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MUSICO-POETIC SYNTHESIS IN NINETEENTH CENTURY MELODIES

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" Le génie musical de la France,
c'est quelque chose comme la fan-
tasiaie dans la sensibilité. "

--- Claude Debussy ¹

" De la musique avant toute chose "

--- Paul Verlaine

It strikes one indeed as noteworthy that the periods of greatest achievements in French lyric poetry should coincide with the periods of high development in the French chanson. In the sixteenth century the inspired lyricism of the Pléiade was paralleled by a lovely flowering of song in France and Renaissance poets such as Ronsard and du Bellay saw their works set to music by the most able composers of their time such as de la Grotte and Tessier. The nineteenth century, too, beginning with the highly personal poems of the romantics and ending in the charming vagueness of the symbolists, witnessed a similar blending of poetry and music, with the works of such distinguished poets as Gautier, Hugo, Baudelaire, Verlaine, and Mallarmé used as texts by the greatest composers of the period. Without attempting to speculate as to the reasons for these simultaneous flowerings and blendings of two art forms, I propose in this paper to examine the second and most recent -- that blend of poetry and music known as the mélodie in nineteenth century France, to analyze in turn verse by three representative poets of that period, and to illustrate how the best-known composers of mélodies in that timespan set them to music.

The lines of literary history in nineteenth-century France, for this study begin with Romanticism. Lamartine's Les Méditations (1820), the success of Hugo's Hernani (1830), and the failure of his Burgraves (1840) are used to conveniently define chronologically the span of Romanticism, although many traces of it are found in earlier and later works. Romanticism is marked by a deep personal lyricism, and inspiration from imagination and sensibilité instead of the classical dependency upon reason and logic. Romantic authors and poets sought to expand their sensibilities, to be in communion with nature, and to escape a monotonous life by voyage through time in their words. Above all, Romanticism glorified passion and the ramifications which it has in human life.

Théophile Gautier (1811-1872), especially in the early works with which one is here concerned, shows the great influence of the more pessimistic and anguishing aspects of Romanticism [La Comédie de la mort (1838)]. Later, reacting against the moralizing of Victor Hugo's coterie, he set forth the doctrine by which he is best remembered: "L'Art pour l'art" -- the idea that art must be cultivated for its own sake and not for any utilitarian purpose. In this capacity he marks a turning point in history of French poetry as he prepares the ground for the poésie plastique of the Parnassians. His theory of art strongly influenced Baudelaire who dedicated his Fleurs du Mal to him and his experiments with the musical qualities of words foreshadowed the coming of the symbolist movement.

Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867) strove to trace the tragedy of the human being -- pulled towards God and the sublime and at the same time towards Satan and vice. As the creator of the "frisson nouveau", according to Hugo, Baudelaire in his great poetic work Les Fleurs du Mal (1857, 1861, 1868)...

a exploré les recoins les plus obscurs de l'âme humaine; il a osé décrire les visions malsaines et effrayantes qui hantent le dégénéré, le criminel, l'ivrone, le fumeur d'opium; il a voulu décrire le bizarre, l'horrible, le macabre. 2

As a precursor to symbolism, Baudelaire almost always hid his ideas and feelings behind symbols in his efforts to suggest rather than to explain or to describe. Another contribution is his famous sonnet "Correspondances" in which he states his belief that colors, sounds, and perfumes can evoke each other. Also, his idea of utilizing words for their musical effects rather than their representative ideas provided a basis upon which symbolism was to build.

Paul Verlaine (1844-1896) sought to remove precision from his poetry and to make it as vague as possible -- to make it music. In this effort he tried to deliver his verse from the last constraints of classicism and romanticism, to use vague vocabulary, and to rearrange the thought in his lines according to this emotional inspiration rather than by syntax. Although not officially aligned with the symbolist movement, by his theories he exercised an enormous influence on the writers of that school.

Verlaine's first collection of poetry, Poèmes saturniens (1866), seems to imitate Baudelaire and Leconte de Lisle although it gives glimpses of the future genius of the poet. Fêtes galantes (1869), inspired by the paintings of Watteau, mirrors the artist's melancholy and sadness. In 1870 Verlaine published poems he had written to his fiancé Mathilde as La Bonne Chanson. Under the influence of Rimbaud, Verlaine's Romances sans paroles (1874) shows great rhythmic variety and power to evoke music through words. While in prison between 1873 and 1875 for shooting Rimbaud in Brussels Verlaine became converted to Catholicism. Although serious at the time, he fell back into

his old vices upon leaving prison. Sagesse (1881) is his collection of religiously inspired poetry.

[The chanson is] a short lyric poem, to which one adds an air to be sung on such intimate occasions as at table, with friends, mistress, or even alone, to relieve temporarily the ennui, if one is rich, and to help one to bear more easily misery and toil, if one is poor. Rousseau, Dictionnaire de Musique.

The history of the French solo song, the chanson, shows periods of great artistic strides followed by periods of relative stagnation. From the 12th century to the 16th, France led other countries in the development of the so-called "secular" song. By the 17th century the solo song finally established itself as a viable musical form in its own right.

During "L'âge de raison" of the 17th century, the rich inspiration of earlier composers of chansons seemed to run out in the concern of this period in French history for the elegant and the précieux. The French art song became the chanson populaire, which subsequently was divided into numerous different forms. Of these are included the courtly and amorous airs de cour, the pastourelles and bergerettes dealing with the pure and innocent lives of shepherds and shepherdesses, chansons narratives, vaudevilles named after street songs, simple yet tender brunettes frequently having a dark-haired girl as their subject, dancing and drinking songs such as chansons à boire and chansons à danser, and the romance descended from the Troubadour songs of the Middle Ages.

This romance, entering on the musical scene late in the 18th century, maintained its popularity well into the middle of the 19th century. Rousseau, in his Dictionnaire de Musique (1767) had this to say about this musical form which so highly influenced the song writers of the 19th century in France:

As the romance is written in a simple, touching style, with a somewhat antiquated flavour, the tune should be in keeping with the words; no ornaments, nothing mannered - a simple, natural, rustic (*champêtre*) melody, which makes its effect on its own accord, without depending on the way it is sung... 3

Around the last two decades of the 18th century, two types of romances were seen to develop from this "primitive" state as described by Rousseau. One type was concerned with expression of the poetic text through a more free melodic structure and a piano accompaniment which, influenced by the German Lied, emphasized the meaning of the words. The second type, under an Italian influence, stressed the purely melodic aspects of the song which did not necessarily have to relate to the text. The accompaniment in this instance consisted of simple arpeggios or block chords. As had happened earlier in its history, these two categories soon broke into splinter factions, around 1815, of which several resultant forms are the barcarolle, nocturne, boléro and the tarantelle.⁴

Also in the beginning of the 19th century, a certain Auguste Panseron, around 1825, invented the romance dialoguée in which the voice and piano accompaniment were equally as important. Generally, because of the infiltration of Italian influences in the melody, German influences in the accompaniment, and the resultant flood of song styles, the works of the early nineteenth century were largely imitations, until Hector Berlioz came onto the scene.

Berlioz (1803-1869) ushered in a type of song which was uniquely French in character. His deep appreciation for the poetic text, his concern for harmony and rhythm in imagery and textual support, his flexible melodies, and his standing according to Théophile Gautier as the main exponent of

"l'idée musicale romantique" causes another term used to describe his musical form. It was Berlioz who first described his songs with the word mélodie although it had earlier been used as the French title to Schubert's songs when they were published in France.

Critics agree that the cycle Les Nuits d'été, Berlioz most frequently performed solo songs, are his best. Written from 1833 to 1834, these songs on love poems by Gautier were first published in 1841 after some revision. Still later, in 1856, Berlioz scored for orchestra. (Absence had already been scored in 1843). Gautier wrote of Berlioz in his Histoire du Romantisme:

Ce que les poètes essayent dans leurs vers,
Hector Berlioz tenta dans la musique avec
une énergie, une audace et une originalité
qui étonnèrent alors plus qu'elles ne char-
mèrent. ⁵

With Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924), one begins to see the developmental characteristics of French song, which were later expanded by the two other "greats" of the mélodie -- Debussy and Duparc. In his contempt for all artistic manifestations of romanticism, Fauré was drawn to symbolist poetry. As this new breed of poets set poetry free from the grip of romantic versification, so Fauré's music accomplished the feat of delivering the French art song from romantic musical rules.

Fauré's songs usually contain a lyrical vocal line with an expressive accompaniment. In his mélodies, the poetic accent tends to be given superiority over the musical accent. Describing Fauré's art songs, the composer Charles Koechlin, one of Fauré's pupils and a composer of mélodies himself, has said"

His songs have no "popular" inspiration; also, he quickly freed himself from the couplet form - ever since the Lamento. In short, externally and

inwardly he shows a subtlety - French and quite special (indefinable in a few words) - which stems from the musical language, the nature of personal taste, a certain restraint in expression, an imagination rich, varied and precise. 6

One finds Fauré at his song-writing best in La Bonne Chanson (1891-2). His settings of these nine love poems by Paul Verlaine, ranging widely in mood, still gives the listener a sense of unity. Donald Ivy says of the songs in La Bonne Chanson:

"...the primary emphasis is upon melodic lyricism, coloristic harmony of a suggestive nature (as opposed to illustrative unless one thinks of harmony in terms of emotional illustration), relatively regular rhythmic patterns that function to outline the poetic form, and an accompaniment style uncomplicated by motivic interplay or development. Of the important French song composers, then, his is related strongly to Brahms and to certain elements in Schubert..." 7

The reputation of Henri Duparc (1848-1933), a highly individualistic and self-critical composer, rests entirely on fourteen songs which he wrote during sixteen years (1868-1884). In 1885 he suffered a mental breakdown and never composed again.

In his penchant for chromaticism and deep lyricism, Duparc has been labeled as a Wagnerian. Ivy says, in reference to his teutonic dramatic expression:

"that it is hardly in keeping with the usual French preference for veiled symbolism." 8

For Duparc, the piano accompaniment is as important as the voice in poetic

expression.

One of his most perfect songs is considered to be "L'Invitation au voyage". Here he musically parallels the sensual lyricism of the Baudelaire poem by creating " an impassioned lyricism bordering on the ecstatic."⁹

Although Fauré and Duparc were instrumental in developing the mélodie to the high degree of sophistication which the symbolist poetry of their time had reached, their mélodies still were linear - that is, the melodic line was seldom interrupted by the accompaniment. Although the composer sometimes dealt with poetic structure in their song settings, generally they still subjected the text to the demands of the musical structure. It is Claude Debussy who, in revolutionizing the French art song, gave the vocal line the entire task of declaiming the text while the accompaniment contained the musical expression.

Debussy (1862-1918), as most artists do, developed his style of mélodie throughout his early artistic life. His first song "Mandoline" (1880) on the Verlaine poem, shows little of any new interest. In 1887, with the beginning of the composition of Cinq poèmes de Baudelaire (1887-89), the accompaniment which was always subdued in his earlier songs, begins to "assert its own musical strength."¹⁰ Here Debussy tends strongly to mirror in his music the rhythms of spoken French.

The Ariettes oubliées (1888), originally published under the title Ariettes, Paysages belges et Aquarelles, also shows marked leanings by the composer towards tunefulness in the accompaniment and imitation of speech patterns in the vocal line.

Debussy's greatest strides in his particular form of the art song, were influenced by two landmark works: his opera Pelléas et Mélisande (1902)

and the Chansons de Bilitis (1897). In Pelléas et Mélisande, Debussy put forth his support for the parlando style of vocal declamation - that which imitates speech rhythms at the sacrifice of melody. The Bilitis songs, on poetry by his friend Pierre Louÿs, are considered by many to be Debussy's greatest contribution to the art song. Ivy says that

"for Debussy, this was a point of no return in vocal delivery; he never again was able to confer to the music anything other than the fullest acquiescence to the demands of the poetry. Never again would he return to the excessive musical manipulation and subtle harmonic vacillations as typical of the ... Cinq poèmes de Baudelaire... For him, color is everything and in his vocal music from this period on the color is motivated entirely by the text and not by the musical exigencies as such." 11

In his Chansons de Bilitis, Debussy reached complete musico-poetic synthesis.

Reynaldo Hahn (1875-1947), great friend of Proust, and Venezuelan by birth, is a "many-sided", yet innocuous composer" ¹² who set six poems by Verlaine to music when he was just eighteen years old. From Verlaine's poem "L'art poétique", Hahn chose the title for this collection - Chansons grises (1893). Hahn was devoted to classicism in the tradition of Mozart, who had little use in his music for the innovations of his mélodie predecessors. His traditionalist point of view found fault with Wagner, too. For the most part, Hahn's songs are simple, and harmonically clean with little dramatic content. In this simplicity, Hahn heralds the coming of "Les Six" into mélodie composition and their concern for complete freedom with both music and text.

Les Nuits d'été - BERLIOZ

The six poems by Berlioz for this song cycle all came from Théophile Gautier's Poésies (1830). These love poems were written during his youth, when he had not yet found his own style and they reflect heavily the influences of the romanticism that pervaded literary Paris around the first presentation of Hugo's Hernani. Berlioz is believed to have written this cycle, in which all musical ties with the romance were broken, around 1840 (except for "Villanelle" composed in 1834). In 1856 Berlioz orchestrated all of Les Nuits d'été except for "Absence" which he had already transcribed for orchestra in 1843.

Berlioz started and ended the cycle with the more lively songs of the six. After "Villanelle", they get progressively darker until they reach their most gloomy mood in "L'Absence", number 4. "Au cimetière" is slightly brighter in both tempo and mood and prepares the listener successively for the very bright "L'île inconnue".

The significance of the title is perhaps best explained by the fact that all the poems are set during the summer or at least during warm months. Also, their different perspectives on love may have been conjured up on a listless summer night in someone's wistful dreams.

Because of the highly centralized nature of any of the arts in France (Paris) throughout the artistic history of that country, one may assume without fear of contradiction that the artists of the nineteenth century were in touch with each other, fertilizing each others minds and providing new and changing inspiration. Joanna Richardson suggests that Gautier

and Berlioz met frequently at Friday night soirées during the Second Empire.¹³ Both had attended the first representation of Hugo's Hernani and Gautier, in his Histoire du Romantisme wrote of his good friend Berlioz. As a critic, Gautier was also responsible for trying to win acceptance for Berlioz's music.

"Villanelle rythmique"

A villanelle is an old medieval verse form from Northern France and is of peasant origin. Usually concerning the arrival of spring, this dance form was marked by a refrain and a steady rhythm. Gauthier, in his youthful romantic love for the Middle Ages strives here to imitate the villanelle form.

In "Villanelle rythmique" a man in the winter season dreams of the coming spring and of his lover. Stanzas 1 and 2 deal with the physical description of the woods upon the arrival of spring -- the freshly blossomed lilies-of-the-valley, the singing birds. Before continuing in the third stanza with more descriptions of nature, the speaker in the poem directly addresses his love, asking that she reaffirm his total commitment to her. As in the poem's medieval antecedents, and many subsequent folksongs concerning proposed expeditions into the woods, there is a graceful underlying eroticism in this poem.

The mood of the poem is gay and bright, reflecting not only the lover's great expectations, but also the arrival of spring after winter. This joie de vivre is poetically punctuated by the spillover of two syllables into a visually separated line -- itself ending with an abrupt exclamation point.

Berlioz's "Villanelle", originally composed for a soprano or a tenor

voice, seems to faithfully render to music the spirit of Gautier's poem. This gay, springtime attitude is suggested in the allegretto tempo of the song. In measure 1 the dotted staccato eighth notes, higher in pitch than the melody, may suggest images of birds singing in the forest.(l. 11-12)

The musical phrasing follows closely that of the poem with each two lines of poetry sharing the same musical motif (mm. 3 and 7). The decasyllabic line is set apart musically from the six preceding octasyllabic ones. In measure 34, the accompaniment thins out, and we see that the voice now exclaims in recitative the text-imitating rhythms of French speech as closely as possible. Further emphasis occurs as the octasyllabic portion of the last line is repeated before the final push to the last two syllables. These important words (l. 8, 16, 24 and mm. 39, 79, 123) are further emphasised by a melodic "push" (ex. m. 39, last eighth note) acting in the music as the exclamation point does in the poetry. Berlioz's repetition of the seventh line in each stanza (ex. mm. 34-40) reflects the form of the medieval dances which were changed each time they were performed. The troubadour singing the song, since it was not written down, even felt obliged to vary the dance at each performance.

