

EXPRESSIVE PROSODY IN FRENCH SOLO SONG:
GABRIEL FAURÉ'S *MÉLODIES*, AND THEIR
HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS

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Mary E. Ober, PhD

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The *mélodies* of Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924) are regularly faulted for “poor prosody,” for frequent mismatches of musical accent and the French text. This study presents evidence that calls for a significantly different approach to accentuation in this popular body of art songs. Close examination of virtually all of Fauré's *mélodies* reveals a unique prosodic practice grounded in the rhythmic nuances of spoken French, in a way not found in the works of his peers. Frequently, performance of a Fauréan song with correct accentuation calls for a substantially greater awareness of the French text as spoken, along with a studied disregard of the musically notated meter. Tracing the evolution of Fauré's prosodic style ultimately leads to settings that are less problematic for its interpreters. In addition, on a number of occasions the composer manipulates the notated rhythms in a way that adds greater expressive meaning; specific examples are given.

The argument for reassessment of Fauré's text-setting is preceded by the author's discussion of the role played by French prosody at the point of its connection with solo song over the previous three centuries. Beginning with the application of rhetorical principles to an early seventeenth-century *air de cour* by Antoine Boësset and continuing through representative quotes from Lully, Rameau, Rousseau and Gluck, comparisons are ultimately made with the purposefully rustic practice of wildly popular staged works of the eighteenth-century *Forains* and a rising tide of *opéras-comiques* built on 'realistic' themes, such as those composed by André Grétry. Analysis connects linguistic, poetic and musical elements as the major actors in these socially complex art forms.

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PREFACE

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Bedford CSD

Thank you.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

[The standard study of] native French prosody is only useful for the foreigner to a limited extent, since they lack many things, specifically that which to the French is self-evident and known, but to the non-French must be specifically explained. (Die einheimischen französischen Verslehren sind für den Ausländer nur in eingeschränktem Maße nützlich, da ihnen manches fehlt, was dem Franzosen zwar selbstverständlich und bekannt ist, dem Nichtfranzosen aber eigens erklärt werden muß.)¹

Aaron Copland once wrote of “a certain ungetatable quality,” an internal complexity hard to define, in the music of Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924).² The “quintessentially French” Romantic composer left scant evidence to assist us in unraveling the inherent ambiguities in his works, guarding his legacy closely through destruction of records in his final years. Fauré’s complex compositional techniques eluded satisfactory deconstruction for most of the twentieth century. A greater understanding of his style has only come about since the mid-1990s, primarily through the accomplished scholarship of Carlo Caballero and James W. Sobaskie. They, in turn, drew on the foundation laid by the Robin Tait’s 1989 dissertation.³ Fauré’s rhythmic style demonstrates a flexible use of both harmony and rhythm—“crossing the barline,” as it were, according to Tait. These scholars have narrowed the focus on the composer’s internal complexities to its most fundamental level: Fauré’s treatment of rhythm. Gabriel Fauré manipulated layers of rhythms

¹ W. Theodor Elwert, *Französische Metrik* (Munich: Max Hueber Verlag, 1961), 7. Translations in this paper are my own unless otherwise noted.

² Aaron Copland, “Gabriel Fauré, a Neglected Master,” *Musical Quarterly* 10, no. 4 (1924): 576.

³ Robin Tait, *The Musical Language of Gabriel Fauré*. Outstanding dissertations in music from British universities (New York: Garland Publishing, 1989).

with a dexterity that was unprecedented in its time, and even today is deemed unpredictable and stimulating—or unsettling.

While the initial success of the new research came from specific use of the most current analytical tools in music theory for harmonic analysis and voice-leading, these studies have gained credence from changes in historiological thought that propose stronger links between societal context and a practitioner’s musical works in order to reveal previously obscure stylistic details. In Fauré’s case, the “societal influences” arguments apply when connecting Fauré to Symbolist currents in art and literature in *fin de siècle* France, to assert the complicity of allusion or “elusive” characteristics in his music with contextual intellectual currents. James W. Sobaskie postulated that the centrality of musical allusion in Fauré’s manipulation of tonality and rhythm was intended by the composer to deliberately “elicit[e] expectations” of, among other things, “a listener’s response.”⁴ Carlo Caballero’s work on the rhythmic aspects of Fauré’s compositions reveals techniques that deliberately evade common meters, a practice that results in a sense of multiply perceived rhythms occurring simultaneously. Caballero applied rhythmic analysis to selected *mélodies* to trace the deliberately “elusive” strategies utilized by Fauré.⁵ Caballero’s clear illustrations of Fauré’s treatment of rhythm on multiple levels explore a trait foundational to his entire compositional oeuvre, an indistinct sense of rhythms that may be interpreted in a myriad of ways by researchers and performers.⁶

⁴ James W. Sobaskie, “Allusion in Fauré’s Music,” in *Regarding Fauré*, ed. Tom Gordon (Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach, 1999), 170. Such a response is in accord with the goal of Symbolist poets in *fin de siècle* France; see Joseph Acquisto, *French Symbolist Poetry and the Idea of Music* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006).

⁵ Carlo Caballero, *Fauré and French Musical Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). See especially Chapter 6, 219-256.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 224. Caballero makes this observation about “Aurore” (1884), suggesting a connection between the overlapping rhythmic layers and expressive verbs found in the poem meaning evasion (*s’envoler*), attraction (*attirer*), expansion (*tendre*), and integration (*tramer*). See also *Ibid.*, 226.

The growing body of scholarship on Fauré's style is most pronounced in regards to the instrumental aspects of his compositions, however. The greater portion of his oeuvre—the songs, and even more, his treatment of the texts in these songs—hold unresolved questions. Gabriel Fauré is recognized as one of the foremost composers of the French *mélodies*, with a reputation unequalled in France, although eclipsed by Debussy beyond the Francophone borders. His solo vocal compositions span his entire professional life—from 1861, at age sixteen, to 1921, three years before his death—and represent the greater part of his lifetime compositions. Although Caballero and Sobaskie deconstructed the songs' rhythmic and harmonic characteristics, applying Schenkerian and voice-leading analyses to works from different style periods, their work applies almost exclusively to the instrumental portion.⁷ Stacy Moore has contributed to an expanded understanding of Fauré's songs with her dissertation on the *mélodies* and their poets.⁸ Katherine Bergeron has added important dimensions to our understanding of the interconnectedness of education, song and the greater French society of the *belle époque*.⁹ My study of Fauré's songs narrows the examination to the specific, a deeper study of the rhythmic practices within the vocal/textual partner in these complex compositions.

While it is commonly recognized that French is a language devoid of the heavy accentuation found in many Western languages such as English, German, and Italian, the ebb and flow of spoken French and its subtler emphases of phrase, word and syllable are not as widely recognized. This is due to aspects of the language that can be easily ignored by non-native speakers without damage to basic comprehension. But the native ear can distinguish

⁷ Sobaskie, "Allusion," 163-205; also Sobaskie, "The Emergence of Gabriel Fauré's Late Musical Style and Technique," *Journal of Musicological Research* 22, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 223-275.

⁸ Stacy Kay Moore, "Words without Songs, and Songs Despite Words: Poetry and Music in the French *Mélodie*," PhD diss., Cornell University, 2001. Among other things, Moore covers, in considerable detail, the fervent arguments over the music-poetry relationship in Parisian artistic circles at the beginning of the twentieth century.

⁹ Katherine Bergeron, *Voice Lessons: French Mélodie in the Belle Époque* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

“correct” or “incorrect” prosodic accent, even when the difference is slight. French music critic Émile Vuillermoz, who was at one time a student of Fauré, makes this observation on Fauré’s prosody:

Few musicians possess as much as Fauré this mysterious sense of the rhythm of French words which is so fleeting, so light, and so deceptive. French, as we know, doesn’t have the elastic and singing inflections of Italian, nor the sharp profile and energetic accentuation of German. Its melodiousness is to be found on a more limited scale, but its harmony is fine, precise. Gabriel Fauré makes us aware of his singularly skillful procedures... This recipe is not without its drawbacks. It can only be applied by a master who knows the limits of resistance of a vowel and the possibilities of melodic extension of a syllable between two accentuations borrowed from current speech. Anyone other than he would fail in this endeavor.¹⁰

Fauréan singer Claire Croiza reported that, “Fauré loved the words of his songs.”¹¹ By all reports and evidence, Fauré also loved the intellectual ponderings to which poetic language invariably led. He was “attentive à toutes les nuances du texte” (attentive to all the nuances of the text).¹² Jean-Michel Nectoux added, “The song and the text must merge in perfectly lyricized diction... The performer of the French art songs, especially the Fauré repertoire, must strive for a perfectly consistent elocution.”¹³ Fauré himself, in remarks published in *Musica* in 1911 as part of an *enquête* (survey) of well-known composers and writers maintained, “That’s the role of music: to highlight the deep sentiment that inhabits the poet’s soul and which phrases are powerless to express with precision.”¹⁴

¹⁰ Emile Vuillermoz, *Gabriel Fauré*, trans. Kenneth Schapin (Philadelphia: Chilton Book Company, 1969), 95.

¹¹ Jean-Michel Nectoux, “Fauré: Voice, Style and Vocality,” in *Regarding Fauré*, ed. Tom Gordon (Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach, 1999), 377.

¹² Pierre Fortassier, “Le Rythme dans les mélodies de Gabriel Fauré” *Revue de musicologie* 62 (1976): 271.

¹³ Nectoux, “Voice, Style and Vocality,” 391.

¹⁴ Fernand Divoire, “Sous la musique, que faut-il mettre? De beaux vers, de mauvais, de vers libre, de la prose?” *Musica* 10, no. 101-102 (1911): 38. As translated, quoted and cited in Moore, 73.

Related to this aspect of the French language is another point that has received very little attention or discussion, and relates directly to accent and Fauré's treatment of song texts: prosodic phrasing. Integral to spoken French and similar to the light accent of specific words in spoken French, this subtle accent *within* spoken phrases is not critical to comprehension or basic expression. Its occurrence has little bearing on the typical French song that has a text set to a dancelike meter, but I have found it relevant to Fauré's prosody. Baroque scholar Patricia Ranum offers the clearest definition of this linguistic event, citing the work of French scholar Henri Morier:

The law of progression ("progressive lengthening") that regulates the length of the vowels within a polysyllabic rhythmic word group...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.

c'est un e- le- phant!
 duration: |---| |----| |-----| |-----| |-----|

...Within the group, the syllable in a protonic position is shortened. The farther it is from the final accent, the shorter it tends to be. Thus the vowels of the rhythmic group generally form a chain of increasingly longer values. They obey a law of progression that gradually unfurls the syllables as they approach the tonic (the final syllable of a word group).¹⁵

In my discussions of Fauré's mature prosody, I shall call this characteristic of the French language "progressive lengthening" that occurs in the "prosodic unit." Stacy Moore raises this issue when she notes that, "[a]mong the conventions that affect timing in (French) poetry we can include...the relative speeds of individual words and the weights of their sounds,"¹⁶ then adds

¹⁵ Henri Morier, *Dictionnaire de poétique et de rhétorique*, 4th ed. (Paris: Presses universitaires françaises, 1989), as translated, quoted and cited in Patricia Ranum, *The Harmonic Orator: The Phrasing and Rhetoric of the Melody in French Baroque Airs* (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2001), 174.

¹⁶ Moore, 125.

rhetorically, that “no rule of French poetry specifies that syllables be of equal duration.”¹⁷ This may also be the aspect of spoken French referenced by poet Pierre Louÿs in the same 1911 *enquête* regarding words and music:

The composer must also take the strong and weak syllables into account. Even in the art song, composers have neglected this side of the question too often.¹⁸

I believe there are connections between progressive lengthening of the spoken phrase in French and Virgil Thomson’s characterization of French music, discussed by Caballero, as a music that “unrolls itself phrase by phrase.”¹⁹ “The anapestic rhythm and vague metrical feel characteristic of the epoch,” writes Moore, “were the result of composers’ endeavors to be truer to the end-accent of the French language.”²⁰ My study shows that Gabriel Fauré, more than any other French composer of the *mélodies*, reached that goal. Significantly, Robin Tait wrote that Fauré’s melodic phrases are true to the phrasing of the text, first, not to musical phrasing.²¹ French scholar Pierre Fortassier adds, “On voit combien... sa lecture est révélatrice de la réalité poétique” (One can see how his reading reveals the poetic reality).²²

A primary emphasis of this study is to investigate occurrences of mismatch between the normal accentuations of the spoken French text and the setting of that text into song in Fauré’s *mélodies*. These misaccentuations of texts in the songs are puzzling, particularly as they occur in the compositions of one whose unusual, unique use of rhythms in instrumental parts is of course deliberate. To the French-literate, but non-native singer, the minor disruptions to the poetry

¹⁷ Moore, 128.

¹⁸ Devoire, quoted in Moore, 76.

¹⁹ Caballero, 221.

²⁰ Moore, 79.

²¹ Robin Tait, 196.

²² Fortassier, 265, n. 17.

caused by mismatches between spoken word and musical meter within Fauré's songs have periodically elicited criticism. Even Claire Croiza, one of the singers who worked with Fauré, appears to have had mixed feelings about Fauré's prosody. In one of her master classes, she reportedly said,

In Fauré more than in any other composer the singer must study the poem apart from the music, because Fauré's rhythm, which is not necessarily that of the poem, would lead him astray.... Fauré draws you on with beauty, with harmony, with music, but he sometimes leads you rather far from the poem.²³

Another source quotes her saying:

Fauré allows himself to be carried away with enthusiasm for the spirit of a poem. His declamation only works when it is sung, whereas one can apply Debussy's declamation to the spoken poem and it is always correct.²⁴

This remark is curious in its contextual comparison of Debussy's and Fauré's treatment of identical texts; my research demonstrates clearly that of the two, Fauré was the greater master when it came to correctly expressing the prosody of the French language. Nectoux shares an additional Croiza comment from the original French version of her master class notes, on song interpretation for performance in general:

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.²⁵

Many scholars and even some English-speaking practitioners have viewed some curious prosodic alignments as mistakes in Fauré's practice. Robert Orledge did not dispute that line of

²³ Betty Bannerman, ed. and trans., *The Singer as Interpreter: Claire Croiza's Master Classes* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1989), 51.

²⁴ Quoted in Moore, 94.

²⁵ Quoted in Nectoux, "Voice, Style and Vocality," 389.

reasoning in his discussion of published and unpublished song manuscripts, suggesting that “considerable word-setting problems” caused Fauré to forgo the publication of some of the works.²⁶ Among the published works, however, as singer and Fauré interpreter Robert Gartside expressed, they frequently were judged to mean nothing in and of themselves. Like singer Claire Croiza, Gartside sees Fauré’s musicianship as the stronger partner in the songs’ composition.

Fauré was not a slave to the words over the requirements of the music. His songs are, first and foremost, a *musical* experience, not a *poetic* experience... If he wanted his music to go a certain way and a particular word would thereby receive an incorrect syllabic accent or stress, that was too bad, the music won out.²⁷

The challenge to this line of thought is this: why would Fauré perpetrate such flawed practice, when recent studies of his works have uncovered so much previously misunderstood detail? There is a wealth of musical nuance now recognized in the compositions of Gabriel Fauré. How can it be that these mismatches exist, within the body of works of a composer so acutely aware of nuance?

The rather unflattering comment on Fauré’s prosody above, from Clare Croiza, may be better seen as a broad view of his works, if one is evaluating his many popular early songs in the same sweep as his less well-known late works. By the 1920s, the waning popularity of the French salons—and with them, a decrease in the appreciative audiences of many of the later Fauré songs—may be behind a myopic evaluation of his skills in the *mélodie*. Without accounting for stylistic changes over the course of his career, particularly in his prosodic practice, it is easy to dismiss the nature and high number of displacements in his earlier works as meaningless. His earliest compositions contain more questionable displacements of accent than

²⁶ Robert Orledge, *Gabriel Fauré* (London: Eulenburg Books, 1979), 209.

²⁷ Robert Gartside, *Interpreting the Songs of Gabriel Fauré* (Geneseo, NY: Leyerle, 1996), 24.

the works produced after about 1890, and fewer still after the 1902-04 period highlighted by Sobaskie as a creative turning point in Fauré's life. My examination of Fauré's songs traces the evolution of a personal, perceptive text-setting style, revealing the development of a sensitivity to the text not readily apparent to the fluent *or* native French singer-performer—requiring as it would, most evidently, a heightened awareness of spoken French prosody, and a dismissal of the usual approach to reading musically notated meters. The reallocation of accentuation according to spoken French cannot of course be appreciated in any degree by the non-native practitioner, whose focus is necessarily on pronunciation, not on the subtle nuances of accentuation.

Scholarship to date has only minimally addressed Fauré's prosodic practice. In Caballero's discussion of three Fauré songs—one from 1884, the other two from the 1903 cycle, *La chanson d'Ève*—he notes of the former, Fauré's "increasingly discerning realizations of French poetry and its accents."²⁸ Concerning the latter examples, Caballero comments without elaboration that "one no longer finds the inconsistencies in notation or prosody" encountered in the earlier work.²⁹ In 2003, Sobaskie focused on the years 1902-1904 in Fauré's life, exploring the composer's refinement of his expression of meaning in the text, developing among other characteristics a high level of "textual deference," without further discussion, or any mention of specific treatment of prosodic displacements.³⁰

My study presents an examination of virtually all published songs by Fauré, with a few specific goals in mind. First, I will identify and seek to explain perceived rhythmic misaccentuations in the songs, many of which occur in complex rhythmic contexts. Multiple changing rhythms and what Caballero argues as elusiveness are common in Fauré's prosody.

²⁸ Caballero, 228.

²⁹ Caballero, 229.

³⁰ Sobaskie, "Emergence," 274.

Many of the details of his prosody, exhibiting close links to the spoken language, may fundamentally be at the heart of his songs' high esteem and comprehension in France. My study of these songs reveals a deliberate focus on refinement in prosodic manipulation over the course of his career, in regards to metrical displacements. For the purposes of this study, a "metrical displacement" is defined as the occurrence, on a musically *accented* beat, of a word that would normally be *unaccented* within the song's particular prosodic context. Another term I use requiring a specific definition is "hemiola." The rhythmic features I label as "hemiolas" here are situations where Fauré reinterprets two measures of 3/4 time, most typically, as one of 3/2: two beats of quarter-note time are succeeded by another two that cross the barline without accentuation of the downbeat, then frequently are followed by another two-beat rhythmic grouping. Fauré's approach to the scansion of his chosen poetic verses is unique from his first vocal composition, "Le papillon et la fleur." Most of the songs written in his last period contain no obvious metrical displacements.

I argue that many of the perceived displacements in Gabriel Fauré's songs are deliberate, and in some instances, the rhythms Fauré uses result in additional meaning—that is, recognizable meaning beyond the mere words themselves. I believe a successful Fauréan performer-interpreter would have correctly expressed such nuance, particularly as an amateur under the composer's tutelage. Fauréan interpreter and vocal coach Graham Johnson supports this thesis in his recent book:

The word 'interpretation' is a dangerous one in the context of Fauré's melodies. If we say a song has been 'interpreted' it usually means that performers have brought their own *viewpoint* to bear on the music, and that they have *shaped* it accordingly. A reading of the poem and an examination of the score have informed their *decisions* on mood and tempo, and after they decide what they *feel* about the song, they will decide how to *present* it. Music and text are filtered through their *emotions*, which have been roused by their subjective *reactions* to the task in hand. I would not deny that all this is

appropriate enough for the preparation of a majority of the song repertoire, but Fauré's music is singularly unsuitable for this treatment.

When we perform the music of Fauré we are, or should be, taking part in his existence on his own terms. Perhaps we should try to cultivate what Keats referred to as 'Negative Capability' – to make ourselves as receptive as a blank sheet of paper that will take on his characteristics... in the service of his music we should be prepared to give only what is asked of us as opposed to everything we have in us.³¹

Perhaps it was precisely that expected success of professional singers in their personal “interpretations” that turned Fauré’s approval away from most of them. In a 1902 letter to Elisabeth Greffulhe, one of his patronesses, Fauré complained,

I'm certain that there are a great many of my songs from the most recent years that you don't know yet! I dream that you will be able to hear them sung by the ideal performers, none of whom will be found among the ranks of professional singers. Rather it is the amateurs who understand me and transmit my intentions best...³²

While deliberate metric displacement in French art songs is not strictly a nineteenth-century construct, as I will show, the debate over whether Fauré's displacements were intentional or the result of poor prosodic practice is understandable. Prosodic practice in French song was a matter of considerable dispute among musicians, composers, theoreticians and aficionados from the time of the humanistic movement in the late sixteenth century. In the time of the *airs de cour*, from which date the earliest French art songs, theories of “longs” and “shorts” proliferated amid attempts to apply ancient Classical rules to modern French. Chapter 2 addresses this period and its prosodic practice. Frits Noske's landmark study, *French Song from Berlioz to Duparc* (1952), includes a discussion of the development of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century prosodic practice that is enlightening, covering as it does the theories and practices leading up to Fauré's

³¹ Graham Johnson, *Gabriel Fauré: The Songs and their Poets* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 375.

³² Gabriel Fauré, *Correspondance*, ed. Jean-Michel Nectoux (Paris: Flammarion, 1980), 249. Quoted and cited in Nectoux, “Voice, Style and Vocality,” 384.

lifetime. Noske's thorough analysis of the literature on prosody in French song represents a valuable contribution to the field.³³ An 1803 theoretician, identified only as A. Scoppa, was one of the first to replace the earlier theories of "quantity" with one of linguistic intensity. Noske acknowledges Scoppa's establishment of important rules of prosody, but then notes—a rarity in the literature on this topic—the unresolved problem of shifting tonic accents in French words.

To begin with, the tonic accent of French words is quite weak, so that it may be deplaced to an atonic syllable under the influence of the "oratory" or emphatic accent. In a word like "jamais,"... the accent often falls on the first syllable instead of on the last. Thus the prosody in the excerpt from a French folk song [given in his text, in which the first syllable of "jamais" falls on the downbeat of a song in 2/4 time]... is quite correct...

The tonic accent may also be deplaced to avoid a collision, as in the case of "C'est joLI" and "JOli bois." Furthermore, a difference in intensity exists between two accents of a single word or of a group of words. Often the accent on the last syllable is weaker than on the antepenultimate, as in "MERveilleux," "MÈne-moi," or "SOMbres lieux."³⁴

Noske concludes that this instability of the tonic accent "was probably the reason why the fictitious quantity had dominated the theory of literary and musical prosody" for so long, and also why clear guidelines continued to elude theoreticians.³⁵ The square musical phrase, a characteristic of much nineteenth-century song, is said by Noske to have contributed to awkward French prosody for much of the rest of the century.

French prosodic practice was very much in dispute at the middle of the nineteenth century, precisely when Fauré was at the École Niedermeyer. Camille Saint-Saëns, Fauré's teacher at Niedermeyer as well as his lifelong mentor and friend, was outspoken on the topic.

The historical French opera, from Lully to Gluck, was founded on declamation, and the accent of the music never contradicted that of the lyrics...

³³ Frits Noske, *French Song from Berlioz to Duparc*, 2nd ed. (New York: Dover Publications, 1970), 41-89.

³⁴ Noske, 52-53.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 53.

It was in the schools at the middle of this [the nineteenth] century that a disdain for verse and prosody first appeared. One imagined that, apart from the caesura and the end of the verse, no syllable carried accent, that musical accent could impose itself at will; and it was not only the musicians who thought thus, but also the poets; whenever one of them put lyrics to a known melody, he did so according to this principle.

The result was a horrible gibberish to which one became accustomed, all the while remarking that it was impossible, in listening to a bit of song, to understand the lyrics. And so one finished by writing whatever, when it had to do with writing poetry to be set to music. Seen from another angle, as one not inconvenienced by that “whatever,” musicians took up the habit of pillaging that which was not poetry except by name, then to wrecking true poetry; and the poets, justifiably irritated, revolted... (L’ancien opéra français, depuis Lully jusqu’à Gluck, était fondé sur la déclamation, et jamais l’accent de la musique n’y contrariait celui des paroles... C’est dans l’école du milieu de ce siècle que s’est fait jour le dédain du vers et de la prosodie. On avait imaginé qu’en dehors de la césure et de la fin du vers, aucune syllabe ne portant d’accent, l’accent musical pouvait se poser à volonté ; et ce n’était pas seulement les musiciens qui pensaient ainsi, mais aussi les poètes ; quand l’un d’eux mettait lui-même des paroles sur un air connu, il le faisait d’après ce principe. Le résultat était un affreux charabia auquel on s’était accoutumé, tout en remarquant qu’il était impossible, en écoutant un morceau de chant, d’entendre les paroles. Aussi avait-on fini par écrire n’importe quoi quand il s’agissait d’écrire des vers pour être mis en musique. D’un autre côté, comme on ne se gêne pas avec « n’importe quoi », les musiciens ont pris l’habitude de saccager ce qui n’avait des vers que le nom, puis de saccager les vrais vers ; et les poètes, justement irrités, se sont revoltés...) ³⁶

Saint-Saëns’ essay appears to exaggerate the situation; Noske paints him as somewhat reactionary, or at the least conservative in his views and practices.

Saint-Saëns had such an intense interest in regular verse that he advised young composers to submit their musical rhythm to ancient and modern literary meters. ... Saint-Saëns’ divergent point of view resulted from his personal concept of art. As a craftsman in the best sense of the term, he was more interested in versification than in poetry. The technical aspect of the relationship between words and music fascinated him, while young composers were more interested in the impression, that subtle echo of the poet’s thought. They preferred to set prose, but their music was “poetic.” Saint-Saëns defended the use of verse, but many of his melodies are too “prosaic.” ³⁷

His influence on Fauré's prosody in his earliest songs ought perhaps to be considered, but it appears not to have defined Fauré’s style to any great extent. Since Saint-Saëns was not, in any

³⁶ Camille Saint-Saëns, “La Poesie et la Musique,” in *Harmonie et Melodie* (Paris : Bibliotheque Contemporaine, 1885), 261-62.

³⁷ Noske, 67-68.

case well-known for his song compositions, I do not include them in this study, or in the stylistic comparisons in Chapter 5.

Noske presents a detailed and compelling portrait of a practice in considerable dispute over several centuries. Baroque musical theorists Marin Mersenne (1588-1648) and Benigne de Bacilly (c.1625-1690) were among those who wrote detailed treatises on the relationship between word and song. Baroque scholar Patricia Ranum has argued that French composers of the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries were particularly aware of the relationships between word, song, and elocution, and that displacement of accents in the airs of the time served a particular elocutionary purpose at the time of their performance.³⁸

In the chapters that follow, I discuss the roots of late nineteenth-century French prosodic style—reaching back to the early seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It was in the time of *temps-mesuré* and the *airs de cour* that French intellectuals first sought to formulate rules regarding the setting of French text into music. The time and style period were not unknown to the young Gabriel, who by the age of ten was a boarder at the new École Niedermeyer in Paris, established as a training ground for church musicians. Jean-Michel Nectoux asserts without reservation that Fauré gained there “a profound knowledge of the secular repertoire of the French Renaissance.”³⁹ That early repertoire placed high value on clear expression of text. Although Fauré’s works do include an occasional “madrigal” (Fauré’s subtitle), this dissertation does not investigate any specific connections between French Renaissance practice and the prosody of Gabriel Fauré.

³⁸ Patricia M. Ranum, *The Harmonic Orator: The Phrasing and Rhetoric of the Melody in French Baroque Airs* (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2001). The particular seventy-year span on which Ranum focuses her research is framed by Lully’s operatic career and Rameau’s treatise on harmony.

³⁹ Nectoux, “Voice, Style and Vocality,” 394.

A limited study of my own, presented in Chapter 2, examines metrical displacements in the *airs de cour* of Antoine Boësset (1586-1643), in compositions dating from the 1620s and '30s. Following a detailed discussion of the prosodic practice demonstrated in Boësset's *airs de cour*, I present a survey and discussion of French prosodic technique as exemplified in the highly successful and commended operas of Jean-Baptiste Lully, Christoph Willibald von Gluck, and others important to French opera in the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries.

The French people, purveyors and consumers of art song, have clearly prized its closely held relationship with the poetic text for many years. Roland Barthes wrote of the *mélodies*:

The historical sense of the French *mélodie* resides in a certain cultivation of the French language. As we know, the Romantic poetry of France is more oratorical than textual, but what our poetry has been unable to do on its own has been done, at times, by the *mélodie* in combination with it; it has worked on the language through the poem. ...it is indisputably present in certain works among which we may include... some of the songs of Fauré and Duparc, practically all the late Fauré songs (where prosody is of the essence)... The point at issue in these works is far more than a musical style, it is... a practical reflection on the language; and progressively the language is assumed into the poem, the poem into the song and the song into its performance. Which means that the *mélodie* has little to do with the history of music, and much with the theory of the text.⁴⁰

The “certain cultivation of the French language” is found in its oratorical practices, long expressed in French song. Carlo Caballero stressed the central vitality of “sincerity” to Fauré, and to French culture, at the time of the *mélodies*' flourishing following the French defeat in the Franco-Prussian war (1870).⁴¹ The era of the *mélodies* and their artistic prominence was one of

⁴⁰ Roland Barthes, “The Grain of the Voice,” in *Image – Music – Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 186. All but the last sentence is as this passage is quoted in Jean-Michel Nectoux, *Gabriel Fauré: A Musical Life*, trans. Roger Nichols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 67. The last sentence is taken from Stephen Heath's translation of Barthes. I have retained Roger Nichols' translation from Nectoux for all but that sentence, due to its closer expression of the French meaning.

⁴¹ Caballero, 11; Noske, 163. Noske also says in passing, but significantly, “many of the chansons and chansonettes sung in the *café-concerts* contained deliberately false rhythms,” suggesting these displacements in the popular genres “encouraged disrespect for the principles of correct prosody.” The *café-concerts*, discussed in detail in

nationalistic fervor in many regions of the continent, where long-subjugated populations were defining and establishing the cultural and political boundaries of their lands at roughly the same time. Italy arose as an independent, unified nation following publication of Alessandro Manzoni's popular novel *I Promessi Sposi* in the Tuscan dialect in 1840 (thereby defining a national Italian language, for the first time in the region's history); Norwegian Ivar Aasen researched regional dialects in western Norway in the 1840s, leading to the codification of the local *landsmål* (meaning, literally, "national goal") dialect—renamed *nynorsk* (new Norse) in 1929—that forged support for the country's independence from Sweden in 1905. Richard Wagner, forced by politics to flee Bavaria in 1848, published *Die Kunstwerk der Zukunft* one year later, and then harnessed the phonemes of the German language in service of artistic expression in *The Ring* cycle. Wagner's creative shadow undoubtedly inspired French composers, in both complementary and oppositional ways. The nationalistic inspiration for the French *mélodies* is a topic worthy of serious inquiry. It is also too broad for further examination in this study.

Stacy Moore grounds much of her initial analysis on the writings of French scholar Pierre Fortassier. Despite his neglect of stylistic periods in Fauré's works, Fortassier presents a convincing argument for the complicity of song and speech in Fauré's *mélodies*. His explanations of metrical mismatches are argued in terms of their true reflection of language, citing an eighteenth-century stylistic device called the "privilège de la diction passionnée"

Elaine Brody, *Paris: The Musical Kaleidoscope 1870-1925* (New York: George Braziller, 1987), were informal performance venues for bourgeois song.

(privilege of passionate diction).⁴² Even so, Fortassier does not develop a methodology sufficient to explain Gabriel Fauré's apparent prosodic manipulations.

French rhetorical theory may be an important common denominator to these diverse cultural strands, a point supported by the quote from Barthes. The setting of French lyrics was guided not only by musical considerations, but by those guidelines covering the written word. Elocution and music composition meet in the setting of text for songs, and rhetoricians of a number of cultures have argued through the centuries over establishing rules for the correct manipulation of this dual-purpose art form. Study of rhetorical theory comprised an important part of the nineteenth-century French classical education. Some of the more persistent theorists whose work remained influential through Fauré's lifetime were Quintilian (ca. 35-ca. 100), Marin Mersenne, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Jean-Philippe Rameau.⁴³ French *mélodie* and its sister genre, the German *Lied*, like the seventeenth-century *airs de cour*, are soloistic expressions embodying one individual's plaint, performed for and on behalf of many in any given audience. These songs speak of the human condition, as does elocution, on behalf of the hearers. Solo song represents human sentiments at a very personal level.

I argue that Fauré adds meaning to his body of song through careful manipulation of musical-textual rhythms, thereby governing or restricting the performer's approach to and expression of the music's text. I will examine and define, to some degree, the additional significance carried by these specific metric placements, and how the meaning inherent in Fauré's musical gestures was expected to be conveyed by the performer-interpreter. The carefully manipulated textual rhythms of Gabriel Fauré's songs have undoubtedly been an aspect

⁴² Denis Diderot, *Le Neveu de Rameau*, ed. Jean Fabre (Geneva : Droz, 1963), 86, as cited in Fortassier, 259. Fortassier quotes Diderot's satire extensively in the introduction to his essay.

⁴³ It is a related point of interest that Rousseau, who favored Italian music, and Rameau, a champion to French composers, had their supporters and detractors in nineteenth-century France.

of the songs' reception, primarily by its performers, both in and beyond French-speaking cultures. His treatment of prosody in the *mélodies* is one of the elements at the most earnest heart of that expression.

The present study seeks, above all, to deconstruct and demystify as many of the accentual conundrums encountered in French vocal art song as possible. These begin with the puzzling prosody of the seventeenth-century strophic *airs de cour*. The next two chapters (2 and 3) trace the historical development of French prosodic practice in solo song from that point in time through the social and artistic strife of the eighteenth century, in order to provide a solid baseline for understanding the practice developed by Gabriel Fauré. Fauré's prosody is defined and discussed in chapters 4 and 5

2.0 PROSODY AND RHETORICAL CONNECTIONS IN THE SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY AIRS DE COUR

Accentual music is nothing but knowledge of the way we need to accentuate and pronounce each word or phrase of speech that you make, recite, or sing, be it theoretical or practical. (La Musique Accentuelle n'est autre chose que la connaissance qu'on a de la maniere qu'il faut prononcer & accentuer chaque parole, ou chaque periode des discours qu'on fait, qu'on recite ou qu'on chante, & est Speculative, ou Pratique.)⁴⁴

--Marin Mersenne

Traité de l'harmonie universelle (1627)

As outlined in my introduction, oratorical practices in the seventeenth century had a profound effect on the composition of French art songs of the period. French theorist Marin Mersenne (1588-1648), writing in the early decades of the century, was arguably the most influential author of musical treatises until Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764), a full century later. Of particular importance to art song were the connections Mersenne defined between rhetoric and song.

Accentual music... is practiced by those who sing to perfection, and ... it [fulfills] the Art of the Harmonic Orator, who should know all the pitches, the beats [*temps*], the rhythms [*mouvements*] and the accents appropriate for stirring listeners to feel whatever he wishes. ... [I explain] everything about the accents of the passions, which will be of great help in perfecting all sorts of songs [*chants*] that should in a way imitate harangues, and therefore have clauses [*membres*], sections and periods, and use all sorts of figures and harmonic passages, like the orator, so that the art of composing airs and

⁴⁴ Marin Mersenne, *Traité de l'harmonie universelle* (Paris: Baudry, 1627), 199, as quoted in Théodora Psychoyou, "L'air de cour dans les écrits théoriques," in *Poésie, musique et société: L'air de cour en France au XVIIe siècle*, ed. Georgie Durosoir (Liege, Belgium: Mardaga, 2006), 196. Translation is my own.

counterpoint will not be inferior to the Art of Rhetoric. (La Musique Accentuelle... se pratique par ceux qui chantent en perfection, et... elle [accomplit] l'Art de l'Orateur Harmonique, qui doit connoistre tous les dégrez, les temps, les mouvemens, et les accents propres pour exciter ses auditeurs à tout ce qu'il veut. ...[J'explique] tout ce qui concerne les Accents des passions, ce qui aidera grandement à perfectionner toutes sortes de Chants, qui doivent en quelque façon imiter les Harangues, afin d'avoir des membres, des parties, et des periodes, et d'user de toutes sortes de figures et de passages harmoniques, comme l'Orateur, et que l'Art de composer des Airs, et le Contrepoint ne cède rien à la Rétorique.)⁴⁵

The first rules for French prosody were formulated in the era of *musique mesurée*, beginning in the 1570s with the principles of Jean-Antoine de Baïf (1532-1589), and the establishment of the Académie de poésie et de musique, ancestor of today's Académie française. The *airs mesurés* were, generally speaking, France's humanistic counterpart to the monodies of the Florentine Camerata.⁴⁶ While both the Italian and French genres sought to recreate the “true” style of Ancient Greek and Roman theater, believed to have blended speech with music in a manner that gave priority to the text, the earliest form of the French *musique mesurée* was as the monophonic choral *air*. French scholar Isabelle His discusses the earliest reactions to Baïf's strict rules and the apparently aesthetically unpleasant results of their slavish application before Baïf died and the rules were relaxed in favor of a more pleasing idiom. According to His, it is in this later form that most *airs mesurés* reached publication.⁴⁷

The *air de cour* resulted when these modified metric principles were carried forward to a solo art song genre arising after the turn of the century, in the early 1600s. The *air de cour* is differentiated from the refined type of *air mesuré* by two specific characteristics: (1) it is written

⁴⁵ Marin Mersenne, “Les Consonances,” in *L'Harmonie universelle, contenant la théorie et la pratique de la musique* (Paris: S. Cramoisy, 1636; Facsimile, Paris: C.N.R.S., 1965), 365, as quoted and translated in Ranum, *The Harmonic Orator*, 22.

⁴⁶ F.A. Yates, *The French Academies of the Sixteenth Century* (London: Warburg Inst., Univ. of London, 1947), 40-42; André Verchaly, “A propos du récit français au début du XVIIe siècle,” *Recherches sur la musique française classique* 15 (1975): 39.

⁴⁷ Isabelle His, “Air mesuré et air de cour: Pour un décloisonnement des genres,” in *Poésie, musique et société: L'air de cour en France au XVIIe siècle*, ed. Georgie Durosoir (Liege, Belgium: Mardaga, 2006), 156-59.

for a solo singer, and (2) it is strophic. Claude Le Jeune (1528-1600) and Antoine Boësset (1586-1643) wrote both solo and monophonic choral forms of many of their airs. It is the solo *air de cour* that is most relevant to my study of French prosodic practice potentially influencing the methodology of Gabriel Fauré in his *mélodies*. Early seventeenth-century practice is demonstrated with a rhetorical examination of Boësset's *air de cour*, “Que servent tes conseilz (Of what use are your counsels),” published in 1628.

The *air de cour* enjoyed a brief period of high acclaim during the reign of Louis XIII (1610-1643), thereafter maintaining a considerably longer presence in the writings of theoreticians. The chief reason for this curious provenance lies in its compositional and performance-related challenges as a strophic form with lofty rhetorical goals. Clear, correct declamation was of utmost importance, as stressed in all theoretical and anecdotal evidence from the period. This clarity included the express requirement that the poetic text be served by each of the repeated verses of the music, a demand made all the more difficult by characteristics of the language (French), and a poetic tradition varying in its prosodic phrasing from line to line and verse to verse, as illustrated below.

Mersenne wrote eloquently and at length about the reputed close connection between rhetoric and song, but until recent changes in academic musicological methodologies, there was scant scholarship touching on this relationship. Mersenne's philosophies on speech and music were known to remain highly influential in France well beyond the seventeenth century, and a number of other French theorists of rhetoric, singing, or music in general also raise the importance of rhetorical connections with French vocal music of this period. French scholar Theresa Psychoyou and American musicologist Patricia Ranum frame the arguments Mersenne presented from the vantage point of over 300 years later. Ranum applies insights gained from

Mersenne and other seventeenth- and eighteenth-century philosophers to her study of the French airs of Jean-Baptiste Lully.⁴⁸ Boësset's works are often cited as the most successful of the *airs de cour*, both in technique and in popularity.⁴⁹

2.1 A LITTLE-UNDERSTOOD GENRE

Non-French writers have universally been highly critical of the *airs de cour* from their first appearance. Typically, their greatest fault has been perceived as the ungainly prosody in their verses, after the initial stanza. A seventeenth-century English editor writes:

[French composers are]being led rather by their freed Fant'sie of Aire...than by any strict and artificial scanning of the line...doe often, by disproportion'd Musical Quantities, invert the naturell Stroke of a Verse.⁵⁰

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholars and performers, both French and non-French, have likewise written disparagingly of their poor artistry. In the 1940s, David P. Walker quoted

⁴⁸ As Psychoyou argues, “Cette importance de la déclamation dans le chant, véritable lien organique entre la rhétorique et l'art de chanter est mise en évidence a plusieurs reprises, dans les écrits qui font suite a ceux de Mersenne. Bénigne de Bacilly batit ses Remarques curieuses sur Art de bien chanter sur cette idée. Comme la rhétorique est l'art de 'bien dire', de meme le chanteur ne doit pas simplement chanter, mais 'bien chanter'; comme l'orateur, il doit convaincre et émouvoir.” (This importance of declamation in song, a veritable organic connection between rhetoric and the art of singing, is in evidence in several collections, in the writings which follow those of Mersenne. Benigne de Bacilly built his *Remarques curieuses sur l'art de bien chanter* (Curious Remarks on the Art of Singing Well [1668]) on this idea. As rhetoric is the art of 'speaking well,' in the same way, the singer must not simply sing, but 'sing well'; like the orator, he must convince and move.) Psychoyou, 197. Patricia Ranum quotes a number of late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century sources, among them Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1687); Jean-Laurent Le Cerf de La Viéville de Fresneuse (1704; often cited for his expertise in instrumental music, but who she notes in her annotated bibliography “merits a thorough rereading, with close attention to verbal issues”); Denis Diderot and Jean Le Rond d’Alembert (1751 and 1777); Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1768); and Bernard de La Ville, comte de Lacépède (1785). Ranum, 26-27, 42-44.

⁴⁹ Psychoyou, 186.

⁵⁰ David P. Walker, “The Influence of *Musique Mesurée à l'antique*, particularly on the *airs de cour* of the Early Seventeenth Century,” *Musica Disciplina* 2 (1948): 158.

a French encyclopedic entry from 1921; the encyclopedia contended that as regards prosodic practice during the early days of French opera, there was “une véritable ivresse de rythmes libres” (a veritable drunkenness of free rhythms).⁵¹ And, Walker claimed, “This freedom is not...controlled by the natural verbal rhythm of the text, which is distorted to a remarkable degree.”⁵²

Thirty years later, American Don Lee Royster similarly noted in his examination of an air by Pierre Guédron (c.1570-c.1620) setting a six-strophe poem by François de Malherbe (1555-1628), that “...the first stanza of this poem... is the stanza around which Guédron habitually built his musical setting, often to the detriment of an easy accord between words and music in subsequent stanzas.”⁵³ However, Royster's dissertation points out the exceptional text-setting of a 1613 Guédron lament on the death of Henri IV (1553-1610). He praises the composer's “improvisatory declamation based on speech rhythm and expressive melody.”⁵⁴

The first line moves in an alternation of longs and shorts. But their values have been subtly altered to approximate the actual spoken lengths of the syllables as nearly as possible. Were this line declaimed, the word receiving the strongest emphasis would be *fait*. This word becomes the goal in Guédron's setting.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Rolland, “l'Opéra au XVIIe siècle,” in *Encyclopédie*, ed. Lavignac and La Laurencie, Pt. I, T. I (Paris: n.p., 1921), 1344. As quoted and cited in Walker, *Ibid.* The musicologist, who Walker only identifies by his last name, is probably Romain Rolland (1866-1944).

⁵² Walker proposed two remedies, both proving misleading. In English strophic songs, it is common or even expected for a performer to make slight adjustments to the music of verses in order for the text to “fit.” Adjustments such as adding a passing tone, repeated note or holding a note over the bar line to avoid a misplaced accent on the downbeat are commonplace. Not so in French. “In French, owing to syllabic versification, couplets almost invariably result in misplaced accents. If the tune were altered for each couplet the changes would often completely transform the musical rhythm, and therefore could not reasonably be left to the singer's discretion.” In the end, Walker is at a loss to explain how seventeenth-century performers may have adapted or maneuvered the problematic passages. Walker concludes that, “until we know more exactly what their rhythm was when performed, all discussions... run the risk of being founded on wrongly interpreted documents.” *Ibid.*, 158, 160, 162.

⁵³ Don Lee Royster, “Pierre Guédron and the 'Air de Cour' (1600-1620)” (PhD diss., Yale University, 1973), 184.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 192.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

This creative use of music notation is unusual for its time, and it clearly expresses a natural spoken rhythm of the poetic text.

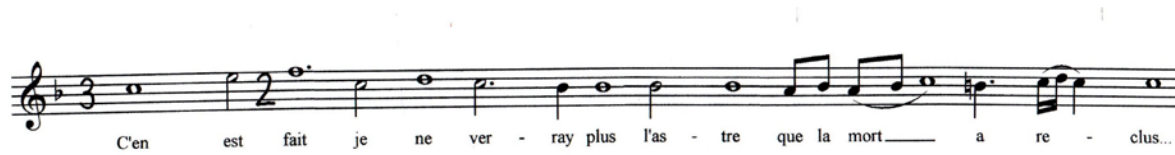


Figure 1. Opening phrases of Guédron's air, "C'en est fait je ne verray plus" (1613)

Théodora Psychoyou has brought to light an important seventeenth-century source reproduced in a 1912 anthology of musicians' writings. In terms stated more clearly than any previously found, this document describes the compositional process required to successfully incorporate rhetorical practice into the strophic song that the *air de cour* had become. The reproduction is of a 1650 treatise by Jacques de Goüy (c.1610-c.1650), a composer of a then recently-developed genre, strophic psalm paraphrases (*paraphrases des psaumes*), a sacred genre in the vernacular (thus in French, not Latin) similar in composition to the *airs de cour*.⁵⁶ Goüy, in the preface to his published collection of psalm paraphrases, takes pains to describe the difference between his genre and the more established secular *airs de cour*. In doing so, he provides the most succinct definition of the latter available anywhere. In the course of his preface, he establishes the similarity between the psalms and the *airs de cour*, to explain why he has entitled his volume simply one of “*airs*.” Most notably, he writes,

⁵⁶ The “Preface” was originally published in Goüy's *Airs à quatre parties, sur la Paraphrase des Psaumes de Messire Antoine Godeau* (Paris: Robert Ballard, 1650), partie de dessus, f.[I-XVI]. Reproduced in a 1912 anthology by J.-G. Prod'homme, *Écrits de Musiciens (Xve-XVIIIe siècles)*, (Paris: Mercure de France, 1912), 156-173. As cited in Psychoyou, 193.

...I thought that I should choose a method [*mode*], or a manner of singing appropriate for the entire psalm, but particularly for the first verse, since the musician is obliged to express the passions encountered there, and not those of the other verses. It is the same as the argument of a discourse, because one has the general view of the entire material, however one does not take note of all the thoughts making it up; but only those that are of the utmost importance. Now the first verse, in my view, is the most remarkable of them; because the method [*mode*] must concur with it more than any other. (... j'ay pensé qu'on devoit choisir un mode, ou une maniere de chanter convenable à tout le Pseaume, mais particulièrement au premier couplet, dautant que le Musicien est obligé d'exprimer les passions qui s'y r'encontent, & non pas celles des autres versets. Il en de mesme de l'argument d'un discours, parce qu'on a veü generale de toute la matiere, neantmoins on n'y marque pas toutes les pensées qui le composent ; mais seulement celles qui sont les plus plus considerables. Or le premier couplet est à mon advis, le plus remarquable en cela; partant le mode luy doit plutost convenir qu'à nul autre.)⁵⁷

The composer's concern with “choosing a method” or *mode* suitable for the entire song—all of its verses—even while focusing initially on the first, aligns exactly with Royster's and others' observations of the uneven prosody in the *airs de cour*.

The expressive meaning of the poetry was the most important consideration for composers of vocal music at the time. The unspoken requirement was that one should be mindful of the effects of sequences, dissonances and melismas on the lyrics of all verses, in a type of “thick composition.” As Psychoyou notes, that requirement creates a particular challenge for the composer of narrative works, such as are many of the *airs*.

... if the singer is to participate in a certain evolution of effects in a significant way, he must, in the midst of his singing, create a gradual change; he must not totally change the character of the given first verse, in the following verses that are sung to the same music. (... si le chanteur peut participer de façon significative à une certaine évolution des affects, s'il peut, au moyen de son art du chant, créer une gradation, il ne pourrait changer totalement le caractère du premier couplet étant donné que les suivants sont chantés sur la même Musique.)⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Goüy, f. [V-Vv], as cited in Psychoyou, 194.

⁵⁸ Psychoyou, 195.

The *air de cour*, given its perceived simplistic form during an era of complex motets and madrigals, was, in comparison to the other genres, much more difficult to compose well, even as a solo song. Goüy continues,

Composition of airs is the most difficult of all... it is necessary that they express the passions, and the pronunciation; that they have agreeable variety, and that they are within the constraint of the rules of simple composition... I know that those who do not engage in composition of airs, imagine that this way is not difficult: but I find that one could make three or four motets for one air with all its sections well proportioned... (La composition des Airs est la plus difficile de toutes... il faut qu'elles expriment les passions, & la prononciation, qu'elles changent agreablement, & qu'elles soient dans la contrainte des reigles de la composition simple... Je sçay que ceux qui ne s'adonnent pas à la composition des Airs, s'imaginent que cette maniere n'est pas considerable: mais je trouve que l'on peut faire trois ou quatre Motets pour un Air qui aura toutes ses parties bien proportionnées...)⁵⁹

Of particular importance to the present study is its confirmation of the link between rhetorical practice and these strophic genres. Psychoyou sums it up thusly:

At once a genre and a musical practice, the *air de cour* was nonetheless the symbolic home of the art of singing well, vehicle of a rhetoric specific to the 'actions of the orator,' this force of the voice so dear to the French model. (À la fois genre et pratique musicale, l'air de cour fut toutefois le lieu emblématique de l'art de bien chanter, véhicule d'une rhétorique propre à 'l'action de l'orateur', cette force de la voix si chère au modèle français.)⁶⁰

2.2 STROPHIC APPLICATION OF RHETORICAL PRINCIPLES

By way of example, let's look at Antoine Boësset's *air de cour*, “Que servent tes conseilz” (1628), with text by François de Boisrobert (1592-1662), that was originally published in Book

⁵⁹ Goüy, as cited in *Ibid.*, 195-96.

⁶⁰ Psychoyou, *Ibid.*, 198.

VI of the composer's airs.⁶¹ The rhetorical reading and performance guidelines for this work presented below draw on seventeenth-century rhetorical principles researched by Patricia Ranum and presented in her detailed monograph (2001).⁶² Each stanza of the poem comprises six lines, with the following number of syllables and rhyme types: Line 1, twelve syllables (ending with a masculine rhyme; that is, without a mute *e* on the final syllable); Line 2, eight syllables (feminine, with a mute *e* at the end of the line that the French do not count—even though it is pronounced in song); Line 3, eight syllables (masculine); Line 4, eight syllables (feminine). In the refrain we find Line 5, twelve syllables (masculine) and finally Line 6, eight syllables (masculine). The longer lengths of the poetic lines suggest, based on the rhetorical theory of the period, that this is an intentionally serious text; and so it appears to be.⁶³ Below is a word-by-word translation of the text, presented side by side with a more poetic translation.

<u>Verse 1, with Literal translation</u>	<u>Poetic Translation</u>
Que servent tes conseilz, Amour, il faut partir; <i>what serve your counsels, love, it's necessary to part</i>	Of what use are your counsels, Love? I must leave;
Mon destin qu'en vain je réclame, <i>my destiny that in vain I reclaim</i>	In vain I reclaim my destiny,
Me fait malgré moy consentir <i>makes me in spite of myself to consent</i>	That, in spite of myself, makes me consent
A me séparer de mon ame. <i>to separate me from my soul</i>	To separate from my soul. [allegorically: my true love]

⁶¹ André Verchaly, *Airs de cour pour voix et luth (1603-1643)* (Paris: SEDIM, 1989), 148-149.

⁶² Ranum, *The Harmonic Orator*. Ranum applies her findings to works by Lully; I have taken her suggestion to “move backwards in time, to...the *airs de cour*.” Ranum, xvi.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 136.

Refrain

Hélas! Je me consume en regrets superflus,)	Alas! I am consumed
<i>Alas! I am consumed with superfluous regrets</i>)	with superfluous regrets,
)	
Beaux yeux je ne vous verray plus.)	Dear eyes, I will no longer see you.
<i>Beautiful eyes I you will no longer see</i>)	

Verse 2.

