

FAURÉ'S *LA BONNE CHANSON*: A JOURNEY OF LOVE AND REBIRTH

by

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Fauré's *La bonne chanson*: A Journey of Love and Rebirth

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Gabriel Fauré's *La bonne chanson*, Op. 61 is a song cycle of nine songs. The cycle was composed between 1892 and 1894, while Fauré was having an affair with an amateur singer, Emma Bardac. Fauré's selection of Paul Verlaine's poems reflects his own emotional journey at the time. Musically, Fauré utilized several recurring elements to bring coherence to the cycle. However, while many sources focus on the occurrences of these themes, they do not examine whether or not these musical elements have a connection to the overall story which is integral to the cycle.

Therefore, I was motivated to analyze this cycle with two goals. The first goal is to uncover the hidden story suggested by Fauré's selection and order of Verlaine's poems. The second goal is to investigate connections between the recurring musical themes and the story.

I have identified two central ideas that define the hidden story of *La bonne chanson*. The first central idea is the narrator's hope to be guided by his beloved. The second central idea is his hope of new life. In the music, there are six recurring musical elements that depict and support these two central ideas. In other words, under Fauré's organization of song sequence and the recurring musical elements, one can see that the narrator's hopes of his beloved's guidance and new life are fulfilled.

In this paper, I will first examine how the two central ideas stem from the lives of Verlaine and Fauré. Next, I will introduce the six recurring musical elements that support these central ideas. Then, in my analysis, I will examine how these six elements depict the two central ideas that drive the development of the story. In the end, I will provide performance insights for musicians who are preparing or teaching this cycle. In conclusion, this paper aims to provide collaborative pianists and vocalists with a better appreciation of

the cycle's overall structure and musical elements in order to inspire them to give a more meaningful performance.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

La bonne chanson is a song cycle written by Gabriel Fauré in 1894. As I was preparing this work for my degree recital, I was fascinated by the complexity of its harmonic language, thematic organization and structure. *La bonne chanson* has already been the subject of a lot of research, which will be cited below. The basic background information about this cycle is well understood. *La bonne chanson* is based on nine poems from Paul Verlaine's collection of the same name. Fauré intentionally selected specific poems from the collection in order to reflect his own emotional journey. In addition, Fauré uses several musical elements throughout the cycle to bring musical coherence. However, while other studies have shown the occurrences of these musical elements, not many have investigated whether or not there is a connection between these elements and the overall story.

Therefore, I was motivated to investigate the possibility of connections between the poems and the recurring musical elements. After examining the content of the poems, I have discovered two central ideas that are interwoven throughout the entire cycle. The first central idea is the desire to be guided by a loved one. The second idea is the hope of a new life. These two ideas seem to reflect the life experience of both Fauré and Verlaine. These ideas are paramount because they are prevalent throughout the cycle. In addition, they appear to govern the development of the story. In the poems and the music, one can see that the main character's wishes are fulfilled, and he receives the guidance and new life that he so desires as the story unfolds.

On a practical level, this paper hopes to assist musicians through deepening their appreciation of the music and enriching their performances by understanding the role of significant musical elements in the cycle. Beyond the practical implications for musicians, my thesis aims to show that Fauré's organization of recurring musical elements all work to

depict the two central ideas that drive the core story forwards. My research has uncovered what I believe to be connections, both obvious and subtle, in the music and the poems that contribute not only to the development of the story but also to the musical symbolization of Fauré's love affair.

CHAPTER II

The Lives of Gabriel Fauré and Paul Verlaine

In *La bonne chanson*, one can find two central ideas that frame the structure of the story. The first idea is the hope of being guided by someone you love. The second idea is the hope of new life. Both ideas stem from the life experiences of Fauré and Verlaine at the time of composing *La bonne chanson*.

Before Verlaine met his wife, Mathilde Mauté, his life was on a self-destructive downward path. He “was already a potential alcoholic, was bisexual, and reacted with violence at the least provocation.”¹ When he met Mathilde, he fell in love at first sight. For him, she was like “a goddess who would save him from himself.”² He wanted Mathilde to be the leader in their relationship and “to inspire him, she was to cleanse him of his past and relieve him of his moral responsibilities.”³ To express his love for Mathilde, he composed twenty one poems as a wedding gift to her. These poems became known as *La bonne chanson*.

Fauré’s life before he met Emma bears some similarities to Verlaine’s. His life in his 30s was filled with stagnation. His engagement with Marianne Viardot was broken in 1877. He eventually married Marie Fremiet in 1883 but the marriage was loveless. His work as *maître de chapelle* and composer was not financially rewarding.⁴ Fauré had gone through a period of depression and a drought of inspiration until he met Emma in 1892. Their friendship blossomed into a passionate affair that led Fauré into an era of creativity and originality in his music. It was at this time Fauré started to compose songs using poems from Verlaine’s *La bonne chanson*. Emma had a charming light soprano voice and was an

¹ Wallace David Weber, “A Comparative Analysis of Text and Music in Gabriel Fauré’s ‘La Bonne Chanson’ and ‘Le Jardin Clos,’” (D.M.A. diss., University of Missouri, 1988), 19, accessed February 21, 2019, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

² Ibid., 19.

³ Ibid., 19-20.

⁴ Jean-Michel Nectoux, *Gabriel Fauré: A Musical Life*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 24-37.

accomplished sight-reader.⁵ Therefore, she was not only his muse but in addition was integral to his creative process in this work.

There is a similarity between Verlaine's and Fauré's lives at the time when they composed their work. Both of them were unhappy with their lives before they met the women they love. They both hoped that their beloved would lead them into a new chapter in their lives.

The Story Arc of *La bonne chanson*

Fauré's selection and ordering of Verlaine's poems outline a story that closely mirrors Fauré's emotional journey with Emma Bardac. More importantly, the development of this story is governed by the two central ideas.

While the central ideas are referenced frequently throughout the cycle, the first song does not mention either of the central ideas. It merely provides the narrator's impression of the woman. In other words, this song functions as a prologue to the main narrative of the story.

The second, third and fourth songs should be grouped together as they outline the next stage of the story. The second song is the first to reveal the two central ideas of the cycle. Therefore, it can be seen as the true beginning of the story. While the third song does not specifically mention any of the central ideas, there is evidence to suggest that the actual union of the two characters takes place in this song. Next, the fourth song provides confirmation that both characters are united as one thus rounding off the first half of the cycle. These three songs depict the narrator's wish and fulfilment of the first central idea.

The fifth song is a transitional point of the cycle. The narrator admits his love and this signifies that after the fulfilment of the first central idea, the narrator has achieved true love.

⁵ Ibid., 180.

From this point forward, the second half of the cycle begins. The sixth, seventh and eighth songs belong together as they are all about the character's new life in the future. To start this new stage of the story, the sixth song depicts scenes of dawn and the symbolic arrival of the sun. It connects back to the second song and confirms that the narrator's new life has arrived. After this new beginning, the seventh song is about his future wedding. Following on from that, the eighth song expresses the narrator's hope of his future life with his beloved and thus brings closure to the second half of the story. These three songs depict the fulfilment of the second central idea.