In measure 39 the accompaniment builds again to the "bird" motive mentioned earlier and one is musically prepared for the next stanza in this essentially strophic setting.

"Le Spectre de la rose"

Gautier, in "Le Spectre de la rose", seems to combine the themes of love and memory with a powerful suggestion of death. In a typically romantic

mood, he gives the reader a glimpse of a young woman's first experience with love. In her dreamy thoughts, as she lies sleeping, the memory of this encounter mingles with the lingering fragrance of a rose which she had worn. The rose, throughout French literature, has stood for beauty, fragile and delicate, which is so easily destroyed, especially by time. Poets such as Ronsard have seen these characteristics in this traditional symbol of the beauty of life and the inevitable passing. In this instance the flower, evoking love's rapture, suggests at the same time its tragic brevity.

The first stanza gives the basic premise of the poem: the rose's scent, talking to the girl, calls forth the memory of the dance to which she was taken. In the second stanza, the specter says that he will return every night and that she will not be able to chase him away (l. 9-12). Also, the specter does not want lamenting over his situation, because he is from paradise (l. 16). He says in the fourth stanza that his fate should be actually envied by others -- that is, he has her alabaster breast as his tomb. The last four lines reveal the instigator of the specter's appearance and also the girl's first experience with love.

The images in this poem are strikingly visual such as the description of the freshly-picked rose in lines 5 and 6 and the lines describing the girl's bosom as an alabaster tomb.

Berlioz's setting of "Le Spectre de la rose", originally composed for a contralto voice, has a dream motif which serves a dual purpose. First it expresses the mood of the poem and, secondly, internally serves as a bridge between the stanzas.

The opening accompaniment measures may suggest a train of thought plucked from the stream of subconscious and conscious thought. The thought is seized upon and the musical theme develops. Its two most distinguishing characteristics are its octave leap (m. 2) and its downward melodic motion at the end of each musical phrase (ex. m. 3).

The time signature and the tempo indication (9/8, adagio un poco lento) both contribute to the dreamy, constantly flowing rhythmic characteristic of the first stanza, as in measure 2 where a note held for three beats is swiftly and precisely followed by eight notes each receiving one beat.

The musical phrasing follows that of the poetry in the first half of each stanza. Each phrase consists of two lines, each line having its own subphrase. The second half of each stanza (the last four lines) are divided equally, with the last two lines receiving most of the melodic and harmonic stress of that particular stanza.

Along with punctuating the end of each stanza, Berlioz also introduced the accompaniment motive of the next stanza in the last two lines of the first two stanzas. In measure 22, one notices how the running chords that have predominated the treble and bass accompaniment until now are suddenly shifted to the treble while rhythmic eighth notes are pounded in the bass. These eighth notes build in harmonic tension through measures 22-25 to produce the climax of the stanza, occurring in measure 26. After this, the running chords disappear as the repeated notes gain total superiority in measure 30 -- the beginning of the second stanza. The running motive of the first stanza perhaps symbolizes the wafting through the air of the rose's fragrance.

These same motives in the second stanza may symbolize the dance of the fragrance upon the bed (l. 12, mm. 36-7).

As was the case between the first and second stanzas, the music once more blends various accompaniment motives to effect smooth transition between stanzas 2 and 3. Again the last two lines introduce the new motive -- in this case a gradual thinning out and lightening (m. 42) of the accompaniment.

The music accompanying the third verse again builds to the declamation of the all-important last two lines in Berlioz's setting. The accompaniment thins (mm. 57-62) and the voice slows (m. 61). Beginning here, in measure 62, the voice trails off suggesting a return to dreamless sleep. A thinned texture is created in the solo note accompaniment. The last line is perfect text declamation, imitating voice-speech rhythms as precisely as possible. The tempo markings plus a diminuendo all contribute here to the imagery as the last remnant of the specter fades away into nothingness.

" Sur les lagunes "

Gautier's "Lamento: La Chanson du pêcheur", the basis for Berlioz's "Sur les lagunes" is straightforward in its presentation, as befits the humble speech of the fisherman who is speaking. The themes are standard ones for a romantic -- the sea, death, and loneliness. Also of romantic quality is the idea of the pathetic fallacy noted in the second stanza, lines 13-14, of "nature en deuil" and the grieving dove in lines 15-16. Each of the three stanzas consists of three parts: four lines in alternating rhyme, four lines in embrasé rhyme, and a final couplet. All the lines are

hexasyllabic except the second line of the couplet.

In this sad and melancholic poem one finds a fisherman who laments his fate of daily having to sail upon the sea in his boat knowing that his beloved will not be awaiting his return. The first stanza explains how a part of the fisherman passed away with his mistress. Also here one sees him blaming fate, for taking his beloved and for not taking him, too. The final couplet is the expression of sadness running throughout the poem where he laments his fate of loneliness. This couplet is the foundation upon which the stanzas stand as proven by its extra length and visual appearance on the page and by its summation of the poem's subject.

As mentioned earlier, in stanza 2 the fisherman finds solace for his grief in nature. The third stanza further develops his lamenting over his loss.

The images created through the pathetic fallacy are strongly evocative. Gautier also uses powerful visual images in describing his mistress' body lying in her coffin (l. 11-12). The recurring couplet in the poem is not so visual as it is just plainly effective on the general emotions. One can almost feel the isolation and loneliness which the fisherman must endure.

Berlioz gave this third song in *Les Nuits d'été* the title "Sur les lagunes". Structurally, this song composed for a baritone, contralto, or a mezzo-soprano, has a refrain (mm. 28-33) as does the poetry. These follow the end of the melodically different setting of the adjoining stanza. The strongly minor tonality of the piece changes just before the second stanza (m. 36) and the accompaniment begins a rhythmic pattern which will last throughout the rest of the song. The first measures of stanza 3 (mm. 76-79)

constitute a melodic return to the first stanza reassuring the listener as to just where he is in the song.

The melodic "sigh" may be said to be the most noticeable image throughout the song. Berlioz deftly uses dynamic markings at important points in the song to effect this (mm. 12-13, 49-53, and 53-56). Beginning with measure 57, Berlioz successively builds these "sigh" motives to a culmination in measures 64 and 65, which have a plethora of dynamic indications. More dolorous "cries" are found in the musical version of the repeated last couplet of each stanza. In measures 30, 70, and 102 one finds a sforzando note in the voice over a sustained and suitably dark-in-color chord in the accompaniment. This stressed note in the voice which is the high tessitura of its appropriate stanza, is followed by a descending passage carried into the accompaniment after the voice has ceased to move (m. 72). The last couplet of the poem receives particular attention in regard to emotions. Berlioz repeats line 29 using a melodic series (mm.98-101) and employs the previously mentioned tessitura on the word "Ah....." in measures 109-113. Then he repeats the last six syllables of that line again using melodic series. The repetition of the word "Ah..." in measures 109-113 suggests, through its dynamic marking, the fisherman sailing off into the distance while continuing his lamento.

Aside from melodic considerations, tempo- and performance-indications contribute to the doleful mood of "Sur les lagunes". The tempo is andantino throughout most of the song, except during lines 16-18 where it is marked animez très peu (m. 57). The singer is at times given clear instructions such as sotto voce (gently) in measure 80, ad lib in measure 83, and con fuoco (with fire) in measure 88.

"Absence"

Gautier's "Absence" reveals a young man's longing, physically and mentally, for his beloved who is far away from him at some distant point. This is obviously an early effort of the poet's as simplicity and romantic affections are visibly present here.

After explaining the basic situation in stanza 1, Gautier laments over the great distance separating himself and his mistress. In stanza 4 and 5, the poet wishes that he had wings so that he could fly the distance which would tire "le pied des chevaux". Since he cannot physically cover this distance, he summons his soul to fly to her roof like a wounded dove (stanza 6), inform her of his loneliness and urge her to return to their love nest.

"Absence" is rich in romantic images. Using a frequently employed simile, Gautier in stanza 1 compares his love to a flower which is deprived of the sun -- her love. Following lovely images of country scenery in stanza 5, the poet's evocation of his mistress's "Gorge divine" (stanza 7) brings the poem to an impassioned climax.

Berlioz set "Absence" to some of the most dolorous music in the cycle. In this setting composed for a mezzo-soprano or a tenor, Berlioz has included only the first three stanzas of the poem with the first stanza serving as a twice-repeated refrain. The soaring quality of the omitted stanzas would have changed the entire mood of the song, had they been used.

Berlioz's setting here is one of the most expressive, from the textual standpoint, of Les Nuits d'été. The simple accompaniment serves just as a background for the vocal line which characterized by numerous fermatas, dynamic and performance markings, and tempo changes, manages to communicate

the lamenting tone of the poem.

The dark tonality of the piece (F sharp major), and the adagio tempo are used to suggest the narrator's despair. The abundance of fermatas may be seen as further illustrating the sighing and lamenting in Berlioz's setting. Dynamics, too, are utilized here (mm. 2 and 3, 10-14) as furthering the lamentation of the poet while serving as convenient ends to the musical phrases. Measures 16 through 26 are in recitative with the accompaniment only slightly suggested.

Berlioz's performance directions are quite explicit in "Absence". Con agitazione is advised when the text reveals bitterness (l. 7, m. 21).

Sotto voce ed estinto (so soft that one can hardly hear the voice) is indicated on the last appearance of the "Reviens, reviens...." melody. The accompaniment is made to follow suit with, in the case of the piano score, una corda and tre corda indications.

" Au cimetière"

Gautier's "Au cimetière" presents a typical romantic graveyard of the early 19th century. The first three stanzas describe the actual scene and are accordingly rich in images. Gautier here makes a powerful appeal to the auditory, visual, and olfactory senses throughout. The first stanza introduces the "pâle colombe" sitting high in his perch whose gentle song is interpreted in stanzas 2 and 3. This reminds one of a similar grieving dove in "Lamento: La Chanson du pêcheur". The poet says that this song has a strange quality that makes one both want and not want to listen to it at the same time. The "air maladivement tendre" in the third stanza represents,

through romantic pathetic fallacy, the complaints of the spirits below who are forgotten (l. 16).

In the next three stanzas, the song of the bird seems to conjure up the image of a spirit of "forme angélique" -- a woman the poet has known in the past. The strong olfactory sensation of the exotic night-blooming plants, spreading their sweet perfume across the graves, follows Gautier's penchant for using exotic flora in his poetry. The ghost "aux molles poses" asks him to recapture their past saying "Tu reviendras?" The poet, however, will have none of this, and quickly departs vowing never again to return (stanza 6).

Looking over the score to "Au cimetière", one notices that only in the first and fifth stanzas does Berlioz follow the abbacc rhyme scheme of Gautier's poem. "Plaintif" and "d'un if" are alike (mm. 10-14) as are "tombe" and "colombe", and "couchant" and "son chant". After stanza 2 the accompaniment noticeably changes until stanza 5 where a return to the beginning vocal line is effected -- although with a slightly changed accompaniment. The last line of poetry gets a particularly strong musical emphasis (mm. 146-51).

Berlioz's musical images in "Au cimetière", originally intended to be sung by a tenor, are effective in their depiction of the plaintive mood of the poem. From the beginning of the mélodie, one notices a particular regularity in the accompaniment and voice, both of which seldom during the first fifty measures, ever produce a note which is not on one of the three beats in each 3/4 measure (mm. 21, 34, and 40 are the only exceptions). This rhythmic regularity may perhaps represent the soft singing of the dove as he sits in the yew-tree. This dove motive takes a different form after the third stanza in which Gautier links the bird's song to the seemingly

dolorous lament of the dead men. Measure 52 introduces this new motive in which the accompaniment consists of two identical notes an octave apart moving, still in octaves, down one half step. This motive changes yet again in measure 87 to repeated syncopated high F sharp notes which move in half steps, through F natural to E (mm. 87-97). In measure 115 the original strict time accompaniment returns until measure 151 where syncopation returns, this time in the dissonant interval of just one half-step which had previously occurred in measures 97 and 98.

Aside from the "chant plaintif" images as just discussed, Berlioz utilizes an accompaniment for the returning "souvenir" (l. 21) which may be seen as inappropriate to Gautier's intentions. In measures 75-79 one sees a melody in the accompaniment which is less somber than the preceding musical text. This harmonic lightness soon darkens (m. 80) although fragments of it may be seen in measures 81-86. Berlioz again employs "sigh" dynamics techniques (ex. mm. 28-31) along with the andantino tempo of the song, to recreate the somber mood of the poem.

The accompaniment to measures 125 through 141, with its uncharacteristically light and bouncy rhythm, might suggest, in view of its appearance after the materialization of "le fantôme aux molles poses" (l. 28) and its question "Tu reviendras?" either the narrator's flight away from the graveyard ("je n'irai jamais plus près de la tombe") or his physical reaction (increased heart beat) upon hearing this specter.

" L'Ile inconnue"

This song is based upon Gautier's poem "Barcarolle -- L'Ile inconnue".

Strictly speaking, a barcarolle is a boating song sung by a gondolier as he threads his way through the maze of Venetian canals. In its extended meaning, it means any poem or piece of music which imitates the rhythm of these songs (usually a steady 6/8 or 12/8 time signature).

Gautier's barcarolle basically fits into the above definition. This poème d'évasion offers a solid rhythmic structure indicated by the recurring refrain "Dites, la jeune belle..." which starts and then alternates with other stanzas. Also, the refrain, it may be noted, consists of two couplets, both having an ab rhyme scheme. The other stanzas may also be divided into two sections each having three lines of aab and ccb rhyme schemes respectively. This constant return (within each stanza) to a b rhyme is another cue to regularity in the poem.

The subject matter also is suitable to the barcarolle. The sailor [not a gondolier as this vessel has a "voile" (l. 3)] asks his young and pretty passenger where she wishes to be taken (the refrain). She is given several exotic choices from which to choose a destination for her fairytale-like voyage (stanza 4). But her choice, "la rive fidèle /où l'on aime toujours", causes the boatman's remark which is the "message" of the poem. What she desires, he replies, is rarely found on this earth. Here Gautier advances the question "Is there eternal love, and if so, what is it and where may it be found?"

Stanza 2 is perhaps the best illustration of Gautier's almost surrealist images, particularly the escapist lyrics suitable to a seafaring song whose inspiration, the sea, has been associated with supernatural and extraordinary events. (c.f. The Rime of the Ancient Mariner)

For the first four stanzas of "L'Ile inconnue", written for a mezzo-

soprano or a tenor, the musical structure follows that of the poetry. The refrains, of course, are melodically the same and the last two lines of it are repeated (mm. 9-19).

Of interest here is Berlioz's changing of a word from the 1830 edition of the poem. He has substituted "enfle" for "ouvre" in each third line of the refrain. This cannot be explained in terms of finding a word to fit the melody, because both fit precisely into the musical structure. Stanzas 2 and 4 are musically separated from the refrain -- the former through melodic differences and the latter through a tonal shift (to A flat major from F major).

The last stanza carries the "message" of the poetry, and Berlioz appropriately makes this noticeable to the listener through the musical elements. Firstly, the preceding refrain is not completely sung, the last two lines being omitted. The imperative "Dites..." is repeated three times (mm. 76-81) which may be viewed as a final demand for the answer that so far as been withheld. Her answer in the voice is contrasted with a simple, rolling accompaniment. His retort, the central theme of the poem, is freely sung with an intermittent staccato accompaniment at first, then repeated with the rolling motives mentioned previously. As his ending to "L'Ile inconnue", Berlioz repeats the question "Où voulez-vous aller?" and the accompanying b rhyme "La brise va souffler". (See the poetic analysis of this poem for the significance of this b rhyme).

A mariner's song by necessity must be lively. Berlioz notes allegro spiritoso as the tempo. The constant repetitions in the accompaniment, varying in their shape, may suggest the water lapping on the vessel's side. In measures 16 through 19, the dynamic markings may indicate the

blowing of the wind, or the opening of the sail as it catches the breeze.

