line, triste', is an echo of the quasi / Tristes' masques of the first stanza, this time redeemed by the sad and calm beauty of the moon. A further word repetition involves the final two lines of the poem with the locution jets d'eau'. Here, Verlaine demonstrates his mastery with words and rhythm: in the penultimate line, the word group ends the line of verse and therefore receives its stress on the last one-syllable word, d'eau'. In the last line, the same words occur near the beginning but, in this case, are framed by two adjectives: grands' which, not unlike its meaning, requires a lengthier phonation time, while sveltes' receives the cumulative accentual weight of the entire phrase, Les grands jets d'eau sveltes'. Moreover, sveltes' occurs immediately following the *césure* and, with its two initial consonants [s] and [v] and frontal vowel [ ], carries additional stress.

As the first of his Verlaine settings, *Clair de lune* is an apt illustration of the artistic liberty which Fauré had attained by the late 1880s, amounting, in a certain sense, to a quiet and unannounced stylistic revolution. The analysis of

this song brings to light Fauré's enhanced means of prosodic expression through a new freedom, not only from traditional harmonic conventions (yet never completely abandoning tonality) but, even more significant in this context, freedom from the metrical and rhythmic recurrence of accentual regularity. Instead, he turns to a new kind of repetition, embodied in Verlaine's imaginative poetry, moulding rhythm and harmony to the subtle nuances and ambiguities of the verse.

*4.4.2: 'Une Sainte en son auréole' (*La Bonne Chanson*): Rhythm in aural and visual correspondences*

In the first song from his cycle *La Bonne Chanson*, selected from Verlaine's poetic courtship narrative of the same name, Fauré constructs a multi-layered rhythmic edifice. The larger form combines voice and accompaniment to depict musically the poet's aural and visual descriptions of his fiancée by the use of thematic material and reiterated pitches and sonorities. As always, Fauré responds to poetic prosody and metres at the local level by integrating their various component rhythms and stresses into musical phrases, echoing the poet's innovative sculpting of prosody and rhythm. The sonorities and rhythmic impact of individual words and word groups are highlighted in Fauré's faithful setting of Verlaine's verse and carried forward by his typical dynamic sense of motion, integrating detailed phrasing into the overall form.[54]

The entirety of Une Sainte' conveys, in a real sense, the *mélange* of

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[54] We find a similar approach in Debussy's Il pleure dans mon coeur' (*Ariettes oubliées*; 1885–87), where Verlaine's poem, saturated with repeated words and sonorities, resonates across phrases in a kind of musical rhyme by means of sounds reiterated on the same or neighbouring pitches, e.g. pleure', pleut', langueur'. Debussy varies this technique by repeating sounds an octave apart as in O le **bruit** de la **pluie**!'.

the old and the new, of tradition and creativity. In his text, Verlaine, inspired by Mathilde's Carolingian-sounding name, is carried away on a dream of ancient saints and of princesses in towers, bringing to mind the sound of distant hunting horns: a visual and aural portrait woven out of mythical chivalry and idealised womanhood. Correspondences link expressions of sight and sound: 'Une Sainte...Une châtelaine... Tout ce que contient la parole / Humaine de grâce...' and, in the last stanza, the poet acknowledges his auditory vision: 'Je vois, j'entends... dans son nom carlovingien.' Yet, the ancient octosyllabic verse, a further reference to times past, sheds some of its predictability with the use of *rejets* ('la parole / Humaine'; 'entendre / Un cor'),[55] as well as with the variety of locations for the *césure*, resulting in a highly rhythmic construction. Interestingly, two lines with varied *césures* in which Fauré makes a word alteration at a *rejet* gain increased rhythmic impact:

Table 4.14: 'Une Sainte en son auréole' (*La Bonne* Chanson, 1870), P. Verlaine, second stanza (excerpt), césures, rhythmic discordance and process

Second stanza (excerpt)	Césures, rhythmic discordance and process
La note d'or // que fait entendre	(4+4) rejet
Un cor dans // le lointain des bois,	(3+5): césure; (2+6): syntactic

Several reasons may have inspired Fauré in changing the article from the

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[55] Fauré changes the text to 'entendre / Le cor', no doubt to facilitate phonation in singing. This tones down Verlaine's powerful *rejet* which includes an elision at 'entendre un', but Fauré's modification adds to the alliteration on [l] and [ ].

indefinite un' to the definite le' to define cor': the elision between entendre'

and un' is less rhythmic, while requiring more articulation to accommodate all

the consonants and vowels; moreover, the singing of the nasalised [œ] is

undoubtedly less attractive vocally than the more straightforward le'; finally, by

using the non-eliding le', Fauré in fact includes some assonance and

alliteration of his own ([ ] and [l]) while adding to the rhythmic impact and

regularity of the phrase.

The juxtaposition of ancient and modern processes also directs Fauré's

approach to harmony in this song. The use of the Lydian mode in the last

stanza at the mention of son nom Carlovingien' (bb. 79–88) hearkens back to

images of graceful ladies and the far-off sound of hunting horns. However,

harmonic movements throughout the song generally venture chromatically to

fleeting tonalities, away from the relative simplicity of ancient modality and

rather more towards modernity, perhaps mirroring Verlaine's hope for future

bliss with the real-life Mathilde.

As in many other *mélodies*, harmony reflects the structure of the song

by colouring text according to meaning in lines or sections. Fauré sets the

scene in the first stanza with a fairly stable harmonic centre around Ab major

(enabling the statement of the recurring theme in the piano right hand, first

stated in bb. 1–3), only venturing into Cb major and related progressions on

 en sa tour / Tout ce que contient' (bb. 8–14). With note d'or' and lointain des

bois', Fauré indeed takes the listener further away from the tonic of Ab, first

with extra notes (Fb and D, bb. 22–33) in the harmonic accompaniment to the

horn motif and then in the region of C7 (bb. 31–33) for the depths of the

woods. The third stanza, characterised by references to Mathilde's pure and childlike qualities, moves to E (enharmonically through Fb). Fauré appropriately links the third and fourth stanzas together (bb. 58–60), two stanzas closely related poetically and separated only by a comma: the vocal line barely pauses for breath (bb. 59–60), supported by thematic material in the accompaniment. The fourth and last stanza, with its Lydian allusions, again links past and present, modal colours with Verlaine's idealised vision.

Two main themes in the piano part sustain the melodic unity of the song and punctuate it rhythmically while maintaining forward motion on the pulse: the Mathilde' theme, first stated in bars 1–3 in the piano right hand and the horn theme in bars 22–33 and 70–75, again in the right hand piano part. The lyrical Mathilde' theme, a recurring pattern throughout the *mélodie* and indeed throughout the cycle (featured, for instance, in the accompaniment of La lune blanche luit dans les bois', bars 32–34), is also reminiscent of the Viardot motif', from Fauré's years at Pauline Viardot's salon and described by Nectoux: [Un] saut ascendant de sixte ou d'octave, suivi d'une ligne descendant par degrés conjoints' (Nectoux, 2008' p. 120).[56] The versatile Mathilde' theme serves a number of purposes. In Une Sainte': it sustains motion by its *moto perpetuo* quality and accompanies most of the idealised descriptions of the poet's fiancée. It is also the basis for other motivic content, in truncated form (bb. 14–20 and 43–46). As the entire theme is solidly established in triple metre rhythm, it also provides the foundation for any rhythmic variations required by the vocal line to recite the text appropriately.

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[56] An ascending leap, either of a sixth or an octave, followed by a scale-like descending passage.

The melodious and flowing character of the Mathilde' theme contrasts strongly with the horn theme, a rare Faurean musical description for La note d'or' of the far-off hunting horn. (bb. 22–32). Pitch repetition and apparent metrical variety underscore Fauré's timely use of contrast in this passage: all at once, motion and immobility, the past and the present. In its more subtle second statement, embedded in an inner voice (bb 70–75), the single-pitch duple metre pattern, set against the triple metre melody provides the backdrop for Verlaine's Je vois, j'entends' and signals the transition from the vision of his fiancée to the inner voice of his own feelings.

While vocal or pianistic tessitura generally play a less prominent role with regard to rhythm and form in Fauré's songs, a few points are worth considering. Within an overall range of a minor ninth and a vocal tessitura mainly featuring the middle voice, Une Sainte' creates intimacy, punctuated by occasional ecstatic lifts of the voice: for example, de grâce et d'amour' (bb 15–20), with a lengthening of the [ ] in grâce' and an upward leap to the normally unimportant conjunction et', adding emphasis to the richness of Mathilde's character. The song's other departure from a restricted tessitura and predominantly conjunct motion is found at bars 44–48: D'un frais sourire triomphant'. Fauré shifts the mood by inserting a two-bar transition after the above phrase (bb. 49–50): the higher tessitura and *forte* Fb at the end of a *crescendo* (b. 46) also act as structuring markers, in contrast with the next two lines of verse scored with quieter dynamics, a lower tessitura and new material in the piano part (bb. 51–56).

In a letter to pupil and friend Jean Roger-Ducasse dated 17 May 1923,

Fauré writes: Je n'ai rien écrit jamais aussi spontanément que la *Bonne Chanson'* (Nectoux, 1980, p. 330).[57] The spontaneous energy of the declamation and rhythms in *La Bonne Chanson* is undoubtedly inspired by his understanding of Verlaine's technique and poetic imagination (but also by his relationship with the cycle's dedicatee Emma Bardac, to whom he alludes further on in the above letter).

In a similar way, youth and exuberance can be heard in Gérard Souzay's interpretation of this *mélodie* (2006f, CD); within Fauré's indication of *Allegretto con moto,* Souzay communicates energy and wonder with a sonorous vocal quality. Charles Panzéra (2002c, CD), who was Fauré's first interpreter of *L'horizon chimérique,* also sings with full-bodied tone and clear diction, conveying the various nuances of the language. Accompanied by Fauré's own arrangement for string quintet and piano, Sarah Walker (1980b, electronic download) brings out the sweetness of Verlaine's representations of his fiancée rather than his fervent admiration by adopting a slower tempo and a gentler manner than either Souzay or Panzéra. In Une Sainte', the string and piano arrangement (to which Fauré preferred the original piano part) does not fully bring out the rhythmic impact of the accompaniment: while it is particularly effective in the Mathilde' theme where the interaction between lines is brought out by the various string colours, the horn motif' lacks rhythmic definition without the precision of pianistic articulation.

Identified with the same poetic revolution as Mallarmé, Verlaine retains the old forms while disrupting their inner structures (Mourier, 1999, p. 18).

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[57] ...I have never written anything as spontaneously as the *Bonne Chanson*.

Lines in Une Sainte' are no longer structured by the 3+5 or 5+3 *césures* of the traditional *octosyllabe*; the tension-producing variations in the inner poetic shape indicate the poet's singular voice, creating and reciting. The memory of the classic pauses contrasting with the new rhythms constitutes the basis for dramatic energy in the new poetry, as discussed by Dessons and Meschonnic (2008, p. 91). Similarly, Fauré's rhythms and harmonies, when coupled with Verlaine's unpredictable verse structure, sustain drama and motion but also alter our expectations with their own unpredictability, and open the way for the Symbolist correspondences in Une Sainte'.

Within a fairly classic structure, Verlaine employs a number of rhythmic constructions to depict the image of his beloved; Fauré's setting enhances and supports these constructions. The *césures* in the first stanza follow a classic scheme, depicting in verse the idealised poetic imagery of chivalrous love, and contrasting with Verlaine's habitual rhythmic alterations.

Table 4.15: Une Sainte en son auréole' (*La Bonne Chanson,* 1870), P. Verlaine, first stanza, recurring sonorities and words

First stanza	Recurring sonorities and words		
Une Sain- // te en son auréole,	3+5	[y] [s] [ã]	Une, en
Une Châtelai- // ne en sa tour,	5+3	[y] [a] [ã] [t] [u]	Une, en
Tout ce que contient // la parole	5+3	[t] [u] [ ] [k] [a]	
Humaine de grâ- // ce et d'amour;	5+3	[ ] [d] [a]	

Fauré's setting features various ways of observing the rhythmic line pauses:

First line: crotchets in the first part (bb. 4–5), quavers in the second (b. 5);

Second line: two different rhythmic motifs on either side of the *césure*: une

châtelaine' (bb. 8–9) and en sa tour' (bb. 9–10);

Third line: same pattern as in the first line (bb. 12–13; 13);

Fourth line: first part, after the *rejet*, with a long note value on a single pitch

and word (grâce', bb. 16–17), second part with a dotted rhythm motif (b. 18).

With these subtle rhythmic variations, Fauré acknowledges the *césures*

without necessarily having recourse to rests or long note values, as in earlier

songs. Noticeable changes can be observed in the melodic contours on either

side of the *césure* in the first stanza. Clearly, the *césure* serves not only as a

poetic rhythmic pause, but also as a melodic and interpretative pivot point for

Fauré to exploit in this song, as noted also in *Clair de lune* in the previous

section, where the *césure* acted as a marker for changes in sonority.

Concurrent accentuation patterns in both verse and musical metre

seem at first glance to depart from Fauré's emancipation from stated metres

and bar-line accents, a stylistic feature which appeared in the 1880s. While

important poetic stresses are located on the downbeat in this stanza, a

number of factors minimise their impact. The most significant of these is the

accompaniment with the *moto perpetuo* Mathilde' motif: the flowing and lyrical

quality of this piano melody, which begins and ends seemingly without regard

to the vocal line, maintains forward motion throughout the song. Another

contributing factor is harmony: short-lived modulations, often introduced in

inner piano lines by voice-leading, contribute to creating ambivalence,

particularly as these harmonic changes are as unpredictable as they are brief.

In bar 9, for instance, the first harmonic alteration of the song occurs on the downbeat, strengthening Fauré's metrical observance of the *césure* (Une châtelaine'). Immediately after, the second beat initiates the next rhythmic segment of the line (en sa tour'), with notes grouped as if in duple metre. The melodic contour of this segment also subtly illustrates the text itself by rising up by a leap of a fourth on tour'. Thus, within the space of a single line of verse, Fauré not only signals the poetic pause with musical rhythms, but by slipping into Cb major (a minor third up from the Ab major tonic key and one of his favoured modulatory moves), he alters tonal colours to suit the new text.

Other rhythmic elements in this stanza focus on word placement. The indefinite article Une' gains prominence through its initial position in the first two lines, as if in continuation of the unsaid phrase: Elle est comme...' (She is like...). Yet, the very fact that this phrase remains unsaid accentuates each line by bringing out the mythical attributes of the absent Mathilde; the glottal attack on the [y] also adds slight stress to each repetition. Additionally, the second occurrence of une' in line 2 receives a downbeat accent, giving the line of verse further emphasis and rhythmic impulse: **U**ne châte**laine** // **en** sa **tour**.' This is consistent with the inner rhythm of the octosyllabic line, where the last accented syllable of châtelaine' receives some emphasis as the end of the first segment before the *césure.* These stress patterns agree with traditional verse accentuation, and contradict Ober's assertion that châtelaine' bears some stress on its first syllable; this reading, suggests Ober, allows a brief sequence of two-beat phrases in a pleasing hemiola' (Ober, 2012, p. 211). While this can be one way of interpreting this passage, it is at variance

with the fundamental end-accented word and verse stresses of French

language and poetry; a slight lengthening of the initial [ ] suffices for subtle

colouring. Moreover, as the analysis in this thesis repeatedly highlights,

linearity constitutes a fundamental quality of French declamation and more

particularly of Fauré's vocal music style.

Note values combined with sonorities form a significant part of the

rhythmic make-up of the third line in the first stanza. Verlaine's close-knit

verse guides Fauré into his choice of note values: here, Tout ce que contient'

is scored on a series of crotchets so that the assonance on [ ] and both the

adjoining and separated alliterations ([k], [t]) may be heard. The same

approach prevails in the next section of the line with the [a] vowel (la parole'),

this time notated with quavers. In the overflow of syllables at the *rejet* on

 parole / Humaine', Verlaine saturates poetic metre to express Mathilde's

grace and love. In Fauré's setting, time appears to stretch indefinitely in the

last words of the line, de grâce et d'amour', in this musical correspondence,

permeated with the fullness of Mathilde's virtues. The expressive gesture of

the high-pitched conjunction et', set with a dotted crotchet note value, further

emphasises Verlaine's evocation of his fiancée's rare qualities.

Contrast between rhythmic groupings runs through the entire second

stanza. The first of these is the horn motif, made up of a single repeated pitch

in duple metre rhythmic patterns (bb 22–33). Against this shift into duple metre

groupings in the piano part, the vocal line remains firmly in 3/4 time. The

musical description of ancient images is modified in the last line of verse,

where Des nobles dames d'autrefois' is rendered in duple metre groupings in

the vocal line, whereas this time the piano remains in the stated 3/4 metre, leading again to the Mathilde' theme in bar 39. At times, Fauré contrasts duple and triple metre groupings against each other to highlight moods and text changes, as in bars 44–56: D'un frais sourire triomphant', is in duple metre groupings in the vocal line, followed by a change to triple metre groupings for Éclos dans des candeurs de cygne', describing Verlaine's shift of mood from an extroverted sentiment to an adoring glance.

Throughout Une Sainte', the rhythms of alliteration and assonance are brought out musically by various means: with the use of identical rhythms, as in La note d'or que fait entendre / Le cor': every [ ] vowel sound is given either a minim or a dotted minim note value, ringing out the assonance over the two lines of verse. Similarly, the fricative [f] in femme-enfant' receives longer note values in a phrase made up predominantly of quavers. To further emphasise these rhythmic events and their expressive power, Fauré places them either on identical pitches or within a restricted musical interval so that their relationship may remain clear. In Un doux accord patricien', for instance, the two [a] vowels are on C and Db respectively, while the [i] sounds are not only a mere major third apart, but form part of a descending major triad, making them even more noticeable.

Expressions such as Je vois, j'entends' become more significant in their Symbolist correspondences in Fauré's setting with only a semitone to alter the first note in the repeated phrase. Here, Fauré sums up the entire poem as a visual and aural depiction of Verlaine's fiancée. At times, Fauré's music may even heighten the sensations suggested by language: the rising

sixth in the Mathilde' theme as an aural description of idealised womanhood;
 grâce' and amour', with almost overlong note values, as superlatives of
Mathilde's qualities and la note d'or' in a rare Faurean rhythmic word-painting.
In this song, poetic and musical rhythms coalesce in an ever-flowing forward
motion to express the intensity of Verlaine's contemplation and wonder.

4.4.3: '*La lune blanche luit dans les bois*' (La Bonne Chanson)*: Rhythm and
stillness*

Several composers have set 'La lune blanche luit dans les bois', including
Reynaldo Hahn *(L'Heure exquise,* 1893), Ernest Chausson *(Apaisement,*
1885–87) and Igor Stravinsky (1911, in the original French, as well as in a
Russian translation). Of the twenty-one poems comprising Verlaine's *La
Bonne Chanson,* La lune blanche' is the only one consisting of tetrasyllabic
(four-syllable) lines of verse. Verlaine's use of this brief poetic metre is
described by J.-S. Chaussivert in his monograph on *La Bonne Chanson*:
 L'emploi du vers de 4 syllabes permet à Verlaine d'imprimer à la phrase un
balancement de longue amplitude, et de la ralentir en lui imposant des arrêts
régulièrement répétés qui isolent les mots' (Chaussivert, 1973, p. 44).[58] Fauré
carefully controls motion to reflect the unhurried pace and nocturnal mood of
this text, conveying by means of the vocal line the contemplation and wonder
from Verlaine's verse.

Whilst a relaxed pace may seem to penetrate this *mélodie*, Fauré
effectively manipulates the overarching rhythm of the song, closely following

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[58] By employing a four-syllable line of verse, Verlaine induces a broad swaying motion in the
phrase, where repeated pauses require a slower pace and isolate the words from one
another.

the text to control dramatic impact. Up to the end of Rêvons, c'est l'heure' at

bar 28, the lines of verse are sung one by one for the most part; furthermore,

rejets receive little consideration and, when Fauré appears to connect two

lines of verse, time is added elsewhere in the phrase as if to reset the

equilibrium between pause and movement, between reflection and speech.[59]

There is no doubt that, in this *mélodie*, one savours each sensation, each

sound and each hushed moment. The final stanza, starting at bar 31 (Un

vaste et tendre...'), is set in a rhythmically distinct manner and in a

diametrically opposed way to the meaning of the text. Here, Fauré observes

the numerous *rejets* and treats the five-line stanza as a single sentence or,

perhaps, as the continuation of the preceding single line of verse, Rêvons,

c'est l'heure,' which, by ending with a comma, conveys an ambivalent

message: is this line connected to the final stanza or only to the two other

single lines of verse at the end of the other two stanzas? This last solution

would form an entirely plausible group of lines and it is probable that Verlaine

consciously exploited this ambiguity:

Table 4.16: La lune blanche luit dans les bois' (*La Bonne Chanson,* 1870),

P. Verlaine, last line of each stanza

Stanza	Last line of each stanza
1	O bien-aimée.
2	Rêvons, c'est l'heure,
3	C'est l'heure exquise.

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[59]   In his Apaisement' (1887), Chausson manages the dramatic energy of Verlaine's verse in a manner which aims to build intensity to the end of each stanza. Thus, while rests separate lines and set a calm recitation pace at the beginning of a stanza, *rejets* are observed more closely near the end, in response to the intensity of the poet's yearning.

While it is less certain that Fauré has planned tonalities to match precisely with these extracted lines of verse, it is worth mentioning that the first line ends on the F# major tonic chord (bb. 13–14); the second line (Rêvons, c'est l heure') passes through an ascending series of chords which touch upon the dominant minor (C# minor) and for two bars in the fleeting tonic of E major (bb. 31–32); the final line of the group (C'est l'heure exquise') returns to the F# tonic, hinting at the Mixolydian mode (E natural in b.44) and with a flattened sixth chord on D major (b. 45). However, it is significant that, while the planning of the chord progressions in this passage may be connected to some extent to the song's overall tonal design, the melodic contour of each of the final-line phrases points to their poetic relationship: each soaring line incorporates sustained notes on an upper pitch (E or F#), a traditional vocal gesture indicating heightened emotion. Sustained notes associated with the high tessitura also underscore the contrast with the preceding text in the stanzas, between the contemplation of nature and Verlaine's passionate longing for his absent fiancée.

Right from the start of La lune blanche', Fauré establishes the immobility of the scene through the piano introduction: a series of identical broken F# major chords in contrary motion evoke the suspended animation of contemplation. Several of Fauré's earlier songs also feature introductions in this style, made up either of repeated or arpeggiated chordal motifs (e.g. *Après un rêve, En sourdine*). The presence of these motifs often signals the dissolution of the stated metre along with its accentual patterns. Perhaps to a lesser extent than in Une Sainte', La lune blanche' downplays the rhythmic

and metrical contrast between the vocal line and the accompaniment. Whereas in Une Sainte' the voice provided a stable rhythmic element against the accompaniment's less regular metrical treatment, featuring poetic stresses placed predominantly on the downbeat, in La lune blanche' the structuring action of poetic accents (or of clear metrical markers in the piano part, such as the perfect cadence in bars 12–13) is shared more equally between voice and accompaniment, a further illustration of the scene's peacefulness.

In the first stanza, the only instance of a poetic stress on a weak beat is in the fourth line, Part une voix' (b. 7), with voix' (the goal of the line of verse) on the third dotted crotchet in the 9/8 bar. In this particular case, melodic contour contributes to the accumulation of dramatic tension: from F# major, the line Part une voix', qualified by Sous la ramée', alludes to the Lydian mode with a B#, then to a possible modulation to C# major, which would have been confirmed had ramée' ended on a C# instead of a B within an E major chord. Again, as demonstrated throughout this thesis, Fauré sustains motion by avoiding traditional chord progressions, instead creating a peaceful atmosphere by means of repeated accompaniment motifs. At the beginning of the stanza, the accompaniment introduces a brief recurring motif in bar 4 which transforms the right hand to 6/8 metre groupings until bar 8. This feature, scored against the voice in triple metre and set with uneven pauses between the phrases, contributes to maintaining rhythmic ambivalence, evoking the imprecise contours of the moonlit scene. Set against this, the constant roll of broken chords in the piano left hand paradoxically lends stillness to the setting.

At the end of the first stanza (bb. 9–11), Fauré makes explicit a further duple-triple metre contrast, this time setting triplets against pairs of quavers in 3/4 time, in a rare stated change of time signature. Consistent with Faurean allusion to modality, the piano right hand contains the Lydia motif' in this passage, a quotation from his 1870 song and its corresponding Lydian flavour (Orledge, 1979, pp. 82–83). The section ends with the first of the three isolated lines, O bien-aimée', which Fauré begins seemingly one beat early on the last beat of the sole 4/4 bar (b. 11), possibly to add the dramatic impact of a syncopation to the ensuing crescendo. Nectoux suggests that the advice given daily to Fauré by Emma Bardac during the composition of *La Bonne Chanson* probably contributed to the lyricism of several of the songs and of this line in particular, where the downward octave leap produces an automatic diminuendo (Nectoux, 2008, p. 249). It may also be taken to represent the expressive speech inflections of the poet's longing for his beloved. This type of downward octave leap is also favoured by Fauré in his late cycles (starting with *La Chanson d'Ève*, 1906–10), and is often used in a declamatory or descriptive manner in his late songs.

The treatment of the *rejet* in the second stanza (La silhouette / Du saule noir', bb. 20–22) illustrates how Fauré manages to stretch and compress time to suggest timelessness. In this stanza, one line of verse flows into the other naturally; however, the swaying nature of the tetrasyllabic metre highlighted by Chaussivert (1973, p. 44) is not only enhanced by the compound musical metre, but is also given an extended span of time by the lengthening of note values on La silhou**et**te / Du **sau**le noir'. In this way, time

seems to stand still for a few beats longer in the immobility of the reflected

willow tree deep within the pond. Exceptionally, Fauré allows himself a subtle

harmonic illustration of the reflections in the dark depths of the water by the

use of the tonic F# major in bar 15, followed immediately by F# minor in the

next bar where the text L'étang reflète' begins, in effect inverting modes. Near

the end of the stanza, in bar 23, the motif first heard in bar 4 of the piano part

returns, again contrasting against the 9/8 metre and increasing dramatic

intensity through the last line of verse on to the last stanza, where the moon

again inspires Verlaine, this time to contentment.

Several factors contribute to the tendre apaisement' described by the

enraptured Verlaine. To convey the absolute stillness of the scene, Verlaine

carefully selects words with round and muted sounds, predominantly the

nasalised [ã]: tendre apaisement', descendre du firmament'; then, the [i]

vowel in irise' contrastingly portrays the moon's iridescence.[60] This stanza,

like the first two, consists of an entire sentence but, unlike the others, is

constructed without any punctuation; hence, the text appears almost prose-

like, due in part to the incorporation of longer words which occupy most or all

of the tetrasyllabic lines. Overfilled with multi-syllabic words, lines of verse

cling to their poetic character by way of the stable rhyme scheme. This

ambivalence undoubtedly forms part of the appeasement of the text, as it

appears to subside gradually into prose – an apt metaphor for the changes to

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[60] Hahn's *L'heure exquise* (1892) makes effective use of tessitura to exploit muted and bright
sonorities: while the last lines of each stanza generally employ a higher vocal range and
longer note values, for the most part the text is set using a minimum of pitches situated in
a low vocal tessitura. In this way, Hahn maintains his Infiniment doux et calme' (Infinitely
soft and calm) marking, while prefiguring some of Fauré's post-1906 means of musical
prosody.

French poetic style at the end of the nineteenth century.