Fittingly, the ninth song functions as the epilogue of the story. Spring is a metaphor for new life and rebirth and the characters, despite all the difficulties in their past lives, have found their own true happiness.

The below table reflects a symmetry within the structure of the story outlined by *La bonne chanson*. Central to the story is the concept of the journey of love that leads to rebirth. The first and last songs function as the prologue and epilogue respectively. The second, third and fourth songs develop the story arc that is governed by the first central idea. The fifth song in the middle of the cycle is the transition from the first to the second central idea. The sixth, seventh and eighth songs are governed by the second central idea and depict the narrator's future life.

Song 1	Song 2-3-4	Song 5	Song 6-7-8	Song 9
Prologue: Introducing the main character	Development: Introducing the beloved. Narrator is united with her.	Transition: Narrator achieves true love	Future: The narrator's wishes have been fulfilled and he is heading to his new life	Epilogue: Rebirth

Table 1: The story arc of *La bonne chanson*

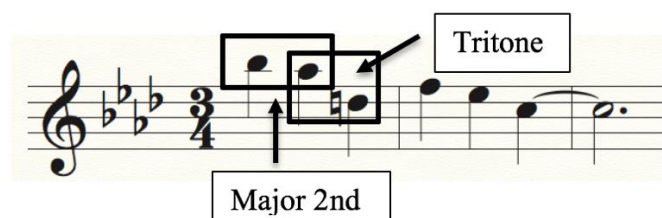
In many ways, the song cycle *La bonne chanson* is a mirror reflection of the journey Fauré took at this time in his life. The central ideas expressed in the music reflect his need to be led into a new life. Musically, there are many linkages that refer to these ideas. Understanding these references, no matter how subtle, would be beneficial for any performers and teachers who are preparing this material.

Cyclical Musical Elements

When analyzing this song cycle, I have discovered that Fauré's organization of six recurring musical elements can be interpreted as the realization of the two central ideas in the work. While some elements are more obvious, others are more subtle and open to interpretation. However, all these elements work cohesively to convey the story.

Among these six elements, the 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th and 6th elements have been identified by scholars such as Jean-Michel Nectoux⁶ and Robert Orledge.⁷ In addition, the 3rd element has been identified by Dan Howard Kinsinger.⁸ Robert Orledge, in his book, *Gabriel Fauré*, states that the function of these elements "is purely musical, for they are not linked with recurring poetic images or ideas, and thus have no similarity with Wagnerian leitmotifs."⁹ However, in my analysis, I have found that these elements are intrinsically connected with the two central ideas mentioned above and help outline the emotional journey of the narrator. Each of these elements has its own meaning and function within the cycle.

1st element: "Carlovingien"



⁶ Nectoux, *Gabriel Fauré: A Musical Life*, 184.

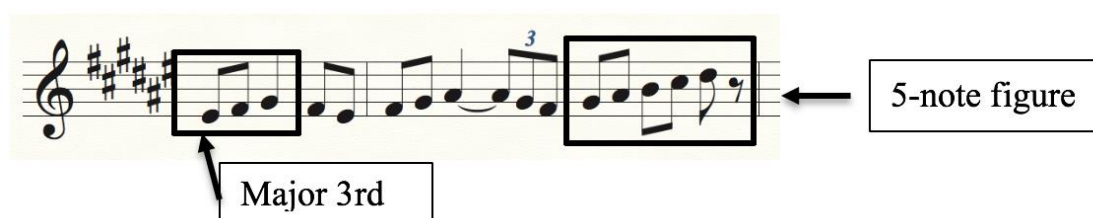
⁷ Robert Orledge, *Gabriel Fauré* (London: Eulenberg Books, 1979), 83.

⁸ Dan Howard Kinsinger, *The Seven Song Collections of Gabriel Fauré* (D.M.A. Thesis: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1971), 97.

⁹ Orledge, *Gabriel Fauré*, 81.

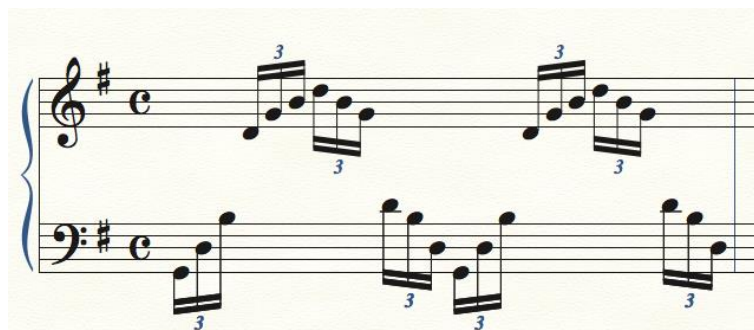
This element is a meandering melody that first occurs in the first song. It is commonly referred to as the “Carlovingien” element in reference to the last line of the song. The shape of this element is based on a descending second interval followed by a larger descending interval. (The specific intervals in the example above vary in other instances.) It is a core element that will recur in many subsequent songs and functions as a connecting thread for *La bonne chanson*. In this paper, this element will be labelled as the “Carlovingien” element.

2nd element: “Lydia”



This element is named after a quote from the composer’s earlier song, *Lydia*, Op. 4, no. 1. It has three noticeable features. First, it is built on a Lydian mode (major scale with #4). Second, the first three notes are in stepwise motion of a major 3rd interval. Third, there is a five-note ascending figure at the end of the element.¹⁰ Fauré would later create variations of this element using the above features. In this paper, this element will be labelled as the “Lydia” element.

3rd element: sixteenth triplet arpeggio



¹⁰ Orledge, *Gabriel Fauré*, 84.

This element is associated with any broken-chord texture in the piano that is based on 16th triplet rhythm. While the other five recurring elements are easy to recognize, this element occurs as the accompaniment in the piano. Kinsinger, in his thesis, *The Seven Song Collections of Gabriel Fauré*, named this element as motive 2.¹¹ His thesis, however, focuses purely on the structural function of this recurring material in the cycle. In my analysis, I find that this element and its variations are associated with the second central idea in the cycle. In this paper, this element will be labelled as the arpeggio element.

4th element: “Que je vous aime”



This element is commonly known as the “Que je vous aime” (That I love you) element. It first appears in the 5th song, in the vocal line, “Que je vous aime,” to express the narrator’s feelings to his love interest. This element recurs in the piano part of the seventh and eighth songs. In both instances, it symbolizes the love between the two characters.

5th element: “Birdsong”



elements. Musically, this element is a combination of two voices singing to each other. This duality can also be interpreted as the two main characters of the love story.

6th element: “Sun”



This element is known as the “sun” element. It appears at the end of the sixth song as a text painting of the golden sun and the arrival of light. It symbolizes the narrator’s new phase of life after his union with his beloved. Therefore, this element reappears in the seventh and ninth songs as one of the core elements. In this paper, this element will be labelled as the “sun” element.