Puis qu'Amour arrestoit mes désirs en ce lieu,	As Love has cut short my desires
<i>since Love stopped my desires in this place</i>	in this place,
Honneur, ta rigueur est extrême,	Honor, your harshness is extreme;
<i>Honor, your rigor is extreme</i>	
Qui m'a fait offenser un Dieu	That which caused me to offend a God
<i>who caused me to offend a God</i>	
Pour me satisfaire moy-mesme.	to satisfy myself.
<i>in order to satisfy myself</i>	

Verse 3

La mort qui mille fois m'a présenté son dard	Death, that has pointed its dagger
<i>Death that a thousand times to me</i>	at me a thousand times,
<i>showed his dagger</i>	
N'a point fait paslir mon visage,	Has not once caused my face to pale,
<i>Has not at all caused my face to pale</i>	
Mais je voy bien qu'en ce départ	Yet well I see that in this departure
<i>But I see well that in this depart</i>	
Elle ébranlera mon courage.	[Death] has shaken my courage.
<i>She shakes my courage.</i>	

Verse 4

Ciel qui dans les périls m'a toujours préservé,	Heaven, who has always
<i>Heaven who in perils me has always preserved</i>	preserved me in peril
Peux-tu voir mon ame abattue?	Can you not see my beaten soul?
<i>can you see my soul beaten</i>	
Ne m'as-tu des armes sauvé	Have you but spared my weapons
<i>[not] have you the weapons saved</i>	

Qu'afin que le regret me tue?
that at last regret me kills

Only to have regret kill me at the last?

Verse 5

Mais que le ciel est juste, et que j'accuse à tort
yet that heaven is just, and that I accuse wrongly

Yet, heaven is just,
and I wrongly accuse

Le destin qui m'est si contraire!
destiny that to me is so contrary

Destiny that is against me!

Certes je mérite la mort,
certainly I merit death

Certainly I merit death,

Mon amour est trop téméraire.
my love is too careless

My love is too careless.

Figure 2 is a print of the score with melody and verses, adapted from the vocal-lute score.⁶⁴ While the published vocal-lute score has no barlines, it does have a cut-time signature, therefore implying a possible sense of “downbeat.”⁶⁵ Upon examining the modernized score, several features are immediately apparent. The note values show considerable variation; there are very few melismas; a number of tied notes cross the modern barline; all the syllables line up neatly in a traditional strophic format. But within the second through fifth verses, a closer scan of the poetry reveals the conundrum. That is where the accents of the music fail to line up consistently with those of the French poetic text. Enter the proposed rhetorical explanation and guidelines for performance.

⁶⁴ Strophic notation is adapted from the published score for voice and lute. Antoine Boësset, “Que servent tes conseilz,” in Verchaly, *Airs de cour*, 148-149.

⁶⁵ The author believes that it would be preferable to reproduce the air without barlines, as in the vocal/lute score.

Que ser-vent tes con-seilz, A-mour, il
Pui-squ'A-mour ar-res-tot mes dé-sirs
La mort qui mi-le-fois m'a pre-sen-
Ciel qui dans les-pé-rilz m'a lou-jours
Mais que le ciel est juste, et que j'a'c'

8
- faut par-tir, Mon des-tin qu'en vain je re-cla-me
- en ce lieu Hon-neur ta ri-gueur est ex-tres-me,
- té-son dard N'a-point fait pas-lir mon vi-sa-ge,
- pré-ser-ve, Peux-tu voir mon ame a-ba-tu-e?
- cuse à tort Le des-tin qui m'est si con-trai-re!

16
Me fait mal-gré moy con-sen-tir À me
Qui m'a fait of-fen-ser un dieu Pour me
Mais je voy bien fen-ser dé-part Elle é-
Ne m'as-tu des-ar-mes sau-ve Qu'a-fin
Cer-tes je mé-ri-te la mort, Mon a-

23
- sé-pa-rer de mon a-me Hé-las! je me
- sa-tis-fai-re moy mes-me
- bran-le-ra mon cou-ra-ge,
- que le re-gret me-tu-e?
- mour est trop le-mé-rai-re.

31
con-summe en re-grets su-per-flus, Beaux yeux, je ne vous ver-ray plus.

Figure 2. "Que servent tes conseilz," Antoine Boësset, text by François de Boisrobert

2.3 RHETORICAL DECONSTRUCTION OF "QUE SERVENT TES CONSEILZ"

To begin with, recall Morier's "law of progressive lengthening," presented in Chapter 1. Each of the poetic lines in the five verses is made up of from eight to twelve syllables that are in turn comprised of two or three poetic feet, in patterns that change from verse to verse, excepting the

hemistich.⁶⁶ For example, the first line of each verse may be broken down as illustrated below.

The numbers under the syllables show the count within each foot.

Verse 1. *Que ser - vent tes con - seilz, A - mour, il faut par - tir;*
1 2 3 4 5 6 // 1 2 // 1 2 3 4
 |--| |--| |--| |--| |--| / |--| |--| / |--| |--| |--| |--|

Verse 2. *Puis qu'A - mour ar - re - stoit mes dé - sirs en ce lieu*
1 2 3 4 5 6 // 1 2 3 // 1 2 3
 |--| |--| |--| |--| |--| / |--| |--| |--| / |--| |--| |--|

Verse 3. *La mort qui mi - le fois m'a pre - sen - té son dard*
1 2 // 1 2 3 4 // 1 2 3 4 // 1 2
 |--| |--| / |--| |--| |--| |--| / |--| |--| |--| |--| / |--| |--|

Verse 4. *Ciel qui dans les pe - rilz m'a tou - jours pre - ser - vé,*
1 // 1 2 3 4 5 // 1 2 3 // 1 2 3
 |--| / |--| |--| |--| |--| |--| / |--| |--| |--| / |--| |--| |--|

Verse 5. *Mais que le ciel est juste, et que j'ac - cuse à tort*
1 // 1 2 3 4 5 // 1 2 3 4 5 6
 |--| / |--| |--| |--| |--| |--| / |--| |--| |--| |--| |--| |--|

The breakdown by poetic feet, and the resulting numerical counts, must be accompanied by the caveat that, given the aforementioned weakness of the tonic accent in French, my divisions are potentially disputable at points.⁶⁷ There are native styles of speech, even regionalisms, that may differ slightly from the phrasing mapped above; in the course of my study I encountered only minor variations. There are two types of divisions indicated between the prosodic units in the graphic below the numbers. When the temporal division between prosodic units as spoken is slight, the slash after the graphic of the last syllable is placed immediately following it, with no space between the vertical line and slash. A slash set apart from the vertical follows prosodic units with greater closure or finality.

⁶⁶ The hemistich marks the halfway point in a line of verse, and is usually marked by a caesura, or pause.

⁶⁷ One might argue the count of verse 5 above as 6+6, without the pause after *Mais* (but). However, there is a slight pause after *mais* in the first half of the line, explained more fully below.

When we compare the five lines of verse, which are of course sung to the same melodic line, it is easy to see the shape of the problem facing the French composer of the *airs de cour*. While the hemistich remains a constant, there is considerable latitude in the breakdown of syllables into feet. The six syllables of either hemistich appear here as either one six-syllable foot, or two feet of 2+4, 3+3, 4+2, or 1+5. The composer's challenge is to create a melody consisting of rhythmic values and steps/leaps such that it artistically expresses the meaning of the text in every verse.

Verse 1.	6+2+4
Verse 2.	6+3+3
Verse 3.	2+4+4+2
Verse 4.	1+5+3+3
Verse 5.	1+5+6

Such an accentual schema is unlike anything encountered in the art song repertoire of Italy, Germany, Spain, or the United Kingdom, due to the prosodic phrasing of French and its grounding in counted syllables, rather than in regular patterns of poetic feet. Setting this strophic poetry to a single melodic line with regular strong and weak beats necessarily and without any other options must result in some of the unstressed syllables in successive verses landing on strong beats.

How was this dealt with, in a way acceptable to the French audience? The answer, it appears, was laid out in rhetorical rules. Theoretical treatises on music, emotional “passions,” and expression of the latter via the former through the intermediary of a text abound during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. An investigation into the many theoretical means of expression at one's disposal applicable to Boësset's “Que servent tes conseilz” is beyond the scope of the present study. I will, however, point out the primacy of a few factors: (1) the law of progression; (2) the oratorical accent, which is a specific, changeable feature of the French

language; and (3) the concept of aesthetic variety, as it plays out in the French *art poétique* and in song. The interplay of these three factors may be at the root of a fourth feature Ranum defines as a special type of anacrusis, occurring most often in a form referred to by Benigne de Bacilly as a “hypothesis” of choice,

...that means that one hesitates a little, and that one should not go on precipitously, which is even more evident in places that grammarians call *optatives*. (...*qui veut qu'on hesite un peu, et que l'on ne passe pas outre avec tant de precipitation; ce qui paroist encore davantage dans les endroits que la Grammaire nomme optatifs.*)⁶⁸

Other terms in Ranum's deconstructions that I use as well, are “doubt” (connected to a passage on the word *mais* [but] in a guide to proper *recitatif* by Jean-Léonor Le Gallois de Grimarest, 1707) and “option,” a synonym for the hypothesis of choice expressed by Bacilly. The anacrusis is most commonly the equivalent of the musical upbeat, but the special usage Ranum defines, when a prosodically weak syllable is found on a strong beat of the music, is more specialized.

Oratorical accents act independently of regular prosodic accents. Regular prosodic accents usually—but not always—fall on the final syllable of French words; they are always at the close of the prosodic unit, and are therefore at the root of progressive lengthening. The oratorical accent runs counter to this normal prosodic accent, and is typically reserved for emotional moments. As Marin Mersenne referred to it, “L’accent, dont nous parlons icy, est une inflexion ou modification de la voix, ou de la parole, par laquelle on exprime les passions et les affections naturellement, ou par artifice” (The accent of which we speak here is an inflection or modification of the voice or of speech, by which one expresses the passions and the affections,

⁶⁸ Benigne de Bacilly, *Remarques curieuses sur l'art de bien chanter* (Paris: Ballard, 1668), 381. <http://www.scribd.com/doc/24497603/16407904-LArt-de-Bien-Chanter-Benigne-de-Bacilly> (accessed August 11, 2011); also see Ranum, 274.

naturally or by artifice [artistically]).⁶⁹ Thus, “JAMais je ne veux te voir!” (I *never* want to see you again!) takes the place of “JaMAIS je ne veux te voir” (I do not wish to see you again), a sentiment perhaps more likely to be expressed as “Je ne te verrai plus jaMAIS” (I will never see you again). Because this accentuation seems unnatural to non-native performers who are perhaps otherwise comfortable singing in French, the fact that in many instances the oratorically accented, but normally *unaccented* syllable falls on a strong beat of the music may cause an unknowing performer to view it as “yet another example of how poorly the words fit the music,” and to “do their utmost to avoid accentuating the offending note.”⁷⁰

There are three subcategories of the oratorical accent as it occurs in music. Their manifestations and meaning are: (1) the “pathetic accent,” a raised pitch on the first syllable of two within a word or prosodic unit, dropping a third or more to the poetic foot, expressing pathos; (2) the “rebounding accent,” a reiterated pitch, creating intensity or evoking duration; and (3) the “languid accent,” an inversion of the pathetic accent, from a lower pitch upward, “generally reserved for contexts where the orator hopes, or believes, that the current state of affairs will last a long time.”⁷¹ All three of these types of oratorical accent are found in this particular air, as can be seen in the details of my rhetorical analysis of its musical features (Table 1). References to all three of these types of accent may be found in theoretical sources of the era.

Aesthetic variety is not as frequently a point of discussion, maybe due to its omnipresence—as in something that “goes without saying.” As oratorian and pedagogue Bernard Lamy (d. 1715), expresses it:

⁶⁹ Mersenne, “Les Consonances,” in *L’Harmonie universelle*, 366; as quoted in Ranum, 217.

⁷⁰ Ranum, 216. Ranum adds, “Although this musical accent did...become a cliché in French music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it is neither false nor clumsy. It was... an important tool.”

⁷¹ Ranum, 223, 227.

Among the defects in arranging words one may count “similitude,” that is to say, an overly frequent repetition...of a given rhythm. Diversity pleases; the best things become boring when they are too common. ...Variety is so necessary to avoid the disgust that one feels for the most agreeable things, that musicians...even use dissonances now and then in their concerts, in order that...the roughness by which they then offend will be like smelling salts that awaken the ears. When poets therefore sometimes disregard the rules... one should neither reprove them nor find fault with these rules. (*Entre les défauts de l'arrangement des mots, on compte la Similitude; c'est à dire une Repetition trop frequente...d'une même cadence. La diversité plait; les meilleures choses ennuient lorsqu'elles sont trop communes. ...La variété est si nécessaire pour prévenir le dégoût que l'on prend des choses les plus agréables, que les Musiciens...affectent mêmes de temps en temps quelque dissonance dans leurs concerts...afin que la rudesse par laquelle ils piquent pour lors les oreilles, soit comme un sel qui les réveille. Quand les Poetes se dispenseroient donc quelquefois des regles..., on ne devoit ni les reprendre, ni blamer ces regles.*)⁷²

Variety is immediately evident in the shifting cadences opening the five strophes of Boisrobert's poem in “Que servent tes conseilz.” Antoine Boësset addressed this variety by actively considering the effect of the melody on the poetic text of each verse.

⁷² Bernard Lamy, *L'Art de parler* (Paris: Pralard, 1675), as quoted by Ranum, 168.

Table 1. Melodic Characteristics of Antoine Boësset's "Que servent tes conseilz"

MELODIC CHARACTERISTICS OF VERSE / VARIETY OF RHETORICAL EXPRESSION – Page 1			
Melodic figure	Vs	Featured words/text	Rhetorical or Musical figure
Descending fifth, d ₁ long to g breve (1 st occurrence) <i>measures 1-2</i>	1	<i>Que</i> (of what)	Anacrusis, Oratorical accent: "Option." + Pathetic accent
	2	<i>Puisque</i> (since)	Oratorical accent: "Hypothesis"
	3	<i>La mort</i> (death)	Anacrusis, Pathetic accent
	4	<i>Ciel</i> (heaven)	Grammatical accent, on high pitch
	5	<i>Mais</i> (but)	Anacrusis, Oratorical accent: "Doubt"
Melisma: long b-flat and figured minims <i>measures 3-4</i>	1	<i>tes</i> (your)	More emphasis on "your"
	2	1 st syllable of word <i>arrestoit</i> (stops)	Adds emphasis to "stop" on #.
	3	<i>mille</i> (thousand)	This syllable is not to be emphasized.
	4	<i>les</i> (the, definite article)	Extends the concept of "thousand"
	5	<i>ciel</i> (heaven)	Ornament further expresses "perils." Article not to be emphasized.
Long f#, phrase ending on leading tone (1 st occurrence) <i>measure 5</i>	1	<i>conseils</i> (counsel)	More emphasis to "heavens"
	2	<i>arrestoit</i> (stops)	Leading tone = "bad" counsel
	3	<i>fois</i> (occurrence)	Literally "stops," w/ sound of doing so in apparent mid-phrase
	4	<i>perilz</i> (perils)	- - -
	5	<i>juste</i> (justified, correct)	Emphasized the "perils" Orator faced Raises question of misplaced "justice"

Table 1. (cont.)

MELODIC CHARACTERISTICS OF VERSE / VARIETY OF RHETORICAL EXPRESSION – Page 2				
Melodic figure	Vs	Featured words/text	Rhetorical / Musical figure	Expressive meaning / considerations
Descending fourth, g to d (1 st occurrence)	1	<i>Amour</i> (love)	Pathetic accent on "Love"	Emphasis on addressee of the discourse
	2	<i>mes</i> (my)	Delayed arrival at tonic; text on lower pitch is connected to the following melodic line	- - -
	3	<i>m'a</i> (to me)		- - -
	4	<i>m'a</i> (to me)		- - -
	5	<i>et que</i> (and therefore)		Emphasizes "and" = Orator doesn't really believe he is wrong
measure 6			Anacrusis, with accentuation	Emotion attached to "required necessity"
	1	<i>il faut</i> (it is necessary)	Melisma on minims expresses deep emotion	Emotion of "desires"
	2	<i>desirs</i> (desires)		Ascending line = "presenting" something
	3	<i>présenté</i> (presented)		Passage of time
4	<i>toujours</i> (always)	Emotion attached to "accusation"		
Ascending melisma in minims, g to c ₁	5	<i>j'accuse</i> (I accuse)	Deep emotion	Orator is not really "leaving"
	1	<i>partir</i> (to leave)	Oratorical accent via repetition of pitches	= Symbolically "this place"
	2	<i>ce lieu</i> (this place)		The "dart" is pointing toward Orator
	3	<i>son dard</i> (his dart)		= Symbolically "preserved"
	4	<i>préservé</i> (preserved)		Steadiness expresses opposite of "wrong" = Orator does not believe it
5	<i>tort</i> (wrong)	Orator's "destiny" is noble, high		
Repeated pitches (a): semibreve and breve	1	<i>Mon destin</i> (my destiny)	Melodic ascent	Naming new addressee of the air
	2	<i>Honneur</i> (honor)	Two-syllable poetic foot	? Notably in even, steady values = no fear
	3	<i>N'a point</i> (not at all)	- - -	Orator lifts eyes to heaven = "see" him
	4	<i>voir</i> (to see)	Grammatical accent	Orator's "destiny" is noble, high (rep.)
	5	<i>Le destin</i> (destiny)	Melodic ascent	Emphasizes "in vain" = Orator saddened
measures 10-11	1	<i>en vain</i> (in vain)	Descending figure	Symbolic "rigidity" of the sequence
	2	<i>ta rigueur</i> (your strictness)	Three-note descent from d ₁	Emphasizes "paling," equivalent to death
	3	<i>fait paslir</i> (makes pale)	Descending figure	- - -
	4	<i>mon ame</i> (my soul)	Descending figure	- - -
	5	<i>qui m'est</i> (which is to me)	Descending figure	- - -
Descending long d ₁ , breve b, to g breve; outlines 'minor triad'* (*not called such, then)	1	<i>measures 11-12</i>	Descending figure	- - -

Table 1. (cont.)

MELODIC CHARACTERISTICS OF VERSE / VARIETY OF RHETORICAL EXPRESSION – Page 3				
Melodic figure	Vs	Featured words/text	Rhetorical / Musical figure	Expressive meaning / considerations
Descending fifth, long d ₁ to breve g (2 nd occurrence)	1	<i>Me fait</i> (makes me)	Pathetic accent	Emphasizing self
	2	<i>Qui</i> (which)) One-syllable Anacrusis (only),) with emphasis on that syllable)	Reference back to “honor”
	3	<i>Mais</i> (But)		“But” is turning point from rhetorical Narration to the Confirmation
	4	<i>Ne</i> [part of <i>ne... que</i> (lest)]		Not to be emphasized
	measures 16-17	5	<i>Certes</i> (surely)	Grammatical accent
1		<i>consenter</i> (to consent)	Ascending figure Antithesis	“consenting” is noble, high
2		<i>un dieu</i> (a god)		Indicating a “god” w/ higher pitch
3		<i>depart</i> (departure)		“departing” upward
4		<i>[des armes] sauvé</i> →		“armaments saved”= life redeemed
5	<i>la mort</i> (death)	Direction in opposition to “death”		
Long ff# (2 nd occurrence)	1	<i>me</i> (to me)	Leading tone, with continuation to tonic	Orator carries poetic foot through the following rebounding oratorical accent
	2	<i>me</i> (to me)		
	3	[1 st syllable of word]		
	4	<i>a fin</i> (in the end)		
measures 22-23	5	[1 st syllable of word]	Sense of “rest” in this instance	Emphasizes “in the end,” but it is an unsteady, false “end”
	1	<i>séparer</i> (to separate)	Oratorical accent via repetition of pitches	Carry poetic foot through to rebound Orator not really “separated” from his soul?
	2	<i>satisfaire</i> (satisfy)		
	3	<i>ébranlera</i> (will shake)		
	measure 23	4	<i>que le</i> (that the)	---
5		<i>trop</i> (too much)	Oratorical accent: repeated pitches	
1		<i>[sépar]er... de (...from)</i>	Break of descent can carry meaning: Slurs express deep emotion	
2		(see <i>satisfaire</i> , above)	Oratorical accent: Pathetic accent Slurs express deep emotion	
3		<i>[ébranler]a... mon (...my)</i>		
Descending g to d, (2 nd occurrence) followed here by ascent with two semibreves on each syllable measures 24-25	4	<i>regret</i> (regret)	Oratorical accent: Pathetic accent Slurs express deep emotion	Deep emotion; also “changeable/rash?”
	5	<i>témé[raine]</i> (reckless)		

Table 1. (cont.)

MELODIC CHARACTERISTICS OF VERSE / VARIETY OF RHETORICAL EXPRESSION – Page 4				
Melodic figure	Vs	Featured words/text	Rhetorical / Musical figure	Expressive meaning / considerations
Final pitch of verse: long f# (leading tone) <i>measure 27</i>	1	<i>ame</i> (soul)	Descending minor third, end on leading tone	Interval and final leading tone express doubt or sadness regarding the Orator's "soul," "self" and "courage." Expressive of "killing"
	2	<i>moy-mesmes</i> (myself)		
	3	<i>courage</i> (courage)		
	4	<i>tue</i> (kills)		
	5	<i>[témé]raire</i> (reckless, or rash)		
REFRAIN				
Melodic figure	Featured text	Rhetorical / Musical figure	Expressive meaning / considerations	
Descending long d ₁ to b- <i>natural</i> breve <i>measures 28-29</i>	<i>Hélas!</i> (Alas!)	Pathetic accent, to pitch not in the same mode	Emotional exclamation	
Descending line, c ₁ (+ appoggiatura d ₁) to f# leading tone, with erratic rhythm <i>measures 30-33</i>	<i>je me consume en regrets</i> (I am consumed with regrets)	Rhythmically uneven melodic descent	Uneven, erratic rhythm expresses the Orator's unstable emotional condition. Orator is deeply "consumed with regrets."	
Ascending breves, g to b-flat long <i>measures 34-35</i>	<i>superflus</i> (superfluous)	Ascent away from tonic pitch	Emphasizes "superfluous," wittily expressed through superfluous notes.	
Ascending breves, (a-bb slurred) to long c ₁ <i>measures 36-37</i>	<i>Beaux yeux</i> (dear eyes)	Slurred ascending notes	Slurs express deep emotion; ascent is as if looking up into the beloved's eyes.	
Descending long d ₁ to f# leading tone, g tonic <i>measures 38-39</i>	<i>je ne vous</i> (I [not] you)	Pathetic accent to leading tone, resolution to tonic	"I" and "you" are far apart	
Appoggiatura (a) and repeated pitches (g) <i>measures 40-41</i>	<i>verray plus</i> (will see again= will not see)	Appoggiatura; Rebounding oratorical accent	Emphasizes "see" and "more." The Orator may not see the beloved any more, but he is certainly not going to die.	

A comparison of the settings of the five stanzas of the poem reveals a significant reinterpretation of many characteristics of the text during the course of the air, using an unchanging strophic melody. Boësset shaped the melody with great skill and attention to detail, creating a work that functions differently with the given melody, phrase by phrase, in each of the five verses. My examination found that Boësset utilized a remarkably restricted palette of melodic ideas to carry and interpret the poetry. Table 1 presents an interpretation of all musical and rhetorical features in the *air*. Some of the music-text relationships do not appear to be significant in all five verses; when these are lacking especial meaning, I have marked those features with dashes.

2.4 DETAILS OF THE ANALYSIS

Of the fourteen melodic events presented in detail, there are five that are not repeated verbatim elsewhere in the air. Of these five, two comprise repeated pitches, embodying different meaning as shown in Figure 3 and described in the table. Then, there are two phrases with different melismas. One of these is shown in Figure 4; the one that is a notated ornament is reproduced in Figure 6 and its specific meaning discussed below. The remaining unrepeated melodic event is a group of three descending pitches outlining the ‘minor triad’ central to the tonality of the song, G minor (Figure 5)—although tonality as we know it was not solidified at that time.

the song is the notated ornament shown in Figure 6; it is intentionally interpreted differently over its five repetitions. In the first and last verses, the ornament adds emphasis to the word *tes* (your, informal form). In the second verse, the ornament adds meaning to the word *arrestoit*, (stopped) in that the word's completion literally appears to stop the motion of the ornament; the meaning of the central verse's *mille* (thousand) is audibly illustrated, and the upcoming *perilz* (perils) in verse four is made more frightening.

tes	con	-	seilz,
ar	res	-	toit
mi	le	-	fois
les	pé	-	rilz
ciel	est		juste,

Figure 6. Vocal ornament, mm. 3-5 of Boësset's "Que servent tes conseilz"

The most problematic feature of the air for the modern performer is the occurrence of weak syllables on strong beats at the beginning of poetic lines. When such a syllable serves as a rhetorical hypothesis, however, its meaning may be understood in that context. Boësset uses this rhetorical device to his advantage. Figure 7 shows the composer's skillful attention to the prosody and meaning inherent in the different lyrics at the start of the third phrase of the air. By choosing a rising, stepwise melodic line here, Boësset illustrates not only the lofty status of the subject's destiny in the first and last verses, but has respected the initial grammatical accent of both *honneur* (honor; verse2) and *peux-tu* (can you, informal; verse 4). Only the third verse remains unexplained, where the poetic line, "N'a point fait palir mon visage" (has not at all caused my face to pale), seems to have no logical reason for its inescapable accent on the first syllable. I propose that the steadily rising line, in even note values, may serve to express the

10

Mon des - tin
 Hon - neur, ta
 N'a point fait
 Peux - tu voir
 Le des - tin

Figure 7. Treatment of first words in the poetic phrase, mm. 10-11, "Que servent tes conseilz"

subject's steadiness or lack of fear in the face of obstacles. That still leaves the problem of the accented weak syllable—that also occurs in the last verse's *Le destin* (destiny).

This is where Ranum's special anacrusis may come into play. Her explanation for the correct interpretation of such phrases in performance results from a combination of the law of progression, the freedom granted by the oratorical accent, and the quest for aesthetic variety. If, as Ranum proposes, the singer deliberately withholds the force of the voice from stressing the downbeat here, it can be argued that the performer is honoring the stress of the law of progression by moving through the phrases to their actual prosodic accent. Thus, the performer sings "N'a point **fait**" and "Le **destin**." Doing so, incidentally, adds variety to the performance.

16

Me fait mal -
 Qui m'a fait -
 Mais je voy -
 Ne m'as - tu -
 Cer - tes je

Figure 8. Measures 16-17, "Que servent tes conseilz"

If one takes the above approach to the text on the fourth-line D of measure sixteen, shown in Figure 8, it is possible to dismiss the objection to Boësset's setting in the fourth verse of the text “Ne m'as tu” (you have me not). I reproduce this passage in order to show, also, the genius of Boësset's composition in this strophic genre. Here is a melodic phrase that echoes the opening of the air, a comfortable repetition in form to the ears of an audience. The text of each verse, however, appears in such a way that its approach and meaning is unique. Verse one: “Me fait” (makes me) continues with “malgré moy consentir” (consent, in spite of myself); the high D on *me* (me) emphasizes the self, and the D-G melodic descent is a pathetic oratorical accent, foregrounding the sadness the situation brings to the narrator. Verse two: *Qui* (who/whom/that) refers back to the previous phrase (see the full score in Figure 2), “ta rigueur est extremesme” (your rigor is extreme), emphasizing the difficulty of the ‘extreme rigor’ by its melodic distance from the following text, *m’a* (to me). Verse three: *Mais* (but) represents a hypothesis of choice, and therefore the performer lingers briefly on the option or doubt expressed. Verse four: The special anacrusis suggests the performer withhold accentuation until the close of the prosodic unit, as proposed above. Verse five: The performer's grammatical stress—that is, with normal prosodic accent—on *Certes* (surely) provides bold emphasis on the certainty of the subject's situation.

2.5 SUMMARY

The rhetorical examination of Boësset's 1628 *air de cour* affirms the concerted effort of this composer, at least, to strive for the closest possible connection between rhetorical practice and the setting of text in his vocal compositions. While historical sources have long claimed the *air*

de cour's imitation of French speech patterns, the rationale for that assertion has been difficult to pin down until recent crosscurrents in academic scholarship. The discovery by Théodora Psychoyou of Jacques de Gouy's notes, and the rhetorical and linguistic connections proposed by Patricia Ranum help to decipher some of the misunderstood compositional artistry of this strophic genre.

While the applicability of progressive lengthening to the airs may be minimal, unless further research reveals a more strongly corroborated link between it and the appearance of weak syllables on strong beats in the *airs de cour*, this particular trait of the French language becomes much more central to the compositional idiom of successive generations of French vocal music composers. The baffling ostensible mismatch of weak words with strong metrical beats in French song continues beyond the era of the *air de cour*. It is found in the prosodic practice of Lully a few decades later, in the airs of his operas. By then, however, the recitative has become the primary bearer of meaning.

3.0 FRENCH PROSODY FROM LULLY TO SAINT-SAËNS

One familiar with matters of French prosody in song may notice that I have not addressed the terms “long” and “short” as they have been variously applied to French poetry and song from the time of *vers mesuré*. Arguments over what precisely constitutes “long” in the French language and what is identified as “short” began with Jean-Antoine de Baïf, who erroneously held that the French language consisted of alternating long and short syllables—a bid to claim heredity from ancient practice. From that false start descended theoretical treatises attempting an improved definition of “long” and “short,” none of which appears to have mattered to the sensibilities of composers. Many intellectual currents of the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries lie outside the parameters of this study, and many musical aspects of the Galant period (ca. 1730-1780) had little effect on French prosody. What is applicable, however, is the dichotomous approach to text-setting exhibited in works written for the Opéra-comique and the Académie royale de musique. This variable practice is evident in successful operatic parodies of increasing number at the close of the eighteenth century.

One curious result culminating from the growing number of social and cultural exchanges in the emerging European states during this period was the increasing mix in approaches to prosody in French song created for public consumption. Musicians from across the continent were more and more peripatetic—or perhaps only more visibly so, as travel and communication improved. The longstanding desire to seek economic opportunity across borders, which could

and sometimes did lead to international fame, was now more easily obtained. That particular cross-pollination of culture and language now meant that operas, for instance, could be performed for appreciative audiences in several different languages in more than one European capital. For the Italian-born Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-1687), the opportunities of his era led to renown and riches in his adopted country of France; in the case of Christoph Willibald Ritter von Gluck (1714-1787), he was able to establish his French operatic career in Vienna before moving to Paris.⁷³ The success of Gluck's *tragédies lyriques* is well documented; however, his French comic operas have undergone less scrutiny, and these demonstrate a very different prosodic practice.⁷⁴ A strikingly different approach to French prosody existed in most of the repertoire at the Opéra-comique compared to that at the Académie royale de musique, a distinction that is intertwined with the realities of social class. The similarity of the prosody found in the comic operas and French vaudevilles stands in stark contrast to the practice in *tragédies lyriques*.

The blurred lines of tradition between these two bodies may be responsible for the clashing theories on French text-setting present in the mid-nineteenth-century of which Saint-Saëns complained.⁷⁵ By that time, according to Andreas Giger, there appear to have been at least four contradictory methodologies in use.⁷⁶ If rules of versification were in agreement on syllable

⁷³ According to Bruce Alan Brown, “French culture was already in the ascendant in the Austrian capital by the time of [impresario Count Giacomo] Durazzo's arrival in 1750, but it was through his efforts—principally in the commissioning of works—that French music began to exert a real force on Italian opera[, dominant for nearly a century] in Vienna.” See Bruce Alan Brown, “Christoph Willibald Gluck and the Opéra-comique in Vienna, 1754-1764” (PhD diss. University of California, Berkeley, 1986), 1.

⁷⁴ Brown's exhaustive dissertation and resulting monograph, *Gluck and the French Theatre in Vienna* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) are the most thorough resource on Gluck's *opéras-comiques*.

⁷⁵ As noted in Chapter 1, 11-12.

⁷⁶ Andreas Giger, “The Triumph of Diversity: Theories of French Accentuation and Their Influence on Verdi's French Operas,” *Music & Letters* 84, no.1 (February 2003): 56-57. Giger also refers to the work of Henri Morier, whose research into the “law of progression” resulted in his definition of the “Accent tonique ou temporel” as a “natural accent of spoken French that consists of a more or less perceivable lengthening of the final sounding vowel in a rhythmic measure.” Morier, *Dictionnaire de poétique et de rhétorique* (Paris, 1961), as cited in Giger, 57.

count, rhyme, and caesura, there was little guidance when it came to correct accentuation in poetic texts expressly written for or set to music:

Authors take four basic approaches to accentuation: first, they avoid the issue; second, they discern regular patterns of metric feet—the approach most commonly occurring in musical writings; third, they observe a set number of accents per verse, which fall on the most important syllables; and fourth, they see irregular rhythmic groups as punctuated by accents.⁷⁷

The people and works most pertinent to the legacy handed down to Fauré include the operatic composers Lully and Gluck.⁷⁸ Brief prosodic analyses of examples from the operas of Lully, Gluck, and a few others in this chapter illustrate the practice deemed acceptable in their respective eras. While Lully's vocal music evidences two styles—one for recitative and the other for airs and choruses—Gluck's settings are more consistent across each work, but show the noted clear stylistic dichotomy between the *tragédies* and the comic operas with which he was involved in Vienna. Other important voices along the way whose contributions are explored to some extent in this chapter are Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), and André-Ernest-Modeste Grétry (1741-1813). This last witness is relevant due to the great popularity of his numerous *opéras-comiques*, and the observations on prosody noted in his *Mémoires*.⁷⁹

Frits Noske's landmark study of nineteenth-century French song includes a chapter devoted to “the literary aspects of the *mélodie*.”⁸⁰ His historical summary of the prominent figures in theoretical writings on the topic covers a roster of well-known names from Baïf

⁷⁷ Ibid., 59.

⁷⁸ Camille Saint-Saëns, Fauré's teacher, mentor, and friend, was not known for his songs—most of them *romances*, a precursor of the *mélodie*. No stylistic connection has ever been proposed to exist between the compositions of Saint-Saëns; I do not include Saint-Saëns' works in my study.

⁷⁹ André Grétry, *Mémoires* (Paris: 1787) http://imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/a/a5/IMSLP83320-PMLP169933-M_mmoires_ou_essai_sur_la_musique.pdf, (accessed August 17, 2011).

⁸⁰ Frits Noske, *French Song from Berlioz to Duparc*, trans. Rita Benton (New York: Dover, 1988), see especially 41-68.

onward. Notably lacking in the summary are French composers who wrote about French prosody; it appears that remarkably few did, although all who worked with text must have been aware of their language's peculiar challenges. Noske names only three: Grétry, Camille Saint-Saëns, and Vincent d'Indy. Two of the three are contemporaries of Fauré, an indication of an evolving interest in issues of correct prosody in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

3.1 LULLY'S IDIOM: *CHANTER COMME ON PARLE*

Jean-Baptiste Lully is said to have based his text-setting on the declamation of a contemporary actress, Marie Desmares “la Champmeslé,” who was well-known in Paris for her stage presence.⁸¹ The natural flow of French speech is readily evident in Lully's recitatives. One of the most prominent features is the frequent change in time signature in response to the phrasing and pace of the spoken text. Figure 9 reproduces a recitative from the opera, *Psyché*, written initially for express performance in the Salle des Machines (literally, the “room of [theatrical] machines”) at the Tuileries Palace in 1671. Molière (1622-1673, whose real name was Jean-Baptiste Poquelin) had won the commission for the production, and he called upon Lully, his longstanding librettist Philippe Quinault (1635-1688), and the famous playwright Pierre Corneille (1606-1684) to assist in its creation. The grand spectacle was intended to impress visiting foreigners with the wealth and splendor of the court; the result was an entertainment that went well beyond the costs of previous productions.

⁸¹ Romain Rolland, *Some Musicians of Former Days*, trans. Mary Blaiklock (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1915), 176.

The libretto for the play's revival and recasting as a *tragédie lyrique* in 1678 is of unclear origin. Quinault had recently been banished from court and an acceptable substitute needed to be designated on short notice.⁸² Thomas Corneille (1625-1709, also known by the pseudonym Corneille de l'Isle)—younger brother of the famous playwright Pierre Corneille—is given credit on the title page, and the younger Corneille may have had assistance from Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle (1657-1757), his nephew and a published writer. Fontenelle later claimed to have written the libretto.⁸³ It is not known how much of the opera retained Quinault's original work; the title of the 2007 edition of *Psyché* indicates its origin “with the collaboration of Philippe Quinault,” without further explanation.⁸⁴ In any case, the resulting opera was the king's favorite for many years.

The first excerpt to be examined here, “Pourquoi du ciel m'obliger à descendre (Why oblige me to descend from heaven),” shown in Figure 9, is sung by Vénus in the Prologue, and as such, is not part of the operatic narrative.⁸⁵ It is unusual in that it does not close by connecting to an aria, according to standard contemporary form. The many time-signature changes are typical of Lully's recitatives; however, their more frequent use in this particular aria is exceptional. Scanning the lyrics within the recitative reveals both minor and major prosodic stresses. Major stresses that define the prosodic unit line up with the changes of key signature. Only once, in the penultimate line on *Dans* (in), does the initial word of the poetic line fall on the

⁸² Théodore de LaJarte, “Introduction,” *Psyché* (New York: Broude Brothers, 1971), 1-2.

⁸³ Lully is reported to have said of the younger Corneille's work, “*J'aimerais autant mettre ne musique un exploit dressé par un sergent que de travailler sur les vers de M. de L'Isle* (I would rather set into music an exploit drawn up by a sergeant than work on the verses of M. de L'Isle).” The account of Fontenelle's involvement is also related in the 1971 edition of *Psyché*, cited above. http://operabaroque.fr/LULLY_PSYCHE_78.htm (accessed October 5, 2011).

⁸⁴ Jean-Baptiste Lully and Molière, *Psyché: Tragi-comédie et ballet (avec la collaboration de Pierre Corneille et de Philippe Quinault)* [with the collaboration of Pierre Corneille and Philippe Quinault], ed. John S. Powell and Herbert Schneider (New York: G. Olms, 2007), xix-xx.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 52-53.

Pour quoy du Ciel m'o-bli-ger a des - cen-dre? Mon mé-rite en ces
 lieux n'a plus rien a pré - ten-dre: En vain vous m'y ren - dez ces hon-neurs so-len-
 nels: Le mé-pris est mon seul par - ta - ge, Et de-puis qu'a Psy -
 ché les a - veu - gles mor - tels De leurs voix a - dres - sent l'hom -
 ma - ge, Vé-nus de - meure sans au - tels. Dans u - ne si hon-teuse of -
 fen - se, Lais-sez-moy sans té - moins ré - sou - dre ma ven - gean - ce.

Figure 9. Lullian recitative: "Pourquoy du Ciel m'obliger à descendre?" from *Psyche*

first beat of a measure.⁸⁶ One can discern minor shades of stress that occur where Lully has either lengthened the note value or provided another means of highlighting the word to provide additional emphasis as, for instance, in the B-flat on *voix* (voice). The lyrics are in a verse form wherein rhyme provides the poetic structure for the text. Below are the lyrics; the first column to the right shows the breakdown of the line into its poetic feet, including those delineated by minor stress. Minor stress is indicated in the first column by parentheses around the number of

⁸⁶ The word *dans* figures prominently in accented positions in music through Fauré's era, despite its position at the beginning of the prosodic unit, not the end. Its position, I suggest, is related to the mild phonemic accentuation of the [d] at its outset.

syllables in the foot. To the right of that, in brackets, is the line's overall metric schema. Whether one chooses to account for the accents by either method, it is clear that there is no regularity in the scansion of these lines. The final numbers furthest to the right show the number of syllables in the entire line. Feminine and masculine endings of the lines are indicated by "f" or "m."

<i>Pourquoy du Ciel m'obliger à descendre?</i> ⁸⁷	4 + (2) + 2f	[4+4f]	8f
<i>Mon mérite en ces lieux n'a plus rien à prétendre:</i>	(3) + 3 + (3) + 3f	[6+6f]	12f
<i>En vain vous m'y rendez ces honneurs solonnels:</i>	6 + (3) + 3m	[6+6m]	12m
<i>Le mépris est mon seul partage,</i>	3 + (3) + 2f	[3+5f]	8f
<i>Et depuis qu'à Psyché les aveugles mortels</i>	(3) + 3 + (3) + 3m	[6+6m]	12m
<i>De leurs voix adressent l'hommage,</i>	3 + 5f	[3+5f]	8f
<i>Vénus demeure sans autels.</i>	4 + 4m	[4+4m]	8m
<i>Dans une si honteuse offense,</i>	(6) + 2f	[8f]	8f
<i>Laissez-moy sans témoins résoudre ma vengeance</i>	(3) + 3 + (2) + 4f	[6+6f]	12f

As a comparison of the setting in Figure 9 with the prosody above shows, Lully is careful to craft the rhythms of vocal music around the prosody of his texts. That deference is most easily observed in the recitatives, and may be found in many of the airs, as well.

The next example is such an air (as arias were still called in Lully's time) from Act II, Scene 1 of *Atys*. Celœnus, King of the Phrygians, sings the air, "Quand on aime bien tendrement (When one loves very tenderly)," in response to another air by Atys, "Qu'un indifférent est heureux (How happy is the indifferent [man])" after both characters have expressed their desire

⁸⁷ Translation of the text for this recitative: "Why oblige me to descend from heaven? My merit in these places has nothing to pretend. In vain you render me these solemn honors; contempt is my only share, and since blind mortals have raised their voices to address homage to Psyché, Venus remains without altars. In such a shameful offense, let me resolve my vengeance without evidence."

to be chosen as the high priest to Cybèle. In both airs, Lully heeds the rhythms of spoken declamation. In spite of the air's restrictions of regular meter, the composer is careful to place spoken accents on downbeats, and he maintains the internal phrasing of the text. A brief excerpt is reproduced in Figure 10.⁸⁸ Note that *dans* (in) is set on beat 3 in 4/4 time here. The verb *est* (is), when spoken in context of the phrase *on est ingénieux* (one is ingenious), may be accentuated or not in French, depending on the strength of the speaker's intention. Lully clearly intends the stress, thus conveying the meaning that "one is *indeed* ingenious." Lully also slightly elongates the syllable correctly in relationship to the initial syllable of *ingénieux*.



Figure 10. Excerpt from "Quand on ayme bien tendrement," *Atys*, Act II, Sc. 1

Before moving on to the next century and its developments in French vocal art music, there is one last example from Lully I wish to examine here. This air, "Est-on sage" (Is one wise), is found in the prologue to *Psyché*.⁸⁹ It exhibits a distinctly different style of vocal composition for Lully. Sung by Flora, the goddess of spring, the text is an innocuous praise of the season and of love, set to a sprightly dance melody with rhythms drawn from the minuet framing her air. The text, consisting of three tercets in each stanza, is through-composed, but strophic. The second verse is a highly-ornamented variation of the first. Below is the text for

⁸⁸ Jean-Baptiste Lully, *Atys* (New York: Broude Bros., Ltd., 1971), 131.

⁸⁹ *Psyché*, 20-23. A brief translation of the full text here is supplemented with a line-by-line version later in this chapter. (verse 1) Is one wise, in this beautiful age, not to love? That without ceasing, one hurries to taste the pleasures here below [on earth]; the wisdom of youth is knowing how to enjoy its charms. (verse 2) Love charms those it disarms; we all give in to it. Our pain would be futile to want to resist its blows. The type of chain a lover takes, liberty has nothing as sweet.

both verses with the shared syllable counts for each line. I also break down the syllabic count of the last line in each tercet; their differences undoubtedly provide a strong rationale for Lully's approach to the text as a through-composed work.

<u>Verse 1</u>		<u>Verse 2</u>
<i>Est-on sage,</i>	3f	<i>L'amour charme</i>
<i>Dans le bel age,</i>	4f	<i>Ceux qui'il désarme</i>
<i>Est-on sage, de n'aimer pas?</i>	8m	<i>L'amour charme cédon's lui tous.</i>
3 + 3 + 2		3 + 2 + 3
<i>Que sans cesse</i>	3f	<i>Notre peine</i>
<i>L'on se presse</i>	3f	<i>Serait vaine</i>
<i>De goûter les plaisirs icy bas:</i>	9m	<i>De vouloir résister à ses coups.</i>
3 + 3 + 3		3 + 2 + 4
<i>La sagesse</i>	3f	<i>Quelque chaîne</i>
<i>De la jeunesse</i>	4f	<i>Qu'un amant prenne</i>
<i>C'est de savoir jouir de ses appas.</i>	10m	<i>La liberté n'a rien qui soit si doux.</i>
4 + 2 + 4		4 + 2 + (2) + 2

The regularity of the poetic lines by syllable count is worth noting: two short lines of three or four syllables are followed by one longer line that increases in length with each repetition. A regular rhyming structure of *aabccbddb* across the three tercets contributes to coherence. Figures 11 and 12 show that the melodic line of Lully's setting contains some repetitive elements, as well—particularly in the first tercet.⁹⁰ Variety is important, as shown in the addition of ornaments in the second verse. The last two tercets share a dotted rhythmic pattern that crosses the barline, creating a hemiola effect to close the phrase.⁹¹

⁹⁰ *Psyche*, 64-65.

⁹¹ Note, for instance, how Lully adds “weight” to the initial syllable of “cédon's” by adding an ornament.

Before I scan the lyrics for prosodic accent, I must address an initially unsettling feature, in that the first syllable of each line in the poetic text coincides with the downbeat of a measure, regardless of where the prosodic flow of the text calls for an accent. Lully did not structure his recitatives in this manner, nor is the text in the other air shown above set in this way. The underlying reason for the strong rhythmic structure of this air is surely its occurrence in the midst of the minuet, as an integral part of the dance. Although Lully calls his dance a “minuet,” it is in fact closer to a *louré*, with its iambic, then trochaic measures (short-long, long-short).⁹² The composer utilizes the dance beat to aid the singer in deferring weight from the misplaced accent on the initial downbeat.

Est - on sa - ge, Dans le bel a - ge? Est - on sa - ge, De n'ai - mer pas?

293 Que sans ces - se L'on se pres - se De gou - ter les plai - sirs i - cy bas:

301 La sa - ges - se De la jeu - nes - se C'est de sa - voir jou - ir de ses ap - pas.

Figure 11. Verse 1 of "Est-on sage," air from Prologue to *Psyche*, Lully (1678)

⁹² Julie Andrijeski, “A Survey of the Loure through Definitions, Music and Choreographies” (PhD diss. Case Western Reserve University, 2006), 19. See her example I-3, which also reveals “occasional phrases” of dotted-quarter+eighth note hemiolas, such as occur in “Est-on sage.” The minuet was one of the most important popular dances at the court of Louis XIV; another dance was the “courante,” which displayed a “teasing rhythmic ambiguity resulting from shifts of metre...[and an] occasionally ambiguous triple meter.” <http://4tepiano.com/music/danceforms.html> (accessed July 30, 2011).

330 L'a-mour char - me Ceux qu'il dis - ar - me, L'a-mour char - me, Ce - dons luy

337 tous: Nos - tre pei - ne Se - roit vai - ne De vou - loir re - sis -

344 ter à ses coups: Quel que chai - ne Qu'un A - mant

349 pren - ne La Li - ber - té n'a rien qui soit si doux.

Figure 12. Verse 2 of "Est-on sage," air from Prologue to *Psyche*

A close look at the first syllables demonstrates Lully's mastery of the text-setting challenges in this context. One could lay the blame for the poorly set prosodic accent here on the recurring, dominant stroke on the musical beat; indeed, to many performers it may not occur to them to sing this passage in any other way but with accents on the downbeat. A closer examination, however, argues rhetorical shaping of several types, using the rules discussed in Chapter 2, to create audible variety in performance. Lully's text-setting practice in the above examples clearly demonstrates his concern for correct prosody, that the singer ought to be able to “chante comme on parle” (sing as one speaks), as Pierre-Alain Clerc affirms in his discussion of Lully's prosody and contemporary declamation for the stage.⁹³

To begin with, the initial *Est* of the first and third lines is hard to enunciate without an initial edge to the voice at the opening of the vowel, like the aspirated French *h*, which appears in

⁹³ Pierre-Alain Clerc, “De Racine à Lully, de Lully à Racine: Chanter comme on parle,” *Analyse musicale* 42 (2002): 47-59.

one sense to justify its occurrence on the downbeat. On the other hand, the astute performer is capable of minimizing the weight given to the word within the phrase, *Est-on sage*, instead placing the correct emphasis on *sage*, assisted by the longer note value on the penultimate syllable, as shown:

Est - on sa - ge
 | - | | - - | | - - - | / | - |

Similarly, the mild explosion of air comprised in the initial *D* of *Dans* occurs on the downbeat, and yet the singer may lighten its effect and emphasize “*age*” with its longer note at the close of the prosodic phrase:

Dans le bel a - ge
 | - | | - - | | - - - | | - - - | / | - |

The iambic rhythm of the *louré* helps to deemphasize the syllable placed on the downbeat, and the relative note values are therefore accurate, with prosodic lengthening and the second downbeat of the phrase leading the singer to correctly stress *sage* and *age*.

Continuing in this way, the setting encompasses considerable variety to please the listener. There are subtle, unexpected cross-rhythms between the dance and the song contained in lines 3, 6 and 9—further heightened by the notated hemiola of the latter two—when these are performed in accordance with spoken prosodic practice. Within the context of this lilting dance, such details enhance the playful nature of the piece, fulfilling its referenced “charms.” A line-by-line translation is provided to the right.

<u>Vs. 1</u>	<i>Est-on sage,</i>	3f	Is one wise,
	<i>Dans le bel age,</i>	4f	In the beautiful age, ⁹⁴

⁹⁴ It is unclear whether the poet means “the beautiful age” as in a stage of human life—i.e., youth—or as “beautiful era,” an alternate meaning of the French *age*, in which case the song compliments the monarchy, and Louis XIV. Given the politics of the time, the latter is likely-- but then again, such ambiguity is part of the French *charme*.

	<i>Est-on sage, de n'aimer pas?</i>	3 + 3 + 2m	Is one wise, not to love?
	<i>Que sans cesse</i>	3f	That without ceasing
	<i>L'on se presse</i>	3f	One presses on
	<i>De goûter les plaisirs icy bas:</i>	3 + 3 + 3m	To taste the pleasures here below:
	<i>La sagesse</i>	3f	Wisdom
	<i>De la jeunesse</i>	4f	Of youth
	<i>C'est de savoir jouir de ses appas.</i>	4 + 2 + 4m	Is to know how to enjoy its charms.
<u>Vs. 2</u>	<i>L'amour charme</i>	3f	Love charms
	<i>Ceux qu'il désarme</i>	4f	Those he disarms
	<i>L'amour charme cédonz luy tous.</i>	3 + 2 + 3m	Love charms, we all give in to it.
	<i>Notre peine</i>	3f	Our pain
	<i>Serait vaine</i>	3f	Would be futile
	<i>De vouloir résister à ses coups.</i>	3 + 2 + 4m	To want to resist its blows.
	<i>Quelque chaîne</i>	3f	A chain
	<i>Qu'un amant prenne</i>	4f	That takes a lover
	<i>La liberté n'a rien qui soit si doux.</i>	4 + 2 + 4m	Freedom is not so sweet.

Next, to address the outlying definite and indefinite articles beginning lines 6 through 8 of the first verse. The indefinite article, *De*, beginning line 6 is connected with the preceding line, “L'on se presse”: One “pushes on...to taste the pleasures here below.” It is an *enjambement*, a continuing thought or action between two lines of poetry. Philologist Henri Morier defines their appearance, then relates in some detail how the reader or singer ought to interpret and perform these rhetorical devices. According to Morier, the *enjambement* is clearly intended to be accented:

...the *enjambement* is a process with a strictly determined technique: the voice rises considerably at the rhyme, lengthening the vowel to let it be heard at first as if having reached the end of the line, but especially to make [the listener] believe that something will follow, as if [the poet/speaker] is searching, for one fraction of a second, a word strong enough to express his idea: [which] releases, in the auditor, a phenomena of intense curiosity, which is a hope or an apprehension, a desire or an anxiety... That is why the word that appears at the beginning of the next line must be a strong word, which strikes, grasps, surprises: then the voice falls, in a sudden relaxation of the

melody... (...l'enjambement est un procédé dont la technique est strictement déterminée: la voix s'élève considérablement à la rime, en éternise la voyelle pour laisser entendre d'abord que l'on a bien atteint les limites du vers, mais surtout pour faire deviner qu'il existe une suite, comme si l'on cherchait, une fraction de seconde, un mot assez fort pour exprimer son idée: [lequel] déclenche dans l'esprit de l'auditeur un phénomène d'intense curiosité, qui est un espoir ou une appréhension, un désir ou une angoisse... Voilà pourquoi le mot qui apparaît au début du vers suivant doit être un mot fort, qui frappe, saisit, étonne: la voix tombe alors, dans une brusque détente de la mélodie...)⁹⁵

The lingering question at the close of the previous line in this particular lyric is not laden with emotion, but the definition and explanation support the way in which Lully has set the text. The same rule of enjambement applies in the middle of line 3, verse 1: “Est-on sage de n’aimer pas?” may be understood as “Is one wise...not to love?”