In the final stanza of La lune blanche', Fauré's musical rhythms appear to coalesce with Verlaine's own. Calm musical motion is introduced in two ways: metre changes to 3/4 time and the constantly moving groups of three quavers gradually subside into chords or occasional arpeggiated triplets (b. 32 to the end). The Lydia motif' returns briefly in bars 36–37 and the harmony oscillates gently between F# major and D major with a Lydian flavour, starting in bar 41. Meanwhile, poetic phrases proceed in a more continuous fashion than in the two preceding stanzas, yet with careful attention to the placement of stresses on the downbeat. In a last display of restrained vocalism supported by harmonic and rhythmic stillness, Verlaine's rapturous vision of hopeful bliss concludes the *mélodie*: C'est l'heure exquise'.

4.4.4: '*J'allais par des chemins perfides*' (La Bonne Chanson)*: Rhythm, harmony and ambiguity*

Analysis of *mélodies* thus far present Fauré as a composer constantly seeking to renew his musical language while building on the foundations of traditional harmony and form. Carlo Caballero highlights this dimension in Fauré's works:

> Fauré's distinctive position in the music of his time... come[s]
> from his attitude toward tradition and novelty, which he
> considered as complementary rather than oppositional values.
> This attitude, of course, may be described as either liberal or
> conservative, and Fauré, like his contemporary Mallarmé,
> realized the culmination of certain long-standing French

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traditions in his work even as he took astounding but carefully

calculated steps into unknown territory (Caballero, 2001,

p. 57).

J'allais par des chemins perfides' may be said to embody this

correspondence between tradition and innovation; indeed, Fauré's harmony in

this particular case may appear at first glance more arbitrary than calculated in

its changeability. In this song, harmonic rhythm along with the setting of

sonorities play a crucial role in the unfolding of the poet's state of mind. The

control of dramatic tension is played out through the gradual emergence of

stable tonality so that, from the harmonic instability of the first 22 bars, a

glimpse of A major and F# minor follows on Votre regard fut le matin' (bb.23–

25), the beginning of a new life for the poet. Up to that point, a succession of

chromatic harmonies supported the description of Verlaine's anxious disquiet.

Robin Tait notes: Harmonic rhythm, that is simply the rhythm of successive

harmonies, the rate at which harmony changes and the directions it takes,

plays a large part for Fauré in the creation and the release of tension' (Tait,

1989, p. 202). This trait has been observed repeatedly in the songs analysed

in this thesis; however, J'allais' represents one of the most harmonically

daring songs in Fauré's repertoire of *mélodies* thus far, riddled with inverted

and diminished chords in unexpected combinations. In bar 2, for instance, a

C# diminished seventh chord leads to Bb major, containing some of the notes

expected in what should have been the traditional harmonic goal, D major or

minor; in bar 4, the C# diminished chord this time leads to an augmented

chord on A.

Verlaine's chemins perfides' form part of the *chiaroscuro* imagery woven throughout the entire collection of poems and present in all nine *mélodies* set by Fauré. Nectoux highlights this quality present in the cycle: La symbolique de l'ombre et de la lumière [alternent] constamment dans les images poétiques et musicales, donnant un aspect à la fois nocturne et miroitant à cette oeuvre' (Nectoux, 2008, p. 255).[61] In this song, words like pâle', faible espoir d'aurore', regard...matin', sombre coeur' express the contrast of light and dark as reflections of the poet's inner turmoil. Again, harmony plays an essential role in this depiction, sustaining ambivalence with non-resolving chords, with chromaticisms (found throughout the song up to b. 47) and by the avoidance of the tonic (bb 25–26: V–VI6). More generally, no definite statement of the tonic F# minor in root position occurs prior to bar 47 as tonality shifts to F# major, at the moment of Verlaine's change of heart. In the first two stanzas of this octosyllabic *terza rima*, the melody appears as a mere extra voice woven within the harmonic fabric (Gervais, 1971, p. 19).

Fauré uses variations in tessitura, both in the voice and in the accompaniment, to emphasise the transformation in Verlaine's life portrayed in J'allais'. In the section preceding bar 25, vocal and pianistic tessituras remain fairly low, mirroring the poet's uncertain progress through life. At the same time, darker or less sonorous vowel sounds, such as [ ], [u], [ ], [ ] and [ ], from the first stanza and the first line of the second stanza, are scored in a medium vocal range and on pitches predominantly below F#5 in the piano

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[61] The symbolism of light and shade alternates constantly in the poetic and musical imagery, lending both a nocturnal and shimmering appearance to this work.

part. The one exception prior to bar 25 in the accompaniment consists of one bar of octaves above the staff, illustrating Vos chères mains furent mes guides' (b. 17), a glimmer of hope in Verlaine's troubled existence.

The mood lifts slightly in the second stanza with the poetic analogy of Mathilde's glance and the dawn of the poet's new life. Harmony hints at A major, the relative major tonality (bars 23 and 26), and ascending scalar passages in the piano right hand further announce the hope that is to come. Ambivalence is still present, however, as the voice proclaims Votre regard fut le matin' with its highest pitch so far (F#), but with a melodic contour pointing at the tonic of F# minor: after nearly 30 bars, tonality is still withheld, appearing only fleetingly.

To underline further the Symbolist unease of these verses, Fauré shifts metrical groupings between duple and triple rhythms. For instance, the passage Si pâle...espoir d'aurore' (bb. 17–21) is grouped entirely in duple rhythmic patterns, changing immediately afterwards back to the stated triple metre at Votre regard fut le matin', highlighting a change of mood. Note values in the triple metre phrase also ensure that significant prosodic stresses are located on the downbeats. This type of duple-triple contrast also provides a means of controlling declamatory pace: in J'allais', the duple metre note groups increase declamation pace, as if to call attention to the restlessness of the poet in search of enlightenment – Luisait un faible espoir d'aurore'.

Table 4.17: J'allais par des chemins perfides' (*La Bonne Chanson,* 1870),

P. Verlaine, third stanza, césures and sonorities

Third stanza	Césures and sonorities	
Nul bruit, sinon // son pas sonore	4+4	[i] [s] [ ] [ ] [n]
N'encourageait // le voyageur.	4+4	[n] [a] [ ] [v]
Votre voix me dit: // Marche encore!'	5+3	[v] [ ] [a] [m]

Sonority, poetic pauses and rhythmic combinations increase dramatic intensity

in the third stanza. Again, Fauré closely follows Verlaine's rhythms

and sound colours. As seen in many similar cases, pitch range remains fairly

restricted where identical sonorities, defined by alliteration, assonance or word

repetition, form part of the verse soundscape. Aside from a brief flash of

confidence at Votre voix me dit' (bb. 33–34), lifting the voice to an upper F#,

most of the vocal writing remains between G and C# below this higher pitch;

this enables the listener to fully appreciate Verlaine's mastery over word

rhythms while evoking Mathilde's comforting tones.

Fauré includes the *césures* in his rhythmic scheme, at the same time

giving impetus and expression to each line of verse. The first line of the third

stanza, beginning with Nul bruit' includes a slight pause after sinon',

acknowledging the *césure* and creating rhythmic tension with the preceding

locution Nul bruit' as well as with the expected but delayed remainder of the

phrase ending at sonore'. The pause also carries more expressive weight as

it mimics the halting pace of the dissatisfied traveller, hearing only his own

echoing steps, alluded to in the unexpected lower octave notes in the piano left hand (bb 28–33). In the second line of verse, the *césure* after ' N'encourageait' almost seems to contradict the text, extending the hesitation found in the first line. As in all other stanzas, the third line is addressed to Mathilde, holding for Verlaine the prospect of hope.[62] In the third stanza, hope lives in the imaginary sound of her encouraging voice resounding high and clear to spur the poet on, scored again by Fauré with a hint of tonality (D major, bb 34–35).

Verlaine's subtle use of assonance through careful lexical choices, at times combined with alliterative sonorities, paints the mood of the stanza line by line: 'bruit' and 'sinon' are brought out by virtue of the bright [i] vowel sound and represent the exterior world; thereafter, [ ], [ ] and [ ] (N'encourageait le voyageur') match the more subdued inner world of the solitary traveller through life. Furthermore, alliteration supplies energy to the lines of verse: each occurrence drives the line forward to some extent as every consonant is attracted to its next repetition. Verlaine extends these recurrences to other lines of verse and, at times, throughout the entire poem as in 'Une Sainte en son auréole' where [r] pervades virtually every line. In 'J'allais', the vowel [ ] as well as consonants [v] and [m] recur throughout. As in other *mélodies* in this cycle, Fauré manages these consonantal rhythms to control the recitation pace, and Verlaine's sonorous verse is set so that performers may bring out all its rich intonations.

This is confirmed in recordings of this song, where the greatest

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[62] Final lines of the stanzas in 'J'allais par des chemins perfides': first stanza: 'Vos chères mains furent mes guides.'; second stanza: 'Votre regard fut le matin.'; Third stanza: 'Votre voix me dit: «Marche encore!»'; Fourth stanza: 'Nous a réunis dans la joie.'

differences lie in the manner of declaiming the text. Performers may be divided roughly into two groups: those who conceive of the poem as a whole, and who treat couplets or lines of verse as interpretative units, like Bernard Kruysen (2002a, electronic download) and Sarah Walker (1980a, electronic download); and those who colour syntactic groups or individual words, like Christopher Maltman (2005a, CD) and Gérard Souzay (2006b, CD). Kruysen's performance focuses on larger sections, resulting in controlled and subdued changes of atmosphere, thus clearly defining the poet's moods. This is an introspective interpretation of the text, much like a time of reflection after an event. The version for string ensemble and piano sung by Walker provides another perspective on the accompaniment: Fauré's own arrangement enhances harmonic interplay between the various voices and adds colour to each line. Walker sings the poem in a straightforward manner, yet with attention to Fauré's indications, and her unflagging pace reflects the poet's steady steps on the metaphoric way to his beloved.

Maltman and Souzay adopt a nuanced approach at the phrase level while retaining Fauré's typical forward motion. Both performers bring out Verlaine's two states of mind by means of vocal colour and dynamics: his feeling of uncertainty before meeting Mathilde and his joy at their love. Maltman and Souzay also approach the song with a rich vocal tone which highlights the poet's strong emotional shifts.

Two other singers present a particular declamatory style. In their interpretation of this song, Charles Panzéra (2002a, CD) and Hugues Cuenod (2004b, CD) use poetic and musical rhythms as guides to speech rhythms at

the local level. Thus, whilst note values are recognisable, they are treated with a certain degree of freedom as a result of expressive emphasis on particular words or consonants. Both singers, in their efforts to articulate text truthfully and expressively, often lengthen notes, transforming them into dotted values. The phrase Votre regard fut le matin' (bb. 23–25), for instance, acquires two dotted rhythms when sung by Panzéra, and Cuenod also adopts a theatrical declamation in his interpretation, a performing style perhaps more prevalent before the middle of the twentieth century.

The final stanza of J'allais' is marked by repeated sounds. Mon coeur craintif, mon sombre coeur / Pleurait, seul...' contain the more sombre vowels ([ ] and [œ]) punctuated by the percussive [k] and with the prolongation of [œ] to the second line; all of these darkened vowel colours sustain the poet's feeling of despondency. A mere semi-colon separates the poet's past from his imminent marriage to Mathilde in this poem; Fauré. however, prepares the joyful ending with a decisive tonal statement in F# major, made the more positive by the change in tempo marked *un poco più mosso* and a constantly repeating motif of ascending quaver scalar passages (bb. 46–60), accelerated to triplets in bars 61–64. In addition to a pervading Lydian flavour (another indication of the poet's happy state of mind, as seen in Une Sainte' and La lune blanche'), the passage is scored in a higher tessitura and features longer, more sustained note values for the voice, in contrast with the accompaniment: eleven bars of music for two lines of verse where the poet finally gives in to the joy of his being re-united with his beloved.[63]

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[63] One other composer has brought out Verlaine's changeability in his setting of this poem. In *La Bonne Chanson* (1889*),* Charles Bordes (1863–1909) illustrates the poet's uncertain way through life in two ways: tempo is either halted or held back as Verlaine pauses to

The text and its slower phonation (délicieux', réunis', joie') along with the lengthier vowel sounds (am**our**', v**ain**qu**eu**r', j**oi**e') combine to release tension, a change of mood brought out by Fauré's long note values. The last isolated line of the *terza rima* resolves the poet's anxious mood, and harmony follows suit in a clear statement of F# major (bar 57 to the end). The tortuous lines of the beginning of the song disappear; in their place, ascending scales lead directly to tonality and to the resolution of anxiety for the poet. Here, as in many other songs analysed in this thesis, Fauré the traditionalist innovator, having ventured into distant harmonies and having repeatedly neutralised metrical stresses, returns to tonality and to the stated 3/4 metre to achieve resolution and repose. This *mélodie* embodies in its rhythms and metrical changes as well as in its harmonic development, first, Verlaine's ambivalent state of mind, and then, his transforming journey from doubt to confident love.

4.4.5: En sourdine: *Words, rhythm and pacing*

As in the other poems from *Fêtes galantes* set by Fauré, *En sourdine* depicts more than a fanciful representation of lovers from the past, meeting secretly or revelling in some secluded grove. Pervading the entire poem is the Symbolist ennui, an indefinable feeling of underlying melancholy. The shallow serenaders of Mandoline' or the moody lover of Clair de lune' seem to have lost their illusions: the pretence of love goes on, out of habit or perhaps out of despair. The protagonists of *En sourdine* take part in this grand tableau of the Fêtes galantes', but they have retired in isolation, possibly seeking a more

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recall Mathilde's encouragement; modulations signal the poet's mood changes much as a lost traveller tries to find his way, in turn hopeful and despondent.

enduring love, but despair awaits them at nightfall.

Verlaine crafts his verse to expand time in several ways. A slow-paced reading of this text aids comprehension and is in accord with the first word, 'Calmes', which sets the apparent mood of a great part of the poem. In terms of form, word and phrase order affect comprehension and declamation pace, such as in the first stanza, illustrated in Table 4.18: the left-hand column contains Verlaine's original word order while the right-hand column re-orders the sentence as it would appear in prose.

Table 4.18: En sourdine' (*Fêtes galantes,* 1869), P. Verlaine, first stanza, comparison of poetic and prose word orders

First stanza: poetic word order	First stanza: prose word order
Calmes dans le demi-jour	Pénétrons bien notre amour
Que les branches hautes font,	De ce silence profond
Pénétrons bien notre amour	Que les hautes branches calmes
De ce silence profond	Font dans le demi-jour

In this excerpt, Verlaine's lines of verse, with inverted locutions separated by commas and line boundaries, induce a slow reading pace, allowing pauses and breaths to draw out meaning and sonorities.

Example 4.18 illustrates the use of punctuation to suspend or slow down the flow of time. Several lines in the poem are internally divided by commas, even without the presence of a *césure*; enumerations also broaden the pace of declamation.

Example 4.18: En sourdine' *(Fêtes galantes*, 1869), P. Verlaine,second

stanza (excerpt)

> Mêlons[64] nos âmes, nos coeurs
>
> Et nos sens extasiés

In the following lines, rhythm is disrupted by commas and by the

metrical alteration of the *rejets* in a stanza made up of an entire sentence:

Table 4.19: En sourdine' (*Fêtes galantes,* 1869), P. Verlaine, fourth stanza,

rhythmic processes

Fourth stanza	Rhythmic processes
Laissons-nous persuader	rejet
Au souffle berceur et doux	rejet
Qui vient, à tes pieds, rider	rejet
Les ondes des gazons roux.	

Words and their sounds play an important part in the pacing of *En*

sourdine. In several cases, adjoining consonants, requiring extra time for

phonation, create a slow-paced mood: **calmes', br**anches', **cr**oise',

pe**rs**uader'. Verlaine also includes diaereses in his metrical count, for

example extas**iés**' and pers**ua**der', as well as polysyllabic words throughout,

imposing the need for careful articulation: pénétrons', extasiés', arbousiers',

solennel', désespoir'.

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[64] Verlaine's original text reads as Fondons'; Fauré presumably objected to the two adjacent
nasal vowel sounds [ ], a less attractive vocal colour.

Contrasting vowel and consonantal sounds in close proximity also alter the pace, as does the rich imagery evoked by the many nouns and adjectives, creating places where a mid-line word stress may modify rhythmic flow without interrupting progress to the end of the line: Ferme tes **yeux** à de**mi**', Au souffle ber**ceur** et **doux**'. Overall, vowel sonorities remain nasalised and muted: [ã], [ ], [ ], [o], [u]; again, this agrees with the apparent calm of the text and the seclusion of the lovers.

Fauré's recitation pace in this poem includes end-of-line pauses, scarcely shortened where a *rejet* occurs. Clearly, atmosphere takes precedence over poetic rhythm in this setting. The fourth stanza is the most remarkable in this respect, as each line flows slowly into the next with a *rejet.* The shortest note value at the end of a line in this stanza also features a strong *rejet*, rider / Les ondes', consisting of a dotted crotchet. While the singer may be in a position to manage some breathing spaces in order to combine the locutions, Fauré includes a quaver rest at the end of the first line after persuader', as if to emphasise the need for an unhurried declamation.

Even more so than in La lune blanche' considered in section 4.4.3, *En sourdine* features an unhurried line-by-line recitation pace. To further emphasise the illusion of suspended time, word accents within lines are given increased importance with longer note values or with the interpolation of rests, as in the very first line of verse, where Calmes' receives a total of five-and-a-half beats, followed by a quaver rest. Another example of expressive declamation is found in the first two lines of the second stanza (longer syllabic durations in **bold**): Mê**lons** nos **â**mes, nos **coeurs** / Et nos sens ex**ta**si**és**'

(bb. 9–12). In a similar way and in a further depiction of the text, Vagues langueurs des pins et des arbousiers' stretches over four bars (bb. 13–16). The sustained vocal line, giving the appearance of stillness, contrasts with the ongoing and somewhat restless movement of the piano part.

Several songs are scored with the Faurean arpeggiated piano accompaniment; its role in *En sourdine* is to control both dramatic energy and motion. Here, Fauré scores semiquaver broken chords predominantly in contrary motion between both hands, giving an enhanced impression of immobility to the song, a feeling of returning to where one had begun. At the same time, this ongoing succession of semiquavers, even while accompanying a decorative line in the right hand (for instance, in bars 24–32), maintains consistency of movement, as found in several other Fauré songs (as in *Les berceaux, Notre amour* and *Fleur jetée*). As is often the case, the constantly moving notes in the accompaniment introduce new notes in the harmony, thus producing transient progressions, suspensions, anticipations and series of seventh chords, as in bars 29–32, all contributing to maintain forward motion on the pulse by delaying the final tonal resolution.

The veiled melancholy permeating this song appears more and more clearly as the poem progresses: Et de ton coeur endormi / Chasse à jamais tout dessein'; Laissons-nous persuader'; Et quand, solennel, le soir'; Voix de notre désespoir'. Fauré alludes to the ending and to its note of despair in bars 24–26 (Laissons-nous persuader') in the first high-register pianistic motif featuring a triplet, related to a similar motif announcing the song of the nightingale in bar 39. It is significant that, in this Symbolist song of sorrow (and

contrary to Clair de lune' or La lune blanche'), the coming of night brings no consolation or hope of love, only despair.[65]

As seen earlier, this seemingly languorous text conceals a well-crafted and unified poetic structure. A small number of words are repeated, consisting mainly of possessive and indefinite articles: nos, des, tes, ton', as well as the substantive coeur'. The recurrence of nasal and rounder, less resonant vowel sounds underscores the half-lit scene.

Verlaine also makes use of internal rhymes, a further uniting feature, as found in Example 4.19. More internal rhymes are found in the fourth stanza: Qui vient, à tes pi**eds**, ri**der**'; and in the fifth: Des chênes noirs tomber**a** / V**oix**...'For these last internal rhymes in particular, pitches fall within small musical intervals to highlight the play of sonorities (bb. 28–30 and 34–36).

Example 4.19: En sourdine' *(Fêtes galantes*, 1869), P. Verlaine*, first and second stanzas, internal rhymes

Que les branches hautes f**ont**,

Pénétr**ons** bien notre amour

De ce silence prof**ond**.

Mêl**ons** nos âmes...

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[65] Poldowski's (1880–1932) setting of *En sourdine* (1911) may be said to convey, by means of its highly expressive vocal lines (e.g. Fondons nos âmes') and, conversely, by the use of reciting notes as well as repeated piano arpeggiated patterns (e.g. Et de ton coeur endormi'), the stillness and despair of Verlaine's lovers. There is a mannered *fin-de-siècle* decadence about [her] songs', writes Johnson, [an] atmosphere of wilting exquisiteness' (Johnson, 2000, p. 348). Certainly, *En sourdine*, like *L'heure exquise* (1913), portrays widely contrasting moods through the use of tessitura and dynamic contrasts.

Verlaine seems to have used at least one consonant to illustrate the 'souffle berceur et doux', the sibilant [s] which recurs abundantly throughout the poem. Less frequent but contrastingly percussive is [k], which initiates the very first word 'Calmes'. In his habitual fashion during the Verlaine period, Fauré scores alliterations within restricted pitch intervals, assisting the singer in highlighting these sounds rhythmically, as was undoubtedly Verlaine's aim.

With long note values and frequent pauses, *En sourdine* conveys an impression of great metrical freedom. In fact, several of the poetic stresses (namely, important words or ends-of-lines) fall on the downbeat. Some exceptions include 'Ferme tes yeux à demi' and 'Les ondes des gazons roux' (bb.17–18 and 31–32); the illusion of total horizontal motion is in large part due to the shifting, inverted and non-resolving harmonies, assisted by the arpeggiated accompaniment pattern sounding as a *moto perpetuo.* Caballero comments on delayed harmonic resolutions: 'Fauré's capacity to suspend resolution for increasingly long spans of time troubled his contemporary listeners more than anything else, despite the fact that he accomplished most of his evasions and extensions through traditional means. (Caballero, 2001, p. 64)' These delayed resolutions, analogous to the lovers' isolation and, perhaps, their longing for permanence (resolution), end at the song of the nightingale. Additionally, retarding a clear return to the tonic sustains, controls and alters motion in many of Fauré's songs, as this thesis demonstrates. In *En sourdine*, it achieves long-range control, supporting intensity and allowing the text to unwind without haste to prolong the moment.

4.5: Chapter Conclusion

There is little doubt that the poetry of Paul Verlaine produced deep transformations in Fauré's compositional praxis. Much like a prism, Fauré was able to capture and bring out the various strands of the poet's art and to reflect this art into *mélodies* which urged him on to further innovations. Fauré's affinities with Verlaine are many: a subtle and allusive artistic nature, a rhythmic sense often freed from conventions and an innovative technique linked to the past. These characteristics reveal Verlaine and Fauré as transitional figures, making their mark at a time of great stylistic transformations in French literature and music.

Fauré's songs during the Verlaine period display a number of key features, as demonstrated in this chapter. Firstly, the vocal line becomes less overtly lyrical yet more subtly expressive by its close relationship with the harmony and with vocal declamatory contours. The melody often features more angular lines, sudden intervallic leaps or, conversely, pitch repetitions to bring out prosodic effects like alliteration and assonance, all indicative of Fauré's increased rhythmic control of motion. Secondly, the accompaniment and, by the same token, harmony, increase in complexity. This includes the use of a great variety of progressions and harmonic devices, with motifs either in counterpoint with the vocal line or, more frequently, completely independent from it. Additionally, the voice-piano partnership evolves into a collaboration of equals, where each partner is essential to the song's intelligibility. Rhythm, always a significant Faurean feature, has become a vital component: it unites

or separates sections in the poetry and voices in the musical lines, it highlights text and creates mood and paces recitation. Inspired by Verlaine's texts, Fauré achieves greater control over his *organisation du mouvement*, moulding voice and piano parts in step with Verlaine's own reciting voice. In so doing, Fauré shows the musical potential of poetic prosody, as evidenced by song analysis in this thesis.

Fauré wrote virtually nothing else but songs during the seven-year Verlaine period; this is surely proof that the *mélodie* enjoyed a privileged position in Fauré's compositional output. Allowing his creative nature to lead him, he aimed to translate Verlaine's *chiaroscuro* verse into song, using ambiguity and subtlety in all aspects of his *mélodies*. Like Verlaine's verse, nothing weighs down or halts this music venturing beyond traditional rhythmic, metrical and harmonic boundaries. When, finally, Fauré weaves into song the colourful prismatic strands of Verlaine's words, the text appears again, revealed in a new light, yet ever nuanced and subtle.

Chapter 5: Fauré's songs on Symbolist Poetry (1894–1921)

Verlaine's experimentations with sonority and rhythm paved the way for a new generation of poets, intent on renewal and change. Inspired by foreign travel and contact with exoticism and Eastern mystical writings, French poetry ventured beyond its traditional boundaries, drawn by a fascination for the mysterious and at times disturbing side of human experience. By making use of the *vers libre*, poets invited the reader on a journey beyond the written word to experience the musicality of the text itself in sound and rhythm. In turn, composers sought ways of translating both the free form and hidden meanings of this allusive style, no longer governed by Classical versification rules. There is no doubt that his work with Verlaine's highly personal poetry led Fauré through the necessary transition from Parnassian artistic perfection to the ambiguity and malaise of Symbolism (Martino, 1967, p. 98).

In a letter to fellow poet Pierre Louÿs (1870–1925) dated 22 June 1890, Paul Valéry ironically describes Verlaine's transitional style from the self-conscious Parnassian perfectionist to the Symbolist and his allusive world: Je suis esthète et symboliste mais à mon heure, mais je veux quand il me plaira de le faire, *verlainiser*, oublier la rime, le rythme, la grammaire, vagir à ma guise et laisser crier mes sens' (Cited in Gibson, 1961, p. 245).[1] In other words, Verlaine consciously overlooked the rules of Classical versification to suit his inspiration: Prends l'éloquence et tors-lui son cou!', exclaims Verlaine

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[1]   I am an aesthete and a Symbolist when it suits me, but when it pleases me to do so, I wish to *verlainiser* [versify like Verlaine], to forget rhyme, rhythm and grammar, to whimper as I see fit and give full rein to my senses.

in *Art poétique* (Mourier, 1999, p. 129).[2] Valéry clearly considers Verlaine's outbursts of emotion as self-indulgent and impulsive bleating, failing to discern (or choosing to overlook) the profound revolution produced by Verlaine's departures from Classical rules. However, simply breaking away from tradition does not make of Verlaine a pivotal figure of late nineteenth-century French poetry. What differentiates his work from the rest is the rhythmic and sonorous nature of his verse as it suggests and alludes to sentiments and atmospheres or to indistinct figures in the half-light.[3]

Verlaine's habitual use of odd-numbered lines of verse along with alliteration and word repetition forge a new way of versifying. In Example 5.1, allusion extends to lexical choices: je devine', un murmure', le contour subtil', amour pâle', une espèce d'oeil', un jour trouble'. Verlaine's world also clearly leads to Symbolist correspondences, with sometimes incongruous juxtapositions of the senses: un murmure / Le contour', lueurs musiciennes', âme...coeur...espèce d'oeil', une espèce d'oeil double /Où tremblote.../L'ariette'. This is precisely where the Parnassians dared not tread, a world of vague meanings and of imprecise forms. In his analysis of Ariettes oubliées' *(Romances sans paroles*, 1874), Mourier highlights the modernity as well as the technical significance of Verlaine's enneasyllabic lines, in opposition to the reassuring' ten-syllable line, anticipated by both eye and ear in traditional verse (Mourier, 1999, p. 198).

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[2] Seize eloquence and wring its neck!
[3] This is particularly true of Verlaine's works written after 1870, when he abandoned Parnassianism: e.g. *Romances sans paroles* (1874)*, Les Poètes maudits* (1884) or *Jadis et naguère* (1884).