Among the six musical elements, “Carlovingien” and “Lydia” are the most important elements because they represent the narrator and his beloved respectively. In other words, these two elements represent Fauré and Emma Bardac. The fact that the “Lydia” element represents Emma Bardac is obvious as the cycle is inspired by Fauré’s affair with her. In addition, in an 1902 interview, when questioned by a young critic, Louis Aguetant, Fauré admitted that this element refers to the singer. This singer very likely refers to Emma.¹² During their affair, the composer would bring the manuscripts of the songs and ask Emma to sing them. The musical setting of its first occurrence also seems to support this assumption. In the third song, after the “Lydia” element appears in m. 9, it is followed by the vocal line singing “Oh beloved,” which suggests that the “Lydia” element is a musical symbol of the narrator’s love interest. If the “Lydia” element represents Emma, then one can assume that the “Carlovingien” element represents Fauré.

¹² Orledge, *Gabriel Fauré*, 83.

Throughout the cycle, there are many instances where both elements appear next to each other, with the “Lydia” element followed by “Carlovingien.” If one assumes that the “Carlovingien” element represent Fauré, then this feature would perfectly depict the first central idea, that the narrator wishes to be led by his love interest. The close association of these two elements also symbolizes the two characters’ union.

CHAPTER III

Analysis

In *La bonne chanson*, the nine songs individually express different aspects of happiness and love. On a deeper level, two central ideas are interwoven with six recurring elements to outline an emotional journey that reflects Verlaine's and Faure's lives. In the following analysis, we will demonstrate how these musical elements reflect the central ideas of the work.

1. *Une Sainte en son auréole*

Une Sainte en son auréole acts as the beginning of the love story. This song introduces the narrator as the primary character in the story. The two main ideas of this cycle will revolve around this narrator and his emotional journey. The song expresses the narrator's impressions and feelings for a woman through the first element (the "Carlovingien" element).

The image shows a musical score for the song "Une Sainte en son auréole" by Fauré. The score is in 3/4 time, marked "Allegretto con moto" with a tempo of 138. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. A box highlights the first element, "Carlovingien element", which is a melodic phrase in the piano part. The lyrics are "Sainte en son au-ré-o-le, U-ne cha-te-laine en sa".

Example 1: Fauré, "Une Sainte en son auréole," *La bonne chanson*, mm. 1-9.

This element expresses a sweet, gentle and lovely aura. When Fauré introduces this element at the very beginning of the first song, the audience will sense the narrator's feelings

for the woman. This element repeats many times in variation throughout this song. These repetitions can be interpreted as the narrator's obsession with her. The element's emotion changes too as it cycles through different variations. While the original element expresses sweetness, its variations can convey heartache (mm. 44 - 47) and bliss (m. 48).

In addition, this element will represent the main character in the rest of the cycle. In the subsequent songs, it will join with the second element (the "Lydia" element) to depict the first central idea. Therefore, it is heavily interconnected throughout the rest of the cycle. Consequently, this element also functions as a connecting thread that brings coherence to the cycle.

2. Puisque l'aube grandit

Puisque l'aube grandit is a significant point of the story, as it reveals the first and second central ideas of the cycle, namely the narrator's hope that his love interest will lead him along the path to a new life. The woman's guidance and the hope of a new life will remain a core idea for the rest of the cycle. Musically, Fauré introduces the second and third elements that are associated with the second central idea, namely the hope of new life that is symbolized by dawn.

The image displays a musical score for the song "Puisque l'aube grandit" by Gabriel Fauré. The score is written for voice and piano. The vocal line is in the upper staff, and the piano accompaniment is in the lower staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo and mood are indicated as *con anima*. The lyrics are in French: "Puis - que l'aube gran - dit, puis-que voi-ci l'aube -". The score is divided into two systems. The first system shows the vocal line starting with a *p* (piano) dynamic and a *cresc.* (crescendo) marking. The piano accompaniment features a repeating pattern of eighth notes. A box labeled "3rd element" points to a specific piano accompaniment pattern. The second system shows the vocal line continuing with the lyrics "- re Puisqu' a - près m'a - voir". The piano accompaniment continues with the same pattern. A box labeled "2nd element: 5-note figure of Lydia" points to a specific vocal phrase. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (*p*, *cresc.*), articulation marks, and repeat signs.

Example 2: Fauré, "Puisque l'aube grandit," *La bonne chanson*, mm. 2-5.

Fauré uses the third element to begin this song that takes place in dawn. It depicts the narrator's excitement and anticipation of true love and happiness. Because of this characteristic, Fauré employs this texture in songs that are associated with dawn and with new life and hence are also connected with the second central idea. As the narrator's new life arrives in the sixth song, one can see this texture blossom in the second half of the cycle. Therefore, this accompaniment pattern serves as a connection between the first and second halves of the cycle.

The second musical element in this song is the vocal phrase at mm. 2-4 (see example 2). It contains the five-note ascending figure of the "Lydia" element. Under the context of

this song, the five-note figure is paired with the word *l'aurore* (dawn), which is associated with the second central idea as its rising contour can be seen as a text-painting of the rising sun. This can be interpreted as a metaphor for new life. As this figure is a fragment of the “Lydia” element, its appearance here can be interpreted as a prequel or introduction for the “Lydia” element, which will appear in the next song. In addition, this figure also serves as the motive in the third and fourth songs that Fauré uses to depict the first central idea.

This vocal phrase will reappear almost identically in the ninth song. As this phrase only has one reappearance in the cycle, it is not categorized with the six recurring elements. However, it is still a significant element because it connects the first half of the cycle to the second half and bring closure to the work.

3. *La lune blanche*

The poem describes the scenery in the wood at night time, at an exquisite hour, which implies sensuality. On the surface, this song doesn't seem to contribute to the development of the story. Consequently, Nectoux states that this song functions as an interlude between songs 2 and 4.¹³ However, the context of this song and its musical elements might suggest otherwise. Fauré introduces the complete second element in m. 9 and connects it to a variation of the first element in m. 12 that reflects the woman's guidance (see example 3 below).¹⁴ As this connection is a symbol of the two character's union one can assume that both characters have become one in this song. As their union has been realised, another step has been taken on their journey to a new life thus further developing the story.

¹³ Nectoux, *Gabriel Fauré: A Musical Life*, 183-184.

¹⁴ Kinsinger, *The Seven Song Collections of Gabriel Fauré*, 106.

The image displays a musical score for the song "La lune blanche" by Gabriel Fauré. It features a vocal line and two piano accompaniment elements. The vocal line is in French, with lyrics: "me - e", "bien - ai - mé - e". The piano accompaniment consists of two elements: the 2nd element, labeled "Lydia", and the 1st element, labeled "Carlovingien". The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *pp*, *cresc.*, and *f*.

2nd element:
Lydia

1st element:
Carlovingien

Example 3: Fauré, "La lune blanche," *La bonne chanson*, mm. 9-14.

4. *J'allais par des chemins perfides*

The next song, *J'allais par des chemins perfides*, functions as a reflection of the narrator's past life and the confirmation of the union between the two characters. The musical setting of this song is significant. Fauré repeatedly uses variations of both the first and second elements to reinforce the first central idea. He depicts the idea that his beloved has led him out of his past and into their new union. This song is a significant point of the cycle because it is a musical affirmation of their union which expresses the narrator's joy of leaving his difficult past behind.