Several times through the song, Berlioz indicates ritardando and a tempo . They regularly appear after the first three stanzas (mm. 18, 34 and 43, 59). These serve to indicate the end of each stanza (refrains included) and rhythmically to "push" the music forward. In the last two stanzas, which have already been shown to be irregular, these markings appear after "Où voulez-vous aller?" (m. 83) and then on the b rhymes (mm. 92 and 111), acting further to declaim the text and to differentiate the speakers.

As to tonality, the boatman's sage advice in lines 28 to 30 (mm. 107-111) where the ritardando and a tempo are noted, are musically written in D flat major. The key modulates back to F major by the end of the piece.

La Bonne Chanson - Fauré

La Bonne Chanson , consisting of nine songs, was composed around 1892 and was arranged by the composer for voice, strings, and piano in 1898. This cycle is generally considered to be Fauré's best effort in composition of songs. The title of the work comes from Verlaine's collection of poems of the same name, which were written between the winter of 1869 and the spring of 1870 while he was courting Mathilde Mauté de Fleurville, a woman of the petite noblesse, whom he later married. Fauré's settings in La Bonne Chanson do not seem to vary as much as do Berlioz's in Les Nuits d'été. Most of the songs are fairly lively, as befits poetry of such a joyous nature. Little is known about any sort of relationship between Verlaine and Fauré, however it is a fact that Fauré played the organ at Verlaine's funeral.

" Une Sainte en son auréole"

In "Une Sainte en son auréole" one finds Verlaine in reverie over the sound of Mathilde's name. In the first three stanzas, the poet confronts the reader with a double image of Mathilde -- both of which give the impression of medieval womanliness. First he says she is as pure as a saint in her halo 1. 1), reflecting medieval religion with its ideal of purity, and secondly describes her family heritage, implying that her family had its roots in the Middle Ages (1. 2), or at least that with her dignity and grace she has all the traits of a medieval châtelaine.

Images in the second stanza, the golden note sounding in the wood,

and the pride of a noble lady, are similar in meaning to those in the third stanza: the smile blooming in a swan's whiteness, and the blushings of a child-wife. The use of the archaic form of "Carlovingien", reinforces the medieval atmosphere of the poem.

The name "Mathilde" itself has been prominent throughout the early history of France, particularly during the Middle Ages. Many queens had it for a name. Her family name of Mauté de Fleurville seemed to reinforce Verlaine's view of her as a noble lady, although it is believed that her family had added the particule to their name in relatively recent times and were not, therefore, of noble birth.¹⁴

One feels a strong cadence throughout the poem as a succession of traits and attributes builds and expands on the previous one. A symphony of sterling qualities that any man in love with a woman for the first time might see is constructed. The last two lines contain the reason or cause for all the poet's listing of these qualities: the sound of her name.

Fauré's text declamation in this first song of La Bonne Chanson is notable. In this essentially light setting, his musical phrasing follows the textual phrasing, which includes enjambement (l. 3 and 4, 5 and 6, mm. 14, 29) His imitation of speech patterns is noticeable throughout the text, especially in measure 14 (the reference to the human voice) and 81 through 84 where the accented syllables in the word "Carlovingien" are given longer note values in the music.

Important throughout the song are the two themes or motives which alternately occur in the piano accompaniment. The first (A) is immediately introduced to the listener in the opening measures -- an upward leap of a sixth followed by a descending quarter-note pattern. The motive is heard

throughout the first stanza. The second (B) accompaniment theme might be called "la note d'or" resounding in the wood -- the repeated and syncopated F flat seen in measures 23 through 35. The A theme reappears before the beginning of stanza 3 (mm. 40-41). Theme B returns for measures 71 through 78, where Verlaine mentions seeing and hearing. Theme A accompanies the last line of poetry.

Although Fauré does not use as many dynamic markings as his contemporary Debussy, "Une Sainte en son auréole" nevertheless has some expressive indications. For instance, a crescendo and diminuendo are indicated in the last line of the first two stanzas. The high tessitura, occurring on "trionphant" at F flat pitch, receives a crescendo (m. 48). This is perhaps not following the poetic climax which occurs in the last line after having been built up in the preceding lines.

"Puisque l'aube grandit"

"Puisque l'aube grandit is a touching declaration of love in which Verlaine states his willingness to forsake the evil influences in his life and start anew with Mathilde. Verlaine's yearning for eternal happiness with his future bride is contrasted with his sordid past experiences to create one of the most intensely personal and sincerely heartfelt of all his poems.

In stanza 1 and 2 Verlaine reveals how his previous "funestes pensées" have driven away since he met Mathilde whom he considers to be the rising sun of his life. He continues in stanza 3 to insist upon the weaknesses he is putting behind him - his outbursts of anger, his rancor, his alcoholism. The fourth stanza describes his present frame of mind: he has seen

her "lumière" of love, happiness and laughter which has transformed his whole being.

In stanzas 5 and 6 Verlaine, like a swooning lover, demands only to be guided on the path of life be it of "mousse" or "cailloux", by Mathilde. Here the poet reveals, especially in the sixth stanza, his desire, which was to be with him for his entire life, to live a calm and tranquil existence "sans violence, sans remords et sans ennui". The last stanza shows Verlaine's particular view of love -- his happiness is obtained through his protestations of love to Mathilde, and he desires no reciprocal action on her part other than just listening without "déplaisir" to him. Aside from the pathos expressed in the poem itself, the knowledge that Verlaine never did find such happiness with Mathilde makes the poem even more meaningful in its expression of his intense desire to find peace and a refuge from his own weaknesses.

Fauré, in his setting of "Puisque l'aube grandit", takes several liberties with Verlaine's tender text. He has omitted from his song stanzas 2, 3, 4, and 6! Thus he has left out Verlaine's appeal for a happy, normal life. He has included, though, the stanzas, where Verlaine expresses his desires for action ("marcher droit", "conduit", and "chanterai") instead of the intellectual's contemplativeness. Also included is the expression of his hopes aligned with the rising sun in the first stanza.

The accompaniment to this song may be taken, with its smooth arpeggios, to represent the energy of the sun as it prepares to come over the horizon. The allegro tempo and G major tonality lend themselves to the passionate and hopeful tone of the song.

The key change in measure 16 signals the beginning of the fifth

stanza, although on "marcher droit" in the same stanza it returns to its original key (m. 23). This musically emphasizes one of Verlaine's desires in the poem, that of leading an upright life.

The lowest vocal note in the song, the B natural in measure 29, mirrors the dark and ominous path of which the text speaks. The high tessitura of the song, an E natural, recurs repeatedly in the song. "Aurore" and "implore" (mm. 4 & 10) introduce it to the listener. "Vous" (m. 17) and "pas" (m. 44) are textually important words concerning the theme. One notices that the "pas", aside from being the tessitura, also is indicated forte.

Fauré utilizes word painting in this setting. "Aurore", line 1, consists of a blend of arpeggios which recall the dawn motive mentioned earlier. When describing in music the different paths on which life may take them, Fauré for the "sentiers de mousse" denotes piano as contrasted with the preceding forte (mm. 23-25), while the "rocs et cailloux encombrant le chemin" is marked with a crescendo to a forte (mm. 26-29).

Performance indications are also written for the last stanzas. Here, when speaking of "bercer les lenteurs de la route" and "airs ingénus" Fauré demands dolce (m. 30) and sempre dolce (m. 36). The allegro tempo and con anima (m. 2) markings assure that the song proceeds expeditiously in a forward direction.

" la Lune blanche "

"La Lune blanche", like "Puisque l'aube grandit", is Verlaine's expression of the new and change-producing love which Mathilde has brought

into his life. This charming nocturne is a dream, a vision, a reflection of reality as Verlaine sees it at that time. This poem represents a moment privilégié in Verlaine's life, where he is seized with a vast tenderness for his beloved and, at the same time finds himself totally in touch with nature. All incongruities in his life seem to suddenly be resolved in this trance-like state. He is unbelievably happy yet he does not know why and cannot explain it: "C'est l'heure exquise".

Rather than representing his ideas in a more logical order, Verlaine in "La Lune blanche" arranges the ideas as they appeal to his conception of the mood he is trying to convey. This poem is an excellent example of Verlaine's ability to turn poetry into music. That is, so arranging words, ideas, and visual clues that the poem itself becomes a musical score and the reader's eyes become the instruments.

Verlaine's simple subject is expressed through magnificent images and sounds. "La lune blanche", "la silhouette du saule noir où le vent pleure", and "firmament que l'astre irise" are powerful visual evocations. The auditory suggestiveness of the last word in each two lines of each stanza -- ramée, aimée, pleure, heure, irise, and exquise (their opened and expansive sounds) -- are heightened by their physical separation on the page. The sibilant rhyme of irise and exquise perhaps suggests the tranquil moonlight enveloping the forest.

The vocal line in Fauré's setting of "La Lune blanche" follows the rhyme scheme of the poem almost perfectly. It is through the utilization of similar melodic lines and rhythmic figurations that this is accomplished.

The melodic and rhythmic characteristics occur when each ab rhyme is

presented. One can see, in comparing, for example, measures 2, 3 and 4 with 5, 6 and 7 that the longest duration of any vocal note occurs on the last syllable of both the a and b lines (ex. blanche-branche and bois-voix.) Also the pitches have, for the most part, the same relative distances between each other. The couplet, too, is stressed on the last syllable ("ramée", "aimée") but this time Fauré adds an embellishment to the vocal parts (m. 10 and 13). These above similarities are noticeable throughout the entire song (ex. mm. 24-25, 28-29, 38-39, and 45-46). The ascending skip in measure 43 underscores further the moment privilégié.

The accompaniment, in andantino tempo, suggests the calm and tranquility of the wood. The arpeggiated chords appear constantly in the score except during the declamation of the last three lines of poetry, while, however, their general ascending motion is recalled in measures 30 through 46.

As with the poetry on the printed page, the visually separated lines are singled out from the preceding music through dynamics (mm. 11-14, 26-29). The technique here is crescendo and diminuendo. The last line is not separated through dynamics but rather by three measures of solo piano accompaniment. As to performance indications, dolce (mm. 2, 9, and 23) sempre dolce (mm. 16 and 40), and dolcissimo (m. 45) are indications of the mood of both the poem and the music.

" J'allais par des chemins perfides" .

Verlaine's theme in "J'allais par des chemins perfides" is identical

to that of "Puisque l'aube grandit" discussed earlier. Here, too, the poet sees Mathilde as a positive, guiding influence which will lead him through all the hazards life has and will continue to put in his path.

The similarities are more than thematic as several key images are shared by the two poems. The "aurore" of hope, that which his future wife represents in his life, is one important image uniting the two (lines 5 of "J'allais..." and line 1 of "Puisque..."). Also, Mathilde's imperative "Marche encore" (l. 9) is simply a grammatical transformation of line 19 in "Puisque...". Both underlie Verlaine's desire for a maternal, consolatory, and guiding love. Continuing in this same direction, one notices the image of being "guidé par vous" in "Puisque..." and "vos chères mains furent mes guides" in "J'allais...". The poet's ideal of love, then, is not to be the dominant, decision-making partner in the relationship, but rather to follow what is considered to be the more feminine role -- that of dependence.

Sound images are also in common between the two poems. "Nul bruit, sinon son pas sonore" (l. 7, "J'allais...") reinforces Verlaine's great isolation as he makes his way down the path of life ("la triste voie") towards happiness with Mathilde. "Je chanterai des airs ingénus", line 26 in "Puisque..." is, on the other hand, an image not of isolation but of togetherness.

Fauré's music to accompany Verlaine's "J'allais par des chemins perfides" may be said to be basically divided into two major image-evoking sections: the first is the e minor encumbered path to happiness and the second is the parallel major (E major) hope and joy which he sees in the

future.

Throughout the first (minor) section may be seen what shall be called the "ambulation" motive. From measure 1 one may see this rhythmic figuration in the right hand of the accompaniment -- a harmonic interval of a sixth of quarter note value on the first beat followed by the same interval of half note value which is generally just one-half or one whole step down in pitch from the previous chord. In this manner, an auditory gait is suggested, much as Moussorgsky accomplished in Pictures at an Exhibition.

Verlaine's first mention of Mathilde's "chères mains" introduces what might be termed the "guiding hands motive (l. 3, m. 13). This is characterized by an ascending passage in the accompaniment. These two motives mix and alternate throughout the next eight lines and next thirty four measures as the poet's regrets about the past are assuaged by Mathilde's gentle love until the last two lines of poetry are reached. Here, the tonality, which has been modulating through measures 39 to 47, turns to E-major -- an appropriate action to indicate that love has finally won out over the opposing forces in the poet's life. The "guiding hands" motive perhaps transforms itself into an auditory image of "joie" in measures 61 through 64 to accompany the highly declaimed voice line above.

Other important words are as equally emphasized as "joie". In measures 35 to 38 the imperative "Marche encore" is sung forte. The line in which the hands "furent mes guides" (mm. 15-16), important to the second part of the song, is strikingly set apart from the rest of the text through crescendos and diminuendos.

The high tessitura of the piece, occurring on "fut" (m. 24) and

"voix" (m. 34) seem both to deal with something of Mathilde's which will guide Verlaine ("votre regard" and "votre voix"). In the last measure, the same E natural tessitura on "amour" (m. 51) and "joie" (m. 61) furthers the declamation of the textual idea, particularly these central words which figure in Verlaine's happiness. The ascending skip on these words even more emphasizes them. The low tessitura in the song fittingly occurs in measure 7 on the word "perfides".

"J'ai presque peur"

In "J'ai presque peur" Verlaine has regained his youthful innocence of mind and expresses anxiety that Mathilde had so infatuated him during the summer of 1868 when they met. The Verlaine of this poem is one of adolescent inquisitiveness and wonder. Here, in great timidity, the poet's desire to preserve the initial illusion he has conceived for fear that it will be destroyed by any declaration of love. The poet prefers the illusion of love to the perhaps painful reality of it.

In stanza 1 Verlaine confesses his doubts about meeting Mathilde, and his subsequent feelings. Stanza 2 elaborates on his immediate love for Mathilde while stanzas 3 and 4 describe how totally void of independent will he is when around her. Verlaine says, in the two remaining stanzas, that his future would indeed be painful without her, except that he has the capacity to just say "I love you". (It is of interest to compare this protestation of love with that of line 27 in "Puisque l'aube grandit": both suggest that any sort of loving response from Mathilde is superfluous -- that only he must constantly affirm his pledge of devotion to her).

Verlaine's use of the normal address "vous" is of note here. The entire poem seems to build up in intensity to the last line. Here, his final switch to the "tu" form ends the poem in a note of impassioned tenderness.

The accompaniment to "J'ai presque peur" is divided according to the thematic content of the poem. Beginning in C sharp minor in allegro molto, an animated accompaniment occurs throughout the declamation of the first four stanzas in which Verlaine explains the situation in question (mm. 1-41). The last two stanzas, however, are harmonically and melodically different (mm. 42-77). Here the key changes to the parallel major, as it did in "J'allais par des chemins perfides" when accompanying words expressing hope and joy (l. 20, 21, and 24). Also, the accompaniment changes form and is now syncopated. Another motive, first introduced in the first accompaniment motive (m. 10 and 11, then 12-14) is added (m. 43). This combined motive is interspersed with yet another: eighth note ascending figurations (ex. m. 47 and 70) which further vary the accompaniment.

The dynamic indications in this song serve to emphasize and accent every vocal line, especially in the second rhythmic "block". In the fourth stanza, the last in its rhythmic "block", is noted poco a poco crescendo (M.33). Of special note is the descending sempre animato figures in the voice and accompaniment in measures 63 and 64 which are continued in the solo voice (m. 65) which carries the energy of the last line through a forte "aimé", a break (m. 69), a senza rallentando, and a further repetition of "aimé", which culminates both the poetry and the music. The octave leap on "aimé" (m. 73) further underscores the attention paid to this textually important word.