Example 5.1: Ariettes oubliées II' (*Romances sans paroles,* 1874),

P. Verlaine, first and second stanzas

> Je devine, à travers un murmure
>
> Le contour subtil des voix anciennes
>
> Et dans les lueurs musiciennes,
>
> Amour pâle, une aurore future!
>
> Et mon âme et mon coeur en délires
>
> Ne sont plus qu'une espèce d'oeil double
>
> Où tremblote à travers un jour trouble
>
> L'ariette, hélas! de toutes lyres!.[4]

Fauré's *mélodies* on Symbolist poetry make up approximately a third of his total song output, comprising over thirty songs.[5] Following on the innovative settings from Verlaine's *La Bonne Chanson* considered in the previous chapter*,* as well as the large-scale outdoor production of *Prométhée* (1900)[6] and his only opera, *Pénélope* (1907–12), Fauré carried on with larger themes within the song cycle form in *La Chanson d'Ève* (1906–10), and *L'horizon chimérique* (1921), while *Le jardin clos* (1914) and *Mirages* (1919)

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[4] Deep within a murmur I discern / The subtle shapes of ancient voices / And in the musical glow / Pale love, a future dawn! / And my delirious soul and heart / Are no more than a kind of double eye / Where, through a blurry day, quivers / The arietta, alas! sounding from all lyres!

[5] This number does not include Fauré's *mélodies* on poetry by Parnassians Leconte de Lisle and Armand Silvestre to which he returned briefly at the turn of the twentieth century, nor his only incursion into the English language with *Melisande's Song*, translated for Maeterlinck's *Pelléas et Mélisande* and performed in London in 1898.

[6] *Prométhée* was a *tragédie lyrique* with spoken and musical sections on a libretto by Jean Lorrain and André-Ferdinand Hérold, and written especially for the arena at Béziers. It featured, among other things, two wind bands and 15 harps. The work was part of the turn of the century fascination for themes from Antiquity and followed on the 1898 inaugural performance of *Déjanire* by Camille Saint-Saëns at the same venue.

depict evocative atmospheres in more intimate and often nocturnal settings. The fact that no separate songs were composed after *La Chanson d'Ève*[7] confirms Fauré's predilection for texts from the same source with a common narrative base at this point in his career.

This chapter focuses on Fauré's Symbolist *mélodies* and begins with a brief survey of the main features of this poetic movement in France from the middle of the nineteenth to the turn of the twentieth century. Extracts from the works of leading French Symbolist poets help to clarify the origins and evolution of the style. These examples are examined from the angle of French versification, such as the play of sonorities and the rhythmic elements making up a line of verse, elements which may include *coupes* and *césures, rejets* and *enjambements,* prosodic and accentuation features. The main section of the chapter addresses the rendering of these poetic characteristics into Fauré's *mélodies.* These poetic features are studied in detail within three specific areas: rhythm, melody and harmony, focusing more specifically on the first two. As with earlier songs, rhythm retains its structuring character in these late *mélodies.* However, analysis reveals that melody and harmony evolve throughout this period, acquiring a new sobriety to which songs such as *Le parfum impérissable* (1897) merely allude. As seen in Section 5.4.2, the declamation and intelligibility of Symbolist poetry dictate Fauré's compositional techniques during this period, determining melodic contour, harmony and accompaniment and, more than ever, rhythmic continuity on the pulse.

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[7]   The only exception is C'est la paix' (1919) on a poem by Georgette Debladis, the result of a newspaper competition for lyrics celebrating the end of the Great War.

5.1: Origins of French Symbolism

At the time when Fauré was selecting poems for his late song cycles, the French Symbolist movement had become well established in the arts, particularly in literature and the visual arts. Poets such as Baudelaire and Verlaine were at the forefront of this force for change in literature. In fact, the roots of Symbolism may be detected as far back as the emotional outpourings of Romantic authors in their growing attraction for mystery, their fascination for the dream world and for strangeness and the macabre.

One of the forerunners of Symbolism was English poet, artist and printer William Blake (1757–1827), whose preoccupation with philosophical and spiritual themes coloured his works, which include depictions of the visions he experienced from a young age. Not yet the result of automatism or aleatory experiences (as in Surrealism), Blake's poems look towards the shadowy world of Symbolism: visions and dreams figure prominently in his poems, as in this excerpt from *The Land of Dreams:*

Example 5.2: *The Land of Dreams* (n.d.), W. Blake, last stanza

Father, O father! what do we here

In this land of unbelief and fear?

The Land of Dreams is better far

Above the light of the morning star.'

Blake states clearly the Symbolist preference for the indistinct, where meaning

is alluded to and dreaming makes everything possible. Some years later, the writings of Edgar Allan Poe (1809–49), featuring a strong preference for dreams and mystery, exerted a significant influence on Baudelaire. French poets seeking, like Poe, new experiences of the mind, cast a fearless gaze into the dark recesses of the soul, prey to a vague undercurrent of disquiet: Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there, wondering, fearing, doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before' (Poe, 1884, p. 19). In a posthumous essay, *The Poetic Principle,* published in 1850, Poe declared: I would define, in brief, the Poetry of words as *The Rhythmical Creation of Beauty* [author's emphasis]' (Poe, 2008, p. 91). This could well have been one of Verlaine's or indeed Baudelaire's articles of poetic faith.

Baudelaire's fascination for Poe's writings came early in his career: fragments of texts by the American writer found in a newspaper in 1846 produced in Baudelaire a singular agitation' – une commotion singulière' (Crépet, 1906, p. 96). It is probable that his seventeen-year translation project of Poe's works into French contributed to Baudelaire's thinking on the meaning and role of poetry, as he explains in the introduction to his seminal work *Les fleurs du mal* (1857, 1861). Like Poe, his aesthetic concerns centred on the dark side of human existence, on disquiet, on the contrast and, indeed, on the relationship between beauty and evil. In a draft epilogue to *Les fleurs du mal*, Baudelaire further clarifies his desire to extract beauty from evil, to become, in effect, a poet-alchemist: Tu m'as donné ta boue et j'en ai fait de l'or' (Baudelaire, 1917, pp. 310, 320).[8]

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[8] You gave me your dirt, I transformed it into gold.

Martino defines the singular quality of Baudelaire's verse: La puissance de la poésie de Baudelaire est, au vrai sens du mot, une force de suggestions' (Martino, 1967, p. 86),[9] The same author notes Baudelaire's affinity with Poe:

> Baudelaire allait jusqu'à rêver quelquefois, avec Poe, de
>
> pièces où ce serait l'obsession d'une musique intérieure
>
> répétant un ou deux sons, qui aurait créé les mots
>
> harmoniques, puis les idées, puis le thème du poème, faisant
>
> naître, au sens exact du mot, l'idée de la «forme»...[Les mots
>
> et les images] créent...«une magie suggestive contenant à la
>
> fois l'objet et le sujet, le monde extérieur à l'artiste et l'artiste
>
> lui-même» (Martino, 1967, pp. 90–91).[10]

Thus, Baudelaire prepares the way for the rhythmic sonorities of Verlaine's verse and for Symbolism's buried meanings, alluded to by means of form, nuance and sounds within a new rhythmic freedom. In contrast to Classical verse, the art of the Symbolists appears to produce form as it gradually unfolds. It is a creative process by which not only the object but also the very subject, that is, the poet's voice, are given life and form through the process itself. In his description, Martino makes reference to two major stylistic characteristics of Symbolism: the use of correspondences to express mystery beyond reality and the notion of verse and musicality.

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[9] The strength of Baudelaire's poetry resides, in the true sense of the word, in the power of suggestion.

[10] From time to time, Baudelaire even dreamt, like Poe, of works where an obsessive inner music, repeating one or two sounds, would create harmonic words, then the ideas, then the theme of the poem, eliciting, in the precise sense of the word, the idea of "form"... [The words and images] create... "a suggestive magic including at once the object and the subject, the world around the artist and the artist himself".

Symbolism also stands in direct contrast to a new intellectual detachment which had found its way into literary works. In the middle of the nineteenth century, the increased importance of science in society gave rise to the naturalist movement in literature, characterised by the use of objective criteria to depict the world and its immediate reality: L'écriture ne doit pas être un écran, un obstacle, mais atteindre à une telle transparence que les images la traversent' (Larousse, n.d., online).[11] The very immediacy of the style limited it mainly to prose, with authors such as Émile Zola (1840–1902) and Alphonse Daudet (1840–97) among its most famous advocates. This, along with the social and political individualism of Romanticism and the formal perfection of the Parnassian movement, provoked a strong opposing reaction among a number of authors and poets, including Gautier, Rimbaud and Baudelaire. While subscribing to some extent to the Parnassians' creed of Art for art's sake', contrary to the proponents of naturalism, many authors started exploring other dimensions beyond the materiality of reality.

To enter fearlessly into the world of dream to seek correspondences between the senses soon constituted a fundamental tenet of Symbolist ideology. In the words of poet and essayist Gérard de Nerval (1808–55), dreaming represented l'épanchement du songe dans la vie réelle', his object being to diriger le rêve au lieu de le subir' (Rousselot, 1976, p. 76).[12]

5.1.1: Main characteristics of Symbolism

In his 1901 analysis of French contemporary literary movements, author

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[11] Writing should not become a shield or an obstacle, but rather attain such clarity that images seem to pass through it.

[12] ...the outpouring of dreaming into real life; ...to guide rather than be subjected to dreams...

Georges Pellissier (1852–1918) contrasted the Parnassian affinity for technical perfection with the quest for experience and depth of expression in Symbolism:

> Chez les parnassiens, la poésie tenait surtout des arts plastiques; avec le symbolisme, elle devient musicale. Entre tous les arts, la musique exprime le mieux ce qu'il y a de plus vague et en même temps de plus profond dans l'âme humaine. Or, c'est là justement le domaine particulier de la poésie symboliste. Aussi emprunte-t-elle à la musique ses moyens et ses effets. Quand on veut «suggérer» ou «évoquer», on emploie les mots non seulement comme des signes logiques, mais aussi comme des sons et presque comme des notes (Pellissier, 1901, pp. 176–77).[13]

Aussi emprunte-t-elle à la musique ses moyens et ses effets': thus can musicality in Symbolism be understood as it borrows its means and effects from music. For the Symbolist poet, this may be rendered, for instance, as the creative use of rhythm within and beyond a line of verse, in the play of vocalic sonorities or in the rhythmic occurrence or re-occurrence of sounds in the indirect evocation of a time, a place or an impression. Most of all, Symbolism is concerned as much with the acoustic impact as with the harmony and the alluded meaning of words; meaning results from the poetic experience rather

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[13] With the Parnassians, poetry was, for the most part, related to the visual arts; within Symbolism, poetry became a musical object. Amongst the arts, music is best suited to conveying what is least definable and yet most profound in the human soul. This is precisely the aim of Symbolist poetry; consequently, it adopts the means and effects of music. To evoke or suggest, one uses words not only as logical signs but also as sounds and perhaps even as notes.

than from intellectual understanding.

The manner in which signs and symbols are incorporated into the various literary genres constitutes one of the main innovations of Symbolism. These textual elements act upon the thematic contents of poetry and prose and contribute to the marked technical changes initiated at the end of the nineteenth century in French literature. These changes stemmed not only from an overwhelming desire for poetic reform at the time, but also from a significant shift in the focus of poetry itself: in order to express nuance, French verse moves away from the strict observance of the Classical rules of versification to a supple line, constantly adapting its rhythms, and influenced by Verlaine's plus vague et plus soluble dans l'air' (Mourier, 1999, p. 128).[14] In other words, poetry plunges into the uncertain and unsettling worlds beneath the surface of reality.

In a reaction to formalism and naturalism, poetry turns to the less defined yet potentially richer notions of sonority and musicality. Paul Valéry looked back in 1920 to one of the fundamental aims of Symbolism: Ce qui fut baptisé: *Le Symbolisme*, se résume très simplement dans l'intention commune à plusieurs familles de poètes (d'ailleurs ennemies entre elles) de «reprendre à la Musique leur bien»' (Fabre, 1920, pp. xii–xiii).[15] Valéry's pragmatic outlook nonetheless reminds us of the close ties binding poetry to music in Antiquity, as considered in section 2.1 of Chapter 2. The Symbolists' re-appropriation of musical means into poetry reveals the potential of French

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[14] More vague and soluble in the air.

[15] That which was named *Symbolism* may be summed up quite simply in the common aim of several poetic groups (actually hostile to each other) to seize back from Music what they considered to be their own'.

verse in several ways. As poets no longer felt themselves bound by traditional rules, they transformed the line of verse into a vehicle for the free evocation of ideas or sensations: *fin-de-siècle* ennui or spleen, themes of night, of the sacred and the mythical, correspondences between symbols and senses, as well as the blurring of distinctions between reality and the mysterious layers of elusive meaning. For example, Arthur Rimbaud, who exerted a significant influence on his contemporaries and on the Surrealist movement at the beginning of the twentieth century, crafted intricate and often enigmatic verse, where sounds mingled with images and ideas to unsettle readers. This excerpt from *Voyelles*, one of his best-known poems, shows the intricacy of Rimbaud's rhythm and imagery:

Example 5.3: *Voyelles* (1871?), A. Rimbaud, second stanza (excerpt)

> Golfes d'ombre; E, candeurs des vapeurs et des tentes,
>
> Lances des glaciers fiers, rois blancs, frissons d'ombrelles;[16]

Details from this complex interweaving of sensations include the sounds [ ] (Golfes d'ombre') and [œ] (candeurs des vapeurs') and the visual ubiquity of the vowel e' itself. Here, E' is arbitrarily connected with the colour white: candeurs', vapeurs', glaciers' blancs'. Associations are made between tents, kings and spears, as well as the feeling of pride (perhaps in the imagery of chivalry); white also leads to glaciers (proud as kings) and to shivers. Ombres' and ombrelles' frame the two lines and the nasal sound [ ] is

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[16] Shadowy gulfs; E, the paleness of vapours and tents, / Lances from proud glaciers, white kings, the shivering of sunshades;

present throughout. Golfes d'ombres' could also be construed as a link with black, the colour in the preceding stanza, a direct contrast with the evocation of E' and whiteness.

The previous chapter examined how Verlaine's skilful handling of words, sounds and rhythm contributed to the transformation of versification. The relaxing of Classical versification usage led to the appearance of the *vers libre* featuring lines of verse of varying numbers of syllables within the same poem. At the same time, and this is highly significant, rhyme lost its status as the major rhythmic goal of the poetic line with the decline of metrical regularity. Prosodic processes such as alliteration and assonance rose in importance as elements of poetic musicality, substituting for traditional line stresses (*césures* and ends-of-lines) in the re-arrangement of sources of rhythmic energy.

Symbolist verse features words as both sources of sonority and meaning, as participants in a renewed rhythmic environment. Sounds are combined in syntactical segments to produce musical and harmonic effects, a technique inspired in great part by Richard Wagner (1813–83) and his musical dramas. For his enthusiastic French followers, who included Baudelaire and Verlaine, musical dramas constituted a perfect art form, the ideal symbiosis of text and music (Hillery, 1980, p. 30). Leading Symbolist poets, among them Mallarmé and Theodor de Wyzewa (1863–1917) founded *La Revue wagnérienne* (1885–87), which remained closely associated with French Symbolism during its brief existence.

Aside from rhyme, other primary sources of rhythmic articulation in the line of verse, among them the *césure*, became the subject of much debate

among poets. Some maintained that the *césure* no longer required a fixed location and should become an additional source of uncertainty, while others advocated its complete disappearance in favour of optional line breaks. Certainly, several poets opted for a free and variable *césure* placement adapted to each line of verse. The adoption of the *vers libre* at the turn of the twentieth century brought into question the entire integrated system of versification, based on numbers of syllables and creating a given rhythm broken up by prescribed (if not necessarily acknowledged) line breaks. The next section examines how these transformations, threatening the dissolution of the French system of versification, instead generated a number of new forms based on language and meaning, on rhythm and recurring sounds.

5.2: Changing techniques of versification

The gradual adoption of the *vers libre* did not signal, at least for the Symbolist style, the complete disappearance of traditional versification techniques and forms. Their persistence side by side with new forms of verse resulted in creative tensions within lines of verse and from line to line, generating collisions between rhythmic events. The implied rhythmic effect of traditional forms in changeable poetic contexts constitutes one of the key points in Dessons and Meschonnic's concept of *l'organisation du mouvement*. They argue that the presence of multiple rhythmic events, causing what may appear as conflicting accents, in reality creatively stimulates verse prosody and opens up performance possibilities, resulting from the lines' paradoxical saturation

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with rhythmic effects (Dessons & Meschonnic, 2008, pp. 91, 104). These creative conflicts have already been demonstrated in previous chapters, where apparently conflicting stresses contribute to pacing, rhythm and motion.

Dessons and Meschonnic present the following example to illustrate how the transgression of a long-standing versification rule (in this case, the mid-point *césure* in the *alexandrin* line) produces tension and also tacitly confirms the presence of the pause (Dessons & Meschonnic, 2008, p. 91):

Table 5.1: 'Après la bataille' (*La légende des siècles,* 1859), V. Hugo, nineteenth line, rhythmic groups

Nineteenth line	Rhythmic groups, without and with césure
Et que le cheval | fit un écart en arrière.[17]	5+7
Et que le cheval | fit // un écart en arrière.	(5+1)+6

In this passage, Hugo intentionally writes according to syntactic groupings instead of observing traditional rules, thereby altering the rhythm of the line to mimic the abrupt change in the horse's progress. Dessons and Meschonnic take both Hugo's *enjambement* and the classic *alexandrin* pause into consideration (see both readings in Table 5.1 above). This analysis brings out the rhythmic tension between syntax and versification, a way of expressing poetically the horse's movement. According to Dessons and Meschonnic, in an *alexandrin*, the usual rhythmic pattern leading to the symmetry of the two-

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[17] And that the horse shied backwards.

part line is sufficient to generate its expectation in the more rhythmically varied *vers libre* or as in the excerpt from Hugo's poem. Centuries of usage, as well as linguistic rhythms, have left long-lasting traces on French verse, thereby maintaining tacit rhythmic markers within the new forms and creating further rhythmic interactions.

Major elements in the poetic line were affected by the increased technical freedom in the second half of the nineteenth century: the number of syllables in a line, rhyme schemes, syntactic groupings, *césures* or line breaks and *enjambements* (including *rejets* and *contre-rejets*). These changes represent, in a certain sense, the material embodiment of Symbolist ideas. In their aim to express the imagined world and the unutterable depths of human experience, poets ventured beyond conventional appearances and forms to create (or recapture) a language which they considered their own, the musical quality of the verse. While one might expect poetic musicality to be a function of regularity based on recurring metrical or rhythmical events, Symbolist musicality freely combines rhythm and sonority to manifest deeper meanings symbolically through allusion and nuance. The *vers libre,* freed from many of the traditional yet potentially binding poetic rules, creates itself as it traces step-by-step the poet's progress into the unknown.[18]

Line length is probably the most immediately perceptible indication of stylistic change in Symbolist poetry, since the *vers libre* generally retains a clear poetic form featuring distinct lines of verse. In order to translate meaning

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[18] *Vers libéré,* not to be confused with *vers libre*, arose at the same time and was more closely linked to traditional versification forms while allowing some renewal, for instance in terms of the *césure* or the hiatus. It may be said to represent a transitional stage in verse reform.

beyond words and through sonority and rhythmic effects, poets often varied syllable count from line to line. In fact, metrical variety had already been in use from time to time since the Classical period and earlier still, but Symbolists, contrary to their predecessors, did not consider irregular metres as deviations from the norm, but rather as the expression of musical relationships enacted among lines of verse.

Table 5.2: Eau vivante' (*La Chanson d'Ève,* 1904), C, van Lerberghe, first stanza, syllabic count

First stanza	Line syllable count
Que tu es simple et claire,	6
Eau vivante,	3
Qui, du sein de la terre	6
Jaillis en ces bassins // et chantes![19]	8

Like the creation story symbolically portrayed in *La Chanson d'Ève*, the irregular lines of verse seem to flow spontaneously from the poet's creative *rêverie*, each line a distinct unit yet clearly part of the entire four-line stanza.[20] Here, an abab rhyme scheme (*rimes alternées*) is retained, but individual lines unfold in the rhythmic alternation of one- and two-syllable words: words in lines 1 and 3 contain one syllable each, while those in lines 2 and 4 are made up mostly of two syllables (vivante' counting as a two-syllable word for the

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[19] How simple and clear you are, / Living water, / Which, from the depths of the earth, / Gushes forth and sings in these pools!

[20] Rumph suggests that one important theme of *La Chanson d'Ève* concerns the gradual dissociation of Eve's voice from her self, as she experiences the desire for self-expression and a growing separation from the natural world. The creation story gradually turns away from Eve's role in the new world and to her own destiny (Rumph, 2015, pp. 527–528).

purpose of poetic metre).

Rhyme schemes vary greatly in Symbolist poetry. As in Table 5.2 above, rhymes may retain the Classical pattern abab (*rimes alternées*) or the equally familiar abba (*rimes embrassées*), as in the following example:

Table 5.3: Danseuse' (*Mirages,* 1919), R. de Brimont, third stanza, rhyme scheme

Third stanza	Rhyme scheme
Sois la fleur multiple un peu bal**ancée**,	a
Sois l'écharpe offerte au désir qui ch**ange**,	b
Sois la lampe chaste, la flamme étr**ange**,	b
Sois la p**ensée**![21]	a

In the excerpt below, from the third stanza of one of the concluding poems in van Lerberghe's vast Creation myth (the last song in Fauré's cycle), rhyme gives way to assonance at lines ending with étend**re**', dissoud**re**' and aspi**re**', as well as between écu**me**' and ci**me**' a few lines further. This is rhyme in its more primitive state of assonance (as heard in ancient poetic epics such as the late eleventh-century *La Chanson de Roland*), distilled to its most basic elements in lines broken up into brief syntactic segments, echoed in van Lerberghe's mythical Eve and her yearning for dissolution. The gradual disintegration of rhyme and of its strong rhythmic effect had already been announced by Verlaine and his preference for assonance (See Chapter 4, Section 4.1.1); here, Eve symbolically enacts its dissolution.[22]

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[21] Be the many-headed flower barely swaying, / Be the stole proffered to changing desire, / Be the chaste lamp, the strange flame, / Be the thought!

[22] A parallel could also be made between Eve's longing for dissolution (or for the extinction of

Example 5.4: O mort, poussière d'étoiles' (*La Chanson d'Ève,* 1904), C. van Lerberghe, excerpt

> C'est en toi que je veux m'étendre,
>
> M'éteindre et me dissoudre,
>
> Mort où mon âme aspire!
>
> ...
>
> Viens brise-moi comme une fleur d'écume,
>
> Une fleur de soleil à la cime
>
> Des eaux,
>
> Que la nuit effeuille, que l'ombre efface,
>
> Et que l'espace épanouit.[23]

Another common feature of the Symbolist poetic style is the free arrangement of syntactic groups, contributing to variety in line-of-verse lengths. In *vers libres* from this period as well as in regular verse, *enjambements* and *rejets* abound, while asymmetrical phrase segments provide variety and rhythmic and dramatic tension. In Albert Samain's *Arpège*. the poet cleverly arranges the syntactic segments together to produce intricately woven series of lines. Such technical complexity adds to Samain's evocation of the mysterious night and of its fleeting and false encounters.

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her voice) and the gradual dislocation of the verse in modern French poetry, brought out by Bergeron (2010, p. 51).

[23] In you will I lay myself down, / Extinguish and dissolve myself, / Death to which my soul aspires! / ... / Come, scatter me like the blossoming of the sea's foam, / A sunny bloom riding / On the waters, / That the night scatters, that the shadows extinguish, / And that ripens in space.

Table 5.4: Arpège' (*Au jardin de l'Infante,* 1893), A. Samain, second stanza, césures and syntactic segments

Second stanza	Césures and syntactic segments	
Nuit de langueur, // nuit de mensonge,	4+4	4+4
Qui poses, d'un ges- // te ondoyant	5+3	3+5
Dans ta chevelu- // re de songe	5+3	6+2
La lune, bijou // d'Orient.[24]	5+3	3+5

Aside from the first line, divided into two *hémistiches* of four syllables each, the next three lines all implicitly retain a 5+3 division for the *césure*, quite distinct from the syntactic phrase segments. The three lines starting from Qui poses' present complex syntax and poetical processes, which a prose re-ordering may help to elucidate:. Qui poses la lune, bijou d'Orient, dans ta chevelure de songe d'un geste ondoyant.' Transformed into prose, the lines shed a great deal of their rhythmic power, particularly where the *rejets* and *contre-rejets* disappear into regular word order. As well as the rich imagery of the night, evoking false hopes (nuit de mensonge'), the meaning in these lines appears almost intentionally opaque, aided by the convoluted word order. Unlike Verlaine's rhythmic effects frequently based on words and their unexpected impact on the line, this typical Symbolist text alludes to its meaning with nuance and indirect expressions. The graceful octosyllabic lines of *Arpège* bring out the text's musicality, conveying the breathless eagerness of lovers aware that l'heure est si brève'.[25]

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[24] Languorous night, deceitful night, / Which places with an undulating movement / In your dream-like hair / The moon, an oriental jewel.
[25] Time passes quickly.

The arrangement of phrase segments in *vers libres* can result in great rhythmic variety:

Table 5.5: Prima verba' (*La Chanson d'Ève,*1904), C. van Lerberghe, third stanza (excerpt), phrase segments

Third stanza (excerpt)	Phrase segments (according to word stresses)
Des paroles depuis // des âges endormies	3+(3+6)
En des sons, | en des fleurs,	3+3
Sur mes lè- // vres enfin prennent vie.[26]	3+(3+3)

In the first line, phrase segments and *césures* collide. These rhythmic contradictions increase complexity within the verse while offering the possibility of more subtle recitation. The lack of punctuation at the end of the first line adds to the complication and may momentarily blur meaning as the next line begins: have the words remained unsaid for ages within sounds and flowers? Or are words finally awakened in sounds, in flowers and on Eve's lips? Like Baudelaire, van Lerberghe seems to create form in the very act of writing his poetry and it is probable that ambiguity was intended as a symbol of the unfolding Creation in Eve's *prima verba*; a symbol,also, of the increasing rhythmic complexity generated by the simultaneous presence of old and new prosodic features.

As seen in the two preceding examples, not only do syntactic segments vary greatly in their location and make-up, but they also bring about other

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[26] Words for aeons sleeping / In sounds, in flowers, / On my lips are alive at last.

changes in the poetic line, including a greater number of *enjambements* and *rejets*, along with an increase in the use of the so-called movable *césure* (considered in Chapter 2). Keeping in mind the powerful attraction of implied traditional rhythmic patterns, the idea of a movable *césure* may sometimes be confused with a need to include an expressive pause to highlight certain word groups or stress a particularly significant word. This study adopts the view that the movable *césure* is often mistaken for subjective expression in performance. Thus, traditional line breaks remain significant (albeit often barely observed in practice) while rhythmic innovations affect the poetic line, creating dynamic tension and making possible a variety of interpretations (Dessons & Meschonnic, 2008, p. 104). In short, the rhythmic discordances between continuity (tradition) and innovation lead to creation and renewal in poetry, much as they do in Fauré's compositions.

Example 5.5: Stymphale' (*Les trophées,* 1893), J.M. de Heredia, second stanza (excerpt)

> L'Archer su**per**- | be fit // un **pas** | dans les ro**seaux**.[27]

Accentual regularity is brought out in Example 5.5 by the symmetrical syntactic division of the *alexandrin* into three four-syllable sections (indicated by vertical lines). The following example presents a more obvious pattern:

Example 5.6: *Suréna* (1674), P. Corneille, Act I, sc. 3

> Toujours ai**mer**, | toujours souf- // **frir**, | toujours mou**rir**.[28]

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[27] The splendid archer stepped forward among the reeds.
[28] Forever loving, forever suffering, forever dying.

This technique, inspired by poets of the French Renaissance movement of La Pléïade, who had also sought to break with established tradition, introduced variety in the strictly regulated *alexandrin* line. Nevertheless, simply appearing to move (or remove) the *césure* merely indicates one possible reading of the text; in actual fact, it fails to explain how a line may appear to have acquired two *césures*.