The image displays a musical score for Fauré's "La bonne chanson," specifically measures 13-18. The score is written for voice and piano. The vocal line is in French, with lyrics: "Vos chères mains furent mes guides; Si pâle à l'horizon". The piano accompaniment features several melodic lines. Two specific elements are highlighted with boxes and labels:

- A box in measure 13, labeled "2nd element: 5-note figure of Lydia", points to a five-note ascending figure in the piano's right hand.
- A box in measure 17, labeled "1st element: 2-note motive from Carlovingien", points to a two-note ascending motive in the piano's right hand.

Other markings include "dolce" above the vocal line in measure 13, "cresc." below the piano's right hand in measure 15, and dynamic markings "f" and "mf" throughout the piano part.

Example 4: Fauré, "J'allais par des chemins perfides," *La bonne chanson*, mm. 13-18.

The first-second element combination in mm. 13-18 is actually a musical reenactment of the woman leading the narrator out of his past life (the first central idea). Fauré first uses the five-note figure of the second element to depict the woman's guidance in the piano at m. 13. He then expands this figure into longer ascending scales in the LH (m. 14) and RH (mm. 15-16). In m. 17, the scale eventually leads to the two-note walking motive, which is taken from the first two notes of the "Carlovingien" element. This passage is paired with vocal line "your dear hands were my guides."

This element-combination at mm. 13-17 also plays an important role in confirming that the third song is also part of the story arc. Comparing mm. 13-14 of fourth song (example 4) to mm. 38-39 of the third song (example 5), one can see that they are almost identical in terms of contour and texture.

2nd element: 5-note figure of Lydia

sempre pp

dolcissimo

C'est l'heu- re ex -

Example 5: Fauré, “La lune blanche,” *La bonne chanson*, mm. 38-44.

In m. 13 of the fourth song (example 4), the second element is a half-step lower than in the third song (example 5). In a way, this texture in the fourth song is like a continuing development of the same texture from the third song. Therefore, this connection contradicts Nectoux’s theory that the third song is an interlude between the second and the fourth songs and does not contribute to the overall story.¹⁵ Fauré’s development of the music here indicates that the fourth song is actually a continuation of third song. Both the musical structure and the development of the story arc support this connection.

Fauré uses the first and second elements to again depict the union of the two characters at the coda of this song. After the narrator has walked out of his past, he announces that he and the woman have united (“love has reunited us in joy”). The elements-combination again begins with the second element’s five-note figure in the RH of m. 46 (see

¹⁵ Nectoux, *Gabriel Fauré: A Musical Life*, p. 184.

example 6). It then expands into a long ascending scale starting in the LH in m. 47.¹⁶ It is followed by the first element in the RH of the piano in m. 48, as the key modulates from F# minor to F# major. Notice that the elements move in contrary motion. The first elements moves downward as the scales moves upward. Both elements eventually meet in m. 52. This juxtaposition of both elements' material and their intersection is also a musical symbol of the union. In m. 61, both elements join again into one chord under the word "joy". In addition to contour, the transformation from F# Lydian to F# major scale also plays a role in this text painting. It should be noted that B# in mm. 46-54 suggests the use of F# Lydian scale. After the union at m. 61, the B# is replaced by B and the F# major ascending scale (m. 61) lead to the ending F# major chords.

The image displays a musical score for Example 6, featuring piano and vocal parts. The piano part is written in F# major (three sharps) and includes a long ascending scale in the left hand starting in measure 47. The vocal part is in F# minor (three sharps) and includes a descending scale in the right hand starting in measure 48. The score is annotated with two elements: '1st element: Carlovingien' and '2nd element: 5-note figure of Lydia'. The piano part is marked with a piano (p) dynamic. The vocal part includes the lyrics 'L' - mour, dé - li - ci - eux vain -'. The score is divided into two systems, with the first system showing measures 46-54 and the second system showing measures 55-63. The piano part in the second system shows a transition from F# Lydian to F# major scale.

Example 6: Fauré, "J'allais par des chemins perfides," *La bonne chanson*, m. 46-53.

¹⁶ Orledge, *Gabriel Fauré*, 85.

As this song is a musical affirmation of the union of the two characters, it contains the most instances in which both “Carlovingien” and “Lydia” elements appear together. This joint appearance occurs less frequently in the rest of the cycle.

5. J’ai presque peur, en vérité

J’ai presque peur, en vérité presents the narrator’s further reflection on his own state of mind after his union with his beloved. He expresses fear of losing his newfound happiness. Despite his insecurity, he assures himself that he loves her. The main element of this song is a variation of the “Carlovingien” element. At the end of the song, Fauré introduces the “Que je vous aime” element, which will become the musical symbol of the love between the two characters. The change of focus away from the idea of the woman’s guidance into a new phase of their life marks a transitional point of the cycle.

The combination of the “Carlovingien” and “Lydia” elements appear again in mm. 19-24 (example 7). In m. 19, the “Lydia” element appears in the LH of the piano part. It is followed by the song’s main element, which is a variation of the “Carlovingien” element, in the RH of the piano part at the last beat of m. 21. In addition to representing the first central idea, both elements carry meaning in this context with the vocal line “This heart anxious solely to love you and to please you.” Notice that the “Lydia” element enters right under the word “vous” (you), suggesting that “Lydia” refers to the narrator’s love interest. For Fauré, as he secretly uses “Lydia” to refer to Emma Bardac, this setting can be seen as his method to confess his love to her. Moreover, the “Carlovingien” element can be interpreted as the text painting of the narrator trying to please his beloved.

The image shows a musical score for Fauré's "La bonne chanson", measures 16-23. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line has the lyrics: "vous, Ce cœur u-ni-que-ment ja-loux de vous ai-mer" and "et de vous plai-re Et je". The piano part includes dynamic markings like *mf*, *p*, *pp*, and *mf*. Two elements are highlighted: "1st element: Carlovingien" and "2nd element: Lydia".

Example 7: Fauré, “J’ai presque peur, en vérité,” *La bonne chanson*, mm. 16-23.

At the end of this song, Fauré introduces the “Que je vous aime” (That I love you) element (example 8). In m. 42, the narrator’s fear has subsided. From m. 42 to the end, the main element of the song becomes very prominent. The recurring main element in RH from mm. 52-64 depicts the underlying emotion of the narrator. This emotion eventually bursts out in the vocal line, “que je vous aime.” This affirmation of love is significant because it is the first time that the narrator admits that he loves her. Fauré composed a declarative and dramatic melody that would become the third recurring element that connects the rest of the cycle and is also associated with the second central idea. For the more intimate “que je t’aime,” Fauré set “t’aime” over G-A-B, a major 3rd that is the same as the beginning of the “Lydia” element. The melody ends on E of E major, which is the same beginning note and key of the first appearance of the “Lydia” element in the third song (refer to example 2).

sempre animato

4th element: Que je vous aime

que je vous ai - - -

- me, que je t'ai - - -

pp senza rall.

me!