In lines 7 through 9, the poet's juxtaposition of *sagesse* (wisdom) with *jeunesse* (youth) must certainly have caused some courtisans to smile, upending the more common linkage of wisdom with old age. An even greater wink is called for in the allusion to youth's “knowing how to enjoy its charms!” Although *C'est* (it is) falls on the downbeat, Lully places it at the outset of a rising melodic line that crests on the proper prosodic accent of *savoir* (to know). The ensuing dotted-note hemiola avoids misaccentuation at the close of the verse.

The second verse is markedly more florid—as is typical of many second verses or da capo reprises of arias, it too contains the iambic-trochaic *louré* rhythm, with equivalent results. Here again, Lully makes effective use of rhetorical devices and ambivalent aspects of the French language. *L'amour* (love) appears prominently in lines 1 and 3; this particular word is one of a limited number in French that may commonly be accented on either syllable, the first or last; one could argue that the two syllables have equal weight. Line 3 of the poem, instead of the enjambement of verse 1, now has an embellishment on the first beat of *cédons* (we cede, or give

⁹⁵ Morier, *Dictionnaire de poésie et de rhétorique*, 4th edition (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1989), 159.

in), to effectively mark its spoken accent. The enjambement of “Serait vaine...De vouloir resister” echoes Lully's treatment of its partner lines in verse 1.

3.2 EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY *TRAGÉDIES LYRIQUES*: MOVING AWAY FROM RHETORIC

Sometime during the first half of the eighteenth century, French vocal art music—by this time firmly embodied in the airs of French operas—experienced a critical creative turn. French musicologist Catherine Kintzler frames it in this way:

To break the Cornelian obstacle—that viewed music as a screen, or at best as a diversion and not a dramaturgical medium—this was the challenge that the *théâtre lyrique* needed to achieve in order to establish its own distinct existence at the heart of the dramatic system. (Briser l'obstacle cornélien, qui percevait la musique comme un écran, au mieux comme un divertissement, et non comme un moyen dramatique, c'était [le] défi que le théâtre lyrique devait relever pour conquérir une existence distincte au sein du système dramatique.)⁹⁶

The music of the *airs de cour* and the nation's early operas were crafted with enormous deference to the text, and to rhetorical traditions. Jean-Baptiste Lully exerted a strong and longstanding influence on serious French vocal music, bequeathing not only his favored position but also its artistic monopolies to his heirs and a close coterie of loyal imitators. It is not known, however, how many of the rhetorical guidelines for the “acceptable” framework were passed on, nor how well their tenets were understood.

The aesthetic quarrel in the 1730s and '40s between “Ramists”—followers of Jean-Philippe Rameau—and “Lullists”—those who persisted in their elevation of the older operatic

⁹⁶ Catherine Kintzler, *Poétique de l'opéra français, de Corneille à Rousseau* (Paris: Minerve, 2006), 289.

works by Jean-Baptiste Lully—is well documented. Kintzler points out that the artistic arguments of the Lullists in the 1730s were repeated nearly word-for-word in the 1750s with the War of the Buffoons (*Querelle des bouffons*, also known as the *Guerre des bouffons*), a rupture in the cultural fabric of France that is probably more well-known than the Ramist-Lullist skirmishes.⁹⁷ The compositional styles of both Rameau and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the protagonist in the mid-century *guerre*, involved challenges to the operatic traditions established by Lully. Rousseau greatly preferred the Italian operatic style that had taken Paris by storm; Rameau had sought to modernize French *tragédies lyriques*. Rameau's changes involved extensions of melodic and orchestral resources, however, and did not greatly affect the composer's treatment of text. From the perspective of the later arguments, Rameau's idiom was perceived to be as acceptable to the public as Lully's. Rousseau's new theories about the nature of music positioned it

...as the archetype of expression and communication, and more: it makes expression and communication the beginning and end of music, [and] of language's silence, the ultimate in musical beauty. (...comme l'archétype de l'expression et de la communication, plus même: elle fait de l'expression et de la communication l'origin et la fin de la musique, du silence de la langue le nec plus ultra de la beauté musicale.)⁹⁸

This valuation of music above the word springs from composers' responses to the theoretical writings of Rameau. As Kintzler points out, our twentieth- and twenty-first-century understanding of music is vastly different from that of the classical age. At that time,

...one did not know how to explain how the learned ear manages to unravel the fundamental relationships that form the essential properties of a musical sound, unless we assume that these relations, perceived thanks to listening logic, are *really* those of the natural sound. (...on ne saurait expliquer comment l'oreille savante parvient à démêler les relations fondamentales qui forment les propriétés essentielles du son

⁹⁷ Kintzler, 291.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

musical à moins de supposer que ces relations, perçues à la faveur d'une écoute logique, sont vraiment les relations du son naturel.)⁹⁹

In short, Rameau's theoretical approach to music defined its essence in ways that could finally be broken down, extracted, examined, and reproduced. Music did not need to signify beyond itself, but could simply exist, on its own terms.

This [newly-established] existence of music as a natural world [unto itself] has a remarkable esthetic consequence. If music can present itself in this way, then it can be heard for itself... Music is by this fact delivered from its servitude as explicator of text, word-by-word and phrase-by-phrase, as prescribed by the Lullist model. (De cette existence de la musique comme monde naturel résulte une conséquence esthétique remarquable. Si la musique peut se présenter ainsi, alors elle peut être écoutée pour elle-même... Elle est de ce fait délivrée de l'asservissement à l'explication de texte, au mot à mot et au phrase à phrase que lui prescrivait le modèle lullyste.)¹⁰⁰

What then makes Rameau's operas important, even pivotal, for the vocal music of the eighteenth century, is his development of the musical idiom beyond previous boundaries—particularly when paired with voice and text. As one contemporary listener complained, regarding this new style of instrumental accompaniments with singers, “l'accompagnement n'est fait que pour soutenir la voix, pour lui donner de la grace et de la force” (the accompaniment is only intended to underlay the voice, to give it grace and strength).¹⁰¹ Similar objections were made to the broader range of harmonic resources tapped by Rameau, an aspect of his work that lies outside the current topic. It is absolutely relevant, however, that Rameau's reach as a theoretician established the validity of music's existence in and of itself within the operatic context, not only to stand in relation to a text.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 336.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 322.

It is therefore the profusion, richness and refinement of this music that shocks; it is not discreet and simple enough, not uniform enough, it goes considerably beyond the modest reserve prescribed for music of the theater; there is too much to hear and the musician indulges himself gratuitously, [the musician] is possessed by it in place of serving the text. One 'understands' nothing because this strange music presents itself in an independent manner. Also, it is perceived as insensitive, absurd, it says nothing. From all the evidence, it is a music that refers too much to itself and not enough to that which it should serve; it presents itself as an object [unto itself]. (C'est donc la profusion, la richesse et le raffinement de cette musique qui choquent; elle n'est pas assez discrète et simple, pas assez uniforme, elle sort inconsidérément de la réserve modeste dans laquelle toute musique du théâtre devrait se tenir: elle se fait trop entendre et le musicien s'y livre gratuitement, il est possédé par elle au lieu de l'asservir au texte. On ne 'comprend' rien parce que cette musique étrange se présente de façon indépendante. Aussi est-elle perçue comme insensée, absurde, elle ne dit rien. De toute évidence, c'est une musique qui renvoie trop à elle-même et pas assez au sens qu'elle devrait servir; elle se présente comme objet.)¹⁰²

A glance at samples of recitatives and arias by Rameau reveals that his prosodic practice is quite similar to Lully's. Since Rameau's and Lully's operas, together, held a virtual monopoly on the serious French opera through most of the century, the prosody of the *tragédies lyriques* before the reforms of Gluck may be illustrated by a prosodic analysis of selections from Rameau's popular *Castor et Pollux* (1737).¹⁰³ “Tristes apprêts” (Sad lessons), the first of two airs presented here was popular as a standalone aria; Telaira, loved by both the mortal Castor and the immortal Pollux—although Pollux's affections were not reciprocated—grieves the death of Castor in battle. Figure 13 shows clearly that Rameau follows the prosodic conventions established by Lully.

¹⁰² Ibid., 323.

¹⁰³ The score of *Castor et Pollux* is located at <http://imslp.org/wiki/File:PMLP57846-Rameau-Castor-1737.pdf>. International Music Score Library Project/Petrucci Music Library/Petrucci Music Library (accessed August 5, 2011).



Figure 13. Excerpt from Telaira's lament, "Tristes apprêts," *Castor et Pollux* (Rameau)

Another air, taken from the prologue (but eliminated from the opera's revision in 1754), displays more vocal ornaments. Unlike the above piece, "Implore, Amour, le secours de ta mere" (Implore, Love, the aid of your mother) (excerpt, Figure 14) is performed in a lighter vein and at a faster tempo.¹⁰⁴ The goddesses Minerva and Venus are contriving to subdue Mars, the god of war, in an allegorical celebration of the end of the War of the Polish Succession (1733-1738). Rameau's recitatives also display a close stylistic proximity to Lully's idiom.



Figure 14. Excerpt from Minerva's air, Prologue, *Castor et Pollux* (1737)

Figures 15 and 16 illustrate the opening phrase of a recitative sung by Mars in the prologue (Fig. 15), and a later section of the same selection, "Je vous revois, belle Déesse" (I see you again, beautiful Goddess) (Fig. 16).¹⁰⁵ Rameau's flexible use of the time signature is like Lully's; the

¹⁰⁴ *Castor et Pollux*, 7.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 20.

opening phrase, with scarcely any vocal ornamentation notated, could have been written by the earlier composer. The later quotation, on the other hand, displays an increased use of ornaments.

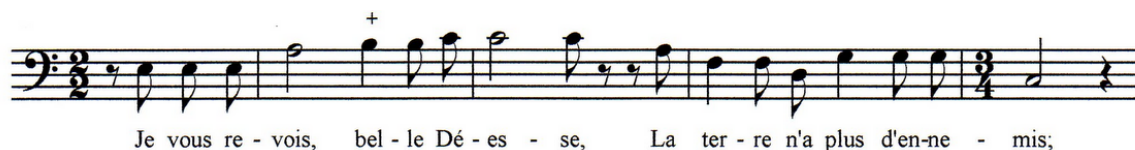


Figure 15. Opening phrase of recitative by Mars, Prologue, *Castor et Pollux*

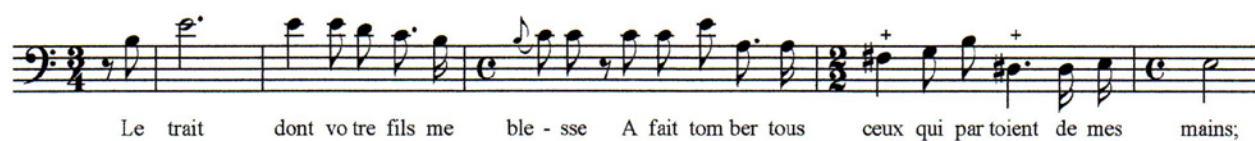


Figure 16. Later phrase in Mars' recitative, "Je vous revois, belle déesse"

Fifteen years later, the French *tragédie lyrique* was essentially still in the same mold when Jean-Jacques Rousseau composed his popular one-act *intermède*, *Le devin du village* ("The Village Soothsayer," 1752). Rousseau's reform efforts, however, represented a meshing of elements successful in *opéras comiques* with the traditions of the *tragedies*. I will return to Rousseau after an examination of one of Christoph Willibald Ritter von Gluck's most successful *tragédies lyriques*, his *Iphigénie en Tauride*, produced in Paris in 1779.

3.3 GLUCKIAN *PROSODIE* IN VIENNA AND PARIS

Christoph Willibald Gluck began his French operatic compositions with *opéras-comiques* in Vienna, but it is the Parisian *tragédies lyriques* that brought him lasting fame—at least in

France.¹⁰⁶ Gluck's operatic reforms are well researched, and lie beyond the scope of this study. My intention here is to focus on the evidence in his music, to draw the lines of French prosodic practice through his works, influential as they were on the field of French composition, to the time of Gabriel Fauré.

In 1903, Claude Debussy published an “open letter to Sir C.W. Gluck (*Lettre ouverte à Monsieur le Chevalier C.W. Gluck*)” in the Paris periodical, *Gil Blas*.¹⁰⁷ In this opinion piece, Debussy chides Gluck's French prosody:

Between us, you prosodize very badly; at the least, you make of the French language an accentuated one, when it is to the contrary a nuanced language. (I know... you are German.) Rameau, who helped to shape your genius, provided fine and vigorous examples of declamation that could have served you better... (Entre nous, vous prosodiez fort mal; du moins, vous faites de la langue française une langue d'accentuation quand elle est au contraire une langue nuancée. (Je sais...vous êtes allemand.) Rameau, qui aida à former votre génie, contenait des exemples de déclamation fine et vigoureuse qui aurait dû mieux vous servir...)¹⁰⁸

From Debussy's vantage point of more than a century later, during a time in French compositional history when there was a heightened interest in the finer points of French culture, such as its prosody, one can detect some errors of nuance in Gluck's prosody. The *chevalier* entered the stage in an era of cultural tumult around such details. To understand why, we need to look at the rising popularity of the *opéra-comique*—and the rising voice of the bourgeoisie. This I do presently, after an examination of his prosodic practice in the *tragédie lyrique*.

Two initial passages from *Iphigénie en Tauride* may clarify the artistry he achieved, and the still greater artfulness Gluck could have realized, had he followed Rameau more closely as Debussy suggested over a century later. Gluck was German, and fortunately for musicological

¹⁰⁶ Donald Jay Grout and Hermine Weigel Williams, *A Short History of Opera*, 4th edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 271.

¹⁰⁷ Reproduced in great part at <http://jp.rameau.free.fr/debussygluck.htm> (accessed January 13, 2009).

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

although it is not construed a “feminine” ending in German; here, it simply is intended to reflect an ending similar to the corresponding French text.

Ihr Göt - ter, ge - währt uns er - bar - men, 2 + 3 + 3(f)

|--| |-----| |--| |--| |-----| |--| |--| |-----| |--|

Grand Dieux! soy-ez - nous se - cou - ra - bles, de tour - nez - vos fou - dres ven -
Ihr Göt - ter, ge - währt uns Er - bar men, eu-res Zor - nes rä - chen-der

6
geurs; ton - nez sur les tê - tes cou - pa - bles, l'in - no - cence ha - bite en nos coeurs,
Blitz, sein Don - ner be - stra - fe die Frev ler, doch nicht uns, die frei sind von Schuld,

Figure 17. Iphigénie's opening recitative, Act I, sc. 1, *Iphigénie en Tauride*

Given the choice, would a performer select the French over the German, as the superior setting? I think not. Gluck’s melodic and rhythmic compositional choices appear to have been made with a Germanic linguistic mindset, somewhat digital in its heavy/light, or “on/off” approach to the poetry.

The following phrase is even more illustrative of this linguistic gradation, particularly since it contains a French verb with nearly equally stressed syllables. The French scansion here is 3 + 2 + 3, with the verbal command, *détournez* (turn away), comprising the initial three syllables. As it happens, this particular verb is accentually problematic as spoken. Each segment of the word is crucial to its meaning—the prefix *dé-*, the verb stem *tour-*, and the *-ez* ending—although the last piece (signaling the verb’s conjugation for second person, plural) is arguably the least critical to comprehension, in most contexts. One could say *Détourn’* (turn away) as an

emphatic command, and it would be understood. Even so, the *-ez* ending is occasionally the most weighted syllable—even Lully sometimes stressed this particular conjugational ending, although he does not give emphasis in an “all or nothing” manner (see Figure 9 on page 47 above, for two instances of such verbs—one accented, the other not).¹¹⁰ The *dé-* piece is the most essential, since it carries the meaning of turning “away.” I have inserted brackets around the [3] to indicate the nearly equal emphasis of the syllables in the verb. The accent on *foudres* (wrathful) is less than the weight given to *vengeurs* (avengers). The phrase, “Détournez vos foudres vengeurs” (Turn away your wrathful avengers), as spoken should thus be scanned:

Dé - tour - nez vos fou - dres ven - geurs [3] + (2) + 3m
 |----| |----| |---|/ | | |----|/ | | |---| |-----|

Juxtaposed to the French phrasing is Gluck’s German, translated as “your wrath’s avenging lightning”:

eu - res Zor - nes rä - chen - der Blitz 3 + 2 + 3(m)
 |--| |--| |-----| |--| |-----| |--| |--| |-----|

The German, as before, distinguishes only shades of light or heavy accent. The differences widen even more in the following two lines, contrasted below. In line 3, the French verb, *tonnez* (thunder, in the sense of ‘strike’), has heavy stress on the final *-ez* in Gluck’s melodic setting; a more nuanced approach would have given slightly greater stress to the initial stem, setting them in a more nearly equal manner. It is worth noting that, in the fourth line, there is one place where the French text is better served: the German *doch nicht* (yet not) is difficult to

¹¹⁰ Lully’s treatment of “rendez” in Figure 9 is a good example of a more equalized setting: the verb’s stem is on the highest pitch of the phrase, the *-ez* ending on the adjacent downbeat.

pronounce adequately on two eighth notes. Other than that, however, it is clear that Gluck has quite naturally expressed his native German text better than he has the French. Here is line 3, in French (“thunder onto the heads of the guilty”) and German (“with your thunder punish the sinners”):

ton - nez sur les t^ê-tes cou - pa - bles [2] + (3) + 3f

|-----| |---| / |--| |---| |-----| / | | |--| |-----| / | |

sein Don - ner be - stra-fe die Frev - ler 2 + 3 + 3f

|--| |-----| |--| |--| |-----| |--| |--| |-----| |--|

And line 4, which contains two elisions in the French. Note that the accent in *habite* is less than for *coeurs*, as in *foudres vengeurs* above. The French translation is “innocence lives in our hearts”; in German, it is “yet not us, who are free from guilt.”¹¹¹

l'in - no - cence ha - bite en nos coeurs 3 + (2) + 3m

|--| |---| |-----| / |--| |----| / |--| |---| |-----|

doch nicht uns, die frei sind von Schuld 3 + 2 + 3m

|--| |--| |-----| |--| |-----| |--| |--| |-----|

Gluck does not appear fully able to disentangle his linguistic tendencies from naturally German habits, a fact that should not ultimately be a surprise. What ought to be puzzling, on the other hand, is that the mistakes he made—especially the regular mistreatment of verbs—seems to have escaped criticism by members of his Parisian audiences. That fact bespeaks volumes on the

¹¹¹ It must be understood that whenever the French text contains elisions—such as here, between the *e-muet* (mute-e) of *innocence* and the first syllable of *habite*, and also the *e-muet* ending *habite* and the word *en* (in)—I will frequently not separate the elided *e-muet* from its stem, following one means utilized in French language music scores.

state of affairs in prosodic practice of sung French during Gluck’s lifetime, as well as among the French public, supporters and admirers of Gluck’s operas well into the next century.

Next, I share a brief review of a recitative and aria from Act II, scene 1, sung by Pylade, that illustrates more subtle distinctions missing in Gluck’s treatment of the prosody.¹¹² Here is a breakdown of the poetic feet in the recitative, which is written in free verse.¹¹³

<i>Quel langage accablant pour un ami qui t'aime!</i>	(2)+2 + (4)+2f	[6+6]	12f
<i>Reviens à toi, mourons dignes de nous;</i>	4 + [2]+ 1 + 3m	[4+6]	10m
<i>cesse dans ta fureur extrême</i>	1 + 5 + 2f	[6+2]	8f
<i>d'outrager et les Dieux et Pylade et toi même!</i>	[3] + 3 + 3 + 3f	[5+7]	12f
<i>Si le trépas nous est inévitable,</i>	4 + 6f	[4+6]	10f
<i>quelle vaine terreur te fait pâlir pour moi?</i>	(1)+(2)+3 + (4)+2m	[6+6]	12m
<i>Je ne suis pas si misérable,</i>	4 +4f	[4+4]	8f
<i>puisqu'enfin je meurs près de toi.</i>	3 +(2)+3m	[3+5]	8m

Gluck’s setting of the text is in Figure 18.¹¹⁴ His interpretation of the prosody in this recitative is remarkably straightforward and acceptable, for the most part. There are two types of problems. The more obvious one has to do with Gluck’s treatment of the French verbs, as noted in the previous example. A more correct setting for the French verbs here, as well, would present in a less accentuated manner, although Gluck’s setting of the verb-cum-article *d’outrager*

¹¹² Gluck, *Iphigénie en Tauride*, 123-27.

¹¹³ Translation: “What damning language, for a friend who loves you! Come to your senses, let us die a worthy death [literally: worthy of ourselves]. Cease your extreme fury of outrage against the Gods, Pylade, and yourself. If our death is inevitable, what vain terror makes you pale for me? I am not so miserable, since in the end I die near to you.”

¹¹⁴ Gluck, *Iphigénie en Tauride*, 123.

(to outrage) here is more effective than is *mourons* (let us die). There are a number of passages in the opera where a character repeatedly sings verbs with this type of heavily accentuated and



Quel lan-gage ac-ca-blant pour un a-mi qui t'ai-me! Re-viens a toi, mourons di-gnes de
Ei-nen Freund, der dich liebt, muß sol-che Sprach-e krän-ken! So fas-se dich; mit Wür-de laß uns

5 nous; ces-se dans ta fu-reur ex-trê-me d'ou-tra-ger et les Dieux et Py-la-de, et toi meme!
sterben; Län-ger darfst du in blin-dem Wü-ten uns'-re Göt-ter nicht schmä-hn, dei-nen Freund und dich sel-ber.

9 Si le tré-pas nous est in-é-vi-ta-ble, quel-le vai-ne ter-reur te fait pâ-lir pour
Ist un-ser Un-ler-gang denn un-aus-weich-lich, war-um fürch-test du noch für-dei-nen Py-la-

12 moi? Je ne suis pas si mi-sé-ra-ble, puis-qu'en-fin je meurs près de toi.
des? Mein Schick-sal kann ich nicht be-klä-gen, da der Tod mit dir mich ver-eint.

Figure 18. Recitative by Pylade, "Quel langage accablant," Act II, sc. 1, *Iphigénie en Tauride*, showing Gluck's French and German texts

elongated final syllable: *détournez* (turn away), *tonnez* (thunder), *frappez* (strike), instead of the way it occurs in spoken French: a more evenly enunciated *détournez*, *tonnez*, *frappez*.

Nuance is important to French prosody, as Debussy writes. The relative weight of *dignes* compared to Gluck's greater emphasis on the end of *mourons* is a problem. As a spoken phrase, *mourons dignes de nous* contains unevenly-weighted syllables. The root of the verb *mourir* (*mour-*) should be nearly even with its conjugated ending (*-ons*); I consider the root in this instance to be inclined to receive more stress than the ending. The first syllable of *dignes* in this passage as spoken is weighted more than either of the syllables of the verb. They are not equal.

The prosodic flow of the phrase, which means “let us die worthy of ourselves,” is toward *dignes*, with a lesser emphasis on both *mourons* and *nous*, as shown:

*mou - rons di - gnes de nous*¹¹⁵
 |-----| |---|/ |-----|/ |--| |--| |---|

While Gluck has privileged the last syllable of the verb in a manner that does not affect its general meaning, it is not correct. His melodic setting of the phrase gives the entire word, *mourons*, greater import than *dignes*, and accentuates *nous* on the downbeat of the next measure. The flow of the entire sung phrase runs counter to the prosody of its spoken inflections. Another minor point, but significant enough in its departure from spoken practice, is that a French native would not break the phrase between “Cesse dans ta fureur extrême” and “d’outrager et les Dieux et Pylade et toi même,” since the meaning is continuous: “Cease your extreme fury of outrage against the gods, Pylade, and yourself.” The “extreme fury of outrage” has been split in Gluck’s setting, without cause.

I turn now to the aria that follows Pylades’ recitative.¹¹⁶ Despite the formal eight-syllable structure in each line, there is enough variety at the micro level—the first column to the right—to invite creative prosody for any composer sensitive to the subtleties of the French text. Portions of Gluck’s setting are shown in Figures 19 and 20.¹¹⁷

*Unis*¹¹⁸ dès la plus *tendre enfance*, 2 + 4 + 2f [6+2] 8f

¹¹⁵ The logic behind the nuanced emphasis within the syllables of the conjugated verb, *mourons*, is probably tied to the greater meaning inherent in the verb’s phonemic stem, *mour-* (*to die*), as compared to that in the conjugated ending *-ons* (indicating second-person plural, *we*).

¹¹⁶ Translation: “United from the most tender childhood, we have had but one same desire. Ah! my heart applauds in advance the stroke which is going to reunite us. Fate makes us perish together, no need to accuse its harshness; death itself is a favor, since the tomb [is] ours together.”

¹¹⁷ *Iphigénie en Tauride*, 124-26.

¹¹⁸ The published score’s spelling is “Unnis.” I have modernized it. *Ibid.*, 124.

<i>Nous n'avions qu'un même désir.</i>	3 +(2)+3m	[3+5] 8m
<i>Ah! mon coeur applaudit d'avance</i>	(1)+2 + (3)+2f	[6+2] 8f
<i>au coup qui va nous réunir.</i>	2 + (2)+4m	[2+6] 8m
<i>Le sort nous fait périr ensemble,</i>	2 + (4)+2f	[2+6] 8f
<i>n'en accuse point la rigueur,</i>	(3)+2 + 3m	[5+3] 8m
<i>la mort même est une faveur,</i>	(2)+1 + 5m	[3+5] 8m
<i>puisque le tombeau nous rassemble.</i>	(1)+4 + 3f	[5+3] 8f

15 U - nis dès la plus ten - dre en - fan - ce nous n'a - vions qu'un mê - me dé -
Seit fer - nen, froh - en Kin - der - ta - gen war's ein Wunsch stets, der uns ver -

19 sir, nous n'a - vions qu'un mê - me dé - sir, ah! mon coeur ap - plau - dit d'a -
band, war's ein Wunsch stets, der uns ver - band: so er - war - tet mein Herz voll -

23 van - ce au coup qui va nous ré - u - nir, Hoff - nung au coup qui va nous ré - u - nir,
Tod, der e - wig uns ver - cint,

Figure 19. Excerpts from "Unis dès la plus tendre enfance," Act II, sc. 1, *Iphigénie en Tauride*, with original French and German texts

A comparison of Gluck's setting of the French and German texts here reveals, for the most part, only a few problems with the French lyrics—and two instances where the later German lyrics do not fit the earlier music for the French text as well. In the first line, the French *dès* (since) should receive greater emphasis than the sixteenth-note value given in the music; the shorter note value suits the German syllable there (the unaccented final syllable *-nen*). Gluck ought to have avoided the clipped vowel. In line 4, the French *qui* ("which," or "that") receives the melodic emphasis appropriate for the German *der* (also translated as "which" or "that," but whereas the conjunction is stressed in German, it rarely is in French). In Figure 20, the second

simply given over to German, to which such a musical and linguistic characteristic is better suited. In Act I, scene 2, Thoas, king of Tauris, sings a dark and brooding aria expressing his foreboding over the fall of his kingdom, should a single captive escape the prescribed death for landing on their shores (Figure 18). While both the German and French texts speak of this fear paralyzing him (in German, *erlahmt*: “weakens;” in French, *intimidée*: “holds back” or “intimidates”), it is fitting that the German *Herz* (heart) should have a steady, if slowed, beat; but the French text’s *âme* (soul) is not to be thus categorized. Here is a graphic of the poetic feet, and the numeric breakdown, with the typical variation of French; I have added X’s to mark the downbeats of measures in the musical setting.

X	X	X	X	
<i>De noirs pressentiments mon âme intimidée</i>				(2) + 2(+2) + 2 + 4f
-	- - -	- - - - -	- - - -	- - - - - -

X	X	X	X	
<i>De sinistres terreurs est sans cesse obsédées.</i>				(3) + 3 + 3 + 3f
-	- - - -	- - - - - - -	/ - - - - - -	/ - - - - - - -

X	X	X	X	X	X	
<i>Le jour blesse mes yeux et semble s’obscurcir,</i>						(2+1) + 3 + (2) + 4m
-	- - - -	- - - -	/ - - - - - -	/ - - - -	/ - - - - - - -	- - - -

X	X	X	
<i>J’éprouve l’effroi des coupables;</i>			(2) + 3 + 3f
-	- - - -	/ - - - - - -	/ - - - -

X	X	X	X	
<i>je crois voir sous mes pas la terre s’entr’ouvrir,</i>				3 + (3) + (2) + [3]
-	- -	- - - -	/ - - -	/ - - -

X	X	X	X	X	X	
<i>et l’Enfer prêt à m’engloutir dans ses abîmes effroyables.</i>						3 + 5 + 4 + 4f
-	- -	- - -	- - - -	- - - -	/ - - - - -	/ - - - - - - -

The French text presents multiple degrees of nuance that Gluck maneuvers fairly well, if one considers only the presence or absence of a stress, according to German poetic rules, and not the

relative degrees of inflection found in French. The last line above is the only one showing a strong misalignment between downbeats and textual stress. It appears Gluck has allowed the melodic line to predominate there, as can be seen in Figure 21.¹¹⁹

Scanning the graphic of the poetic feet in the right-hand column above, only one of the lines, the last, is composed of clear groupings of the prosodic phrase as spoken, without ‘parenthetical’ phrasing—places where the syllabic accentuation is not as great as it is in the following phrase, and one pauses only briefly, or not at all, before continuing and placing primary emphasis on that next phrase. The opening, “De **noirs** pressentiments” (black

De noirs pres-sen-ti-ments, mon âme in-ti-mi-dé-e, de si-nis-tres ter-reurs est sans cesse ob-sé-dé-e. Le jour bles-se mes
 Von düst-rer Furcht be-drängt, er-lahmt der Schlag des Her-zens, in be-

6
 nis-tres ter-reurs est sans cesse ob-sé-dé-e. Le jour bles-se mes
 drü-cken den Träu-men er-schau-ert die See-le. Ja, groß ist mei-ne

13
 yeux, et sem-ble s'ob-scur-cir, j'é-prou-ve l'ef-froi des cou-
 Schuld, und mei-ner Ta-ge Licht, durch sie schein-t es sich zu ver-

19
 pa-bles; je crois voir sous mes pas, la ter-re s'en-tr'ou-vrir,
 dun-keln; schon um-fängt mich die Nacht, die Er-de öff-net sich,

25
 et l'En-fer prêt à m'en-glou-tir dans ses a-bî-mes ef-froy-a-bles.
 ihr dunk-ler Schlund zieht mich hin-ab. Das ist, ihr Göt-ter, eu-re Stra-fe

Figure 21. "De noirs pressentiments," Act I, sc. 2, *Iphigénie en Tauride*

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 67-74.

forebodings), is spoken with the primary accent on the second syllable of *pressentiments*, and the final two syllables of the word pronounced without added weight. Gluck placed the more lightly stressed word of the phrase, *noirs*, on the downbeat, and the heavier central syllable of *pressentiments* on the weaker third beat. In the third line, I have broken down “Le **jour** **blesse**” (the daylight hurts) further to (2+1) within the prosodic unit, due to the natural emphasis on “jour,” which may be due at least in part to the long [ou] vowel, since the same effect is found in the following line, “J’**éprouve** l’**effroi**” (I feel the terror).¹²⁰ Gluck also stresses the two words, in both cases.

In contrast to the French, Gluck’s German text evidences its regular alternations, in stark on/off clarity. Even if one argues for a minute difference between the weight of an adjective (i.e., *düstrer*, and its noun *Furcht*), a setting to music would not require differentiation of the relative stresses in any way. The shades of grey inherent in the French language do not apply to German poetry or song.

Von düstrer Furcht bedrängt, erlahmt der Schlag des Herzens, 2 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 2(f)
 |-| |---| |-| |----| |-| |----| |-| |----| |-| |----| |-| |----| |-|

in bedrückenden Träumen erschauert die Seele. 3 + 3 + 3 + 3(f)
 |-| |-| |----| |-| |-| |----| |-| |-| |----| |-| |-| |----| |-|

Ja, groß ist meine Schuld, und meiner Tage Licht, 2 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 1
 |-| |----| |-| |---| |-| |----| |-| |----| |-| |----| |-| |----|

durch sie scheint es sich zu verdunkeln; 2 + 1 + 2 + 3(f)
 |-| |----| |----| |-| |----| |-| |-| |----| |-|

schon umfängt mich die Nacht, die Erde öffnet sich, 1 + 2 + 3 + 2 + 2 + 2
 |----| |-| |----| |-| |-| |----| |-| |----| |----| |----| |----|

¹²⁰ The terms “long” and “short” can apply to vowel color; the confusion over the terms in French music history is primarily over long and short *note values* in congruence with aspects of the spoken language.

ihr dunkler Schlund zieht mich hinab.

| - | |-----| | - | |-----| |-----| | - | | - | |-----|

2 + 2 + 1 + 3

*Das ist, ihr Götter, eure Strafe.*¹²¹

| - | |-----| | - | |-----| | - | |-----| |-----| | - |

2 + 2 + 2 + 2(f)

Looking at the musical setting of the French and German, we can see that while it is true that common time (4/4) is sometimes the equivalent of 2/4 time in practice, the accompanying violin part in this case makes it clear that the composer is privileging the first beat.¹²² It appears again that Gluck is approaching French with the same application of stress as German. An equal treatment of words such as French adjectives and nouns does not apply as in German prosody. Gluck is clearly much more comfortable and competent setting text in his native German. Debussy rightly points out his ignorance of French nuance.

And yet the influence of Gluck's French operas can hardly be underestimated. As French musicologist Jean Mongrédien puts it, in the years following the French Revolution, the main attractions of the season at the Paris Opéra were revivals of Gluck's five French operas. "Rameau and his predecessors had disappeared from the bill and entered a long-lasting purgatory. It was as though French opera had begun with Gluck in the 1780s."¹²³ It may be that the root of Gluck's incomplete discernment of the shades of nuance applicable to French prosody lies in his earlier musical experience with the language. Long before the triumphs of his *tragedies lyriques* on the Parisian stage, he had worked under Count Giacomo Durazzo in Vienna, adapting imported *opéras-comiques* for Austrian and, one assumes, also expatriate

¹²¹ Translation: "From gloomy fear oppressed, the beat of my heart is crippled, in distressing dreams my heart is crippled. Yes, great is my guilt, and through it my daylight seems obscured. Even the night surrounds me; the earth opens up. Its dark abyss pulls me down. That is, you gods, your punishment."

¹²² Gluck, *Iphigénie en Tauride*, 67.

¹²³ Jean Mongrédien, *French Music from the Enlightenment to Romanticism 1789-1830*, translated by Sylvain Frémaux (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1996), 72.

French audiences.¹²⁴ These works, however, arose as a genre via the French *vaux de ville*, or the ensuing *vaudeville*; they, in turn, were primarily built on parodies of existing works. Part of the vaudeville's rustic charm was its characteristically *bad* prosody. The practice of French prosody in this increasingly popular genre took European society quite literally by storm in the closing decades of the eighteenth century.

3.4 THE FOIRE THEATRES, AND ROUSSEAU

When Gluck began working with the French comic operas in Vienna, they were presented both to the broad public and to the imperial court, for general entertainment.¹²⁵ In Parisian society, the *opéra-comique* had evolved from more base entertainments, including the earliest eighteenth-century theatres—the *foire* theatres—held at the seasonal trade fairs in the Parisian suburbs of Saint-Germain and Saint-Laurent. The *foire* vaudevilles and the *opéras comiques* are a rich source of commentary and provide a window onto French social life in the late French monarchical era, beginning in the first decades of the eighteenth century. The vaudeville comedies of Alain LeSage (1668-1747), such as *Crispin rival de son maître* (“Crispin, Rival of his Master,” 1707) and *Arléquin roi de Sérendib* (“Harlequin, King of Serendib [Sri Lanka],” 1713) relied on the audience to sing the lyrics to dozens of songs, since the right of actors to sing on stage was held by the Opéra.¹²⁶ The lyrics to well-known tunes were unfurled on banners above the stage. The French word meaning the tune or melody is *timbre* (not to be confused

¹²⁴ Bruce Alan Brown, “Christoph Willibald Gluck and the Opéra-comique in Vienna, 1754-1764” (PhD diss. University of California, Berkeley, 1986), 37-40,

¹²⁵ Brown dissertation, 43.

¹²⁶ Daniel Heartz, *Music in European Capitals: The Galant Style, 1720-1780* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003), 701-702.

with the usual musical definition referring to the definitive sound envelope of an instrument or voice), known by name from the initial words of its original song. The *timbres* formed an essential part of the framework for the plays. *Arléquin*, a three-act play, parodied over sixty tunes, “from street songs to favorite airs by Lully.”¹²⁷ LeSage was particularly adept at selecting melodies whose original text referred in some way—by label (the name of the original *timbre*), text, or music (and sometimes all three) to the new lyrics, providing another layer of meaning. In addition, his plays were frequently effective vehicles of satirical commentary on works currently playing in the official theatres.¹²⁸

LeSage’s success at the *Forains* (as the Théâtres de la Foire came to be called) was carried forward by the talents of Charles-Simon Favart (1710-1792), a master of the stage who was active and influential for most of the century. Favart’s greatest skill lay in creating sentimental plays; his appeared onstage at the *Forains* from the 1730s. In 1741, Favart’s highly popular play, *La chercheuse d’esprit* (“The Woman in Search of Spirit”), played for over two hundred performances. Based on Jean de La Fontaine’s tale, *Comment l’esprit vient aux filles* (“How the spirit comes to girls”), the adaptation was staged with over seventy parodied songs in one act of twenty-one scenes. It also included a sentimental ballad in triple time, a forerunner of the *romance*.¹²⁹ Daniel Hertz connects the music to “the old branle de Poitou type that survived as one kind of minuet into the eighteenth century. This type must have had amorous associations, because it was frequently used when sentiments of love and passion came to the fore...”¹³⁰ Favart’s parody, to the *timbre* (tune) of “Tes beaux yeux, Nicolle,” is reproduced in

¹²⁷ Ibid., 702.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 704.

¹³⁰ Ibid.



Figure 22. Favart, from *La chercheuse d'esprit*, No. 4 (1741)

part in Figure 22.¹³¹ The awkward displacements of accent are bold, the dominance of music over text obvious—i.e., at worst, the setting of *Une* (one) on an upward leap.¹³²

The relevancy of the *Forains* to the present study is in regards to the comic opera's meteoric rise in popularity from the 1750s forward. During the same period, a serious decline in support for the longstanding, traditional *tragédie lyrique* arose throughout France, and the younger genre's often deliberately haphazard approach to French prosodic practice began to impact the more established operas. The nuanced errors in the prosody of Gluck's *tragedies lyriques* are nothing compared to those encountered in the vast majority of songs, in virtually every French *opera-comique*—from Gluck or anyone else, Frenchmen among them.

The Swiss-born composer of *Le devin du village*, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, was one of the French intelligentsia who aided and abetted the growing, restless resolve in French cultural circles to inject newlife and realism into the opera of the mid-century. *Le devin du village* began its storied history with a performance before the court at Fontainebleau in 1752; from there, it moved to the Paris Opéra and remained a favorite for many years. Although Rousseau

¹³¹ My Figure 23 is a reproduction of Hertz's Example 7.1. Hertz, *Music in European Capitals*, 705.

¹³² Translation of this text: "Her size is ravishing, and one can already see a nascent bosom pushing back the handkerchief." The text continues: "Elle a par excellence / Un teint... des yeux... elle a... / Elle a son innocence, / Qui surpasse cela." (She has the ultimate color... her eyes... she has... She has her innocence which surpasses all that.) The text's reference to the young girl's blossoming bosom is in all likelihood metaphorically behind the sudden leaps on the unaccented syllables in *Une* (one, feminine singular) and *Repousser* (pushing back).

championed the Italian opera in Paris—most famously the *buffa* then performing at the Théâtre Italien—there had previously been considerable influence from the Italians on the French *comédies*. One of the results of that cross-pollination, for instance, was the light French *ariette*. Newly composed ariettes—*airs nouveaux*—are to be found in many of the *comédies*.

Two of Rousseau’s airs from *Le devin du village* are reproduced below. The opening air by Collette, “J’ai perdu mon serviteur” (I have lost my servant), in Figure 23, is purposefully rustic, but attains its naïveté without breaking any rules of French prosody; Colin’s air, “Dans ma cabane obscure” (In my hidden cabin), in Figure 24, is among the earliest *romances*, a genre still

Figure 23. Collette's air, "J'ai perdu mon serviteur," Sc. I, *Le devin du village*

Figure 24. Colin's romance, "Dans ma cabane obscure," Sc. VIII, *Le devin du village*

in circulation during Fauré's young adulthood.¹³³ (Indeed, Fauré's earliest songs retain enough similarities to the genre for them to be labeled, technically, *romances*.) Rousseau's *intermède* introduced the supposedly more realistic French shepherd and shepherdess of popular culture—that is, of both popular song and the *opéra-comique*—to the stage of the *tragédie lyrique* where gods of Classical antiquity had reigned since Lully. This first example of Rousseau's work respects and upholds the traditions of correct French prosody, while at the same time traversing, by means of its subject matter, the gulf between the *tragédies lyriques* and the *opéras comiques*.

The prosody of Colin's *romance*, in clear contrast to Collette's air, is fraught with errors: Rousseau's accent on the first syllable of *cabane*, the accented and elongated initial syllable of *toujours* that occurs twice (apparently for musical reasons), *travaux* instead of *travaux*; on the repeat, the accented prepositions *des* and *de* [*la Prairie*]; finally, the word *retournant* is, prosodically speaking, utterly destroyed. Oddly enough, Rousseau's varied treatment of *chaque* works fairly well, despite the differing rhythms; both approaches serve to emphasize the initial syllable. The final half-phrase, from the high point at F-sharp, places an improper accent on *na* (which I believe is meant to be *n'a*, meaning “does not have”) and *en* (in). The entire *romance* greatly privileges the melody over the text. If Rousseau intended to demonstrate the unsuitability of French for the opera, he appears to have succeeded in this selection. The point he claimed, unfortunately, was lost on a French public by this time apparently immune to the effects of bad prosody, to judge from the popularity of the vaudevilles.

¹³³ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Le devin du village*, [http://imslp.org/wiki/Le_Devin_du_village_\(Rousseau,_Jean-Jacques\)](http://imslp.org/wiki/Le_Devin_du_village_(Rousseau,_Jean-Jacques)) (accessed August 21, 2011), 12-14, 68-69.

3.5 GLUCK AND THE VIENNESE *OPERA-COMIQUE*

The following examples from two *opéras-comiques* in Gluck's output demonstrate how far prosodic practice had strayed from the seventeenth-century ideal, when the music was subservient to the text. If anything, the increasing popularity of parodies in the context of the comic operas encouraged, by their rustic ambiance and portrayals of common *paysans*, a rather roughshod approach to the rules of good prosody in the text: all the better to enhance its realism! Rameau's release of music from the shackles of subservience to the text could not have foreseen the twists and turns in French society leading to the absolute privileging of melody over text, now dominating the stage at the Opéra-comique.

Le diable à quatre, ou La double métamorphose ("The Devil to Pay, or The Double Metamorphosis") was one of the earliest comic operas that Gluck adapted for the Viennese stage—for that was his task, making whatever adjustments were deemed necessary to the language and the music to be better suited for the Viennese audience. According to Gluck scholar Bruce Alan Brown, these preparations involving the imperial censor typically resulted in ridding the score of many of the provincial colloquialisms, and correcting substandard grammar. Frequently tunes for the many vaudevillian scenes of the *comédies* in the Parisian source were exchanged for different ones from Italian or other French operas familiar to audiences in the Austrian capital.¹³⁴ *Le diable à quatre* was among the first not to have the original Parisian prose suppressed, and Brown points out the addition of Gluck's *airs nouveaux*, anonymously, within

¹³⁴ Brown dissertation, 361-62.

the score.¹³⁵ It is difficult to determine the extent of Gluck's original work on all facets of this particular opera. The short parodies of popular songs refer to and attribute French popular airs, for the most part. Gluck appears to have changed few of these from the Parisian original. The editor of the 1992 score makes note of some differences between the two sources.¹³⁶ While the prosody in the components of *Le diable à quatre* may be more illustrative of Parisian practice than Venetian, that question is unimportant for my purposes here. The contrast between the naïvite of the comedy's prosody and the more polished practice exhibited in any of the examples above is unambiguous.

The story contained in *Le diable à quatre* is typical of the rustic, provincial portrayals of common human social experience portrayed in the *opéras comiques*. This particular narration centers on a favorite ruse, the exchange of social roles and/or personalities to teach a life lesson to one of the characters. In this opera, a Marquise, known for her bad humor, refuses hospitality to a traveling mystic; in retaliation, the sorceress causes her to magically exchange places with the tolerant wife of a poor and ill-tempered cobbler. Michel-Jean Sedaine wrote the libretto, based on Pierre-Claude Patu's translation of an English ballad opera, "The Devil to Pay, or Two

¹³⁵ Bruce Alan Brown, "Opéras comiques," in "Gluck, Christoph Willibald," Jeremy Hayes, et al., *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, edited by Stanley Sadie. *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/O007318> (accessed October 8, 2011).

¹³⁶ *Die Pariser musikalischen Quellen für Le Diable à quatre brauchen un shier nicht zu beschäftigen, da – wie wir gesehen haben – ausser dem Libretto von 1757 nichts Wien erreicht zu haben scheint, bevor Glucks Version fertiggestellt war. In den wenigen Arien, die in Wien aus der originalen Fassung beibehalten wurden, folgen die Singstimmen im allgemeinen hinsichtlich Rhythmus und Tonumfang (obgleich nicht immer der Tonart) den schlecht gedruckten Melodien am Ende von Duchesnes Libretto* (We need not employ the Parisian musical sources for *Le diable à quatre* here, since—as we have seen—with the exception of the libretto of 1757, nothing seems to have reached Vienna before Gluck's version was completed. In the few arias which were retained in Vienna from the original version, the voices in general follow rhythm and pitch range (although not always the key) of the poorly printed melodies at the end of Duchesnes libretto). Christoph Willibald Ritter von Gluck, *Le diable à quatre, ou, La double métamorphose: Opéra-comique in drei Akten von Michel-Jean Sedaine und Pierre Baurans* (New York: Bärenreiter, 1992), xvi. There are two headings in the "Vorwort (Foreword)," one "*Le Diable à quatre* in Paris," ix-xii; the other "*Le Diable à quatre* in Wien," xii-xvi.

Wives Metamorphosed” (1731) by Charles Coffey.¹³⁷ The first production of the opera in Paris was in 1759, with a score by François-André Danican Philidor (1726-95). Typical of the *opéras comiques* of its day, it comprised a fast-paced mix of vaudeville parodies on French songs, borrowed Italian *buffa* melodies, and a few *airs nouveaux* in the Italian style, interspersed with brief spoken dialogue. Philidor’s score was thereafter shipped to Count Durazzo in Vienna, who passed it on to Gluck for the Viennese adaptation. The following discussion is necessarily limited to aspects of prosody, only; details of the plot and relationships between characters lie outside the stated parameters.

The examples given below (Figures 25-27) reproduce selections from an excerpt of the score to *Le diable à quatre*; shown are parts of three sequential airs that had spoken dialogue between, delivered in rapid succession in performance.¹³⁸ Two of the airs come from the end of Scene III; the third follows brief dialogue at the start of Scene IV. The first parodied air differs from the Parisian *timbre* (the borrowed melody or tune); Gluck’s score makes note of the tune to be used, “Ma commère, quand je danse,” while a footnote refers to an appendix for the *Pariser Fassung* (Parisian edition).¹³⁹ There is no indication that the other two airs were changed between productions in Paris and Vienna.

Figure 25, the air using the Viennese *timbre*, has the same text and melody at beginning and end, in *aba* form. The *a* line, shown here (encompassing the first and last four measures in the air), reads: “Sa complaisance m’assomme, il est plus doux qu’un mouton” (His kindness overwhelms me, he is softer than a sheep). In the line falling between the bookends of the repeated *a* line, the same melody carries the text, “Jamais un plus honnête homme n’eut pout

¹³⁷ Brown dissertation, 461.

¹³⁸ Christoph Willibald Ritter von Gluck, *Le diable à quatre, ou, L double métamorphose: Opéra-comique in drei Akten von Michel-Jean Sedaine und Pierre Baurans* (New York: Bärenreiter, 1992), 17.

¹³⁹ Gluck, *Le diable à quatre*, 16.



Figure 25. Primary melodic line of air sung to melody (*timbre*) of "Ma commère, quand je danse," Act 1, sc. III, *Le diable à quatre* (Gluck, 1759)

femme un tel démon” (Never has a more honest man had such a demon for a wife). In conversation, the lines would be spoken with different accentuation than appears in the parody, as shown by the bold-type italics and the prosodic diagram below the text. The “x” above the poetic lines denotes the music’s strong beats: “**X**” marks the downbeat, “x” the secondary stress on beat 3.

x X x X x X x	
<i>Sa complaisance m'assomme, il est plus doux qu'un mouton.</i>	(4) + 3f + (4) + 3m
- - - - - - - / - - - - / - - - - - - - - - - / - - - - - -	
X x X x X x X x	
<i>Jamais un plus honnête homme n'eut pour femme un tel démon.</i>	[2] + 5f + 3 + 4m
- - - - - / - - - - - - - - - - / - - - - - - / - - - - - -	

It is worth noting that in both lines above, the fourth (midway) and eighth (final) musical accents in the line match the prosodic accents (although coinciding with the secondary accent on beat 3 of the measure), while the second and sixth accents (the second in each half-line) miss that alignment by a single beat.¹⁴⁰ In the second line, the word *jamais* (never) is like the verbs discussed above in regards to Gluck’s prosody in the *tragédie lyrique*; the two syllables of *jamais* have nearly equal emphasis, and depending upon the intent of the speaker—expressed through oratorical accent—either the first or second syllable may receive slightly more weight.¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ Patricia Ranum’s research, discussed in Chapter 2, argues for planned occurrences of “singing through the barline.” There may be an intentional structure in evidence here.
¹⁴¹ *Jamais* was also used as an example of this changeable accent in Chapter 2 above, 34.



Figure 26. Air sung to *timbre* "La bergère un peu coquette," from *Le diable à quatre*, Act 1, sc. III

The secondary musical accent on the word *femme* (wife; sixth accent, second line) aligns with the prosodic accent. All other musical accents—particularly those primary musical accents with the capitalized, bold font letter **X** above—fall on normally unaccented syllables.

If Gluck was responsible for choosing the *timbre* for this air, it appears that his grasp of French prosodic practice in this *opéra-comique* of 1759 is significantly less polished than in the 1779 *tragédie lyrique* examined above. It is quite possible, however, that this prosodic style was purposefully corrupted, in order to express the more rustic, provincial characteristic typical of the parodied *timbres*. This type of blatantly maligned prosodic practice is widespread in the genre, and aroused no official commentary or condemnation.

The second air excerpted from *Le diable à quatre* (Figure 26), sung to the tune of “La bergère un peu coquette,” fares somewhat better. It is possible that this air retains Philidor’s original Parisian setting. The textual form of this air is *abb* (I omit the repeated *b* line in my notation); the air is in triple time, one strong beat to the measure. A translation of the two lines is, “A beauty without brains is attractive in vain; if I were a man, I know well how I would punish her.” My graphic comparison of the musical accents and spoken prosody is below. The musical accentuation in the first (line *a*) of the two lines of text is remarkably aligned with the musical downbeats; only the word *en* is misaccentuated. The second line of text contains a tie

over the barline resulting in syncopation and a “missed” musical accent within the word, *comme*.
 In this line (b), only the initial *Je* is stressed in the song in a manner not as spoken.

X **X** **X** **X**
*Une **belle** sans cervelle aurait en **vain** des **attraits**;* (3) + 4 + (4) + 3m
 |-| |-| |---| / |-| |-| |---| |---| / |-| |-| |---| |---| / |-| |-| |---|

X **X** x **X**
*Je sais **bien** si j’étais **homme** **comme** je la **punîrais**.* 3 + 4 + (2) + 6m
 |-| |-| |---| / |-| |-| |---| |---| / |-| |---| / |-| |-| |---| |---| |---| |---|

The final air taken from this sequential portion of *Le diable à quatre* (Figure 27) is sung to the tune of “Jardinier, ne vois-tu pas?” The prosody here is the worst of the three, and particularly so for the cook (*le cuisinier*), who sings the first part, that in the tenor voice (suboctave clef). A translation of his text is, “When your angry wife heads toward you, my friend (lit., “accomplice”), what do you do?” to which the bass *Maître Jacques* (Master Jack) replies, “Me, at first, [I get] a fear of blows, I hit, I hit, I hit.” Again, the capitalized, bold “**X**” below denotes beat 1 in 4/4 time, while the small “x” marks beat 3.

x **X** x **X**
*Quand votre **femme** en **courroux*** 4 + 4m
 |-| |-| |---| |---| / |-| |-| |---|

x **X** x **X**
***auprès** de vous s’**échappe**,* [2] + (2) + 2f
 |-| |---| |-| |-| |-| |---| |-|

x **X** x **X**
***Compère**, que **faites-vous** ?* 2 + 3 + (2m)
 |-| |---| / |-| |-| |---| / |-| |---|

x **X** x **X**
Moi**, d’**abord**, **crainte** des **coups 1 + 2 + 1 + 3m
 |---| / |-| |---| / |---| / |-| |-| |---|

x X x X x X
Je frappe, je frappe, je frappe. 2+ 3+ 3f
 | - | ---- | / | - | - | ---- | / | - | - | ---- | / | - |



Figure 27. Air sung to *timbre* "Jardinier, ne vois-tu pas?" from *Le diable à quatre*, Act 1, sc. IV

In this air, scarcely any of the sung accents align with those of the spoken text. Given the rough nature of the characters and the text, that specific characteristic is likely to be intentional, in order to foreground the two characters' low nature and classlessness. The text of the cook, with worse sung prosody than that of Master Jack, likely indicates through the music that he is the more base character of the two. Also, if the performer playing the second character stresses the initial syllable of *frappe* (hit), even as it is set on the final beat of the measure, and then adds no additional stress to the "-pe" ending on the downbeat, the aspiration of the [p] itself already makes the text's "hit" more emphatic, and more expressive of the "hit."