Examples of syntactic *trimètre* divisions (the *alexandrin* divided into three equal sections as in Examples 5.4 and 5.5) which introduce other breaks in the line, draw attention to the confusion between poetry in its pure form and poetry as discourse, that is, the particular realisation of a text by a given subject at a given time. Grammont's *Petit Traité de versification* blurs these boundaries between form and discourse, so that the mid-line *césure* of the *alexandrin* disappears in favour of a three-part line division where syntax might indicate it (Grammont, 1971, pp. 55–60). Conversely, retaining the mid-point *césure* after fit' in the de Heredia excerpt above (Example 5.5) increases rhythmic and dramatic tension, particularly in conjunction with the inner stresses of the three-part division. The ensuing rhythmic clashes accord with the representation of the archer in the act of pausing before shooting off his arrow: L'archer super- | be fit // un pas | dans les roseaux.' The discordance between pauses also avoids the risk, however slight, of a too-regular recitation rhythmic scheme. Like Dessons and Meschonnic, Dubiau-Feuillerac argues that maintaining the implicit Classical *césure* is not only essential for poetic rhythm but, when combined with strong *enjambements,* as in poetry by Verlaine and his Symbolist successors, generates le malaise de

l'incertitude' (Dubiau-Feuillerac, 2008, p. 56).[29] Thus, versification technique and embedded symbols and correspondences combine to reform poetic language while prosodic rhythm gains in variety and complexity, providing composers with musicality for rhythm and sonority, and imagery for translating words into song.

5.3: Fauré's stylistic transition from Verlaine to the Symbolists (1894–1906)

Just as Verlaine extends the limits of the verse to explore rhythm and musicality, Fauré, inspired by Verlaine's poetic voice, expanded the expressive vocabulary in the writing of his *mélodies*. In later songs, rhythm remained, as before, the major structuring energy of the musical phrase, further transformed by Symbolist texts. The interval between 1894 and 1906 represents a transitional period following the intensity of the Verlaine years in Fauré's song output, perhaps even a time of gestation, made up of small clusters of songs interspersed with years of absence from the genre. Not until *Le don silencieux* (1906) and the monumental *Chanson d'Ève,* completed in 1910 (on which he worked intermittently from 1904), did Fauré truly embark on his late period of *mélodie*-writing.

During the years leading to *La Chanson d'Ève*, Fauré's affections turned to Marguerite Hasselmans, a pianist he had met in Brussels in 1900 and who was to remain his unofficial companion for the remainder of his life.

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[29]   The unease of uncertainty.

This relationship is reflected in his compositional output: the number of works for the piano gradually increases while song production waxes and wanes up until his last cycle, *L'horizon chimérique* (1921).[30] Fauré's choice of poets also reflects the transitional nature of the pre-1906 period: Parnassians Leconte de Lisle and Silvestre stand alongside Symbolists Albert Samain and Catulle Mendès (1841–1909). Nevertheless, contact with Verlaine's rhythmically sonorous texts had greatly influenced Fauré's work and this is made particularly evident in the songs on texts by de Lisle and Silvestre dating from this period.

Two important characteristics become apparent from these compositions. Firstly, rhythm in the vocal line gradually shifts to the *parlando* style of the late songs, thus increasingly reflecting the syntactical structure of the poetry rather than the metrical recurrence of musical or poetic stresses, or even the modified note values of Italian-style vocalism. Secondly, the graceful lyricism so typical of the Parnassian *mélodies* has been replaced by a restricted melodic line espousing the contours of expressive declamation, more suited to the rhythmic interplay of sonorities and to textual intelligibility.

Le parfum impérissable[31] (1897; Leconte de Lisle, *Poèmes tragiques,* 1884), provides a striking example of this change. At first glance, it appears that the rhythmic patterns, basic rhythmic building blocks employed for analytical purposes in this thesis and characterising a particular song, have

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[30] While the composition of *mélodies* remained intermittent during this period, piano and chamber works, along with the composition of his only opera, *Pénélope,* completed in 1907, occupied a large share of the summer months Fauré could dedicate to composition, away from the day-to-day demands of his role as director of the Paris Conservatoire.
[31] See translation and score in Volume 2, Appendix C.

returned to structure text and melody in the same manner as they formerly did

with this poet (considered in Chapter 2, section 2.3.2, as well as in Chapter 3

song analysis). In fact, *Le parfum impérissable* constitutes the first indication

of Fauré's mature *mélodie* composition style. The treatment of rhythm in a

syntactical and forward-flowing fashion has now become habitual; what is new

is Fauré's approximation of poetic recitation by the use of rhythm to speak'

the text even more accurately than before. In *Le parfum* the following rhythms

appear throughout the song:

♪♪♪ , ♪♪♪ , ♪ ♪ .

Their main purpose is to translate poetic declamatory rhythms musically for

expression and clarity; they also contribute to the non-metrical feel of the lines

in Fauré's typical forward motion. Closely related to French speech rhythms,

these groupings differ from the rhythmic patterns found in earlier Parnassian

songs. In the song settings of Symbolist poetry, a small number of identical

rhythmic groups recur in virtually every song to assist singers in pacing text

while subtly lengthening important syllables or words or, conversely, rapidly

enunciating unstressed syllables. The above three groups from *Le parfum*

form the core of these repeated patterns (further discussed in Section 5.4.2).

Several word and poetic stresses occur on the downbeat in *Le parfum*,

yet the song unfolds seemingly freely, without strong metrical accents. To

achieve this, Fauré ventures even further away from lyricism than with the

Verlaine songs: the melodic line moves mainly diatonically, remaining within

the same tessitura for entire stanzas. The first two stanzas, for instance,

stay well within the range of a sixth, with the highest pitch (a C#) being approached gradually and abandoned fairly rapidly for notes ranged near the lower tonic (E), a tessitura more suited to recitation and to the quasi-mystical atmosphere of the song (bb. 7–10).

Le parfum impérissable also bears witness to Fauré's careful planning as he seeks to bring out the expressive potential of the text. While the dramatic character of the first two stanzas is more in keeping with the Parnassian ideal of artistic perfection in the restrained description of an exquisite and eternal perfume, the third and final stanza (from bar 18 onwards) suddenly increases in intensity as the poet describes his wounded yet forgiving heart. Reflecting this change of mood, Fauré raises the emotional pitch in several ways: the vocal line lifts to the upper tonic in heightened emotion, new rhythms in the form of quaver triplets add emphasis and intensity and increased chromaticism adorns the keyboard part as it parallels the change in vocal tessitura. This song, the last of the Leconte de Lisle settings, marks a significant moment in Fauré's song composition: it identifies the transition from the structured yet expressive vocalism of the Parnassian settings to the *parlando* sobriety of the Symbolist *mélodies*, illustrated in *Le parfum* as a combination of artistic refinement and natural declamation.[32]

Recordings of this song demonstrate how performers respond to the

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[32] It is interesting to note that Maurice Ravel (1875–1937), who studied with Fauré and received encouragement and support from him to further his career, composed a *mélodie* a year after Fauré's song which reveals surprising similarities with *Le parfum*. *Sainte* (1896), on a poem by Mallarmé, employs recitation techniques reminiscent of Fauré's, namely the frequent use of diatonic melodic contours and rhythms disregarding the stated 4/4 metre, with the piano part maintaining a regular chordal or quaver pattern to sustain musical prosody. While Ravel's declamation remains highly personal, the means he employs, at least at this early stage, show clear similarities with Fauré's own.

blend of poetic declamation and expressive vocal writing. Karine Deshayes (2009c, CD) and Sarah Walker (1992d, CD) colour individual words and syntactical groups which, while stressing potentially meaningful words, removes some of the intensity of the linear recitation. Conversely, Felicity Lott (2005b, CD) and Elly Ameling (2006d, CD) focus on the larger form of the line of verse. Ameling is particularly adept at maintaining a pulse-centred legato line with clear diction in continuously unfolding recitation. Fauré's typical chordal accompaniment sustains forward motion and helps avoid well-defined cadential resolutions which generally appear as brief acknowledgements of stanza endings (bb. 8–9, 16–17, 31–32). By employing vocal declamation involving long-range phrasing supported by a seemingly non-metrical piano part, Lott and Ameling follow Fauré's expressive yet often understated intentions more closely.

The transitional nature of the twelve-year period following the Verlaine settings is further brought out in songs to texts by Symbolist poets such as Samain and Mendès. While *Le parfum impérissable* exhibits clear evidence of Fauré's mature vocal style, *Soir* (1894; Albert Samain, *Au jardin de l'Infante,* 1893) or *La fleur qui va sur l'eau* (1902; Catulle Mendès, n.d.) incorporate vocalism reminiscent of Fauré's earlier lyrical style. The vocal part in *Soir* integrates soaring lines, as in the Viardot years, with the recitation rhythms seen in *Le parfum impérissable* (Example 5.7). In the climactic moment between bars 28 and 33 and on to the end of *Soir*, rhythm reverts to longer note values in a return to pre-Verlaine vocalism, a reminder of Mourier's law of

lengthening. These extended lyrical line endings differ from the long note values associated with phrase endings, unconnected with tessitura changes, found throughout *La fleur qui va sur l'eau,* featured in many of Fauré's late *mélodies* (Example 5.8).

Example 5.7: *Soir* (1894), bb. 27–37

Composed eight years after *Soir*, *La fleur qui va sur l'eau* is the third and last of Fauré's more impassioned *mélodies* after Toujours' (*Poème d'un jour,* 1878) and *Fleur jetée* (1884). While the text is set rhythmically using familiar recitation patterns (♩ ♪♪ , ♪♪♩ , ♩.♪), the melodic line spans the singer's entire vocal range. In the midst of this amalgam of early and late features, Fauré inserts the characteristic late-style long notes at the ends of musical phrases, as seen below in Example 5.8. Extending lines with longer note values (as in *Les berceaux,* 1879*, Le pays des rêves,* 1884 or *Spleen,* 1888) was fairly common in earlier songs; however, this means of lengthening a musical phrase becomes more systematic in later songs and can serve to indicate the end of a line or a durational stress on important vowels or

syllables. In the context of the *vers libre*, where regular syllabic count is no longer a prime marker of poetic rhythm, Fauré creates other ways of indicating poetic form. In *La fleur*, the long notes faithfully bring out word and phrase stresses, but also impart to the song a kind of stylised diction that avoids melodrama, based on the pulse and supported by an accompaniment characterised by restless rhythms and harmonies. As Fauré's late *mélodies* increasingly take on the restricted contour of the *parlando* vocal line, long notes interspersed among rhythmic patterns mimicking speech remain part of the melodic fabric, subtly emphasising phrases and words in the free verse.

Example 5.8: *La fleur qui va sur l'eau* (1902), bb. 19–23[33]

5.4: Rhythm in Fauré's late songs and cycles

It is likely that the condensed structure of verse and poetic form as well as the additional challenge of translating meaning into music allowed Fauré's creative imagination to flourish and even to transfer this creativity into his instrumental works. Song analysis throughout this thesis demonstrates

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[33] In the dark ocean, / Now grown less bleak, / Where sinks the three-master, / The flower stayed afloat.

repeatedly the crucial role played by poetry and its structures and rhythms in the shaping of Fauré's personal approach to composing *mélodies.*

5.4.1: The Symbolist poetic line and changes in Fauré's musical phrase

In a letter to his wife dated 22 August 1906, Fauré describes with unaccustomed pride how completely different *Le don silencieux* is from his previous works, even from any other contemporaneous song (Fauré–Fremiet, 1951, p. 121). It is probable that Fauré was alive to the fact that, with this song, he was breaking new compositional ground. Two couplets from the poem illustrate how closely Fauré follows recitation rhythms, flexibly altering the musical phrase to express the subtle structure of the Symbolist verse.

Table 5.6: *Le don silencieux*[34] (1906), J. Dominique, first couplet with accents and recurring sounds (main stresses in bold, secondary stresses underlined)

First couplet: main and secondary accents, césures	Recurring vowel and consonant sounds	
Je mettrai mes deux **mains** // sur ma bouche, pour **tai**re	[ ] [u]	[m]
Ce que je voudrais **tant** // vous dire, âme bien **chè**re!	[ ] [ ] [u]	[v]

While the poem is made up entirely of *alexandrins,* inner rhythms clearly go against the grain of a classic twelve-syllable line of verse, with syntactic segments of varying lengths made even more irregular by the presence of *rejets.* Not only are both *césures* over-written but, in each instance, a break occurs a few syllables later; the first line also extends with a *rejet* into the

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[34] See translation and score in Volume 2, Appendix C.

second line in a rush of timid yearning, sustained in large part by words with masculine endings.

The result is a transformed *alexandrin*, with the regular rhythmic goals still exerting their pull on asymmetrical syntactic phrases. The *rejet* at the end of the first line illustrates this change: while it is clear that the sentence needs to proceed to the next line for its conclusion, taire', both in its location at the end of the line and in its meaning (to keep quiet) seems to pull back the tempo of the ongoing phrase to restrain the rush of unsaid words. The same can be said of the *césure* in the second line, where one needs to complete the phrase (tant // vous dire'), yet the emphatic tant' creates a break in the flow of the line. Along with these implicit yet powerful points of temporary repose, secondary stresses and instances of assonance and alliteration adorn this couplet and add to the complexity of its declamation.

In his understated setting, Fauré achieves two aims: by paying close attention simultaneously to syntactic segments and to poetic stresses, he expressively paces recitation while maintaining constant motion (bb. 1–4). At the same time, he subtly utilises the stresses of the 4/4 metre to mould musical phrases and textual intonations. In these couplets, the ongoing recitation is maintained by avoiding note values longer than crotchets for word or syllabic stresses; additionally, emphasis is deflected to beats other than the downbeat. Fauré cleverly positions taire', the end-of-line goal of the first line (and part of the *rejet*) on a downbeat, immediately followed by four semiquavers to energise rhythm and to allude to the conflicting emotions of the poet. The couplet concludes with the first syllable of chère' on a third beat,

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avoiding an overly strong ending. Thus, in the very structure of the music and of the text, allusions to mood and meaning may be detected.

Two singers illustrate nuanced concepts of these two lines in their performances. Yann Beuron (2009, CD), highlights the rhythmic aspect of the text by slightly isolating the small syntactical segments of the lines with tiny stresses on initial consonants. Contrastingly, Gérard Souzay (2006d, CD) clearly conceives of the entire two lines as a unit. Fully exploiting the interpretative potential of vowel sounds and note values, he recites the text on the pulse within its restricted vocal range. Souzay's *andante* tends to the more rapid side of the tempo and suitably depicts the poet's shy rush of words with rare alliterative consonantal stresses as on taire' and tant'.

An entirely different character permeates the seventh couplet of the same *mélodie*: vowel sounds requiring careful enunciation within a more classic *alexandrin* structure signal the poet's change of heart.

Table 5.7: *Le don silencieux* (1906)*,* J. Dominique, seventh couplet with accents, césures and recurring sounds (main stresses in bold, secondary stresses underlined)

Seventh couplet: main and secondary accents and césures	Recurring vowel and consonant sounds		
Elles iront à **vous**, // légères d'être **vi**des,	[ ] [i] [u]		[v]
Et lourdes d'être **tris- //** tes, tristes d'être ti**mi**des;	[u] [ ] [l]		[t]

The more obvious rhythmic symmetry of these lines alludes to the poet's acceptance of giving oneself to another, the lines' regularity symbolising hope

and appeasement. The recurrence of the [i] vowel sound in the lines, at the rhyme and in assonance at the *césure* of the second line brightens the tone colour of the couplet. Sounds requiring lengthier phonation on [u] (vous' and lourdes') and [ ] (elles', légères', d'être') alter recitation pace. The couplet also features word repetition as in d'être' and tristes', typical of the sound interplay in Symbolist poetry.

All of these rhythms and effects of sonorities emerge in Fauré's setting (bb. 21–24), brought out by tied notes on vous' and légères' and by the conscious use of downbeats to begin each *hémistiche* on its first accented syllable. While such symmetry might hamper musical fluidity, Fauré makes use of dotted rhythms to maintain energy at the same time as providing a brief durational stress, as in tristes d'être timides' (b. 24). Here, Fauré utilises a minimum of musical techniques, carefully planned to convey the meaning, mood and rhythms of the text. This song heralds the last four cycles, where an apparent compositional sobriety, concealing Fauré's masterful handling of rhythm, melody and harmony, allows the Symbolist texts to be experienced and savoured.

A similar situation to the first couplet of *Le don silencieux* occurs in the first stanza of Prima verba', the second song in the cycle *La Chanson d'Ève*. Line *rejets* and a controlled recitation pace bring out the meaning of the text and the irregular verse structure.

The *vers libres* are made even more irregular by the *rejets* at the end of lines 1 and 3; nevertheless, rhyme is still present and, while adding a certain amount of structure, contributes to the internal assonance between chante',

dans' and murmurante' ([ã]), as well as voix', âme' and bois' ([a], [ ]). In Fauré's setting, note values agree with word stresses and main line accents like voix' and bois', but vocal lines also subtly embody the long whispering' of nature in the extended note values on murmurante', fontaines' and bois'. To maintain the dreamy quality of the stanza, Fauré avoids using downbeats on potential locations of text emphasis such as the ends of lines of verse, thus ensuring ongoing motion on the pulse.

Table 5.8: Prima verba' (*La Chanson d'Ève*, 1904), C. van Lerberghe, first stanza, syllabic count and rejets

First stanza	Syllabic count and rejets	
Comme elle chante	4	rejet
Dans ma voix,	3	
L'âme longtemps murmurante	7	rejet
Des fontaines et des bois!35	7	

Example 5.9: 'Prima verba' (*La Chanson d'Ève,* 1906–10), bb. 2–5

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35 How clearly it sings / Through my voice, / The long-whispering soul / Of fountains and woodlands!

Table 5.9: L'aube blanche' (*La Chanson d'Ève,* 1904), C. van Lerberghe, third stanza (excerpt), recurring sounds and rhythmic process

Third stanza (excerpt)	Recurring sounds and rhythmic process
Et mon âme, // comme une rose	[m] rejet
Troublante,[36] len- // te, tout le jour,[37]	[u] [ã] [t] [l]

Example 5.10: 'L'aube blanche' (*La Chanson d'Ève,* 1906–10), bb. 19–23

Fauré adopts a contrasting approach in the third stanza of L'aube blanche', the fifth song from the same cycle. The rhythm of the first two lines of octosyllabic verse is punctuated by a *rejet* and by a number of brief interruptions in the form of commas, imparting a halting pace to the lines. Repeated sonorities increase rhythmic complexity. In this excerpt, Fauré leads the musical phrases to the downbeats to end both lines of verse, at the risk of jeopardising the *rejet* between rose' and troublante'. In actual fact, continuity is preserved by a seamless passage between the two lines, where the classic end-of-line pause is transferred to troublante' by means of a tie over the bar-line in bar 20 (Example 5.10). In this way, punctuation and accentuation are

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36 Tremblante (C. van Lerberghe): Fauré probably made this change to avoid repeating the nasalised [ã] three times in close succession (tremblante, / Lente'). An email exchange with Roy Howat on 25 April 2016 confirms the existence of a single extant manuscript for *La Chanson d'Ève*, containing this change of word affecting both sonority and meaning. Interestingly, van Lerberghe does not include the last syllable of troublante' in this line's octosyllabic count, perhaps as the same sound occurs a mere two syllables later in lente'; the repetition of the final -te' might well have been excessive to the subtle Symbolist ear.

37 And my soul, like a troubling (trembling – van Lerberghe) rose / Unhurried, all day long.

applied in skilfully structured musical phrases, where expression is embedded directly in the musical structure.

Finally, two contrasting excerpts from Cygne sur l'eau' (*Mirages,* 1919) again demonstrate how Fauré, with a seemingly free *parlando* singing style, controls phrase lengths and pacing by varying accentuation points. A classic *alexandrin* shapes the entire poem.

Table 5.10: Cygne sur l'eau'[38] (*Mirages*, 1919), R. de Brimont, third stanza (excerpt), rhythmic processes (main stresses in bold, secondary stresses underlined)

Third stanza (excerpt): main and secondary accents and césures	Rhythmic processes
Et des blancs nénu**phars** // chaque corolle **ron**de	rejet
Tour à tour a fleu**ri** // de désir et d'es**poir**.	enjambement

In these two lines, the *enjambement* at the second line *césure,* fleuri // de désir', narrowly prevents unimaginative recitation in groups of three syllables. Downbeats punctuate the end of each *hémistiche* in this *mélodie*, yet there is little impression of metrical regularity. Instead, Fauré's treatment of the *enjambement* in the second line, where the expected lengthening on fleuri' is transferred to désir' (bb. 28–30), serves the dual purpose of facilitating good prosody and maintaining forward motion. A reading of the text using only musical rhythm reveals every main and secondary stress carefully yet musically translated with varying note values. Nectoux cites a comment made

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[38]   See translation and score in Volume 2, Appendix C.

by Claire Croiza, the first interpretor of *Le jardin clos* (composed five years

before *Mirages*)*,* apropos Fauré's prosodic rhythms. Her impression was that

Fauré used poetry primarily as musical inspiration, and that a prosodic reading

using his musical rhythms was not feasible, a statement she contradicts in

another context (Nectoux, 2008, pp. 463–64 and 1999, p. 389). Certainly,

correctly reciting most poetic texts set by Fauré using musical rhythms is

entirely feasible and renders a sensitively paced performance with carefully

placed declamatory stresses.

The last stanza of the same poem presents a different character,

featuring two lines of contrasting rhythms, yet retaining the classic pauses of

the *alexandrin*.

Table 5.11: Cygne sur l'eau' (*Mirages*, 1919), R. de Brimont, fifth stanza
(excerpt), rhythmic groups

Fifth stanza (excerpt)	Rhythmic groups
Les golfes embaumés,// les îles immortelles	2+4 // 2+4
Ont pour vous, cygne noir, // des récifs périlleux;	3+3 // 3+3

Again, a repetitive three-syllable rhythm could generate monotony in the

second line; however, the noun-adjective connection in récifs périlleux' alters

the pattern. Declamatory pacing shapes Fauré's *mélodie (*bb. 46–51): the first

line is given a quasi-plainchant contour and unhurried pace, supported and

doubled in the accompaniment right hand, whereas the next line, with its

warning of unknown perils, proceeds in brief syntactic segments to follow text

punctuation. While only the *césure* divides the first line for smooth recitation, in the second line Fauré highlights all stresses and pauses in his expressive reading, making use of the commas and of significant words (vous', noir', récifs périlleux'). All but one of the *hémistiches* (cygne noir') end on the downbeat; again, Fauré inserts meaning directly into the musical score by ending the first half of the second line seemingly one beat early, as if to halt the progress of the black swan into the unknown (b. 49).

This section has examined some of the ways in which Fauré translates Symbolist line rhythms into a rhythmically musical phrase. By comparison with earlier songs, where the extroversion of Romantic poetry or the Classical beauty of Parnassian verse prompted Fauré to respond with creative accompaniments and memorable melodies, the music of the late songs becomes a willing servant of the word: a less decorative art perhaps, yet closely involved in assisting with the expression of the poet's ideas.

This chapter also seeks to explore further the ways in which Fauré's music interacts with Symbolist texts so that little musical interference disrupts poetic flow or masks meaning. Throughout this thesis, the close rhythmic and interpretative relationship between text and music has been repeatedly highlighted; furthermore, analysis details variations in this link and recognises the crucial role played by poetry on Fauré's compositional style. This is especially true of the less lyrical late songs in their quasi-ascetic simplicity. By forging his own path to modernity in the post–1906 cycles, Fauré gradually sheds the individualistic expression of Romanticism so that the nuances and subtleties of Symbolism may appear, unimpeded yet enhanced by the music.

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5.4.2: Rhythmic patterns in word and line-of-verse stresses

The examples taken from Cygne sur l'eau' in the previous section share one important feature: rhythms in the vocal line are made up of discernible and freely recurring rhythmic patterns. In Fauré's mature cycles, analysis reveals – and this is mainly a function of transformations in poetic style – that the essential difference with his Parnassian settings lies in his generalised lack of concern for bar-lines, metrical stresses and other musical markers of regularity. Carlo Caballero claims that Fauré's goal is to provide a guide to declamation' (Caballero, 2001, p. 226). This observation brings out an essential characteristic of Fauré's vocal music rhythms, but fails to acknowledge his careful planning of the rhythmic structure in his songs, a much more comprehensive use of rhythm revealed by analysis in this thesis. Fauré's late-style declamation, while appearing to unwind freely, is in fact as carefully planned as the more formal structures of his Parnassian *mélodies.* Furthermore, this controlled form supports proper and precise French *parlando* rhythms in the songs, rather than a multiplicity of line and phrase readings.[39]

The following brief rhythmic groups (already encountered in *Le parfum impérissable*) recur freely in Fauré's last four song cycles to mimic the pace and end-accented character of French speech and form the basis for further

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[39] Caballero's metrically-based analysis of rhythmic groupings in Fauré's songs (as seen in Chapter 1) takes for granted the mobility of stresses within the French phrase. While the reading of a text, whether orally or mentally, depends on a variety of factors and therefore can never yield exactly the same results, a musical composition is already shaped by the composer's voice, and therefore reduces the number of possible readings. The choices Fauré makes with regard to word stresses or to *enjambements*, for instance, need to inform performance and condition performers' interpretative choices.

rhythmic variations:

♪♪ , ♪♪♪ , ♪.♪ ; in augmented form: ♩ ♪♪ , ♪♪♩ , ♩. ♪

Whereas these patterns occurred fairly regularly and predictably in Fauré's settings of Parnassian poets, the irregular poetic forms of Symbolist verse transformed rhythmic patterns into musical representations of declamatory speech. No longer controlled by traditional forms and versification, poetic rhythm, now subject to meaning and poetic musicality, becomes increasingly more varied, particularly at the syntactical level. Fauré's solution, incorporating recitation rhythms, intelligibility and ongoing motion, involves the use of brief recurring rhythmic patterns within a more neutral metrical structure than previously. This suits perfectly the subtle French word and phrase accentuation as well as the fluidity of the *vers libre*. A few examples illustrate the close relationship of these rhythms to French declamation.

Keeping in mind the end-accented character of French words, phrasal segments and lines of verse, the rhythmic interplay of main and secondary stresses is apparent in the excerpt from 'Exaucement' (*Entrevisions*, 1898, Table 5.12). In the first three lines of verse (bb. 5–7), all rhythmic patterns lead either to significant words ('mains', 'lumière', 'front', 'défaillant', 'amour', 'prière') or to words whose syllables need more time for phonation ('alors', 'poses'). Interestingly, the two crotchets on 'alors' (bb. 1–2) suggest a calm mood as well as a feeling of continuity from a time preceding the first words of the poem: 'As in your luminous hands...'. The change of rhythm to a dotted pattern in the last line (bb. 8–9) facilitates the proper accentuation of words

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with a mute e' (vienne', comme') and neatly acknowledges the third-line *rejet*
(en ta prière / Vienne', bb. 7–8) with first syllable stresses, at the same time
altering the pace to suit the change of mood as in the fulfilment of a prayer.