Same note and key (E major) as the first note of Lydia element

Example 8: Fauré: “J’ai presque peur, en vérité, *La bonne chanson*, mm. 64-77.

6. *Avant que tu ne t’en ailles*

Avant que tu ne t’en ailles represents a new chapter in the narrator’s life. The long awaited dawn has finally arrived and is depicted brilliantly by the music. The song describes several scenes at dawn and the narrator’s wish that his thoughts will travel into the dream of his beloved. The arrival of the sun at the end of the song signifies the new life of the narrator with his beloved (the second central idea). Fauré introduces the “birdsong” and “sun” elements, which are both associated with dawn and new life.

In this song, the “Carlovingien” and “Lydia” elements appear at mm. 44, 48 and 52. However, this time Fauré fuses them into one element to reference their union. The beginning of the element is built on major 3rd, which is a “Lydia” feature; while the next three notes are in the same intervals of “Carlovingien” (see example 9).¹⁷

The image displays a musical score for Fauré's "Avant que tu ne t'en ailles" from the song cycle *La bonne chanson*, measures 44-55. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. Annotations identify specific musical elements: the "2nd element: Lydia" and "1st element: Carlovingien" are labeled above the vocal line. In the piano part, a "Major 3rd" interval is circled in measures 44-45, and a "Major 2nd: dim. 4th" interval is circled in measures 48-50. The vocal line includes the lyrics: "Et fais lui - - -", "re ma pen - sé - e", "Là - bas bien", and "loin! Oh! bien loin!". Dynamics such as *p*, *cresc.*, and *pp* are indicated throughout the score.

Example 9: Fauré, “Avant que tu ne t’en ailles,” *La bonne chanson*, mm. 44-55.

Once again, the “Lydia” material comes before the “Carlovingien.” This refers to the first central idea that the narrator is led by his love interest. Their fusion into one element is also a symbol of their union. This octave melody is repeated three times and each time is

¹⁷ Orledge, *Gabriel Fauré*, 84.

higher than before. This ascending sequence depicts the rising sun and also implies that both of the characters are going into their new life which is musically symbolized by the “sun” element.

Fauré uses the “bird-song” element to depict the quails and larks (mm. 8-14, and mm. 21-27). This element has two important features. First, it is a combination of two voices singing to each other. This duality can be interpreted as the two main characters of the love story. In the eighth song, there is a metaphor of the two lovers as nightingales singing together. This element can be seen as a musical prequel of that metaphor. Second, the “bird-song” element is accompanied by 16th-note broken chord figure that is related to the third element in the second song. This 16th-note arpeggio accompaniment is related to the image of dawn. In this song, Fauré fuses this accompaniment with the bird song to musically manifest the approach of dawn.

Mil - le caill - les chan - tent, chan - tent dans le

cresc.

5th element: birdsong

3rd element: 16th triplet arpeggio

Example 10: Fauré, “Avant que tu ne t’en ailles,” *La bonne chanson*, mm. 9-11.

The song eventually builds up to a climax at the end, where the “sun” element occurs in the piano at m. 72. It is a text painting for the “golden sun” that is mentioned in the vocal line. This element will become a significant music element in the seventh and ninth songs

because it is also associated with the second central idea. The arrival of the sun marks an important point of the cycle as it represents the arrival of the narrator's new life.

The image displays a musical score for Fauré's "La bonne chanson". It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line includes the lyrics "Car voi - ci le soleil" and "d'or!". The piano accompaniment has two specific sections highlighted with black boxes. The first box, labeled "6th element: sun", covers a passage in the left hand of the piano. The second box covers a passage in the right hand of the piano. The score is written in a key with two flats and a common time signature.

Example 11: Fauré, “Avant que tu ne t’en ailles,” *La bonne chanson*, mm. 72-79.

7. *Donc, ce sera par un clair jour d’été*

Donc, ce sera par un clair jour d’été opens on a description of the wedding day and evening of the two characters. This song acts as the climax of the overall story arc as this is what the story has been gradually building towards. The “sun” and arpeggio element both represent the daytime and generate immense excitement. For the wedding night, the use of the “que je vous aime” element is suggestive and reaffirms the union of the two characters.

Fauré incorporates the “sun” and the 16th arpeggio elements to depict the shining sun (“Le grand soleil”) of the wedding day (example 12). The repetition of this element in the first section of the song depicts the constant shining of the sun during the day and the tremendous happiness of the characters.

6th element:
sun

mf Le grand soleil, com -

3rd element:
arpeggio

Example 12: Fauré, “Donc, ce sera par un clair jour d’été,” *La bonne chanson*, mm. 4-5.

Notice the shape of the arpeggio is a diminutive version of the one from the second song. This similarity of shape connects this song back to the second song. Fauré varies this accompaniment as the scene transitions from day to night. He slows down the rhythmic value and also lowers its contour to depict the sunset (example 13).

pp sempre

dolce Et quand le soir vien-

4th element:
Que je vous aime

Example 13: Fauré, “Donc, ce sera par un clair jour d’été,” *La bonne chanson*, mm. 26-30.

The “que je vous aime” (That I love you) element played only on the piano implies that the evening air is filled with love. In addition, the music can be interpreted as a declaration of love between the wedded couple. Musically, this element is lyrical and sits in the lower register of the piano. It acts as a counterpart (intimacy; evening) to the “sun” element (joy; mid-day).

8. *N'est-ce pas?*

N'est-ce pas? is a hopeful episode in which the narrator reflects upon his ideal married life in the future. He and his wife will walk along their path hand in hand together and not worry about any obstacles. Fauré uses the “que je vous aime” element to symbolize the two character’s love and union in their new life. This element first appears in the alto voice of the piano in m. 14 to reflect the text “isolated in the wood with love.”

4th element: Que je vous aime

I - so - lés dans l'a - mour

Example 14: Fauré: “N’est-ce pas?” *La bonne chanson*, mm. 13-18.

Later on, Fauré uses the “Que je vous aime” and “Lydia” elements in mm. 28-33 to express his love to Emma Bardac. The “Que je vous aime” element enters in octaves in m. 29. It is immediately followed by a variation of the “Lydia” element.¹⁸ As discussed earlier the “Lydia” represents Emma Bardac. This particular order of the two elements can be interpreted as a musical statement: I love you, Emma. Both elements represent the love and union of the two characters in the future.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for piano accompaniment. The first system, labeled '4th element: Que je vous aime', shows a melodic line in the right hand and a corresponding line in the left hand, both in octaves. The second system, labeled '2nd element: Lydia', shows a similar octavated melodic line in the right hand and a more complex, arpeggiated line in the left hand. Dynamics like *mf* and *pp* are indicated, along with performance instructions like *poco cresc.* and *Se -*.

Example 15: Fauré, “N’est-ce pas?” *La bonne chanson*, mm. 28-33.