"Avant que tu ne t'en ailles"

Verlaine's "Avant que tu ne t'en ailles" is a melange, a juxtaposition, of two simultaneous events. In the first two lines of each stanza, the poet is addressing the morning star and asking its help in placing him into the dream of his beloved who is "là-bas, bien loin" (m. 14) -- "Luire ma pensée dans le doux rêve où s'agite ma mie endormie encore". In the second half of each stanza the poet describes the actions of nature awakening to the dawn as his lover is doing. These descriptions supply the rich images of the poem" a thousand quails softly singing in the fields of fragrant thyme, a lone lark swiftly flying into the rising sun, dew silently reflecting the half-light of dawn, and finally the majestic and dazzling appearance of "le soleil d'or" itself. These descriptions of nature are connected to each other with hyphens -- suggesting perhaps the continuous, automatic, instinctive actions of nature as opposed to the poet's thoughts, on the other hand, which are tied by periods, commas, and semicolons suggesting perhaps man's deliberate control over his own domain but not that of nature. Verlaine, then, is trying to establish a connection between his love of Mathilde and the great rhythms of nature, a theme that will reappear in later poems of La Bonne Chanson.

Fauré's musical structure studiously follows that of Verlaine in "Avant que tu ne t'en ailles". For the first two lines of each stanza, Fauré has written a steady, tranquil accompaniment in an adagio tempo to support a vocal line which is equally as restful in character (mm. 1-7) with its general descending step-wise movement. This might represent

the fading silence and calm of the soon-to-end night. The second half of each stanza -- the description of nature -- are set apart musically as they are with hyphens in the poem. The key here changes to minor, the time signature goes from 3/4 to 2/4, and the tempo is sped up into allegro moderato (mm. 9-15). The dotted, energetic vocal rhythms are supported by frenzied triplet and dotted rhythmic figurations in the accompaniment. Adding to this great surge of power are crescendos that further accentuate both the music and the text (mm. 12-14). The music appears to be strophic in form following that of the first stanza, except that after the third the time signature stays in 2/4 instead of 3/4. This furthers the parallel between the awakening and enlivening of the music to that of the dawn.

Both parts of the fourth stanza become even more active as dotted rhythms and syncopated formations of sixteenth notes in the accompaniment are coupled with crescendos again in the voice (mm. 54-54 and 61-63). This ties in with the climax of the poem in this stanza. Returning to 3/4 time, although retaining most of the previous accompaniment motives (m. 64), the music declaims the final "Vite, vite" through a rising melodic sequence, first sung then played in the accompaniment (m. 72) at molto crescendo. The music builds to its climax as "le soleil d'or" comes over the horizon literally depicted in the melodic ascent and night is ended (mm. 74-78). After this big explosion of energy the music calms, as does nature as she begins her daily routine.

" Donc, ce sera par un clair jour d'été "

As the movement in nature depicted in "Avant que tu ne t'en ailles" goes from darkness to light, or night to dawn, so "Donc, ce sera par un clair jour d'été" goes in the opposite direction -- from bright afternoon to evening. This poem conveys Verlaine's dreams of his coming marriage to Mathilde. His choice of the words satin, soie, longs plis, voiles, and époux support this nuptial image.

In this poem, too, Verlaine seeks a symbiotic relationship with the great cycles of nature which relentlessly proceed around him. The sun is his "complice de joie" (l. 2). The sky is the illuminating energy which reflects their love (l. 5-8), the gentle evening breeze blows softly around his lover's veils as the stars gaze eternally upon them.

The poetic energy in the first two stanzas is active and busy, as illustrated by the "donc" which starts the poem and "frissoner" (l. 6). By contrast the last stanza where the calm and tranquil nuptial night has fallen and nature is asleep, is composed of words like doux, caressant, paisibles, and bienveillamment which carry this feeling of peace and serenity to the reader.

The musical structure of "Donc, ce sera par un clair jour d'été", parallels that of Verlaine's poem. The first two stanzas are an allegro non troppo tempo, suitable to be busy activity of nature during the daylight hours and the excitement of his wedding day. The voice in these stanzas sings dotted rhythmic figurations (ex. mm. 3 and 5) -- pompous and grand in their effect -- while the accompaniment, sometimes imitating these rhythms (mm. 4-9), executes fast, ascending sixteenth note

formations, all contributing to the feeling of joy in the poem. One notices also, to this same end, the generally forte indications during measures 1 through 24.

In measure 25, the accompaniment leads the musical way to the declamation of the last stanza. The allegro tempo is slowed to molto più lento and pianissimo is indicated (m. 27). The furiously running notes in the accompaniment yield to a simple, less intensive melodic formation reflecting the rest of nature after an energetic day. Dolce (m. 29) and pianissimo (m. 39) are the indications for performance of this section of the mélodie as the music, imitating nature, lulls itself to sleep along with the newlyweds (mm. 44-47).

Fauré's techniques of text declamation may readily be seen in "Donc, ce sera par un clair jour d'été". In measure 21 one may notice the dynamics on the word "bonheur". He indulges in word-painting in measure 33 and 37 where an undulating melodic pattern on "caressant, dans vos voiles" imitates the movement of the wind on the veil.

" N'est-ce pas?"

"N'est-ce pas?" continues the images and themes previously presented in "Puisque l'aube grandit" and "J'allais par des chemins perfides". Here is the recurring "path of life" theme, which both he and Mathilde will tread, hand in hand, overcoming all obstacles in their way. In this poem, however, Verlaine stresses a love which is more child-like. He sees the possibility of shutting out the outside world and of their being able to love each other without the slightest anxieties or restraints imposed

by society. Their love, says Verlaine, will sing like birds in the "bois noir" of their lives (l. 7). They fabricate their own "armure adamantine" against the world (l. 14) without concern for their future (l. 16), or the attention they attract (l. 6). Their love will triumph over (l. 15) that which the world (stanza 4) can throw at them.

The images common with other poems in La Bonne Chanson are readily observable. The "sots et méchants" who would distract the lovers appeared earlier in "Puisque l'aube grandit" (l. 10) while "nous marcherons pourtant du même pas" (l. 18) is reminiscent of lines 16 through 19 of the earlier poem.

Verlaine's adolescent ideal of a pure love is seen in the last lines of the poem. "L'âme enfantine" and "ceux qui s'aiment sans mélange" reveal his thoughts. Like "Une Sainte en son auréole", and "J'ai presque peur", "N'est-ce pas?" reflects an innocence in Verlaine's feminine nature and his quest for ideals unattainable in his lifetime.

In "N'est-ce pas?", as he did with another lengthy poem "Puisque l'aube grandit", Fauré has edited out all but only the most essential verses -- that bare minimum which will convey the poet's intention. He has omitted stanzas 1, 4, and 5 which really are only variations of the "isolation" theme in stanzas 2 and 3 which he does include. Stanza 2 introduces the walking motive of the poem, stanza 3 relates their indifference to the world, and stanza 6 contains the movement ("nous marcherons").

Fauré's music follows this arrangement. Stanza 2 is in an allegretto

moderato tempo. The accompaniment reveals, through its sixteenth note figurations and its alternation between the notes C and E. the gait of the lovers mentioned in line 4 (mm. 1-3). This changes into a modified form in measures 13 through 15 for the declamation of the third stanza. The sixteenth note figurations return in measure 44 and recall the previous walking motive -- this under the text "nous marcherons". The last line of the poem is separated from the rest of the poem by two measures of rest in the voice accompanied by a mix of the two different motives which up to now had been heard with the text.

Line 9 may be used as an example of Faurés musical images in this song. One notes that "chantent" the longest sung word in the song, is appropriately forte in the voice supported by the forte arpeggios in the accompaniment. "Soir", the low tessitura, is at the end of a descending melodic line accompanied with dark harmonies. Pianissimo is indicated furthering the night imagery.

The last "N'est-ce pas?", indicated as piano unlike the rest of its line, is written in a rather pleading manner, as though Fauré believed that the idyllic love apart from the world is an impossibility. In its ascending octave leap and long-held syllable, this last "N'est-ce pas?" seems to be almost rhetorical in sense as it and the accompaniment fade away.

"L'Hiver a cessé"

"L'Hiver a cessé", the last poem to be set to music as part of La Bonne Chanson , deals with the arrival of spring after a heavy winter. The poet,

enraptured by the new season, feels, in lines 3 through 6, that even the saddest heart should be happy, and remarks that even the huge, impersonal city of Paris seems to welcome it. Self-confidently, the poet next says that he has had spring in his heart since the day he met Mathilde ("J'ai depuis un an..."). In the last of stanza 3, he describes the arrival of spring and its heightening of his feelings for her ("flamme entourne une flamme"). Stanza 4 continues this idea of nature's reinforcement of his love. Then in stanza 5, in an enraptured manner, Verlaine says that no matter what the season be, he will always have the message of spring in his heart as long as he has Mathilde to love. In the last two lines, the poet thanks the young woman for helping him to realize his true feelings about her and himself. Verlaine's use of images is again extraordinary in "L'Hiver a cessé". In the fourth stanza, the "immuable azur" of the sky, representing the ideal, is presented as the place where his love lives (l. 14). The vision of a sullen Paris welcoming spring by extending its vermilion roof tops to the sky is related in stanza 2. The arrival of spring, in line 10, is described as "le vert retour du doux floréal". (Floréal, a revolutionary month like Germinal, further emphasizes this idea of rebirth and change.)

"L'Hiver a cessé" is the musical culmination of La Bonne Chanson. Here, as in the previous songs, Fauré's musico-poetic techniques include duplication of both the poetic structure and imagery.

The song begins with a pianissimo spring motive in measure 1 which

builds in intensity to its climax in measure 6 (the arrival of spring). One may call the arpeggios in measures 8 through 10 the lingering motive of winter. This one accompanies the line "L'hiver a cessé" but yields to the spring motive on the last syllable of cessé (m. 11). Other word painting occurs in measures 14 through 16. The word sol is musically made to leap down to from the preceeding "du" then as the "lumière tiède" rises to the sky, so does the voice (m. 15).

The accompaniment figurations under the words concerning winter occur sporadically in the music of the first stanza, but they reign completely during the declamation of the third and fourth stanzas. The beginning of the last stanza sees the reintroduction of the spring theme which reappears again on the mention of winter (m. 43). Measures 40 through 44, especially the crescendo in measure 44, musically underscore Verlaine's new attitude now that he has Mathilde. Dynamic markings in both the voice and the accompaniment climax on the word "hiver" (m. 44).

The music of the last eight syllables of lines 19 and all of line 20 is a mixture of several motives that had previously occurred in La Bonne Chanson. For instance, the listener will be reminded of the voice line in measures 64 and 65 of "N'est-ce pas?" by the voice in measures 49 and 50 here. "Une Sainte en son auréole" in particular the piano melody of measures 80 and 81, are recalled in the piano accompaniment in measures 52 and 53 of "L'Hiver a cessé". Regressing for just a moment, one sees that the vocal line in measure 46 of "L'Hiver a cessé" resembles measure 4 of "Puisque l'aube grandit". The ascending scales of measures 54 and 56 recall measures 14 and 15 of "J'allais par des chemins perfides."

Henri Duparc

" Au pays où se fait la guerre "

This song by Duparc is based on Gautier's "Romance" written between 1833 and 1838. The poem is a simple love ballad, a romance, sung by a woman ("Et moi, toute seule..."), whose beloved has gone off to fight a war. Gautier's subject here reflects his interest in the Middle Ages as does his selection of medieval verse form. Words such as "tour" (1.9), "rampe" (1. 24), and "lampe" (1. 24) seem to suggest a castle and a maiden in a tower, watching from her vantage point for her lover's return. Each stanza consists of one embrasé rhyme, one alternating rhyme, and a final couplet. As in any romance, the language is simple, the rhythm and rhyme of the stanzas even, and the refrain occurs at the end of each stanza (the couplet).

Each stanza is divided exactly the same way as to the meaning of the text. The first seven lines are the narrative, which varies in each. In the first stanza one learns that the man has gone off to war and taken with him her soul (1. 6), and that she is impatiently awaiting his return (1. 7) perhaps fighting off thoughts that he has been killed. The eighth, ninth, and tenth lines of each stanza relate the time of day which changes in each stanza and also reiterates her long wait (1. 10). Here it is sunset.

In the second stanza, she hears the dove's song on the roof and water running beneath willow trees while attempting to ward off an increasing feeling of anxiety (1. 15 and 17). Time continues forward -- now it is

nighttime.

The third stanza sees the arrival of a servant with a lamp -- she is disappointed in discovering to whom the footsteps belong (l. 23-24). Then she begs the night breezes to carry her protestations of total devotion to him (l. 26-27). Now, as she is still waiting, it is becoming dawn. The poem runs full cycle and ends where it began, leading one to suspect that the young man is dead, and that the woman does not yet know it and is consequently fighting against thoughts along these lines -- "Je n'ose plus espérer".

Duparc's simple yet moving setting of "Romance" is believed to have been composed around 1869 but was probably altered at some later date. The first two stanzas of "Au pays où se fait la guerre" begin with the same melody in the voice (mm. 5-8, and 53-55). Before each of these, the pianist plays an andante figuration or motive (mm. 1-2) which, repeated at strategic spots throughout the mélodie, remind the listener that: 1. he is hearing the beginnings of another "cycle" in the music and 2. that the woman in the poem, in spite of her various desires, cannot escape the inevitable. Thus this figuration might be called the "fate" motive. In common with each stanza is of course the two line refrain "Et moi, toute seule en ma tour...". Coupled with this are the two lines preceeding the refrain in each stanza. If one examines and compares the vocal line in measures 32-47, 77-93, and 122-138 he will readily see this similarity. For the sake of variation, the accompaniment, though similar, is not repeated here.

Duparc's textual expressiveness in "Au pays où se fait la guerre" is equal to that of this other songs. The measures corresponding to

the first line, sung simplement (m. 6), recall the opening "fate" motive on the word "guerre" (m. 9). The accompaniment here, too, is simple and harmonically uncluttered. The vocal line in measure 18 again repeats the "fate" motive. The next two lines of the first stanza, an entire thought in the poetry, are a musical unit in itself as were the first four. Here, in measures 23 to 31, the accompaniment becomes just block chords, under a vocal line which is totally different from that of the preceding four lines. For lines 7 and 8, which are transition lines in the poetry describing the time of day, perform the same functions in the music. The piano again begins its rhythmic movement with measure 40 where, on the first word of the refrain, the accompaniment returns to that style which opened the piece (mm. 8-9).

Of note is Duparc's method of building tension and releasing it. In measure 28, he begins to crescendo both the voice and the piano. In measure 32, the woman's rhetorical question to God is sung at forte, which immediately softens. For the voice, in measures 25 through 39, the relative pitches between notes in the melody are the same but the volume, continuing its decrease, stands in contrast to the preceding measures. The woman's mention of the possible return of the soldier, a central theme of the poem, is highly emphasized in measure 46 and 47 through musical rests and a marked reduction of the tempo (rallentando molto).

The words of the second stanza, after the same piano introduction which the first stanza had, are sung un peu plus vite. Although the vocal line differs from that of the first stanza after the first five measures

(to measure 57), this stanza has much the same structure as previously mentioned. The exception here is that the first, second, third, and fourth lines are in two separate musical units (mm. 53-69). The fifth and sixth are also a "unit". The pattern then follows that of the first stanza. The transition lines of the passage of time, and the declamation of "son retour" are thus the same (mm. 92-93) as their corresponding parts in the first stanza.

When the woman believes her lover is coming up the stairs, returning at last, her momentary extasy, hope, and puzzlement are reflected in Duparc's setting. At a faster tempo, the thirty-second note accompaniment in measure 94 suggests the nervous tension of the text. The bass figuration in measure 95 which furthers the tension, is repeated in a louder volume and higher pitch in measure 97, just after the agitato notes sung to "Quelqu'un...". The measure of rest may represent the halting speech of the woman as she stops to listen closely. The tension continues through a sudden sforzando in measure 99 and an avec feu declamation of the woman's hopes as to the footsteps heard. The harmonic tension subsides, as does the volume, and the lent tempo returns as she realizes that, in measures 109 through 114, that it is only her servant with a lamp. Saddened by the truth, the woman's shout to the wind expressing her pledge of love is perhaps her last effort to believe that he will return (m. 114-116). This spot in the music is indicated poco a poco crescendo and marcato molto (m. 115). The words "Toute ma joie" (mm. 121-122), the high tessitura of the piece on A flat, receives particular emphasis here at fortissimo volume. As the sun rises, and another day has passed, the woman stoically reaffirms her faith and her willingness

to wait, in a forte musical setting confidently regains the characteristics of the refrain noted earlier. After the hopeful "son retour" (mm. 137-138), the monotony and "fate" motive returns once again, slowly dying out with the last measures of "Au pays ou se fait la guerre".