Table 5.12: Exaucement'[40] (*Entrevisions*, 1898), C. van Lerberghe, first
stanza, césures and line stresses

First stanza: main and secondary accents	Césures, rhythmic process	
A<u>lors</u> qu'en tes **mains** // de lu**miè**re	5+3	
Tu <u>po</u>ses ton **front** // défail**lant**,	5+3	
Que mon a**mour** // en ta pri**è**re	4+4	rejet
<u>Vien</u>ne **com**- // me un exauce**ment**.	3+5	

This seemingly unassuming song inspires three performers in rather
different ways. In a serene *allegretto,* Marc Boucher (2005a, CD) smoothly
declaims the text and proves that there is little need to add to Fauré's clear
rhythmic indications for reading the poem. A less flowing interpretation from
Karine Deshayes (2009a, CD) results in unnecessary stresses on **po**ses' and
 dé**fail**lant'. As discussed above, the first syllable of poses' on the downbeat
needs no additional stress save that of the crotchet due to its early position in
the line. As for défaillant', it is incorrectly stressed on two counts: the word
should be end-accented by virtue of its final position in the line of verse and
also in its own stress pattern, as Fauré has scored it (défail**lant**); additionally,
any stress it receives should be kept to a minimum to accord with its meaning:

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40   See translation and score in Volume 2, Appendix C.

your ailing brow'. There are compelling reasons to aim for a smooth singing line in Fauré's late songs: the diatonic nature of many of the melodic lines within a restricted tessitura, the consistent and ongoing musical flow on the pulse and the recitation rhythms are chief among them, as the analysis of these late-style songs indicates.

A third singer offers an intriguing interpretation: Elly Ameling (2006b, CD) colours the entire song in an aura of supplication. Fauré's *allegretto* slows down to an *adagio* as the song becomes a study in reticence. It clearly lacks the underlying joy from the last line of the poem (Trouve la joie et le repos'), yet here one finds a convincing expression of contentment expressed by Ameling's even legato and strict adherence to durational rather than to accentual word stresses.

Rhythmic patterns play a different role in L'aube blanche' (*La Chanson d'Ève*), where they lead words or phrases to downbeats or long notes to mark stress points. Example 5.10, considered earlier, demonstrates how Fauré uses various rhythmic means to bring out poetic expression: durations assist in word stress and highlight punctuation, while the *rejet* is smoothly negotiated by means of quavers (rose / Troublante'). Troublante' receives additional emphasis and duration with a tie over the bar-line which effectively neutralises the 3/4 metre and its stresses. In practical terms, this passage yields a supple declamatory pace, subtly and faultlessly accentuated.

Example 5.11: L'aube blanche' (*La Chanson d'Ève*, 1906–10), second stanza (excerpt), rhythms

Et mon â- // me, comme une rose

♪ ♪ ♩ ♪   ♪ ♪.♪ ♩♪

Troublante, len- // te, tout le jour,

♪ ♩♪♪♪   ♪ ♪. ♪ ♩♪

Here, as in the entire poem, each final syllable in the octosyllabic verse is located on the downbeat (rose', jour'), while inner secondary stresses occur on long note values (âme', troublante'); assonance on troublante' and lente' and on tout' and jour' is highlighted by restricted pitch range (as seen in the Verlaine settings) as well as by longer note values for the [u] vowel sound. Between these stress points, quavers and semiquavers in rhythmic patterns sustain constant motion, as can be seen in Example 5.11.

Thus, in the above examples, *Le jardin clos* and *La Chanson d'Ève*, both cycles on texts by van Lerberghe, are set using simple and recurring rhythmic groups in a variety of designs for musical declamation. These rhythms may be found leading to stressed beats (Example 5.8) or to unstressed beats in the bar (Example 5.9); they also occur in series, as in *Le don silencieux,* bars 5–7[41] or as groups set apart by long notes or rests. In these late songs, analytical evidence points to a clear link between linguistic and musical rhythms, as Fauré strives constantly for clarity of text and subtlety of expression.

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[41]   See translation and score in Volume 2, Appendix C.

As with the more systematic use of rhythmic patterns in his settings of Parnassian poetry, Fauré varies recitation pace by augmentation or diminution of relative note values. The two following examples from Paradis', the first movement of *La Chanson d'Ève*, show how diminution affects pace and expresses meaning in the 3/2 metre. In Example 5.12, freely combined minims and crotchets unhurriedly allude to Eve's first awakening (Ouvrant à la clarté ses doux et vagues yeux, / La jeune et divine Ève / S'est éveillée de Dieu'[42]). Later, Eve stands in the midst of all living things in the new Creation, naming them as they scurry and breathe and soar (Chose qui fuit, chose qui souffle, chose qui vole.'[43]). Diminished note values, still in 3/2 metre, evoke the garden teeming with life and movement around Eve and contribute to a more lively mood and declamation pace.

Example 5.12: 'Paradis' (*La Chanson d'Ève*, 1906–10), bb. 53–61

As in past poetic styles, rhythmic groups are extensively used as a means of recreating the rhythms of French speech. In Fauré's Symbolist *mélodies*, the ongoing musical pulse replaces metrical regularity, enabling a

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[42] Opening her soft and vague eyes to the light, / The young and divine Eve / Awakes out of God.
[43] Scurrying things, breathing things, flying things.

more varied and nuanced declamation. These rhythms strongly define the vocal line in the late song cycles as the reciting line from which vocalism for its own sake has virtually disappeared in favour of intelligibility, sonority and prosodic expression.

Example 5.13: 'Paradis' (*La Chanson d'Ève*, V), bb. 102–07

5.5: Melody and rhythm in Fauré's settings of Symbolist poetry

Perhaps the most immediately striking characteristics of Fauré's late cycles, particularly from the singer's point of view, are the modifications made to the vocal line. In contrast with the memorable and lyrical melodies inspired by previous poetic styles, Fauré's late-style melodic lines were radically transformed by Symbolist poetry. This section explores the origins of this change and the ways in which poetry and melody combine for declamation and expression. The analysis focuses on two particular areas: firstly, the interaction of pitch and rhythm, chiefly pitch repetition and the function of note values; secondly, the alterations to melodic contour, highlighting restrictions to vocal range and tessitura. Finally, the effects of these melodic changes on Fauré's typical forward motion on the pulse are studied in more detail.

5.5.1: Origins of melodic changes in Fauré's late-style songs

Émile Vuillermoz and other authors associate Fauré's general restriction in harmonic and vocal ranges with his progressive hearing loss (Vuillermoz, 1960, p. 110). In a more nuanced interpretation, Nectoux's observations on late-style vocal restraint and apparent harmonic sobriety appear to imply an aesthetic choice, an asceticism confirmed by Fauré's handicap (Nectoux, 1995, p. 146). However, the gradual process of change in Fauré's style charted in this thesis points to clear thinking and to a planned economy of means. Furthermore, innovation, flexibility and adaptability still thrive in Fauré's late *mélodies*, now virtually inseparable from their texts.

Fauré-Fremiet casts a different light on Fauré's late melodic and harmonic changes. He lists instrumental works composed at the end of Fauré's life while afflicted with almost total hearing loss: for instance, the *First Sonata for Cello* (1917), the *Second Piano Quintet* (1919)*,* the *Piano Trio* (1922) and the *String Quartet* (1923) (Fauré-Fremiet, 1957, p. 117). Listening to these works, it is debatable whether a purely physiological explanation can be adopted for changes to melodic lines or for a greater use of the medium-low tessitura in Fauré's late vocal compositions. High tessituras in the upper strings and the keyboard right hand remain in use, as are lower pitches for the cello and the piano left hand in chamber works after 1900. Thus, a variety of tone colours is still present despite Fauré's increasing lack of aural perception in later life at pitch extremes, areas where his hearing was most affected.

Rather, one needs to look at a broader context for indications of change. Findings for this thesis from a careful study of Fauré's *mélodies*

starting from the late nineteenth century show a gradual tendency towards increased harmonic complexity with a corresponding reduction in lyricism. From the time of *La Bonne Chanson* onwards, the vocal line progressively sheds its easy vocalism and memorable melodies to become a vehicle for poetic declamation. This is increasingly noticeable in relation to the versification changes effected by Symbolist poets, considered at the beginning of this chapter. Nevertheless, while it may be said that Fauré's late songs no longer charm in the same way as his salon *romances*, the intensity of concentrated expression produced by a judicious economy of means cannot be denied.

5.5.2: Fauré's melodic adaptation of Symbolist poetic style

The technique adopted by Fauré to shape the voice part to the rhythms, contours and sonorities of Symbolist verse is that of the *récitant* (a declaimer of poetry) with the aid of a melodic line adapted to support declamation and enhance the listening experience. Fauré-Fremiet points out Fauré's belief that a composer should strive for an intimate union between his music and the poetic work (Fauré-Fremiet, 1957, p. 45). This is manifested in Fauré's intentional connection of vocal and poetic rhythms and in a much simplified vocal line. This deliberate simplification of melodic means, focusing on clarity and communication, allows Symbolist imagery, suggestions, sensations and correspondences to emerge freely.[44]

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[44] Other composers from this period and into the first half of the twentieth century, setting French poetry to music, have adopted an approach akin to Fauré's with regard to musical prosody, using simplified means and drawing attention to the text. Thus, Albert Roussel (1869–1937), composing a *mélodie* in 1908 on G. Jean-Aubry's *Flammes,* written in *vers libres*, has nevertheless made ample use of simple declamatory rhythms and downbeats

The following examples explore the ways in which the vocal line gains a new contour based predominantly on narrow intervals or diatonic movement. Phrases rise and fall more gradually than in earlier *mélodies*; expression is less overt; rather, it arises from text recitation itself through note durations and repetitions, as well as by gradual dynamic variations and occasional sudden tessitura alterations. Above all, the singer's knowledge of French diction and accentuation plays a major role in this vocal line closely attuned to the declamatory nuances of the Symbolist poetic line.

Le don silencieux, examined earlier, is a typical example of a melodic line governed by the text. By the careful management of the vocal line (in its gentle rise and fall or in pitch repetitions) and of rhythmic patterns (leading to or indicating word, syntactic or poetic stresses), Fauré constructs his own unique musical declamation on the pulse, musical recitation which is closely related to text pacing and inflections (one example can be seen in *Le don silencieux,* bars 2–4).[45]

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5.5.3: Pitch and melodic repetition for declamation

Pitch repetition used as a means of rhythmic declamation originates in the fairly lyrical Verlaine settings, as seen in analytical material from Chapter 4 and in passages from *La Bonne Chanson*: bars 36–39 (Example 5.14 below)

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for word or line stresses within his less tonal harmonic environment. In a similar fashion, Francis Poulenc (1899–1963) often employs downbeats either to initiate or end phrases; again, the Cubist and Surrealist poetry, of which many of his *mélodies* are crafted (for instance *Tel jour, telle nuit*, 1936–37, or *Banalités*, 1940), calls for relatively simple musical recitation means in order that the text may be heard and experienced, albeit in a highly stylised declamatory fashion where wide intervallic leaps mimic exaggerated spoken intonation in a twentieth-century return to vocalism.

45 See complete score and translation in Volume 2, Appendix C.

from Une Sainte en son auréole' (for alliteration and assonance on [d] and [a], bringing out duple groupings); bars 9–12 (Example 5.15) from N'est-ce pas?' (a thrice-repeated motif illustrating the poet's indifference); bars 46–50 (Example 5.16) from J'ai presque peur en vérité' (featuring pitch repetition assonance and alliteration on [i], [ ], [s] and [ ]). In these excerpts, Fauré places pitch repetitions close to one another, avoiding large intervallic leaps and holding back from excessive dramatic gestures to maximise textual and rhythmic effects.

Example 5.14: 'Une Sainte en son auréole (*La Bonne Chanson*, 1892–94), bb. 36–39

Example 5.15: N'est-ce pas?' (*La Bonne Chanson*, 1892–94), bb. 9–12

Example 5.16: 'J'ai presque peur en vérité' (*La Bonne Chanson*, 1892–94), bb. 46–50

Leading to the Symbolist style, *Le parfum impérissable* represents a further step towards a declamatory melodic contour. Pitch repetitions are paired with rhythmic patterns to mimic recitation rhythms in a predominantly step-wise melodic line in which vocal tessitura clearly parallels emotional states. Accordingly, the first two stanzas remain for the most part in the lower or middle vocal range during Leconte de Lisle's description of the sublime perfume lingering within the dust of its shattered phial. In the same way as the third stanza turns to the poet's description of the pain of a broken heart, Fauré's music alters: in rising chromatically to a higher vocal tessitura the unrequited love... at the heart of the song's mournful ecstasy' is suddenly given voice. Johnson considers this song an intimation of things to come and a precursor of the style of the late song cycles' (Johnson, 2009, p. 263). Certainly, prosody and melody no longer resemble the memorable *Lydia, Nell* or *Les roses d'Ispahan* set on de Lisle's verse.

After the remarkable *Don silencieux*, *La Chanson d'Ève* carries on with the well-established device of pitch repetition. Used in the context of brief rhythmic segments or short syntactical phrases, repeated pitches contain a relatively low level of dramatic intensity suitable for text clarity or for bringing out particular sonorities (in contrast with large intervallic leaps or a sustained high tessitura). Repetition is also featured in reiterated motivic phrases, though the latter are used sparingly and in an unpredictable manner in Fauré's late songs.

In Dans la pénombre' (*Le jardin clos,* Example 5.17), written in quasi-recitative style, the melodic line is made up predominantly of pitch repetitions

or step-wise motion with very occasional leaps, of which the largest is a perfect fifth .

Fauré relieves dramatic tension as the tessitura is very gradually lowered by the use of repeated notes. Lengthier note values and ties gently neutralise the stresses of the stated triple metre. Additionally, an unhurried rhythmic pace contributes to the interpretation of this reflective text. Despite the simplification of musical means in his late songs, Fauré retains some of the techniques commonly used in earlier compositions, in this instance, the law of lengthening, clearly signalling the the end of the poem.

Example 5.17: 'Dans la pénombre' (*Le jardin clos*, 1914), bb. 33–39[46]

The beginning of Veilles-tu, ma senteur de soleil', from *La Chanson d'Ève,* provides an illustration of pitch reiteration combined with repeated rhythms. Fauré translates the predominantly end-accented syntactic groups with the familiar ♪♪♪ pattern, which leads naturally to durational stresses. Paired with the *Allegretto con moto* tempo and a fluttering semiquaver accompaniment, this rhythmic motif also evokes Eve's youthful vitality (Example 5.18).

Pitch repetitions are also found in the reiteration of brief melodic motifs.

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[46]   Through the golden foliage, / Among the lilies of her thoughts.

In Dans un parfum de roses blanches' (*La Chanson d'Ève,* Example 5.19), a clear melodic, rhythmic and harmonic sequence announce the spreading glow of sunset on Eve's Paradise, depicted by notes and harmonies modulating upward by a major second.

Example 5.18: 'Veilles-tu, ma senteur de soleil' (*La Chanson d'Ève,* 1906–10), bb. 2–6[47]

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47 Are you heedful, o my sun-like odour, / My aroma of golden bees,

Example 5.19: 'Dans un parfum de roses blanches' (*La Chanson d'Ève,* 1906–10), bb. 20–23[48]

Sur le pa - ra - dis bleu   s'ou-vre un pa - ra - dis   d'or;

In Prima verba', Fauré brings out Symbolist correspondences as the limpid air of Paradise fascinates the young Eve. Recurring words and sonorities create musicality in this excerpt:

Table 5.13: 'Prima verba' (*La Chanson d'Ève,* 1904), C. van Lerberghe, second stanza (excerpt), recurring sonorities and words

Second stanza (excerpt)	Recurring sonorities and words	
Avec tes grappes de rubis,	[ ] [l] [ ] [i]	avec, tes
Avec tes gerbes de lumière,	[ ] [l] [ ] [i]	avec, tes
Avec tes roses et **tes** fruits.[49]	[ ] [l] [ ] [i]	avec, tes

Example 5.20: 'Prima verba' *(La Chanson d'Ève,* 1906–10), bb. 6–10

A - vec tes grap - pes de ru - bis,_____ A - vec tes

ger - bes de lu-miè - re,   A - vec tes ro - ses et tes fruits._____

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[48] Above a blue Eden a golden paradise spreads.
[49] With your clusters of rubies, / With your sprays of light, / With your roses and your fruits.

Eve's growing wonder is mirrored in Prima verba' with a simple melodic motif built around a minor third and repeated three times, each new statement rising by a semitone. Contrary to the excerpt taken from Dans un parfum de roses blanches, (Example 5.19), minor rhythmic and melodic variations direct the listener's attention to the text rather than to a predictable melodic and rhythmic sequence. By using these subtle variations, Fauré ensures that rich imagery and recurring sonorities retain their central place.

Example 5.21: 'Je me poserai sur ton coeur' (*Le jardin clos,* 1914), bb. 1–9[50]

Je me poserai sur ton coeur' (*Le jardin clos*) is one of Fauré's most effective songs from the point of view of prosody. His use of ties and

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[50] I shall descend upon your heart, / Like the springtime upon the sea, / Upon the barren spaces of the sea.

syncopations in the accompaniment skilfully prevents potentially recurring downbeat accents in the triple metre bar; additionally, Fauré often avoids downbeats as end-of-line stresses in the vocal line. The two instances of downbeat stress in bars 31 and 34 (Example 5.22) are linked to an explicit return to the Eb major tonic key, a sign that Fauré is gathering the various musical threads in preparation for the song's conclusion. The melody follows a very gradual arch within the interval of a fifth up to the first downbeat goal in bar 9. All rhythmic groups are end-accented, directed to longer note values which then proceed onwards without haste, sustained by the ongoing piano syncopations yet, for the most part, avoiding potential downbeat stresses.

Example 5.22: 'Je me poserai sur ton coeur' (*Le jardin clos,* 1914), bb. 29–35[51]

Repeated rhythms using neighbouring pitches in Example 5.21 consist mostly of variations on ♪♪♩ , whereas the dotted motif: ♪. ♪ slightly lengthens secondary prosodic stresses. The last seven bars of the song in the vocal line (Example 5.22) span a scant perfect fourth and move solely in step-wise motion. Barely stressed syllables and extended note values, in augmentation from the previous phrases, create a monotone effect, evoking the image of a

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[51] I shall descend upon your heart / Like a bird upon the sea.

bird finding rest upon the undulating sea, in a symbolic representation of loving consolation and repose.

Je me poserai' requires great skill on the part of the singer: a flawless legato and an intimate knowledge of French prosody are essential to recite this carefully constructed text. Recordings reveal two main approaches to its interpretation: on the one hand, singers Elly Ameling (2006c, CD) and Karine Deshayes (2009b, CD) follow Fauré's melodic line almost in the manner of plainchant, with a smooth line and few stresses save for the durations indicated by the composer. Their interpretation embodies Fauré's late-style *parlando* vocal line, needing only the support of the keyboard part to complete the atmosphere. Other singers, like Jennifer Smith (2005, CD) and Marc Boucher (2005b, CD), give extra expressive weight to longer notes, an interpretation resembling that of more strongly inflected speech than heard in the performances of Ameling or Deshayes. In Smith's performance, while the resulting expression is varied and sustained by a constant legato, the addition of emphasis over and above Fauré's durational stresses in this quasi-barcarolle occasionally disturbs the consolatory feel of the text, as in the final full-bodied *crescendo* and *diminuendo* in bars 32–33. Perhaps Sarah Walker (1992c, CD) succeeds best in combining calm with varied shadings in her performance, where stresses are present yet subtle, and where tessitura and dynamics are used effectively in proportion to the song's general tone, as in bars 12–16 and 24–29.

A comment on this song by Vladimir Jankélévitch may suggest a key to

its understanding and performance: Fauré, ici comme partout, se tient «sur le seuil», sur ce seuil indistinct où la barcarolle devient berceuse, où la balance des flots se confond peu à peu avec les battements du coeur; où les dilemmes fondent qui séparaient le spirituel et le physique' (Jankélévitch, 1938, p. 210).[52] Again, here are references to the equivocal nature of Fauré's music as a doorway into a deeper understanding of suggestions and meanings, supporting Symbolism's immersion into the world of dreams with sober yet expressive declamation, as highlighted by this analysis.

Pitch repetition, particularly in a medium or low vocal tessitura, facilitates declamation in all of Fauré's last song cycles and notably in *Mirages*, where *vers libres* abound. In true Symbolist style, lines of verse of varying metres are commonly found, along with frequent *enjambements* from one line to the next, contributing to the breakdown of metrical regularity. Two representative examples from this cycle follow.

The first, from Jardin nocturne' (Example 5.23), is Fauré at his *parlando* best, with one or at most two pitches per bar. Here, only the subtlest of prosodic shadings on the pulse, rendered in a variety of flexible rhythms, is needed to declaim this evocative and sensuous text, while pitch repetitions within a restricted vocal range follow the inflections of expressive speech. In this context, the *contre-rejet* from the second to the third line of verse in bar 7 is negotiated smoothly.

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[52] Here, as in everything else, Fauré stands on the threshold', on the indistinct threshold where the barcarolle becomes a lullaby, where the ebb and flow of the sea is gradually merged into the beating of the heart; where the oppositions between the spiritual and physical spheres vanish.

Table 5.14: Jardin nocturne' (*Mirages,* 1919), R. de Brimont, first stanza (excerpt), rhythmic divisions and process

First stanza (excerpt)	Rhythmic divisions and process	
Nocturne jardin // tout rempli de silence,	5+6	
Voici que la lune ouver- // te se balance	7+4	contre-rejet
En des voiles d'or flui- // des et légers;[53]	7+4	

Example 5.23: 'Jardin nocturne' (*Mirages,* 1919), bb. 2–10

Reflets dans l'eau', the second song of the cycle *(*Example 5.24), also includes examples of long phrases of declamation on repeated notes. Bars 12–17 ascend gradually in pitch using note repetition in whole tones and semi-tones from F to C. Bar 16, two bars before the melodic goal (évente', b. 17), is comprised almost entirely of the note B with a barely perceptible insertion of an A to relieve monotony. Fauré then eases the emotional tension, which had been slowly increasing for five bars, with a sudden downward octave leap, a melodic device used to great effect in a variety of settings (studied in the next section). In Example 5.24, the descending octave leap may also be said to

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[53] Nocturnal garden, filled with silence, / Now the full moon swings / Among shifting and light golden veils.

illustrate the poet's experience of the refreshing breeze (la brise au souffle frais / qui nous évente', b. 17).

Example 5.24: 'Reflets dans l'eau' (*Mirages,* 1919), bb. 12–17[54]

A - lors au fond du Pa-ssé   bleu,___ mon corps min-ce n'é-tait qu'un peu d'om-bre mou-

van- te, sous les lau-riers et les cy-près___ J'ai-mais la bri-se au souf-fle frais___ qui nous é - ven- te...

5.5.4: Restricted vocal range and controlled tessitura

Pitch and motif repetition, mainly associated with declamatory rhythms, constitute important features of the restricted vocal range in Fauré's late-style songs. Putting aside an unproven link between vocal tessitura and hearing loss in Fauré's later years, the use of pitches situated for the most part within the interval of a ninth in the medium-low vocal range has prompted some authors to speculate on Fauré's preference for the low female and male voices as a plausible explanation for tessitura choices. According to Nectoux, Fauré developed this particular affection' for the warmer tones of the mezzo-soprano and baritone voices early in his career, preferring clear declamation to undue reliance on high-range vocalism (Nectoux, 2008, p. 120). This argument paints a limited picture, however. Fauré's songs undeniably require a consistently clear enunciation, but his early songs contain a fair number of instances of lyricism and high-range vocalism; indeed, some of his favoured

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[54]   Thus, from the blue depths of the Past, / my slim body was a mere/ moving shadow; / under the laurels and the cypresses / I liked the breeze's cool breath / that refreshes...

singers were soprano Emma Bardac (who was the inspiration for *La Bonne Chanson*) and tenor Maurice Bagès, for whom Fauré transposed a number of songs to high keys beyond the usual comfortable range of most tenors.

In Fauré's late songs, lyrical and sweeping melodic lines have been abandoned in most cases for simplified melodies, at times reminiscent of plainsong. Starting with *Le don silencieux,* Fauré's songs testify to his mature melodic style, given to clear and expressively sung declamatory rhythms with restrained musical expression, completely attuned to the Symbolist writing style. Poetic recitation rests primarily on the singer, whose task consists of rendering the text as Fauré interprets it through rhythms and stresses, pitch and tessitura, dynamics and pacing. While an aesthetic preference may have inspired Fauré to opt for the richer quality of the lower male and female voices at one time or another, late-style tessitura choices distinctly point to expressive recitation, where vocal aesthetics matters less than poetry. As poetic styles evolve throughout Fauré's life, the rhythmically based declamatory relationship between text and music in his songs emerges ever more clearly, as evidenced by the research in this thesis.

One important consequence of the restricted vocal span in Fauré's last songs is the increased importance of any alteration to the vocal (and, at times, pianistic) range. Thus, while a medium or medium-low tessitura in these songs can be associated with clear poetic recitation, any departure from this region of the voice should be construed as indicative of emotional or dramatic change. This is comparable to the way in which actors or public speakers alter vocal intonation for expression or effect. Whilst restricted melodic intervals

already reflect speech intonations, it follows that a greater dramatic effect is achieved with sudden and large intervals.

As a result of the repeated pitches and reduced vocal range of the *parlando* style, the melody features a much less varied contour; thus, any change in its configuration warrants attention. Fauré treats tessitura variations in two ways: new pitches are either arrived at gradually or reached suddenly by way of a large rising or descending intervallic leap. It could be said that these tessitura alterations offer little innovation on Fauré's earlier works or indeed on traditional means of vocal expression: songs like 'Toujours' (*Poème d'un jour*, 1878, Example 5.25) or *Ici-bas* (1874, Example 5.26) feature large upward or downward intervals following passages in relatively stable tessituras, much like the late *mélodies*. However, significant changes have occurred in the songs composed 30 years after these Parnassian examples.

Example 5.25: 'Toujours' (*Poème d'un jour,* 1878), bb. 24–27

Example 5.26: *Ici-bas* (1874), bb. 22–27

The most visible distinction, brought out repeatedly, is found in the melodic line and its rhythms, tailored to conform to Symbolist declamation style. By contrast, earlier songs, inspired by the extroverted expression of Romanticism and by the vocal conventions of the operatic stage, often feature range exploration and sustained high tessitura to express strong emotion. The excerpt from 'Toujours' (Example 5.25) features a melodic line consistent with the *romances* and *mélodies* from the 1870s. The angular melodic contour and dramatic expression of 'Toujours' and the Italianate vocalism of *Ici-bas* (Example 5.26) contrast sharply with the sober lines of *Le don silencieux* or 'Reflets dans l'eau'.

In addition, modifications brought to phrase length alter the perception of tessitura differences in later songs. The long lines of Symbolist poetry, as a consequence of high syllabic count (twelve syllables or more) or of end-of-line *rejets* along with the irregular *vers libre*, result in a larger number of pitches and beats within the same restricted vocal range. Consequently, greater dramatic emphasis results from tessitura alterations. A passage from the middle section of 'Cygne sur l'eau' (*Mirages*), bars 26–35, shows how Fauré imperceptibly manipulates rhythm and tessitura to illustrate the text subtly amid the ongoing declamation.[55]

With great control and delicacy, as if to mirror the swan's smooth progress on the water, Fauré twice leads the melody upward to a new vocal region: first to Db on 'désir' for a slightly longer duration (bb. 26–29), returning three bars later, this time through D on the way to Eb on 'inconnu fuyant' (bb.

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[55] See translation and score in Volume 2, Appendix C.

29–32). Whilst these two phrases share the same tessitura, dramatic impact distinguishes them from one another. The initial climactic goal on désir' depicts a veiled expression of longing for the poet (represented by the figure of the mythical black swan), while the second, higher ascent, sustained by ongoing rhythmic patterns (♪♪♪) leads to the brief Eb goal, as elusive in duration as the mysterious unknown pursued by the swan. Fauré embeds meaning into the music, not only through sensitive recitation rhythms and inflections on an unobtrusive melodic line, but also in the care with which each nuance of the Symbolist text is coloured by tessitura within the entire musical fabric.

Most melodic intervals in Fauré's late songs span no more than a third, and less frequently a fourth; major and minor seconds are the most prevalent intervals by far. Hence, rising or falling leaps of a fifth or more are almost certainly planned by Fauré for optimising dramatic impact. This is suggested by the way in which these large intervals occur in the songs, by their connection with particular words or expressions, by the presence of associated dynamics, as well as by the sheer extravagance of these events in otherwise diatonic melodic passages.