In the epilogue, the arrangement of the “que je vous aime” element plays out the last line “of those who love one another unreservedly.” The element appears in the tenor line in the piano in m. 61 to represent the narrator (male). It then appears in the soprano line in the piano in m. 63 to represent the woman (female). These two appearances can be interpreted as the two characters singing “I love you” to each other. Finally, the element appears in octaves m. 65, depicting them singing “I love you” at the same time. The expression of the

¹⁸ Orledge, *Gabriel Fauré*, 84.

characters love for each other starts to wind down the overall story arc and to bring fulfilment to their lives.

9. L'hiver a cessé

L'hiver a cessé is the final episode of the story. As winter has ended and spring has come, it signals the rebirth of the narrator and that he has emerged into a new life of joy and happiness. This brings the second central idea into completion. Now that he is with his wife, all of the seasons have become charming to him. Both musically and poetically, all elements appear to bring closure to the cycle. Fauré brings back all the main musical elements as well as multiple sections from previous songs to fully conclude the story and the cycle.

This song contains musical elements that are associated with both central ideas. This song begins with the “birdsong” element and builds up to a high point, which is the arrival of the “sun” element (example 16). This piano introduction is a text painting for the arrival of spring. Accompanying the “sun” element is the arpeggio element, which is again associated with light.

Allegro. ♩ = 96.

5th element: birdsong

6th element: sun

3rd element: arpeggio

Example 16: Fauré: “L’hiver a cessé,” *La bonne chanson*, mm. 1-7.

A fragment of the “Que je vous aime” element appears in the vocal phrases in mm. 15-16 (example 17).¹⁹ Although it is a subtle reoccurrence of this element, the vocalist should still be sensitive to it. The shape of this phrase is a text painting of the light is dancing from the ground to the heaven (“Et danse, du sol au firmament”). This ascending contour parallels the text paintings of the rising sun from the second and sixth songs.

¹⁹ Orledge, *Gabriel Fauré*, 84.

dan - se, du sol au fir - ma - ment

4th element: que je vous aime

sempre

clair, Il faut que le cœur le plus tris - te

Example 17: Fauré: “L’hiver a cessé,” *La bonne chanson*, mm.14-17.

The “Carlovingien” and “Lydia” elements make their final appearance in the ninth song. The “Lydia” element appears in the vocal line from m. 26 (last eighth-note) to m. 28 (example 18).²⁰ It is immediately followed by the “Carlovingien” element in the RH of the piano (accented note) from m. 28 to m. 34. The order of the two elements once again refers to the image of the woman leading the narrator through life into the future.

²⁰ Nectoux, *Gabriel Fauré: A Musical Life*, p. 185.

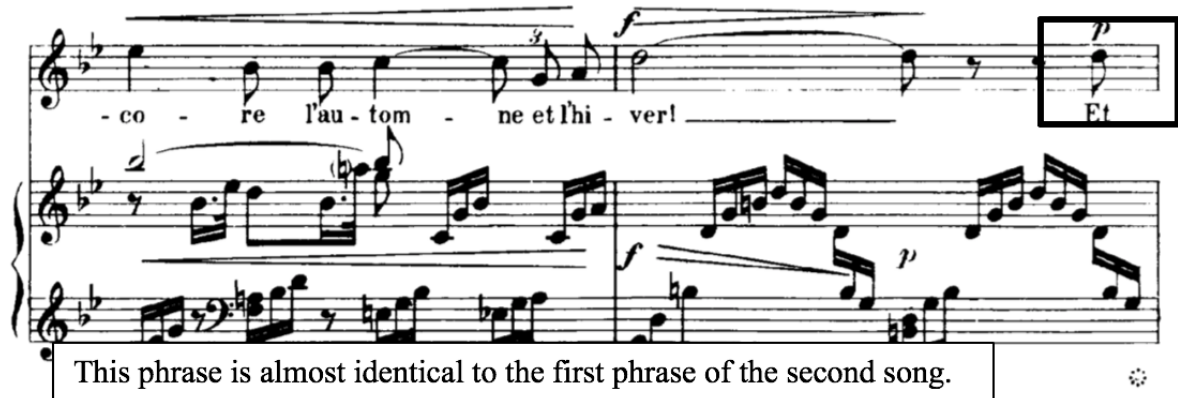
The image displays three systems of musical notation for the song "L'hiver a cessé" by Gabriel Fauré. Each system consists of a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (grand staff).
 - The first system shows the vocal line with lyrics "doux flo - ré-al," and "ain - si qu'u - ne flam - me en -". A box highlights the phrase "ain - si qu'u - ne flam - me en -". A label "2nd element: Lydia" points to this phrase.
 - The second system shows the vocal line with lyrics "- tou - re u - ne flam - me," and "Met - te - ti - dé". A box highlights the piano accompaniment phrase "Met - te - ti - dé". A label "1st element: Carlovingien" points to this phrase.
 - The third system shows the vocal line with lyrics "- at - sur mon i - dé - at." and a piano accompaniment phrase. A box highlights a specific section of the piano accompaniment.

Example 18: Fauré: "L'hiver a cessé," *La bonne chanson*, 26-31.

From m. 44 to the end is a montage of various sections from previous songs (example 19). It is as if the narrator is reminiscing about the memories of his emotional journey. The vocal phrase at mm. 44-47 closely resembles the first phrase of the second song at mm. 2-4 (refer to example 2). This phrase not only bring back the similar shape of the melody but it also modulates to G major, a significant key in this cycle. The beginning of the story, the

second song, is set in G major. The end of the story, the eighth song, is also set in G major.

This occurrence of G major in this song signifies the end narrator's wishes are fulfilled and the end is near.



- co - re l'au - tom - ne et l'hi - ver! Et

This phrase is almost identical to the first phrase of the second song.



cha - que sai - son me se - ra char - man -

te,

Example 19: Fauré: "L'hiver a cessé," *La bonne chanson*, 43-48.

The coda of this song in mm. 50-59 (example 20), contains music that is similar to the ending of the previous songs. Measures 52-53 is similar to the ending of the first song.

Likewise mm. 54-55 is similar to the ending of the fourth song. Measures 56-59 are also similar to the end of the seventh song. In addition, Fauré interweaves several fragments of the recurring elements. The major 2nd figure (C-Bb) in mm. 56, 57 and 58 is from the “Carlovingien” element. The Db-Eb-F melody in mm. 56-57 is from the “Lydia” element. The dotted rhythm figure is from the “birdsong” element. Notice that both “Carlovingien” and “Lydia” elements are closely intertwined together. They eventually join and became Bb major root position chord, a symbol that both characters are united in harmony. This coda creates a fulfilling yet intimate finale for the whole cycle.

piu lento *Andante moderato.*

mf *espr.* *p*

ô 3 Toi que dé-co - re Cet te fin tui

p *dolcissimo*

L'istesso tempo. *dimin.*

Ending from the 1st song.