" Lamento "

Duparc's "Lamento" composed in 1883 and dedicated to Fauré, is much shorter than Berlioz's version of "Au cimetière" by Gautier. Duparc has omitted stanzas 2, 4, and 5 and consequently does not include the spirit which is certainly a main subject in the poem. In his watered-down version, he includes only the singing of the dove, its rapport with the spirits in the ground, and the poet's desires to never return to this place which haunts him so.

Duparc thoughtfully sets to music, in the key of d minor, the remaining stanzas as befits a "Lamento". The difference between Berlioz's and Duparc's setting are quite striking. Duparc's is much simpler, relying more perhaps on harmonic foundation in the accompaniment rather than rhythmic figurations. The text here, too, is declaimed in the French tradition of the 19th century and is sung as closely as possible to the way in which the voice would say it.

In this song to be performed très lent (m. 1) and très doux (m. 3) one notes the imagery of isolation brought out by the dynamic crescendo and diminuendo on "seule" in measure 10. Measures 14 through 24 repeat the music written for the first stanza with only slight variation to accommodate the different text., (mm. 15-16). This time the emphasis

is placed in "plainte" (m. 21). These first two stanzas are almost pure recitative having only chordal support for accompaniment.

The last stanza is preceded by a slightly faster piano introduction which is quite different from the "block" chords that ended the previous stanza. This section begins at forte (m. 28) during the poet's vow never to return to the graveyard. The high tessitura of the song occurs on "Ah..." in this measure. The rest of the song consists of a decrecendo slowly returning to the original tempo in measure 39 through a ritardando to the original accompaniment style of measure 41 ending this song as it began.

" La Vie antérieure"

"La Vie antérieure", Baudelaire's well-known sonnet about reincarnation, comes from his collection Les Fleurs du Mal (1857) but was first published in La Revue des Deux Mondes of June 1, 1855. The poem is thought to have been inspired by a passage of prose in Gautier's Mademoiselle de Maupin (1835)¹⁵ in which he describes a highly voluptuous past life amidst lush tropical surroundings.

Images are what makes this sonnet so powerful. In the first quatrain one is treated to a glimpse of the poet's physical, structural paradise. The pillars "droits et majestueux", "vastes portiques" like basaltic grottoes, define the immediate area of his concentration. In the second quatrain a mixture of sounds and images are experienced as the rays of the setting sun reflecting off the water have a tranquilizing effect on him -- putting him into a trance as he listens to "Les tout-puissants

accords de leur riche musique". Adding to the sensual nature of his paradise are the perfumed slaves who tend to his needs.

Everything in contact with him is sheer voluptuousness. He relaxes there, amidst all this sensuality, where every possible need of his body is fulfilled. This great physical well-being only inflames the melancholy which constantly gnaws at him ("le secret douloureux"), revealing that the poet cannot conceive of any life without spleen being present.

In "La Vie antérieure" Duparc's penchant for text expression is vividly demonstrated. However the accompaniment is important here also. The song, Lent et solennel at the beginning, is characterized by the same figurations all through the singing of the words to the first quatrain (mm. 1-14). This gentle, soothing passage sets the restful mood of the song. Especially in a work of such a slow tempo, the composer must take into consideration the rhythmic impetus of the accompaniment so as not to impede forward motion. Duparc through the lent first section adds a sixteenth note "push" into the text measures (ex. m. 1). This assures continuity throughout and also contributes to the soothing rhythm of this first section. During the final declamation of the "spleen" (l. 14 and mm. 47-51) Duparc again keeps the song moving forward using syncopation between the voice and the piano.

Upon arriving at the second quatrain Duparc takes the image of the gently rolling water and translates this into arpeggiated chords in the accompaniment while further differentiating this quatrain from the first with a slight increase in tempo (m.15). Through this quatrain

Duparc pushes and augments both the tempo and dynamics until a climax is reached in measure 32 after the majestic two-measure arpeggio by the piano. "Là" of the first tercet is the point of main stress and the musical climax of the piece. The reiterated eighth note chords in the accompaniment here recall the serenity motive of the opening bars while at the same time giving a feeling of great intensity to the word being sung above them. The singing of "volupté calmes" (mm. 36-37) is preceded immediately by a molto diminuendo causing the song to return to the state of previous calm pleasure. The energy of the song decreases until the last line containing "le secret douloureux qui me faisait languir" is most expressively sung by the voice in measures 47 and 51. The last series of E flat quarter notes in their repetitions evoke a return again to the serenity of the opening measures.

Typical of Duparc's ability to set poetic images to music is his rendition of "au milieu de l'azur, des vagues, des splendeurs / et des esclaves nus, tout imprégnés d'odeurs" (mm. 38-41). As indicated in his performance suggestions, he is trying to evoke the misty recollection of a vision of one's past life.

Duparc's harmonies are equally as lush as the textual images. The song begins in E flat major, and modulates as it builds in intensity to measure 32 to C major. Then, as the energy is released, the key changes back to a darker tonal center -- E flat minor.

" L'Invitation au voyage "

"L'Invitation au voyage", one of Baudelaire's best known poems, was written for a Parisian actress called Marie Daubrun with whom the poet

wished to curry favor. This, and other poems written to and of her, is considered to belong to what the critics call the cycle of the "Green-eyed Venus". The exact date of the poem's composition is not known, however it first appeared in the June 1st issue of La Revue des Deux Mondes in 1855. Enid Starkie suggests that this poem, like "La Vie antérieure", could have been written under the influence of drugs. ¹⁶

In "L'invitation au voyage", Baudelaire, an accomplished art critic, drew upon his knowledge of the traditional image of Holland from Flemish painting, and also from accounts given to him by friends, and used these as a launching point for his dreams of happiness with Marie Daubrun. The allusions to the Netherlands are readily seen here, as in the third stanza. The ships in the canals which have come from all the exotic Dutch colonies around the world (l. 29, 30, 34) are obvious. The words "soleils mouillés / de ces ciels brouillés" (l. 7-8) are references to the atmospheric peculiarities of Holland as portrayed in paintings by the Dutch masters and in personal correspondence from friends who had actually experienced this strange lighting effect. ¹⁷

The structure of the poem is almost that of a ballad. Three twelve-line stanzas are separated by a two-line couplet refrain. In stanza 1 the poet approaches Marie with his invitation to escape with him to a land where they will be free to love as they please (l. 1-6). Then he equates her eyes to the strange light of Holland. The recurring refrain constantly evokes the peace, harmony, and voluptuousness that they will find there together.

The second stanza contains the sensual description of their Dutch Shangri-la. The images, tactile, visual, and olfactory, are powerfully expressed. Baudelaire and his mistress will be surrounded by exotic

luxury. The emphasis on the artificial here reminds one highly of Huysmans' *Des Esseintes*. Their senses will luxuriate in exotic stimulations -- flowers (l. 18), Far-Eastern fragrances (l. 20), deeply carved ceilings (l. 20), and fine mirrors (l. 21). Beauty will speak to them at depths below intelligence (l. 24-26).

In stanza 3, in reference to the Dutch merchant ships, he says that their only purpose is to bring to their doorstep the exotic treasures of the world for their enjoyment. In lines 35 through 40, Baudelaire once again mentions the effects of the Dutch light on the environment -- everything, at sunset, is bathed in purples and gold.

Of particular interest in "L'Invitation au voyage" is the poet's use of rhythm. He constantly alternates two five-syllable lines with one containing seven. The refrain itself contains seven syllables in each line. In reading the poem, one is immediately struck by the effect of this rhythm -- the poem seems to propel itself forward as the changing rhythm of the lines takes effect. Vitality, hope, and happiness are the products of this rhythm, and also they exemplify the tone of this most optimistic love poem.

Duparc's dreamy setting of "L'Invitation au voyage" is essentially strophic in its form as is the poem. The composer, however, omits the second stanza from his musical version composed in 1870.

The accompaniment throughout is surprisingly similar, in this song to be performed doux et tendre (m. 3). Duparc's ability to imitate speech patterns in his music immediately is noticeable in the first two measures.

The comma separating the first line of poetry is translated into a musical rest (m. 5). As these first few lines communicate the poet's invitation to Marie Daubrun, the music is suitably aggressive -- the crescendo climaxing on "ensemble" (m. 9). One notices too in measure 21, the crescendo leading to "brouillé", the building up of tension which is so subtly resolved through the retenez un peu then a tempo (m. 22-23) followed by a piano indication. When the intensity builds once again, in measures 28 through 30, the composer, sliding gently into the quietly declaimed refrain, juxtaposes the high note on "larmes" (m. 30) with a tempered très doux indication.

The refrain is pure recitative with only chords acting as tonality guidelines. As the piano part is simplified, so the text must correspondingly gain even more in importance. Here one notices the rather elaborate rhythmic notation in the voice to imitate as closely as possible normal speech patterns, (m. 33).

The tempo and accompaniment both return to their opening characteristics as the third stanza is sung using more or less the same melodic line as before. Line 37, separated from the rest of the poem by a hyphen, is a description of the natural surrounding which is really not a part of the thought contained in the first half of the stanza. It contains mood and background information. This is set apart too in Duparc's music (m. 58). The un peu plus lent tempo, the 9/8 time signature, and the arpeggiated chord pattern will last, however, through the end of the stanza and into the refrain. The voice, though, remains as in the beginning, and only the accompaniment, tempo, and time signature change. One notices the same concern for speech rhythms in measures 75 through

82 and on "volupté" which again receives emphasis through a slight rallentando then an a tempo. The song ends dreamily, much as it began.

Debussy -- Cinq poèmes de Baudelaire

Debussy composed his Cinq poèmes de Baudelaire between 1887 and 1889 on poems from Les Fleurs du Mal. These poems are "Le Balcon", "Harmonie du soir", "Le Jet d'eau", "Recueillement", and "La Mort des amants". Debussy dedicated these songs to Monsieur Etienne Dupin, a wealthy financier and patron of the arts who, amongst other favors, helped him to make his "pilgrimage" to Bayreuth twice to hear Wagner's music -- once in 1888 and again in 1893. Debussy had become acquainted with Baudelaire's verse in his youth and was always deeply moved by it.

" Harmonie du soir "

Baudelaire's "Harmonie du soir" was grouped with several other love poems in Les Fleurs du Mal in what many call the cycle of the "White Venus". Most of these were written between 1852 and 1854 and were inspired by Baudelaire's infatuation with Madame Sabatier, a demi-mondaine for whom he had an idealistic love. However, because of the almost mournful tone of lamenting a lost love (l. 16), scholars believe that this particular poem was written much later -- probably early in 1857. ¹⁸ The poem was first published in La Revue Française of April 10, 1857.

Baudelaire used an oriental verse form called the pantoum in this poem in which the second and fourth lines in each quatrain become the first and third in the following stanza. The poet used these repetitions in developing the musical power of his verse.

Because of the repetitions of lines, "musical themes" are heard interwoven into a musical "fabric". Thus only two rhymes in the poem help

contribute to its "tonality". The words themselves are reminiscent of music. The alliteration of "v"'s in the first line seems like a continuo or pedal point upon which the structure of the poem rests. The constant "-oir" and "-ige" endings, in their pronounciations, may also resemble repeated musical motives. This alliteration coupled with the pantoum form has much the same effect as a Catholic litany in which the words and music seem to entrance the congregation of faithful.

"Harmonie du soir" is a more optimistic spleen poem, important more for its mode of expression than for what it is trying to express. Baudelaire's captivating images here have the synesthetic power to evoke smells, visual experiences and sounds.

Lines 1 through 4, and 12 contain perhaps the most accessible of these images. One notices that even in this rather sad love poem, the spleen baudelairien is ever present -- evoked especially in the line "un coeur tendre, qui hait le néant vaste et noir" (l. 10).

The poet's use of religious symbols -- "encensoir", "reposoir", "ostensoir" -- are of note here. In line 8 he compares the color of the setting sun to the ornate trappings of a Catholic street altar. Baudelaire's adoration of Madame Sabatier is revealed in the last line of the poem, where the memory of her is likened to a monstrance held before his eyes for his benefit and adoration.

The most striking aspect of Debussy's "Harmonie du soir" is his faithfulness to Baudelaire's text. Just as the poet follows the pantoum form, so the composer creates an independant and recognizable vocal melody for each different line which is interwoven with others, in a

buildup-process which creates his particular work of art.

For example, one immediately notices, in respect to the idea expressed in each line, its notation in the score. Almost every written line is indicated as having its own performance directions (ex. mm. 10, 14, 17, 20, etc.) in the scope of the general andante tempo rubato indications of the entire work (m. 1). This overall tempo indication is slightly varied throughout the song, such as the animando poco a poco (m. 20), tranquillo (m. 39), and calmato (m. 58). Occurring also in the song are key changes which serve to signal some of the lines of poetry (ex. mm. 28, 49, 58).

Debussy's use of work painting is not as prevalent as with, say, Fauré and Berlioz. One does however notice, in measure 14, how the "valse mélancolique" is indicated animez un peu and is coupled with quick sixteenth note figurations in the accompaniment. Too, the "ciel trist et beau" (l. 8) is musically expressed in tranquilly regular quarter notes (mm. 29-30) in the voice and rolling triplet figurations in the accompaniment (mm. 28-29).

One notes, too, scanning the score, an abundance of piano markings emphasizing the beginning of each line (ex. mm. 2, 7, 10). The high tessitura of the piece occurs on line 14 on a forte "recueille" (m. 55). Otherwise, the dynamics of the song change very little, again suggesting the tranquility of this poetic setting.

" Recueillement "

Baudelaire's "Recueillement", in the form of a regular French sonnet and first published in La Revue Européenne of September 1861, was written

in the short months previous to September which were the lowest points to which Baudelaire's spirits sank during his life.¹⁹ In January he had failed at his second attempt at living with his former mistress Jeanne Duval. His ever-present financial troubles still plagued him and, perhaps most significantly, his syphilis flared up for the third time.

In "Recueillement" one sees the poet's desire for night to fall, that he may be alone with his sadness and forget the trials of his earthly existence. The stone of resignation in his poem is characteristic of much of Baudelaire's later works. Here, he wishes to take his "douleur" far away from the ignorant masses. The poet sees time also as an unescapable force to which he has reconciled himself (l. 9-11). In the last stanza the poet relates the physical setting of nature as he patiently and calmly awaits the final disappearance of the "moribond" sun and the subsequent inner peace which he will share with his inner sadness. Baudelaire's calm resignation and acceptance of his past serenely awaits the approaching night -- or death.

Baudelaire's images are very striking in this poem not only because he has personified such abstractions as sadness (l. 1), pleasure (l. 6), time (l. 9), regret (l. 11), the sun (l. 12), and night (l. 14) but also because he has capitalized each in its turn, further drawing them to the attention of the reader. The poet's intimacy with these abstractions suggest the peace which he has worked out between himself and the complexities of his life. Being on intimate terms, they both know just what to expect from each other.

The actions of these personified feelings make the most visual of

images. "Le fouet du Plaisir", ce bourreau sans merci, va cueillir des remords..." (l. 5-7) and "les défuntes Années" leaning over "les balcons du ciel" in "robes surannées" along with "Ma Douleur, donne-moi la main" constitute the main images of this text. Just as evocative is line 12 where "le soleil moribond s'endort sous une arche." Combining both visual and auditory images, the poet writes in the last two lines: "Comme un long linceul trainant à l'Orient, Entends, ma chère, entends la douce Nuit qui marche."

Debussy's musical rendition of Baudelaire's "Recueillement", undated on the original manuscript, is in C sharp minor -- a fitting key for such a reflective poem. The quiet ferocity of the poet's emotions are aptly illustrated here through repeated voice notes, and repeated accompaniment rhythmic figurations. One notices these patterns in almost any measure in the score (ex. mm. 7, 12, 27, 41, 47-48, 55, etc.).