Large intervallic leaps occur at moments of high emotion associated, to a certain extent, with particular themes. Moreover, tessitura and large intervallic shifts may underline or colour groups of lines or particular stanzas and, at times, an entire song. For instance, Comme Dieu rayonne' (*La Chanson d'Ève,* Example 5.27, bb. 9–12), features ascending leaps immediately followed by an even larger descending interval (b. 12) to depict

ecstatic speech. In this passage, Eve admires God contained in Creation: Ah! comme il chante en ces oiseaux.../Qu'elle est suave son haleine'.[56]

Example 5.27: 'Comme Dieu rayonne' (*La Chanson d'Ève,* 1906–10), bb. 9–12

O mort, poussière d'étoiles', the last in Fauré's *Chanson d'Ève* cycle, presents a contrasting mood. Here, most phrases progress downward from the middle vocal range with pitches contained mostly within the interval of a sixth, downward from A to C. Only two phrases rise up from the solemn tranquillity of Eve's yearning for death: Viens, souffle sombre où je vacille / Comme une flamme ivre de vent'[57] (Example 5.28, bb. 7–9) and Mort où mon âme aspire! / Viens, brise-moi…'[58] (Example 5.29, bb. 13–15). These high tessitura exclamations of longing emerging out of the low vocal range and its subdued colours point to Fauré's careful reading of van Lerberghe's pantheistic Creation narrative. In O mort', Eve's desire for death is symbolised by the quiet descent of the tessitura and dynamics into the depths of silence Whilst Fauré deliberately scores most of the vocal lines of the cycle in a range suitable for clarity of recitation and in keeping with the mood of the text, in this song of quiet acceptance he makes use of tessitura variations to adjust to

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[56] Ah! how he sings in these birds... / How sweet his breath.
[57] Come, sombre breeze where I flutter / Like a wind-drunk flame.
[58] Death to which aspires my soul! / Come and break me…

sudden changes of expression. The descent on 'Viens, brise-moi' in Example 5.29 effectively depicts Eve's dissolution as her voice sinks into the symbolic stillness of the low tones of the female voice.

Example 5.28: 'O mort, poussière d'étoiles' (*La Chanson d'Ève,* 1906–10), bb. 7–9

Example 5.29: 'O mort, poussière d'étoiles' (*La Chanson d'Ève,* 1906–10), bb. 13–16

A significant number of large rising vocal intervals are associated with text depicting light. In addition to bars 8–9 in Example 5.28 above ('Comme une flamme'), bars 15–17 of 'L'aube blanche' (*La Chanson d'Ève*) feature a rising perfect fifth on the words 'une flamme' (Example 5.30); similarly, the phrase 'Je plonge en des vagues de feu'[59] ('Il m'est cher, amour, le bandeau' from *Le jardin clos*) concludes on a rising fifth from Ab to Eb, denoting a moment of high emotion illustrated by imagery evoking flames (Example 5.31). In another *mélodie,*from *La Chanson d'Ève,* 'Roses ardentes', Fauré combines both rising and falling intervals to depict the 'supreme force' of van

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[59] I plunge into fiery waves.

Lerghe's Creation narrative embodied in the radiant Sun: first a falling

minor sixth alluding to the immanence of the supreme deity in this mythical

Eden, then rising intervals of a fourth followed by a minor third as Eve, turning

to the sun, feels her soul rising to God (Example 5.32).

Example 5.30: 'L'aube blanche' (*La Chanson d'Ève,* 1906–10), bb.15–17

Example 5.31: 'Il m'est cher, amour, le bandeau' (*Le jardin clos,* 1914), bb.

27–29

Example 5.32: 'Roses ardentes' (*La Chanson d'Ève,* 1906–10), bb. 27–36

Large falling intervals are associated with a variety of meanings,

including references to vast spaces or to a God-like presence, but also to the
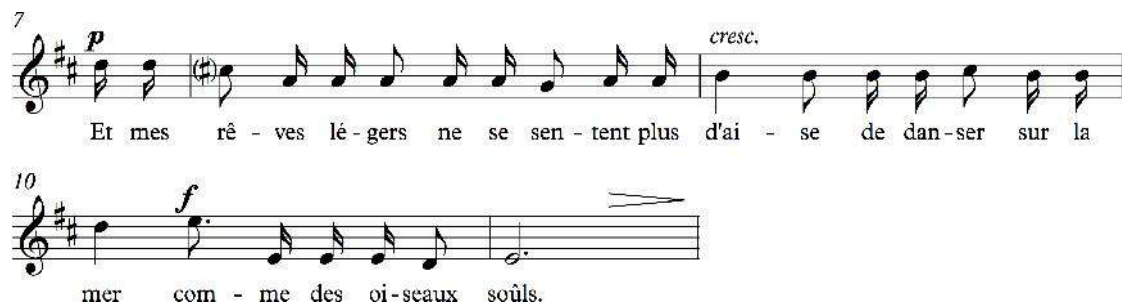
soul and the heart, to the earth, to darkness or to death. One remarkably

allusive example is the Faurean musical illustration of the sky mirrored in a

lake at the very end of Cygne sur l'eau' (*Mirages*) in bars 54–61.[60] As the

music gradually descends through an octave from C to C (from middle-high to

low tessitura), Fauré invites the listener to a Symbolist contemplation of the

reflected sky, to gaze ever more deeply beneath the surface at the clouds, the

flowers and the stars of this imaginary watery world.

Another example of large downward melodic leaps can be found in La

mer est infinie' (*L'horizon chimérique*). The poet, Jean de la Ville de Mirmont

(1886–1914), compares his fleeting dreams to drunken birds joyously tossed

about on the waves. This is illustrated by a sudden falling octave leap in the

middle of the word comme': Et mes rêves légers ne se sentent plus d'aise /

De danser sur la mer comme des oiseaux saoûls.'[61] This vocal gesture is

stylistically consistent with the entire cycle: the themes of the sea, of immense

spaces, of natural powers and of unutterable yearnings all contribute to the

unique character of Fauré's last song cycle. While recitation rhythms still

constitute an important feature of the prosody, more overt expression and

range exploration are in evidence in the vocal lines, in a manner reminiscent

of earlier *mélodies*, in effect a last backward glance on Fauré's part. At the

same time, these songs bear the hallmark of the preceding cycles, with pitch

repetitions, non-metrical poetic stresses and harmonic changeability,

highlighting the close connection between text and vocal line established in

Fauré's late songs.

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[60] See translation and score in Volume 2, Appendix C.
[61] And my agile dreams only find their joy / In dancing on the sea like drunken birds.

Example 5.33: 'La mer est infinie' (*L'horizon chimérique,* 1921), bb. 7–11

Recordings of this song reveal far more about Fauré's ability to translate meaning through the voice than through the melodic contour alone. The sudden falling octave is indeed a valuable tool and all singers demonstrate its expressive power to some extent. Bernard Kruysen (2002b, electronic download), Charles Panzéra (2002b, CD) and Gérard Souzay (2002c, CD) powerfully deliver the text, accentuating the *forte* dynamic in bar 10 and crucially maintaining this level until the *diminuendo* at the end of the next bar. All three singers emphasise the large interval and, in so doing, depict in sound the image of the wind-tossed birds. Conversely, Marc Boucher (2005c, CD) and Christopher Maltman (2005b, CD) take a more lyrical approach to the passage: while a clear declamation prevails, a smooth delivery and the almost effortless management of the octave leap contrast with the highly effective dramatic emphasis of the three other singers.

In this last song cycle, Fauré confirms yet again his insight into the voice as an instrument for effective and expressive declamation. Analytical evidence repeatedly reveals how musical rhythms are used to great effect as rhythmic approximations of French poetic declamation in a predominantly medium vocal range. In *L'horizon chimérique*, written for the baryton-martin

voice of Charles Panzéra, the technical management of the sudden passage

from a fairly high to a medium range in this voice type specifically highlights

meaning. The more open sound quality favoured by the high French baritone

voice strongly brings out the dramatic contrast between the two pitches of the

octave leap, particularly within the *forte* dynamic indicated in the score. Thus,

Fauré makes use of a large descending interval in a specific voice type,

brought out rhythmically with a slight lengthening of the upper note value and

with a higher dynamic level. The first three singers (Kruysen, Panzéra and

Souzay) fall into the baryton-martin vocal category; the other two singers,

particularly Maltman, favour a more evenly-balanced vocal tone, hence

playing down the dramatic elements in this particular song. *L'horizon*

chimérique is Fauré's only song cycle intended for the male voice and written

in the particular context of French vocal music, which included the unique

baryton-martin voice type. Written specifically for Panzéra's voice,

nevertheless it does not establish a precedent for reserving any of his

previous songs for certain voice types or, indeed, for songs to be performed in

particular tonalities. Ample evidence exists from Fauré's lifetime, documented

by research, which points to transpositions in published and also in

manuscript form for the purpose of performance; however, the late cycles

were published in one key only and, keeping in mind the significance of vocal

range and intelligibility for performance arising from this thesis, original keys

should be given priority in these cases.[62]

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[62] Opinions differ on the subject of original keys versus transpositions for Fauré's songs. Daitz and Nectoux, in their critical edition of the songs and duos from 1861–75, have attempted to restore what their research of extant documents, editions and manuscripts from that period indicates as the songs' original keys. They maintain the view that market forces rather than a flexible approach to song setting dictated the common nineteenth-

In Fauré's Symbolist song settings, gradual changes in tessitura agree with ongoing recitation rhythms by their steady upward or downward progress. In this respect, melodic contours subtly support and reinforce prosody and expression while maintaining the clarity of the *parlando* style on the pulse. However, large and often unexpected intervallic leaps not only provide Fauré with additional means of mirroring speech inflections, but may also serve to emphasise rhythms and draw attention to specific meanings (as in references to light in *La Chanson d'Ève* and *Le jardin clos*). Their sudden occurrence produces rhythmic disruptions as they interrupt the gradual rise and fall of melodic lines in much the same way as words can alter meaning or poetic rhythm (as in Verlaine's poetry).

Two excerpts further illustrate the contrasting effect of large descending intervals in Fauré's late songs. Bars 17–19 of Dans la nymphée' (*Le Jardin clos*) feature a slow melodic climb to Eb, illustrating a statue's imagined awakening in a nymphaeum, a Symbolist passage into the mythical world. The subsequent octave fall then serves as new ground from which the magical being may rise. In this way, Fauré gradually builds dramatic tension, then suddenly alters melodic direction and intensity, remaining thereafter in the middle-low tessitura. Example 5.33 above from La mer est infinie' uses the falling octave as a sudden and subtle word-painting: while note values

century publishing practice of offering songs in at least two tonalities to suit high and low voices (Daitz & Nectoux, 2010, pp. 153–54). Howat and Kilpatrick take a more nuanced view vis-à-vis the various transpositions of Fauré's songs, basing their argument on the variety of keys in which songs existed, often in Fauré's own hand, destined to suit a particular performer's vocal qualities. They note: Few of Fauré's early songs have a real sense of key specificity: within appropriate bounds of practicality and taste, they sit easily in a range of keys'. Regarding the last cycles, composed after 1900 and published in only one tonality, Howat & Kilpatrick suggest that the reshaping of the *mélodie* at the time by composers such as Debussy and Ravel led to a generalised tendency for the publication of songs in their original keys (Howat & Kilpatrick, 2014, pp. 307, 308).

scarcely alter, the wide intervallic space seems to disrupt rhythmic flow as the melody changes direction (b. 10). In Example 5.34 below, the octave leap again appears to interrupt melodic and rhythmic flow as the crotchet on 's'éveille' (b.19) combines with the subsequent octave leap to illustrate the poet's nocturnal vision.

Example 5.34: 'Dans la nymphée' (*Le jardin clos,* 1914), bb. 16–19

5.5.5: Melodic changes and forward motion on the pulse

Fauré's fluid approach to musical metre and bar-line structures is a marked feature in his late songs. As underscored by analytical findings in previous chapters, this important characteristic of his rhythmic treatment of poetic texts is established fairly early around the 1870s and is continually refined through contact with each subsequent poetic school. Fauré's flexible rhythms on a constant pulse, in their approximation of recited French, generate long musical phrases made up of small musical intervals, much like the music from the Renaissance studied by the young Fauré at the École Niedermeyer. Robin Tait reflects on this link with the past in Fauré's music:

While it is fanciful to suggest that Fauré's rhythmic approach is identical to that of Palestrina, it is nevertheless true that much of Fauré's music conforms to that description: rhythmic consistency is preserved by adherence to a constant pulse, and rhythmic variety is produced by melodic lines whose rhythms may be unremarkable taken in isolation, but which interact with the pulse in a manner not unlike the style of the Renaissance (Tait, 1989, p. 189).

Tait's acknowledgement of a link between Fauré's rhythmic treatment in his melodic lines and the Renaissance style underlines two significant points from which further conclusions may be drawn: rhythmic consistency (as in the use of recurrent rhythmic patterns) and the importance of the constant pulse, minimising the regularity of metre and bar-lines. Taking Tait's argument even further, it is possible to say that Fauré's rhythms interact, not only with the pulse, but with each other among the different lines of the voice and piano parts (more on this in section 5.6). However, in his understanding of Symbolist poetic meaning and versification, Fauré evolved further in the treatment of melodic rhythm within his own approach to musical metrical structures.

Two literary changes contributed to this reform: the long poetic lines, often made up of *vers libres* and *rejets* to other lines, and the thematic content of Symbolist verse. Both of these elements inspired Fauré to alter his manner of writing melodic lines, leading to longer phrases matching lines of verse and closely following the inflections of a declaiming voice. Versification changes altering line accentuation schemes combined successfully with Fauré's non-

metrical treatment of the musical phrase on a constant pulse. For instance, most of Prima verba' (*La Chanson d'Ève*) and of *Le don silencieux* exemplify Fauré's free use of the beats within the bar, with the downbeat as only one of a number of possible accentuation goals. Additionally, thematic content based on vague sensations or imprecise settings are reflected further in Fauré's varied phrase lengths, chromatic and fluid harmonies as well as by a subtle structuring of lines and stanzas.

Long melodic lines on the pulse are particularly evident in *Mirages*, its four *mélodies* consisting of poems made up either of long lines of verse of ten to twelve syllables (Cygne sur l'eau' and Danseuse') or of lines with variable metres with several *enjambements* (Reflets dans l'eau' and Jardin nocturne'). While these songs, like most of Fauré's Symbolist *mélodies,* include both a free accentuation scheme and the occasional downbeat emphasis, in *Mirages* particular care is taken to minimise any undue musical stress. Rather, repetition, duration, as well as tessitura and dynamics, as seen earlier, now indicate emphasis, mood or changes of emotion. Thus, the *parlar-cantando* melody, possibly in its most advanced form, brings the poetic text to the fore (Nectoux, 2008, p. 570). Songs examined in this chapter demonstrate Fauré's skill in utilising a more sober expressive palette to declaim text on a pulse-controlled yet varied melodic line.

5.6: Rhythm, harmony and accompaniment

Harmony and accompaniment in relation to poetic and melodic rhythms in

Fauré's late *mélodies* take on a supporting role, reminiscent of the early *romances* and songs prior to the 1870s. Whilst Fauré constantly aimed to innovate during his career, a number of key features remained through to the settings of Symbolist poets.[63] This section focuses on two points of interaction between rhythm and harmony in the late songs: the structuring role of harmony and its importance in maintaining motion on the pulse. The way in which accompaniment patterns support these two functions is also studied.

5.6.1: The structuring role of harmony and accompaniment

In a certain sense, harmony in tonal music can be viewed as a structuring factor by virtue of organised chordal progressions, building up and decreasing dramatic tension, ultimately resolving this tension in various cadential forms, representing diverse types of musical punctuation. In Fauré's late songs, this structuring role is at once more complex and less clear-cut than in earlier *mélodies*. Karl Johansen describes the fluid quality of Fauré's harmony:

> Dans ces oeuvres,[64] la musique coule de phrase en phrase
>
> sans être ponctuée par aucune cadence conclusive. Il en
>
> résulte un mouvement harmonique qui semble être en
>
> évolution constante, traversant les tonalités au lieu de les
>
> confirmer, sans jamais s'attarder. L'équivoque harmonique est
>
> donc très étroitement lié à la continuité musicale, car en

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[63] A letter to his wife from Zurich on 23 August 1904 explicitly states Fauré's aspiration for renewal with every new composition (Fauré–Fremiet, 1951, p. 85).

[64] Here, Johansen refers to typically brief statements of the tonic: in the *Seventh Prelude*, op. 103 (1909–10), bb.19–22, with the tonic chord in second inversion, and in the *Ninth Nocturne*, op. 97 (1908), bb. 15–21, with a dominant seventh chord. These piano works date from the same period as the late songs and Johansen's analysis highlights the mood created by harmonic ambiguity in Fauré's compositions in the early twentieth century.

repoussant constamment la détente harmonique, Fauré

diffère notre attente de résolution, parfois même jusqu'à la

cadence finale (Johansen, 1999, p. 91).[65]

Fauré increases ambiguity through implied or fleeting tonalities. As Johansen

notes, this technique depends on previously established harmonic precedents.

L'équivoque harmonique soulève une difficulté de taille en ce

que nous confondons souvent l'équivoque avec l'incertitude

ou l'obscurité...(Notons bien que c'est seulement avec sa

résolution qu'un accord est équivoque ou non.) Autrement dit,

la création de l'équivoque harmonique a besoin d'un

précédent. Ce précédent peut paraître dans la même

oeuvre...; il peut aussi exister dans la mémoire de l'auditeur

comme une convention sous-entendue de l'usage courant

(Johansen, 1999, p. 67).[66]

Johansen establishes two features of Fauré's harmonic style, noticeably

present in the late songs: the link between continuity and non-resolving

harmonies and the mechanism of Fauré's harmonic ambiguity, built on the

absence (or distance) of pre-existing precedents. Both these elements feature

in the themes under discussion in this section: the structuring role of harmony

and its importance for maintaining forward motion. Yet again, Fauré combines

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[65] In these works, music flows from one phrase to the next without punctuation by a concluding cadence. The resulting harmonic movement appears to be in constant motion, passing through tonalities without remaining in any one key. Harmonic ambiguity is thus very closely linked to musical continuity for, by constantly putting off harmonic resolution, Fauré postpones our expectation of this resolution, at times right to the final cadence.

[66] Ambiguity raises significant questions in that one often confuses it with uncertainty or complexity... (It is worth noting that a chord needs its own resolution to be considered equivocal or not.) In other words, to create harmonic ambiguity one needs a precedent. This precedent may exist in the same work, or it may be present in the listener's memory as an implied convention in common usage.

innovation with tradition, using harmony to structure poetic form expressively whilst retaining links with past processes (for instance, using perfect cadences as indicators of stability or of dramatic resolution).

Delayed resolution to the tonic, harmonic ambiguity and the fluid passage from one tonality to another are well-established processes as Fauré begins composing his Symbolist *mélodies.* The origins of these techniques may already be discerned in the Verlaine settings. J'allais par des chemins perfides' or Avant que tu ne t'en ailles' (both from *La Bonne Chanson*) are examples of Fauré's exploration of tonality in the context of the highly rhythmic Verlaine verse (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.3).

The poetry Fauré selects for his late *mélodies* still exhibits many of the hallmarks of Classically-inspired forms: many works are divided into stanzas or incorporate syntactically driven phrases and lines of verse in octosyllabic or *alexandrin* metres (e.g. Exaucement', Inscription sur le sable', Cygne sur l'eau'). However, lines or stanzas are often structured musically by moving fleetingly in and out of tonalities rather than by traditional means such as tonic cadences or instrumental interludes. Predictable harmonic progressions (such as those leading to common cadences – the precedents discussed by Johansen) no longer constitute habitual signs of tonality. Thus, Fauré effectively controls the overall harmonic process, creating brief clusters of tonality or, conversely, chords in constant mutation, to increase or decrease dramatic intensity while subtly reflecting poetic structure.

Fauré employs these fluid chordal movements in the second stanza of La messagère' (*Le jardin clos*, bb. 12–22, Example 5.35). Harmony proceeds

from one chord to another by way of a common note in the constantly moving semiquaver arpeggios of the piano right hand. From the first chord in the tonic of G major, the listener travels through broken forms of C# major, E major and Eb major on the way to an Ab7 chord (a minor second up from the tonic at the beginning of the stanza) to conclude, aptly, on the words: Le chemin est mystérieux'.[67] The entire text within this section is a description of the passage through a mystic portal into a kind of parallel space inhabited by mythical beings, thematic content in keeping with the Symbolist ideas of imaginary worlds, mystery and myths. Harmonic rhythm remains limited to one main chord per bar, with occasional and transient modifications on the third (and last) beat, mainly through single note changes in the semiquaver broken chord patterns.

Le don silencieux presents several examples of Fauré's subtle use of harmony to support poetic structure.[68] The text is arranged into eight couplets of *alexandrins* in *rimes plates* (abab) alternating feminine and masculine endings from couplet to couplet. In a manner consistent with other songs from this period, Fauré establishes the main tonality (E major) at the beginning of the song (bb. 1–3) and returns to it unequivocally in the last five bars (bb. 25–29). Between these two statements, the E major chord may be glimpsed (rarely in root position), hints of the tonic in the midst of progressions in constant movement. Despite a sense of harmony in continuous flux, closer examination reveals that Fauré inserts statements of the tonic at strategic points.

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[67] The way is mysterious.
[68] See translation and score in Volume 2, Appendix C.

Example 5.35: 'La messagère' (*Le jardin clos,* 1914), bb. 12–22

At the junction between couplets two and three appears a fleeting allusion to a V7–I progression in bar 7 (the tonic chord being in first inversion with a major seventh): ...que pourtant vous cherchiez. / Je mettrai...'. In the transition from the third to the fourth couplets in bar 10, Fauré retains an E major chord, first in root position with a major seventh, then with a minor seventh in third inversion. One weak form of a perfect cadence in the tonic key occurs in bars 20–21, where both the dominant and tonic chords are in inverted form, with the cadence occurring at the end of a cleverly planned series of chords. These form the bridge between couplets six and seven and delay the moment of resolution in bar 21 (albeit a fleeting and weak resolution, as seen above), in a kind of harmonic *rallentando* brought about by the use of repeated notes and by diatonic movements within the same pianistic tessitura, featuring a variety of chords around E major.

Harmony also plays a role in the linking or division of stanzas. In *Le don silencieux*, Fauré distinguishes between couplets linked by meaning, syntax and / or punctuation and those containing distinct ideas or sentiments, stated as complete poetic sentences. A space varying between one-and-a-half to four beats (this includes the last syllable of the preceding couplet) may separate two self-contained couplets; linked couplets follow one another without pause, much as lines following each other in a *rejet* (this continuity occurs between the fifth and sixth, and the seventh and eighth couplets). Spaces between couplets are rarely harmonically static, as in bar 20, or in bar 10 at the junction of the third and fourth couplets, where each couplet is granted a fleeting statement of the tonic chord (...de quel coeur je vous prie! /

Et puis je les mettrai...').

In other songs, such as Exaucement' (*Le jardin clos*) or Reflets dans l'eau' (*Mirages*), stanzas run on with scarcely a beat or two between them. Conversely, Quand tu plonges tes yeux dans mes yeux' (*Le jardin clos*) and Je me suis embarqué' (*L'horizon chimérique*) present clear temporal and harmonic boundaries between stanzas. From these examples and from a close examination of Fauré's other late songs, stanza delimitations do not appear to follow a general set of rules; rather, declamatory pace and possibly the intensity of emotional states or descriptions may at times explain the quick succession of lines of verse or stanzas, as seen in La messagère' or Reflets dans l'eau'.

While it is not the goal of this thesis to examine in great detail the role of harmony in Fauré's *mélodies*, a few points of interest taken from *Le don silencieux* merit further consideration. By the end of the 1870s, Fauré habitually used the technique of modulating by means of a single common note taught at the École Niedermeyer. This technique is illustrated particularly clearly in the accompaniment patterns and pianistic tessitura in *Le don silencieux*: patterns and tessitura remain stable throughout and allow subtle note changes within the very restricted range in the piano right hand. By engineering rapid and, at times, unrelated chord changes, Fauré varies the emotional tension of the music, using chord progressions of varying complexity combined with chromaticism. This is exemplified in bars 18–20 where harmony pairs with the rising melodic tessitura in a crucial section of the verse, as the poet surrenders and offers her hands (her being) to God:

Lasses d'avoir porté tout le poids d'un secret / Dont ma bouche et mes yeux et mon front parleraient'. Here, each chord save one (the last beat of bar 19) shares a common note with its neighbours. While the harmony seems to hover around E minor, additional colour in the form of diminished, half-diminished and augmented chords sustain ambiguity and give impetus to the phrase, seeming to hasten (bb. 18–19) and then to relax motion (b. 20).

Sequential passages, used relatively rarely in Fauré's songs, represent yet another expressive use of harmony. In *Le don silencieux*, bar 22 is repeated one whole tone lower in the next bar, in a rare occurrence of Faurean word-painting: ...**légères** d'être vides, / Et **lourdes** d'être tristes...'. This sequential passage introduces further ambiguity as to the harmonic direction of the remaining line of verse. Will a third statement of the sequence be necessary? How and when will Fauré lead the harmony back to the tonic? In the present example, the second statement of the sequence (b. 23) leads to a root position tonic chord, introducing the concluding section of the song. Combined with vocal line contour, harmony contributes to colouring and pacing of text for nuanced and expressively sung declamation.

5.6.2: Harmony and forward motion on the pulse
One of Fauré's essential musical qualities, brought out in Robin Tait's study, is the power of his harmonic language to destroy the tyranny of the bar-line' (Tait, 1989, p. 222). Elsewhere, Tait observes that rhythmic consistency is preserved by adhering to a constant pulse' (Tait, 1989, p. 189). Both these statements about metre and harmony apply to the songs on Symbolist poetry:

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ongoing lines of verse sung expressively on music whose motion is directed mainly by textual rhythms on a regular pulse. Furthermore, text and music are supported, controlled and coloured by series of harmonic progressions delaying resolution, often until the very end.

Caballero writes that Fauré's floating continuity...depends on a generally low level of tension'. He then qualifies this statement by recognising the presence of a powerful yet low level of tension in Fauré's music (Caballero, 2001, pp. 236–37). In other words, tension is constant but modest, with few variations. Superficially, this statement makes perfect sense: in order to sustain a non-metrically structured motion, the constant impetus of the musical pulse is necessary. However, the powerful underlying tension to which Caballero refers (but about which he offers no explanation) needs to originate from other sources. To a great extent, the rhythmic impulse and direction of the text (that is, the poetic rhythms) and the energy provided by the harmony and accompaniment patterns produce and sustain this ongoing tension: in other words, *l'organisation du mouvement*.

Paradoxically, Fauré uses some of the same devices to impel musical energy forward as he does to structure and alter it. Fluid or unsettled harmonies may well form part of the colour of a particular stanza, thereby setting it apart; these same harmonies also increase musical and dramatic intensity to direct the music to an eventual tonal resolution. Comme Dieu rayonne' (*La Chanson d'Ève*) contains some of Fauré's most dissonant harmonies in the cycle, produced by the movement of individual voices in the accompaniment. While each stanza begins with a clearly stated tonal centre (it

is difficult to speak of tonality in this context), chromaticisms quickly disorient the listener and create a higher level of intensity than Caballero seems to imply in his comments.

The song begins in C minor with first stanza harmonies frequently alluding to non-chromatic chords (e.g. A minor or E major). Each of the four voices in the piano part proceeds at its own pace, featuring quavers in both the top right hand (stating the theme from bb. 1–6 of Paradis') and top left hand lines, while the two lower lines in each hand are made up of sustained note values, such as crotchets or minims. This produces constant changeability as passing notes create momentary harmonies as well as rapid forays into foreign keys (see Chapter 2, Example 2.5).