One unique aspect of the displaced accents in these particular examples is the abundance of stressed mute *e*'s on the downbeat. The frequency of this event here is unusual in relation to the excerpts discussed thus far, from the seventeenth century forward. There are many more

instances of the mute-*e* vowel occurring on the downbeat in the nineteenth century, however. In the era of the *mélodies*, the occurrence of the final, ‘feminine’ mute-*e* on the melodic downbeat is common. I will discuss this issue in the chapters on Fauré’s prosody.

The fast pace of the dialogue and large number of short, familiar airs in the *opéras-comiques* was an important part of the genre’s popularity. Figure 28 presents one last brief example from *Le diable à quatre*, sung to the French *timbre*, “J’ai rêvé toute la nuit,”¹⁴² a melody familiar to some English and American adults as the tune of a Christmas carol.¹⁴³ The primacy of the recognizable tune is evident; even so, this air (sung again by Master Jack) contains text with excellent prosodic placement on all downbeats.

La femme est hors de chez nous, en-fants, di-ver-tis-sez-vous, fai-tes

5 ensemble un re-pas. Ne vous gri-sez pas, ne vous gri-sez pas, te-nez,

9 voi-ci dix e-cus. Dans sa main je les ai vus.

Figure 28. "La femme est hors de chez nous," to tune of "J'ai rêvé toute la nuit" (*Le diable à quatre*)

¹⁴² *Le diable à quatre*, Act I scene IV, 21. In English, the lyrics translate: “The wife is away from our house, children, entertain yourselves, make a meal together. Do not get drunk, do not get drunk; here you are, here are ten *écus* [pennies] in her [or his] hand, I saw them.”

¹⁴³ The English carol, which begins “Willie, take your little drum; with your whistle, Robin, come,” is a translation of the French carol. “*Pat-a-pan*,” in Burgundian dialect, may in itself have borrowed the original melody from another folk source.

Overall, as most of the above examples show, music typically trumps text in the burgeoning field of the *opéra-comique*. The composer of these popular pastiches had little incentive or rationale to pay attention to something as inconsequential to their usual audience as the careful prosody of French texts.

Gluck scholar Bruce Alan Brown notes that this particular pastiche comedy included some newly composed material, albeit occurring anonymously in the score. Figure 29 is a portion of an *ariette nouvelle* from the opera, sung by Maitre Jacques, the surly, combative cobbler.¹⁴⁴ *Ariettes*, as a genre, were intended to mimic the popular Italian ariettas of the *buffons*. The prosody in this early French *ariette* by Gluck is admirable. There is only one word in the entire song that lies in a contestable position of stress, and that is *ne* (usually meaning “not,” but here is part of *ne...que*, meaning “only”) in the third measure. The word *ne*, in this particular context, is part of “ne connaît chez moi que ma loi” (at my home knows only my law), and where *ne connaît* carries nearly equal stress on each syllable; *ne connaît* is, like the earlier verbs, a bracketed, nearly equal [3].

Gluck’s prosody in this brief *air nouveau* is significantly better than in the typical parodied *timbre* in an *opéra-comique*. It makes sense, however, that Gluck would have aspired to a fairly correct prosody in French in an *air nouveau*, regardless of the native tradition in the *opéras comiques*. As a German-speaking composer seeking to prove his proficiency in writing music with French text, and desiring to do so ultimately in the French capital, the assumption is that Gluck would have been reluctant to attract any criticism for poor French prosody.

Given the social context of Gluck’s efforts, it is not surprising that Favart praised Gluck’s setting of the French librettos he forwarded to Durazzo. As Favart wrote to the Viennese

¹⁴⁴ *Le diable à quatre*, 18-20.

Je veux que m'on ré - vè - re, et ne con - naît chez moi que ma

5 loi. Quand un re-gard sé - vè - re an - non - ce ma co - lè - re, ma fem-me se_ tien

11 coi, trem - ble à part soi, songe à se tai - re, et meurt d'ef - froi,

Figure 29. *Ariette nouvelle*, Act I, sc. IV, *Le diable à quatre*

impresario in November, 1763, “They leave nothing to be desired in the expression, the taste, the harmony, even in the French prosody.”¹⁴⁵ It is significant that the compliment dates from the years of Gluck’s *opéras comiques* in Vienna, and thus explicitly reflects his prowess with the prosody in that particular genre, one in which he outshines the natives in accuracy. On the other hand, the native French composers of the *opéras comiques* were allowed their deliberate errors in their native tongue—tongue in cheek—in the name of “realism.”

3.6 GRÉTRY, THE ROMANCE, AND PROSODIC ARGUMENTS

Over the middle decades of the eighteenth century, the vaudevilles of the Théâtres de la Foire matured. At one point in their reformulation, a mixed genre called “comédie mêlée d’ariettes” (comedy mixed with ariettes) arose, soon eclipsed by more sophisticated musical offerings for

¹⁴⁵ Letter to Durazzo, November 16, 1763, in Favart, *Mémoires*, 2:169. As translated, quoted and cited in Grout and Williams, 256.

the stage. By the time Belgian-born composer André-Ernest-Modeste Grétry (1741-1813) obtained operatic successes in Paris with his first two *opéras-comiques*, *Le Huron* (1768) and *Lucile* (1769), “comic” operas were no longer considered lesser compositions than the serious works of the Paris Opéra, still officially known as the Académie royale de musique. In many instances, the newest *opéras comiques* surpassed the older genre in both quality and popularity. David Charlton quotes the Comédie-Italienne’s royal certificate of March 6, 1780, wherein the king takes note of the “astonishing” growth of “the genre of lyric pieces.”

It is works of this type that have formed taste in France, that have accustomed ears there to a more learned and expressive music, and which finally have prepared for the revolution occurring even at our Academy of Music...where today one sees masterpieces applauded whose merit would have been neither recognized nor appreciated had they been played twenty-five years earlier.¹⁴⁶

Three prolific operatic composers dominated Paris during the early years of this fomentive period: Philidor, the Italian-born Egidio Duni (1708-1775), and Pierre-Alexandre Monsigny (1729-1817). All three display a prosody that ought, by all rights, to be more accurate than it is, given the numerous instances of correct prosody preceding them. Even Rameau’s work, a scant half-century earlier, was more accurate. Could there have been that much ignorance or disregard of past practice, or is it possible that at least a portion of the inaccurate prosody is purposeful? I propose that all three possibilities play a role in the breakdown. The three composers saw a handful of their operas remain staples of the Parisian repertoire for many decades, despite the avoidable problems. Notably, Daniel Hertz states that Duni, the Italian, “treats French as if it were Italian, according weak syllables long notes or strong accents.”¹⁴⁷ Gluck was not alone in his misapprehension of French nuance; it was an understandable creative

¹⁴⁶ *Les spectacles de Paris...1782* (Paris, n.d.), as translated, quoted and cited in Charlton, 4.

¹⁴⁷ Daniel Hertz, *From Garrick to Gluck: Essays on Opera in the Age of Enlightenment* (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2004), 246.

response from the non-French composers, given the abundance of misaccentuations in the *opéras-comiques*, not to mention the increasingly multilingual European cultural milieu.

Figure 30 reproduces an example of Monsigny's prosodic style.¹⁴⁸ The *romance*, "Jusque dans la moindre chose," is from the opera *On ne s'avise jamais de tout* (One never thinks of it, 1761).¹⁴⁹ Curiously enough, this is the air young Grétry is quoted as his "competition," upon his arrival in Paris in 1767.¹⁵⁰ Operatic *romances* were deliberately crafted to evoke a simpler, ancient style, recalling the troubadours and trouvères. *Romances* were much in vogue at the time, and undoubtedly effected public perception of "correct" practice. Grétry writes that he immediately began to study Monsigny's style with such pieces.¹⁵¹

The simple rhythms and stepwise melodic gestures of this particular *romance* hark back to Rousseau's *Devin*. This particular piece illustrates a rising characteristic in vocal music: the

Jus - que dans la moin-dre cho - se Je vois mon A-mant em - preint; Quand j'é -
 9 par - pille u - ne ro - se, Dans cha - que feuille il est peint. Je le vois dans le nu -
 14 a - ge, Que l'air pro - mène _ à son gré;

Figure 30. Monsigny, "Jusque dans la moindre chose," mm. 4-16

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 202.

¹⁴⁹ Translation of the text: "In but the smallest thing, I see my lover's imprint; when I scatter [pluck the petals of?] a rose, in each petal he is painted. I see him in the cloud, which the air walks [pushes] at its will...."

¹⁵⁰ Hertz, *From Garrick to Gluck*, 202-203.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 202.

“square phrase,” consisting of four-measure units. Although it was difficult to adjust this style to the natural flow of the language, the “square phrase” was for a time considered aesthetically correct, and was strongly argued for, oddly enough, by Grétry—this despite his apparent abiding interest in correctly set text. Noske states, “Grétry was too much a musician to tie himself [solely] to the word. He approved of the ‘square’ phrase...believing that ‘symmetry of phrases is necessary to make [instrumental] music suggest dancing. In vocal music it is no less useful to the melody to square the phrases as often as possible.’”¹⁵²

Below is a comparison of the spoken prosody with the setting to musical beats: as before, with prosodic lengthening illustrated below, numbers of the poetic feet to the right, and X’s above to indicate the strong beats in 2/2 time, on beats one and two, X and x, respectively. Each set of two lines comprises a “square phrase” in the music. As can be readily observed, while there appears to be a sincere attempt to align as many of the prosodic accents with the music, there are still a considerable number of places where the musical accents contradict those of the prosody.

x X x X <i>Jusque dans la moindre chose</i> ---- / --- ---- / --- /	(1) + 4 + 2f
x X x X <i>Je vois mon Amant empreint;</i> --- / --- / --- / ---	(2) + 3 + 2m
x X x X <i>Quand j'éparpille une rose,</i> --- ---- / --- /	4 + 3f
x X x X <i>Dans chaque feuille il est peint.</i> --- ---- / --- / ---	4 + 3m

¹⁵² Noske, 48.

x X x X
Je le vois dans le nuage, 3 + 4f
 |-| |--|----| / |-| |--|----|----| / |-|

x X x X
Que l'air promène à son gré; (2) + 2 + 3m
 |-| |--| / |--| |--| / |-| |--| |--|

Grétry's troubadour, Blondel, in the 1784 opera, *Richard Cœur-de-lion* (Richard the Lionhearted), joins in singing a *romance* with King Richard in Act 2 that is deliberately written “in the ancient style” (Figure 31).¹⁵³ Such a style was promoted in a 1742 book of *trouvères* poetry from Normandy, published by Levesque de La Ravallière.¹⁵⁴ Although de La Ravallière indicated that the trouvère's music had no designated rhythm and speed, Grétry notates Blondel's air, “Une fièvre brulante” (A Burning Fever), in 3/4 time, with a significant amount of



Figure 31. Blondel and Richard, *romance* from *Richard Cœur-de-lion*, Act 2, two phrases sung by each character.

¹⁵³ David Charlton, *Grétry and the Growth of Opéra-Comique* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 237.

¹⁵⁴ John Haines, *Eight Centuries of Troubadours and Trouvères* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 111.

mismatched prosody and meter. Perhaps Grétry believed it would convey enough of an “ancient” flavor, to dislocate accents in the opening bars, slightly in the middle, and badly again at the end, since there lies the worst offenders: *unE fièVRE*, begins Blondel; Richard opens with *un REgard DE*, then later, *a LA peiNE*.

An excerpt displaying Grétry’s more typical finesse in prosody is Figure 32, a brief passage from *Guillaume Tell* (William Tell), with libretto by Sedaine.¹⁵⁵ In this scene, Madame Tell envisions the torments of her husband, bloodied and crying for help. Here, there is no “square” phrasing, and the character’s syncopated melodic line effectively sobs, “arrêtez, arrêtez, je me meurs, je succombe...Je succombe à mes douleurs” (stop, stop, I die, I succumb... I succumb to my sorrows).

The compositions of Philidor, Monsigny, and Grétry fill the bulk of the calendar for the seasons at the Comédie-Italienne from the 1770s into the early nineteenth century. Charlton presents detailed charts tracing the popularity of works staged at the Comédie-Italienne, including titles of those most frequently performed, notably “excluding vaudeville pieces.” His recounting covers the number of operas by each of a handful of composers—few with representation approaching that of the top three. For the years 1771-1780 the three top composers of *opéras-comiques* were Grétry, Monsigny, and Duni; then from 1781-1790 it was Grétry, with double the number of performances of his nearest competitor, Nicolas Marie Dalayrac (née d’Alayrac, 1753-1809), who himself doubled Monsigny at that point.¹⁵⁶ Grétry’s operas clearly dominate, with well over one thousand performances of his works in each decade.

¹⁵⁵ Charlton, 321.

¹⁵⁶ Charlton, 66-67 and 214-215.



Figure 32. Excerpt from air by Madame Tell, Grétry's *Guillaume Tell* (1794)

Charlton's lists, however, specifically exclude vaudeville pieces. He does name two pastiches by Favart—*Annette et Lubin* (114 performances) and *Isabelle et Gertrude* (78 performances)—that enjoyed runs between 1771 and 1780, containing vaudevillian elements with bad prosody. The continuing popularity of the vaudevilles is apparently not documented as of yet. If it can be ascertained that such a presence was still vibrant in Paris and/or in the provinces, such findings would bolster the case for the French public's acceptance of mangled prosodic practice.

Grétry, apparently alone among his peers, championed a better approach to prosody, much of it recorded in his collected writings.¹⁵⁷ As previously noted, Frits Noske cites Grétry's writings as the earliest evidence written by a practicing composer, instead of a theorist, concerning issues of French prosody. One of Grétry's chief professional goals was to find a way

¹⁵⁷ A.E.M. Grétry, *Mémoires, ou Essais sur la Musique* (3 vols., Paris, 1796-97) volume one only of the revised edition (Brussels, Académie de musique, 1829) is found at http://216.129.110.22/files/imglnks/usimg/0/0c/IMSLP83390-PMLP169933-Tome_1.pdf, accessed October 6, 2011. Also A.E.M. Grétry, *Réflexions d'un solitaire*, ed. Lucien Solvay and Ernest Closson (4 vols., Brussels and Paris, 1919-24); volume one is found at <http://www.archive.org/stream/rflexionsdunso01gr#page/n9/mode/2up>, accessed October 16, 2011. See also Charlton, 19-32.

to successfully bridge the persistent gaps between Italianate melody, French harmony, and correct French prosody. “Many have tried to write music in the Italian taste,” he wrote to his Italian mentor in 1767, “but they have had no success because the prosody of the language was incorrect; I believe I have surmounted this point.”¹⁵⁸ An additional quote translated and provided by Charlton reveals more of the composer’s insights on French text-setting:

The expressive note very frequently wants to be on the verb, quite frequently on the noun, sometimes on the adjective. That is not all: this good note must be situated on the good syllable of the word.¹⁵⁹

“The ‘good syllable of the word’,” Charlton adds, “means that whose accent is demanded by the normal pronunciation of the French language.”¹⁶⁰ Grétry admired and studied the scores of Giovanni Battista Pergolesi (1710-1736) and his settings of Italian text, writing, “may I not... declaim in singing with as much truth and charm?”¹⁶¹

Charlton credits Philidor and Monsigny with laying the groundwork for musical ideas incorporated by Grétry into his operas. Philidor’s *Ernelinde, princess de Norvège*, premiered to much acclaim in Paris in late November, after Grétry arrived in the capital. Charlton compares their music and prosody, holding Grétry’s to be “more supple and effective.”¹⁶²

Grétry survived the Revolutionary years with some difficulty, continuing as a working composer for the stage, turning to patriotic and occasional pieces.¹⁶³ His works were eclipsed in

¹⁵⁸ Letter to Padre Martini, as translated and quoted in Charlton, 30.

¹⁵⁹ A.E.M. Grétry, *Réflexions d’un solitaire*, vol. i, 236 ; as cited in Charlton, 30.

¹⁶⁰ Charlton, 30.

¹⁶¹ A.E.M. Grétry, *Réflexions d’un solitaire*, vol. i, 229 ; as cited in Charlton, 30.

¹⁶² Charlton, 31. Charlton’s Ex. 2.3 provides a comparison illustrating the differing prosodic practices of Philidor and Grétry. Charlton, 32.

¹⁶³ M. Elizabeth C. Bartlet, “Grétry and the Revolution,” in *Grétry et l’Europe de l’opéra-comique*, ed. Philippe Vendrix (Liège: Mardaga, 1992), 47-110.

the last years of the century, enjoying but a brief revival at a reorganized Opéra-comique from 1812-1814.¹⁶⁴

In 1803, a new treatise on French prosody was published by an Italian theorist by the name of Scoppa. Andreas Giger compares Scoppa's approach to that proposed by French theorist, Louis Benloew, in an 1862 book advocating *temps fort*, or the regular recurrence of an accent in verse.¹⁶⁵ As the many examples in this chapter have shown, however, French is not at all a regularly accented language. To attempt to force the language into such a stricture is to approach it and its poetry disingenuously. While Scoppa's work influenced several French theorists, he utterly "failed to accommodate an important aspect of French verse: its accentual flexibility"—an essential element of it prose. The oratorical accent maintains its power to shift the primary weight of a word, and French phrases are not equal in length. Noske notes, "The periodic structure of phrases occupies an important place in the musical esthetics of the first half of the nineteenth century."¹⁶⁶ He quotes François-Joseph Fétis (1836), arguing for the "square phrase":

The ear is struck by an impression of the number of measures, without actually counting. Out of this arises the ear's need for repetition and if it is satisfied in this respect, a new type of rhythm, based on the symmetry of the phrase, becomes apparent to the ear. This rhythm constitutes the phraseology, which in music is designated as "squareness of phrases."...The more similar the arrangement of the rhythmic elements of each measure, the more satisfying the new rhythm is to the ear.¹⁶⁷

Noske presents a strophic operatic romance by Étienne Méhul (1763-1817), reproduced in Figure 33, displaying problems typical of the popular strophic romance: displaced accents in

¹⁶⁴ Charlton, 324-25.

¹⁶⁵ Andreas Giger, 62-64.

¹⁶⁶ Noske, 53.

¹⁶⁷ François-Joseph Fétis, *La musique mise à la portée de tout le monde*, 2nd edition (Paris, 1836), 49-54 ; as quoted and cited in Noske, *Ibid.*

succeeding verses abound.¹⁶⁸ “Clearly,” Noske states, “strict strophic form cannot coexist with correct prosody.”¹⁶⁹ According to Noske, many composers of these late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century romances “attempted to avoid this difficulty by changing the musical rhythm of each stanza so that accents would fall on strong beats.”¹⁷⁰ While it may have offered a successful solution, theoreticians such as music critic and theoretician François-Henri-Joseph Blaze (1784-1857; known as Castil-Blaze) were dissatisfied, laying primary blame for the continuing prosodic difficulties on the librettists:

Consider an air whose smallest fragments are drawn with all gracious regularity of rhythm and meter. How can we possibly adjust an air of such elegant symmetry to the insipid humble, the lifeless and unpolished prose, the mess produced by our librettists? Such elements are incompatible with all regular melody; the composer sees it immediately and, despairing of making them agree with his songs, he breaks, tortures, massacres those rebellious words, and spreads their deplorable shreds over the music.¹⁷¹

(1^{er} Couplet) Au dés-es-poir mon â-me s'a-ban-don . . .
 (2^e Couplet) Que de mal-heurs la-ve-nir nous pré-pa . . .
 . ne, j'ai vu pé-rir mon é-poux in-no-cent.
 . re! Au-tour de moi le crime est tri-omph-ant.

Figure 33. Excerpt from romance, "L'infortunée Lyonnaise" (Étienne Méhul); reprinted by permission of the publisher.

¹⁶⁸ Reproduction of Example 20, Noske, 54; by permission of Dover Publications, Inc.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Castil-Blaze, *Molière musicien*, Vol. II (Paris, 1852), 10-11, as translated, quoted and cited in Ibid., 55.

Castil-Blaze's proposed solution is to establish a pattern of strong beats and accents in the first line of a poem, "with unvarying conformity... No equivalents, always exact duplicates."¹⁷² The primacy of music over text is clear in this time period, but no poet or librettist was willing to follow such advice. It might in any case have drawn criticism for monotony.¹⁷³ Fortunately, the era of free verse was on the horizon, and the *mélodies*.

3.7 SUMMARY

The span of musical styles from Lully to post-Revolutionary France saw a redefinition of the relationship between music and text. From music's subservience to the text, through Rameau's liberation of the muse to the rise of the proletariat, one would think that a people's relationship to their words expressed in song might have remained more constant, as it appears to have done over time in Germany, and was probably so in other countries with regularly accentuated patterns of speech. The nuances of the French language create peculiar challenges for its composers of song. The idiosyncrasies of its personalized expression could not be easily communicated using the same broad brush, the same turns of phrase or melody, as the other cultures surrounding them.

André-Ernest-Modeste Grétry was the first French composer to verbalize that struggle in an enduring medium: print. The observations he made about French prosody, that he then made

¹⁷² Castil-Blaze, *Ibid.*, 189-190, and *L'Art des vers lyriques* (Paris, 1857), as translated, quoted and cited in *Ibid.*, 56.

¹⁷³ Grétry said as much in an entry in his *Mémoires*, v. I, 406, in a passage quoted in Noske, 48: "the poet must derive movement from the meaning of the words, for unless he has paid the utmost attention, the longs and shorts of one line will not correspond at all with those of the next line. And even if the poem were to establish a consistent rhythm, it would be a hindrance to be compelled to follow it, because I believe that in the course of time continuation of the same movement would cause unbearable monotony."

his goals, are reflected in much of his vocal music. In one of his earliest recollections, the young artist muses on the advantage Italian composers of song have over their French counterparts:

The Italian loves music too much to give it other shackles than those of [music's own] rules. He voluntarily sacrifices his language to the beauties of song. The Italian language is itself so much in love with melody that it gives everything over to it, even to the point of extravagances of the musician, without its grammarians making the slightest reproach.

'What does it matter,' the nation seems to say, 'that in order to produce a particular effect for a new song, one must mangle the prosody and even the sense of the words; the song is nonetheless found, and other words lend themselves to its original texture.' France one day may think the same: but then she will love music passionately, and the sentiment will have replaced the mania of providing epilogues and analyzing her pleasures.

(L'italien aime trop la Musique pour lui donner d'autres entraves que celles de ses regles. Il sacrifie volontiers sa langue aux beautés du chant. La langue italienne est elle-même si amoureuse de la mélodie, qu'elle se prête à tout, même aux extravagances du musicien, sans que jamais ses grammairiens lui fassent le moindre reproche.

« Qu'importe, semble dire la nation, que pour produire un trait de chant neuf, il faille estropier la prosodie et même le sens des paroles, le chant n'en est pas moins trouvé, et d'autres paroles se prêteront à sa contexture originale. » La France un jour pourra penser de même : mais alors elle aimera la musique, et le sentiment aura remplacé la manie d'épiloguer et d'analyser ses plaisirs.)¹⁷⁴

Noske quotes extensively from an article written for the *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* (1846) by Maurice Bourges that frames an emerging answer to sung prosody's dilemma: rhythmically free strophes, "new kinds of rhythm. So great [is] the ear's need to steep itself at all costs in the unexpected, that the enjambement, that notorious run-on line...has acquired passionate defenders for some time now."¹⁷⁵ Bourges' reference to appreciation of "the unexpected" is quite arguably an intrinsic element of French aesthetics, as I discuss in the next chapter.

¹⁷⁴ André-Ernest-Modeste Grétry, *Mémoires ou Essais sur la musique*, revised edition, ed. J.H. Mees (Brussels : L'Académie de musique, 1829), http://216.129.110.22/files/imglnks/usimg/0/0c/IMSLP83390-PMLP169933-Tome_1.pdf, 107-08 (accessed October 15, 2011).

¹⁷⁵ Maurice Bourges, "Situation mélodique actuelle," *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* 13, no. 30 (July 26, 1846) : 235-36; as translated, quoted and cited in Noske, 60.

4.0 THE PROSODY OF GABRIEL FAURÉ

Gabriel Fauré's prosodic style was influenced by many factors—some of them, the historical precedents of the practice established during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries discussed in previous chapters. These practices, as we have seen, were becoming disjointed by the turn of the nineteenth century. In the decades following the French Revolution, the widespread social unrest and struggles between bourgeois, proletariat and the scattered, but recovering remnants of the nobility and upper class—typically staunch supporters of the arts—caused even more stress and disruption within the artistic communities. Nevertheless, training of the young and gifted continued, despite handicaps to tradition wrought by France's unprecedented societal upheaval.

This is the milieu in which Gabriel Urbain Fauré (1845-1924) was raised, wherein he obtained his musical training and established his personal compositional voice. His value to French cultural life reaches well beyond the educational reforms he affected as Director of the Paris Conservatoire (1905-1920), and as composer of the widely performed choral "Requiem" (1888), not to mention the works for piano and chamber music. A great number of his songs—*mélodies* and romances—are studied by vocalists in private studios across the globe and performed in various venues. They represent a significant part of the French art song repertoire. Nevertheless, criticism of the prosody in many of Fauré's *mélodies* is both pervasive and persistent in the literature. Charles Koechlin, writing one of the earliest biographies (1945),

notes that “the prosody (especially in the first of [Fauré’s earliest songs, meaning “Le papillon et la fleur”]) is open to question.”¹⁷⁶

More recently, scholars have variously charged that certain pieces have seemed “to have been conceived from the viewpoint of the pianist, with less regard for purity of vocal writing... [although] Fauré does not exceed the limits of good taste...”¹⁷⁷ or of “false accentuation... Some of his best-known songs contain displaced accents which familiarity with the music now makes it hard to hear.”¹⁷⁸ Robert Gartside’s guide to interpretation of Fauré songs charges, “Fauré’s songs, both early and late, have numerous problems with incorrectly placed tonic accents,” although “in the songs written close to the end of his life...his mastery of setting poetry to music was unassailable.”¹⁷⁹ In a discussion of the 1884 *mélodie* “Aurore,” Carlo Caballero comments on Fauré’s “increasingly discerning realizations of French poetry and its accents.”¹⁸⁰ Graham Johnson, one of the most recent Fauré scholars to address his style, notes “the very careless prosody of the earlier...songs,” blaming them on “the central problem of having been too little concerned with prosody in the first place.”¹⁸¹ Countering such complaints are moderating observations, sometimes by the same critical sources, on other songs within the repertoire. Generally speaking, scholars agree that there came a time in Fauré’s output when it was perceived as having “better prosody.”

¹⁷⁶ Charles Koechlin, *Gabriel Fauré, 1845-1924* (New York: American Musicological Society Press, 1976; reprint of London: Dobson, 1945), 18.

¹⁷⁷ Frits Noske, *French Song from Berlioz to Duparc: The Origin and Development of the Mélodie*, 2nd revised ed., trans. Rita Benton (New York: Dover, 1970), 261.

¹⁷⁸ Jean-Michel Nectoux’s note of “false accentuation” is in reference to a word in “Tristesse,” which I address further on in this chapter. The ‘familiar’ song is “Les berceaux.” Jean-Michel Nectoux, *Gabriel Fauré: A Musical Life*, trans. Roger Nichols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 358.

¹⁷⁹ Robert Gartside, *Interpreting the Songs of Gabriel Fauré* (Geneseo, NY: Leyerle Publications, 1996), 24, 23.

¹⁸⁰ Carlo Caballero, *Fauré and French Musical Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 228.

¹⁸¹ Graham Johnson, *Gabriel Fauré: The Songs and their Poets* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 8.

The goal of my study has been to investigate this prosodic dilemma posed by Fauré’s art songs, to discover the extent of compensatory practices, if any, and to attempt to determine some of the reasoning behind Fauré’s prosodic techniques. In this chapter I present the results, and argue for a different perspective on the text-setting displayed in the *mélodies* of Gabriel Fauré. The extensive evidence for a reevaluation of Fauré’s prosodic skill is compelling.

4.1 L’ÉCOLE NIEDERMEYER

L’École Niedermeyer was home to young Gabriel from 1854 (at age nine) until 1865, by which time he had composed his first songs. Swiss musician Louis Niedermeyer (1802-1861) established his school only one year earlier; Gabriel was among the first thirty students.¹⁸² Niedermeyer opened the school to train church musicians—organists and choirmasters—to repair what he perceived as a desperate lack of musical quality in the French Catholic Church; that is undoubtedly an accurate assessment in the aftermath of the heavily anti-Church Revolution.¹⁸³ The Niedermeyer school taught harmony in a particularly enlightened and unencumbered way, radically different—even “subversively” so—from studies at the official Conservatoire.¹⁸⁴ Gustave Lefèvre (1831-1910), Louis Niedermeyer’s son-in-law and the second director of the school after Niedermeyer’s untimely death, was a student of Pierre de Maleden (1800-1871), a theoretician from Limoges. Maleden promoted a harmonic system in which it

¹⁸² Robert Orledge, *Gabriel Fauré* (London: Eulenburg Books, 1979), 6.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁸⁴ Jacques Chailley, “Momigny, Maleden et l’Ecole Niedermeyer,” in *Logos Musicae: Festschrift für Albert Palm*, ed. Rüdiger Görner (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GmbH, 1982), 13. The Conservatoire famously refused admission to both students and professional hopefuls who studied at L’École Niedermeyer. Fauré’s credentials from Niedermeyer caused him to be passed over repeatedly for official appointments and professional opportunities, before he eventually won title to the position of professor of composition in 1896. He was named Director in 1905, but not without continuing controversy and criticism of his atypical credentials.

was taught that the qualities of intervals vary “according to the step of the scale on which they are placed.”¹⁸⁵ Fauré biographer Robert Orledge states that in composition as taught at Niedermeyer, “Passing notes and enharmonic modulation were treated in a freer and more enlightened manner, and the tonal language was frequently enriched by modal elements.”¹⁸⁶ The unorthodox approach promoted at Niedermeyer was viewed with considerable disfavor by the official Conservatoire.

The curriculum for students at Niedermeyer’s École de musique religieuse et classique (School of Religious and Classical Music) included history, geography, literature, Latin and music. Gregorian plainchant, Palestrina, and Bach served as the models of plainchant, sacred polyphony, and organ repertoire.¹⁸⁷ Textbooks used for music included the *Traité théorique et pratique de l’accompagnement du plainchant (Theoretical and Practical Treatise on the Accompaniment of Plainchant, 1857)* by Joseph d’Ortigue and Niedermeyer. Lefèvre taught composition after Niedermeyer’s death, and published a tome of his compositional philosophy and teachings in 1889, *Traité d’Harmonie à l’usage des cours de l’école (Treatise on Harmony for Use in School Courses)*, a text that provides an important window into Fauré’s training as a composer.¹⁸⁸ Significantly, however, there is no mention of prosody in the text, nor instructions or guidelines on how to use correct prosody in French vocal works. The school’s goal of training church musicians would not have required such knowledge in any case, as Masses and other liturgical occasions in the French Catholic church were conducted in Latin.

¹⁸⁵ The entire quote from Chailley reads, “according to the step of the scale on which it is placed, one learns that following the place they occupy, they acquire different properties, [allowing] an explanation in cases judged inexplicable” (...d’après le degré de la gamme sur lequel ils sont placés; on apprend que suivant la place qu’ils s’occupent, ils acquièrent des propriétés différents, et l’on explique ainsi des cas jugés inexplicables). Chailley, 15.

¹⁸⁶ Orledge, 7.

¹⁸⁷ Chailley, 6-7.

¹⁸⁸ Gustave Lefevre, *Traité d’Harmonie à l’usage des cours de l’école* (Paris : Dubois, 1889).

Niedermeyer's own career as a minor composer in the first half of the nineteenth century is tangentially relevant to Fauré's development as a composer of *mélodies*. Niedermeyer composed a well-known *romance* for piano and voice in 1823 to a poem entitled "Le Lac," by Alphonse Lamartine (1790-1869). According to French musicologist Dominique Hausfater, this contribution of Niedermeyer's to French music was particularly important to changes in the *romance* and to the development of the *mélodie*:

Several original traits, apart from the quality of the verse, are worth mentioning: the more varied structure, the closer rapport that the composer establishes between the text and the music, and the relative importance of the accompaniment. In reality, *Le Lac* does not truly enrich the art of the *romance*, but in opening new perspectives to composers, helps to detach them more or less definitively from it, to the benefit of a more demanding form, the *mélodie*, even while it serves the same primary function in the musical salon. (Plusieurs traits originaux, outre la qualité des vers, sont à mentionner : la structure plus variée, le rapport plus étroit que le compositeur établit entre le texte et la mus[ique] et la relative importance de l'accomp[agnement]. En réalité, *Le Lac* ne va pas réellement enrichir l'art de la *romance* mais, en ouvrant de nouvelles perspectives aux compositeurs, les aide en détacher plus ou moins définitivement au bénéfice d'une forme plus exigeante, quoique ayant la même fonction première de mus[ique] de salon, la *mélodie*.)¹⁸⁹

4.2 CURRENT SCHOLARSHIP AND CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Two recent studies of the songs written by Fauré between 1861 and 1875 are seminal to this study: the 2010 critical edition by Mimi Daitz and Jean-Michel Nectoux, published by J. Hamelle of Paris (Fauré's publisher);¹⁹⁰ and a December 2011 article on the same repertoire by Roy Howat and Emily Kilpatrick, that leads up to a scheduled critical edition of Gabriel Fauré's

¹⁸⁹ Dominique Hausfater, "Romance," in *Dictionnaire de la musique en France au XIXe siècle*, ed. Joël-Marie Fauquet (Paris: Fayard, 2003), 1081.

¹⁹⁰ Mimi S. Daitz and Jean-Michel Nectoux, *Gabriel Fauré: Mélodies et duos, Vol. 1. Premières mélodies 1861-1875* (Paris: J. Hamelle, 2010).

songs commissioned by Peters Editions of London.¹⁹¹ My discussion of Fauré's *romances* and *mélodies* begins with an examination of the composer's three earliest songs that laid the groundwork for his prosodic style. This is followed in this chapter by an overview of approximately the first half of his entire published solo vocal catalog. This portion of his compositional output attests to Fauré's exceptional focus on development of a prosodic voice that, as nearly as possible, reflects the characteristics of the French language. The summary is presented in the form of tables of basic data along with descriptive notes on the prosodic practice demonstrated in the songs. The earliest chart includes the resources of the new publications. My study identifies specific compositional techniques utilized by Fauré to produce songs exhibiting an inherent nuance similar to spoken French prosody; the present chapter traces the development and expression of his prosody in the songs until the early- to mid-1890s. From around that point in his compositional career, the *mélodies* begin to demonstrate an interest in deeper levels of rhythmic and melodic expression than that typical of a simple "song," and to approach what Roland Barthes refers to as "prosodic" Fauréan melody, capable of attaining "une réflexion pratique...sur la langue" (a practical reflection on the language).¹⁹² My investigation into Fauré's refinement of expression and his increasingly straightforward prosody continues in Chapter 5. Charted overviews in each chapter are complemented by prosodic analyses of selected examples.

Although there are a number of studies published on the works of Gabriel Fauré, the scope of this inquiry necessarily restricts the field to the scholarship of relevance to his prosodic practice in the French-language solo vocal works. Scholars thus attuned include not only the

¹⁹¹ Roy Howat and Emily Kilpatrick, "Editorial Challenges in the Early Songs of Gabriel Fauré," *Notes* 68/2 (Dec. 2011): 239-283.

¹⁹² Roland Barthes, "Le grain de la voix," in *L'obvie et l'obtus* (Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1982), 242.

current major Fauré scholars Jean-Michel Nectoux, James Sobaskie, and Carlo Caballero, but also those with substantial foundational work on this aspect of his compositional practice, Robin Tait and Pierre Fortassier. Other recent research in the United States and Europe includes notable contributions by Graham Johnson, Susan Youens, Roy Howat, Emily Kilpatrick, Mimi Daitz, and Stacy Moore. The present chapter owes a particular debt to all of these.

My primary materials for the study presented in these two chapters are the published Dover scores of the first three *recueils* (collections)—a total of sixty songs in one volume, reprints of the 1908 versions of the original scores by J. Hamelle, Paris.¹⁹³ I also utilize the Daitz-Nectoux critical edition of the earliest songs,¹⁹⁴ along with examples of variations published in the Howat-Kilpatrick article in advance of the forthcoming Peters critical edition. My figures are chiefly software-generated reproductions of brief examples from all sources. Since the above-cited materials are readily available, my presentation of specific examples from the songs will be somewhat limited in scope (I do not reproduce entire songs), yet they will be adequate to illustrate the progression of Fauré’s personal style in this central feature of his *mélodies*, the carefully worked setting of his poetic texts.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ Gabriel Fauré, *Sixty Songs: Medium Voice* (New York: Dover Publications, 1990). This volume is an unabridged version of (1) *Premier Recueil. 20 Mélodies Pour Chant et Piano* par Gabriel Fauré (first edition, 1879; with revisions in 1908); (2) *2^{ème} Recueil. Vingt Mélodies / Chant et Piano / Gabriel Fauré* (first edition, 1897 ; with revisions in 1908 ; and (3) *3^{ème} Recueil. Vingt Mélodies / Chant et Piano / Gabriel Fauré* (1908).

¹⁹⁴ I use the Daitz-Nectoux edition for “Seule!” as the Dover score contains some misprints affecting the prosody, corrected in the critical edition. Other excerpts from Daitz-Nectoux apply specifically to “S’il est un charmant gazon” and “Hymne.” Daitz-Nectoux, 69-72, 181, 187.

¹⁹⁵ I do not discuss the many revisions made by Fauré to the original poetry, as that is not a central issue to my study.

4.3 UNIFYING FACTORS

Most of Fauré's songs are published by Hamelle in one of three collections, or *recueils*, in which they are generally ordered according to date of composition. The first *recueil* contains all but one of his published solo-voice works for 1861-1875—that one being “Barcarolle,” that I add to my table here—along with “Après un rêve” (composed 1875-77, published 1878), “Sylvie” (composed 1878, published 1879), and a later *cantique* that I do not include in this study.¹⁹⁶ Only those songs dated between 1861 and 1875 are included in the Daitz-Nectoux critical edition. The Howat-Kilpatrick article discusses editorial issues regarding the same pieces as those in Daitz-Nectoux, plus “Après un rêve,” “Sérénade toscane,” and “Sylvie.” These three *mélodies* are published in the first *recueil*, but are not part of the Hamelle critical edition. The second *recueil* includes songs principally from the years 1878 through 1887 (plus “Barcarolle,” one that I consider in the context of the first *recueil*). This second collection also includes “En prière,” a work Johnson labels a *cantique*, not a *mélodie*;¹⁹⁷ like “Noël,” “En prière” is not part of this study. The third *recueil* will be surveyed in Chapter 5, along with all of Fauré's song cycles.

There are characteristics unique to Fauré's prosodic practice from even the earliest songs—the essentially strophic *romances*—that display deliberate attempts to mimic the irregular accents and phrase lengths found in spoken French. The evidence is at times as simple as phrasing a poetic 6/8 within a 3/4 meter context; in other instances, Fauré swings from two-beat to three-beat phrases, or from three to four. The “long-beloved hemiola” Sobaskie refers to in Fauré's accompaniments is everywhere in the vocal writing, as well, in the appearance as I

¹⁹⁶ The Daitz-Nectoux critical edition adds his duos and unpublished songs that are not part of the present study. The carol, “Noël,” was added to the first volume in 1897, when J. Hamelle also decided to move “Barcarolle” to the second *recueil*. Howat-Kilpatrick, 241, n.3.

¹⁹⁷ Johnson, 184.

defined in the Introduction.¹⁹⁸ Fauré's vocal hemiolas typically involve treating two measures of 3/4 meter as one of 3/2, resulting in accentuations on beats one and three of the first measure, and beat two of the second. These vocal hemiolas are not as immediately evident to the singer, particularly to the non-native. Fauré also frequently uses triplets in duple meters, and these are more clearly recognized, of course, when they are openly notated. Other triplets are less transparent. An early technique central to his entire catalog regularly displaces the downbeat from beat 1 of the measure to beat 2, and later often to beat 3. These "downbeat displacements," or deflections, are not held to consistently throughout a *mélodie* or *romance*; rather, the pattern generally modulates between downbeats on beat 2 and those on beat 1. 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, as I have shown in previous chapters, 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. Of course, German, Italian, English, and other languages also manage to musically manipulate prosodic phrases with upbeats to the measure; French simply has many more instances where that would be required, if strictly applied.

Prosodic monotony, however, is something to be avoided in French verse and song. In 1850, French Latinist Louis-Marie Quicherat (1799-1884) published his *Traité de versification française* (Treatise on French versification), intended for university courses. In it, he deliberates on minute details of French poetry, including verse intended for song lyrics. Chapter 12 addresses issues of number, cadence, rhythm and accent. In discussing the changeable accent

¹⁹⁸ James Sobaskie, "The Emergence of Gabriel's Late Musical Style and Technique," *Journal of Musicological Research* 22/3 (Fall 2003): 242.

within one particular example of Alexandrine (twelve-syllable) verse, he notes, “La mobilité des deux accents que nous pouvons appeler secondaires, fait éviter la monotonie qui résulterait de nombres uniformes” (The mobility of the two accents that we can call secondary, avoids the monotony that would result from uniform numbers).¹⁹⁹ The “secondary accents” to which Quicherat refers are those he locates on varying numbered syllables before and after the hemistich in Alexandrines; the hemistich always occurring after the first six syllables in traditional verse. In a later passage, on “Différents manières de couper le vers” (Different ways to cut the verse), Quicherat adds, “Le repos de l’hémistiche n’est pas toujours le repos le plus marqué. Le poète évite la monotonie en arrêtant l’idée et la prononciation après deux, trois ou quatre syllabes” (The repose of the hemistich is not always the most marked repose. The poet avoids monotony in stopping [pausing] his idea after two, three or four syllables).²⁰⁰ Chapter 15, entitled “Mélange de différents mètres – Vers libres” (Mix of Different Meters – Free Verse), includes the author’s observation, “Il y a entre les différents mètres des concordances et des discordances naturelles, que l’oreille apprécie.” (There are natural concordances and discordances between the different meters that the ear appreciates).²⁰¹ French musicologist Pierre Fortassier makes note of the same issue in regards to song, in the context of his deconstruction of Fauré’s *mélodies*:

...for rhythm as for melody, the organization of symmetrical groups is a strong factor of coherence and unity. But the principle of *symmetry* itself is completed by, and [also] complicated by, an antagonistic principle, that of *variation*, indispensable for introducing an element of dissymmetry into symmetry, without which it [symmetry] produces nothing but monotony and boredom. (...pour le rythme comme pour la mélodie, l’organisation de groupes symétriques est un puissant facteur de cohérence et d’unité. Mais le principe de *symétrie* lui-même se complète, et se complique, d’un

¹⁹⁹ Louis-Marie Quicherat, *Traité de versification française* (Paris: L. Hachette, 1850), 134.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 140.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 209.

principe antagoniste, celui de *variation*, indispensable pour introduire dans la symétrie l'élément dissymétrique sans lequel elle n'engendrerait que monotonie et ennui.²⁰²

Susan Youens defines and discusses the French *accents mobiles* (mobile or moveable accents) in a 1983 article.²⁰³ These are the moveable, subordinate accents of syllables within the prosodic unit—as in, for example, *le pauvre fleur* (the poor flower), where the first syllable of *pauvre* within the four-foot unit receives slightly greater weight than the other syllables around it, while *fleur* retains the primary accent of the phrase. Because of their relative importance in Fauré's prosodic practice, I include reference to them (parenthetically) in presentations of the spoken flow of his chosen texts, as for example, *Le (pau)vre fleur*.

4.4 THE QUEST FOR A SINCERE PROSODIC VOICE

Sincerity, as Carlo Caballero writes, is a central value in Fauré's compositional style, related directly to the high level of nationalism in post-Prussian War France. Caballero traces the highly elusive manifestations characteristic of Fauré's personal expression of sincerity in his instrumental writing. He also touches on the multiple layers of different rhythms in the *mélodies* in a section closing his monograph.²⁰⁴ My examination of the present body of works seeks to enlarge understanding of Fauré's elusive expression in his prosodic practice. As I have shown, the very core of the French language is itself hard to pin down, a fact that enhances the elusive ambiguity of its prosody: primary and secondary accents typically occur at the close of prosodic

²⁰² Pierre Fortassier, "Le rythme dans les mélodies de Gabriel Fauré," *Revue de Musicologie* 62/2 (1976): 260.

²⁰³ Susan Youens, "From the Fifteenth Century to the Twentieth: Considerations of Musical Prosody in Debussy's *Trois Ballades de François Villon*," *Journal of Musicology* 2/4 (Autumn, 1983):418-433.

²⁰⁴ Carlo Caballero, *Fauré and French Musical Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 220-228.

units of variable length, units that can and do change length and position between poetic verses, a feature of French versification cherished for its variety. But a syllable can by the same token stand alone, as an emphatic accent. Secondary accents are malleable, and may be ignored; a number of words have syllables of virtually equal and therefore changeable emphasis—such as infinitives of verbs (the “to be” form in English) and the third-person plural *vous* declension (“you,” polite or plural, with the [-ez] ending). Rhythmically, the relative speed of textual syllables can to some degree define their intended relevance to the subject at hand.

Gabriel Fauré establishes his personal, very adaptable prosodic practice at an interesting nexus, when French poetry—like so much of French society, on the whole—is beginning to break out of its traditional structures. Free verse arises, coinciding with the musical development of the *mélodie*; the *mélodie* quickly eclipses the *romance*, and “square phrase” restrictions on French song are swept into the dustbins of history. Fauré’s prosodic technique, I argue, indicates that, after his earliest songs, he deliberately avoids even the outward appearance of the square poetic phrase. Its manifestation on paper belies the delicate nuance of the text, spoken or sung.

Caballero discusses Fauré’s “diffusion of meter” in selected songs, primarily from the view of the pianist, in terms of harmonic movement. As Howat and Kilpatrick note, “Accentual inversions, cross-rhythms, hemiolas, and related rhythmic play are... fundamental to Fauré’s music in toto.”²⁰⁵ My study looks at it from the singer’s perspective, starting at the point referred to by Howat-Kilpatrick in “Le papillon et la fleur,” where Fauré juxtaposes a vocal 3/4 with the pianist’s 6/8.²⁰⁶ The key to understanding Fauré’s approach to prosody is, as French singer Claire Croiza once said, to study the text, separately from the music.

²⁰⁵ Howat-Kilpatrick, 265.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

Let us think of the texts as he did himself, with intelligence and understanding of the words, and with a ‘true’ articulation.

I beg singers to work at the vocal line as a vocalize, and then spend a fortnight repeating the words away from the music, before singing them with the piano, sensing the harmonies, and fitting text and music together like a glove. ...I knew Fauré well and sang his songs with him, so I know what he liked and what he did not like. He gave exact indications in his songs...²⁰⁷

In Fauré’s case, that study includes taking account of the subtleties, the bare nuances of spoken French accentuation.

The approach to prosodic emphasis manifested in Fauré’s vocal writing is distinctive from the outset. Figure 35 illustrates some of the typical complexities in the earliest songs.²⁰⁸ While my study presents an extensive examination of the prosody in Fauré’s first song, “Le papillon et la fleur,” later in this chapter—yielding as it does a significant baseline to Fauré’s prosodic technique—I wish at this point to highlight a few important general characteristics. At the opening of his seventh published song, “Les matelots” (composed sometime between 1870 and 1872), the notated meter is 3/4, but the piano part is ambivalent. It may be in 6/8 time, or 3/4; such ambivalence of meter is at the center of theses such as Caballero’s.²⁰⁹ Enter the voice, in duple time, against the possible duple or triple time of the piano.²¹⁰ But the natural accentuation of the text reveals that the two upbeats in the vocal performer’s phrasing do not follow the meter of the bar lines in the same way that it would in German or English. Rather, the words, “Sur l’eau,” placed on the first (downbeat) and second beats of the measure, are two

²⁰⁷ Betty Bannerman, ed. and trans., *The Singer as Interpreter: Claire Croiza’s Master Classes* (London: Victor Gollanz, Ltd., 1989), 80.

²⁰⁸ Fauré, *Sixty Songs*, 17.

²⁰⁹ Carlo Caballero’s analysis of the rhythmic complexities in “Aurore,” from “La chanson d’Ève,” are a case in point. Caballero, 223-227.

²¹⁰ Translation of “Les matelots”: “We journey/ On the deep blue sea,/ Encircling the world/ With a silver wake,/ From the Sunda Islands,/ From India’s burning sky, As far as the frozen pole/ We think of the land/ We are leaving behind/ Of our old mother,/ Of our young loves;/ But the light wave/ With its sweet refrain/ Lulls our sorrow to sleep!/ Sublime existence!/ Rocked in our crow’s nest,/ We live on the abyss/ At the heart of the infinite;/ Skimming the crests of waves,/ In the great blue desert/ We go with God!” Graham Johnson, *Gabriel Fauré: The Songs and Their Poets* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 59-60.

upbeats leading to *bleue* that create a three-syllable prosodic phrase (or three beats in 3/4, in time-signature parlance but with the downbeat in a reversed position); *et profon-* is three syllables (but only two beats, or 2/4); “-de, Nous *allons*” is three beats (3/4), followed by “*voyageant*” over two beats for the enunciation of the text but ending with an extension (in the music) to a sum total of four beats. Later in the song, longer prosodic phrases occur in multiple rhythmic elisions whenever there is

The image displays two systems of musical notation for the beginning of "Les matelots" by Gabriel Fauré. The first system shows the voice line and piano accompaniment for the first three measures. The voice line has a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (B-flat major), and a 3/4 time signature. The lyrics "Sur l'eau bleu" are written below the notes. The piano accompaniment has a grand staff with treble and bass clefs, showing a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a similar pattern in the left hand. The second system shows the voice line and piano accompaniment for the next three measures. The voice line has a treble clef, a key signature of two flats, and a 3/4 time signature. The lyrics "et pro - fon - de, Nous al - lons voy - a - geant." are written below the notes. The piano accompaniment has a grand staff with treble and bass clefs, showing a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a similar pattern in the left hand.

Figure 34. Beginning of "Les matelots," mm. 1-6, illustrating Fauré's varied approach to vocal rhythm

an unaccented *e-muet* (mute “e”) ending the poetic line. Musical extensions of the poetic phrase are common.²¹¹

When the voice finally does align with the piano’s 6/8, in bar 51 (at “**Dans le grand** desert”), it is unexpected, after so many phrases of “displaced downbeats” in the vocal line. Figure 35, reproducing measures 45 through 53, begins with the first word of the poetic phrase.²¹² The rhythmic phrasing of the first two syllables here (*Nous vi-*) is defined according to their relationship to the syllable *-vons* (thus, “we live”) on beat 2 of measure 45. To the English speaker, accustomed to more recurrent accents *beginning* the phrase on a downbeat, the French-language definition of the phrase moving *toward* the accent requires some rethinking. Thus, *Au sein* (at the breast) in m. 47 is prosodically connected to the *e-muet* at the end of *abime* (abyss), in a total of three syllables, as it is in the syllabification of French poetry. At this point, with *sein* (breast) closing the prosodic phrase but using only one musical half-beat of time, the English analyst is faced with a conundrum of French syllable number verses musical quantity of beats. The word *sein* ends the phrase, technically, after two and a half beats. Do we divide the phrase in the French manner, counting beats leading *to* the accentuation: *de l’infinie* (of the infinite), in four syllables across two beats beginning on the second half of beat 2 and including the first half of beat 1, disregarding the musical extension through both beats 1 and 2? Or ought we to transpose our method of counting, acknowledging that French “upbeats” are part of the phrase that closes with a strongly accentuated syllable, yet counting musical beats in the traditional manner, with the strong beat *heading* the phrase? It is an important distinction, central to our

²¹¹ The extensions of the poetic phrase following an *e-muet* in “Les matelots” occur at mm. 12-13, 31-32, 42-43, and 46-47. The phrase endings at mm. 16-17, 25-26, 29-30, 35-36, 44-45, and 54-55 all involve musical extensions of the final masculine syllable of the poetic line.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 20.