The lent et tranquillo prelude suggests the resignation expressed in the poem. The sigh-like crescendo and diminuendo on the word "Douleur" (mm. 7-8) underscore the poet's morose state of mind. Line 2 of the poetry is, in the music, pure recitative (mm. 12-15). Lines 3, 4, and 5 are grouped together musically in 3/4 time (as opposed to the general 4/4 of the song). The crowds under the whip of Pleasure are musically driven to ecstasy by a poco crescendo ed animando (m. 29) and a crescendo in measure 30 to "sans merci". Where the poet talks directly to his Sadness, line 8, the music returns to the original time signature and tempo (m. 36). The tenderness remains for lines 9 through 12, to measure 55. The last two lines of the poetry are set in a solemn mood (m. 56). Here, the voice is punctuated by the syncopated chords

in the piano. As the poet's thoughts fade away so does the music in measures 60 through 66 (morendo in measure 63)

Images in the music are not as prevalent as in other songs of his, yet Debussy does manage some word painting in "Recueillement". One may notice, in measures 46 and 47, that the voice line descends in steady, repetitive eighth notes and ascends in the same manner. This, under "les robes surannées" of the years, might suggest the eternal cycle of time which stops for no man, including the poet.

One note also an abundance of descending melodic lines in the voice and the accompaniment" the last lines of the poem ascend to perhaps a lightly sung high ending of hope, the high tessitura on "Marche" (m. 63), yet leaps downward at the last moment (m. 64) confirming the general sadness of the song.

Dubussy's technique of text declamation is also seen here. Flowing melody mean little to this composer as is evident by the repeated notes in the voice dominant throughout the song (ex. mm. 18-19, 56-58), where rhythm rather than pitch are the important factors.

Ariettes oubliées

In 1888 Debussy composed five songs on poems from Verlaine's Romance sans paroles (1874). He chose "C'est l'extase", "Il pleure dans mon coeur", and "L'Ombre des arbres" from the "Ariettes oubliées" section of the work, "Chevaux de bois" from the "Paysages belges" section, and "Green" and "Spleen" from the "Aquarelles" section. These songs, originally published under the title Ariettes oubliées, paysages belges, et aquarelles are all dedicated to Mary Garden, the English singer whom Debussy had picked to

sing the role of Mélisande for the first performance of his landmark opera Pelléas et Mélisande (1902). She was considered during her career as a leading interpreter of Debussy's songs.

Verlaine's mother-in-law had studied under Chopin and gave the young Claude Debussy piano lessons for a few months around the time of the Commune. Edward Lockspeiser suggests that perhaps Madame Mauté, aside from acquainting him with the piano technique of Chopin, aided him in his wish to enter the Conservatory in 1872.²⁰ Perhaps it was also through this lady that Debussy acquired his life-long passion for Verlaine's poetry.

" C'est l'extase "

"C'est l'extase" first appeared in the 18 May and 29 June editions of La Renaissance littéraire et artistique in 1872. The moment privilégié described in this poem illustrates Verlaine's tendency toward the pathetic fallacy.

The first two stanzas have a plethora of personified nature images -- "les frissons des bois parmi l'étreinte des brises", "cri doux que l'herbe agitée expire". Stanza 2 continues these descriptions of nature using onomatopoeic words such as gazouille and susurre (l. 8) which augment the highly auditory nature of this love poem. The third stanza sums up the various analyses of nature in the previous stanzas as the poet says that his and his beloved's soul are in total harmony with these manifestations of nature (l. 15-16).

The mood of the poem is subdued and soft, causing one to imagine that

he is listening to the sounds of nature in the evening with his companion. The rich images, largely auditory, are highly effective.

Debussy's setting of "C'est l'extase" puts into music the languid mood contained in the poem -- that mild evening in mid-summer when all of nature seems to be speaking directly to one through the tepid heat. Debussy's performance indications lent et caressant and rêveusement in the first three measures suggest the closeness of the evening and the indolent state of mind caused by these physical sensations. The parallel chords in the opening measures of the accompaniment may also be seen as contributing to the atmosphere of the song.

The voice, too, carries the aforementioned sensations. The naturally elongated syllables of the words of the first couplet, "langoureuse" and "amoureuse", are treated in the same manner in the music (mm. 3-9) with the "amoureuse" given added emphasis by the addition of a crescendo and diminuendo (mm. 7-8). The onomatopoeic words previously mentioned such as murmure (l. 7) and susurre (l. 8) are emphasized on the second "u" vowel in measures 20 and 23 respectively as if to imitate the slight rushing of air of which this sound consists. "Expire", line 10, and measure 20, also receive this onomatopoeic treatment.

The descending voice motive of line 10 is a furthering of the descending parallel-chord motion (mm. 1-2) which appears throughout the song. This may be seen as an example of the descending melodic direction which pervades the song. This motion is used in the first two stanzas as punctuation between the main ideas therein (m. 10 before l. 3, mm. 18-19 before l. 7, and m. 28 before l. 11).

Of interesting note is a discrepancy between Verlaine's text and that

set to music by Debussy. In measure 34 the voice sings "plainte dormante" while the poem, as published, says "plaine dormante". This difference makes no claim as to clarity, as both are easily sung. Perhaps Debussy just copied the words incorrectly when he was composing the song.

The high tessitura of the piece occurs in line 16 (m. 43) which coincides with the poetic climax. An example of word-painting occurs in measures 32 to 34 where the "roulis des cailloux" is accompanied by a melodic series that turns upon itself denoting a circular motion.

" Il pleure dans mon coeur "

Verlaine describes another occasional ennui whose cause cannot be determined by rational thought in "Il pleure dans mon coeur". Here he evokes a mood of general sadness which is mirrored in the dreary weather outside his window.

The first two stanzas develop the comparison of the malaise in his heart to the rain falling outside. The close relationship between the French words "rain" and "weeping" serves as the basic simile which pervades the poem. The dark-sounding rhymes like "pleure" and "coeur" reinforce this gray atmosphere. At the same time, the end rhymes of lines 1, 5, and 10, with the alliteration of lines 6 and 13, also underscore this comparison.

The second two stanzas ponder the cause for his present ill-feeling. In the last stanza, he readily admits that the worst part of this strange feeling is that it has no rational basis.

Verlaine's rhymes are unorthodox for the 19th century in France as he defies a rule of French prosody in using the same words to affect a rhyme

(ex. "coeur", l. 1 and 4). These liberties with the rhyme of "il pleure dans mon coeur" shows the influence which Rimbaud's Illuminations (1886) had upon him. (The epigraph of the poem is from Rimbaud). 21

Debussy makes use of many musical techniques in his setting of "Il pleure dans mon coeur" to evoke the plaintive, sad mood of the poem. His expression markings (mm. 1 and 3) are quite obvious "triste et monotone" and "un peu en dehors". Sordini are (m. 1) dampers placed over the pianostrings to muffle their sound. These effects plus the piano's gently moving accompaniment throughout the song serve to evoke in the listener the image of rain gently, monotonously falling upon a roof. This is also the case with the morendo (dying) in measure 87 as the sound of the rain fades and the song is ended. Debussy uses crescendos and diminuendos on key words illustrating the "sigh" motive prevalent throughout the song.

The setting can in no way be called strophic in form as each verse of poetry is given a different melodic line. The most important line of poetry, where the irrationality of the illness is lamented (ll. 11, 12, 15, 16) contains the high tessitura of the piece (m. 39). Musically the tonal center of the piece, which had been B major, modulates during line 10 (mm. 42-46) until the key of B flat major is reached. Also the accompaniment calms down, and the expression mark indicate lent ad libitum. The key changes to G sharp minor in measure 67 at the beginning of the last stanza and continues until the end of the song.

The word in line 12, the most important in Debussy's setting, are announced through an octave leap (mm. 60-61) and then very short, sharp attack indications over "est sans raison" (mm. 62-63). The "rain" motive again returns to the piano until line 16 where the complaint of the entire poem is one last time exclaimed before the "rain" motive returns and dies

off.

As he did in "C'est l'extase", Debussy has changed another word in setting the poem to music. In measure 35, he has substituted "bruit" for "chant" (l. 8). As bruit rhymes with pluie and as both words are sung on E natural (mm. 35, 37), it seems as though the composer chose the change the text to suit his musical idea of the poetic structure.

"Green"

"Green" is a typical late-nineteenth century love poem in which relationship between lovers is chiefly characterized by languor and melancholy. The poem could possibly have been intended for Verlaine's wife Mathilde, as they were quarreling bitterly over Rimbaud around the time of its composition although they were not yet divorced.

"Green", in alexandrine verse, opens with the poet symbolically giving his heart and soul to his lover (l. 2) along with other verdant offerings of nature to which the title refers. Here one again sees the theme of total abandonment of one's self to another as seen in Verlaine's "J'ai presque peur" of La Bonne Chanson. He gives her his being, asking in a pathetic way not to be hurt (l. 3).

The second stanza reveals the poet's languid weariness from which he hopes to find solace in his lover's arms. This again is the consolatory maternal love which so frequently is a theme in Verlaine's love poems. Stanza 3 continues this idea of assuagement of his troubles and fears.

Verlaine's images in the poem are visual, yet less striking than in other works. The offering of the first line and also his brow covered with dew (l. 5) evoke scenes of nature in the early morning. The tran-

quility so desired by the poet is suggested in the last stanza by images which may remind one of a child curled up in his mother's lap.

Debussy's setting of "Green" follows closely the changing physical states of the narrator in the poem. The music starts "joyusement animé" as the poet presents his mistress with his offerings (l. 5). Each stanza shares a similarity in melodic and harmonic structure -- the first line always carrying the pitches set in measures 5 through 8, while the rest of the verse is almost in a true recitative style when compared with the light rhythm of the first line. Each stanza ends with a ritardando (mm. 17, 18, 38, 53) and diminuendo or a retenu tempo marking.

The image of the cold, blowing wind in lines 5 and 6 are transposed into musical expression using running notes in the accompaniment (mm. 24-31) while the melody, in the mentioning of the wind, has staccato attack and swells as would a gust of wind.

Several of Debussy's performance indications are examples of text imagery imitation. Line 8 in the poetry, concerning the youth's tender anticipation of receiving his mistress' love, is noted in measure 36 by Debussy as "tendre". Even more obvious is Debussy's "caressement" indication for "sur votre jeune sein laissez rouler ma tête".

The third and most touching strophe is indicated andantino instead of the previous "joyusement animé". The tempo slows (m. 50) and is augmented (m. 53) imitating the sleep and relaxation expressed in the last line of "Green". The ascending duplets in the accompaniment in measure 52 and ending in 56 reinforce this sense of termination as reflected in the text. An ascending skip on the high tessitura in measure 44 (l. 9) underscores the musical climax at this point. The last word of

the poem, "reposez", fittingly receives the D flat low tessitura of the song.

" Chevaux de bois "

Interestingly enough, "Chevaux de bois" was published in two different poetry collections. Originally it was included in Verlaine's Romances sans paroles (1872) but also appeared later in Sagesse (1881). The poem is based on his experiences at the fairground of Saint-Gilles in Brussels in August of 1872.

In this Sagesse edition of the poem, two stanzas (5 and 6) are added, stanza 2 is completely rewritten, and five of the eight lines of stanzas 8 and 9 are changed. A poem of content such as this hardly fits into the religious plan of Sagesse, but as Verlaine himself explained in the preface to the first edition, "'L'auteur a publié très jeune, c'est-à-dire il y a une dizaine et une douzaine d'années, des vers sceptiques et tristement légers. Il ose compter qu'en ceux-ci nulle dissonance n'ira choquer la délicatesse d'une oreille catholique; ce serait sa plus chère gloire comme c'est son espoir le plus fier." 22

The Sagesse version of this poem consists of nine stanzas with four nonosyllabic lines in each verse, another example of the odd number of syllables which Verlaine recommends in his "Art poétique". "Chevaux de bois" is interesting in its use of popular language -- such as "chacun se paie un sou de dimanche" (l. 8), and "filou" (l. 11). The rhythm and tempo of the poem are strongly affected by the frequent repetitions of "Tournez" in the first stanza and then at the beginning of each odd numbered stanza.

Written during a most depressing period in Verlaine's life, in which he believed that life offered no escape for him, the poem's theme is accordingly somber. Here the constant, unceasing turning of the horses on a merry-go-round symbolizes Verlaine's unending struggle to find happiness in his life. While describing the fate of the wooden horses who are fooling themselves as to their real purposes in life, as they spin around on an empty stomach (l. 15) striving for nourishment they will never reach (l. 28). This represents for the poet the wasted and disillusioned lives of the people around him. The last stanza in its juxtaposition of "tristement" and "joyeux" reflects the duality of feeling in this poem, the ceaseless agitation and its essential meaninglessness.

Debussy takes liberties with Verlaine's Sagesse version of the text in this setting of "Chevaux de bois". He has completely omitted stanzas 5 and 6 and added the word "Tournez" to the end of the song.

Debussy's tempo markings such as allegro (joyeux) express the general mood of the song. The dynamics, accents, triplet figures and accompaniment all reinforce the visual impression given by the poem -- that of a spinning merry-go-round. The right hand accompaniment in measures 3 through 8 strongly suggests a galloping horse. The voice and accompaniment both vary constantly in dynamics, as though the whirling wooden horses come towards and then away from you as they go in their circular path. The accent and staccato markings (mm. 8-10), needed especially at the indicated tempo, are an aid to the performer in his declamation of the text. The impression of spinning is further intensified by the repeated trills

in the opening measures, and by the repetition of the melodic notes in measure 9 coupled with the dynamic markings above them. Also, in measure 9, the running accompaniment is marked "léger" by Debussy, once more giving the illusion of fast flight, or of whirling around.

Each stanza beginning with "Tournez"(L. 1, 3, 7, 9) shares the same melodic notes. The same is true of the "flying" piano notes except in the case of stanza 9. Stanza 2, 4 and 8 are all melodically different. As the song begins with rhythmic strength, conversely it ends softly and lightly. Starting with the end of stanza 7 the tempo slows (m. 59) while the piano continues its now less rapid passage work through measure 77. The joyous spirit of the first three lines is fully lost in this declamation where the uselessness of the horses' position appears to him. But quickly the original tempo returns (m. 90) initiating the trill motive of the opening measures. Debussy's added "Tournez" fades into the distance.

Debussy's music certainly fits Verlaine's striking poem in its depiction of the incessant whirling of the trapped hobby horses and Verlaine's idea of the reality of the situation. Prolific expressional markings illustrate Debussy's concern, as a so-called impressionistic composer, with the translation into musical sound of the intrinsic imagery of the poetry.

" Trois mélodies "

Debussy composed his Trois mélodies in 1891 on poems by Verlaine which had been inspired by English scenes. "La mer est plus belle" is dedicated to the French composer Ernest Chausson, while "Le son du Cor

s'afflige" and "L'Echelonnement des Haies" are dedicated to Robert Godet, Debussy's oldest and most faithful friend.²³ Godet was a staunch Wagnerian and an Orientalist who provided continual artistic and intellectual support for the composer throughout his life.

In 1877 Verlaine had been in England working as a school teacher. These three poems were included in his Sagesse collection.

" La Mer est plus belle "

"La Mer est plus belle" is believed to have been inspired by the English coastline and by Tennyson's Sea-dreams.²⁴ The poem had been originally entitled "La Mer de Bournemouth".

Here the poet ponders the awesome power and immensity of the sea. In his poetic analysis of this aspect of nature, Verlaine comments on the seeming duality of the sea (l. 7-8): it can be at once calm and gentle (l. 9) and just as quickly become enraged (l. 10). Furthering this duality are lines 13 and 14, giving the sea qualities which normally are not associated with it.

Yet in spite of these seeming contradictions, the poet sees that the sea, unlike human beings, is not spiteful or conscious of the harm or good it can cause (l. 11-12). The poet perhaps means that the sea, with its varying colors (l. 20-22) has found a way to be somehow closer to God than man has. The sea is certainly "meilleur que nous" as the poet claims in the last line, and at the same time it surpasses any attempt man has made to come into a closer relationship with God -- that is, his impressive cathedrals which physically try to reach up to him (l. 1 and 2).

Verlaine sees the sea, and the apparent message which it conveys (l. 17 and 18), as perhaps a physical manifestation of the Christian religion on earth. Christ is said to have died on the cross so that our hopeless lives would end without suffering because one is accepted into the kingdom of heaven. Lines 17 and 18 say just this, that "Those without hope will die without suffering." The religious overtones in the poem are further supported by lines 5 and 6 in the reference to the Virgin Mary who traditionally has been associated with the sea in the Catholic religion.

The images in the poem are visual and auditory, evoking the sounds and sights of the calm and turbulent ocean. The last stanza is especially powerful in visual imagery.