Ending of the 4th song

2nd element: Lydia

Ending of the 7th song

1st element: Carlovingien

pp

5th element: bird song

The image displays a musical score for 'L'hiver a cessé' by Fauré. It features vocal lines and piano accompaniment. The score is divided into several sections, some of which are highlighted with boxes and labels. The first section is marked 'piu lento Andante moderato.' and includes the lyrics 'ô 3 Toi que dé-co - re Cet te fin tui'. The second section is marked 'L'istesso tempo.' and includes the lyrics 'et - te rai - son'. The third section is marked '2nd element: Lydia' and 'Ending of the 7th song'. The fourth section is marked '1st element: Carlovingien' and '5th element: bird song'. The score also includes various musical notations such as 'mf', 'espr.', 'p', 'dolcissimo', 'pp', and 'dimin.'.

Example 20: Fauré: "L'hiver a cessé," *La bonne chanson*, 49-59.

CHAPTER IV

The Performance Implications of *La bonne chanson*

By understanding the relationship between the two central ideas and recurring musical elements, performers can make artistic decisions that reflects the emotional journey of the cycle. The following table provides the organization of the songs, stage of story, distribution of the musical elements and key areas of each song. This information aims to provide a guideline for performers to organize the songs during a performance.

Song	Story arc	Stage of story	1st central idea (1st, 2nd elements)	2nd central idea (3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th elements)	Key
1	Prologue	Introducing main character	1		Ab
2	Development	Beginning of story: Expresses first and second central ideas	2	3	G
3		Union between the two characters	1, 2		F#
4		Reflection and confirmation on his union	1, 2		F# minor
5	Transition	Narrator achieves true love after the union	1, 2	3	E minor
6	Future	The arrival of the sun (new live)	1, 2	3, 5, 6.	Db
7		Wedding day and night		3, 4, 6	Bb
8		Both ideas are fulfilled: Hope for future live	2	4	G
9	Epilogue	Rebirth	1, 2	3, 4, 5, 6	Bb

Table 2. Summary of the story arc, stage of story, central ideas, musical elements and key areas of *La bonne chanson*

First, pianists and vocalists who are preparing the performance of the entire cycle need to group the songs in a manner that reflects the development of the story. In other words, they will need to determine the length of pauses between each song. Second, they need to shape the musical elements that reflect the development of the story. Considering the central ideas mentioned in the analysis, they should consider the following organization.

Performers should take longer pauses between pivotal points in the cycle. Namely, between the prologue (song 1), development (songs 2-3-4), transition (song 5), future (songs 6-7-8), and epilogue (song 9) sections. Within the songs of the same section, pauses should be shorter. Next, performers should pay attention to the relationship of these recurring elements so that they reflect the emotional journey.

The first song serves as the prologue of the story. Even though it doesn't contain any central ideas, musically it introduces the first element, the "Carlovingien" element, which represents the main character. Because of its significance, pianists should bring out this element whenever it appears. Particularly, pianists should pay attention to the first two intervals of this element because they are integral to it. During its first appearance, the first interval is a major second followed by a minor third. It expresses a sweet, gentle and lovely aura. This element repeats many times in variation throughout this song. Variation 1 occurs in m. 16. It contains a major 2nd followed by a tritone and expresses longing. Variation 2 occurs in m. 44. It contains a minor 2nd followed by a tritone and expresses heartache.

Within the first song, these variations reflect the narrator's obsessive feelings towards his beloved. Pianists should alter their touch to suit the different moods that these variations represent within the element. Even though vocalists only partially sing this element, they should be sensitive to it because this element is a musical symbol of the narrator. Vocalists should listen to the moods suggested by these elements intently in order to accurately portray the emotions of the main character.

The second, third and fourth songs continue the development of the story. Performers should take less time between these three songs because they are interconnected by the first central idea. In addition, they should be aware of how the first and second musical elements depict the first central idea and interconnect the songs.

As the second song introduces both the first and second central ideas, it is considered the beginning of the love story. Therefore, more time should be taken in between the first and second songs. Musically, this song introduces the 5-note figure of the second element, the “Lydia” element, which represents the main character’s love interest (refer to musical example 2). This 5-note figure is sung by the vocalist in m. 4 over the word “l’aurore”. Here, this ascending figure (B-C#-D-E-F#) depicts sunrise. Vocalist should be aware that F#5 is an important note that will appear in the next two songs to highlight significant words. The song also introduces the third element, which is the 16th triplet arpeggio. As this element is associated with the second central idea, pianists should apply more shape and color into this figure.

The third song does not contain any central idea, however, the combination of both first and second elements, the “Carlovingien-Lydia” sequence, and the context of the poem suggests that both characters are united (refer to example 3). While the “Lydia” element is easy to recognize, the variation of the “Carlovingien” element is not obvious as the element is embedded within the octave passage. Therefore, pianists should not rush this passage. Instead, they might like to apply a slight rubato to bring out this element. Vocalists should be aware that as they are singing “O bien-aimée” (O beloved), the F#5 is a response to the characters’ union. In mm. 38-44, Fauré uses the five-note figure of the second element to construct a contrapuntal texture (refer to example 5). Pianists should create an intimate atmosphere to set up the mood for “C’est l’heure exquise” (It is the exquisite hour). Vocalists should be aware that the high note of this phrase is again in F#5. They should use a seductive tone to reflect the

intimacy union. In addition, this section will reappear in variation in the next song. Therefore, although Fauré marks *pp*, pianists should not play too softly. They should shape the 5-note figure by using a slight crescendo so that audiences can recognize the similarity between the second and third songs.

In the fourth song, the narrator confirms that he has united with his love interest. One can see the “Carlovingien-Lydia” sequence throughout the song. The passage in mm. 13-17 is a variation from the coda of the third song (refer to example 4). Therefore, pianists might like to use a gentle and intimate sound to play the 5-note figure as it represents the love interest. As the figure extends into longer ascending scale, pianists should also bring out this scale as it represents the guidance of the woman. Vocalists should be aware that this is the text painting for their line “Vos chères mains furent mes guides” (Your dear hand were my guides).

In the coda, Fauré composed a fulfilling ending for the union of the two characters. The complete “Carlovingien” element recurs again in joining the second element to represent the characters’ union (refer to example 6). In m. 48, pianists should take time to change the mood from F# minor to F# major. The element should express a longing that is similar to the one in the first song. This will prepare the atmosphere for the vocalists to sing “L’amour, délicieux vainqueur, nous a réunis dans la joie” (Love, that delightful conqueror, has reunited us in joy). Note that Fauré once again sets an important word on the note F#5 (“L’amour,” m. 51). As this song functions as the fulfilment of the first central idea, performers should take a longer pause between the fourth and fifth songs.

The fifth song stands as a turning point of the story. In it, after his union with his beloved, the narrator achieves his true love. Musically, the “Carlovingien-Lydia” sequence occurs only once (refer to example 7). At the end of the song, Fauré introduces the fourth element, “Que je vous aime” to represent the narrator’s achievement of true love through their union (refer to example 8). Leading into the arrival of the fourth element is a passage

containing multiple repetitions of first element (mm. 53-63). Although Fauré only marks *pp*, pianists should create an undercurrent to depict the narrator's bubbling emotions. It will set up the atmosphere for the vocalists' outburst of the passionate "Que je vous aime" element. Vocalists should be aware that the more intimate "Que je t'aime" line ends on E4 and in E major, the same note and key that appear in the first instances of the "Lydia" element in the third song (refer to example 3). They should use a warmer tone as they are reaching the final E4. Performers should take a longer pause after this song because the next song marks the second half of the story.