45
Nous vi-vons sur l'a - bi - me, Au sein de l'in - fi - ni, Des

45
flots ra-sant la ci - me. Dans le grand dé - sert bleu Nous mar -

49
chons a - vec Dieu! Nous mar - chons a - vec Dieu!

53
chons a - vec Dieu! Nous mar - chons a - vec Dieu!

Figure 35. “Les matelots,” mm. 45-56

understanding of French texts set into song, but asking a non-French singer to consider the one or the other may be an unnecessary splitting of hairs. As far as the performer is concerned, the

text leading to the close of the prosodic phrase is treated like an upbeat to the now repositioned “downbeat” on an interior beat of the measure.

In the present discussion of French text and Fauré’s musical phrasing, the most succinct explanations may be aided by counting musical *beats* from the accented syllable *ending* the French prosodic phrase, while providing—in a second stream, as it were—the French prosodic phrasing and syllable counts *leading to* the final syllable, as I have done in previous chapters. In measures 48 through 50 of Figure 35, a situation not uncommon in French song needs clarification in the context of the analytical method proposed above. These measures contain verse that is all set vocally in 3/4 time: “Des // **flots** rasant la // **cime**” (waves breaking on the beach), ending with a feminine rhyme (the unaccented *e-muet*). Since “**Dans le grand** desert” (in the large desert), is in 6/8, following the spoken prosody, that leaves the feminine *e-muet* at the end of *cime* at loose ends. In French poetry, the feminine *e-muet* is not counted as a syllable when it occurs at the end of the line; I propose a similar understanding here. When the *e-muet* is situated alone at the end of a poetic line and between strong syllables, as it is in measure 50, it will be considered a “feminine ending” of the prior strong syllable, and nothing more. To close this commentary on “Les matelots,” the phrase “Nous **marchons** avec **Dieu**” (we walk with God) is prosodically correct as set in 3/4 time, provided the vocalist observes the correct spoken phrasing of *nous marchons* as musical upbeats in both measures 52 and 55. The resulting hemiola in the fifty-sixth measure is rhythmically pleasing.

Fauré’s nuanced treatment of French prosody is aided by the attention he pays to the secondary accents in his poetic texts—the *accents mobiles* identified by Susan Youens.²¹³ But some aspects of Fauré’s prosodic practice are not explicitly clarified in scholarly sources. A few

²¹³ Youens, 418-419.

cases relate to specific French words that appear to have accentuation in some occurrences in the songs, where such accentuation is not particularly strong in spoken French. One of those words is *dans* (in), such as in the phrase, “Dans le grand desert,” in the example above. *Dans*, *pour* (for), *sous* (under) and *vers* (toward) are words that appear to carry some weight, judging by their appearance in positions of accent in the early *mélodies*. *Que* (that) and *quel* (which/that), when beginning a phrase in French are usually translated with the addition of some type of emphasis: for example, “Que mon sort est amer!” (from the “Chanson de pêcheur”) becomes “How bitter my fate is!”²¹⁴ As such, I allow that they are similarly emphasized when they fall in the initial position of the spoken or sung phrase in French. A few words beginning with vowels commence with a phonetic glottal stop that may play a role in accentuation. Linguistically speaking, the glottal stop is the interruption of airflow by a brief closing of the glottis in the back of the throat. French words my study finds with initial glottal stops in positions of accentuation include *et* (and), of frequent occurrence at the beginnings of poetic phrases, and *à*, meaning “at” or “to”; the verb form *est* (third person, singular, “is”) is also stressed at times.²¹⁵

Given the relatively low differentiation levels of accent in French, compared to other European languages, it is at times difficult to discern when a frequently occurring stressed word

²¹⁴ Fauré, *Sixty Songs*, 30. Translation, in this case, is the official one provided, *Ibid.*, vi.

²¹⁵ Mimi Daitz and Jean-Michel Nectoux include in their notes the reproduction of an early published version of measures twenty-one and twenty-two in the 1870 setting “Hymne,” with text by Charles Beaudelaire which I believe has relevance to the issue of the glottal stop. Daitz-Nectoux, 181. This early version of the passage placed the initial word, *Elle* (she), on a dotted-quarter note in 6/8 time, leading to an accentuation on the first syllable of *répand*. The verb *répandre* has syllables of nearly equal weight, but the first syllable, *ré-*, closes with an intersyllabic glottal stop, before pronouncing the “p” of *-pandre*. The intersyllabic glottal stop could easily have the undesirable effect of shortening the quarter note on *ré-*. Fauré changed the passage to that shown below, which is the more widely known version. Here, the glottal stop is aligned with the barline.



Fauré, *Sixty Songs*, 74-75. Although either version is prosodically correct, technically speaking, the presence of the intersyllabic glottal stop undoubtedly makes the later version preferable. *Répandre* is a verb generally meaning “to spread,” but in this context a better translation is “to lavish”; thus, the text here: “she lavishes herself on, or into, my life.” Translation of text is mine here, and unless otherwise attributed.

is accentuated for grammatical reasons (is the word always weighted in this way?) or if the emphasis is due to a so-called rhetorical, oratorical or declamatory type of accent, when the speaker wishes to emphasize the importance of a person, thing, or concept, as we have seen in past French musical-rhetorical practice in the previous chapters. For instance, the personal pronoun *je* (I) is occasionally stressed, which appears to reflect Fauré's interpretation of the speaker's emphasis.²¹⁶ When other personal pronouns, such as *elle* (she), occur in positions of stress, however, it may be for one of two possible reasons: Either it is to reflect artistic emphasis on the beloved, similar to the emphasis on *je*, or it may be due to the glottal stop (although the latter is arguably only sufficiently prominent when the word is emotionally stressed). The word *avec* (with), although predominantly stressed on the final syllable in spoken French, may occasionally receive weight on the initial syllable, as it does in a few instances within the *mélodies*.²¹⁷

Finally, I propose—although I am unable to locate scholarly substantiation at this time—that there is specific meaning, or an underlying reason connected with some rare incidences of the accented definite articles, *la* or *le* (the, in both feminine and masculine singular form, respectively). My sense, in examining such events in Fauré's oeuvre, is that it may be intended to convey a more particular sense of “the only” or “the one,” not simple “the.” There are places in the songs where an emphasis appears deliberate and inexplicable by any other means. One such example is the faithful dog's response to the departed master's absence in Fauré's setting of Victor Hugo's text in “L'absent,” in a slow 4/4 (with many triplets, thus essentially in “12/8”

²¹⁶ *Tu* (you, informal form) and *tes* (your, informal form) are on downbeats in “Après un rêve,” which also contains a number of the other normally unstressed words. The accentuation of these personal pronouns is likely intentional.

²¹⁷ My personal experience lies with the former accentuation, but a careful check of many native French examples on <http://www.forvo.com/search/avec> (accessed December 3, 2011) reveals a few instances where the stress was nearly equal, or slightly more on the first syllable, when *avec* was at the beginning of a phrase.

time), with *La* on a half note: “**La maison est vide à présent!**” (The house is empty now!)²¹⁸

More typically, the accented article is found attached to a personified aspect of nature, such as *la lumière* (the light, meaning daylight), and *le vent* (the wind).²¹⁹ If there is a more precise reason for the occasional accentuation of the definite article in this body of song, it remains elusive at this time.

My examination of the prosodic practice exhibited in Gabriel Fauré’s early songs reveals that his expression of the French texts is, from the outset, more complex than is at first discernible. It appears that the primary focus of these earliest songs, up to approximately the early 1880s, is on the short prosodic unit or phrase of two to four syllables in length. Once he conceived his basic plan regarding a variable approach to the notated meter, Fauré developed a number of options when it came to alignment of his text with the stresses inherent in the shape of his melody.

4.5 DEFINING A UNIQUE PROSODIC PRACTICE: FAURÉ’S FIRST SONGS

Although scholars frequently connect Gabriel Fauré’s early compositional style with his influential teacher at L’École Niedermeyer, Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921), the younger composer establishes his own approach to prosody in his earliest songs. Three songs from Fauré’s earliest stylistic period illustrate the foundations of his prosodic practice. All of them are settings of texts by Victor Hugo (1802-1885), and are his first compositions—“Le papillon et la fleur,” “Mai,” and “S’il est un charmant gazon (Rêve d’amour).” Two of them rank among

²¹⁸ Fauré, *Sixty Songs*, 175.

²¹⁹ The accented *la lumière* is found in this guise in “Aubade,” m. 25; *le vent* is stressed in “Seule!” m.11, and also in “La lune blanche luit dans les bois,” the third song in *La bonne chanson*, in m. 23.

Fauré's best-known songs: "Papillon" and the song usually called "Rêve d'amour," a title Fauré did not personally approve.²²⁰ The other, "Mai," is not as well known. All three are stylistically classified as *romances*, since they are primarily strophic, with piano ritornello. The methods Fauré establishes in these earliest piano-vocal compositions are re-used, reworked and extended into new ways of fitting text and music together for the rest of his career. After examining these three foundational pieces, the focus of the present chapter will turn to more limited specific examples in a distillation and discussion of the types of prosodic techniques Fauré develops and uses in his compositions for solo voice and piano in the years covering approximately the first half of his career. Fauré's mature approach to prosody encompasses a minor but significant presence of rhythms manipulated for purposes of deeper expression, a topic to which I turn in Chapter 5.

"Le papillon et la fleur" is Fauré's first song, completed when he was still at the Niedermeyer school.²²¹ Yet even at this stage of his life and career, the student's prosodic skill in this lilting tune displays an attentiveness to the text not seen in many of the popular *romances* of the period. "Le papillon et la fleur" is in 6/8 time, and so the two dominant beats per measure are slightly unequal, much as French accentuation in speech conveys differing levels of stress. Examination of the music and lyrics reveals that Fauré clearly avails himself of the optional division of the 6/8 measure's six pulses into 3/4 time. Fauré makes the most of those particular variances in "Le papillon et la fleur," in essence pitting the shifting metrical stance of the voice

²²⁰ Fauré's title for the song is given first; the original publisher, Choudens, gave it the title "Rêve d'amour." Nectoux, *Gabriel Fauré: A Musical Life*, trans. Roger Nichols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 22. Daitz-Nectoux, 171. "Rêve d'amour" is the name by which it is generally known, but I will refer to it by Fauré's original title, as do Daitz-Nectoux in their critical edition.

²²¹ Nectoux, *A Musical Life*, 9-10. Fauré accompanied soprano Madame Miolan-Carvalho on a concert tour of Brittany in 1868; she sang this song of Fauré's as a gesture of thanks to the young composer. Orledge, 8. Graham Johnson notes that it, and the others completed under the tutelage of Saint-Saëns, show the stylistic influence of his teacher. Johnson, 39.

against the steady 6/8 of the piano—along with giving the singer the responsibility for maintaining the difference.²²² Fauré also avoids placing text on the primary downbeat throughout most of the melody, opening each of the main phrases with an eighth-note rest.²²³ Below is the spoken prosody, with the textual *accents mobiles* marked parenthetically, the stronger accents in bold typeface:²²⁴

VS. 1	<i>Le (pau)vre fleur disait au (pa)pillon céleste:</i>	4 + (2) + 4 + 2f	12f
	- - - - - - - - - - / - - - - / - - - - - - - - - - - / - - - - / -		
	Ne fuis pas !	[3m]	3m
	- - - - - - - - -		
	Vois (com)me (nos) destins sont (dif)férents, je reste,	1 + 5 + [4] + 2f	12f
	- - - / - - - - - - - - - - - - / - - - - - - - - - - / -		
	<i>(Tu) t'en vas !</i>	3m	3m
	- - - - - - - - -		
	<i>Pour(tant) nous (nous) aimons, nous vivons (sans) les hommes,</i> (2) + 4 + [3] + 3f		12f
	- - - / - - - - - - - - - - - - / - - - - - - - / - - - - - - - - - / -		
	Et loin d'eux !	[3m]	3m
	- - - - - - - -		
	<i>([Et nous nous])* ressemblons* et l'on dit que nous sommes</i> [6]*+ (3) + 3f		12f
	- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - / - - - - - - / - - - - - - - - / -		
	<i>*ressemblons</i> is, itself, [3]; (<i>[Et nous nous]</i>) is comprised of words of equal “ <i>accents mobiles</i> ”		

²²² Howat-Kilpatrick notes that Fauré frequently uses this changing rhythmic approach in his piano music, and point out its presence at the opening of this romance. Howat-Kilpatrick, 265.

²²³ Howat-Kilpatrick present evidence that Fauré appears to have changed his mind on the opening half-beat rest for the 1879 medium-voice edition, but it was later restored to the original rhythm. Howat-Kilpatrick, 265.

²²⁴ As in Chapter 3, bracketed counts of syllables indicate a unit of near-equal stress; parenthetical numbers indicate a minor stress, which in many cases defers to the major stress of the following prosodic unit. Translation of lyrics: (Vs. 1) The poor flower said to the celestial butterfly:/Do not flee!/See how our destinies are different, I stay/You go away!/Even so, we love each other; we live without men,/And far from them!/And we resemble each other, and it is said that we are/Both flowers! (Vs. 2) But alas, the air carries you off, and the earth chains me./Cruel fate!/I would like to perfume your flight with my breath,/In the sky!/But no, you go too far, among numberless flowers,/You flee!/And me, I stay alone to watch my shadow turn/At my feet! (Vs. 3) You flee, then you return, then you go away again/To glimmer elsewhere/And so you always find me at every daybreak/Completely in tears!/Ah! So that our love flows through days of fidelity,/O my king!/Take root like me, or give me wings/ Like you!

	<i>Fleurs tous deux !</i> ---- / -- ----	1 + 2m	3m
VS. 2	<i>(Mais) hélas, (l'air) t'emporte, et la terre m'enchaîne.</i> - -- --- / -- --- ---- / - -- --- / -- --- ---- / -	3 + 3 + (3) + 3f	12f
	<i>Sort cruel !</i> --- / - ---	(1) + 2m	3m
	<i>Je voudrais embaumer ton vol de (mon) haleine,</i> - -- --- / - -- --- / - -- / - -- --- ---- / -	[3] + ([3]) + 2 + 4f	12f
	<i>(Dans) le ciel !</i> - -- ----	3m	3m
	<i>Mais non, tu (vas)(trop) loin, par(mi) des fleurs sans nombre,</i> 2 + 4 + (4) + 2f - --- / - -- --- ---- / - -- --- ---- / - --- / -		12f
	<i>(Vous) fuyez !</i> -- --- ----	3m	3m
	<i>(Et) moi je (res)te seule à (voir) tourner mon ombre,</i> - --- / - --- --- ---- / -- --- --- ---- / --- ---- / -	(2) + (4) + [4] + 2f	12f
	<i>(À) mes pieds !</i> - -- ----	3m	3m
VS. 3	<i>(Tu) fuis, (puis) tu reviens, (puis) tu t'en (vas) encore</i> - --- / - -- --- --- ---- / - -- --- --- / - --- / -	2 + 4 + (4) + 2f	12f
	<i>Luire ailleurs !</i> -- / -- ----	(1) + 2m	3m
	<i>Aussi (me) (trou)ves-(tu) toujours à (chaq)ue aurore</i> -- --- / - -- --- --- ---- / -- --- / - -- --- ---- / -	[2] + 4 + ([2]) + 4f	12f
	<i>(Tout) en pleurs !</i> --- / -- ----	(1) + 2m	3m
	<i>Ah ! [pour que] notre amour coule des (jours) fidèles,</i> - / - -- --- --- --- ---- ---- / -- --- --- ---- ---- / -	1 + [6] + 5f	12f
	<i>Ô mon roi !</i> - / -- ---	1 + 2m	3m
	<i>(Prends) (com)me moi racine ou (don-)ne-(moi) des ailes</i> --- / -- - --- / -- --- / -- --- --- ---- ---- ---- / -	(1) + (3) + 2 + 6f	12f

Comme toi !
|--/ | - | ----|

(1) + 2m

3m

First, let's look at the short, recurring (three-syllable, masculine ending = 3m) lines, shown in Figure 36(a-d). One sees that Fauré has chosen a repetitive dotted melodic/rhythmic figure for the first and fourth short lines of each verse, one that places primary emphasis on the final syllable of the prosodic phrase (as it is spoken), somewhat less on the initial syllable—but retaining some stress, with the lengthened dotted rhythm and melodic placement. Nothing but a light touch is given to the central syllable, in a way that is precisely as it is spoken for many of those particular poetic lines; note the abundance of 1 + 2-foot breakdowns. The second and third

(36.a) First three-syllable phrase of all verses.



1. Ne fuis pas! —
2. Sort cru - el! —
3. Luire ail - leurs! —

(36.b) Second three-syllable phrase, all verses.



Tu t'en vas! —
Dans le ciel! —
Tout en pleurs! —

(36.c.1) Third three-syllable phrase, verses 1-2.



1. Et loin d'eux!
2. Vous fuy - ez!

(36.c.2) Third three-syllable phrase, verse 3.



3. Ô mon roi!

(36.d.1) Fourth three-syllable phrase, verse 1.



1. Fleurs tous deux!

(36.d.2) Fourth three-syllable phrase, verses 2-3.



2. A mes pieds!
3. Com - me toi!

Figure 36. Treatment of four different three-syllable lines, "Le papillon et la fleur" (Fauré, 1861-62)

short lines, per verse, have equal eighth notes for the same penultimate syllables—except for the final verse’s “Ô mon roi!” that takes the dotted rhythm. The only line of these that may suffer slightly in audience comprehension of their settings is the first, “Ne fuis pas!”

Fauré’s treatment of the longer lines is more subtly complex. Since he has stylistically chosen repeating phrases, chiefly in their rhythmic aspect, the melody needs to serve as many of the textual nuances as possible, with but the slightest variance. The young Fauré succeeds in most cases, as the following four figures illustrate, in which I compare lines one through six of the three verses, one line at a time. In line one of the three verses (Figure 37), his awareness of textual nuance is illustrated in the adjustment of rhythm for *terre* (earth), verse two, and the lengthened note values for *papillon* (butterfly) and *tu t’en vas* (you fly away).²²⁵ Also, the last

Figure 37. Comparison of first-line treatments of lyrics, all three verses, "Le papillon et la fleur"

²²⁵ Fauré, *Sixty Songs*, 3-6. The latter change may specifically help counteract the misplaced musical accent of “papillon” and “tu t’en vas,” if the singer/performer does not otherwise grasp the 3/4 vs. 6/8 hemiola intended.

verse's first line contains the song's only change from the eighth-note rest at its beginning, moving the rest after *fuis* (flee), to highlight the separate outward flight and *reviens* (return) of the butterfly. This specific point is one of very few places the Daitz-Nectoux critical edition shows a change in the vocal line affecting its prosody; the composer originally sketched the text of all three verses starting with the identical eighth-note rest.²²⁶

The differences between the three settings of the second of the longer poetic lines (third line of the poem) are miniscule (one added sixteenth rest), as shown in Figure 38,²²⁷ but it is notable that the D-sharp of the first measure points to the shift of accentuation away from a mistaken 6/8 interpretation of *comme nos* (how our [destinies]) in the first verse and *me trouves* (you find me) in the last verse, to the correct 3/4 meter (*com-*)*me nos* and *me trouves*. In the second strophe, the nearly equally stressed syllables of *voudrais* and *embaumer*, indicated in my prosodic mapping for the syllabic accentuation of the entire song, above, leaves Fauré's intent

1. Vois com - me nos des - tins sont dif - fé - rents, je res - te.

2. Je vou - drais em - bau - mer ton - vol de mon ha - lei - ne.

3. Aus - si me trou - ves - tu tou - jours à chaque au - ro - re.

Figure 38. Comparison of third line treatments of lyrics, all verses, "Le papillon et la fleur"

²²⁶ Daitz-Nectoux, 168. Howat-Kilpatrick exhibit an additional variation: for the 1879 *recueil*, Fauré apparently changed the opening line of the song in m.10 to delete the rest, adding an E-D# slur on *fleur*, beat three; but that may have been deemed "a makeshift remedy, as it leaves the same issue unaddressed...at m. 14. That might explain why all sources, from the ca. 1887 reprint of the medium-voice collection onwards, revert to the original syllabification; this can only have been a deliberate revision, since it necessitated amending the existing plates." Howat-Kilpatrick, 265.

²²⁷ Fauré, *Sixty Songs*, 3-6.

1. Pour - tant nous nous ai - mons, nous vi - vons sans les hom - mes,
 2. Mais non, tu vas trop loin, par - mi des fleurs sans nom - bre.
 3. Ah! pour que notre a - mour cou - le des jours fi - dé - les,

Figure 40. Comparison of fifth line treatments of lyrics, all verses, "Le papillon et la fleur" (mm. 18-20, 38-40, 58-60)

time, against the piano's steady 6/8. Only the last verse has unclear stress assignments, since *pour que* (so that) and *amour* (love) are words with nearly equal syllables, and *notre* (our) can either be accented or not. There are a few different options for accentuation of the vocal melody in measures 58 to 60 of the last verse. I believe the most plausible takes into account the exclamatory *Ah!* and the aspirate [h] at its close. That aspiration and the brief pause that naturally clings to it are reason enough to believe the next words should either be stressed *pour que*, or not at all. In measure 59, if the second syllable of *amour* is stressed and the performer sings in 6/8 meter, the result is weight on the unaccented *des* (meaning "through" in this context), and nonalignment with the lengthened note adding weight to *jours* (days). The word *coule* (flows) is not one with a flexible accent and so is always pronounced *coule*, with stress on the initial syllable. Thus framed, I propose that Fauré intends no accent on *pour que* or *amour*, but rather on *notre* (our). The result gives the impression of 6/8 time—offset by one eighth-note (a half-beat) pulse—up through the word *jours*: "*Ah!* pour que **notre** amour **coule** des **jours**..." At that point, the rhythm is shortened from the dactylic rhythm to trochées: *jours fideles*, a pleasing variation to the French ear.

1. Et nous nous res - sem - blons et l'on dit que nous som - mes.
 2. Et moi je res - te seule à voir tour - ner mon om - bre.
 3. Prends com - me moi ra - cine ou don - ne - moi des ai - les.

Figure 41. Comparison of seventh line treatments of lyrics, all verses, "Le papillon et la fleur" (mm. 22-24, 42-44, 62-64)

Figure 41, showing the even treatment of the last long lines of each verse (seventh of the poem), reveals that only the final one, nearest the end of the song, requires the switch to 3/4 for the prosody to work well.²³¹ But Fauré's dynamics change to *forte* for that one line, so if it happens that the change of meter in the vocal line is disregarded by the performer, and yet the lyrics are sung emphatically, the resulting misaccentuations of *comme moi* (like me) and *donne-moi* (give me) would be acceptable and in character with the forceful ending to the song, provided the first syllables of *comme* and *donne* are likewise given some dynamic emphasis. The prosody of the first measure in verse two can work in either 6/8 or 3/4. "Et moi **je** reste **seule**" (And I remain alone) is arguably as typical in French conversation as the option, "Et **moi** je **reste seule**." The question is one of flow to the following measure, which can be spoken as either "**seule à voir tourner**" (alone to watch [my shadow] turn) in 3/4 time) or "**seule à voir tourner**" (in 6/8) since the verb *tourner* (to turn) has syllables of equal weight. However, Fauré does not alter the note value of the dotted eighth to accommodate an accentuation of *tourner*, although he certainly could have. It appears that Fauré clearly intends the 3/4 accentuation in measure 43; I believe he also means to accent *je* (I) in the previous measure (on the highest pitch), leaving measure 42 in 6/8 time with the piano. This early song confirms what

²³¹ Fauré, *Sixty Songs*, 3-6.

professional accompanist and scholar Graham Johnson describes of Fauré's technique, wherein the performer must participate in Fauré's songs "on [Fauré's] own terms."²³²

Overall, the composer is remarkably aware of all potential accentuations in or derivatives of 6/8 meter. His opening eighth-note rests effectively reduce the number of occasions for performer misaccentuations on downbeats, textually, that cause more havoc with the fundamental characteristics of French. That fortuitous rest is not eminently repeatable in one's compositional toolbox, of course, and without it, many other early songs face increased prosodic challenges. The fact that "Le papillon et la fleur" contains such accurate prosody ought to be surprising, given its origin at that point in the history of French solo vocal music, when so many other works exhibited corrupt or even mangled prosodic practice.

Next, to touch briefly on "Mai," we can see the extension of the above multiple rhythmic techniques into a slightly different negotiation of prosodic nuance. In this *romance* set in 3/4 time, the piano's arpeggios are clearly in 6/8 (Figure 42, more unmistakably than the earlier example from "Les matelots").²³³ The primary stresses of the voice shift between the two meters. In the opening poetic lines of "Mai," duplicated below, I mark strong and weak beats with large and small X's, according to the "borrowed" 6/8 meter, or the notated 3/4, with defining meter signatures and double vertical lines as bar lines. There are two options for accentuation of the first vocal measure, measure 3 of the song: it may be in either 6/8 or 3/4.²³⁴ There is no alternate way to subdivide measure 5 correctly, however; it must be in 6/8 for the word *prés* (fields) to be correctly accented. I propose that it is more likely he intended the triple-

²³² Johnson, 375.

²³³ Fauré, *Sixty Songs*, 7.

²³⁴ Fauré, *Sixty Songs*, 7-11.

based meter of 6/8 for measures 3 through 5, since the cheerful nature of this song lends itself to the more dancelike option.²³⁵

Options for accentuation in mm. 3-6, "Mai":

OPTION #1: $\frac{6}{8}$ || X x || X x || X x || $\frac{3}{4}$ X x x
 $\frac{8}{8}$ (Puis)que **Mai**... tout en **fleurs**... dans les **prés** nous ré- **4 cla**- - me,

OPTION #2 : $\frac{3}{4}$ || X x x || X x x || $\frac{6}{8}$ X x || $\frac{3}{4}$ X x x
 $\frac{4}{4}$ (Puis)que **Mai**... tout en **fleurs**... $\frac{8}{8}$ dans les **prés** nous ré- **4 cla**- - me,

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system shows the voice line and piano accompaniment for the first four bars. The voice line starts with a whole rest in the first two bars, then sings 'Puis-que Mai tout en fleurs'. The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and chords in the left hand. The second system shows the voice line and piano accompaniment for the next four bars. The voice line continues with 'dans les prés nous ré - cla - me, Viens, ne te las - se pas'. The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic pattern.

Figure 42. Opening eight bars of "Mai," in 3/4 time, showing piano accompaniment in 6/8

²³⁵ Also, a dancelike meter is better suited to the text here, which translates, "Since May, all a-blossom, summons us to the meadows,/Come, do not grow weary of mingling with your soul/The countryside, the woods, the charming shady places..." Translation from Fauré, *Sixty Songs*, v.

In either case, bars 7 and 8 are in 3/4 time, since the correct accentuation of the text there is, “**Viens**, (ne) te **lasse pas**.”

There is another clue, thanks to the Daitz-Nectoux critical edition, as to how Fauré may have wished to shape the prosody of this *romance*, and how it resulted in another manipulation of his settings. In its original published form, measure 9 appeared as shown in the *ossia* in Figure 43 below, a rhythm that gave undue weight to the normally unstressed *de* of *de mêler* (to mingle).²³⁶

The song “Mai” contains five instances where Fauré made slight changes to the rhythm of the vocal line in a reprint of his work (the 1879 Choudens edition, in this case). All five occur where the first word, occurring on the downbeat, is a prosodically unstressed *le, la* (masculine/feminine “the,” or plural *les*), or *de* (or its plural *des*, meaning either “some” or, as a preposition with a secondary accent, “of”). The five occurrences are: *de mêler* (measure 9, shown below), *les ombrages* (the shady places; measure 13), *Le sentier* (the path; measure 19), *des pudiques* (of the modest [stars]; measure 38), and *de parfums* (with fragrances; measure 46). The *ossia* in Figure 43 reproduces the original voice part of measure 9.²³⁷ The same rhythmic adjustment was made for the other four manifestations of the displacement. The new rhythm helps to de-emphasize the downbeat of the measure by providing forward momentum with an anapestic “short-short-long” rhythm. The perceived accentuation on beat 2 shifts attention away from the downbeat on beat 1, to the syllable with the longer note value on beat 2, where the spoken stress normally falls.²³⁸ Fauré utilized the resulting rhythmic nuance as one of his

²³⁶ The prepositions *de* (of) and *à* (to) commonly serve as prepositions in French to verbs in infinitive form.

²³⁷ Fauré, *Sixty Songs*, 7; *ossia*, Daitz-Nectoux, 170-71.

²³⁸ One could even say the result is in line with Virgil Thomson’s observations about French music, coupled with Robin Tait’s study, showing how Fauré’s harmonies and melodies “conspire to ‘cross the bar line.’” Caballero, 220-221, 223. Noske takes the divided first beat in another sense, connecting Fauré’s anapestic rhythm to a

primary prosodic techniques to maneuver the maze of accented and unaccented syllables and words in French, as well as those with *accents mobiles*.



Figure 43. "Mai," mm. 3-10, voice, with *ossia* showing original manuscript and first published version

Without the rhythmic adjustment emphasizing the new “downbeat” on beat 2, “Mai” otherwise contains potential misaccentuations, the majority of which are connected to the restrictive, overvalued four-bar square phrase of early- to mid-nineteenth century French song composition. The four-bar square phrase fit well with the German *Lieder* Saint-Saëns introduced to his composition classes—think of phrases in Schubert’s “Der Lindenbaum,” for example, or a Mendelssohn *Lied*—but it does not suit the fluid, nuanced nature of French prosody, and many French composers—including Fauré—abandoned the practice of the square phrase within a decade after Fauré’s “Mai” saw light of day.²³⁹

The vocal line in Figure 44 could be sung in 6/8 meter for the first four bars (keeping in mind the frequent rhythmic “deflection” of the first-beat accent to beat four of six), then in 3/4 for one measure, then in two-beat hemiolas across the last two measures shown (“**lune au bord**

dominant rhythm—also anapestic—in Lully’s recitatives, although Lully’s anapests began on the upbeat to the measure, not on beat one. Noske, 260.

²³⁹ Perhaps Saint-Saëns’ railing against students’ poor prosody sprang from his pupils’ attempts to duplicate the sound and success of the German *Lieder*?

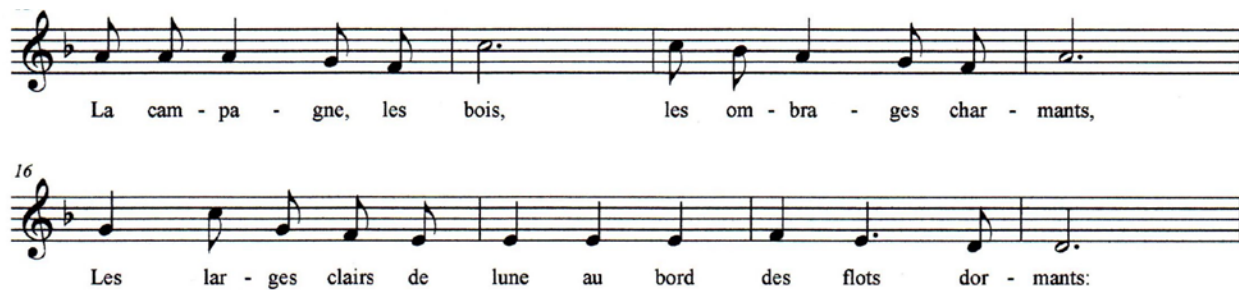


Figure 44. "Mai," mm. 11-18, illustration of four-bar "square phrase"

des **flots dormants**").²⁴⁰ This passage also illustrates one of the characteristics of the square phrase that has its root in Lullian airs: accentuation of the initial syllable in the phrase. Here, however, such an accentuation would act without its rhetorical connections and rationales, bereft of seventeenth-century guidelines that were known to all participants in the practice at the earlier time. In measure 16, *Les* (the, plural), with an entire beat to itself, appears to call for accentuation; but fortunately, Fauré wrote in a melodic leap to the first syllable of *larges* (wide), so the composer's intent is clear. *Les* receives its weight only from the lengthened note, and no more. Such subtlety runs the risk of being missed, resulting in accentuation that is awkward at least, and blatantly wrong at its worst. When a seventeenth-century composer placed a definite or indefinite article on a downbeat, there was a rationale for it, a rationale shared by an educated audience. No longer. Yes, as Saint-Saëns complained, the popularity of the opéras-comiques is partly to blame, as discussed in the previous chapter.²⁴¹ As well as the rise of the proletariat, and the decline of rhetorical education. However, such an accentuation does work in some cases,

²⁴⁰ Fauré, *Sixty Songs*, 8.

²⁴¹ See also Saint-Saëns' book of essays, *Harmonie et Mélodie*, available online in scanned form. Two selections in his book relate to prosody: "La poésie et la musique" (257-266; quoted to some extent in my first chapter, 14-15) and "Jacques Offenbach" (217-224), in which he pillories Offenbach's compositions for comic opera. Camille Saint-Saëns, *Harmonie et Mélodie* (Paris: Librairie Nouvelle, 1885). <http://ia600407.us.archive.org/35/items/harmonieetmlod00sain/harmonieetmlod00sain.pdf> (accessed January 10, 2011).



Figure 45. "S'il est un charmant gazon," mm. 13-18

Then, in bar 17, even more clearly:

Musical accents:	-----3----- -----3-----	
	<i>Où l'on cueille à (plei)ne main</i>	3 + (2) + 2m
Prosodic accents:	- -- ---- / - -- ---- /	

The deliberate use of the displacement is reinforced with melodic leaps to the second beat in measures 61 through 70, as shown in Figure 46.²⁴⁴

“S’il est un charmant gazon” also seems to contain an aspect of rhetorical practice, after all, although not necessarily through any rules passed down by practitioners. This is in relationship to several prominent initial words in some of the lines. In my chapter on seventeenth-century practice, the rhetorical term “Doubt” applied to words like *si* (if) and *que*



Figure 46. "S'il est un charmant gazon," mm. 61-70

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 16-17.

(what if/whether), where the interpreter-performer was expected to linger briefly as if considering his or her options. Such an interpretation is likewise applicable here, if only because that reaction occurs naturally in a speaker, when saying “if” or “what if”: the speaker lingers briefly, before going on.

The mixed prosodic practice evident in these first three songs is typical of many contained not only in the first *recueil*, but throughout his extensive solo secular song catalog. Other techniques are introduced at intervals over the course of his career. My discussion of prosodic techniques Fauré used in his earliest songs has thus far included these accommodations: Re-definition of meter (3/4 can be 6/8 and vice versa), displacement of the primary beat to a beat in the measure other than the first (a kind of rhythmic deflection, but also frequently reflective of spoken French prosody), and hemiolas. The refinement of Fauré’s approach to text to reflect French speech patterns more precisely and sincerely is aided by virtually all these rhythmic adjustments. Rhythmic deflection involved in displacement of the primary stress to a beat other than the first one in a measure is the most common, probably because it is so central to spoken French. This deflection often results in irregular phrase lengths that can include hemiolas; there is frequent interplay between these techniques. The next section of this chapter provides some additional details evident in the early to mid-career published solo vocal songs (*romances* and *mélodies*), showing the development of this “quintessentially French” composer’s prosodic practice.

4.6 REFINED TREATMENT OF RHYTHMS

The process of fitting together text and music necessarily entails a keen awareness of how and where accentuations of the text interact with musical meter, and displacements of accent may take many forms. Caballero discusses Fauré's "multivalence," or multiple and concurrent rhythms, in depth.²⁴⁵ He refers to the work of Harald Krebs on "metrical dissonance" in the songs of Robert Schumann, concluding that Fauré's "unpredictable, irregular numeric groupings" prevent an equivalent analysis to determine "grouping" or "displacement dissonances."²⁴⁶ Krebs' definition of a "grouping dissonance" is the interaction of two or more metrical layers whose cardinalities are different, as I have demonstrated is clearly present in Fauré's solo secular vocal works, although not on a consistent basis for the duration of a composition. Vis-à-vis "displacement dissonance," Krebs writes,

When a metrical layer is present within a displacement dissonance, we generally perceive the antimetrical layer or layers as shifting out of the "normal position" designated by the metrical layer; the pulses of the metrical layer, in other words, function as a series of reference points in relationship to which the pulses of the antimetrical layer are perceived as being displaced.²⁴⁷

It would appear that Fauré's accompanied solo vocal songs meet the criteria of this definition applied to his near contemporary as well, except for the assumption of consistency throughout a work. Caballero presents solid evidence that Fauré's complex rhythmic multiplicities far exceed Schumann's; what my study adds is the *prima causa* of the French

²⁴⁵ Caballero, 223-228.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 228-229.

²⁴⁷ Harald Krebs, *Fantasy Pieces: Metrical Dissonance in the Music of Robert Schumann* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 34.

language, its spoken prosody, and evidence of Fauré's strivings to accommodate it and music to each other in song.

The charts that follow in this chapter and into the next (Tables 2 to 4, then 9 through 16) map out the frequency of displacements and/or prosodic misaccentuations occurring in Fauré's published solo vocal songs. Each table also provides limited notes on the approach Fauré takes to prosodic manipulation of the music-text connection in each song. "Date of probable composition" and possible order of composition are given according to Howat-Kilpatrick for the first *recueil*.²⁴⁸ As Table 2 shows, the prosodic practice exhibited in the first *recueil* becomes more subtle and complex toward the end. The string of asterisks heading the far-right column attests that many of the early songs were strophic *romances*, set in square phrases. As we have seen in previous chapters, writing effective music for multiple verses in French places considerable constraint on prosodic nuance. The challenge is as genuine in the mid-nineteenth century as it was in the previous 300 years. The written-out form of the *romance* seen here allows for slight variations between verses, and Fauré's personal approach to the task, with redefinitions of meter and downbeat, make significant inroads on the task.

Frits Noske's landmark monograph, *French Song from Berlioz to Duparc*, includes a brief section on the prosody of Fauré's first collection. Among the few characteristics Noske discusses is Fauré's use of the durational accent, meaning places where the composer uses a long note value on a weak beat of the measure to create the effect of a syncopation and bring adequate weight to an expressed syllable; Noske's durational accent is frequently identical to that I call rhythmic deflection.²⁴⁹ The two definitions vary only in emphasis: Noske's is on the occurrence

²⁴⁸ Both Howat-Kilpatrick and Daitz-Nectoux cite problems with precise dating for many of the songs, in the absence of a consistent record of dated autograph scores. Daitz-Nectoux, x-xii; Howat-Kilpatrick, 244-245.

²⁴⁹ Noske, 259.

of the longer note value, while mine is on the deflection *from* the first beat, with shorter note values, to the longer internal note. Noske mentions the durational accent present in Fauré's *romance* from the early 1870s, "Seule!" To his observation we can now add that Fauré also has irregular-length prosodic units in the phrase Noske quotes in his book. Figure 43 reproduces Noske's Example 207.²⁵⁰ Above it is my graphic of the prosodic units expressed, in square phrases:

Musical: -----2----- -----3----- ---3----	<i>Literal English translation :</i>
<i>Dans un baiser l'onde au rivage</i>	In a kiss, the wave to the shore
Prosodic: - - - - - - - - - - / - - - - - - - - - - - - - / -	4 + 4f
	tells its sorrows
Melodic: -----4----- ---4---	
<i>Dit ses douleurs!</i>	
Prosodic: - - - - - - - - - -	4m

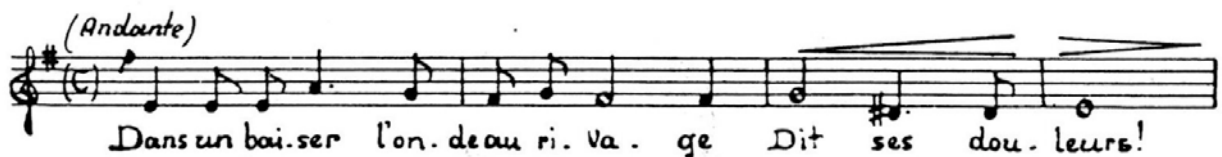


Figure 47. Reproduction of Ex. 207, Frits Noske, showing mm.3-6 of "Seule!" Used by permission of the publisher.

"Seule!" also contains a variation on the rhythmic deferral of the downbeat. Melodic deferral is evident in the passage just quoted: the melodic leap in the middle of the word *baiser* (kiss) acts as a clear signal to the singer that the primary prosodic stress of the measure is deferred to the second syllable of *baiser*, from the first beat, *Dans* (in). The same technique is used throughout this *romance*. In measures 15 and 25, the melodic deferral spares the definite

²⁵⁰ Noske, 259. Reprinted by permission of Dover Publications, Inc.

Table 2. Songs of the first *recueil*

Order in first <i>recueil</i>	Probable order of compositn	Meter Signature	Song Title/Poet	Probable year of compositn	Year first published	(Number of prosodic errors); if no number, None. Details of Prosodic Approach KEY: * Square-phrase appearance + 6/8 and 3/4 combination ! Complex 2-, 3-, 4-beat phrasing
1	1	6/8	<i>Le papillon et la fleur</i> / Hugo	1861-62	1869	0 * + complex interplay of 3/4 and 6/8 in vocal line
2	2	3/4	<i>Mai</i> / Hugo	1862-64	1871	*(1: <i>le</i> , m.21) +! Downbeat accent moved to b.2 many places
10	3	3/4	<i>S'il est un charmant gazon (Rêve d'amour)</i> / Hugo	1862-64	1875	*! Many displacements to b.2; "Si" and "Que" may be connected w/ rhetorical 'doubt'?
3	4	6/8	<i>Dans les ruines d'une abbaye</i> / Hugo	1866-68	1869	*! Accent consistently moved to b.2 (b.4 of 6)
8	5	C	<i>Lydia</i> /Leconte de Lisle	1868-70	1871	*! Evocative use of triplets, m. 16, 34.
16	6	6/8	<i>Hymne</i> / Beaudelaire	1870-71	1871	+ (0? Elle, m. 21) Occasional displacement of downbeat to b.2 (b.4 of 6); [<i>szlu</i>] has changeable accentuation.
4	7	3/4	<i>Les matelots</i> / Gautier	1870-72	1876	*+! Many hemiolas, displaced downbeats to b.2.
5	8	4/4	<i>Seule!</i> / Gautier	1870-72	1871	* (1: <i>le</i> , m.11) Melodic contour helps to defer downbeat
11	9	C	<i>L'absent</i> / Hugo	1871	1879	! (1? <i>La</i> , m. 34) Displacements to b.2
18	10	3/4	<i>La rançon</i> / Beaudelaire	1871	1879	! (1: <i>de</i> , m.53) Sequential hemiolas m. 19-28.
9	11	12/8, 9/8	<i>Chant d'automne</i> / Beaudelaire	1871	1879	! Minor use of displaced downbeat. Most unique characteristics relate to length, Duparc influence.
7	12	4/4, C	<i>Chanson du pêcheur (Lamento)</i> / Gautier	1872	1877	*! Modified strophic form; melody evokes Duparc. Extensive use of triplet figures = 12/8 feel, displacement of downbeat to b. 3 of measure.
13	13	6/8	<i>Tristesse</i> / Gautier	1872-74	1876	+ Frequent 3/4 and 6/8 changes in prosody
12	14	12/8	<i>Aubade</i> / Pommey	1872-74	1879	(1? s'ouvrir m. 9) <i>Je</i> , m.20; <i>la</i> , m.24,25 more explicable
In 2 nd <i>recueil</i>	(Not in Daitz-Neetoux)	6/8	<i>Barcarolle</i> /Monnier	Oct. 19, 1873	1877	+! Start of all but one phrase accents b.3 of 6.
19	16	2/4	<i>Ici-bas!</i> / Sully Prudhomme	1874	1877	1; <i>Leurs</i> , m. 21
17	17	6/8	<i>Au bord de l'eau</i> /S. Prudhomme	1875	1877	+ Frequent shifts between 6/8 and 3/4
15	18	3/4	<i>Après un rêve</i> /Anon. Italian, adapt. Bussine	1875-77	1878	+ (? <i>Dans, Je, Tes, Tu(2x), Pour, vers, Les</i> all explicable) Also preponderance of b.3 →b.1 mvt
6	19	9/8	<i>Sérénade Toscane</i> / Anon., trans. Bussine	1875-77	1879	(6? <i>de</i> , m. 9,49; <i>la</i> , m.10,14,19,27) This Italianate song appears driven by melody to detriment of prosody.
14	20	3/4	<i>Sylvie</i> / Choudens	1878	1879	+ "Je te le dirai..." and many other phrases b.3→b.1

Beaudelaire (1821-1867), “L’invitation au voyage.”²⁵³ The two young composers met through the founding of the Société nationale de musique (1871); Duparc brought his new song to an early meeting of the founding committee.²⁵⁴ Duparc’s approach to Beaudelaire’s verse is not as a strophic *romance*, but through-composed. Significant, too, is his varied treatment of musical and prosodic “downbeats.” Through-composition of Beaudelaire’s poetry was made more workable by the structure of the poetic verse—written in irregular five- and seven-syllable lines, unlike the neat symmetry of eight-, ten- or twelve- syllable lines more typical of other verse adapted to or written expressly for art songs of the time.²⁵⁵ The songs Fauré composed immediately after Duparc’s “L’invitation”—those listed in Table 2 from “Hymne” through the “Chanson de pêcheur”—all reflect Fauré’s exploration of Duparc’s compositional ideas to some degree. “L’invitation” thus bears a particular responsibility for the composer’s trajectory into fresh compositional territory.²⁵⁶

One clear change at that point in Fauré’s career is visible in Table 2: with the exception of one song with text by Victor Hugo (“L’absent”) and the three Gautier settings from this period (“Les matelots,” “Seule!” and “Chanson de pêcheur”), Fauré’s songs written after the first of his Beaudelarian *mélodies*, “Hymne,” abandon the square phrase model and the strophic *romance*. The impetus appears to be Beaudelaire’s poetry. Victor Hugo’s text adapted for “L’absent,” a through-composed work, is in the form of a dialogue, a format very different from the earlier Hugo texts Fauré set to music, which may explain why Fauré found it easier to avoid using

²⁵³ http://erato.uvt.nl/files/imglnks/usimg/d/d3/IMSLP28561-PMLP62816-Duparc_-_L_invitation_au_voyage_voice_and_piano_.pdf (accessed February 19, 2009).

²⁵⁴ Nectoux, *A Musical Life*, 503.

²⁵⁵ The lines of irregular length are an important part of the charm of “Le papillon,” and those of “S’il est un charmant gazon” alternate between seven syllables with a masculine ending and five syllables with a feminine rhyme. “Lydia,” too, contains an irregular line length, exploited by Fauré in his setting.

²⁵⁶ Nectoux points to this encounter with Beaudelaire’s poetry as a watershed in Fauré’s compositional style. Nectoux, *A Musical Life*, 355.

square phrases in that song, and instead utilize similar techniques to those he introduced in his Beaudelaire *mélodies*.

There are a few specific prosodic techniques beyond the initial stylistic elements discussed above which are exhibited through the balance of the first *recueil*. Fauré’s fondness for the hemiola is known; he also makes good use of triplets, either in duple-meter contexts or simply by writing in 6/8, 9/8 or 12/8 time. The 1872 *mélodie* “Chanson de pêcheur,” although scored in common time, is replete with triplets in both the voice and the accompaniment. Rather than occurring as stand-alone triplets, however, they are often integrated into the ongoing flow of hemiolas and other short phrases. Figure 49 shows the opening measures for the voice, from the pickup to the second measure through measure 5.²⁵⁷ The first full measure contains two two-beat rhythmic groupings; thereafter, triplets, or the conveyed sense of triplets, dominate. A graphic representation of the beats in the melody and prosodic units in the text clarifies their respective partitions, by notation in the music and in the prosody as spoken. In the first line, the four-beat measure is evenly divided into two parts of two beats each. The second line of verse is comprised of two triplets, each on one beat, leading to the half note on the accented “-*jours*.”²⁵⁸

	beats beats	
Musical accents:	---2 --- -----2-----	<i>English translation :</i>
	<i>Ma (belle) amie est morte.</i>	My beloved [female sweetheart] is dead.
Prosodic accents :	- -- --- ---- / - ---- / -	(4) + 2f
	triplet triplet beats	
Musical accents:	-----3----- ----3---- ----2----	
	<i>(Je) (pleur)erai toujours!</i>	I will cry forever!
Prosodic accents:	- -- --- ---- / -- ---- /	(4) + 2m

²⁵⁷ Fauré, *Sixty Songs*, 29.

²⁵⁸ The triplets in the vocal part in the first two beats of measure three are continued in triplets in the accompaniment on the third and fourth beats.

opening bars of “Tristesse.” The piano is evidently in step with the notated meter signature of 6/8; but the voice is not, and the entrance of the voice on *avril* (April) occurs as an upbeat to the third beat of the measure in 3/4 time, not 6/8. In fact, the vocal part does not coincide with the piano’s 6/8 until the sixth measure, as shown in Figure 50.²⁶⁰ I mark the prosodic stresses of the text with bold, italicized typeface.

The rhythmic adjustments described above are part of the musical milieu in which we find Fauré’s *mélodies*: hemiolas, rhythmic deflections or displacements, and variable meters

The image displays a musical score for the first seven measures of the song "Tristesse" by Gabriel Fauré. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system shows the voice and piano parts for measures 1-3. The voice part is in 3/4 time, and the piano part is in 6/8 time. The lyrics are "Av - ril est de re -". The second system shows measures 4-7. The voice part continues in 3/4 time, and the piano part continues in 6/8 time. The lyrics are "tour, La pre mière des ro - ses, De ses lev res mi - clo - ses, Rit au premier beau jour,". Prosodic stresses are marked with bold, italicized text: "Av - ril", "pre mière", "ro - ses", "Rit", and "beau jour".

Figure 50. Measure 1-7 (beat 1), "Tristesse," showing piano in 6/8, voice in 3/4 until m.6

²⁶⁰ Fauré, *Sixty Songs*, 58.

became standard fare for Fauré within a short time of his early successes. An extension of his rhythmic vocabulary demonstrates an occasional reach beyond the “downbeat” pulse into accentuations on the “upbeat,” as seen in the fabricated “triplets” in “Chanson de pêcheur.” Although these rhythms today would be called syncopations, there is nothing to indicate Fauré considered them as such in the context of the *mélodies*.

The following figures show a few instances of these “upbeat” accentuations. The first example (Figure 51) is from “Ici-bas!” (1874), of measures 3 through 6 (the rhythm in question lies in the midst of the phrase: measure 5). In the stylistic context for the period in which it was composed, the measures shown appear simply to wrongly accentuate the normally unaccented definite and indefinite articles. The reader may recall performances in which the interpreter sings, “**Ici-bas, tous les lilas meurent, Tous les chants des oiseaux sont courts**” (Here on earth all lilacs die, all the songs of the birds are short), despite the fact that *les* and *des* are not accented words in spoken French. Many performers—including professionals, in recorded performances—sing the passage in lock-step with the time signature. Approaching this passage with the knowledge of Fauré’s intricate, careful (and elusive) prosody, the assumption can be made that Fauré had a better plan in mind when he set it. In speaking, the text would have this rhythm:

[(Ici)-(bas)], (tous) les [lilas] meurent, (Tous) les (chants) des oiseaux sont courts,
 |--||---||----|/ |--| |-| |--| |--| |----|/ |-| |--| |-| |--|/ |--| |--||----|/ |--| |----|

that in places is quite opposite what is usually heard in performance. Note the two instances of words with syllables of near-equal weight, *ici-bas* (here on earth) and *lilas* (lilacs). *Ici-bas* is comprised of two words: *ici* (here) and *bas* (below; translated as a unit, it means “here on earth”), with *ici* consisting of two syllables, each having an *accent mobile*, as does the word

bas.²⁶¹ The first line under the notation in Figure 51 shows the correct prosody, following the discussion above; below it is the frequently misaccentuated version of the text.²⁶²

If we look at the notational phonemes of the poetic verse, as it were, a different level of phrasing emerges, that Fauré appears to have taken advantage of in this passage. If we overlook the “on-beat” rhythms and 2/4 meter at the surface level, but instead break down the beats into their smallest value in the piece, the sixteenth note, is it not possible to create hemiolas and deflected rhythms at that level? The manipulation of the rhythm in this way would be similar

3

I - ci - bas! tous les li - las meur ent, (Tous) les chants des oi-seaux sont courts,
I - ci bas! tous les li - las meur ent, Tous les chants des oi-seaux sont courts,

Figure 51. "Off-beat" accentuations, mm. 3-6, "Ici-bas!"

to what Fauré did with the triplets in “Chanson de pêcheur,” but without the adjacent model of the actual triplets. What I propose is that we hear and perform the phrase with the proper accents on *chants* (songs) and *oiseaux* (birds), with their accented syllables at the close of adjacent two-syllable iambic and three-syllable anapestic feet, respectively: *les chants* and *des oiseaux*. The word, *Tous* (all) preceding *les chants* opens the phrase and may either take the *accent mobile* as I suggest, providing a sort of “springboard” for the following rhythms, or remain unaccented if the performer prefers (turning “Tous les **chants**” into a three-foot phrase). Figure 51 presents the correctly accented and misaccentuated interpretations.