This song begins immediately with the arpeggiated notes in the piano which are prevalent throughout the score. Performed forte and animé, they may evoke in the listener's mind the rolling of the sea waves and may even, if one could go so far, suggest the vaults of the sea's own special cathedral which the poem, in praise of God's glory, evokes. One notices, too, how the dynamic markings (m. 1) indicate swelling and subsiding again the wave motion. In support of the religious nature of the poem, one could cite as evidence that the two forte vocal lines in measures 1 through 11 are both on phrases containing religious symbols such as "cathédrale" and "Vierge Marie". The text between these phrases is sung piano (m. 7).

The highest vocal note thus far in the song occurs in measures 16 and 17. Here "cette immensité", spanning octave F sharps, is accompanied at a furious pace on the piano. The mood on "rien d'entêté" (mm. 17-18)

changes to calm et doux in measure 19. Here the message carried across the waves is tenderly sung and accompanied at ppp volume. But the vivacious, relentless rolling of the opening description of the sea returns (m. 28) briefly and then dies down again in deference to the religious mood in the last two lines. The high tessitura (m. 36) coincides with the climax of the poem (l. 23).

Of extreme beauty is Debussy's musical "La mer sur qui prie / la Vierge Marie" (mm. 9-11). The repeated D note evokes the calming, soothing effect which the Virgin traditionally hold for seagoers who believe in Christianity. Also of interest is the composer's fashion for ending the song. In contrast to the bright and sure opening, the last stanza, where the spiritual value of the sea is contemplated, demands silence in awe of this powerful manifestation of God.

" Fêtes galantes "

The paintings of the Frenchman Antoine Watteau (1684-1721) inspired Verlaine's writing of twenty-eight poems known as the Fêtes galantes in 1869. Watteau was a relative unknown for a long time until the Goncourt brothers popularized his work in 1860. The subjects of his painting have been described as "...paysages de rêves, une fête perpétuelle, des amours aimables et conventionnelles, une gaieté factice, apportée par les masques de la comédie italienne, et, sous tout cela, quelque chose d'irréel, de mélancolique, une tristesse musicale".²⁵ This poetry by Verlaine showing his technical competence, power of evoking music, and extreme sensibility, "captures and enshrines"²⁶ the painters haunting landscapes.

Debussy wrote two sets of Fêtes galantes. The first, including "En

sourdine", a second version of "Clair de lune", and "Fantoche", was composed in 1892. The second series, composed in 1904, includes "Les Ingénus", "Le Faune", and "Colloque sentimental".

" En sourdine "

In the twilight setting of "En sourdine" we again find Verlaine's search with his mistress for association with the great cycles of nature. He desires that he and his beloved be intermingled with the silence of twilight (l. 3-4). He wishes to intertwine their souls and thought with the nature surrounding them (stanza 2) so that they may totally experience their love (l. 12).

Verlaine's images are in keeping with the rural setting of this and the other Fêtes galantes. The fourth stanza is particularly strong in its evocation of tactile and visual sense impressions. "Le rossignol" singing in the dark and quiet woods in stanza 5 is another image, auditory however, which serves Verlaine's poetic purposes in this love poem.

The title means "muted" in its most common meaning, yet "on the sly, secretly" in colloquial usage. The lovers, then, may be assumed to be actually making love ["nos sens extasiés" (l. 6)] under the protective canopy of the oak trees (l. 2 and 18). Nature, then, in stanza 4 seems to deepen their love. Verlaine asks his mistress to quiet her intellect and let herself be driven by her instincts (l. 12). The coming of night, with the lamenting nightingale's song, mirrors through the pathetic fallacy, the fundamental melancholy Verlaine so often experiences in love.

Debussy gives a rêveusement lent setting to Verlaine's "En sourdine" in keeping with the subdued tone of the poetry. Debussy had divided his music into sections which coincide with the versification of the poem. One may observe this most readily in the piano accompaniment. The first stanza is preceded and accompanied by what might be termed the "Nightingale" motive seen in measures 1 and 2: an almost literal use of the nightingale's singing created through the syncopated repetition of, in this instance, G sharp tied to a triplet descending formation. The second stanza, measures 11 through 16, is accompanied by much the same figurations, however, at a more animated tempo (peu à peu animé) in measure 11 returning in measure 15 to the original tempo. Stanza 3, measures 18 through 24, has an arpeggiated accompaniment which is again augmented. The accompaniment to the fourth stanza (measures 26-31), using slightly different note formations, builds to a crescendo then sinks to a diminuendo as the nightingale motive in the first measures rises out of the unsettled harmonies of measures 30 and 31. This predominates throughout the lines 17 and 18, changes into a simple block accompaniment for the declamation of lines 19 and 20, then reappears and dies away following the word "chantera" (m. 39).

Debussy's techniques of text declamation are apparent in "En sourdine". One notices throughout the song his strict observation of the poetic punctuation and poetic expression. In measures 12, 15, and 23 one sees that the continuation of the poet's thought takes precedence over the musical structure, as the composer utilizes triplet formations in the voice in imitation of speech rhythms.

In step with the relaxed, almost intoxicated tone of the poem and song, the composer when writing music to the thought "rossignol chantera"

(l. 20) did not raise the pitch upward on the last syllable of "chantera" as would be expected given the visual image and work evokes, but instead goes in a downward, more ominous direction (m. 3). On the other hand, the final syllable of "extasié" (mm. 13-14, l. 6) receives an ascending leap which may be described as word-painting.

Too, Debussy's performance directions seem to confirm the soft and sensual tone of this poem -- rêveusement lent (m. 1), toujours très doux (m. 0), délicatement (m. 18) doux et expressif (m. 36), en se perdant (m. 40). The climax of both the poem and music occurs in the fourth stanza (m. 26-31). The music here, indicated intimentement doux, builds to the high tessitura on "roux" (m. 31).

" Clair de lune"

The effect created in Verlaine's arresting nocturne "Clair de lune" is of much greater importance than the theme. In examining the soul of a lady (l. 1) he sees a Versailles-type park bathed in cool moonlight. Although he sees much happiness and life there, he also contends that beneath this joie de vivre exists a gentle melancholy -- a vague sadness -- which adds depth and character to her.

In stanza 1 and 2 one is introduced into the mise-en-scène of the poem which is further developed in the final stanza. This "paysage choisi" is as fantastic as the masks which the dancers are wearing. Marble fountains and statues are perhaps surrounded by a grove of trees (l. 10-12) bathed in the moon's light. Against this backdrop we see the essence of the lady's soul -- "masques et bergamasques" apparently

happily enjoying themselves (l. 3) yet who appear to Verlaine as "quasi tristes". Furthering the differences between appearances and reality are the songs of triumphant love and happiness (l. 6) which these apparitions sing in the second stanza. Sung in the minor key, these "love songs" belie their true meanings. The poet even remarks in line 7 that they cannot seem to rid themselves of their vague melancholy. The last stanza adds details to the scene in describing with visual images the moonlight and its effects on its surroundings. The mystic beauty of the sadness seems here to dominate the sadness. Few lines in the text are as evocative as are these of the last stanza. Verlaine's belief in correspondence between the senses is illustrated in line 8 -- "Et leur chanson se mêle au clair de lune." . Here is the blending of sound and light into a composite entity.

Debussy's music to "Clair de lune", in G sharp minor, evokes the almost surrealistic scene envisioned by the poet. What might be called the "moonlight" motive is introduced in the opening measures of the accompaniment. This musical idea which occurs throughout the song, consists of the note figurations visible in the first beats in the left-hand (bass) piano part in measure 1. The accompaniment in "Clair de lune" does not delineate the various stanzas as clearly as in, say, "En sourdine". Here, instead, the "moonlight" theme and the other chosen accompaniment figurations (without particular significance except as contrast to the "moonlight" theme) continuously seem to interweave with each other -- at times one or the other being prevalent. Using the moonlight theme as an example, one notices its appearance in measures 9 and 10 (l. 3) which changes to what might be termed the "chanson"

motive in measure 13.

The second stanza is un peu animé which aids in distinguishing it from the music of stanza 1. The moonlight motive appears briefly in measure 16, and reappears again, this time predominantly in the treble, in measures 19 and 20 where the "chanson" motive (in the bass) blends with the moonlight motive -- exactly as the text is saying.

The last stanza is majestically set at the original tempo (m. 21). Through measures 25 one again hears the prominent motive mentioned above. As the scene fades away in the music (morendo in measure 29) the motive is heard twice again, once in measure 30 and then in 31.

The vocal line, too, reveals Debussy's concern for the poet's text. The high tessitura occurs at the thematically important spots in the song. The forte F sharp in measure 17 underscores the gently sadness that exists in the woman's soul. "Calme" in measure 21 again receives the F sharp emphasis. "D'eau" in measure 27, at piano volume, rather than emphasizing the actual climax of the poem (which this is not), serves as word-painting to describe musically the waters of the fountain as they shoot skyward.

Of note also is the great descending motion of the last measures of voice (mm. 26-30). This befits the fading landscape and reflects perhaps the ultimate sadness which underlies the supposed gaiety of the woman's soul.

" Colloque sentimental "

"Colloque sentimental" is another paysage de l'âme which Verlaine so well evoked in previous poems such as "Clair de lune". In this poem

the author shows his fundamental pessimism in dealing with the passage of time, the disappearance of the tenderest emotions and the loneliness of death.

Basically, one sees in the poem two ghosts (l. 6) who chance onto each other in a eerie park setting (possibly of the 18th century). Here they try to recall the past. One, perhaps the more optimistic of the two, tries to convince himself of the happiness which they shared in their past life. The second, the more pessimistic, represents the poet's point of view and thus has accepted the inevitable fact that with time both life and love pass away, and that one must face death. The questions asked by the first spirit, in couplets 4 and 5, are an attempt on the one ghost's part to try to relive their tenderest emotions. Hope for regaining the past has certainly fled their lives (l. 14) as they stand in all truthfulness before eternity (l. 11). Just as their lives mean nothing now, so the words they are now exchanging are meaningless (l. 16). These couplets, separated from each other, visually add to the solitary tone of the poem.

Debussy's C sharp minor setting of "Colloque sentimental" consists of a series of vignettes corresponding to each couplet (only the first and third are similar to any great degree). Their basic accompaniment figurations help to distinguish these sections -- they appear in different combinations in each. The first is the triplet formations found in measure 21. The second is the syncopated upper and lower chord tone formations found in measure 20. The third is seen in measure 1 -- an accompaniment figuration which appears mostly in the first measures of

the piece.

The first couplet, "triste et lent" (m. 1) is sung as a recitative. The accompaniment augments in texture during the second couplet and becomes a stationary chord when the voice repeats the "Dans le vieux parc" theme of the first couplet.

When the specters are speaking in the fourth couplet, the music is un peu plus mouvementé and très expressif, mélancolique et lointain (mm. 19-20). Couplet 5 is slowed down to the original tempo (m. 27). In the sixth couplet noted as animez et augmentez peu à peu, the climax of the song (mm. 36-37) on the word "indicible" is sung forte while a furious piano line accompanies. The last half of that couplet again returns to the original tempo and to pianissimo (m. 40). Debussy indicates très expressif et soutenu in the measure preceding the voice for couplet 7. In contrast to the visual image, Debussy's music descends when hope is fleeing to the black sky (mm. 47-48).

The last couplet, at the original tempo, is in almost pure recitative style, through measure 53. Then the triplet formations mentioned earlier reappear and the accompaniment according to the composer wishes in measure 54 must diminish into the distance più pp then plus rien, measures 56-57).

As in most of Debussy's songs, the text declamation here is excellent. As a brief example, one notices the first two lines (m. 4-8), especially the imitation of speech rhythms in measure 7 for the word "ont tout à l'heure passé".

Hahn -- "D'une prison"

"Le Ciel est, par-dessus le toit", the poem upon which "D'une prison" is based, was written during Verlaine's incarceration in prison in Mons, Belgium in 1873. In this simple yet moving poem, the poet seeing and hearing the everyday pleasures which are denied to him, the "distant, muffled sounds of gaiety" ²⁷ is flooded with bitter remorse about the waste of his youthful years. Possibly because of the essentially religious nature of this poem, it was published in his Sagesse collection.

In the first two stanzas, the poet describes the world around him which he is prevented from participating in. The tree tops (l. 3), a bell chiming softly in the distance (l. 5-6), and a bird singing in a tree are all symbols to him of daily life and its pleasures. In the third and fourth stanzas Verlaine talks first to God and then to himself. To God he complains of his separation from "cette paisible rumeur... de la ville" (l. 11-12). To himself, he asks what he has done with his youth that he should be so unhappy and unfulfilled now (l. 13-16).

Of interest is Verlaine's desire here to go back to a "simple and tranquille" life (l. 10) on the outside. Verlaine's life in Paris, with his constant bouts with his wife, drinking, and his own antisocial behavior, could hardly have been considered "simple et tranquille". However, the entire stanza may be taken as a desire by the poet, similar to that expressed frequently in La Bonne Chanson, to lead a normal life like everyone else. This may be taken as an affirmation of his rehabilitation during prison and of his spiritual cleansing.

Reynaldo Hahn's "D'une prison" shares common characteristics with many others of his songs: simplicity, tranquility, and beauty.

The piano begins the song with a steady regular series of quarter note chords over a pedal point (B flat) in a major key. Cautioning that the song must not be performed too slowly, Hahn specifies pas trop lent in measure 1. The vocal line here, too, seems to be written with la plus grande tranquillité in mind (mm. 4-8). After a diminuendo to pianissimo or encore (diminuendo) si possible in measures 15 and 16, the music builds to the poet's cry to God in measures 20 through 21 at mezzo-forte. These notes are given stress markings to insure that the singer not neglect their expressiveness. The end of the first three stanzas is sung pianissimo (m. 29) on repeated pitches of relatively low tessitura.

The last stanza, in particular the first two lines, where the poet suddenly realizes that his youth was wasted, the music, un peu plus lent et douloureux, changes. The opening forte on "Qu'as-tu fait" is preceded by an ascending arpeggio in the piano. These bitter words to his self-questioning are again stressed (mm. 30-32). The accompaniment, which is progressively withdrawn until only a quarter note in measure 32 remains, regains the figuration one hears at the beginning of the song in the following measure. Hahn here adds the first two lines of poetry, in the same melodic pitches as before, as a postlude to the poem. Perhaps the composer intended this postlude to indicate the calm and tranquil state of resignation to which Verlaine must have returned to after purging himself of his emotions in the last stanza. He had to reconcile himself to the fact that he was not going to leave prison for a while.

" Offrande "

In marked contrast to Debussy's setting of "Green" which is noted joyusement animé, Hahn's "Offrande" is noted pas trop lent!

Debussy's setting is much more complex than Hahn's, has many more performance suggestions and tempo indications.

As in the other Hahn songs, the composer relies on the accompaniment to provide a harmonic foundation for the voice, rather than rhythmic impetus. The voice sings as closely as possible to normal patterns of speech. For example, one notices in measures 2 through 6 how the poetic punctuation is observed and how words that have a tendency to be quickly pronounced in speech, ("déchirez", m. 7), and "Qu'à vos yeux" (m. 9) are successfully translated into music.

Hahn utilizes a few performance indications in "Offrande". Très doux is indicated for line 2 (m. 5), très expressif (m. 9) for line 4, un peu accentué (m. 13) for the first line of the second stanza, and très éteint for the sleep on his lover's "jeune sein". In measures 28 through 31 one feels the fatigued poet slowly and gently falling asleep.

Hahn's simple accompaniment here stresses the supreme importance of the text to the composer. The languor, the melancholy, and the fatigue expressed in the poem are translated into the music. The simple vocal line evokes a calm feeling in it gentle, generally stepwise motions (no skip is ever greater than a major third) and its restricted range (middle C to the octave above). The low dynamic range of the song (pp-mf) also emphasizes the essentially languid quality of the poet's love.