The sixth, seventh and eighth songs depict the narrator's future. In addition, they are interconnected by recurring elements. Therefore, performers should take less time in between these songs.

In the sixth song, the daybreak signifies the beginning of narrator's new phase of life. Fauré uses the 5th element, birdsong, to foreshadow daybreak (refer to example 10). In addition, Fauré brings back the third element to accompany the birdsong. Both elements represent the narrator's excitement of his new life. Therefore, transitioning from the slower section into the faster section in mm. 8, 21 and 34, pianists should be able to alternate the mood immediately to highlight these elements. The "Carlovingien-Lydia" sequence appears three times in mm. 44-54 suggesting that both characters are heading to a new phase of life that is represented by the sun (refer to example 9). Pianists should be aware that each time this sequence occurs, it is a third higher than before. This ascending motion can be seen as a depiction of the rising sun. Therefore, each time the sequence occurs (mm. 44, 48 and 54), pianists should play its melody and harmony with increasing intensity. The sixth element, the "sun," arrives in the piano part in m. 72 (refer to example 11). In response, vocalists sing "Car voici le soleil d'or" (For here is the golden sun). Both performers should be aware that this is the representation of the narrator's new life. At the downbeat of m. 76, Fauré finally brings the song into the home key,

Db major. In addition, vocalists are singing her “d’or” (golden) in her high note F5 while pianists are matching it with a brilliant Db major chord underneath. Therefore they should emphasize this moment as the climax of the song.

In the seventh song, the characters get married. The song describes the wedding day and night. Performers should be aware that this song is connected to the sixth song not only chronologically, but also by the image of the sun and its corresponding musical elements. The sun arrives at the end of the previous song. Then, in the beginning of the seventh song, the narrator describes that his wedding will be on a summer day with a grand sun in the sky. Musically, the “sun” element appears in the piano postlude and the music fades towards the end. Interestingly, Fauré begins this song by using the third element in *pp*. Therefore, pianists should make the transition between the sixth and seventh songs as seamless as possible. In the first half of the seventh song (mm. 1-26), the “sun” element is dominant and descriptive. Performers should be sensitive to this and bring out the colourful harmony that depicts the blue sky and the narrator’s immense happiness. Pianists should also be attentive to the LH accompaniment, which is a variation of the third element. Together with the “sun” element, they depict the bright summer day and the buoyancy of the narrator’s mood (refer to example 12). The fourth element, “Que je vous aime” enters in m. 28 (refer to example 13). It suggests that the characters are united on their wedding night. Therefore, pianists should use the warmest and most intimate tone to play this element. It will set the mood for the vocalists to sing about the wedding night in m. 29, “Et quand le soir viendra, l’air sera doux” (And when the evening comes, the air will be sweet).

After their wedding, the narrator states in the eighth song that he and his beloved will walk the path of their future life together. Performers should notice that the LH of the piano part contains two voices. It can be seen as a musical symbol of the two characters walking.

Therefore, pianists should bring out the interaction of the two voices rather than playing them like chords. In m. 14, the 4th element, “Que je vous aime” appears in the alto voice in the piano (refer to example 14). Pianists should highlight this element as vocalists will respond to it by singing “Isolés dans l’amour ainsi qu’en un bois noir” (Isolated in love as in a dark wood). In mm. 29-35, pianists should bring out both the “Que je vous aime” and “Lydia” elements as they represent the hidden message from Fauré to Emma Bardac: I love you, Emma. (refer to example 15). This song functions as the end of the story as both central ideas are fulfilled at this point. For such an important moment, performers should take a longer pause after the eighth song. Both performers should be aware that this song is in G major, the same key as the second song at the beginning of the story. This creates a symmetry within the structure of the cycle.

The last song does not contain any central ideas. However, the waning of winter and arrival of spring is a metaphor for the rebirth of the narrator’s spirituality. Musically it is the accumulation of all the recurring elements of the cycle. The song begins with the “bird song” element, leading to the “sun” element that is accompanied by the third element (refer to example 16). These three elements work together to depict the arrival of spring. Pianists should start as quietly as possible. Then they should perform an eruptive crescendo to match the arrival of the “sun” element in m. 6. This would establish the mood for the narrator to declare “L’hiver a cessé” (Winter has ended). Vocalists should be aware that a fragment of “Que je vous aime” appears in the line “au firmament” in m. 15 (refer to example 17). The “Carlovingien-Lydia” sequence occurs in mm. 26-31 (refer to example 18). Vocalists should recognize that they are singing the “Lydia” element in the line “Ainsi qu’une flamme entoure une flamme” and they should internally pass the music line to the pianists. Pianists will then play the “Carlovingien” element in the accented notes in the piano. Pianists should bring out this element even though the score is marked *pp*. From m. 44 to the end is a montage-like sequence of sections from

previous songs. It is as if the narrator is reminiscing about his memories of his emotional journey. In m. 44, the song modulates to G major, the key of the second and eighth songs. In addition, the vocal phrase here is almost identical to the first vocal phrase of the second song (refer to example 19). Performers should emphasize the arrival of the G major and this phrase to make the connection to the second song very clear. At the coda (mm. 50-59), pianists should imitate the return of previous songs (refer to example 20). Measures 52-53 comes from the first song. Measures 54-55 comes from the fourth song. The last four measures of the song are similar to the end of the seventh song. The RH of the piano contains fragments of the “Lydia,” “Carlovingien” and “birdsong” elements. Pianists should particularly sensitive to and bring out the voicing of the “Lydia” and “Carlovingien” fragments. As two elements once again intertwined together and resolve into Bb major, they symbolize the characters union in harmony.

Both pianists and vocalists should be sensitive to the integral musical elements of the cycle. They should pay attention to the relationship between these musical elements and the poem as well as the two central elements that connect the whole cycle. Their performance should reflect a knowledge of Fauré’s emotional journey and his organization of the musical elements.

Chapter V

Conclusion

La bonne chanson is a significant French song cycle for several reasons. The first is Fauré's ability to draw on his own life for inspiration and to reflect this within his music. This unique background inspired him to create a very personal work that stands as a monument to his love affair. His selection and arrangement of nine of Verlaine's poems effectively mirrored his own emotional journey and expressed his love and affection for Emma Bardac. On the surface, the songs express feelings of joy and happiness in different scenarios. However, when considering Verlaine's and Fauré's lives as they composed their work, one can uncover two central ideas that govern the development of the main character's love story. Through these two central ideas, the main character expresses his wish that his love interest guide him toward a new phase of life. In the music, Fauré brilliantly uses six recurring elements to play out the evolution of these two central ideas. By observing the relationship between the two central ideas and Fauré's organization of the musical elements throughout the cycle, one can see that the main character's wish is eventually fulfilled. An understanding of this story provides the perspective and context to inspire rich and meaningful performances.

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