²⁶¹ Since the word *ici* begins with a glottal stop that provides a level of accentuation in that way, I do not recommend any further stress on that initial syllable than what results from the additional length of the note.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 88.

4.7 FROM THE “ITALIANATE” MÉLODIES THROUGH 1878

Many of Fauré’s songs composed during the period from 1872 through early 1878 have been demonstrated to contain Italianate features, primarily a *bel canto* style, as a result of the young composer’s acquaintance with and participation in the influential salon of Pauline Garcia-Viardot (1821-1910).²⁶³ The “Italianate” *mélodies* bridge the first and second collections of Fauré’s *mélodies*:²⁶⁴ the “Chanson de pêcheur (Lamento)” (1872, published as seventh in the first *recueil*); “Barcarolle” (1873; presently published at the end of the second *recueil*, but that I include in Table 2 above); “Au bord du l’eau” (1875, published seventeenth, or three from the end, in the first *recueil*); “Après un rêve” (1875-1877; fifteenth in the first *recueil*); and “Sérénade toscane” (also 1875-1877, published as sixth in the first *recueil*, immediately ahead of “Chanson de pêcheur”). Nectoux judges this period of Fauré’s output as of considerably lesser quality than that of earlier or later compositions, pointing out “a slackening in attention to the text and to the prosody in particular.”²⁶⁵

My opinion on the matter of their quality is somewhat tempered; I concur that the quality of pianistic writing is less challenging, and the vocal melody more prominent, but I do not agree that the prosody of all the Italianate songs is objectionable. Of the four identified by Nectoux that open with a dramatic Italianate upward leap in the vocal line, I found only one with what seemed upon initial analysis to contain an abundance of questionable prosody: “Sérénade

²⁶³ Fauré was briefly engaged to Pauline Viardot’s daughter, Marianne (from July to October, 1877). The deep attachment to the cosmopolitan Viardot family during this impressionable time of Fauré’s life resulted, among other things, in these songs, his “Italianate compositions.” Romaine Bussine was a voice instructor at the *Conservatoire*, and a friend of both the Viardot’s and Fauré. Johnson, 101.

²⁶⁴ There are three additional songs from this period which are less stridently ‘Italian’: “Tristesse” (1872-74), “Aubade”(also 1872-74), and “Ici-bas” (1874).

²⁶⁵ Nectoux, *A Musical Life*, 72. He also identifies a common opening gesture in over half of the songs from this period: a rising sixth to octave, followed by a stepwise descent. *Ibid.*, 70-71.

Toscane.” There were, I thought, five questionable accents in the “Sérénade,” exceeding those in any other *romance* or *mélodie* examined thus far. Referring to the slightly earlier “Après un rêve,” Graham Johnson writes, “One is tempted to wonder whether Fauré composed the Italian original of this song before the French words were appended.” I was rather more tempted to wonder the same about the “Sérénade.”²⁶⁶ I thought to compare its effectiveness in French with that of the Italian text, but it is difficult to discern the Italian text in the broken type of the reprinted score. Fortunately, Johnson includes parts he has traced to their origins in his monograph.²⁶⁷ Below is a comparison of the first part of the Italian text, on the left, including highlights of text falling on the notated strong beats (in 9/8 time) in bold typeface, with the French on the right, showing the text in bold on the same musical stresses.

*O tu che **dormi e riposata stai**
 ‘N **testo bel letto senza pensiero,***

*Ô toi que **berce un rêve enchanteur,**
 Tu **dors tranquille en ton lit solitaire,***

The first two lines in French are acceptable. As accented definite articles begin cropping up in the French column, it occurred to me that those landing repeatedly on the longer note of the lilting dactylic pair found throughout—quarter-eighth, quarter-eighth (frequently further accentuated by melodic leaps *to* the misaccentuated syllables)—are primarily definite articles attached to nouns of nature: *la nuit claire* (the clear night), *la brise* (the breeze), *la rosée* (the dew), *la voûte étoilée* (the starry sky). If my thesis regarding Fauré’s emphases on this type of noun holds up, these instances are excusable. There is only one other possible misaccentuation I find in the “Sérénade” that is not explicable by rhythmic deflection, hemiolas, or any other Fauréan technique argued above. That one case is the *de* in “Esclave de tes yeux” (slave of your

²⁶⁶ My analysis of “Après un rêve,” in light of the prosodic techniques discussed above, does not find inexplicable fault with the accentuations of the questionable words listed for “Après un rêve” in Table 2.

²⁶⁷ Johnson, 110.

eyes), found in measure 9 of Figure 52, that despite the upward melodic leap, may be expressed as a graceful gesture toward the beloved.²⁶⁸ That interpretation ought not to be difficult to achieve, as long as the singer properly accentuates *esclave* and *yeux*. Since both words fall on the actual downbeat of the measure, one would expect no problems in that regard. The previous phrase, “Éveille-toi, regarde le chanteur” (Awaken [yourself], regard the singer), illustrates Fauré’s use of hemiolas in this song. The composer does avail himself of his usual prosodic techniques in “Sérénade toscane,” although the greater than usual emphasis on melody and the strong dactylic nature of its rhythms makes such use not as visible. This Italianate *mélodie* is in 9/8 time; for the purposes of my graphic here, I consider “one beat” to be three of the nine eighths, so that the piece is, for all practical purposes, in 3/4 with triple subdivisions of the beat.

Musical accent: |-----2-----||-----2-----||----2-----
Éveille-toi, regarde le chanteur,
 Prosodic accent: |---|---|---|---| / |---|---|---|---| 4 + (2) + 4m

Musical accent: |-----3-----||-----3-----||----3-----
Esclave de tes yeux, dans la nuit claire ! (2) + 4 + 4f
 Prosodic accent : |---|---| / |---|---|---|---| / |---|---|---|---| / |---|---|



Figure 52. "Sérénade toscane," from pickup to m.9 through end of phrase, m.11

A curious example in Noske’s landmark study, showing the first five and a half measures of “Au bord de l’eau”—another Italianate *mélodie*—was among the first perceived irregularities

²⁶⁸ Fauré, *Sixty Songs*, 24-25.

that drew me to the present study. I reproduce Noske's Example 208 here, as Figure 53.²⁶⁹

What originally appeared to me as a misaccentuation of *du* (meaning "of the") in the second measure, I now understand to be located within the context of a measure where the voice follows a 3/4 meter, after starting out in 6/8: "S'asseoir tous (now 3/4) *deux* au *bord* du *flot* qui *pas*se, (returning to 6/8) Le *voir* passer..." "Au bord de l'eau (Beside the waters)" is comprised of many poetic lines that in their settings pass gently back and forth, primarily between 3/4 and 6/8 time, all the while adding to the impression of waves of the passing waters.

The one slight variation to the 3/4-6/8 arrangement is in measure 23; the meter here takes a brief turn to an off-beat "syncopation," "triplet," and "hemiola," all in one phrase, shown in the eleventh and twelfth lines of verse below. The transition from one meter to the next is more



Figure 53. Reproduction of Frits Noske's Ex. 208, showing mm. 1-6 of "Au bord de l'eau," by permission of the publisher.

even than one might think; Fauré eases the passage with the clear assistance of the melodic design. (See the second line of Figure 54.) The textual prosody of this *mélodie* is as follows:

²⁶⁹ Noske, 259. Reproduced by permission of Dover Publications, Inc. The sole comment provided for this example in the translation of Noske's book says nothing about the prosody, only that the poetic lines are divided in an unequal fashion, to avoid the square phrase.

Line 1: (6/8) *S'asseoir tous* (3/4) *deux au bord du flot qui passe,*
Line 2: (6/8) *Le voir passer,*

Line 3: (6/8) *Tous deux s'il glisse un nuage en l'espace,*
Line 4: (6/8) *Le voir glisser,*

Line 5: (3/4) *À l'horizon s'il fume un toit de chaume,*
Line 6: (6/8) *Le voir fumer,*

Line 7: (3/4) *Aux alentours si quelque fleur embaume*
Line 8: (6/8) *S'en embaumer,*

Line 9: (6/8) *Entendre au* (3/4) *pied du saule où l'eau mur-* (6/8) *-mure,*
Line 10: (6/8) *L'eau murmurer,*

Line 11: (6/8) *Ne* (“2/4”) *pas sentir* (3/8 triplet) *tant que ce* (2/8) *rêve* (6/8) *dure,*
Line 12: (6/8) *Le temps durer;*

Line 13: (6/8) *Mais n'apport-* (3/4) *-tant de passion profonde*
Line 14: (6/8) *Qu'a s'adorer,*

Line 15: (3/4) *Sans nul sou-* (6/8) *ci des querelles du monde,*
Line 16: (6/8) *Les ignorer;*

Line 17: (6/8) *Et seuls tous deux devant tout ce qui lasse,*
Line 18: (6/8) *Sans se lasser,*

Line 19: (3/4) *Sentir l'a-* (6/8) *-mour devant tout ce qui passe*
Line 20: (6/8) *Ne point passer,*

Line 21: (6/8) *Sentir l'amour devant tout ce qui passe*
Line 22: (6/8) *Ne point passer.*

17
S'en em - bau - mer, En tendre au pied du saule où l'eau mur - mur - e L'eau mur mur - er, Ne pas sen
23
tir tant que ce rê-ve du - re Le temps du - rer, Mais n'apport - tant de pas si - on pro - fon - de

Figure 54. Measures 17-28, “Au bord de l’eau”

The texts for two of the Italianate songs in Table 2 are from French translations by Romaine Bussine (1830-1899) of verse originally in Italian. My discussion of “Sérénade toscane” reveals a rather opaque prosody; in contrast, “Après un rêve (After a dream),” in 3/4

time but with the vocal part in many triplets set against the piano's steady eighth-note pulsations, is more prosodically transparent. Accentuated references to *je* (I), *tu* (you, informal form), and *tes* (your, informal) all may be considered part of the poet's emphasis on the personal bond between the personalities involved in the *rêve* (dream). We have seen other occasions of *dans* (in) being accentuated that I believe are excusable when not overused; *pour* (for/in order [to]) appears on the first beat of bar 20, but the accent is immediately deflected by a downward leap, then a longer note on the second syllable of *m'enfuir* (to escape), as shown in Figure 55. The leap, first downward, then upward, is akin to the leap Nectoux first identified and named the 'Viardot motif.'²⁷⁰ Note that in this example, the meter in measure 21 shifts to 6/8 for *vers la lumière* (toward the light). "Après un rêve" also exhibits a tendency toward increased rhythmic and melodic movement on the last beat in many measures, in effect propelling the *mélodie* forward, toward and then past the next barline. It is a noticeable characteristic in "Barcarolle," as well, a feature that piques my curiosity as to the origin of this characteristic. Whether that is considered an "Italianate" feature or not, it soon becomes more solidly a part of Fauré's vocal writing, one of his accustomed techniques.

Every musical phrase in the next deliberately Italianate *mélodie*, "Barcarolle" (1873), starts on beat 1, but the first prosodic accent of the text is on either beat 3 or 4 (of 6, in 6/8). The initial word or syllable is lengthened, but the effect of the tie connecting the downbeat eighth note to the subsequent sixteenth note is a suspension, or a slight lift of the singer's brow in holding the note just that brief time longer. The momentary lift is followed—with the sole exception of the slower, tender sentiment toward "tes yeux noirs, mon épousee" (your dark eyes, my bride)—by the rush of words and melody, either upwards or down, appearing to emulate the

²⁷⁰ Johnson, 100.

third of the *mélodies* published in the second *recueil* spring from this year of recovery and foment. His output includes the last Italianate *mélodie*, “Sérénade toscane,” the professionally expedient “Sylvie,”²⁷¹ and a trio of Grandmougin poems comprising a trilogy, “Poème d’un jour.” “Nell,” the angular “Le voyageur,” and the perfectly set Armand Silvestre poem, “Automne,” conclude the 1878 production. As my notes in the chart below (Table 3) illustrate, this succinct collection of one year’s compositions utilizes all the prosodic techniques brought to fruition up to this point. They also appear to occasionally expect some level of additional expressive meaning—that is, nonverbal meaning as expressed by the performer in response to the text-setting.

A passage in “Rencontre” from the short song series, “Poème d’un jour,” contains a curious sequence of four similar, frequently misaccentuated phrases that occur in measures 12, 14, 16 and 17. The rhythmic adaptations I believe Fauré intends here are fairly minor, but they correct what has been faulted as poor prosody. In measure 12, the text as spoken is accentuated, “Ô, **passante** aux doux **yeux**” (oh, passer-by with soft eyes), with the final syllable of *passante* (passer-by, a woman) receiving the accent in that word. Performers, however, typically sing, “Ô, **passante aux doux yeux**,” maintaining the 4/4 time structure of the time signature. When the spoken prosody is respected, the result is a lilting triplet, a light touch of ear-pleasing variation. The other three phrases, when sung in a similar fashion, reveal a prosody that is gently lyrical, in phrases dominated by triplets: “Serais-**tu** donc l’**amie** / Qui rendrait le **bonheur** au **poète isolé**, / Et vas-**tu** rayonner sur mon **âme affermie**, **Comme le (ciel) natale**...”

²⁷¹“Sylvie” is a setting of text by Paul Choudens, son of his publisher. Fauré was, apparently, seeking to fill out the number of songs awaiting publication to an even twenty, and what better way to encourage Choudens to complete the task? Johnson, 112.

Table 3. *Mémoires* of 1878

Collection	Meter Signature	Song Title / Poet	Year of Composition	Year of Publication	Prosodic Details
First recueil	9/8	<i>Sérénade toscane</i> / Anon., trans. Bussine	1878 ?	1879	Last Italianate <i>mélodie</i> . Hemiolas and displaced downbeats frequent. “ <i>Esclave (de) tes yeux</i> ” (slave of your eyes), a longing gesture; <i>la brise</i> (breeze) makes the <i>voix</i> (voice) mimic it, accent displaced until <i>emportée</i> (delivered).
First recueil	3/4	<i>Sylvie</i> / Choudens	1878	1879	“ <i>Je te le dirai</i> ” is at heart of this song where spoken prosody is followed throughout. Skillful switch to 6/8: m.10, 14, 30, 32, 36, 41, 52, 58, 63.
Second recueil	C	<i>Poëme d’un jour: Rencontre</i> /Grandmougin	1878	1880	Stretches of microrhythms(m.12-18, 32-39) simulate ‘triplets,’ convey intimacy.
Second recueil	C	<i>Poëme d’un jour: Toujours</i> /Grandmougin	1878	1880	Beat 4 in many measures has greatest rhythmic density, and propels the melody forward, forcefully! <i>Et</i> accented on b.1, m.24,36 would have glottal emphasis; <i>de</i> on b.1, m.8 is correctly accentuated here, as third <i>de</i> after “ <i>Vous me demandez de... (you ask of me to...to...and to...)</i> ”
Second recueil	C	<i>Poëme d’un jour: Adieu</i> /Grandmougin	1878	1880	? <i>Les</i> m.9 may be expressive of the <i>longs soupirs</i> (long sighs); ? <i>que</i> m.17 (b.1), m.19 (b.3). Sense of stillness is pervasive in steady pace of syllables, conveying narrator’s much-subdued emotions at parting.
Second recueil	C	<i>Nell</i> / Leconte de Lisle	1878	1880	Many two- and three-beat phrases cross the barlines throughout: m.5-7, 10-11, and end 22-24; technique also avoids accents on <i>du</i> at m.14, m.29. Frequent durational accents on beat two.
Second recueil	3/4	<i>Le voyageur</i> / Silvestre	1878 ?	1880	Displaced downbeats throughout; “aggravated” and forceful.
Second recueil	12/8	<i>Automne</i> / Silvestre	1878	1880	Regular rhythmic patterns, mostly longer note values on beats one and three; prosody is aligned well with musical rhythms throughout.

formation of the triplets is pleasing to the ear: the first triplet begins with the accented syllable, the second both begins and ends with accented syllables. Figure 57 replicates Fauré's musical setting, with the lyrics showing both the corrected accentuation, and the common misaccentuation.²⁷²

12 *Ô, pass-ante au doux yeux, ser-ais-tu donc l'a - mi-e Qui ren-drait le bon - heur au poète i - so-*
Ô, pass-ante au doux yeux, ser-ais-tu donc l'a - mi-e Qui ren-drait le bon - heur au poète i - so-

16 *lé, Et vas tu ray-on - ner sur mon âme af-fer - mi - e com me le ciel na - tale*
lé, Et vas-tu ray-on - ner sur mon âme af fer - mi - e com me le ciel na - tale

13

Figure 57. "Syncopated" accentuations, mm. 12-19, "Poème d'un jour: Rencontre"

My discussion of the rhythmic aspects of Fauré's early songs has already included the "longing gesture" of *de tes yeux* in "Sérénade toscane," indicating by its suggestion a physical response on the part of the performer.²⁷³ In this example from "Rencontre," the text as correctly accentuated in the song is in a modified triplet rhythm. There is more to the story, however. The quasi-triplets in the above text stand in stylistic contrast to the section immediately preceding this passage. The prior part of the *mélodie* acts as an introduction; set in a regular (even quite square), common time, as a simple statement. My graphic below links the 'introductory' text to its notated values in 4/4 time. One hyphen equals one eighth note, and the double vertical line is the barline; I add the hyphen at the feminine ending, for ease of spoken replication of the

²⁷² Ibid., 113.

²⁷³ My note in Table 3 asserts that the dotted-rhythm slur in "Sérénade toscane" at the poet's "*voix, par la brise emportée* (voice, carried by the breeze)" is intentional, and not a prosodic error as Nectoux writes. Nectoux, *A Musical Life*, 72.

Figure 58. Showing transition from 'stated' style of opening text, to passionate triplets (mm. 10-17), "Poème d'un jour: Rencontre"

The native French performer may comfortably express these natural prosodic stresses; for the non-native, a lack of knowledge concerning the expressive realism imbedded in the prosody here makes the passage more difficult to perform accurately. Fortunately for the non-native, a significant number of Fauré's songs composed after the early 1880s exhibit no prosodic errors in regards to the notated downbeat. For the native, or a singer familiar with French prosody, there are of course additional songs without "errors," as long as one recognizes and correctly expresses the French prosody according to the principles found in Fauré's earlier works. The primary reason for the development of these "correct" songs is the cohesion of Fauré's prosodic technique around the rules he laid down, listed at the close of this chapter. The balance of Fauré's second *recueil* contains *mélodies* exhibiting trends already discussed, illustrative of the expansions in the composer's prosodic techniques through the 1870s.

4.8 BALANCE OF THE SECOND *RECUEIL*: EXTENSIONS OF SPEECH

One of the salient features of the songs in the second *recueil* is their gradual evolution toward the rhythms of spoken French, using a number of different approaches. Whereas the songs of the

first *recueil* all clearly reflect their purpose as songs for entertainment, during the 1880s, Fauré gradually adopts melodic and prosodic rhythms more nearly matching that of spoken French, as opposed to “songs in French.” Figures 59 and 60 illustrate the change in focus, with excerpts from “Chant d’automne” (1871; from the first *recueil*) and “Clair de lune” (1887; from the second). This particular development in Fauré’s technique is seen clearly in a comparison of the prosody as spoken and sung. Syllables that close prosodic units are italicized; secondary accents, the *accents mobiles*, are in parentheses. In the graphic line below the text, slashes are placed immediately adjacent to the vertical line when it marks a secondary accent, but the slashes set apart from the vertical line denote the close of a prosodic unit. The poetic text from measures 59 through 61 from “Chant d’automne,” as spoken, may be charted thus:

J'(ai)me de vos longs yeux, la lum(ièr)e verdâtre, 12f
 ---/ | | | | --- | ---- | ----- | / | | | --- | / | | | --- | / | |

Here is a comparison with Fauré’s setting, with one hyphen representing the eighth note, and capitalized and lower-case X’s signifying the strong and weak musical beats; I leave the parentheses and bold typeface in the line of text, for ease of comparison.

X x x X x x X x x
J'(ai)me de vos longs yeux, la lum(ièr)e verdâtre
 ---| ---| | | | | | ---| / | | | | | | | | | | | ---| -----|

The greatest difference between the prosody of the spoken phrases and the same words as set in the music is found on the word *lumière*. When Fauré composed “Chant d’automne,” of course, he had already begun to take stylistic steps away from his earliest songs. An excerpt from “Clair de lune” illustrates how much closer the sung prosody is to spoken French, sixteen years later. Brackets around *l’amour* signify the nearly equally stressed syllables of that word; my graphic below it reflects that, as well. Here is the text from measures 26 to 30, as spoken:



Figure 60. Notation of mm. 26-30, "Claire de lune"

The vocal part of this excerpt from “Clair de lune” is in two- and three-beat accentual groupings displaced from beat 1, most frequently to beat 3: “**Tout** en chan-” is followed by “-**tant**, sur le mode mi-”; the eighth-note rest is enclosed within the next three-beat grouping, “-**neur**, L’amour vain-.” The next two-beat unit, “-**queur** et” overlaps into the 6/8 measure (as performed) comprising “la **vie** oppor-” finally ending on beat 1, with “-**tune**.” The rhythmic interplay between prosody, note length, and rhythmic groupings is considerable.

Table 4 provides an overview of the remaining (post-1878) songs in Fauré’s second *recueil*, of *mélodies* originally published as the bulk of a volume, *Vingt-cinq mélodies (Twenty-four Songs)*, by J. Hamelle in 1897. As there are no published critical editions of this collection to date, the “possible date of composition” listed for each song is that supplied by Fauré accompanist and scholar Graham Johnson in his monograph.²⁷⁷ Given the lack of a critical edition, all observations on prosody in the second *recueil* are limited to what is shown in the 1908 reprint that Fauré would have approved. The songs in this collection generally date from 1878 to 1887. As noted before, I have moved “Barcarolle” back to the first *recueil* (where Choudens published it in 1879), and omit the last song, the *cantique* “En prière” from the table and from the present study.

²⁷⁷ Graham Johnson, *Gabriel Fauré: The Songs and Their Poets* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011).

Table 4. Balance of second *recueil* (post-1878)

Song Order 2 nd <i>rec.ueil</i>	Meter signature	Song Title/Poet	Possible date of composition	Year first published	(Number of Prosodic errors); <u>Prosodic Details</u> KEY: + 6/8 & 3/4 ! Complex 2-,3-,4-beat phrasing
8	6/8	<i>Notre amour</i> / Silvestre	c.1879	1882	+! Voice frequently in 3/4
7	12/8	<i>Les berceaux</i> / S. Prudhomme	1879	1881	! Freq. downbeat displacement to b.3
9	2/4	<i>Le secret</i> / Silvestre	1880- 81	1881	(?) <i>le</i> , mm.3, 23; probably indicative of deeper expression
10	C	<i>Chanson d'amour</i> / Silvestre	1882	1882	None
11	2/4	<i>La fée aux chansons</i> / Silvestre	1882	1883	! rhythmic deflections, m.56- 58
12	C, 2/4, 3/4	<i>Aurore</i> / Silvestre	1884	1885	None; careful setting! GF makes use of many upbeats
13	6/8	<i>Fleur jetée</i> / Silvestre	1884	1885	None
14	12/8 & 6/8 (alt), C	<i>Le pays des rêves</i> / Silvestre	1884	1885	Change of meters; <i>Du</i> , m. 17 and 26? Also rising melodic line, m. 13, 26, 30, 38, 56 appears intended as upbeat.
15	2/4	<i>Les roses d'Ispahan</i> / Leconte de Lisle	1884	1885	! Some 3/8 rhythmic groupings (i.e., m.16-17)
17	3/4	<i>Nocturne</i> / Villiers de L'Isle-Adam	1886	1886	+ in piano; vocal hemiolas m.8, 21
18	2/4	<i>Les présents</i> / Villiers de L'Isle-Adam	1887	1889	None. Lyrics set in speechlike rhythms
19	3/4	<i>Clair de lune (Minuet)</i> / Verlaine	1887	1888	+ m.29 ! Lyrics set in speechlike rhythms.

In “Le secret” (composed c.1880-1881), the composer appears to have deliberately placed the definite article *le* (the, masculine singular) in locations where the performer needs to be certain *not* to accentuate it (expressing sadness or chagrin), while in a third (joyous) location, *le* is clearly set in an unaccented position. Figure 61 begins at the pickup to measure 3 and

continues through the first beat of measure 6;²⁷⁸ Figure 62 reproduces the companion setting of the poet's third strophe, from the pickup to measure 23 through beat 1 of 26;²⁷⁹ Figure 63 opens with the pickup to bar 13 and ends after beat 1 of measure 16. In measure 3, the lyric of this text as it would be spoken is "Je (veux) que le **matin** l'**ignore** / Le **nom** que j'ai **dit** à la **nuite**" (I wish the morning to ignore/ The name that I said to the night). And in measure 23, similarly, the poet says, "Je (veux) que le **couchant** l'**oublie** / Le **secret** que j'ai **dit** au **jour**" (I wish the setting sun to forget/ The secret that I told to the day). In both these first and last strophes, the definite



Figure 61. "Le secret," from pickup to m. 3 through b.1, m. 6



Figure 62. "Le secret," from pickup to m. 23 through b.1, m. 26

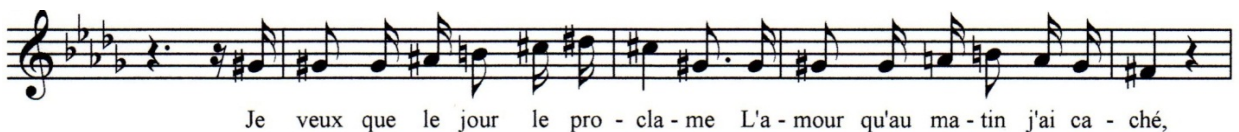


Figure 63. "Le secret," from pickup to m. 13 through b.1, m.16

²⁷⁸Fauré, *Sixty Songs*, 131.

²⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 132.

articles of *le matin* (the morning) and *le couchant* (the setting sun) fall directly on the second beat, and they are frequently misaccentuated by performers. However, in the second stanza, between the two quoted above, the article *le* is situated such that the noun, not the definite article, falls on the beat. There, the text is sung without prosodic adjustment, “Je **veux** que le **jour** le **proclame** / L’**amour** qu’au **matin** j’ai cache” (I wish the day to proclaim / The love that I hid in the morning).

The remarkable commonality connecting the first and last phrases stylistically and in meaning is that the narrator is expressing an emotional state that is very unsure and unhappy in both of them. When the narrator says, “I wish the morning to ignore” and “I wish the setting sun to forget,” Fauré sets both these lines so that the performer must withhold undue accentuation—and keep a fairly straight facial expression, as well—until the final syllable of *matin* and *couchant*. If the performer and the listeners are accustomed to accentuation on the interior beats of a measure, the deflection may be somewhat unsettling, further emphasizing the meaning of the text. The contrast with the assured accentuation of *le jour* is clear.

It should be noted that *le matin* and *le couchant*, both personified attributes of nature, could possibly fall into the questionable category wherein the article may be allowed accentuation. But if that were so, why does not *le jour* also have an accentuated article? Fauré’s intentions here are indisputable.

Not long after “Le secret,” Fauré composed “Les roses d’Ispahan” (1884), the sole text of his *mélodies* unmistakably linked to the exoticism of the Middle East. Here, the hemiolas, utilized with regularity since the beginning of his career, take on a slightly different character—although to some degree similar to the microrhythms seen in “Au bord de l’eau” (c.1875) above. Instead of phrases grouped by two beats across measures notated in 3/4, however, this *mélodie* in

Ont un par-*fum* moins *frais*, ont une o - *deur* moins *dou* - ce,
Ont un par-*fum* moins *frais*, ont *une* o - *deur* moins *dou* - ce,

Figure 64. Measures 16-18, "Les roses d'Ispahan," showing both the varied prosodic accentuation, and typical misaccentuation in strict 2/5 meter

Parfum has a lengthened note value, creating its accentuation. But the accent on *frais* (fresh) and the comma following it require the singer to do two things that add to the sense of the words. The singer accents the word *frais*, and immediately shortens the word's enunciation to give time for the comma, releasing the breath in an action that gives the impression of a breathless "freshness."

When the singer correctly accents the second syllable of *odeur* in the midst of the sixteenth-note gesture, the musical accent is shifted to the second half of the second beat in the measure, in a kind of syncopation such as we have seen elsewhere in Fauré's prosodic practice. Thus *odeur* (scent) is more clearly linked with *douce* (sweet), its length implying the languid inhalation of the lover's sweetly scented breath. I believe a performer misses an opportunity to make this passage more meaningful, "breathless," and then languid, if the rhythmic and textual nuances are not acknowledged.

4.9 SUMMARY OF GABRIEL FAURÉ'S FOUNDATIONAL PROSODIC TECHNIQUES

The instrumental music of Gabriel Fauré is known to have an inclination toward complex simultaneous and changeable rhythms. At the same time, his solo songs—the *mélodies* and earlier *romances*—have been criticized for poor prosodic practice. My close examination of the texts and songs, separately and together, reveals that the vocal part typically exhibits the same rhythmic tendencies as do piano accompaniments and other instrumental works. Gabriel Fauré demonstrates a keen awareness of the relationship between text and music, beginning with his first song composition, the *romance* “Le papillon et la fleur.” In this and other very early songs, Fauré uses alternate definitions of the 6/8 meter signature as 3/4, and vice-versa. Multiple sequential redefinitions of the meter signature allow the composer to apply a more flexible approach to the French text in all his songs. The inclusion of hemiolas, triplets, and other mixed metrical devices also expand the composer’s available tools. The prosodic aspect of Fauré’s solo vocal music has not been examined before in this light. The examples presented in this chapter exhibit the following prosodic attributes in Fauré’s music:

- *Mélodies* in 6/8 or 3/4 time frequently contain vocal rhythms that shift between the two.
- The barline does not necessarily indicate the location of the strong beat of the measure.
- Hemiolas are a preferred device for articulation of rhythmic variety.
- The strongest beat of a measure can and often does occur on an internal beat of the measure.
- Each measure contains at least one, but often two emphasized beats.
- Beats with emphasis are determined by the prosody of the phrase, and can include words or syllables of both primary and secondary accents.
- Melodic/rhythmic textual “upbeats” to a prosodic strong beat are the same as those occurring in the spoken prosodic phrase.

- Any meter signature may be reinterpreted internally in any measure(s) during the course of a song.
- Triplets may be notated (i.e., occurring within one beat, or across two, with indication of “3”) or not. In the latter case, their presence is determined by textual prosody.

The features of Fauré’s songs composed prior to 1878, in regards to the French text itself, are:

- The rhythmic and melodic emphases of the song shall always respect the prosody of the spoken text as much as possible; only occasional errors are tolerated (i.e., no more than one or two per song, in minor positions only).
- The primary beat of emphasis in each measure always aligns with a word of primary or secondary stress within the prosodic unit.
- Interpretations differing from the notated musical rhythm will be made as necessary for correct accentuation of the text, including the use of micro-rhythms (i.e., 3/8, 2/8).
- Accents are acceptable on the prepositions *dans*, *sous*, or *vers*.

In addition to the above, it remains to be determined whether accents are acceptable on the article *la* or *le* when it is attached to a noun representing the personification of a specific object or of an element of nature. Such accents appear to apply an effect of singular distinction to the accompanying noun.

As discussed in previous chapters on the historical practice of French prosody in song, the structure of the French language as spoken or sung is antithetical to a musical style that requires regularly recurring beats or rhythms. French song is fundamentally different from most other European languages in this regard. The French language does not of itself have strongly accentuated or stressed words—at least not as heavily marked as in German, Italian, or English. Accents or stresses can and do occur in French in oratorical and/or declamatory accents, whereby the speaker/performer “raises the voice” to express the desired emphasis of the word, person’s name, or so on. Beyond the oratorical accent, also, French is not a completely “unaccented” language, as is sometimes said; the normal stresses on particular words in conversation proceed in grouping of words called prosodic units. French as spoken or sung in a non-metrical context

consists of syllables grouped into prosodic units of irregular length, within which the syllables increase in duration from short to long as the prosodic unit is produced or enunciated, in a phenomenon called “progressive lengthening” by scholar Henri Morier.²⁸¹ For example, a sentence typically consists of from two to four prosodic units, each one comprised of four to six syllables. Each prosodic unit begins with the shortest syllable of the prosodic unit, and is followed by syllables of gradually increasing duration. The prosodic unit ends with the word or syllable of the longest duration.

French poetry as historically practiced consists of lines of counted syllables, only, without reference to any sense of strong or weak syllables within prosodic units comprising the line of verse, although theories of “short” and “long” were argued and more or less given credence in French rhetorical culture from the end of the sixteenth century. Weak and strong beats in music are occurrences of stressed or unstressed musical events (i.e., those musical sounds given more or less *volume* in their production) within the rhythmic flow of a composition. The relatively weak stresses normally produced in spoken French occur in prescribed ways determined by common practice in the French linguistic community. Many regularly accentuated words in French receive stress on the final syllable of the word, in an “end accent.” Others have nearly equal stress on two or more syllables; such as is the case in many verbs in infinitive form (the “to be” form, in English), as well as declined verbs in the form of first- or second-person, plural (with the *-ons* or *-ez* ending, respectively). Still other words do not receive any stress other than the emphatic accent, when applied. Other words are of a nature involving

²⁸¹ Henri Morier, *Dictionnaire de poétique et de rhétorique* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1989), 906, 1239.

“secondary accents,” or *accents mobiles*, as Susan Youens defines them, meaning that such words may be accented or not, depending on the linguistic context.²⁸²

What all of this means is that a number of words or syllables previously believed to be set badly in positions of accent when they should not be, or the reverse when they ought to be accented, reveal themselves, instead, as cleverly disguised chameleons. In many Fauréan *mélodies*, when there is an appearance of a misaccentuation, there is instead a solution to be found, as Claire Croiza advised, by studying the text apart from the music. This presents a complication for the non-French performer, particularly in a situation such as that found in Fauré’s earliest songs, where the tonic accents of words or syllables frequently do not follow the notated meter signature. In the songs where Fauré ‘redefines’ the notated meter or makes use of hemiolas, non-notated triplets, or other rhythmic devices, it is extremely difficult or even impossible for the non-French performer to sing with the correct, intended French accentuation without some type of guide to follow for each different song.²⁸³

This brings us to the *mélodies* in Table 4 above, in which my notes specify there are “no displacements.” What such a designation means is that Fauré has set the text to these particular songs in a manner that causes no prosodic misunderstandings on the part of the singer, French-speaking or not. The flawless prosody of “Automne” (at the end of Table 3) and others of later composition in the third *recueil* are beneficiaries of this development in Fauré’s prosodic technique. In these songs, Fauré has taken care that every notated downbeat coincides with a syllable of primary or secondary accentuation. This is probably the point at which critics have made note of “improved” prosody in Fauré’s *mélodies*.

²⁸² Youens, 418-419.

²⁸³ This difficulty may be the root of the perhaps well-intended but erroneous advice sometimes given to non-French singers, to the effect that French is an “unaccented” language.

Some of the latter analyses of the *mélodies* above refer to the performer's physical response to an aspect of Fauré's notation. That expressive piece of Fauré's solo vocal songs gradually slips into his *mélodies*, the farther we delve into his middle-period songs, extracting meaning that appears to reside primarily in the treatment of the text by this highly respected French composer and his unique and specific prosody. In the next chapter, the continuing examination of Fauré's songs presents refinements in his compositional technique that improve the accessibility of his songs, and also add occasional layers of expressive meaning. I also propose guidelines, applicable from a mid-point in Fauré's compositional career, for the performer to help identify prosodic accommodations and determine the correct approach to a song's accentuations. It is important to recognize, in such circumstances, any words that are not normally intended to bear weight or excessive length, regardless of their position in the text (the definite and indefinite articles, for example). The question remaining open at that point is whether their accentuation is intentional for reasons of deeper expression.

5.0 FAURÉ, BEYOND THE BASICS: COMPARISON WITH HIS PEERS, ADDED EXPRESSION THROUGH RHYTHM, AND *L'ÉCRITURE CHANTÉE*

The last chapter identified and traced the evidence of Gabriel Fauré's largely misunderstood rhythmic techniques in the text-setting of his *mélodies*. Fauré's attempts at sincere expression of French prosody in his songs begin with those of his youth, in the *romances* of the early to mid-1860s. By the appearance of his Italianate *mélodies* in the 1870s, the patterns of changeable rhythms, displaced downbeats, microrhythms, and the use of a few specific methods for deflecting accentuations are well established. My examination of Fauré's *mélodies* presents strong evidence of his sensitivity to the expressive nuances of his native language in song.

A comparison of his approach to the processes shown in the *mélodies* of his peers reveals that some of the techniques Fauré used to coordinate French text and song were also used by them in their prosodic practices. The primary difference between their prosodic techniques and Fauré's appears to lie in Fauré's treatment of beats *within* the measure—internal beats—more than the way he aligned textual accents with the downbeat. He was not, for instance, the only composer to avail himself of rhythmic deflections involving shortened note values on the downbeat. To determine more precisely the correlation of their methodologies with Fauré's, the first part of this chapter presents an examination of twenty-seven *mélodies* by five other French composers who wrote them at some point in their careers: Emmanuel Chabrier (1841-1894), Jules Massenet (1842-1912), Henri Duparc (1848-1933), Ernest Chausson (1855-1899), and

Claude Debussy (1862-1918). There is minor crossover between the texts set by these composers in their *mélodies* and those used by Fauré; their differing approaches reveal in more concrete terms some means by which Fauré's personal interpretation of the poet's text differed from theirs, as well.

This comparison is of his peers' methodologies and a selection of the *mélodies* Fauré published during his middle years, in approximately the same time period. The other composers' approach to the downbeat, first of all, provides the frame of reference for my appraisal of their differing methodologies. After the comparison, I return to my presentation of Fauréan text-setting, which from the 1890s involved a more even-handed strategy in regard to rhythms. The discussion of Fauré's interpretation as expressed in the minutely manipulated rhythms of the *mélodies* of his middle stylistic period is presented, as well. I close with his late style, when the prosody expressed in the *mélodies* most closely resembles spoken French prosody.

5.1 THE PROSODIC TECHNIQUES OF OTHER COMPOSERS OF *MÉLODIES*

All five of the other French composers faced, as did Gabriel Fauré, the prosodic challenges inherent to the French language. Some of the techniques visible in their *mélodies* have much in common with Fauré's solutions; others remain on a more rudimentary level when it comes to handling their text-setting tasks. The results of my survey are presented in this part of the chapter. The five composers whose works are examined are those named above—Duparc, Debussy, Massenet, Chabrier, Chausson, and Hahn. Table 6 presents a compilation of the survey; the chart immediately thereafter (Table 7) adds details on some of the normally unaccented words (in spoken French, that is) that are frequently found on the downbeat in French

songs of the period. Table 5 enumerates which *mélodies* were included from each composer's catalog; composers and their works are placed in as close a chronological order as possible.

Table 5. Five Contemporary French Composers of *mélodies*

Henri Duparc			
Title (Translation of Title)	Year of comp.	Text by:	Meter Signature(s)
“Chanson Triste” (Sad Song)	1868	Jean Lahor (pen name of Henri Cazalis)	12/8
“Soupir” (Sigh)	1869	Sully Prudhomme	3/4
“L’invitation au voyage” (Invitation to the Voyage)	1870	Charles Beaudelaire	6/8, 9/8
“Extase” (Ecstasy)	1874	Jean Lahor (see above)	3/4
“Lamento” (Lament)	1883	Théophile Gautier	C, 2/4
Jules Massenet – All from a set of six (closing with a duet that is not included in my survey), entitled “Poème d’amour”			
“Je me suis plaint aux tourterelles” (I Complained to the Doves)	1878- 1880	Paul Robiquet	6/8
“La nuit, sans doute, était trop belle” (Without a Doubt, the Night was Too Beautiful)		(same)	C, 3/2
“Ouvre tes yeux bleus, ma mignonne” (Open Your Blue Eyes, My Darling)		(same)	C
“Puisqu’elle a pris ma vie” (Because She has Taken on My Life)		(same)	6/8
“Pourquoi pleures-tu?” (Why Do You Cry?)	 v	(same)	2/4
Ernest Chausson – All from “Sept mélodies” (Seven Melodies), Opus 2, no. 1-7			
“Nanny” (Nanny)	1878- 1880	Leconte de Lisle	3/4
“Le charme” (The Charm)		Armand Silvestre	4/4, 2/4
“Les papillons” (The Butterflies)		Théophile Gautier	2/4
“La dernière feuille” (The Last Leaf)		Théophile Gautier	2/4
“Sérénade italienne” (Italian Serenade)		Paul Bourget	3/2
“Hébé: Chanson grecque dans le mode phrygien” (Hebes: Greek Song in the Phrygian Mode)		Louise Ackermann	6/4
“Le colibri” (The Hummingbird)	v	Leconte de Lisle	5/4

Claude Debussy - The final three <i>mélodies</i> below are from “Trois chansons de Bilitis,” (Three Songs of Bilitis)			
“Mandoline” (Mandolin)	1882	Paul Verlaine	6/8, 3/8
“Beau soir” (Beautiful Evening)	c.1883	Paul Bourget	3/4
“La flûte de Pan” (Pan’s Flute)	1897- 1898	Paul Louÿs	C, 3/4
“La chevelure” (Hair)		(same)	6/4, 9/4
“Le tombeau des Naiades” (Tomb of the Nyads)	v	(same)	C, 2/4
Emmanuel Chabrier			
“Credo d’amour”	1883	Armand Silvestre	3/4
“L’île heureuse”	1889	Ephaïm Mikhaël	3/4, many triplets
“Toutes les fleurs!”	1889	Edmond Rostand	3/4
“Ballade des gros dindons”	1889	Edmond Rostand	2/4, 6/8, + triplets
“Villanelle des petits canards”	1889	Rosamonde Gérard	2/4

Because my study has found evidence of stylistic changes in prosodic practice over the course of the *mélodies*’ active life as a genre (from the late 1860s through the first decades of the twentieth century), it should be pointed out that Duparc’s works include the earliest composed songs in the survey. Only his last *mélodie*, “Lamento,” originates at a date later than that of another composer in the group. Debussy’s “Trois chansons de Bilitis” are the latest in the group to be published. In between, but near the outset, Jules Massenet and Ernest Chabrier both authored songs in 1878-1880. Two Debussy *mélodies* and one of Ernest Chabrier predate the last of Duparc’s. Overall, the selections reflect a significant span of time in the midst of the period when the *mélodies* held sway—not to mention tremendous seminal power—in Parisian society’s popular private *salons*, the societal gatherings *de rigueur* of the concert-going public.

Tables 6 and 7 thus provide a summary of the prosodic practices of five of Gabriel Fauré’s peers. There is a broad range in the prosodic creativity of these men. The two composers with the most complex prosodic practices are Ernest Chausson and Emmanuel Chabrier. Chabrier in particular has a prosodic technique that rivals Fauré’s in complexity,

encompassing changeable rhythms, melodic and rhythmic deflection and passages of some length set to notes of equal value.²⁸⁴ On the other end of the spectrum is Jules Massenet, best known for his operas, who displays a surprising lack of attention to nuance in the sample of *mélodies* examined for this comparison. Henri Duparc’s skills in song composition are well known, as are Debussy’s. What is striking about their prosodic practice as exemplified in these particular *mélodies*, however, is the contrast between these two composers’ prosodic styles in their text-setting. Four of Duparc’s five *mélodies* display a broad approach to the challenges of setting French text to song. In these four pieces, Duparc only aligns primary and secondary prosodic stresses with the downbeat of the measure 40 to 60 percent of the time; while in the fifth piece—the 1883 “Lamento” (ironically dedicated to Gabriel Fauré)—over 90 percent of the measures begin with a prosodically stressed syllable.²⁸⁵ Debussy, on the other hand, relies heavily on the placement of prosodic stresses on the downbeat: three of the five *mélodies* in my sample register an astounding 75 to 80 percent use of this technique, far outstripping any other type of prosodic accommodation.²⁸⁶

It also is worth noting the general trend, from the earlier to the later vocal works, toward progressively fewer accentuations on conjunctions or prepositions—such as *et* (and), *dans* (in), *mais* (but), and *quand* (when)—and more rests on the downbeat to avoid musical accentuation of undesirable syllables.²⁸⁷ Ernest Chausson appears to continue his primary-beat placement of

²⁸⁴ The last named technique effectively deflects the ‘downbeat’ or primary stressed syllable until a following measure containing a stressed note of longer value. It is a technique utilized more by Fauré in his late style period.

²⁸⁵ In the “Lamento,” the other 8.8%, representing three measures of the thirty-four with vocal events involving the downbeat, are all attributable to measures commencing with a rest.

²⁸⁶ Debussy’s “Mandoline” (1882) contains the broadest approach to text-setting, using seven different ways of dealing with French text-setting. The three final selections are from one collection, the “Trois chansons de Bilitis”; it appears Debussy quite purposefully altered his prosodic approach for the central song of the set, “La chevelure.” It alone of the three in the “Trois chansons” uses more downbeat rests, plus three other techniques.

²⁸⁷ I suspect a correlation with the waning “square phrase.”

Table 6. Prosodic Techniques Utilized by Five Contemporary Composers of *Mélobies*

	Emmanuel Chabrier (1841-1894)		Claude Debussy (1862-1918)		Ernest Chausson (1855-1899)		Jules Massenet (1842-1912)		Henri Duparc (1848-1933)	
	1883-1889	five	1882-1898	five	1878-1880	seven	1878-1880	five	1868-1883	five
<i>NB: Dates within each composer's composite column to the right represent years of mélodie production examined in current study</i>										
<i>Total Number of each composer's songs in sample</i>										
Alignment of primary textual accents or syllables with accents mobiles (secondary accents) with beat one of the measure.		30 / 41 / 62 / 56 / 57		20 / 21 / 16 / 9 / 20		29 / 16 / 33 / 28 / 17 / 15 / 22		8 / 8 / 23 / 27 / 27		13 / 22 / 46 / 11 / 31
Use of rests on beat one to avoid downbeat stress in text.		0 / 1 / 3 / 0 / 1		5 / 1 / 4 / 7 / 5		2 / 1 / 7 / 6 / 2 / 4 / 1 / 1		1 / 13 / 7 / 2 / 3		2 / 5 / 8 (4x2 strophic) / 6 / 3
Use of ties across barline to avoid downbeat stress in text.		7 / 0 / 4 / 0 / 4		1 / 0 / 0 / 1 / 0		1 / 0 / 2 / 4 / 3 / 1 / 1		1 / 3 / 0 / 1 / 0		1 / 1 / 6 / 0 / 0
Personal pronoun on beat one.		Elles (#1) Tes (#3) Sa (#3) Ils (#4), x2(#5) Leur (#5)		Elle (#2) Nous (#2) Me (#4)		me (#2) ta (#2) il x2 (#4) nous (#5)		All in #1: Je/J': 2 M': 1 Elle: 1		J', Je (#1), Tu (#1)
Occurrence of e-muet on beat one.		3(#1), 6(#2), 6(#3)		4 (#1)		5(#3), 1(#4), 2(#5), 1(#7)		-		6(#3), 2(#4)
Use of notes of shorter value on beat one to deflect initial stress of the measure to an internal beat in the measure.		15 (#1), 8 (#3), 1 (#5)		1(#2)		3(#1), 5 (#2), 1 (#4), 1 (#5), 6 (#6), 5 (#7)		2? (#1 only)		6 (#2, 4=Ne) 2 (#3), 3 (#4)
Equal-stress note values deflecting to following measure(s)		#3, m. 15-16, 25-26, 69-70, 80-81, 113-114, 124-125		-		#6, m. 26-27		-		#1, m. 14-15
Prosodic ERRORS		Les (#4x4; two are les matins & les couchants) D'une (#5)		Les (#1) des (#1)		Les#6; Le #7; both initial words of mélodies		Les (#1x2), de (#1) Le (#1) La fleur du souvenir(#4; 'singular'?)		-
ADDITIONAL NOTES		(#1) voice appears to be in 6/8 time in several places. (#3) many passages with notes of equal value → end of prosodic phrase.				#7 in 5/4 time ("Le colibri")		#1 is in "square phrasing," others based on same, with slight variations		-

Table 7. Details of Prosodic Techniques of Five Composers of *Mélodies*

<i>Accentuations of Conjunctions, Prepositions and other Parts of Speech</i>	Henri Duparc (1848-1933)	Jules Massenet (1842-1912)	Ernest Chausson (1855-1899)	Claude Debussy (1862-1918)	Emmanuel Chabrier (1841-1894)
<i>Et</i> (“and”)	3(#1), 1(#2), 2(#3)	2(#1), 1(#3), 1(#4)	1(#4), 1 (#5), 1 (#6)	2 (#1), 2(#2)	2(#3), 1(#4)
<i>Dans</i> (“in”)	4 (#1)	-	1 (#4)	1 (#1)	2(#3), 1(#5)
<i>Mais</i> (“but”)	1(#2 only)	1(#4 only)	1 (#4)	-	2(#3), 1(#5)
<i>Quand</i> (“when”)	1 (#1)	1(#1)	2 (#2)	-	1(#3)
<i>Que</i> (“that”), <i>Qui</i> (“whom”)	<i>Que</i> (#1)	<i>Que</i> (#1)	<i>qu'en</i> (#2), <i>Qu'une</i> (#4)	-	1(#1)
<i>C'est</i> (“that's”)	<i>C'est</i> (#3)	-	-	<i>C'est</i> x2 (#1)	-
<i>Car</i> (“because”), <i>Si</i> (“if”)	-	-	-	<i>Car</i> (#2)	-
<i>Où</i> (“where”)	-	-	<i>où</i> (#3), <i>où</i> x2 (#7)	-	-
<i>À, Déjà, En, ou</i> (“or”), <i>Ouvre,</i> <i>Par, Pour, Près, Sous, Vers</i>	-	<i>À, Déjà</i> (#3) <i>Ouvre</i> x2 (#3)	<i>Pour</i> (#5), <i>Vers</i> (#7)	<i>Sous, Pour</i> (#1) <i>Par</i> (#4) <i>ou</i> (“or,” #4)	<i>En, Vers</i> (#4)

conjunctions, but his works are the exception. Chabrier’s late accentuations on conjunctions are found in the two comic *mélodies*, “Ballade des gros dindons” (Ballad of the Big Turkeys) and “Villanelle des petits canards” (Villanelle of the Little Ducks), that seem to deliberately display an unsophisticated aura; otherwise, he—like Chausson— turns to a greater reliance on rhythmic and equal-value deflections of accentuation. Table 8, below, breaks down the usage of different prosodic techniques into the percentage of measures so dominated. As percentages, reflecting the number of prosodic accommodations per number of vocal measures with enumerated events, the actual disposition of each composer toward a particular technique is more clearly expressed. One can see, now, that Debussy’s vocal works for the salon demonstrate a heavy reliance on the

Table 8. Average Use of Most Common Prosodic Techniques, by Composer

Technique	Duparc	Debussy	Chausson	Chabrier	Massenet
(# of <i>mélodies</i> in sample)	5	5	7	5	5
Primary or Secondary Accent	62% (Last <i>mél.</i> @ 91.2%)	66% (3 @75%+)	63.5% (First <i>mél.</i> @ 78.4%)	73.8% (3 >80%)	60.8% (Last 2 in set 82%, 90%)
Rest on beat 1	13.5% (4 th <i>mélodie</i> @ 27.3%)	18% (<i>Ch.de Bilitis</i> all >20%)	8.6% (3 <i>méodies.</i> >13%)	1.3%	18.6% (2 nd in set @ 54.2%)
Tie from previous measure	3% (3 <i>mélodies</i>)	1.5% (2 <i>mélodies</i>)	4.7%	4.4%	3.7%
Conjunctions, prepositions, and personal pronouns; or emphatic utterances	9.9% (2 <i>mélodies</i>)	10% (3 <i>mélodies</i>)	8.4%	5%	11%
Prosodic Errors	-	1% (Two, total)	0.5% (one, total)	1.5% (Five, all in the two comic <i>mélodies</i>)	4% (Five, in two <i>mélodies</i>)
Rhythmic Deflections or Equal Stress (Deflecting)	7.2% (4 of 5 <i>mél.</i>)	0.7% (one, total)	11% (6 of 7 <i>mél.</i> , 3 >17%)	9% (4 of 5 <i>mél.</i>)	1.8% (two, total)
<i>e-muet</i> on beat 1	3.5% (2 <i>mélodies</i>)	2% ("Mandoline" only, >10%)	3% (One >10%)	4.7% (none in comic <i>mélodies</i>)	-
% accounted for by above:	99.1%	99.2%	99.7%	99.7%	99.9%

initial rest—nearly as much as Jules Massenet, who was primarily a composer of operas; Debussy’s accentuation of conjunctions and personal pronouns is high, too, similar to Massenet’s—but then, so is Duparc’s.²⁸⁸ It is also clear that all five carefully avoid the appearance of obvious prosodic errors.