The entire second stanza of Comme Dieu rayonne', beginning with a statement of the key of G minor (the dominant in minor form), is characterised by a fair degree of harmonic instability. A number of diminished and augmented chords, still in the same pianistic four-voice pattern, contribute to an increase in dramatic intensity, as Eve admires nature imbued with the presence of the pantheistic God. The third and final stanza begins in Ab major with a sudden change in the accompaniment pattern to semiquaver broken chords, another means of acknowledging poetic structure. Fauré gradually steers the harmony towards C major, confirmed by a change in key signature in bar 21. In bar 23, a clear statement of the original tonality occurs on the final syllable of radieux', the last word of the poem.

Comme Dieu rayonne' is not atypical of Fauré's compositions in this period. However, it is unique in the daring harmonies arising from voice-

leading, providing a foretaste of his very last work, the *String Quartet*, op. 121 (1923). Vladimir Jankélévitch describes how Fauré extends his harmonic language to the very limits of tonality: Fauré...sait tendre jusqu'au rebord aigu de l'oubli la patience de la mémoire auditive; il a calculé les moindres résonances du ton, mesuré les limites au delà desquelles le ton n'est plus reconnu, exploré le seuil le plus extrême de l'inconscient' (Jankélévitch, 1938, p. 196).[69]

Harmony for colour, intensity and motion, controlled or ongoing: in the musical recitation of Symbolist poems, Fauré supports text with non-resolving and generally unstable harmonic movements, with fleeting changes produced by voice-leading and by the judicious use of clear statements of tonality. By examining harmony in relation to text, this thesis shows its role in supporting, controlling and pacing textual declamation in Fauré's late songs, particularly its function in enhancing forward motion on the pulse.

5.6.3: Accompaniment patterns and harmony

Unlike *La Bonne Chanson*, where voice and piano share equally in the musical declamation of Verlaine's verse, enhanced by great pianistic variety, Fauré's late *mélodies* appear to return to an earlier accompaniment style. A large number of the late songs comprise arpeggiated or chordal piano parts, reminiscent of the early *romances* or of the Romantic poetry settings of the 1870s. However, the similarity in pianistic style with these first songs belongs to manner rather than to harmony. The forty-six years separating the

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[69] Fauré knows how to extend to the extreme limit of oblivion the tolerance of aural memory; he has worked out the merest tonal resonances, measured the limits beyond which tonality is no longer perceived, explored the extreme edges of the unconscious.

composition of *Dans les ruines d'une abbaye* (1868) and La messagère' (*Le jardin clos,* 1914), for example, bear witness to Fauré's constant refinement of his compositional and harmonic languages in a consistent yet innovative manner. Both songs feature broken chords and a rapid tempo; however, the later song, based on more complex poetry and thematic content, is characterised, among other things, by a through-composed structure and by changeable harmonic and accompaniment styles.

Many of the factors contributing to the distinct character of the late songs result from traits originally found in the poetic works: irregular numbers of syllables in a line of verse, numerous *enjambements* and *rejets*, the use of alliteration and assonance for rhythm and sonority, all are manifestations of transformations to poetic style and of the deeper meanings contained within words and symbols. Accordingly, accompaniment style is simplified (while harmonic language grows in complexity) to allow the vocal line and text to be declaimed clearly and expressively and to accommodate poetic irregularities.

The apparent simplicity of the accompaniment patterns constitutes an important contributing factor to the shaping of harmony. The more subordinate role of the keyboard in the late songs (in contrast with the melodically interactive style of the earlier compositions up to 1900) supports vocal recitation and allows countless minute yet richly chromatic changes in chordal progressions. However, the return of the arpeggiated and chordal accompaniment patterns does not signify a lack of innovation or imagination on Fauré's part. Subtle rhythmic and pattern variations contribute to every song's unique character.

Variations on the arpeggio motif include: the simple pattern and sparse voicing in *Le don silencieux*,[70] the modified flutter of the *moto perpetuo* semiquaver movement in La mer est infinie' (Johnson, 2008, p. 361) and the thick texture in the middle section of Roses ardentes' starting in b. 14. Even straightforward chords in the manner of *Le secret* find a renewed energy: anticipations and suspensions in Prima verba', the ethereal transparency of Diane, Séléné' or vamping in Quand tu plonges tes yeux dans mes yeux', testify to Fauré's continuing creativity until late in life (Examples 5.36 to 5.40).

Example 5.36: 'La mer est infinie' (*L'horizon chimérique,* 1921), bb. 6–9

Example 5.37: 'Roses ardentes' (*La Chanson d'Ève,* 1906–10), bb. 14–17

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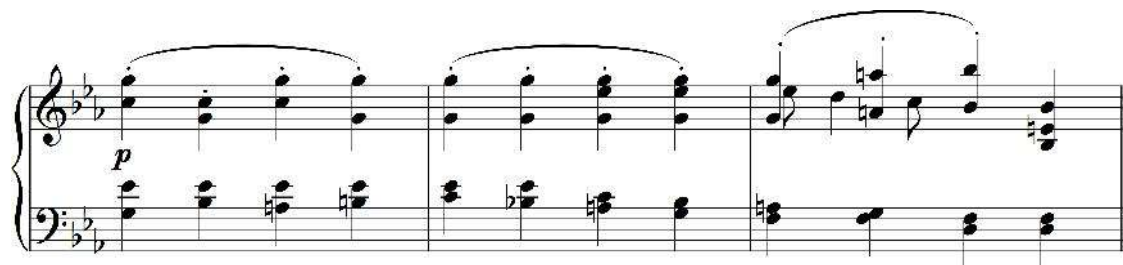
[70]   See translation and score in Volume 2, Appendix C.

Example 5.38: 'Prima verba' (*La Chanson d'Ève,* 1906–10), bb. 1–4
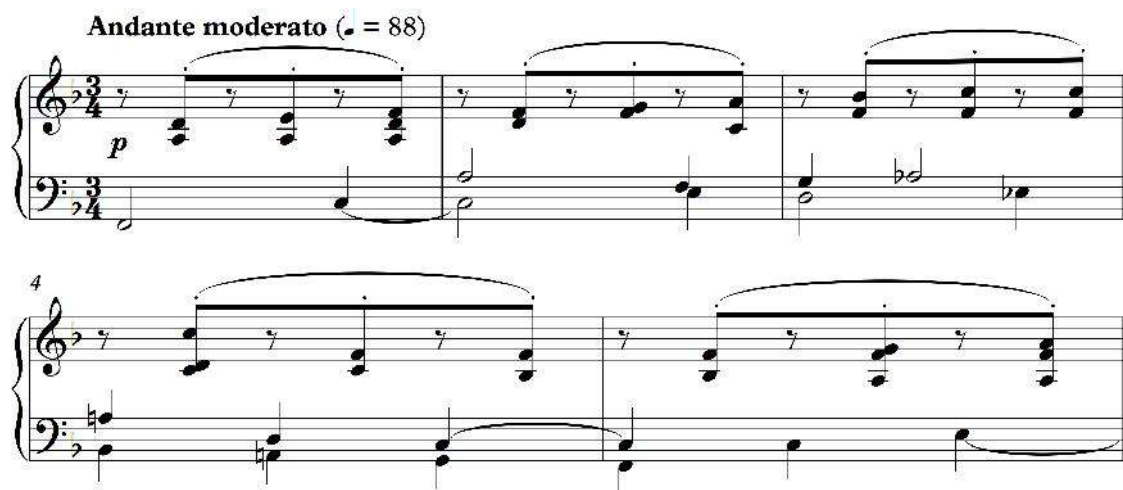
Example 5.39: 'Diane, Séléné' (*L'horizon chimérique,* 1921), bb. 11–13

Example 5.40: 'Quand tu plonges tes yeux dans mes yeux' (*Le jardin clos,*

1914), bb. 1–5

One representative example of Fauré's late accompaniment style is
featured in Exaucement'.[71] The transparent two-voice texture consists of
downward quaver arpeggio motifs in the right hand, while the left hand
provides harmonic and rhythmic tension with sustained notes of varying
durations. The song's apparent simplicity belies the underlying sophistication
of the means employed by Fauré: single note changes in the right hand
broken chords produce harmonic clashes with the left hand long note values.

Like the Symbolist poetic musicality, Fauré makes use of diverse
techniques for harmonic colour and expression: constant movement
supporting fluid note and harmonic changes, motif repetition and bass notes of
various durations in rhythmic counterpoint to blur metre and bar-line regularity
and accompaniment patterns designed to bring out and support the
declamatory style and rhythm of the vocal line. It may be said that the
accompaniment has been relegated to a secondary role during this period;
however, like the vocal line, it is now entirely linked with the text and has
become a vehicle for expressing Symbolist nuance and ambiguity, in songs
exhibiting frequent and unexpected harmonic progressions and chromaticism.

5.7: Chapter Conclusion

The qualities of allusion and nuance of Symbolist poetry as well as
modifications to Classical rules of versification clearly contributed to further
refinement in Fauré's vocal music, highlighted by the detailed study of

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[71]   See translation and score in Volume 2, Appendix C.

numerous song excerpts in this chapter. Poetic musicality and correspondences along with sonority within the *vers libre* led Fauré to re-think the vocal line in the *mélodie,* indeed to renew the voice-piano partnership once more to suit the reformed poetic environment. Thus, vocal and piano parts regain some of the independence suspended in the Verlaine settings. Fauré's Symbolist vocal lines exhibit several common traits: a restricted vocal range within a predominantly medium or low tessitura, diatonic or narrow intervallic movements, except for rare and noticeable wide leaps for increased expression, melodic lines almost devoid of vocalism to favour clear and expressive declamation for communication.

The central element of this thesis remains the relationship of poetic and musical rhythm and metre in Fauré's songs; in the last song cycles this relationship becomes most evident. Decades of manipulating rhythm, melody and harmony have led Fauré to this point, where word and rhythm appear inseparable, clearly enacted in the 1919 cycle *Mirages*. Musical examples bring out the return of simple rhythmic patterns and pitch repetition, used as Fauré's closest musical approximations of French speech. In turn, melodic contour and tessitura, supported by dynamics reflect the expressive inflections of a reciting voice. Finally, inspired by his first songs, Fauré constructs accompaniment patterns reminiscent of the *romances,* at times baffling in their harmonic intricacy yet clothed in a new sobriety, at once controlling and energising form and musical lines on the pulse.

Fauré's late-style restraint should not be identified with a simplistic manner. In fact, as analytical evidence in this chapter reveals, Fauré discerns

in Symbolist verse the necessity for clarity in recitation in order to facilitate access to its deeper meanings; accordingly, he strips all extraneous material from his songs, all ornamentation and all musical fancies', laying bare the poetic text to be expressively declaimed by singer and accompanist. In his late-style *organisation du mouvement*, Fauré sets the *vers libres* rhythmically on the pulse to ease recitation and comprehension and, like the Symbolists, to allude to meaning by making use of vocal tessitura, dynamics, pacing and harmony. Paradoxically, in his quest to express poetic meaning and nuance, Fauré's *mélodie* style remained intensely personal to the end, a unique voice seeking to translate into song the singular voices of the poets.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This thesis has addressed the question of rhythm in Fauré's songs and has sought answers to the following questions:

1. What relationship exists in Gabriel Fauré's songs between, on the one hand, poetic rhythm and, on the other hand, musical rhythm and metre?

2. What does this relationship reveal about poetic prosody and musical declamation?

Central to this thesis is the idea of *l'organistion du mouvement,* Dessons and Meschonnic's concept based on continuity in speech, allowing multiple rhythmic manifestations of language (*la parole*) in each unique recitation of a text, the first of which is the author's. This study has been carried out in three principal ways: firstly, by situating the early fracture between Latin and French declamatory rhythms and metres (believed to have taken place between the fifth and seventh centuries) as the foundation of modern French versification, thus establishing its particular prosodic style; secondly, by contextualising and relating Fauré's songs to specific poetic periods in their socio-cultural environment to provide an analytical framework; thirdly, by addressing specific poetic and musical characteristics in song excerpts and commercial recordings to illustrate the rhythmic and metrical text-music relationship in context, and by using analytical results to clarify the issue of musical prosody and declamation. In exploring the thesis questions on the text-music relationship in Fauré's songs, this research brings new insight to the subject

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by concentrating at the outset on the poetic text (with its associated stylistic and rhythmic elements) as the source of Fauré's techniques and inspiration for musically expressive declamation in his songs.

6.1: Analytical findings

The organisation of the thesis into specific periods along Fauré's timeline revealed the evolution of his prosodic style through the examination of the musical setting of verse from each consecutive poetic movement. Following Chapter 2 and its survey of the evolution of French prosody away from Latin rhythmic influences, Chapter 3 examined Fauré's Romantic and Parnassian songs. The more structured line of verse produced by the Romantic poets Hugo and Gautier – the latter a transitional figure towards Parnassianism – demonstrate Fauré's early experimentations with prosody. Works by Hugo and Gautier reflect the poetic framework based on classic metres such as the *octosyllabe* or the *alexandrin*, as well as fairly predictable accentuation patterns and infrequent deviations from versification rules. Fauré's first songs, starting in 1861 with *Le papillon et la fleur*, are stylistically consistent with contemporaneous solo vocal works by composers such as Gounod and Fauré's mentor and friend Saint-Saëns: the four-square phrase structure of the *romance,* adopted for the early songs, features a relatively simple accompaniment providing harmonic support for Fauré's well-known lyrical vocal lines.

However, after a four-year stay in Rennes and his subsequent return to

Paris in 1870, Fauré's solo song composition becomes strongly influenced by verse from the Parnassians Leconte de Lisle and Sully Prudhomme. Whilst the precepts of balance, technical control and beauty of this literary movement inspired by Hellenistic ideals come through clearly in Fauré's songs (for instance *Lydia* and *Les roses d'Ispahan*), the effect of the 1870 Franco-Prussian War must not be discounted. As France sought to recover its wounded pride, a current of cultural nationalism led to the development of the French equivalent to the *lied,* the *mélodie*.

Fauré's role in the growth and establishment of the *mélodie* in the latter part of the nineteenth century can be traced back to the Parnassian settings. For the first time, he systematically applies and develops a rhythmic approach for expressive musical declamation by the use of brief recurring rhythmic patterns to mimic speech rhythms within the highly structured context of Parnassian verse, a poetic style still attached to its Classical antecedents while exhibiting signs of emancipation (e.g. a greater number of *rejets* and of *enjambements* at the *césure*, variations in metre and increased use of words for rhythmic effect, as seen in *Le secret* and *Ici-bas* in Chapter 3). In his aim to recreate the durational stresses of French speech, Fauré also initiates a lifelong emancipation from the recurring stresses of musical metre (stresses which contradict the variable and end-accented character of the French language), an emancipation which, by extension, nullifies the effect of the bar-line. Consequently, musical movement becomes progressively more organised around the pulse rather than on an overarching metrical structure as it re-creates French prosody and declamatory patterns; this crucial feature

of Fauré's style is repeatedly brought out by song analysis in this thesis.

During the early period of his career, lyricism prevails in Fauré's songs, as the *mélodie,* inspired by the *lied,* finds its place in nineteenth-century French musical Romanticism. Influenced for a time by teacher, composer and renowned singer Pauline Viardot, Fauré adopts some of the conventions of solo stage works into his *mélodies*: songs such as *Après un rêve* (1877) and *Barcarolle* (1873) display wide vocal ranges and sustained high tessituras for expressing intense emotion; dynamic contrasts and vocal effects including wide ascending or descending intervallic leaps also appear regularly. Whilst Fauré's songs during this time demonstrate a variety of imaginative accompaniment settings, inspired by the innovative voice-piano collaboration of the *lied*, the real locus of Fauré's experimentation with rhythm, metre and prosody remains the vocal line, where rhythmic patterns combine to simulate speech rhythms, supported by a pulse-centred forward motion. As seen in Chapter 3, the songs based on Romantic and Parnassian poems incorporate tied notes over the bar-line, long-held notes across the middle of the bar and prosodic accents located on beats other than the downbeat, techniques designed to neutralise metre and enhance forward motion for effective and expressive declamation.

Fauré's Verlaine songs (examined in Chapter 4) constitute a turning-point in his solo vocal music output. Verlaine plays a transitional role in the nineteenth-century poetic world, spanning both the Parnassian and Symbolist movements, the creator of uniquely crafted, highly rhythmic and lexically idiosyncratic verse. Verlaine's highly personal poetic style, with its power to

depict nuances of meaning with textual rhythms and sonorities, was instrumental in the gradual relaxation of Classical versification rules at the end of the nineteenth century. Between 1887 and 1894, Fauré perfects his rhythmic technique for expressive declamation with songs on texts by Verlaine, and *mélodies* from this seven-year period demonstrate the closest collaboration between voice and piano yet seen in his songs, attained by treating the voice as an additional harmonic layer (J'allais par des chemins perfides', *La Bonne Chanson*). However, among the expressive characteristics of the melodic line from this period, the most remarkable remains the rhythm, closely modelled on Verlaine's verse, freely transgressing metrical boundaries and replete with sonorous echoes of alliterative and assonant effects (J'allais par des chemins perfides'*,* Chapter 4, Example 4.17).

With the Verlaine songs, Fauré unknowingly anticipates his last (Symbolist-inspired) period as he crafts melodies no longer as vocally memorable as his previous Romantic and Parnassian settings, yet effective in the evocation of Verlaine's nuanced tableaux (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4.3 and the detailed analysis of La lune blanche luit dans les bois'). The reason for this is clear: having poetic prosody as its primary energy, the contour, tessitura and dynamic range of the vocal line espouse expressively sung declamation more closely than before, allowing greater flexibility for subtlety, nuance and ambivalence, and for the depiction of the correspondences so highly valued by Symbolist poets. One of Fauré's most effective *mélodies* in terms of craftsmanship and Symbolist nuance, À Clymène' (*Cinq mélodies de Venise'*, Chapter 4, Section 4.1.3), symbolically and musically depicts by

means of a continuous melody woven between voice and piano the inner connections linking senses and meaning.

The development of his rhythmic-prosodic technique with the Verlaine settings eases Fauré's transition to pure Symbolist poetry at the beginning of the twentieth century (discussed in Chapter 5). Up to this point, constant renewal, rooted in tradition (Gervais, 1971, p. 19), runs through Fauré's works; in his quest to translate the hidden meanings of the Symbolist texts, he strips his last songs of all embellishment, of all apparent musical distractions. Narrow vocal ranges in low to medium vocal tessituras incorporate melodic contours progressing in steps or small intervals to facilitate textual intelligibility, as seen repeatedly in the analysis of excerpts from Fauré's last four song cycles. One important rhythmic feature makes a renewed appearance, however: rhythmic patterns, no longer organised systematically as in the pre-Verlaine years, now flourish freely as musical approximations of expressive speech, often mirroring the varied lines of free verse.

The expressive power of irregular phrase segments was brought out in the analysis of the third stanza of Prima verba' (*La Chanson d'Ève*; Chapter 5, Table 5.5*)*. The sobriety exhibited by the late songs also extends to the piano part, now restored to a chordal or arpeggiated supporting role as in the first songs, yet retaining the refined and often complex harmonic play of fluid progressions and fleeting modulations found in later works. In composing his four last song cycles, Fauré utilises his lifelong experience of the voice-piano partnership to symbolically allow the verse to emerge through the music. In this respect, Fauré's work is highly personal, both in terms of his *parlando*

vocal style and of his unique harmonic language, frequently hinting at modality while enjoying a great modulatory freedom, at times bordering on the outermost edges of tonality, exemplified in Comme Dieu rayonne' *(La Chanson d'Ève*, Chapter 2, Example 2.5)*.* Melodic and harmonic freedom, in essence Fauré's personal and nuanced venture into the new musical modernism, has been attained through a lifetime of careful management of prosodic and musical rhythm to achieve *l'organisation du mouvement.*

6.2: Theoretical Implications

Whilst writers like Caballero (2001, pp. 223–238) and Ober (2012, pp. 131–132) re-group phrases in new musical metres to suit word or locution accents or to attempt to clarify what appears to be faulty prosody, they fail to address fully the poetic text, its rhythms, features and transformations, as the initial and main motivation for Fauré's pulse-centred melodic writing. To better understand Fauré's rhythmic-prosodic process, this thesis has examined poetic texts on their own and noted their rhythmic attributes; it has explored the effect of sonority on rhythmic flow, taking into consideration the various technical and stylistic alterations to the Classical line of verse through changing poetic periods and the effects of these changes on sung prosody in Fauré's songs.

This thesis has demonstrated that a text-centred study of rhythm in Fauré's songs brings clearer answers to the question of the text-music relationship in his *mélodies.* Above all, in the process of exploring Fauré's

option to overlook bar-lines in favour of a continuous rhythmic motion on the pulse for expressive declamation, this approach opens out to a more comprehensive outlook in two ways, allowing for interaction between literary and musical elements.

Firstly, examining *mélodies* from the point of view of the poetic text at the outset situates the genre in both the literary and musical spheres equally, with the poem as the genesis of a song. All prosodic and sound elements, all metrical and rhythmic events in the poetic text impact on its musical realisation (confirmed by Fauré's careful text selection and painstaking compositional process). Moreover, modifications in Fauré's compositional technique clearly arise from contact with poetic styles (as discussed in detail in Chapters 3–5). The main findings of this thesis pointed to Fauré's consistent pursuit of the best expressive declamation, suited to each poet and poetic style, as he constantly sought to translate the poet's thoughts. This, in turn, has direct implications for performance practice, as reviewed in the next section.

Initiating an analysis from the perspective of the text avoided the imposition of purely musical constructs on Fauré's songs, and this is the second way in which this approach sheds new light on the text-music relationship. This thesis has shown that describing apparent metrical re-groupings as hemiolas or as changes in musical metre not only presents a limited explanation for prosodic accentuation shifts but also runs the risk of imposing unwanted structures on musical phrases, structures which may well prove to be inconsistent with the fundamental movement of the French phrase, while contradicting Dessons and Meschonnic's principle of

l'organisation du mouvement in its means of elucidating rhythmic interactions in poetry. Fauré's unique approach to French prosody is to neutralise the recurring downbeat accent and to create durational syllable stresses on the forward-going pulse, aided by brief rhythmic groups modelling speech. Thus, this text-based outlook minimises the impact of rhythmic events centred solely on musical means; musical metre and rhythm become vehicles for expressive declamation, as the analysis of songs spanning Fauré's entire output has demonstrated. Moreover, a detailed examination of Fauré's last four song cycles, beginning with *La Chanson d'Ève* (1906–10), pointed to a clear decline in lyricism in favour of a closer association of the melodic line with the text and its spoken rhythms and inflections – more evidence which suggests the significant influence of poetic, prosodic and expressive elements in the musical score.

6.3: Performance implications

One important performance implication of Fauré's neutralisation of metrical signals and stresses in favour of pulse-centred forward motion in his *mélodies* is the facilitating of French speech rhythms in the vocal line. Evidence from this thesis has shown that musical means such as tied notes over the bar-line, long-held notes across the middle of the bar and poetic stresses placed on beats other than the downbeat contribute to durational accentuation and end-accented expressive musical declamation. Symbolist poetry, in its progressive emancipation from Classical versification rules, exhibits many of the rhythmic

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changes leading to Fauré's late-style vocal declamation (examined in Chapter 5). Rhythmic groups during the Parnassian period and again at the beginning of the twentieth century in the settings of Symbolist texts seek first and foremost to mimic French speech rhythms rather than to alter musical metre and stresses. Infrequent downbeat accentuation reinforces the return to tonic harmonies and often indicates poetic form (for instance, the end of a stanza) rather than interpretative stress; this is particularly evident in *Le don silencieux* (1906) The success of metrical attenuating techniques (through rhythmic means but also through harmony) is such that the positioning of significant poetic line stresses on the downbeat often goes unnoticed in the late songs.

Likewise, harmonic movements contribute to this recitation-based writing: fluid movements between tonalities (according to Gustave Lefèvre's precepts from the École Niedermeyer), series of inverted seventh chords, chromaticism and unstable harmonies in chordal or arpeggiated accompaniments support and colour the vocal line and often help delay harmonic and dramatic resolution until the very end of a song.

Commercial recordings brought other evidence to light as they confirmed Fauré's organisation of rhythmic events on the pulse for optimal expression and declamation. In particular, this thesis has found that native French singers treat rhythmic patterns and groups as would a *récitant*, a poetic recitalist, with a less musically rigorous rhythmic approach, resulting in natural-sounding diction. However, taking into account Fauré's lifelong association with amateur singers, findings indicate that vocal lines often draw

attention to important prosodic stresses by lengthening note values or by inserting rests, thereby assisting efficient recitation for singers of any cultural (or, indeed, linguistic) background. Thus, the evidence from this thesis confirms that Fauré's recitation rhythms, supported by fluid harmonies on the pulse, constitute a valid approach to French prosody and provide important insights into the performance practice of his songs.

6.4: Future research

Relatively little of note has been written about the question of directly relating rhythm and metre to poetic text in Fauré's songs, Ober's 2012 study being the most recent. Yet, the question of the musical treatment of French prosody and of its evolution, starting with the *romance* (and possibly looking at pre-eighteenth-century antecedents) and on through to the development of the *mélodie,* merits further attention. The extent to which composers yielded to poetic imperatives in their music (for instance, the degree to which the French line of verse determined phrasal structure and rhythms), the incursion of stylistic characteristics of stage works into solo vocal music or the very real influence exerted by the Wagnerian phenomenon at the end of the nineteenth century need further exploration. In historical terms, the *mélodie* was relatively short-lived as a genre; and thus one might ask what role the individual paths followed by composers like Fauré, Debussy or Poulenc played in its eventual relegation to a minor vocal music compositional genre in the late twentieth century.

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Katherine Bergeron's 2010 book, *Voice Lessons*, explores the rise of the *mélodie* during France's Belle Époque and the notion of the voice becoming an object of study at the time. Perhaps research which examines the role of the poet's voice could fruitfully explore how *l'organisation du mouvement* is enabled by a variety of voices, including the additional layers of the composer and performers, reciting a poem in the form of a *mélodie*. There is certainly a place for an exploration of the distinction between verse as poetics and verse as performance; in terms of voice, the contrast between the creating voice and the performing voices, in particular that of the composer as intermediary between poet and performer. On a related topic, this thesis brings out in very real terms the French attitude to language as composers aim for a particular clarity of declamation in musical rhythms and inflections. This attitude gave birth to the unique recitation style of Fauré's last songs; could it also have contributed, for instance, to Debussy's recitatives in his opera *Pelléas et Mélisande*? In other words, what further insights arising out of this thesis could be gained with respect to French, its linguistic attributes, its prosody and its musicality if applied in other contexts?

Finally, a striking contrast exists between the realism (one might even say the *verismo*) of French poetic declamation in song as enacted at the turn of the twentieth century and the intentional layering of imprecision in Impressionist art. Both art forms sought artistic truth: one through verbal intelligibility to lead to the underlying mystery beneath the words; the other, through allusion and nuance, perhaps already plunging into the mystery beneath reality. Parallels and contrasts between these art forms could lead to

a deeper understanding of social and artistic contexts of the times and to further research into correspondences between art forms.

In the music of Fauré, it is not the "élément nerveux"[1] which predominates, but a kind of classical refinement, a sobriety and a quiet distinction, that "fantaisie dans la sensibilité",[2] which was the hallmark of the French musical genius in the eyes of Debussy' (Cooper, 1940, p. 58). As this thesis has shown, Fauré's progress in the composition of *mélodies,* from the elegant melodic lines of the 1870s to the nuanced restraint of his last cycles in the early twentieth century, points to a constant search for renewal, a renewal almost entirely shaped by his wish to translate and communicate words and the meanings beyond these words – l'indicible' (the unutterable). Ce que notre poésie n'a pu faire à elle toute seule,' observes Roland Barthes, la mélodie l'a fait parfois avec elle'.[3] Through restraint from excess, through the skilful blending of musical elements in their employ for expressive declamation, Fauré is possibly one of the few composers who comes closest to realising the sublime fusion of word and music.