Fauré, on the other hand, is frequently criticized for “poor prosody.” Fauré’s averages are tabulated via the same techniques assessed above, as utilized in a selection of eleven *mélodies* composed between 1868 and 1894 (nearly the same time frame). The eleven songs are:

²⁸⁸ The high number of accented personal pronouns in Debussy’s sample may be due to the subject matter of the poetry in the “Chansons de Bilitis.” And Henri Duparc was an earlier practitioner of the *mélodie* than Debussy, so his use of the older technique is forgivable.

- “Lydia” (1868-1870)
- “Après un rêve” (1875-77)
- “Au bord du l’eau” (1875)
- “Ici-bas!” (1874)
- “Nell” (1878)
- “Automne” (1878)
- “Le secret” (1880-1881)
- “Les roses d’Ispahan” (1884)
- “Clair de lune” (1887)
- “Mandoline” (1891; from the *Cinq mélodies ‘de Venise’*)
- “L’hiver a cessé” (1894; from *La bonne chanson*)

The eleven are divided into two groups, each group representing an approximate earlier or later style period, with “Automne” and “Le secret” bridging the gap. These two particular *mélodies* display what is, for Fauré, an atypically heavy reliance on primary or secondary accents on beat 1. Table 9 presents the tabulation, piece by piece, showing averages for each period to the left of each half. A comparison of the prosodic practice as evidenced in the above five composers’ vocal works with averages of prosodic features in Fauré’s comparable works, from the same time periods, shows distinct similarities. The overall percentages of use for each prosodic accommodation in the eleven *mélodies* by Gabriel Fauré are not dramatically different from those of his peers. A condensed tabulation is shown in listed format as Table 10.

In the aggregate, Fauré make less use of the rest on beat 1, and of conjunctions or personal pronouns on the downbeat. His use of (1) rhythmic deflections and (2) the placement of the *e-muet* on beat 1, on the other hand, are high compared to his peers. The data in the two columns labeled “Average of Sample” for each half in Table 9 reveals that only the location of primary and secondary accents on the downbeat and his use of the tie across the bar line increased in preferential use between the first and second samples, both an increase of nearly 6 percent; all other accommodation types declined.

Table 9. Tabulation of Same Prosodic Techniques as Utilized by Gabriel Fauré, 1868-1894

	AVERAGE OF SAMPLE: 1868-1878	Lydia (1868-70)	Après un rêve (1875-77)	Au bord de l'eau (1875)	Ici-bas! (1874)	Nell (1878)	Automme (1878)	AVERAGE OF SAMPLE: 1880-1894	Le secret (1880-81)	Les roses d'Ispahan (1884)	Clair de lune (1887)	Mandoline (1891)	L'hiver a cessé (1894)
Primary or Sec. Accent	67.6%	44%	70%	69.6%	73%	56.7%	92.3%	73.4%	96%	75.4%	66.7%	55.5%	73.3%
Rest on beat 1	7.2%	8.8%	-	23.9%	7.7%	2.7%	-	4.5%	-	-	8.3%	5.5%	8.9%
Tie on beat 1	2.5%	-	-	4.3%	7.7%	2.7%	-	5.6%	-	5.3%	2.8%	11.1%	8.9%
Conjunctions or personal pronouns	4.9%	11.7%	13.6%	-	3.8%	-	-	2.8%	-	3.5%	8.3%	-	2.2%
Prosodic Errors	1.4%	5.9%*	2.4%*	-	-	-	-	0.6%	-	-	2.8%*	-	-
Rhythmic deflections / Multimodalities	11.3%	29.4%	-	2.2%	3.8%	32.4%	-	8.4%	-	7%	5.5%	25%	4.4%
<i>e-muet</i> on beat 1	5.1%	-	13.6%	-	3.8%	5.4%	7.7%	4.6%	4%	8.8%	5.5%	2.7%	2.2%

Table 10. Condensed Tabulation Showing Comparison of Techniques Used by the Five Composers and Fauré

	Percentage (%) Occurrence	
	Fauré	Others: Range Median [#]
Primary and Secondary Accentuation on beat 1:	70.2	60.8 – 73.8 63.5 (JM)
Use of a rest on beat 1:	6.0	1.3 – 18.6 13.5 (HD)
Use of a tie on beat 1:	3.9	1.5 – 4.7 3.7 (JM)
Occurrence of conjunction/preposition or personal pronoun on beat 1:	3.9	5.0 – 11.0 9.9 (HD)
Prosodic errors:	1.0*	0 – 4.0 1.0 (CD)
Rhythmic deflections (including hemiolas across bar line)	10.0	0.7 – 11.0 7.2 (HD)
Occurrence of <i>e-muet</i> on beat 1:	4.9	0 – 4.7 3.0 (EC)

* All of Fauré's "errors" are accentuated definite articles attached to nouns of nature or 'singularity.' In "Lydia": *Le jour qui lui est le meilleur* (the day that is to her the best; m.11-12); in "Après un rêve": *Les cieux pour nous* (the skies for us; m.24); and in "Clair de lune": *Les grands jets d'eau sveltes* (the great slender fountains [of marble], m.52).

Initials after the Median number indicate which composer's percentage is the median. JM= Jules Massenet; HD= Henri Duparc; CD= Claude Debussy; and EC= Ernest Chausson.

Ernest Chausson and Emmanuel Chabrier—the latter more than the former—exhibit a more varied prosodic practice than the other four. Neither one, however, displays the breadth of styles one sees in Fauré’s *mélodies*. A passage from Chausson’s “Nanny” (one of the “Sept mélodies,” Opus 2, No.1) encapsulates some of the best text-setting by these two composers, whose work is in many ways similar.²⁸⁹ (See Figure 65.) The quote is from measures 18 through the first three beats of bar 28. First, there is the deliberate placement of *pleure* (cry) accentuating the wrong syllable in a way that does call the *jeune Dieu* (young God), to “cry.” Bar 20 also contains an effective triplet to correctly align the accentuations of “**Été mûrissant**” (maturing summer) with the musical stresses; in bar 21, the voice is in 6/8 time but returns to 3/4 in the next measure, in order to give the scansion of “**coupe ta tresse couronné**” (cut your crowned tresses) its proper alignment. For the following poetic phrase, “Et pleure, Automne rougissant” (and cry, reddening autumn), Chausson uses a tie across the bar line to maneuver the passage; it and the balance of the quote is self-explanatory. (“L’angoisse d’aimer” translates as “the anxiety of loving.”)

Emmanuel Chabrier’s *mélodies* make greater use of changing rhythms and rhythmic deflection than do Chausson’s. Figures 66 and 67 replicate two passages from Chabrier’s

Figure 65. Measures 18-28, "Nanny" (Op.2, No. 1; 1879-1880), Ernest Chausson

²⁸⁹ http://petrucci.mus.auth.gr/imglnks/usimg/5/5d/IMSLP16897-Chausson_Melodies_Op2.pdf, 4 (accessed January 29, 2012).



Figure 66. "Toutes les fleurs!" (1889), Emmanuel Chabrier, mm. 25-27, including pickup notes

“Toutes les fleurs! (All the Flowers!)” (1889); the first (Fig. 66) shows measures 25 through 27, plus the pickup from measure 24, the second (Fig. 67) is a lengthier passage from much later in the song, measures 121 through 134. In the former, Chabrier does not intend the singer to accent the word *qu’entrouvre* on its final syllable, *-vre* (wrong in spoken French), but within the phrase, as either “**qu’entrouvre**” or “qu’entrouvre,” then continuing “l’aurore De ses (doigts) **frileux**” (that pries open the dawn with its chilly fingers; referring back to *les liserons*, bindweed). Taken as a whole, the note values do not change from *qu’en-* through the word *doigts*; I believe Chabrier intends that the singer withhold emphasis on any particular syllables in this case, deflecting accentuation until he/she arrives at the final syllable of *frileux* (chilly).

The second Chabrier quote (Figure 67) is considerably longer, and shows, in a compressed manner, a number of this composer’s techniques for handling prosodic accentuations in his *mélodies*.²⁹⁰ I have printed the accented syllables in bold typeface. There are two words in this passage that contain multiple accents: *gracilité* and *rivalité*. The greatest stress in both words is on the first and last syllables, as **gracilité** and **rivalité**; the second syllable is not accented, and the weight of the third (*-li-* in both cases) is usually slightly less than the final **-té**. Chabrier has set these words in such a way that first, he reinterprets the 3/4 time signature as 6/8 (in measure 121; m. 129 is also in 6/8), and then he creates effective “triplets” within the 3/4

²⁹⁰ http://imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/8/88/IMSLP22646-PMLP51838-Chabrier_-_Toutes_les_fleurs_voice_and_piano.pdf, 11-12 (accessed January 29, 2012).

metrical context. The word *oeillet* (eyelet) is accented on the initial syllable, pointing out the presence of a rhythmic deflection on the downbeat of measure 123, deflecting the stress until *met* (puts, or places; the translation of the entire poetic line is “And the eyelet that puts your cheek and the dawn in rivalry”). The phrase beginning “ta **joue** et l’**aur**ore” is comprised of notes of equal value, deflecting weight until the final syllable of *rivalité* (rivalry). The entire phrase flows in this way, in a creative triplet rhythm that disregards the barlines: “Et l’**oeillet** que (met) ta **joue** et l’**aur**ore / En **rivalité**!” From “Mais surtout,” one can follow the text as set (with a few secondary accents on beat 1) until the last measure quoted. There, the shorter note values of *de* (of your) rhythmically deflects the accent to *yeux* (eyes) on beat 2, avoiding an undesirable accent on *de* (of).²⁹¹ One can also see the similarity of Chabrier’s prosodic setting in the last two measures with Fauré’s common early practice of “displaced downbeats” to the second beat of the measure.

Figure 67. "Toutes les fleurs!" (1889), Emmanuel Chabrier, mm. 121-134

²⁹¹ Translation of the last three poetic lines is: “But most of all, most of all I am in love / with your dear unopened lips / and the dark rings of your eyes.” The text paints a humorous, rather than flattering, picture of the beloved.

Between them, Chausson and Chabrier appear to have been as aware of French linguistic nuance as Fauré. One of the Chausson *mélodies* I examined was in 5/4 time: quite unusual for the era. The unusual meter was not one a composer could use often, but it offered him a different means to manipulate the prosody. Figure 68 reproduces a portion of the opening bars of “Le colibri (The Hummingbird),”²⁹² from the pickup to measure 3, through measure 6. Although I do not reproduce the piano introduction in its entirety, one can see from the last two lead-in measures that he has effectively blurred a listener’s perception of the downbeat, so that the definite article, *Le* (the, masculine singular), does not sound as if it is on beat 1, instead it is heard as a pickup note. It is also likely that the extreme rarity of this composite meter aids the distortion of a listener’s sense of downbeat.

This abbreviated survey of late nineteenth-century French prosodic practice in the *mélodies* closes with one final example from Ernest Chausson, of additional expressive meaning



Figure 68. "Le colibri" (Op. 2, No. 7; 1879-1880), Ernest Chausson, m.3 b. 5, through m.6

²⁹² http://petrucci.mus.auth.gr/imglnks/usimg/5/5d/IMSLP16897-Chausson_Melodies_Op2.pdf, 20 (accessed January 29, 2012).

indicated through manipulation of rhythm. Figure 69 illustrates an instance in “Le charme” where the musical and prosodic stresses have what appears to be an uncomfortable juncture.²⁹³ As shown in the reproduction of the passage in question, Chausson adds a *ritardando* to assist the singer in negotiating the awkward stresses of “un **plus** (dou)lou(reux) **charme**” (a more painful charm). The *accents mobiles* of (dou)lou(reux) fall on the first and last syllables of the word and appear to be intentionally stressed by the *ritardando*. As it happens, avoiding accentuation on the middle syllable may actually be somewhat *douleureux* (painful) for the singer, and understood as such by the French audience. The notated passage may thus express the meaning of the text even more than if it had been set to a different style of melodic and rhythmic gesture.



Figure 69. "Le charme" (Op. 2, No. 2; 1879-1880), Ernest Chausson, mm. 19-20

During the 1870s, Fauré appears to be in the midst of exploring similar ways to further extend his personal interpretation of text through compositional means. Up to this point, Fauré’s manipulation of rhythm on the level of internal beats of the measure is carried out in greater detail and in a more consistent manner than that evidenced in the work of his peers. A few of the *mélodies* now reach a level of expression, like Chausson’s (dou)lou(reux) above, that indicates meaning beyond the words themselves through minute manipulations of rhythm. The French performer and audience were arguably capable of comprehending the additional layer of

²⁹³ Ibid., 7.

meaning displayed in these rhythms, at a time and place where high value was placed on “sincerity.” As Carlo Caballero writes,

...the idea of sincerity has a definite history, a real aesthetic presence, specifically French, whose telling opens up new perspectives on a crucial phase in the history of music. Fauré becomes a central figure in this discussion because no composer more than he and no music more than his were hailed as sincere in France during the first quarter of the twentieth century.²⁹⁴

I believe the value of sincerity was expressed in many parts of Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century, particularly in regards to native languages and music with either nationalistic motifs or drawn from folk song. Wagner’s success in promoting a Germanic legend is as much a part of Germany’s nationalistic “sincerity” as is the painstaking manipulation of German language evident in his librettos and the text-setting of his operas. The links created between the French language and song by the *mélodies* is a significant player in French nationalism in the *belle époque*. Fauré’s prosodic style integrated more nuances of its language into the smaller-scale rhythms that occur within each measure of this valued French genre, unfailingly and on a much broader scale than did any of his contemporaries.

Roland Barthes writes that the *mélodies*, and especially those of Fauré, achieve a rare level of “sung writing (*l’écriture chantée*).”²⁹⁵ Comparison of spoken French and the prosody evident in Fauré’s last songs and cycles in this chapter reveals the finesse with which Gabriel Fauré, far more than his contemporaries, extends the linguistic nuances of his native language into song. Fauré’s contemporaries may have utilized some of the same means to occasionally

²⁹⁴ Caballero, *Fauré and French Musical Aesthetics*, 11.

²⁹⁵ Roland Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 185-186. Also in French, “Le grain de la voix,” in *L’obvie et l’obtus: Essais critiques III* (Paris: Editions de Seuil, 1982), 242.

employ the nuances of French prosody in the songs shown in the evaluation above, but Fauré kept writing. His later *mélodies* broke new ground.

5.2 TOWARD DEEPER EXPRESSION AND “SUNG SPEECH”

In Chapter 4, I presented evidence of the intricate early rhythmic explorations of the young Gabriel Fauré and the growth of those threads into complex components in an ever more succinct expression of French poetic texts in song. It is fitting that the last chapter covers only the earliest years of Fauré’s career as a composer of *mélodies*. As Gabriel Fauré tweaks, expands, and refines the rhythmic aspects of his texts and their transference to melody, he increasingly injects nuanced hints of his intended expression of the text into the music itself. The first *recueil* includes a singular, brief touch of this deeper level of expression in the early *romance* that brought him his first pronounced acclaim, “Lydia” (composed c.1870). The triplets in “Lydia” are located in an identical melodic position in each of the two strophic treatments of the text (shown in Figure 70). Rarely in his entire vocal catalog does Fauré repeat lyrics, or set text with melismas; this is one such case, and the effect is ethereal. The repetition of the words, *tes baisers* (your kisses) and the triplets on *de colombe* (like a dove) give the distinct impression of the head-spinning emotions that are the result of the lover’s kisses. In the second verse at the close of the song, the triplets convey the tender longing of the (male) narrator toward his beloved Lydia.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁶ Fauré, *Sixty Songs*, 35, 36. These triplets are interpreted in other ways by other scholars. Graham Johnson writes, “the undulating vocal line, accompanied by gently fluting thirds [from the piano], is one of the most haunting evocations of cooing doves in all song.” Perhaps the cooing doves were part of the memory of the exceptional kisses. Johnson, 64.

Lai - sse tes bai - sers tes bai - sers, de co - lom - be Chan - ter sur ta levre en fleur,
 O Ly - di - a, rends moi la vi - e, Que je pui - sse mou - rir,

Figure 70. "Lydia," mm. 15-17 and 35-37

As Fauré moves into his middle stylistic period, there is a slight increase in the number of opportunities taken to construct non-verbal meaning into the rhythms of his *mélodies*. At no time did the practice take over as a primary method in his songs, however. Fauré's expression of poetic meaning was always tempered with a keen awareness of the limits of good taste—both in his compositional expression and in his personal expectations of the performer/interpreter of his songs, as the above quotes attest. Additional meaning is subtle and nuanced, like his prosodic practice, and the singer-performer is key to the transference of the composer's intentions to the audience/listener through an accurate reading of the text.

The third *recueil* was assembled and published by J. Hamelle in June, 1908, and represents a period of Fauré's compositional career during which his interests and compositional efforts turned more to other genres and away from his popular, but less remunerative *mélodies*.²⁹⁷ Part of the lag in his compositional activities was due, as well, to the official position he gained in 1892, as governmental inspector of the regional conservatories in France.²⁹⁸ When in 1896 he

²⁹⁷ Fauré's publishers paid him an average of 50 francs for each *mélodie* for much of his career, with no rights for further remuneration. Charles Koechlin, *Gabriel Fauré* (London: Dennis Dobson Ltd., 1945), 4-5.

²⁹⁸ Graham Johnson, *Gabriel Fauré: The Songs and Their Poets* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 249. Nectoux publishes a letter Fauré wrote to Marcel Girette, a friend of Fauré's and the official charged with filling the vacancy, in which he points out his financial need; at the time, his only income came from the Madeleine, as choir director, and by giving private lessons. Nectoux, *A Musical Life*, 224-225.

Table 11. Contents of the third *recueil*

Song Order in 3 rd <i>recueil</i>	Meter signature	Song Title/Poet	Date of composition	Year first published	(Number of Displacements) and Details of Prosodic Approach
2	3/4	<i>Au cimetière</i> ²⁹⁹ /Richepin	1888	1888	Hemiolas across barlines: m.4-5, 16-17, 42-43, 50-51. Voice in 6/8 m.27, 47, 51, 70.
1	3/4	<i>Larmes</i> /Richepin	1888	1888	Hemiola across barline, m.24-25. Extensive use of triplets. Voice in 6/8 in m. 27, 44.
3	3/4	<i>Spleen</i> ³⁰⁰ /Verlaine	1888	1888	Hemiola across barline, m.27-28, otherwise no adjustments.
5	12/8	<i>Chanson (from Shylock)</i> /Haraucourt	1889	1889	(1) Accent on <i>la</i> , beat two, m.34, as second “strophe,” mimicking contemporary understanding of the historic genre.
6	3/4	<i>Madrigal (from Shylock)</i> /Haraucourt	1889	1889	Many downbeats deflected to beat two, reflecting French prosody; voice in 6/8 time in m. 21, 24, 27.
4	3/4	<i>La rose (Ode anacréontique)</i> /Leconte de Lisle	August 1890 ³⁰¹	1890	Notated hemiolas m. 43-44; ? emphases on <i>la</i> m. 34, 48. Microrhythms m. 13-15.
7	C	<i>Cinq mélodies ‘de Venise’ Mandoline</i> /Verlaine	1891	1891	Many downbeats deflected to beat two, reflecting French prosody. Repeated <i>Leurs</i> m.19-21 appear to be deliberately set apart.
8	C	<i>Cinq mélodies ‘de Venise’ En sourdine</i> /Verlaine	1891	1891	This setting is sensitive to avoidance of beat one accentuation, reflective of French prosody.
9	3/4	<i>Cinq mélodies ‘de Venise’ Green</i> /Verlaine	1891	1891	No problems; speechlike rhythms. <i>Laissez-la</i> , m. 27-28, utilizes correct prosody as set.
10	9/8	<i>Cinq mélodies ‘de Venise’ A Clymène</i> /Verlaine	1891	1891	Occurrence of <i>puisque la</i> (since the) in m. 39-40 intended as hemiola across barline, per accentuation in m. 22, 24, 34.
11	3/4	<i>Cinq mélodies ‘de Venise’ C’est l’extase</i> /Verlaine	1891	1891	Multiple occasions of downbeat on beat two. Occurrence of <i>C’est la</i> in m. 5-6 is intended as deflected downbeat to beat two as in m. 2, 39.
14	3/4	<i>Prison</i> /Verlaine	Dec. 4, 1894 ³⁰²	1896	Speechlike; no problems; in m.9 <i>dans</i> has rhythmic deflection. Accentuations of <i>-là</i> are correct
15	3/4	<i>Soir</i> /Albert Samain	Dec. 17, 1894 ³⁰³	1896	Voice in 6/8, m.5, 31. Rhythmic deflection from <i>le</i> , m. 8.

²⁹⁹ Graham Johnson places the composition of “Au cimetière” ahead of “Larmes,” as I do here, not in the order as published. Johnson, 170-173.

³⁰⁰ The composition of “Spleen” may have preceded the two Richepin songs currently listed above it. Johnson, 168.

³⁰¹ Johnson, 181.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 240.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 254.

Table 11 (cont.)

12	3/4	<i>Le parfum impérissable</i> /Leconte de Lisle	Aug. 22, 1897 ³⁰⁴	1897	No downbeat deflections; numerous triplets.
13	9/8	<i>Arpège</i> /Albert Samain	Sept. 6, 1897 ³⁰⁵	1897	No rhythmic deflections or other types of displacements/errors.
20	3/2 & 4/2	<i>Accompagnement</i> /Albert Samain	Mar. 28, 1902 ³⁰⁶	1903	Voice in 12/8, m. 6. Downbeat deflections to beat two in m. 27, 30, 38, 41, but these are not critical as syllables on beat one have secondary accents.
19	3/2	<i>La fleur qui va sur l'eau</i> /Catulle Mendès	Sept. 13, 1902 ³⁰⁷	1902	Downbeat deflections to beat two in m.3, 23-24, 25-26, 26-27. Hemiolas m.5-6; complex rhythms m.23-27 may have underlying meaning.
18	3/4	<i>Dans la forêt de Septembre</i> /Catulle Mendès	Sept. 29, 1902 ³⁰⁸	1902	Secondary accents set on beat one avoid serious displacements; i.e., m. 17, 51. Melodic movement chiefly stepwise, melodically speechlike.
16	2/2	<i>Le plus doux chemin (Madrigal)</i> /Silvestre	1904	1907	Rhythmic deflections from beat one: m. 3,4,7,9; secondary accents on beat one: 13, 15, 18, 21, 26.
17	3/4	<i>Le ramier (Madrigal)</i> /Silvestre	1904	1904	No rhythmic deflections; hemiolas across barlines m.12-13 and 29-30 are written in.

was appointed to teach composition at the Conservatoire, his professional stature as a composer increased, but along with the position came even more restrictions on his time to compose.

Repeated attempts to write an opera finally yielded *Prométhée* in 1900. Two of the songs in the third *recueil* were written as incidental music for *Shylock*, a play staged in December, 1889, and are related to his long-thwarted goal of opera composition.³⁰⁹ Fauré would have written these two brief *mélodies* as incidental music to be sung by the actors in the play, not the salon performers to whom he was accustomed to dedicate his songs. I believe that fact may explain in part the apparent regression in Fauré's prosodic practice as regards the two *Shylock* pieces.

³⁰⁴Ibid., 262.

³⁰⁵Ibid., 264.

³⁰⁶Ibid., 273.

³⁰⁷Ibid., 275.

³⁰⁸Ibid., 277.

³⁰⁹Nectoux, *A Musical Life*, 510-516.

Another not insignificant factor is the historical French song genres themselves. The titles of these two short songs—“Chanson” and “Madrigal”—refer to two historical genres not necessarily prized for their prosody.³¹⁰ The prosodic techniques he utilizes in these two particular songs are fairly unsophisticated, particularly in the context of the other *mélodies* Fauré submits for publication by Hamelle at this time.

Table 11 details, within limits of space, the prosodic practice exercised in each *mélodie* over the course of the collection. Note that I now refer to the rhythmic “displacements” as “deflections,” demonstrating more precisely their role in prosodic practice. Fauré’s technique is complex by this point in his career; some stylistic features are addressed in greater detail below. The most important trend in Fauré’s technique in this collection is the continuum of his compositional trajectory toward spoken French prosody. The sung text in “Dans la forêt de septembre” (1904), third *recueil*, is even closer to the spoken prosody than was “Clair de lune,” as shown in Chapter 4. Here is the text from measures 36 to 40, reproduced first with the prosody as spoken:

(<i>Mais</i>) d’un (fin) bou(leau) de la sente,	8f	
---/ --- --- --- --- / --- --- / ---		
Une <i>feuille</i> , un peu <i>rousse</i> , (frô)le	8f	(with <i>enjambement</i> , continuation of the expressed thought to the beginning of the next line)
--- --- / --- --- / --- / --- / ---		
Ma <i>tête</i> et (trem)ble à mon <i>épaule</i> ;	8f	
--- --- / --- / --- / --- --- --- / ---		

A comparison with its musical setting (shown both graphically, and as notated in Figure 64) reveals the development of the composer’s attunement to French prosody. This time, one

³¹⁰ These two works bring to mind Grétry’s attempt at an historical style in the *romance* of Blondel and Richard Coeur-de-lion.

hyphen represents a sixteenth note, the smallest note value sung; the line above the text has double vertical lines indicating the bar lines.

||

(*Mais*) d'un (fin) bou(leau) de la sente,
 |---| | | |---| |---| | | |---||---|

||

Une *feuille*, un peu rousse, (frô)le
 |---| |---| | | | |---| |---| |---| |

||

Ma *tête* et (trem)ble à mon *épaule*;
 | |---| | |---| |---| | | |---| |---|

The above graphics show that Fauré's musical setting of the text (Figure 71) is now virtually equal in its rhythms to that of the spoken prosody.³¹¹

Figure 71. "Dans la forêt de septembre," mm. 36-40

The microrhythmic technique, discussed earlier in "Les roses d'Ispahan" and "Rencontre," is evident for one final time in the *recueils* in "La rose (Ode anacréontique)." Here, it is contained within a lengthy vocal passage stretching without pause from measures 13 through 16.³¹² The presence of the plural article *les* (the, plural) on the first beat of bar 14 at this point in Fauré's career (1890) is the clearest indication that an accentuation holding resolutely to

³¹¹Fauré, *Sixty Songs*, 43, 255.

³¹²*Ibid.*, 198.

the 3/4 time signature would be mistaken. Several features of the surrounding text within the *mélodie* are relevant to the investigation of a satisfactory solution: (1) three of the four syllables of the verb *épanouir* (flourish) are nearly equal in weight—the *é-*, *-pa-* and *-ir* (but not the penultimate syllable, *-nou-*), and so any of the three could serve as the ‘downbeat’ introducing a phrase; (2) *entre* (between) is always accented on the first syllable; (3) *beaux* (beautiful) has an *accent mobile*; and (4) *doigts* (fingers) is typically accented. In this case, the secondary accent of *beaux* is ignored, located as it is immediately next to the accented *doigts*.

Fauré’s practice in this middle stylistic period was to lengthen prosodically important syllables. This makes the composer’s prosodic intent easier to discern, measure by measure. Details that may assist in determining the prosodic accentuation are: (1) the length of the note (the longest value in most measures is the one receiving the greatest stress, unless it is a mute *e*, in which case it does not count); or, in the case of notes of equal value, (2) whether the syllable placed on the first beat of the measure should receive the grammatical stress, or if (3) one of the syllables with equal-length notes can be determined to receive melodic emphasis (such as by an intervallic leap), or finally, (4) by looking ahead to the subsequent measure(s), for a note of greater value toward which the performer directs the primary stress.

The longest note values in this passage are those with the following syllables, starting with the longest: the central syllable of *moroses* (morose), the word *l’Aube* (the dawn), then equally lengthened, these particular boldface syllables of *épanouis* and *écartant* (spreading); lastly, *doigts*. From these characteristics of the surrounding text and notation, we may surmise the solution shown in the graphic below. The hyphens, again, represent multiples of the sixteenth note; the notated triplet is represented above the effected text. I include a graphic of the prosodic (spoken) phrasing for comparison.

|---3---|

Tu t'é(pan)ouis entre les beaux (doigts) de *l'Aube*, écar(tant) les (om)bres moroses...

Musical phrases: |--| |--| |--| |--|/ | | | | |--| |--| |--|/ | | |-----| / | - - | |--| / | | | | | | |-----| / |-----|

Prosodic phrases: | | |--| |--| |--| |--|/ | | |--| |--| |--| |--|/ | | |--| / | | |--| |--| / | | |--| |--| |--| |--| |--| |--| / | |

This line of text does not fit into any particular metric scheme. Using the eighth note to define the micro level of the pulse here—since Fauré’s smallest division in a meter signature is the eighth—there are three beats (or six pulses, 6/8) in the phrase beginning with *-pan-*, then only one beat (two pulses, 2/8) in the phrase with *doigts*, two beats (four pulses—but the second beat is broken into triplets, not eighths, 2/4 or 4/8) from *l'Aube*; then two beats (four pulses, 2/4 or 4/8 again) following *-tant*, ending with the dénouement on *-roses*. Fauré is clearly more concerned about serving the flow of the text, than he is in establishing or maintaining any particular meter. That observation supports the thesis that his concern is to express, sincerely, the rhythms of the French language as spoken. Figure 72 shows the notation from the *mélodie*, with correct scansion in the first line immediately below the notation, and on the second line, the

Tu t'é-**pa**-nou-is en-tre les beaux **doigts** de *l'Aube* — é-car-**tant** les om-bres mo - **ro** - ses;
 Tu t'é-**pa**-nou-**is** en-tre les beaux **doigts** de *l'Aube* — é-car-**tant** les **om**-bres mo - **ro** - ses;

Figure 72. "La rose (Ode anacréontique)," mm. 13-16, showing prosodic adjustment according to note length misaccentuations that would occur if a performer followed only the time signature and notated tie to the triplet.³¹³

Other differences over the course of this period are more subtle: deflection of the “downbeat” to beat two occurs with regularity; also, there are fewer occurrences of the earlier

³¹³Fauré, *Sixty Songs*, 198.

6/8-3/4 rhythmic shifts, although that particular feature has not entirely disappeared from Fauré's compositional vocabulary. Where Table 11 indicates "no displacement," it frequently is the result of Fauré's use of words with *accents mobiles*, secondary accents, on beat 1.

A few of the abbreviated descriptions in Table 11 may benefit from some brief explanation. The note that "La rose (Ode anacréontique)" (1890) contains two occurrences of the article *la* (the, feminine singular) indicates the following: one of these is *la mer*, on beat 1 of measure 34, approached by leap. The other is on the longest note (beginning on beat 2) in measure 43 that cannot be avoided. The latter *la* is for *la beauté* (beauty), however, and so if the theory of 'singularity' holds true, its significant weight may be due to an emphasis on the singularity of "beauty"; the same may be possible for *la mer* (the sea). The other details in question apply to the microrhythms addressed above.

The accented possessive pronoun, *leurs* (their), in "Mandoline" (1892; the first of the five *mélodies de Venise*) is more complicated. I believe there is additional meaning intended in this instance. Since much—but not all—of Fauré's setting of the Verlaine poem is replete with deflections of the downbeat to beat 2 of the measure, one would expect the four occasions of the unaccented *leurs* in the text all to occur in a location, notational values, and/or within a position in the melodic line indicating an upbeat or a deflection. They do not, with the exception of the final "Et leurs **molles ombres bleues.**" Each of the other three occurrences is on the downbeat, beat 1 of the measure. Figure 73 reproduces measures 19 through 23, encompassing all four phrases.³¹⁴ The appearance of *leurs* is not deflected; the note values, too, indicate an intentional accentuation of the word. Graham Johnson places this composition in its social milieu, taking note of its potency in these remarks:

³¹⁴ Fauré, *Sixty Songs*, 211.

...the centenary (1889) of the French Revolution sparked a collective nostalgia for the *ancien régime*. The citizens of the Third Republic were now amused to take part in costume balls... The time was ripe for music to follow suit... [Fauré] was superbly suited to evoke an era that combined outrageous self-indulgence with the rigours of an exaggerated *politesse*. *Mandoline* has a sprightly charm, certainly, but it is also powered by a *pudeur* [modesty] that is appropriate to Fauré at the height of his technical powers. ... [Fauré's setting presents] a world where everything is a matter of guarded calculation, where passion is played out partly as a power game, where nothing can be out of place, nothing left to chance. ... The semi-sincere and ultimately melancholy world of *Mandoline* is a metaphor for Fauré's dealings with the whole race of high-flying Parisian aristocrats... [In] these songs *de Venise*... the composer pays lip-service to the *ancien régime* of Versailles while plotting a revolution of his own devising.³¹⁵

In light of Johnson's insights into the historical context, I propose Fauré's accentuated *leurs* are meant as an exaggeration of *leur*—their—*importance*. Given the lengthened note values, the



Figure 73. Fauré's "Mandoline," mm. 19-23

singer is obliged to linger on the word (although not necessarily with any additional weight), poised, quite possibly with a slight smile on the lips, eyebrows lifted ever-so-slightly... the reader surely understands the visual image I suggest here. The intended effect is guided by Fauré's notated interpretation of the text.

“La fleur qui va sur l'eau” (The Flower Floating on the Water) contains a hint of musical word painting, a rare occurrence in Fauré's compositions. The text, by Catulle

³¹⁵ Johnson, 208-209.

Mendès (1841-1909), reads in measures 19 through 27, “Dans l’océan sombre, Moins sombre déjà, où le trois mâts sombre, La fleur surnagea. L’eau s’en est jouée, Dans ses noirs sillons; C’est une bouée Pour les papillons” (In the dark ocean, already less dark/gloomy, where the three-master founders [playing on the other, nautical meaning of *sombre*], the flower floats. The water plays with it, in its black waves; it’s a buoy for butterflies). Fauré uses melodic means to gently draw the listener into the deep, “where the three-master (a ship with three masts) founders.” In the next breath, almost literally, the flower *surnagea* (floats on top); the listener can hear it, and undoubtedly the character of the melodic line, linked with the text, invites the performer’s gaze, if not his or her head (or merely the facial expression, as in a ‘lift’ of the cheeks and eyebrows) to rise slightly as well. See Figure 74

Dans l'o-cé-an som - bre, Moins som - bre dé - jà, où le trois mâts
 22 som - bre, La fleur sur-na - gea. L'eau s'en est jou - é - e, Dans ses
 25 noirs sil - lons; C'est u - nê bou - é - e Pour les pa-pil - lons.

Figure 74. "La fleur qui va sur l'eau," mm. 19-27

for a replication of the passage.³¹⁶ In the next phrase, “L’eau s’en est jouée, Dans ses noirs sillons” (The water plays with it, in its black waves), the vocal melody undulates playfully, and the singer may smile. The final phrase in this passage turns to triplets (*une bou-*), a

³¹⁶ Fauré, *Sixty Songs*, 259-260.

involved in the phrase *pour les papillons* are easily formed with the human linguistic apparatus (lips/teeth/ tongue), and they are typically produced in fairly rapid succession.

On the other hand, “C’est une bouée” is a phrase comprising somewhat more complex movements of the lips, jaw, and tongue, not to mention three consecutive vowels that are of necessity enunciated more slowly if the intended audience is to comprehend their meaning. The tight French [u] of *une* follows the more open “eh” of *C’est*; the speaker therefore needs to move the lips from the open “eh” position to the [u] that is pronounced with tightly pursed lips. The pronunciation of “C’est une” can be accomplished rapidly, certainly, but normally is not. The tongue touches the upper ridge between the two vowels, for the intervocalic [t]; after [u], the [n] and its connected *e-muet* (itself a traditional convention in music, not pronounced in normal speech; here, it acts as an extension of the sounded indefinite article), the next word, *bouée* appears by nature if not by performance requirements to call forth languidity. The [b] is enunciated in a forward position of the lips, easily moving to the long “oo” at the center of *bouée*; the passage between adjacent vocalic sounds—the “-ouée” at the heart of the word—necessarily cannot be hurried, for comprehension’s sake. This word, like *une*, also ends with the *e-muet*. And so, while “C’est une bouée” *may* be pronounced quickly, it is not typically done so. The first half-phrase is usually pronounced significantly more slowly than the latter half-phrase. Fauré has apparently taken that linguistic aspect of the French text into consideration in his rhythmic and melodic setting.

5.3 CONVERGENCE OF TECHNIQUES IN *LA BONNE CHANSON*

Fauré's first true song cycle, *La bonne chanson*, was composed during the period covered by the songs of the third *recueil*, but published separately. The chart in Table 12 provides a prosodic overview of the nine *mélodies* it contains, listing them as nearly as possible in the order in which they were composed.³¹⁷ Table 13 charts the two published *mélodies* that are unfortunately not part of any cycle nor added to the three earlier *recueils*, and therefore much less known: "Le don silencieux" and "Chanson" (the latter, Fauré's last song in the "madrigal" style³¹⁸), published by Heugel before Fauré's second song cycle.³¹⁹ Tables 14 through 17 provide details on the prosody of Fauré's four other song cycles: *La chanson d'Ève* (Table 14); *Le jardin clos* (Table 15); *Mirages* (Table 16); and *L'horizon chimérique* (Table 17). Of the nine *mélodies* in *La bonne chanson*, seven of them have prosodic features of consequence.³²⁰ Some of these prosodic elements appear to add a layer of deeper meaning; others are merely rhythmic adjustments of the music-text boundaries. I will address a few of the purely rhythmic nuances first, most of which are listed in a fairly self-explanatory manner in the tables, then those with the deeper expressive meaning in four of the *mélodies* in this early song cycle.

³¹⁷ The score is available online. http://petrucci.mus.auth.gr/imglnks/usimg/6/6d/IMSLP24128-PMLP54722-Fauré_-_La_bonne_chanson_Op._61.pdf (accessed February 20, 2011). Dates of composition are from Graham Johnson. Johnson, 228-238.

³¹⁸ Johnson, 294.

³¹⁹ "Le don silencieux," a poignant *mélodie* that expresses much that could be said about Gabriel Fauré himself, deserves wider circulation. I am not including "C'est la paix!" in this study. Fauré set the poem—written by a Parisian woman, Georgette Debladis—as a result of a contest by *Le Figaro*. Nectoux, 404.

³²⁰ Those I do not consider here contain prosodic issues recently discussed. The article *le* of *le vent* in "La lune blanche luit dans les bois" appears to be incorrectly longer than the noun *vent* (wind). The same word combination occurs with a similar length in measure 11 of Fauré's 1871 *mélodie*, "Seule!" In both cases, I believe the article is extended for the same purpose as the *la* of *la mer* (the sea) and *la beauté* (beauty) above, in "La rose (Ode anacréontique)" second *recueil*: for emphasis and/or singularity.

Table 12. *La bonne chanson*

Order in Cycle	Meter signature	Poet: Paul Verlaine Published: 1894	Date of composition	(Number of Displacements) and Details of Prosodic Approach
7	C, 2/4, 3/2, 9/8, 12/8	<i>Donc, ce sera par un clair jour d'été</i>	Aug. 9, 1892	Prosodic phrasing in opening line: <i>Donc, ce sera par un clair jour d'été</i> , includes downbeat displacement to b.2 in m.3. In m.6 through m.8, plus m.11, 13, 21, primary emphasis on b.3 instead of b.1. In m.21, also syncopated rhythmic deflection from b.1 to second half of b.1 (but primary emphasis still b.3). Unnotated hemiolas across barline in m.29-30 and m.36-37. Downbeat displacements to b.2 in m.16, 37, 41, 42; to b.3 in m.8, 11, 21, 30.
1	3/4	<i>Une Sainte en son auréole</i>	Sept. 17, 1892	<i>Une</i> intended as upbeat to <i>châtelaine</i> in m.8, with unnotated hemiola m.8-9; see m.4-5. Notated hemiolas across barline m.37-38, 41-42, 45-46, 61-62.
4	3/4	<i>J'allais par des chemins perfides</i>	1892	Notated displaced downbeat to b.2 in m.6, unnotated in m.45; both complete displaced three-beat phrases. Latter displacement results in hemiola on b.2-3, m.45. Both m.41 and 44 contain 'audible' displacements of downbeat to b.2, echoing textual treatment at m.5. Notated hemiola m.34-35. Displaced downbeats to b.2 in m.58,60.
6	3/4, 2/4	<i>Avant que tu ne t'en ailles</i>	1892	Downbeat displacements to b.2 in m.10 and m.30; m.29-32 phrasing is prosodic: <i>Tourne ton regard que note l'aurore dans son azur</i> . Multimodal contrast between interior and exterior images imbedded musically in each poetic verse.
8	3/4	<i>N'est-ce pas ?</i>	May 25, 1893	Opening phrase has prosodic hemiolas: <i>N'est-ce pas, nous irons, gaie et lent...</i> Unnotated hemiolas in m.47-48 (<i>ce que nous destinies le sort</i>). Downbeat displacement to b.2 in m.50.
3	9/8 (9/4, C)	<i>La lune blanche luit dans les bois</i>	July 20, 1893	(1?) In m.14, b.3: <i>le vent</i> , even though on internal beat, note length emphasizes the definite article? No rhythmic deflections; 'downbeat' on internal beat after rest or tied note on beat one, in m.18, 23.
5	C	<i>J'ai presque peur, en vérité</i>	Dec. 4, 1893	Rhythmic deflections of downbeat from b.1 to b.2 in m.3, 9, 18, 25. Rhythmic deflection to b.3 in m.7. Triplets in m.57 and 61 comprise multimodality.
2	C	<i>Puisque l'aube grandit</i>	1893	No rhythmic deflections from beat one to beat two; 'downbeat' on internal beats after rest or tied note on beat one, in m.5, 7, 20, 26, 39, 42, 46.
9	C, 3/2, 3/4, 9/8	<i>L'hiver a cessé</i>	Feb. 1894	Rhythmic deflection of downbeat m.12. Voice in prosodic 3/4 in m.23-24; continues in modified 3/4 for m.25-26; both are multimodalities. In m.34-35, text prosodically accentuated, with multimodal meaning. In m.27-28, 32-33, 41, 45, 47, b.1 and b.3 are equally accentuated; m.29 rest on b.1 gives impression of 3/4 for this measure. In m.43, voice in 3/4 through b.1, m.44.

To begin with, the second *mélodie* composed for *La bonne chanson* (but first in the published cycle) is “Une sainte en son aureole” (A Saint in her halo). It includes, in two phrases near the beginning, the word *Une* (one, or a, the singular indefinite article), in two different positions within the measure. The first phrase, “Une sainte en son auréole,” is followed by “Une châtelaine en sa tour” (a lady in her tower). In the first phrase, *une* begins on beat 2 in 3/4 time, so is easily understood as an unaccented upbeat. When the same word reappears in the second phrase (after a one-measure pause in the vocal part), however, it falls on the first beat of the measure, and so is frequently misaccentuated in performance—as “*Une*”—and the word following it, *châtelaine*, is also mispronounced “*châtelaine*” with “*-laine*” on beat 1 of the next measure. The correct scansion, however, is “*châtelaine*.” When the prosody is corrected, *châtelaine* begins the first of two sequential two-beat prosodic phrases, in a pleasing hemiola. See Figure 75 for the correct and incorrect accentuations of this passage.³²¹ The common error of misaccentuation is entirely due to a strict reading of the time signature.

The image shows a musical score in 3/4 time, consisting of two staves. The first staff (measures 4-10) contains the melody for the first phrase. The lyrics are: "Un - e Sainte en son au - ré - o - le,". Below the staff, two lines of lyrics are shown: "Un - e Sainte en son au - ré - o - le," and "Un - e Sainte en son au - ré - o - le,". The second staff (measures 8-10) contains the melody for the second phrase. The lyrics are: "U - ne châ - te - laine en sa tour,". Below the staff, two lines of lyrics are shown: "U - ne châ - te - laine en sa tour," and "U - ne châ - te - laine en sa tour,". The first line of the second staff shows the correct prosodic accentuation, with "châ - te - laine" as a single unit. The second line shows a typical misaccentuation, with "châ - te - laine" split across two measures.

Figure 75. "Une sainte en son auréole," mm. 4-10, showing correct prosodic accentuation and typical misaccentuation in strict 3/4 meter

³²¹ Fauré, *La bonne chanson* (see n.317), 1 (accessed February 20, 2011).

“J’allais par des chemins perfides” (I walked on treacherous paths) whose tortured chromatic beginning echoes the poet Paul Verlaine’s recurrent mental anguish, contains an occurrence of an accented indefinite article, *des* that is entirely justifiable. There are occasions where *des* is accented, and this is one. It may be partly due to its position adjacent to the [r]—whether that consonant is flipped or is enunciated in the throat makes no difference here. The phrase, “par des chemins” (by [some] roads) carries stress on both the second syllable of *chemins* (roads) and *des* (some; plural indefinite article), although not the same amount of weight. Fauré lengthens the note value for the accented syllable of *chemins*; *des* is melodically accented, only (notation shown in Figure 76).³²²



Figure 76. "J'allais par des chemins perfides," mm. 4-7, illustrating prosodic stress

The rhythmic aspect of “Avant que tu ne t’en ailles” (Before you leave) that could use some explanation is the phrase found in measures 29 through 32, “Tourne ton regard que noie l’aurore dans son azur” (Turn your gaze that drowns the dawn in its blue). At this point in Fauré’s career, as we have seen, we can glean some of his intentions from the lengths of the notes, and their melodic relationships with the other notes around them. The word attached to the longest note here—besides the final *azur*—is *Tourne* (turn; dotted quarter), followed by two different words, *noie* (drown) and *[au-]rore* (dawn) with quarter notes. The singular possessive pronoun, *son* (its, feminine singular, but appearing in ‘masculine’ guise on account of the initial vowel in the noun), is on a dotted eighth (plus the feminine *e-muet* of *noie*, but that doesn’t

³²² Ibid., 16.

(it will be on a clear summer day), with *clair* (clear) and *jour* (day) each being words with an *accent mobile*. But Fauré has accented neither of these words; instead, he places *un* (one, or a, the singular masculine indefinite article) squarely on the downbeat. As it happens, *un* only receives stress when it has a declamatory accent, for emphasis. It is possible, although not likely, that in this context Fauré intends to emphasize a particular summer day. I propose the scansion as written in Table 11: “Ce sera par un clair **jour** d’été,” expressing the text of “**jour** d’été” in a manner that, in its enunciation, brings the mouth forward more quickly and easily into a smile. When the phrase is expressed, “**un** clair jour d’été,” the jaw drops farther for *un* than otherwise, and the smile that comes so effortlessly to the performer when speaking the phonemes of “*d’été*” is delayed, relatively speaking. By lengthening the final syllable of *sera* and the word *jour* immediately before *été*, Fauré indicates their intended accentuation. The *jour-été* combination presents more easily in a joyous facial expression than one with the accents on *un* and *été*. The effect of Fauré’s choice as notated is expressive gesture and text performed together. (See Figure 79 for the passage quoted.³²⁵)



Figure 79. "Donc, ce sera par un clair jour d'été," mm. 2-3

³²⁵ Fauré, *La bonne chanson* (see n.317), 29 (accessed February 20, 2011).

The additional expression in the rhythms of “Avant que tu ne t’en ailles” takes place on a much broader scale, and is hard to miss. The text of Paul Verlaine’s poem describes two realities, presumably occurring at the same time: one, the poet/lover with his beloved stirring at dawn next to him; the second, looking outdoors, gazing across misty fields at the coming sunrise. The two realities are in different keys and present themselves in entirely different musical styles. The interior setting is quiet, intimate, tender and perhaps soul-searching. The second stirs and rises quickly, from *piano* to a full *forte* in a matter of only a few beats. Much of the expressive character is imbedded in the piano accompaniment and the piano-vocal harmonies; the relevance of their prosody is not as great, but certain elements are essential. Their differing prosodic frames are: (1) The lover’s nest is in 3/4 time, with additional triplets in the second and fifth ‘scenes’ that express beyond the reach of words the emotions of the poet toward the beloved: thoughts and feelings of devoted tenderness and deep love, perhaps born of intimacy or sustained on the strength of that intimacy, and of the desire for a deep *and* lasting love.³²⁶ (2) The exterior scenery is as if imagined by the wakeful poet, or perhaps as seen through a window or other open space; in 2/4 time until at measure 46, when the poet’s interior thoughts are expressed in the exterior meter—as if the speaker is now more alert, more connected than before to the scenes out-of-doors. The singer-performer, whose task is to communicate the composer’s intent of the poem, must reflect both the “interior” and “exterior” frames primarily through facial expression. The English translation of the passages containing triplets is: (first) “Turn toward the poet, whose eyes are full of love,” and (second) “In the sweet dream that stirs my still sleeping dear

³²⁶ My proposal is founded in the strength of observed triplets on repeated occasions in passages expressing tenderness or intimacy in Fauré’s vocal works. I have not explicitly investigated the strength of the observation, at this point.

one.” Figure 80 replicates the notation of the ‘interior’ scenes, measures 16 through 19, and 65 through 68, showing its emotive triplets.³²⁷

16. Tour - ne de-vers le po - è - te dont les yeux sont pleins d'a - mour

65. Dans le doux rêve où s'a-gi - te ma mie en - dor - mi en - cor

Figure 80. "Avant que tu ne t'en ailles," mm. 16-19, 65-68

Triplets serve a similar dimension relative to the text in “J’ai presque peur, en vérité” (In truth, I am almost afraid) in fifth place within the cycle but composed seventh (completed December 4, 1893³²⁸). This time, they are quarter-note triplets, across two beats of common (4/4) time, so one could argue that the emotion they convey incorporates an expansive element of sorts, perhaps a sense of reaching out to the beloved in an embrace capable of drawing in not only the beloved, but all that is good and present about her world. It is debatable, but then again,

³²⁷ Fauré, *La bonne chanson* (see n.317), 25, 28 (accessed February 20, 2011).

³²⁸ Johnson, 233.

Figure 81. "J'ai presque peur, en vérité," mm. 57-74

the poet—who, earlier in this *mélodie*, has vacillated between addressing the beloved with the formal *vous* and informal *tu* as he wrestles with his strong emotions of acceptance or rejection of all the beloved represents to him, including major changes in his own life³²⁹—returns to the formal or plural *vous* immediately after the triplets, a point that may be applicable in the debate. Translation of the passage is: “Immersed into this supreme happiness, / To tell myself again and for always, / In spite of dismal returns [implying the poet’s continuing deep questions about the betrothal], / That I love you (*vous*, formal or plural), that I love you (*tu*, informal, singular).” In any case, the tenderness of the speaker is conveyed via these triplets, shown in Figure 74.³³⁰ The emotion-bearing triplets are in mm. 57 and 61; I also reproduce the closing bars of the vocal part, to show the final *vous/tu* vacillation.

³²⁹ Graham Johnson writes in detail about the origin of this extraordinarily passionate poetry by Paul Verlaine, at a time when the homosexual poet was struggling against his sexual tendencies (then perceived by Verlaine as a personal fault), then met and became engaged to the youthful Mathilde Mauté. Johnson, 222-225.

³³⁰ Fauré, *La bonne chanson* (see n.317), 28 (accessed February 20, 2011).

5.4 LATE SONGS AND CYCLES: *L'ECRITURE CHANTEE*

The songs of Fauré's mature period, particularly after the composer's two-year artistic crisis discussed by James Sobaskie, become even more closely tied to the spoken prosody.³³¹ Fauré also appears to make a conscious decision to forego efforts at building deeper expression into the rhythms within these later *mélodies*—at the least, to deliberately avoid any effects beyond that involved in the performer's simple expression of the poetry in a straightforward manner, without

Table 13. Two *Mélodies*

Meter signature	Songs not published in collections	Date of composition ³³²	Year first published	Details of Prosodic Approach
C	<i>Le don silencieux</i> ³³³ / Marie Closset (aka Jean Dominique)	Aug. 20, 1906	1906	Piano opens in 3/4 time. Often clear accentuations on longest note values; but vocal part also comprised of lengthy prosodic phrases containing repeated notes of equal value, deflect stress to successive measures in lengthy prosodic chains. Rhythmic deflections to beat 3 in m. 2, 11, 13, 14, 16, 21, 24; to beat 2 in m.9, 25, 26. Hemiolas in m.4. Equal stress on two or more beats deflects stress to following measure(s) in m.5-6, 15, 17, 18-19, and 23. Equal stress in m.18-19 reflects speechlike phrasing.
3/4	<i>Chanson</i> ³³⁴ / Henri de Régnier	1906	1907	Fauré's last <i>mélodie</i> written in the 'madrigal style.' In keeping with that designation, majority of accental downbeats are on beat one of measure. Rhythmic deflections from beat 1 to beat 2 in m.14, 15, 20, 21, 24. Equal note values deflect to next measure in m.8, 10, 22. Hemiolas m. 15-16.

³³¹ James Sobaskie, "The Emergence of Gabriel Fauré's Late Musical Style and Technique," *Journal of Musicological Research* 22/3 (Fall 2003): 223-275.

³³² Johnson, 290, 294.

³³³ http://imslp.org/wiki/Le_don_silencieux,_Op.92_%28Faur%C3%A9,_Gabriel%29 (accessed February 20, 2011).

³³⁴ http://imslp.org/wiki/Chanson,_Op.94_%28Faur%C3%A9,_Gabriel%29 (accessed February 20, 2011).

the need to negotiate further any deliberately placed accentuations, or “misaccentuations,” as they were often misconstrued.

Sobaskie’s analysis focuses more on the developments in Fauré’s use of harmony than on any other aspect of composition; significantly, however, he takes note of Fauré’s “metric texturation” in this period.³³⁵ The “various kinds of durational groupings” Sobaskie sees in the accompaniment have been present for some time in the voice part, as we have seen. Sobaskie also notes, “Metric texturation like this frees the accompaniment from rigid, meter-reinforcing figuration, lending variety and vital flow to the music,” an observation that is as applicable to issues of prosody, and the desire to avoid “boredom” and sameness.³³⁶

The multiple instances of equal stress I point out in “Le don silencieux” (see Table 13) are linked to the manifestation of normally spoken French prosody, which can and often does cascade forth in manifold rhythmic repetitions, such as the sequential anapests here. These long rhythmic strands are a characteristic that become more common in the songs written in Fauré’s mature stylistic period. The effect of the long sequences with the longer notes of equal value is that it affects a shift in textual focus to the endpoint of the entire phrase, much as in French speech. (See Figure 82 for an example.) It is in this sense that Fauré’s music in 1906 is more like *l’écriture chantée* (the sung writing) to which Roland Barthes refers in his essay.³³⁷

The translation of the phrase in Figure 84 is “I will place my two hands on my eyes, to hide that which I so wish you would yet seek.” The longest value note in the first two measures is an eighth note, but it occurs multiple times in each of the two measures, repeatedly deflecting the singer’s accentuation until the quarter note on the last syllable of *cherchez* (you would

³³⁵ Ibid., 241.

³³⁶ Ibid., 242.

³³⁷ See Chapter 1, 15.



Figure 82. "Le don silencieux," m. 5 through m.7, b. 1

seek), in measure 7.³³⁸ The singer is allowed a brief ‘catch-breath’ at the comma after *yeux* (eyes), but otherwise there is no break in the phrasing until *cherchez*. The prosodic line has lengthened significantly since the early days of Fauré’s patchwork of vocal hemiolas and three-beat phrases. Now, Fauré uses multiple notes of equal value within the measure to metrically deflect accentuation until the end of the longer prosodic unit. The singer may now “murmur” entire sentences in one breath, as Maurice Bagès, one singer from Fauré’s lifetime, is said to have done.³³⁹

The mature style of Gabriel Fauré’s compositions is more strongly characterized by experiments and refinements in his harmonic vocabulary than in his prosody. There is little that is new in his prosodic practice after *La bonne chanson*. If anything, it appears that Fauré takes a few steps back in his approach to use a simpler, more straightforward prosodic practice in many

³³⁸ Fauré, “Le don silencieux” (see n. 333), 1-2 (accessed February 20, 2011).

³³⁹ Maurice Bagès (1862-1908; née Maurice Bagès Jacobé de Trigny), an amateur tenor with long ties to professional musicians, apparently had an uncommon and empathetic manner to his singing of Fauréan *mélodies*. Bagès was one of Fauré’s inner circle of preferred singers, having given the first public performances of both the *Cinq mélodies ‘de Venise’* and *La bonne chanson*, as well as the highly successful “Clair de lune.” His manner of presentation is described by French historian, musician, and art critic Charles Oulmont (1883-1984): “He rose, went to the piano and then moved away from it after having quickly conferred with the accompanist. He drew near the hearth, leaning against it nonchalantly, and with impeccable diction in a voice both sweet and warm murmured the songs the composers had entrusted to him. Within this murmur, the absolute essence of his art, he conveyed without exaggeration every detail of the composer’s intention, the poet’s slightest nuance.” Charles Oulmont, *Musique de l’amour I: Ernest Chausson et la ‘Bande à Franck’* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1935), 140-141, as quoted and cited in Jean-Michel Nectoux, “Fauré: Voice, Style and Vocality,” in *Regarding Fauré* (Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach Publishers, 1999), 382. Nectoux also quotes another critic, less sympathetic, who described Bagès singing of Fauré’s *mélodies* at a 1901 concert as “pretentiously delivered.”

Table 14. *La chanson d'Ève*

Order in Cycle	Meter signature	Poet: van Lerberghe	Date of composition	Date first published	Details of Prosodic Approach
9	3/2	<i>Crépuscule</i>	June 4, 1906	Aug. 1906	Rhythmic deflections to beat two in m. 9, 14, 36. Downbeat on beat two or three (not deflected) in m. 12, 21, 22, 32. Notated hemiolas in m. 19-20, 28-29.
1	3/2, 2/2, C	<i>Paradis</i>	Sept. 3-8, 1906	Jan. 1907	Rhythmic deflections to beat two in m. 26, 40, 56, 60, 92, 118, 127, 128; to beat three in m. 36, 38, 99, 112. Downbeats on beat two or three (not deflected) in m. 19, 25, 33, 36, 38, 40, 62, 76, 102, 113, 130. Notes of equal value deflect stress to longer value in following measure(s), m. 100, 103-104, 132. Unnotated hemiolas in m. 12-13, 62-63; notated hemiola (of four beats) in m. 89-90. Voice in 6/4 time in m. 45, 54, 64.
2	C, 3/2	<i>Prima verba</i>	Sept. 28, 1906	Jan. 1907	Primary characteristic of the text is long, speechlike, prosodic phrases: i.e., m. 2-4; also m. 6-9, 13-14.5, 14.5-16, 18-21; Rhythmic deflection to beat three in m. 17.
3	3/4	<i>Roses ardentes</i>	June, 1908	Nov. 1908	Rhythmic deflections to beat two in m. 7, 13, 26, 28. Downbeat on beat two (not deflected) in m. 4, 14, 16, 18. Measure 30 has hemiola on beats 1-2, new 'downbeat' on beat three.
5	3/4	<i>L'aube blanche</i>	June 1908	Nov. 1908	Rhythmic deflections to beat two in m. 7, 16, 26; Downbeats to beat two or three (not deflected) in m. 8, 9, 27. Hemiolas in m. 21-22. Equal stress on internal beats in m. 18, no 'directionality.' Measures 21-22, two- and three-beat phrases.
4	C	<i>Comme Dieu rayonne</i>	Before May 26, 1909	Oct. 1909	Rhythmic deflections to beat three in m. 17; to beat two following equal stresses in m. 6. Downbeat on beat three (not deflected) in m. 7, 9, 16, 18, 19, 20. Equal note values deflect to longer value in following measure, m. 4, 13, 19. Measure 11 contains equal stress on beats one and three, no 'directionality.'
6	3/4	<i>Eau vivante</i>	Before May 26, 1909	Oct. 1909	Rhythmic deflections to beat two in m. 7, 9, 10. Downbeats on beat two (not deflected) in m. 4, 11. Equal note values deflect stress to longer value in following measure(s), 19-20. Notated hemiolas m. 15-16, 22-23; unnotated hemiolas in m. 24-25.
8	3/4	<i>Dans un parfum de roses blanches</i>	Before June 5, 1909	Oct. 1909	Hemiolas m. 5-6, 7-9, at m. 9, final two-beat phrase ties in with next measure's rhythmic deflection. Equal note values deflect to longer value in following measure, m. 20, 22. Rhythmic deflections to beat two in m. 3, 10, 21, 23, 25, 26, 29. Downbeat on beat two or three (not deflected) in m. 12, 15, 17, 35.
7	2/4	<i>Veilles-tu, ma senteur de soleil?</i>	Jan. 1910	Feb. 1910	Many downbeats occur on first beat in this <i>mélodie</i> (25 measures on beat 1). Rhythmic deflections to beat two m. 5, 13, 22, 28, 48. Downbeat on beat two (not deflected) in m. 2, 3, 15, 25, 29, 34, 39, 54, 56. Equal note values deflect to longer value in following measure(s) in m. 9, 23. Special case in m. 16, longest note does not have accent, which is on beat two (sixteenth-note value).
10	C	<i>O mort, poussière d'étoiles</i>	Jan. 1910	Feb. 1910	Four instances of displacement to metric subdivision (syncopation), in m. 4, 9, 13, 16; also syncopation on secondary accent m. 24. Increased rhythmic attention to secondary accents within measures. Rhythmic deflection to beat two in m. 12, to beat three in m. 24; downbeat on beat three (not deflected) in m. 6. Equal stress note values deflect to longer value in following measure(s) in m. 16-17, 18-19. Hemiolas m. 12-13.

of the late songs. Table 14 presents Fauré's approach to prosody in his second cycle, the first of his late style, *La chanson d'Ève*.³⁴⁰ In this cycle of *mélodies*, over half of the displacements or deflections from the downbeat are accomplished via a rest on beat 1, or a tie across the bar line from the previous measure. These two techniques are somewhat more common among Fauré's contemporaries than they have been in Fauré's works up to now, as we have seen. In contrast, very few of the rhythmic deflections/displacements from beat 1 in *La bonne chanson* were the result of either of those practices.³⁴¹

The late song cycles do contain examples of extended rhythmic techniques; Fauré uses these to express the French text in what has become a rich and varied prosodic practice. The bar line is irrelevant, and meter no longer matters in the passages reproduced below. The spoken prosody alone is of central importance. Figures 85 and 86 present the graphic representations of both the musical settings and the spoken prosody of the texts shown in the accompanying notation. Figure 85 is from measures 2 through 6 of "Prima Verba" (second *mélodie* of *La chanson d'Ève*).³⁴² Figure 86 replicates measures 8 through 10 of "Inscription sur la sable" (the last *mélodie* in the 1912-1914 cycle, *Le jardin clos*).³⁴³ Each hyphen in the graphic of the music represents one sixteenth note. The prosody in the two quotes from *La chanson d'Ève* and *Le jardin clos* mirror spoken French to an uncanny and rare degree. Fauré captures precisely the nuanced rhythms of the French poetic lines, then transfers their undulating murmurs into song,

³⁴⁰ http://imslp.org/wiki/La_Chanson_d%E2%80%99%C3%88ve,_Op.95_%28Faur%C3%A9,_Gabriel%29 (accessed January 12, 2011). Dates of composition listed in the table are from Graham Johnson. Johnson, 309-319.

³⁴¹ Fauré made spare use of the rest on beat one to avoid the primary downbeat of the measure; his ties across the bar line are typically part of a series of hemiolas.

³⁴² Fauré, *La chanson d'Ève* (see n. 340), 11. (accessed January 12, 2011).

³⁴³ http://imslp.org/wiki/Le_jardin_clos,_Op.106_%28Faur%C3%A9,_Gabriel%29 (accessed July 22, 2010), 31.

Table 15. *Le jardin clos*

Meter signature	Poet: van Lerberghe Composed: July-Nov. 1914 ³⁴⁴ Published: May 1915 ³⁴⁵	Details of Prosodic Approach
4/4	<i>Exaucement</i>	Virtually all in 2-beat phrases. Three different prosodic treatments of same rhythmic cell in mm. 16, 21, 22: (1) Three-beat phrases cross bar line in mm.15-16, with <i>des rayons</i> on beats 2-3 of second group; (2) <i>jardin</i> in m.21 is third beat of three-beat group from previous bar; (3) in mm.22-23, accentuation is <i>douce volonté faite</i> .
3/4	<i>Quand tu plonges tes yeux dans mes yeux</i>	Prosodic phrasing reflected in note values that define accentuation, throughout; exceptions are melodic emphases mm.12, 19.
3/4	<i>La messagère</i>	Extensive use of hemiolas from m.24-40, 46-47, 50-51, 53-55, 62-63, also brief across bar line mm. 20-21. Rhythmic deflections to beat two in mm.5, 8, 12, 13. Downbeats on beat two or three (not deflected) in mm.3, 7, 9, 50. Equal note values deflect stress to following measure in mm.15, 21, 38, 44-45.
3/4	<i>Je me poserai sur ton cœur</i>	Prosodic phrasing reflected in note values that define accentuation, throughout. Half-note values occur at ends of prosodic phrases, some quite lengthy. Hemiolas mm. 32-33.
4/4	<i>Dans la nymphée</i>	Prosodic phrasing reflected in note values that define most accentuation, throughout; exceptions in accentuation relative to note values are m.17: <i>éblouissement</i> ; and m.22: <i>le rapide éclair</i> , note values reflect as spoken, and text accented on beat two as spoken.
3/4	<i>Dans la pénombre</i>	Multiple techniques in play in this “spinning song.” Rhythmic deflection in the vocal part of this particular <i>mélodie</i> signifies the action of the foot pedal of the spinning wheel; these occur in mm.8, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21 (twice), 22, 23, 25, 26, 33 (twice) and 37. In m.6, the voice is in 6/8; hemiolas mm.8-10, 20-21, 23-24, 33-37. Downbeat on beat three (not deflected) in m.3. “Foot pedal” rhythm in varying prosodic accentuations.
3/4	<i>Il m’est cher, amour, le bandeau</i>	Despite opening with hemiolas, many measures adhere to the scored 3/4 time; hemiolas mm.3-4, 7-8, 18-19, 27-31, 39-40, 42-43. Rhythmic deflection to beat two in mm. 25, 26.
4/4	<i>Inscription sur le sable</i>	Prosody in much of this song works in 4/4 as written; m.9 is most speechlike, with clear syncopation and longer note: text here is “ <i>D’impérissables diamants.</i> ”

³⁴⁴ Graham Johnson, 332-339. The order of song composition is apparently unknown at this time.

³⁴⁵ Johnson, 329.

chorus and Ravel's *Chanson du rouet*.³⁴⁶ In this setting, both the piano and voice parts evoke the sounds and movement of the spinning wheel, kept in motion by the young woman's foot treading the pedal as she pensively, sometimes smiling—"À sourire à son rêve encor / Avec ses yeux de fiancée (smiling again at her dream, with the eyes of the betrothed)"—absent-mindedly pulls and spins her wool into yarn. If the singer/interpreter presents this particular selection in the calm, somewhat detached manner Fauré preferred, with a hint of a smile, and a smile "in the eyes," it is effectively portrayed. Figure 88 replicates this particular passage; note the presence of the foot-pedal in the "eighth-eighth-quarter" rhythms.³⁴⁷ This rhythm is first introduced at the beginning



Figure 86. "Dans la pénombre," mm. 18-24

of the cycle, in the opening *mélodie*, "Exaucement." In "Exaucement," however, the stress is on the first of the two eighth notes, relaxing into the longer quarter note. Here, the shorter notes bear the lighter weight.

By this time of his life, Fauré is aware of his gradual hearing loss that affects high- and low-range pitches. The vocal range of his last songs becomes narrower than before, emphasizing even more their speech-like nature. For some time now, we have seen that when Fauré uses a

³⁴⁶ Unfortunately, Johnson confuses the imagery of spinning with weaving, referring to the "warp and woof," both terms for weaving. His comparisons with the other examples, however, are well placed. Johnson 337-338.

³⁴⁷ Fauré, "Le jardin clos" (see n.363), 22.

longer note value to identify the primary stress in a phrase on a beat other than the first one of the measure, he is careful to place another syllable of at least secondary accent (an *accent mobile*) on beat 1. In these late songs, where the prosody so defines the rhythms of Fauré's settings, there is scarcely a sense of "downbeat" at all. The *accent mobile* serves the songs well, particularly for the performer unacquainted with the nuances of the French text; given the situation of *accents mobiles* on the downbeat, there is no need—for example, in the *Mirages* cycle—for the singer to consider rhythmic deflections when preparing these songs for performance. Whenever there is a fresh note on the downbeat, the singer may give it a modicum of stress without making a prosodic error; stresses on other beats of the measure are marked by lengthened note values. Ties and rests clarify accentuation of all other events. There is little that needs explanation for correct accentuation in performance of the songs in the *Mirages* cycle, and little change in prosodic technique between them. The notes in Table 16 present a comparison with the prosodic techniques tabulated and evaluated in the discussion of *mélodies* by Fauré's peers.

The prosody exemplified in the late songs is evident in the following brief examples, taken from measures 4 through 7 of "Reflets dans l'eau," then 2 through 9 of "Jardin nocturne," the second and third songs in the *Mirages* cycle (1919).³⁴⁸ Encompassing a limited vocal range—a major sixth in the former, a perfect fifth in the latter—with many repetitions of pitch, the melodic contours of both "Reflets dans l'eau" and "Jardin nocturne" clearly resemble French speech in a melodic sense as well as in the rhythms.³⁴⁹ A comparison of the spoken rhythm and the musical setting, again, makes the connection even closer. A graphic of the spoken prosody and a reproduction of the notation for each of the two passages are shown in Figure 89 and 90.

³⁴⁸http://erato.uvt.nl/files/imglnks/usimg/6/66/IMSLP24084-PMLP54659-Fauré_-_Mirages_Op._113_voice_and_piano.pdf (accessed August 4, 2010).

³⁴⁹ Graham Johnson proposes that Fauré may have been making a conscious gesture of homage to Debussy in this cycle, so like many of the late younger composer's works. Johnson, 351-353.

Table 16. *Mirages*

Order in Cycle	Meter signature	Poet: Renée de Brimont Composed: 1919 Published: 1919	Details of Prosodic Approach
1	3/4	<i>Cygne sur l'eau</i> Primary/Secondary Acc. = 76.8% (only 39.5% of these, or 30% of total, are on <i>accents mobiles</i>) Tie on beat 1 = 16.1% Rest on beat 1 = 3.6% Melodic deflections = 1.8% Conjunction on beat 1 = 1.8%	<p>Lengthy prosodic phrases in long melodic arches, longer notes, at times in tied values across bar lines, clarify intended accentuations. (Look for longest note values.)</p> <p>Bar lines inconsequential to vocal part.</p>
2	4/4, 3/2,	<i>Reflets dans l'eau</i> Primary/Secondary Acc. = 92.3% (44% of these, or 41% of total, are on syllables with <i>accents mobiles</i>) Tie on beat 1 (m.5) = 7.7%	<p>Many prosodic details internal to the measure are not covered in the data on downbeats to the left.</p> <p>Per data to left, Fauré frequently varies his stylistic approach to prosody in relation to the downbeat, but three of the four songs in this cycle rely more on <i>one</i> particular technique per song, in addition to the primary and secondary accents on downbeats.</p>
3	3/4	<i>Jardin nocturne</i> Primary/Secondary Acc. = 78.7% (62.2% of them/48.9% of total, are <i>accents mobiles</i>) Tie on beat 1 = 8.5% Rest on beat 1 = 6.4% Melodic deflections = 6.4%	<p><i>Cygne sur l'eau</i>: Ties on beat 1</p> <p><i>Reflets dans l'eau</i>: Much greater emphasis on <i>accents mobiles</i>; also ties on beat one.</p> <p><i>Danseuse</i>: Rests on beat 1</p>
4	2/2	<i>Danseuse</i> Primary/Secondary Acc. = 74.5% (40% of these, or 29.8% of total, are on <i>accents mobiles</i>) Rest on beat 1 = 19.1% Melodic deflections = 4.3% Tie on beat 1 (m.4) = 2.1%	

First, the “Refllets d’eau” excerpt as spoken:

<i>(j’ai) reflété mon (vague) ennui,</i>	8m
- / - - - / - - - - / - - - -	
<i>mes yeux profonds, cou(leur) de nuit</i>	8m
- - - - - - - - - - / - - - / - - - - /	
<i>et mon visage</i>	4f
- - - - - - - - / -	

Then, as set by Fauré:

Figure 87 shows a musical score for the song "Refllets d'eau" by Gabriel Fauré. The score consists of two staves. The top staff is the vocal line, and the bottom staff is the piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "j'ai re-flé-té mon vague en-nui, mes yeux pro-fonds, cou-leur de nuit et mon vi-sa-ge". The music is in 4/4 time and has a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat).

Figure 87. "Refllets d'eau" (*Mirages*), mm. 4-7

Next, the text from “Jardin nocturne,” as spoken:

<i>Noc(tur)ne jardin tout rem(pli) de silence,</i>	11f
- - - / - - - / - - - / - - - - - / -	
<i>voici que la (lun)e ouverte se balance</i>	10f
- - - / - - - - / - - - - - / - - - - - - - / -	
<i>en des (voil)es d’or flu(i)des et légers;</i>	10m
- - - - / - - - / - - - - / - - - - -	

Then as set by Fauré:

Figure 88 shows a musical score for the song "Jardin nocturne" by Gabriel Fauré. The score consists of two staves. The top staff is the vocal line, and the bottom staff is the piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Noc-tur-ne jar-din tout rem-pli de si-len-ce, voi-ci que la lune ou-ver-te se ba-lan-ce en des voi-les d’or flu-i-des et lé-gers;". The music is in 3/4 time and has a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat).

Figure 88. "Jardin nocturne" (*Mirages*), mm. 2-9

The composer's settings clearly show which words Fauré believes are more central to the poetic imagery, or to its meaning. Whereas, for example, the text as *spoken* places secondary weight on *rempli* (brimming) and primary accent on *silence*, Fauré apparently holds that the descriptive adjective *rempli* is of greater importance than the noun *silence*. Similarly, Fauré's emphasis on "fluides et légers" (liquid and light) indicates that they are essential descriptors of the "voiles d'or" (veils of gold). Fauré scholars often quote his comments on "the successful complement" music makes to poetry. For all the adaptations Fauré makes to the texts he chooses and sets to music, his unshakable belief is in the task of the musician "to understand and feel with one's poet."³⁵⁰ His choices of specific emphases on particular descriptors reflect that belief.

The prosody of Fauré's final song cycle, "L'horizon chimérique" draws on the vast menu of his life's practices.³⁵¹ The extensive details provided in Table 17 are largely self-explanatory. The most unexpected element of the prosody in this cycle is the number of times Fauré sets syllables with primary beats aligned with the measure's downbeat. This has been a longstanding practice among his peers who compose *mélodies*, as my earlier survey demonstrated. It appears that Fauré analyzed and utilized specifically speech-like rhythms and primarily stepwise melodic attributes of his native French tongue in the shaping of his final vocal compositions. Fauré created *mélodies* in a new mode for "modern" French song.

³⁵⁰ Part of Fauré's response to an article 'Sous la musique que faut-il mettre: de beaux vers, de mauvais, des vers libres, de la prose?' *Musica*, no. 101 (February 1911), 38. As quoted and cited in Nectoux, *A Musical Life*, 354.

³⁵¹ http://erato.uvt.nl/files/imglnks/usimg/4/4e/IMSLP08814-Faure_horizon_chimerique_op118.pdf (accessed August 4, 2010).

Table 17. *L'horizon chimérique*

Order in Cycle	Meter signature	Poet: de la Ville de Mirmont Composed and Published: 1921	Details of Prosodic Approach
1	3/4	<p><i>La mer est infinie et mes rêves sont fous</i></p> <p>Primary/Secondary Acc. = 71% Tie on beat 1 = 12.9% Melodic deflection = 9.7% Rest on beat 1 (m.16) = 3.2% Personal pronoun (m.26) = 3.2%</p>	<p>Twenty-two measures have the prosodic downbeat or a secondary accent on beat 1; comparable to rates of his earlier peers, more than Fauré uses in his earlier <i>mélodies</i>. Downbeat deflections determined by longest note value, to beats two and three in mm.2*, 5*, 12, 13*, 18*, 21, 26, 30, 31. (*= also has syllable with secondary accent on beat one) Melodic accents and “negations” of accent play role in mm.7, 10, 16. Syncopation and melodic accent in m.19 is one measure in 6/8: “<i>Aux vaisseaux que mon cœur dans leur fuite...</i>”</p>
2	3/4	<p><i>Je me suis embarqué sur un vaisseau qui danse</i></p> <p>Primary/Secondary Acc. = 80.5% Tie on beat 1 = 9.8% Melodic deflection(m.44) = 2.4% Rest on beat 1 = 7.3% <i>e-muet</i> on beat 1 (m.46) = 3.2%</p>	<p>Twenty-six measures have textual downbeats on beat 1, most of these in first half of song. Deflections of downbeat to beat two evidenced in longest note values, in mm.5*, 13*, 18*, 24*, 25*, 26*, 35*, 41, 44. To beat three in mm.2, 31. (*= also has syllable with secondary accent on beat 1) Syncopation in m.32 reflects spoken prosody, deflects downbeat (but has conjunction, <i>qui</i>, on downbeat); sing as one measure in 6/8: “<i>qui n’est plus qu’une image effacée...</i>” Sequential hemiolas in mm.39-44.</p>
3	4/4, brief 2/4	<p><i>Diane, Séléne lune de beau metal</i></p> <p>Primary/Secondary Acc. = 82.4% Tie on beat 1 (m.5) = 5.9% Melodic deflections = 11.8%</p>	<p>Fourteen measures in this brief <i>mélodie</i> have either primary or <i>accent mobile</i> downbeat on first beat of the measure; when the longer note value occurs later in measure (mm. 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 18), that is the primary accent, but ‘acceptable’ for performance if not recognized; <u>except</u> in m.13, where note values delineate “<i>de ta lim(pi)dité,</i>” itself further subordinate (along with m.14) to accent in m.15 on <i>âmes</i>. Also mark downbeat deflection in m.19, to beat 2.</p>
4	12/ 8	<p><i>Vaisseaux, nous vous aurons aimés en pure perte</i></p> <p>Primary/Secondary Acc. = 84.6% Tie on beat 1 = 7.7% Melodic deflection (m.4) = 3.8% Rest on beat 1 (m.6) = 3.8%</p>	<p>Twenty-one measures may be performed with beat 1 downbeat, either as primary or secondary accent. As in prior <i>mélodie</i>, longer values later in measure denote primary accent in mm. 3, 5, 15, 22, 23, and 25. Syncopations in mm.4, 12, 16, and 19 are half-measure settings of text in 6/4 time (3/4 for the half-measure); m. 19, <i>désirs</i> is highlighted by melodic negation on <i>sont</i>; the other three half-measures provide rhythmic deflection. Measure 21 has two accents, one is on beat 1; beat 4 has melodic accentuation. Rhythmic deflections to beat 2 in mm. 15 and 23, to beat 3 as noted in m.19, also in mm.22, 24, 26.</p>

5.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

My initial investigation into the prosody exemplified in the *mélodies* of Gabriel Fauré, in the previous chapter, identified and traced the development of his earliest and most basic techniques in manipulating French text in song, with piano and willing singers. This chapter opens with a closer look at Fauré's solo vocal works of his mid-career, the time period covered at the close of Chapter 4. This is a time when he is creating well-received *mélodies*, but not advancing his career as smoothly as a few of his equally talented compositional peers. A strictly numerical analysis of prosodic techniques utilized by Fauré and other French composers of song to mitigate the mismatch of French prosody's progressive lengthening and the musical downbeat is presented to identify those practices most frequently called on by his peers. Twenty-seven *mélodies* of Duparc, Massenet, Debussy, Chausson, and Chabrier examined for this comparison reveal that they rely principally on a short list of procedures:

1. Placement of syllables receiving primary or secondary prosodic accent on strong beats;
2. Using either a rest on beat 1, or a tie originating in the previous measure to avoid location of text on the downbeat;
3. Alignment of conjunctions (most commonly *et* [and]; but also *mais* [but] and *quand* [when, or whenever]); prepositions (frequently *dans* [in]), personal pronouns (such as *je* [I], *tu* [you, informal singular]), or—more rarely—an exclamation of emphasis (*Ah!* or *O*), with the musical downbeat.

The survey reveals a trend over time toward a greater alignment of primary and secondary prosodic accentuations with the downbeat. In the eleven pieces by Gabriel Fauré which I compared with the works by the other five composers, there was a significant increase between the alignments found in the six songs composed before 1880 (averaging 67.6 percent)

and those from the period 1880-1894 (averaging 73.4 percent); the details provided in Table 8 clarify the variation even more. His peers' utilization of this technique also increased in their later songs. Of Chabrier's four songs composed in 1889, three show an alignment of primary and secondary stresses with the downbeat from 81.4 percent to 87.5 percent of the time. Two of Debussy's "Trois chansons de Bilitis" (Three songs of Bilitis) (1898) only use two techniques—these alignments of stress and downbeat rests, in an 80 percent/20 percent split; the other *mélodie* is a 45 percent/35 percent split, with conjunctions, a personal pronoun and a tie accounting for the remaining 20 percent.

Fauré's *mélodies* demonstrate much less reliance on downbeat rests, and on conjunctions, prepositions or personal pronouns on the downbeat than the other five surveyed. The practice of placing shorter value notes on the initial beat of the measure to negate the effect of or to "deflect" the rhythmic stress away from the downbeat is an uncommon technique among Fauré's peers. Only Emmanuel Chabrier and Ernest Chausson make fairly routine use of it, demonstrating an awareness of the nuances in their native language in many ways equal to Fauré. The *mélodies* of both Chabrier and Chausson manifest rhythmic complexities in many ways similar to those of Fauré: examples are given of places where the voice vacillates between 6/8 and 3/4 time, and a passage in Chabrier's "Toutes les fleurs!" is demonstrated to contain "triplet" rhythms that cross the barline. Chabrier scholar Steven Huebner notes that Chabrier's music "has a penchant for cross-rhythms and syncopations," which much like Fauré's musical palette, in addition, pushes the musical envelope at the end of the nineteenth century.³⁵² Only Chabrier, and only in that single "triplet" passage in one of his five *mélodies*, seemed to manipulate his text-setting in regard to the internal beats of the measure. No other composers in the survey indicate,

³⁵² Steven Huebner. "Chabrier, Emmanuel." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/05351> (accessed February 4, 2012).

via evidence in the music, that they did so. The most common approach appears to have been the three techniques listed above. Gabriel Fauré's early vocal settings, the prosodic practice he establishes and the extent to which he follows his changeable rhythmic tendencies in the vocal part are quite unique. And while those of the five peers who continued to compose music moved on to other genres, Fauré continued to compose a large number of songs, and his techniques continued to evolve, as well.

The balance of the present chapter completes the examination of Fauré's solo vocal works begun in the previous chapter. One strand central to this chapter is tracing the continuing development in Fauré's songs toward a prosodic voice that replicates as clearly as possible the rhythms of spoken French. By the 1890s, the composer is writing *mélodies* in such natural prosodic rhythms that even the non-native can locate the intended stresses in the melodic line—provided one is not expecting them to remain solely bound to the meter and barline. The steps to locating prosodic (and therefore sung) stresses are laid out using the example of a lengthy vocal phrase from “La rose (Ode anacréontique).”

The mature and late style periods comprise works that reveal the composer's consideration of deeper means of expression through rhythmic manipulation of the texts in the musical settings. Examples are shown of the notation invoking head-spinning *baisers* (kisses) in “Lydia,” followed by several examples from *La bonne chanson*. At times, Fauré's musical references are bold and blatant, as in the two differing points of view painted in “Avant que tu ne t'en ailles” (Before you leave). On the other hand, there are occasional points in a *mélodie* here or there that reveal linguistic awareness coordinated with rhythmic nuance on a phonemic scale. Such is the case in the example given from “La fleur qui va sur l'eau” (The flower floating on the water), in which the rather stretched setting of the elastic phonemes of “une bouée” (a buoy)

are contrasted to the quick and flighty “pour les papillons” (for the butterflies) (Figure 74). A later example of what I argue is the precise placement of the text for expressive reasons in the title phrase of “Donc, ce sera par un clair jour d’été” (Thus, it will be on a clear summer’s day), where the longer note values point out the textual emphases. The singer-performer following those particular accentuations, and not those of the barline and time signature, will find the “jour d’été” easily draws into a smile; while emphasis according to the barline and meter does not have the same effect. Finally, there are “**Leurs** courtes vestes de soie and **Leurs** longues robes à queues,” from Fauré’s “Mandoline”—purposefully exaggerated as a reflection of their self-importance, if we take Graham Johnson’s narrative into consideration (see pp. 204-205).

6.0 REFLECTIONS, FUTURE RESEARCH, AND CONCLUSIONS

The elocutionary disappearance of the poet mean[s] an investment in expressive syntax at the expense of naturalism and self-presentation, or a focus on the words to the greatest possible exclusion of the speaker... for what is most musical (and Fauréan) about [the Parnassian poet] Mallarmé's idea is its preference for words... as a vehicle for a personal sensibility.³⁵³

If we begin to study a Fauréan *mélodie* with the mindset that whatever the composer intended is accessible in his expressive syntax, through his careful manipulation of the words at the nexus of text and music, we must recognize the call to scrupulously avoid privileging our own interpretation of the music. I argue that Fauré strove for “the greatest possible exclusion of the speaker,” namely the singer. His inferred accentuations, taken over from spoken French, are deliberately meant to inform the singer-performer of the composer's own interpretation of the poetic text. The patterns of accentuation revealed in the spoken prosody reinterpret the meter signature and frequently pass through barlines devoid of accentuation, in a technique similar to that recognized in Fauré's instrumental music.

The evidence presented in my study supports identification of chameleon-like aspects of the French tongue—seen chiefly in the changing rhythms of the text relative to the music. These changeable rhythms as they appear in Fauré's *mélodies* have challenged artistic expression for many years; most of the difficulty has been due to the performer's assumption that the meter

³⁵³ Caballero, *Fauré and French Musical Aesthetics*, 254.

signature indicated in the score also defines, as it usually does, the subdivisions of the beat within the measure. But strict adherence to the notated meter is not what Fauré's prosody calls for; in fact, the evidence indicates that what is applicable in the *mélodies* is nearly always a deliberate disregard for it. Before the present study, there is no record of any effort to decode the unnotated meters of the text settings within this substantial body of songs. The reassignments of accent according to French prosody (and *not* according to barlines) serve here as a means to the sensitive composer's expression, enabling him to pinpoint meaning within a narrower range of the music's possible interpretations.

Henri Morier's phonological analysis of the French language and its intersection with poetry point to what appear to be elements of an ongoing quest for refined comprehension of the features of French poetry. The fourth edition of Morier's definitive tome was published in 1989; now twenty years later, its graphically supported insights continue to challenge and clarify minute details of French verse.³⁵⁴ More than a century after the creation of most of the *mélodies* under discussion here, some of Morier's literary definitions still read like hypotheses. Morier's audience is French literature academics. The following quote is from his definition of *accent*:

Thus, the accent of French changes its form according to the will of phonetics, to its place in the rhythmical weaving and to the melodic line of the phrase, similar to the way in nature insects change according to circumstances of climate or season, being alternately larva or butterflies, with wing colors of spring or summer. It is the phenomenon of polymorphism. It is to that, as much as to the absence of intensity as a dominant factor, that the French oxytonic accent owes its qualities of variety, of sweetness and of discretion. (Ainsi, l'accent du français change de forme au gré du phonétisme, de sa place dans la trame rythmique et dans la ligne mélodique de la phrase, comme changent, dans la nature, au gré des circonstances, du climat, de la saison, ces insectes qui sont tour à tour larve ou papillon, vanesse de printemps, vanesse d'été. C'est le phénomène du polymorphisme. C'est à lui, autant qu'à l'absence de

³⁵⁴ Morier makes frequent reference to the graphic results from a device he utilizes which produces a visual graph of enunciated sound, the *mingogramme*. Henri Morier, *Dictionnaire de poésie et de rhétorique*, 4th edition (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1989), 17.

l'intensité comme facteur dominant, que l'accent français oxyton doit ses qualités de variété, de douceur et de discrétion.)³⁵⁵

The variety inherent in the French language is both an opportunity for construction of concise interpretation and, alternately, the root of rampant misinterpretation. One's creative use of the language's variations offers unparalleled opportunity. It should not be surprising that questions of meaning persist in this case, where Fauré does not yield to musical tradition—i.e., the barline, or notated meter—in his quest for precision and ultimate personal expression.

6.1 FUTURE DIRECTIONS

My study began as an inquiry into issues of French prosody in historical genres of vocal music. Ultimately, the goal of this study has been to deconstruct and examine the nuances inherent in the prosodic practice of Gabriel Fauré, as exhibited in the numerous *mélodies* composed during the course of a long career. As such, it has revealed a strong rationale for the perceived misplacements of prosodic accent in his songs. The investigation also brought to light other areas for investigation and clarification.

I am curious about Fauré's penchant for women singers performing texts from the male-narrator point of view, a fairly common practice at the time. Was it merely seen as a socially acceptable venue for women to express their own sexual longings? More specifically in this case, were those longings, set to music by the sometimes sexually unfulfilled and/or frustrated man, Gabriel Fauré, acts of fulfillment in some way, as an expression of Fauré's own sexual desires when sung by women? It should be pointed out that although he was openly involved

³⁵⁵ Morier, 40-41.

romantically with the singer Emma Bardac—prior to her divorce from her first husband, a prominent banker, and her subsequent affair with and marriage to Claude Debussy—there is no evidence suggesting that he engaged in regular liaisons with his female singer-performers.

One lingering question I have mentioned during the course of my narrative is Fauré’s ostensibly deliberate accentuation of the definite article in connection with nouns of nature, or where the noun appears to be an object of singularity, unique character, or personification. There is no evidence of the same practice in the song compositions of his peers, but that does not rule out its use by others beyond the scope of my survey. It would be interesting to seek out evidence in other sources, even in general written or rhetorical contexts of the era, since it is a text-related question. The accented article is a conundrum, and it does appear to deliberately target certain types of nouns. I propose that it may carry symbolic meaning in its accented guise.³⁵⁶

Accentuations on personal pronouns such as *je* (I), *tu* (you, informal singular), or *nous* (we) may be explicable via rhetorical methodology; Morier expounds at length upon their presence in poetry as *embrayages rhétoriques* (rhetorical shifters);³⁵⁷ *embrayage* is a term used by Finnish semiotician Eero Tarasti, translating it as “engagement,” in the sense of returning toward the center of semiotic engagement.³⁵⁸ If Morier intends *embrayages rhétoriques* to mean “rhetorical engagement,” then his description of the term relative to the personal pronouns *je*, *tu*, and so on makes sense. One can see how such words “engage” the listener, inviting audience members to take an intellectual or sensual ownership of the text thus prefaced.

³⁵⁶ See the discussion of *symbole*. Morier, 1136-1145.

³⁵⁷ Morier, 400-406.

³⁵⁸ Eero Tarasti, *A Theory of Musical Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 197.

Another related issue stems from Camille Saint-Saëns' complaints about the poor prosody of many French songs composed in the mid-nineteenth century. Frits Noske, noting Saint-Saëns' conservative approach, observed the composer's particular attraction to the technical aspects of the music-text relationship, while to many of his students "the interior atmosphere [of the poem] acquires great importance to the composer...for only music possesses the faculty of expressing the inexpressible and thus realizing [that] interior atmosphere."³⁵⁹ I believe my results demonstrate conclusively that Fauré harnessed and replicated the changing patterns of rhythms inherent in the French language in the service of his personal expression of otherwise inexpressible meaning beyond the words themselves. One may yet ask, how does Fauré's manipulation of melodic line define shades of meaning, when that feature of his *mélodies* is inspected in light of the arguments presented here for his subtly shifting rhythmic complexity?

Native speakers of French who manipulate its words, such as French poets, novelists, and composers of vocal music, convey a particular attraction to the notion of variety. Variety in phrasing is admired in French poetry and in its songs. Is its high value a direct reflection of the varied nature of French prosodic phrases? Or, the reverse: does the pleasure thus gained encourage the phrasal variety? Another question one may pose is relevant only in recent years: Is variety of the kind referenced by various French theorists desirable because its decoding stimulates the neurological pathways in a particular and pleasurable manner? The growing field of neuromusical research encompasses cognitive studies related to the processing of musical stimuli. In recent years, scientific studies have begun investigations into relationships between the cognitive processing of musical and linguistic signals that may lead to relevant revelations.³⁶⁰

³⁵⁹ Noske, 68-69, 83-84.

³⁶⁰ Richard D. Edwards, "The Musical Brain Imaging Research Database (MusicBIRD)" (session paper, Ohio Music Educators Association annual conference, Cincinnati, OH, January 15, 2011).

A 2008 study, for example, found right-brain correlations of higher activity during linguistic processing tasks while simultaneously hearing unexpected Neopolitan chords, versus standard tonic chord resolutions.³⁶¹

On the other hand, if the question of a common link between musical expectations and linguistic comprehension of a sung text in French does not yield answers through cognitive research, there may be a much simpler explanation. The rise in popularity of the *opéra-comique* during the eighteenth century is well documented. Deliberate misaccentuations incorporated into these works to give an “authentically rustic” flavor to their narrative were discussed in Chapter 3. Perhaps the audience’s enjoyment of the comic effects caused by displacements of accent (that at times still occur) is the only necessary explanation.

In Chapter 5, I addressed indications of “deeper expression” through Fauré’s rhythmic manipulations. Further research into these attributes of Fauré’s and others’ complex approaches to rhythm in the *mélodies* may be able to successfully connect composers’ attempts to “express the inexpressible” with semiotic studies. Eero Tarasti presents a semiotic analysis of Fauré’s “Après un rêve” (1877) in a chapter discussing music and literature in his text, *A Theory of Musical Semiotics*.³⁶² His analysis sheds light on multiple aspects of its semiotic organization, first utilizing methods stemming from harmonic analysis (i.e., Sundberg’s application of numerical values to chordal analysis, to determine “harmonic tension”) and closing with descriptions of expressive qualities found in twenty-two aural recordings of this particular

³⁶¹ Nicolaus Steinbeis and Stefan Koelsch, “Shared Neural Resources between Music and Language indicate Semantic Processing of Musical Tension-resolution Patterns” (*Cerebral Cortex* [18/5]: 1169-1178). The observed French attraction to a variety of approaches to rhythms at the barline has been proposed as an area for cognitive research by Per Aage Brandt of Case Western Reserve University (personal communication, 11/07).

³⁶² Tarasti, 193-208, 293-301.

mélodie from the archives of the Finnish Broadcasting Company.³⁶³ Although necessarily lacking the visual aspect in his report (but nevertheless discussing vocal and instrumental techniques in regard to expression of the text), Tarasti observes certain features of the work that appear related to some of the rhythmic and linguistic considerations addressed in my study: (1) the association of melismatic triplets in several places with the element of mystery, specifically the *nuit mystérieuse* (mysterious night) from which the narrator has awakened;³⁶⁴ (2) the “call” *topoi* Tarasti identifies, in the rising interval of a fourth (an interval found in a bugle’s revelry call) at *Tu m’appelais* (You call me, m.17), and *Je t’appelle* (I call you, referring to the night from which the narrator has awakened; mm.34-35);³⁶⁵ and (3) the association of the song’s many dark vowels with night, in the first part of the setting when the narrator dreams, that are then largely replaced by brighter vowels in the latter half of the song when the narrator is fully awake.³⁶⁶ The last point would be more significant, I believe, had Fauré not merely selected his texts but also written them.³⁶⁷ Regardless, Tarasti’s analysis clearly demonstrates that there is much potential for more semiotic analyses of Fauré *mélodies* using his methods.

My historical research extended beyond Gabriel Fauré and his immediate social context to the era of one of the roots of French prosodic practice, that of the *vers mesuré* of the late sixteenth century. I have not, however, dwelled greatly on the social *milieu* of the earlier time period; my study did touch more on cultural changes in the intervening centuries, from Lully to the end of the eighteenth century and also somewhat on the nationalism so prevalent during Fauré’s lifetime. The French search for national identity in the early modern era is closely

³⁶³ Ibid., 199.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 200.

³⁶⁶ Ibid., 203.

³⁶⁷ The author has identified Richard Wagner’s specific use of vowel ‘colors’ in certain passages of *Der Ring*. Mary E. Ober, “Waking the Wala, through *Stabreim* and Musical Setting,” unpublished paper.

connected to the study and preservation of its language, and also with its cultural and artistic expression. The defeat of the French army at the hands of the Prussians in 1870 led to a national crisis of confidence. Gabriel Fauré was one of the founding members of the Société Nationale de Musique; its establishment on February 25, 1871 was the direct result of the Franco-Prussian War's outcome. Reactions favoring and decrying the groundbreaking music of Wagner were of course factors in the push by French composers for promotion of French music during this period. Fauré was by all accounts an admirer of Wagner's music, but Fauré's music has been judged to be stylistically independent of Wagner's influence.³⁶⁸ There is ample room for greater connections to be made between the compositional styles and text-setting practices of composers mentioned in the course of this study and their social surroundings; certainly the culture of the semiosphere defined by the borders of European French-speaking lands has not yet revealed all its enigmas.³⁶⁹

While I focus on the works of Gabriel Fauré, there are other historical French vocal music genres and different composers' works that have been judged by academia at one time or another to be more or less successful in their setting of French text; the French-language chansons of Josquin Des Prez are one successful example.³⁷⁰ A more thorough investigation into issues of French prosody inclusive of other genres, including current art music and popular styles, has to my knowledge not yet been attempted.

³⁶⁸ Wagner's manipulation of his texts harnessed German consonants and vowels, the language's phonemes, in the service of his music. Fauré taps into a basic feature of French: its rhythms. They are similarly driven.

³⁶⁹ Historian Jane Fulcher traces many official state projects and events between the end of the First World War and the outbreak of World War II; many elements of the period worked together to emphasize French cultural identity, to win support for the French state, and to sustain it during both wars. Jane Fulcher, *The Composer as Intellectual: Music and Ideology in France, 1914-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 3-96. See also Jane Fulcher, *French Cultural Politics and Music: From the Dreyfus Affair to the First World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

³⁷⁰ For instance, many French madrigals, chansons, and the French works of Josquin Des Prez are praiseworthy.

6.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

Antoine Boësset's 1628 *air de cour*, “Que servent tes conseilz,” evidences the singular success of this composer in connecting rhetorical practice and song composition. Historical claims in theoretical sources about the *air de cour's* imitation of French speech patterns has been a conundrum to modern scholars. Recent publications emanating from France and the work of American Baroque scholar Patricia Ranum have brought important insights to the field. The discovery of Jacques de Gouÿ's notes by Théodora Psychoyou has been of strategic significance.

The contributions of French philologist Henri Morier to our understanding of French linguistic characteristics are also important. Ranum's application of Morier's findings to Baroque airs opened the door to construction of an important link between music and French rhetoric. Although Morier's recognition of progressive lengthening was not found to have a strong connection to the *air de cour*, this trait is central to nineteenth-century song composition.

French vocal music underwent extensive stylistic upheaval between the time of Lully and the French Revolution. The operatic monopoly of Jean-Baptiste Lully and his disciples effectively froze vanishing rhetorical practices into the scores of dozens of newly created but old style *tragédies lyriques* well into the eighteenth century. The analytical theories of Jean-Phillipe Rameau liberated music from its subservience to the text, but also opened the floodgates to an unabated stream of ungrounded prosodic practice from the pens of composers—many of whom now focused their creativity on popular genres. The vocal music of the *Forains* largely ignored nuances of the French language, drawing inspiration as it did from popular chansons whose charm depended to a significant degree on the unpolished nature of their prosody. The popularity of the *operas-comiques* grew exponentially in the bourgeoisie and upper classes during the course of the eighteenth century, first eclipsing and then radically changing the

subject matter of serious operas in the capital city. All the while, there was an ongoing debate among the intelligentsia over the “suitability” of French language (as opposed to Italian) for the opera.

France’s social chaos during the decades at the end of the eighteenth century and those opening the nineteenth effectively closed many bridges to France’s past for several generations. The result that directly affected Fauré was the utter loss of tradition in specific arenas of the fine arts, due to the Revolution and ensuing social unrest. The classical education and musical training he received at L’École Niedermeyer, however, gave the young composer a broader, more liberal grounding in historical and current music styles than he would have obtained at the Paris Conservatoire.

The instrumental music of Gabriel Fauré is known to have an inclination toward multiple layers of rhythms subject to differing interpretations that occur simultaneously. Despite that knowledge, the prosodic practice within his solo songs has been faulted for awkward accentuations. I argue that the vocal part of his *mélodies* exhibits the same rhythmic tendencies as is found in the piano accompaniment, and in his purely instrumental works. The rhythm of a text as Fauré sets it directly reflects its spoken prosody. Gabriel Fauré’s use of alternate definitions of the meter signature allows him the flexibility to move between the ever-changing scansion of his poetic lines. The inclusion of hemiolas, triplets, and other mixed metrical devices also expand the composer’s available tools. The prosodic aspect of Fauré’s solo vocal music has not been examined before in this light.

As discussed in previous chapters on the historical practice of French prosody in song, the structure of the French language as spoken or sung is antithetical to a musical style that requires regularly recurring beats or rhythms. French song is fundamentally different from most

other European languages in this regard. The French language does not of itself have strongly accentuated or stressed words—at least not as heavily marked as in German, Italian or English. Accents or stresses can and do occur in French in an optional type of oratorical or declamatory accent, whereby the speaker/performer “raises the voice” to express the desired emphasis of the word, person’s name, or so on. Beyond the oratorical accent, French is not a completely “unaccented” language, as is sometimes said; the normal stresses on particular words in conversation proceed in grouping of words of variable length. Within these prosodic units, the syllables typically increase in duration from short to long as the prosodic phrase is enunciated, in a phenomenon called the *loi de progression* (progressive lengthening) by Henri Morier.³⁷¹ The prosodic unit ends with the word or syllable of the greatest duration.

If the present study has made but one point clear, it is that the innate traits of the French language engendered multiple efforts between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries to successfully connect its rhythms with vocal music. Its very manner of speech is not easily communicated using the same broad brush, the same turns of phrase or melody, as those of other artistic cultures in Europe. French poetry as historically structured consists of lines of counted syllables, only, without reference to any sense of strong or weak syllables within prosodic units comprising the line of verse, although theories of “short” and “long” were argued and more or less given credence in French rhetorical culture from the end of the sixteenth century.

Strong and weak beats in music are occurrences of stressed or unstressed musical events (i.e., those musical sounds given more or less intensity or *volume* in their production) within the rhythmic flow of a composition. The relatively weak stresses normally produced in spoken French occur in prescribed ways determined by common practice in the French linguistic

³⁷¹ Morier, 906, 1239.

community. Many regularly accentuated words in French receive stress on the final syllable of the word, in an “end accent.” Others have nearly equal stress on two or more syllables; such as is the case in many verbs in infinitive form (the “to be” form, in English), as well as declined verbs in the form of first- or second-person, plural (with the *-ons* or *-ez* ending, respectively). Still other words do not receive any stress other than the emphatic accent, when applied. Other words are of a nature involving “secondary accents,” or *accents mobiles*, as Susan Youens defines them, meaning that such words may be accented or not, depending on the linguistic context.

Therefore, a number of words or syllables previously believed to be poorly set in positions of accent when they should not be, or the reverse when they ought to be accented, reveal themselves instead as quiet actors in Fauré’s prosodic plan. In many Fauréan *mélodies*, when there is an appearance of a misaccentuation, there is instead a solution to be found, as Claire Croiza advised, by studying the text apart from the music. This presents a complication for the non-French performer, particularly in a situation such as that found in Fauré’s earliest songs, where the tonic accents of words or syllables frequently do not follow the notated meter signature. How can a non-native determine the locations of the prosodic accents? In the songs where Fauré “redefines” the notated meter or makes use of hemiolas, non-notated triplets, or other rhythmic devices, it is even more difficult for the non-French performer to correctly assign accentuation. This study opens the door to call for a resource that may assist the non-French speaker, especially in the earliest songs before Fauré began to systematically place syllables of primary or secondary accent on the downbeat of the measure. The detailed tables and notated examples presented and discussed in chapters four and five point out many of the prosodic

features of the songs, where the singer-performer ought to be made aware of nuances in the text-setting and accentuation.

The *mélodie* as a genre and the Parisian *salons* as desirable and productive venues for new compositions and their performances by a competent and admired coterie of amateur musicians was a unique and fortuitous confluence in late nineteenth-century France. The salons became the proving grounds for many a budding composer, where pianos, singers, and all manner of portable instruments held court. Gabriel Fauré, first introduced to this flourishing attribute of Parisian society by his mentor and lifelong friend, Camille Saint-Saëns, became a regular participant. The art songs that composers wrote for the salons frequently were viewed as “practice compositions,” leading to the greater goals of large-scale performance works.

Composition for the opera—whether as serious drama or for the Opéra-Comique—was typically the prize to be sought. For reasons largely unknown, that door was closed to Gabriel Fauré for much of his career. Other composers more rapidly successful at moving through their *mélodie* ‘stage,’ as it were, moved to the upper echelons of compositional respectability. The most compelling arguments as to why Gabriel Fauré did not succeed as rapidly are linked, first, to his unusual preparation at L’École Niedermeyer and the handicap that training presented in the view of those in positions of power in the Parisian musical echelons; and secondly, to the resulting drain on his creative energies caused by the necessity of working however he could to support his wife and sons. A third reason, quite compelling, is the very nature of his quite misunderstood, unique approach to the prosody of his chosen poetic texts.

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