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[1]   animated aspect
[2]   sensitive fantasy
[3]   That which our poetry has not succeeded in accomplishing on its own has at times been achieved with the aid of the *mélodie* (Barthes, 1982, p. 242)*.*

Appendix A

International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) for French						
Vowels				**Consonants**		
a	as in	patte	/pat/	b	as in bal	/bal/
		pâte	/pɑt/	d	dent	/dɑ̃/
e		dé	/de/	f	foire	/fwaʀ/
		belle	/bɛl/	g	gomme	/gɔm/
		demain	/dəmɛ̃/	k	clé	/kle/
i		gris	/gʀi/	l	lien	/ljɛ̃/
o		gros	/gʀo/	m	mer	/mɛʀ/
		corps /kɔr/		n	nage	/naʒ/
œ		leur	/lœʀ/		oignon	/ɔɲɔ̃/
ø		deux	/dø/		dancing	/dɑ̃siŋ/
u		fou	/fu/	p	porte / pɔʀt/	
y		pur / pyʀ/		ʀ	rire	/ʀiʀ/
				s	sang	/sɑ̃/
Nasals					chien / ʃjɛ̃ /	
		clan	/klɑ̃/	t	train	/tʀɛ̃/
		lin	/lɛ̃/	v	voile	/vwal/
		long	/lɔ̃/	z	zèbre /zɛbʀ/	
œ̃		brun	/bʀœ̃/		jeune / ʒœn/	
Semi-vowels						
j	as in	fille	/fij/			
		huit / ɥit/				
w		oui	/wi/			

Appendix B

French and General Poetry Terminology

Alliteration: the recurrence of identical consonant sounds in a line of verse;
often used to enhance rhythm

Assonance: the recurrence of identical vowel sounds; pre-dates rhyme as a
mark of rhythm in a line of verse; may also be used as a poetic device
for rhythm and sonority

Césure: a rhythmic break in a line of verse of eight syllables or more

Contre-rejet: a technique of versification by which a brief element (a few
syllables) at the end of a line of verse is linked syntactically and
semantically to the next line (e.g. Souvenir, souvenir que me veux-tu?
L'automne / **Faisait voler la grive...** ; P. Verlaine – *Nevermore*)

Diérèse: two adjacent, pronounced and counted vowels within one word (e.g.
Les charmants cris var**iés**; V. Hugo – *Dans les ruines d'une abbaye*)

E caduc or *e muet:* the mute e'; customarily found in words ending in -e', -es',
and -ent', indicating an unpronounced syllable in discursive speech
and an uncounted syllable at the end of a line of verse in poetry; the *e
caduc* is pronounced and counted within a line of verse unless it is
elided (see *élision*)

Élision: the placement of the mute 'e' in the course of the line of verse in front
of another vowel; it is neither counted as a syllable nor pronounced
(e.g. Ta rose de pour**pre à** ton clair soleil; Leconte de Lisle – *Nell*)

Enjambement: literally stepping over'; in poetry, words or phrases which

continue through a *césure* or beyond the end of a line of verse; (*Note*: for the purpose of this thesis, *enjambement* refers to the former occurrence only to avoid confusion)

Hémistiche: the traditional division of a line of verse in two equal numbers of syllables, separated by a *césure;* often used in relation to the *alexandrin* (6+6)

Hiatus: the direct contact of two vowel sounds within a line of verse without elision (e.g. De b**éa**titude et de paix; P. Bourget – *Romance*)

Metre: in French verse, metre is determined solely by syllabic count. Thus:

    i) *Hexasyllabe*: a line of verse of six syllables

    ii) *Heptasyllabe*: seven syllables

    iii) *Octosyllabe*: eight syllables; the most ancient French metre

    iv) *Décasyllabe*: ten syllables; the most popular lyric metre until the late Middle Ages

    v) *Alexandrin*: twelve syllables; the most common metre since the 16th century

Rejet: a technique of versification by which a brief element, linked syntactically and semantically to the preceding line of verse, is highlighted (e.g. Le colchique couleur de cerne et de lilas / **Y fleurit.**; G. Apollinaire – *Alcools*)

Rime (*rhyme*): at the end of a line of verse, the recurrence of identical vowel and/or consonant sounds, regardless of spelling

    i) *Rime féminine*: a line ending with a mute 'e'; the syllable is not counted

ii) *Rime masculine*: a line ending with a fully sounding (and counted) syllable

Common types of rhyme:

  i) *Rimes plates (suivies)*: aabb

  ii) *Rimes croisées*: abab

  iii) *Rimes embrassées*: abba

Sonnet: a poetic form made popular from the sixteenth century, originally comprised of two *quatrains* and two *tercets* to make up fourteen lines of *alexandrins*

Strophe: a stanza; in French poetry, stanzas may or may not be separated by a blank space, but may be characterised by a small indent; all stanzas are known by the number of lines they contain, thus:

i) *Distique*: two lines

ii) *Tercet*: three lines

The most common types: *Quatrain* (4), *Quintil* (5), *Sizain* (6), *Septain* (7), *Huitain* (8), *Dizain* (10).

Terza rima: a poetic form made up of *tercets*, often in *alexandrins* and ending with an isolated line; the rhyme scheme is as follows: aba, bcb, etc.

Vers: in traditional poetry, a line of text characterised by a distinct number of syllables and usually related by its rhyming end to one or more other lines

i) *Vers pairs*: a line consisting of an even-numbered total of syllables, e.g. an *octosyllabe*; *vers pairs* are more common in Classically-

inspired poetry

ii) *Vers impairs*: a line consisting of an odd-numbered total of syllables, e.g. an *heptasyllabe*

iii) Vers libres: within the same poem, lines whose number of syllables is unfixed and which may often be devoid of rhyme; this type became more prevalent from the second half of the 19th century onward

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Discography

Note: All the works from the following recordings are by Gabriel Fauré.

The Discography is arranged alphabetically by singers' names.

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Gabriel Fauré and *l'organisation du mouvement*:
Poetic prosody and rhythmic continuity
in the songs (1861-1921)

Volume 2

Appendix C:
Translations and complete scores of selected songs

Darquise Bilodeau

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of PhD (Music)
in the Faculty of Arts, Design and Media
at Birmingham City University
May 2016

Contents

Songs are in order of appearance in the thesis. Each song is preceded by the poetic text and an English translation.

1. Une Sainte en son auréole' (*La Bonne Chanson*)

Une Sainte en son auréole,	A Saint in her halo,
Une Châtelaine en sa tour,	A noblewoman in her tower,
Tout ce que contient la parole	All that which is contained
Humaine de grâce et d'amour.	In human speech of grace and love.
La note d'or que fait entendre	The golden note heard
Le cor dans le lointain des bois,	From a horn in the distant woods,
Mariée à la fierté tendre	Joined to the tender pride
Des nobles Dames d'autrefois;	Of noble ladies of long ago;
Avec cela le charme insigne	With this the striking charm
D'un frais sourire triomphant	Of a youthful and triumphant smile
Éclos dans des candeurs de cygne	Bprn of a swan-like paleness
Et des rougeurs de femme-enfant;	And the blushes of a child-woman;
Des aspects nacrés, blancs et roses,	Like pearls, white and pink,
Un doux accord patricien:	In a sweet and noble harmony:
Je vois, j'entends toutes ces choses	I see, I hear all of these things
Dans son nom Carlovingien.	In her Carolingian name.

Fauré
Une Sainte en un auréole

Allegretto con moto. ♩ = 138

dolce

U - ne Sainte en son au - ré - o - le, U - ne cha - te - laine en sa tour, Tout ce que con - tient la pa - ro - le hu - mai - ne De grâ - - - - ce et d'a - mour

La no-te d'or que fait en-ten-dre le cor dans le loin-tain des bois, Ma-ri-é à la fier-té ten-dre des no-bles da-mes d'au-tre-fois; A-vec ce-la le charme in-

4

2. N'est-ce pas?' (*La Bonne Chanson*)

N'est-ce pas? nous irons gais et lents, dans la voie
Modeste que nous montre en souriant l'Espoir,
Peu soucieux qu'on nous ignore ou qu'on nous voie.

Isolés dans l'amour ainsi qu'en un bois noir,
Nos deux coeurs, exhalant leur tendresse paisible,
Seront deux rossignols qui chantent dans le soir.

Sans nous préoccuper de ce que nous destine
Le Sort, nous marcherons pourtant du même pas,
Et la main dans la main, avec l'âme enfantine.

De ceux qui s'aiment sans mélange, n'est-ce pas?

Is it not so? we shall go, happy and unhurried, along the path
Which happy Fate shows us,
Little caring whether we are seen or not.

Secluded in love as in a dark wood,
Our two hearts, exhaling their peaceful tenderness,
Will be as two nightingales singing in the night.

Without a care for our future
Fate, yet we shall walk our way together
Hand in hand, with the youthful soul

Of those who love truly, is it not so?

Fauré
N'est-ce pas?

Allegretto moderato. ♩= 92

dolce

N'est - ce pas? nous i -

-rons, gais et lents, dans la voie Mo - des - te que nous

mon - tre en sou - ri - ant l'Es - poir, Peu sou - ci -

-eux qu'on nous i - gno - re ou qu'on nous voie.

Lyrics under the staves:

I - so - lés dans l'a - mour

ain - - si qu'en un bois

noir, Nos deux

soir

Sans nous pré-oc - cu - per de ce que nous des-ti - ne le

sort, nous marche-rons pour - tant du mê - me

pas Et la main dans la

main a - vec l'â - - me enfan - ti - - ne

de ceux qui s'ai - - ment sans mé - lan - - -

- ge,_____ N'est - ce

pas?_____

3. *Prison*

Le ciel est, par-dessus le toit,
      Si bleu, si calme!
Un arbre, par-dessus le toit,
      Berce sa palme.
La cloche, dans le ciel qu'on voit,
      Doucement tinte.
Un oiseau sur l'arbre qu'on voit
      Chante sa plainte.
Mon Dieu, mon Dieu! la vie est là,
      Simple et tranquille.
Cette paisible rumeur-là
      Vient de la ville.
Qu'as-tu fait, ô toi que voilà
      Pleurant sans cesse,
Dis, qu'as-tu fait, toi que voilà,
      De ta jeunesse?

The sky above the roof is
      So blue, so calm!
A tree, above the roof,
      Waves its branches.
The bell, in the sky we can see,
      Softly tolls.
A bird, on the tree we can see,
      Sings its plaint.
My God, my God, life is there,
      Simple and tranquil.
That peaceful far-off rumbling
      Is the city's sound.
What have you done,
      To weep unceasingly like this,
What have you done, now,
      Of your youth?

Fauré
Prison

Quasi adagio. (♩ = 60.)

Le ciel est pardessus le toit si bleu, si cal — me,

Un ar-bre pardessus le toit ber-ce sa pal — me; La clo-che

dans le ciel qu'on voit Doucement tin — te, Un oi-seau sur

l'arbre qu'on voit Chante sa plain — te. Mon Dieu, mon Dieu la

4. *Clair de lune*

Votre âme est un paysage choisi	Your soul is a precious landscape
Que vont charmant masques et	Charmed by masks and Bergarmasks,
bergamasques,	
Jouant du luth et dansant, et quasi	Playing the lute and dancing and almost
Tristes sous leurs déguisements fantasques.	Sad beneath their fantastical disguises.
Tout en chantant sur le mode mineur	Singing in the minor mode
L'amour vainqueur et la vie opportune.	Of victorious love and of an agreeable life
Ils n'ont pas l'air de croire à leur bonheur,	Yet they scarcely believe their good fortune
Et leur chanson se mêle au clair de lune,	And their song mingles with the moonlight.
Au calme clair de lune triste et beau,	With the calm, sad and beautiful moonlight,
Qui fait rêver, les oiseaux dans les arbres,	Setting the birds dreaming in the trees
Et sangloter d'extase les jets d'eau,	And the fountains sobbing in ecstasy,
Les grands jets d'eau sveltes parmi les	The tall fountains among the marble statuary.
marbres.	

Clair de Lune
(Menuet)

Deux mélodies, Op. 46, N° 2

Musique: Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)
Poème: Paul Verlaine
«Fêtes galantes»

Ton original: si bémol mineur

Andantino quasi Allegretto ♩ = 78

Voix

Piano

p

sempre dolce

Vo - tre âme est un pa - y - sa - ge choi - si,

Que vont char - mant mas - ques et ber - ga - mas - ques

sempre cantabile

Jou - ant du luth et dan - sant, et qua - si

tris - tes sous leurs dé - gui - se - ments fan - tas - ques.

Tout en chan - tant, sur le mo-de mi - neur, L'a - mour vain-queur _____ et la _ vie op - por - tu - - - ne, Ils n'ont pas l'air de croi - re à leur bon - heur, Et leur chan - son se mêle au clair de

lu - - ne,

espressivo e dolce

Au cal - - me clair de lu - - ne,

tris - - te et beau, Qui fait rê - ver les oi -

- seaux dans les ar - - - - - bres,

Et san - glo - ter d'ex - ta - - - se les jets d'eau,

Les grands jets d'eau svel - - tes

par - mi les mar - - bres.

5. La lune blanche luit dans les bois' (*La Bonne Chanson*)

La lune blanche
Luit dans les bois.
De chaque branche
Part une voix
Sous la ramée.
O bien aimée....

The pale moon
Gleams in the woods.
From every branch
A voice is heard
Under the foliage.
O my beloved.

L'étang reflète,
Profond miroir,
La silhouette
Du saule noir
Où le vent pleure.
Rêvons, c'est l'heure.

The pond reflects,
A deep mirror,
The shape
Of the black willow
Where the wind weeps.
Let us dream, it is the hour.

Un vaste et tendre
Apaisement
Semble descendre
Du firmament
Que l'astre irise.
C'est l'heure exquise.

A vast and tender
Peacefulness
Seems to descend
From the heavens
Made iridescent by the moon.
It is the exquisite hour.

Fauré
La lune blanche luit dans les bois

Andantino. ♩.= 76

dolce

La lu - ne blan - che luit dans les bois; De cha - que bran - che part u - ne voix sous la ra - mé - e O

1

14

6. J'allais par des chemins perfides' (*La Bonne Chanson*)

J'allais par les chemins perfides,
Douloureusement incertain.
Vos chères mains furent mes guides.

I was wandering along treacherous roads,
Painfully unsure.
Your dear hands guided me.

Si pâle à l'horizon lointain
Luisait un faible espoir d'aurore;
Votre regard fut le matin.

Wanly at the distant horizon
Shone the faint hope of dawn;
Your look was the morning.

Nul bruit, sinon son pas sonore,
N'encourageait le voyageur.
Votre voix me dit: Marche encore!'

No sound, save for his resounding step,
Urged the traveller on.
Your voice said: Keep walking!'

Mon coeur craintif, mon sombre coeur
Pleurait, seul, sur la triste voie;
L'amour, délicieux vainqueur,

My fearful heart, my forlorn heart
Wept, alone, on the dismal road;
Love, the delightful conqueror,

Nous a réunis dans la joie.

Has brought us together in bliss.

Fauré
J'allais par des chemins perfides

gui - des; Si pâ - le à l'ho - ri -

-zon loin-tain Lui - sait un faible es - poir d'au-ro - re

Vo - tre re - gard fut le ma - tin!

Nul bruit, si - non son pas so - no - re,

N'en-cou-ra - geait le voy-a - geur, Vo-tre voix me dit: _____ Mar-che en-

-co - - re! _____

Mon cœur crain-tif, mon sombre cœur _____ pleurait, seul, sur la tris - te

voi - - e,

un poco più mosso.

L'a - mour,_____ dé - li - ci - eux vain -

- queur, Nous

a - ré - u - ni _____ dans la joi -

- - - e!

7. *En sourdine*

Calmes, dans le demi-jour,
Que les branches hautes font,
Pénétrons bien notre amour
De ce silence profond.

[Fondons]1 nos âmes, nos coeurs
Et nos sens extasiés,
Parmi les vagues langueurs
Des pins et des arbousiers.

Ferme tes yeux à demi,
Croise tes bras sur ton sein,
Et de ton coeur endormi
Chasse à jamais tout dessein.

Laissons-nous persuader
Au souffle berceur et doux
Qui vient, à tes pieds, rider
Les ondes des gazons roux.

Et quand, solennel, le soir
Des chênes noirs tombera
Voix de notre désespoir,
Le rossignol chantera.

Calm, in the half-light
That the high branches make,
Let us infuse our love
With this deep silence.

Let us join our souls, our hearts
And our ecstatic senses,
Amid the vague languor
Of the pines and of the arbutus.

Half-close your eyes,
Cross your arms on your breast,
And from your languorous heart
Forever dismiss all intent.

May we be enticed
By the soft and lulling breeze
Which, at your feet, ripples
The expanse of reddened grasses.

And when the solemn evening
Shall descend from the black oaks,
Voice of our despair,
The nightingale shall sing.

Fauré
En sourdine

10

Fer - me tes yeux à de-mi, Croi - se tes bras

sur ton sein Et de ton cœur en-dor - mi Chas - se à ja-

-mais tout des - sein.

Lais - - -sons-nous per - su - a - der Au

souf - fle ber - ceur et doux Qui

vient, à tes pieds, ri - der Les on - des des

ga - zons roux.

mf *sempre*

f espressivo

Et quand, so-len-nel, le soir ____ Des chê - nes noirs tom-be-

8. *Le parfum impérissable*

Quand la fleur du soleil, la rose de Lahor,
De son âme odorante a rempli goutte à
                                      goutte,
La fiole d'argile ou de cristal ou d'or,
Sur le sable qui brûle on peut l'épandre toute.

Les fleuves et la mer inonderaient en vain
Ce sanctuaire étroit qui la tint enfermée,
Il garde en se brisant son arôme divin
Et sa poussière heureuse en reste parfumée.

Puisque par la blessure ouverte de mon
                                      coeur
Tu t'écoules de même, ô céleste liqueur,
Inexprimable amour qui m'enflammais pour
                                      elle!
Qu'il lui soit pardonné que mon mal soit béni!

Par de là l'heure humaine et le temps infini
Mon coeur est embaumé d'une odeur
                                  immortelle!

When the sun's flower, Lahor's rose,
From its perfumed soul has imbued, drop by
                                      drop,
The clay or crystal or golden flask,
On the burning sand it may be emptied.

In vain would the rivers and the sea flow over
This tiny refuge where it stayed shut,
It retains its divine aroma as it breaks
And its fulfilled dust still exudes an odour.

Since by my heart's open wound

You also pour out, o celestial liquor,
Unutterable love kindled by her!

May she be forgiven, may my pains be
                                  blessed!

Beyond human and infinite time
My heart is perfumed with an immortal odour!

Fauré
La parfum impérissable

Andante molto moderato. ($\bullet$ = 60)

Quand la fleur du so-leil, la ro-se de La-hor,___ De son âme o-do-rante a rem-pli gout-te à gout - te, La fi - o - le d'ar--gi-le ou de cris-tal ou d'or,___ Sur le sa-ble qui brû-le on peut l'é-pan-dre tou - te.___ Les fleu-ves et la mer i-non-de-raient en vain Ce sanc-tu-

1

-ai - re é -troit qui la tint en -fer - mé - e, Il garde en se bri-

-sant son a -rô -me di - vin. Et sa poussière heu - reu-se en res - te par-fu-

- mé - e. Puis - que par la bles - sure ou-ver - te de mon

cœur Tu t'e-cou - les de mé - me, ô cé - les - te li-

-queur, In-ex-pri-ma-ble a-mour qui m'en-flammais pour el - le! __ Qu'il lui

soit par-don-né._____ Que mon mal soit bé - ni!_____ Par de

là l'heure hu-mai - ne et le temps in-fi - ni __ Mon cœur est em-bau-

-mé d'une o-deur im-mor-tel - - le!_____

9. *Le don silencieux*

Je mettrai mes deux mains sur ma bouche,
pour taire
Ce que je voudrais tant vous dire, âme bien
chère!

I shall cover my mouth with my hands to hold
back
What I would yearn to tell you, dearest soul!

Je mettrai mes deux mains sur mes yeux,
pour cacher
Ce que je voudrais tant que pourtant vous
cherchiez.

I shall cover my eyes with my hands to
conceal
That which I would so wish you to seek.

Je mettrai mes deux mains sur mon coeur,
chère vie,
Pour que vous ignoriez de quel coeur je vous
prie!

I shall cover my heart with my hands, dear
life,
So that you may not know the heart praying
to you!

Et puis je les mettrai doucement dans vos
mains,
Ces deux mains-ci qui meurent d'un fatigant
chagrin!...

And then, gently, I shall lay them in your
hands,
These two hands, dying from an exhausting
grief!...

Elles iront à vous pleines de leur faiblesse,
Toutes silencieuses et même sans caresse,

They shall go to you, full of their weakness,
Quite silent, not even seeking a loving touch,

Lasses d'avoir porté tout le poids d'un secret
Dont ma bouche et mes yeux et mon front
parleraient.

Weary of carrying the weight of a secret
Which my mouth and my eyes and my brow
could reveal.

Elles iront à vous, légères d'être vides,
Et lourdes d'être tristes, tristes d'être timides,

They shall go to you, empty and so light,
And yet heavy with sadness, sorry for their
reticence

Malheureuses et douces, et si découragées
Que peut-être, mon Dieu, vous les
recueillerez...

Forlorn and gentle, and so disheartened
That perhaps, my God, you shall welcome
them...

Fauré
Le don silencieux

2

_cher Ce que je voudrais tant que pourtant vous cher_chiez. _____ Je met_trai mes deux mains sur mon

coeur, _____ chère vi _ _ _ e, Pour que vous i_gnoriez _____ de quel coeur je vous

pri _ _ e! _____ Et puis je les met _ trai dou_cement dans vos mains, Ces deux mains_

_ci qui meu _ _ _ rent d'un fa_ti_gant chagrin...

dolce

El _ les i_ront à vous, plei _ _ nes de leur faibles _ _ se,

cresc.

Tou _ tes si_len _ ci_eu _ _ ses, et mê _ _ me sans ca_res _ _ se,

cresc. sempre

Las _ _ ses d'avoir porté tout le poids d'un se _ cret Dont ma bouche et mes yeux et mon front par_le_

_ raient.

p

El _ les i_ront à vous, _____ lé_

10. Cygne sur l'eau' (*Mirages*)

Ma pensée est un cygne harmonieux et sage
Qui glisse lentement aux rivages d'ennui
Sur les ondes sans fond du rêve, du mirage,

De l'écho, du brouillard, de l'ombre, de la nuit.

Il glisse, roi hautain fendant un libre espace,

Poursuit un reflet vain, précieux et
                              changeant,
Et les roseaux nombreux s'inclinent lorsqu'il
                              passe,
Sombre et muet, au seuil d'une lune d'argent;

Et des blancs nénuphars chaque corolle
ronde
Tour à tour a fleuri de désir ou d'espoir...

Mais plus avant toujours, sur la brume et sur
                              l'onde,
Vers l'inconnue fuyant glisse le cygne noir.

Or j'ai dit : "Renoncez, beau cygne
                              chimérique,
A ce voyage lent vers de troubles destins;
Nul miracle chinois, nulle étrange Amérique
Ne vous accueilleront en des havres certains;

Les golfes embaumés, les îles immortelles
Ont pour vous, cygne noir, des récifs
                              périlleux.
Demeurez sur les lacs où se mirent, fidèles,
Ces nuages, ces fleurs, ces astres et ces
                              yeux.

My mind is an harmonious and wise swan
Slowly gliding by the shores of ennui
On the bottomless waves of dreams, of
                              mirages,
Of echo, mist, shadows and of night-time.

It glides, a haughty king, through the open
                              spaces,
Vainly chasing its precious and changeable
                              reflection,
And the many reeds bend down as it passes,

Dark and mute, by the rim of a silvery moon;

Every round corolla of the pale water-lilies,

Each in turn, has bloomed in yearning or
                              hopeful.
Yet, unceasing, on the mist and the waves

Glides the black swan toward the elusive
                              unknown.

But I said: Beautiful and fantastical swan,
                              abandon
This slow voyage to an uncertain fate;
No Chinese miracle, no mysterious America
Shall welcome you in their harbours.

Perfumed gulfs and immortal islands
Hold perilous reefs for you, O black swan.

Remain on the lakes where are reflected,
The familiar clouds, the blooms, the stars and
                              these eyes.

Fauré
I. Cygne sur l'eau
Mirages

Ma pen _ sé _ e est un cy _ gne har_mo_ni_eux et sa _ ge qui glis _ _ se len _ tement _____ aux ri _ va _ ges d'en _ nui sur les on _ des sans fond _____ du rê _ ve, du mi _ ra _ _ ge, de l'é _ cho, du brouillard, de

l'om _ bre, de la nuit. Il glis _ _ se, roi hautain _

_ fen _ dant un li _ bre es _ pa _ _ _ ce, pour _ suit un reflet vain, _

_ pré _ cieux et chan _ geant, et les roseaux nom _ breux s'in _ cli _ nent quand il

pas _ se, sombre et mu _ et, au seuil _ d'une lu _ ne d'ar _

Or j'ai dit, "Re_non_cez, beau cy _ gne chimé _ ri _ _ que, _____

_ à ce voy_a _ ge lent vers de trou_bles des _ tins; _____ nul mi_ra_cle chi_

_nois, nul _ le étrange Amé _ ri _ que ne vous accueil _ le _ ront en des hâ _ _ vres cer_

_tains; _____ Les gol_fes em _ bau_més, les î _ les im _ mor_

_tel _ les   ont pour vous, ___ Cygne noir, ___ des récifs   pe _ ril _ leux,   demeu_

_rez   sur les lacs   où   se mi _ rent,   fi _ dè _ _ _ les,   ces nu_

_a _ _ _ ges,   ces fleurs, _____   ces as _ _ _ tres,

_ et   ces yeux!" _____

11. Exaucement' (*Le Jardin clos*)

Alors qu'en tes mains de lumière
Tu poses ton front défaillant,
Que mon amour en ta prière
Vienne comme un exaucement.

Alors que la parole expire
Sur ta lèvre qui tremble encor,
Et s'adoucit en un sourire
De roses en des rayons d'or;

Que ton âme calme et muette,
Fée endormie au jardin clos,
En sa douce volonté faite
Trouve la joie et le repos.

As, in your luminous hands
You lay your ailing brow,
May my love by your prayer
Come as fulfilment.

As the last word dies off
On your still trembling lips
And softens in a smile
Like roses in the golden light;

May your calm and silent soul,
The sleeping fairy in an enclosed garden,
With a sweet constancy
Find joy and repose.

Fauré
I. Exaucement
Le jardin clos

Allegretto — *mezzo p*

A — lors qu'en tes mains de lu —

Allegretto (♩ = 104)

p

— miè — — re Tu po — ses ton front dé — fail —

— lant. — Que mon a — mour en ta pri — è — — re,

poco — *a* — *poco*

poco — *a* — *poco*

1

cre _ _ *scen* _ _ _ *do*

Vien _ _ ne comme un ex _ au _ ce _ ment. _____ A _ _

_ lors que la pa _ role ex _ pi _ _ _ re Sur ta

lè _ vre qui tremble en _ cor, _____ Et s'a _ dou _

_ cit en un sou _ ri _ re de ro _ ses, _____

en des rayons d'or; Que ton â _ me calme et mu_

_ et _ te, ____ Fée endor_mie au jar_din clos, ____ En sa

dou _ ce vo_lon_té fai _ te, ____ Trou _ ve la joie ____

____ et le re _ pos. ____