" L'heure exquise "

The two settings of Verlaine's poem "La lune blanche", by Fauré and Hahn are typically different in their approach to the meaning of this poem. "L'heure exquise" by Hahn begins with a piano prelude which evokes the dreamy moonlight landscape as does the version by Fauré. Here it is pictured through the ascending arpeggios in measures 1 through 3. This motive supports the voice almost exclusively throughout the song. The constant appearance of this motive seems to communicate the calm and tranquil atmosphere of the poem. Line 6, where the poet addresses his love directly, is délicatement separated, as it is on the page, from the preceding lines by three measures of piano accompaniment. The D sharp (m. 17) on "animé" is the highest sung pitch of the piece, yet it is contrarily noted piano. This D sharp is sung again twice--once in measure 27 on "Rêvons" and on "Exquise" in measure 42. Although in each of these three cases there is a leap to the D sharp, only the last one may be considered the high tessitura because the leap covers the greatest distance (a seventh) and it occurs on the climax of the poem.

Stanzas 1 and 2 are alike enough in accompaniment and melodic rhythm that they may be said to be strophic in form. Line 12, like 6, has an extremely long-held syllable (m. 27) on the word "Rêvons" and appropriately adds notes to accommodate the extra word "C'est l'heure exquise" (mm. 28-30).

The third stanza is again similar to the first two in both vocal and piano lines. The original piano motive then finishes out the song, returning to the darkness of the beginning measures.

In the above analyses one may notice certain trends that follow parallel courses both in the poetry and in the music. The early romantic Gautier, in such poems as "Romance" and "Lamento : la Chanson du pêcheur", is filled with directly-stated passion. As if he is saying "This is what I feel", or "That is how I understand it", Gautier exemplifies in these early works the excessive sentimentality and occasional bombast of romanticism which is so often criticized. The songs of his fellow romantic Berlioz, too, seem to partially represent an "excess" which will be opposed by a reaction against it. Berlioz, in setting Gautier's texts to music, still tended towards sustained and "pretty" melodies, as is evident in Les Nuits d'été.

As the esthetic of poetry changed, so did that of music. Baudelaire's use of symbols to hide his meanings and to make them vague, certainly foreshadowed the later symbolist movement: "Suggérer, voilà le rêve" said Mallarmé, the chief of the symbolists. Over the same period, sustained tunefulness in music seems to disappear as did direct statement of personal sentimentality in poetry. The composers Fauré and Duparc only hinted in their songs at what Debussy was to do with his Chanson de Bilitis and his Verlaine settings - to totally rid the voice of any duty save that of expressing the text. Along with this, the accompaniment was also to serve to express the ideas and feelings of the text. In his songs "Il pleure dans mon coeur", "Clair de lune", and "La mer est plus belle", just to name a few, Debussy the impressionist tries to evoke through his piano accompaniment the same feeling with which the text deals. His insistence upon suggestiveness as opposed to the sustained melody of Berlioz mirrors the freedoms

of rhythm, form, and sound of Verlaine as opposed to the forthright statement of feeling of the romantics. Perhaps then the entire esthetic movement in nineteenth century French mélodie text declamation may be summed up by what Debussy called the ideal:

Le meilleur récitatif est celui où
l'on chante le moins.... 28

Villanelle rythmique

Quand viendra la saison nouvelle,
 Quand auront disparu les froids,
 Tous les deux nous irons, ma belle,
 4 Pour cueillir le muguet au bois;
 Sous nos pieds égrenant les perles
 Que l'on voit au matin trembler,
 Nous irons écouter les merles
 8 Siffler!

Le printemps est venu, ma belle;
 C'est le mois des amants béni,
 Et l'oiseau, satinant son aile,
 12 Dit des vers au rebord du nid.
 Oh! viens donc sur le banc de mousse,
 Pour parler de nos beaux amours,
 Et dis-moi de ta voix si douce:
 16 Toujours!

Loin, bien loin, égarant nos courses,
 Faisons fuir le lapin caché,
 Et le daim au miroir des sources
 20 Admirant son grand bois penché;
 Puis, chez nous, tout joueux, tout aises,
 En panier enlaçant nos doigts ,
 Revenons rapportant des fraises
 24 Des bois!

Le spectre de la rose

Soulève ta paupière close
 Qu'effleure un songe virginal!
 Je suis le spectre d'une rose,
 4 Que tu portais hier au bal.
 Tu me pris encore emperlée
 Des pleurs d'argent de l'arrosoir,
 Et parmi la fête étoilée,
 8 Tu me promenais tout le soir.

O toi qui de ma mort fus cause,
 Sans que tu puisses le chasser,
 Toutes les nuits mon spectre rose
 12 A ton chevet viendra danser;
 Mais ne crains rien, je ne réclame
 Ni messe ni De Profundis,
 Ce léger parfum est mon âme
 16 Et j'arrive du paradis.

Mon destin fut digne d'envie,
 Et pour avoir un sort si beau
 Plus d'un aurait donné sa vie;
 20 Car sur ton sein j'ai mon tombeau.
 Et sur l'albâtre où je repose
 Un poète avec un baiser
 Ecrivit: "Ci git une rose,
 24 Que tous les rois vont jalouser."

Lamento
La chanson du pêcheur

Ma belle amie est morte:
Je pleurerai toujours;
Sous la tombe elle emporte
Mon âme et mes amours.
5 Dans le ciel, sans m'attendre,
Elle s'en retourna;
L'ange qui l'emmena
Ne voulut pas me prendre.
Que mon sort est amer!
10 Ah! sans amour, s'en aller sur la mer!

La blanche créature
Est couchée au cercueil.
Comme dans la nature
Tout me paraît en deuil!
15 La colombe oubliée
Pleure et songe à l'absent;
Mon âme pleure et sent
Qu'elle est dépareillée.
Que mon sort est amer!
20 Ah! sans amour, s'en aller sur la mer!

Sur moi la nuit immense
S'étend comme un linceul;
Je chante ma romance
Que le ciel entend seul.
25 Ah! comme elle était belle,
Et comme je l'aimais!
Je n'aimerai jamais
Une femme autant qu'elle.
Que mon sort est amer!
30 Ah! sans amour, s'en aller sur la mer!

Absence

- Reviens, reviens, ma bien-aimée;
 Comme une fleur loin du soleil,
 La fleur de ma vie est fermée
 4 Loin de ton sourire vermeil.
- Entre nos coeurs tant de distance!
 Tant d'espace entre nos baisers!
 O sort amer! ô dure absence!
 8 O grands désirs inapaisés!
- D'ici là-bas, que de campagnes,
 Que de villes et de hameaux,
 Que de vallons et de montagnes,
 12 A lasser le pied des chevaux!
- Au pays qui me prend ma belle,
 Hélas! si je pouvais aller;
 Et si mon corps avait une aile
 16 Comme mon âme pour voler!
- Par-dessus les vertes collines,
 Les montagnes au front d'azur,
 Les champs rayés et les ravines,
 20 J'irais d'un vol rapide et sûr.
- Le corps ne suit pas la pensée;
 Pour moi, mon âme, va tout droit,
 Comme une colombe blessée,
 24 S'abattre au rebord de ton toit.
- Descends dans sa gorge divine,
 Blonde et fauve comme de l'or,
 Douce comme un duvet d'hermine,
 28 Sa gorge, mon royal trésor;
- Et dis, mon âme, à cette belle:
 "Tu sais bien qu'il compte les jours,
 O ma colombe! à tire d'aile,
 32 Retourne au nid de nos amours."

Lamento
Au cimetière

- Connaissez-vous la blanche tombe
Où flotte avec un son plaintif
L'ombre d'un if?
- 4 Sur l'if, une pâle colombe,
Triste et seule, au soleil couchant,
Chante son chant;
- Un air maladivement tendre,
8 A la fois charmant et fatal,
Qui vous fait mal
Et qu'on voudrait toujours entendre,
Un air, comme en soupire aux cieux
12 L'ange amoureux.
- On dirait que l'âme éveillée
Pleure sous terre à l'unisson
De la chanson,
16 Et du malheur d'être oubliée
Se plaint dans un roucoulement
Bien doucement.
- Sur les ailes de la musique
20 On sent lentement revenir
Un souvenir;
Une ombre de forme angélique
Passe dans un rayon tremblant,
24 En voile blanc.
- Les belles-de-nuit, demi-closes,
Jettent leur parfum faible et doux
Autour de vous,
28 Et le fantôme aux molles poses
Murmure, en vous tendant les bras:
Tu reviendras?
- Oh! jamais plus, près de la tombe
32 je n'irai, quand descend le soir
Au manteau noir,
Ecouter la pâle colombe
Chanter sur la branche d'if
36 Son chant plaintif!

Barcarolle
L'île inconnue

- 4 Dites, la jeune belle,
Où voulez-vous aller?
La voile ouvre son aile,
La brise va souffler!
- 8 L'aviron est d'ivoire,
Le pavillon de moire,
Le gouvernail d'or fin;
J'ai pour lest une orange,
Pour voile une aile d'ange,
Pour mousse un séraphin.
- 12 Dites, la jeune belle,
Où voulez-vous aller?
La voile ouvre son aile,
La brise va souffler!
- 16 Est-ce dans la Baltique,
Sur la mer Pacifique,
Dans l'île de Java?
Ou bien dans la Norvège
Cueillir la fleur de neige
20 Ou la fleur d'Angsoka?
- 24 Dites, la jeune belle,
Où voulez-vous aller?
La voile ouvre son aile,
La brise va souffler!
- 28 Menez-moi, dit la belle,
A la rive fidèle
Où l'on aime toujours.
Cette rive, ma chère,
On ne la connaît guère
Au pays des amours.

Une Sainte en son auréole

Une Sainte en son auréole,
Une Châtelaine en sa tour,
Tout ce que contient la parole
4 Humaine de grâce et d'amour;

La note d'or que fait entendre
Un cor dans le lointain des bois,
Mariée à la fierté tendre
8 Des nobles Dames d'autrefois;

Avec cela le charme insigne
D'un frais sourire triomphant
Eclos dans des candeurs de cygne
12 Et des rougeurs de femme-enfant;

Des aspects nacrés, blancs et roses,
Un doux accord patricien:
Je vois, j'entends toutes ces choses
16 Dans son nom Carlovingien.

Puisque l'aube grandit

Puisque l'aube grandit, puisque voici l'aurore,
 Puisque, après m'avoir fui longtemps, l'espoir veut bien
 Revoler devers mor qui l'appelle et l'implore,
 4 Puisque tout ce bonheur veut bien être mien,

C'en est fait à présent des funestes pensées,
 C'en est fait des mauvais rêves, ah! c'en est fait
 Surtout de l'ironie et des lèvres pincées
 8 Et des mots où l'esprit sans l'âme triomphait.

Arrière aussi les poings crispés et la colère
 A propos des méchants et des sots rencontrés;
 Arrière la rancune abominable! arrière
 12 L'oubli qu'on cherche en des breuvages exécrés!

Car je veux, maintenant qu'un Etre de lumière
 A dans ma nuit profonde émis cette clarté
 D'une amour à la fois immortelle et première,
 16 De par la grâce, le sourire et la bonté,

Je veux, guidé par vous, beaux yeux aux flammes douces,
 Par toi conduit, ô main où tremblera ma main,
 Marcher droit, que ce soit par des sentiers de mousses
 20 Ou que rocs et cailloux encombrent le chemin;

Oui, je veux marcher droit et calme dans la Vie,
 Vers le but où le sort dirigera mes pas,
 Sans violence, sans remords et sans envie:
 24 Ce sera le devoir heureux aux gais combats.

Et comme, pour bercer les lenteurs de la route,
 Je chanterai des airs ingénus, je me dis
 Qu'ellé m'écouterà sans déplaisir sans doute;
 28 Et vraiment je ne veux pas d'autre Paradis.

Verlaine

La lune blanche

- La lune blanche
Luit dans les bois;
3 De chaque branche
Part une voix
Sous la ramée...
- 6 O bien-aimée.
- L'étang reflète,
Profond miroir,
9 La silhouette
Du saule noir
Où le vent pleure...
- 12 Rêvons, c'est l'heure.
- Un vaste et tendre
Apaisement
15 Semble descendre
Du firmament
Que l'astre irise...
- 18 C'est l'heure exquise.

J'allais par des chemins perfides

- 2 J'allais par des chemins perfides
Douloureusement incertain.
Vos chères mains furent mes guides.
- 4 Si pâle à l'horizon lointain
Luisait un faible espoir d'aurore;
6 Votre regard fut le matin.
- 8 Nul bruit, sinon son pas sonore
N'encourageait le voyageur.
Votre voix me dit: "Marcher encore."
- 10 Mon coeur craintif, mon sombre coeur
Pleurait, seul, sur la triste voie;
12 L'amour, délicieux vainqueur,
- Nous a réunis dans la joie.

Verlaine

J'ai presque peur

J'ai presque peur, en vérité,
 Tant je sens ma vie enlacée
 A la radieuse pensée
 4 Qui m'a pris l'âme l'autre été,

 Tant votre image, à jamais chère,
 Habite en ce coeur tout à vous,
 Mon coeur uniquement jaloux
 8 De vous aimer et de vous plaire;

 Et je tremble, pardonnez-moi
 D'aussi franchement vous le dire,
 A penser qu'un mot, un sourire
 12 De vous est désormais ma loi,

 Et qu'il vous suffirait d'un geste,
 D'une parole ou d'un clin d'oeil,
 Pour mettre tout mon être en deuil
 16 De son illusion céleste.

 Mais plutôt je ne veux vous voir,
 L'avenir dût-il m'être sombre
 Et fécond en peines sans nombre,
 20 Qu'à travers un immense espoir.

 Plongé dans ce bonheur suprême
 De me dire encore et toujours,
 En dépit des mornes retours,
 24 Que je vous aime, que je t'aime!

Avant que tu ne t'en ailles

- Avant que tu ne t'en ailles,
Pâle étoile du matin
-Mille cailles
4 Chantent, chantent dans le thym. -
- Tourne devers le poète,
Dont les yeux sont pleins d'amour,
-L'alouette
8 Monte au ciel avec le jour. -
- Tourne ton regard que noie
L'aurore dans son azur;
-Quelle joie
12 Parmi les champs de blé mûr; -
- Puis fais luire ma pensée
Lâ-bas, -bien loin, oh! bien loin,
-La rosée
16 Gaîment brille sur le foin. -
- Dans le doux rêve où s'agite
Ma mie endormie encor...
-Vite, vite,
20 Car voici le soleil d'or! -

Donc, ce sera par un clair jour d'été

Donc, ce sera par un clair jour d'été:

Le grand soleil, complice de ma joie,

Fera, parmi le satin et la soie,

4 Plus belle encor votre chère beauté;

Le ciel bleu, comme une haute tente,

Frissonnera somptueux à longs plis

Sur nos deux fronts heureux qu'auront pâlis

8 L'émotion du bonheur et l'attente;

Et quand le soir viendra, l'air sera doux

Qui se jouera, caressant, dans vos voiles,

Et les regards paisibles des étoiles

12 Bienveillamment souriront aux époux.

N'est-ce pas?

N'est-ce pas? en dépit des sots et des méchants
Qui ne manqueront pas d'envier notre joie,
3 Nous serons fiers parfois et toujours indulgents.

N'est-ce pas? nous irons, gais et lents, dans la voie
Modeste que nous montre en souriant l'Espoir,
6 Peu soucieux qu'on nous ignore ou qu'on nous voie.

Isolés dans l'amour ainsi qu'en un bois noir,
Nos deux coeurs, exhalant leur tendresse paisible,
9 Seront deux rossignols qui chantent dans le soir.

Quant au Monde, qu'il soit envers nous irascible
Ou doux, que nous feront ses gestes? Il peut bien
12 S'il veut, nous caresser ou nous prendre pour cible.

Unis par le plus fort et le plus cher lien,
Et d'ailleurs, possédant l'armure adamantine,
15 Nous sourirons à tous et n'aurons peur de rien.

Sans nous préoccuper de ce que nous destine
Le Sort, nous marcherons pourtant du même pas,
18 Et la main dans la main, avec l'âme enfantine

De ceux qui s'aiment sans mélange, n'est-ce pas!

L'hiver a cessé

L'hiver a cessé: la lumière est tiède
Et danse, du sol au firmament clair.
Il faut que le coeur le plus triste cède
4 A l'immense joie éparsé dans l'air.

Même ce Paris maussade et malade
Semble faire accueil aux jeunes soleils
Et, comme pour une immense accolade,
8 Tend les mille bras de ses toits vermeils.

J'ai depuis un an le printemps dans l'âme
Et le vert retour du doux floréal,
Ainsi qu'une flamme entoure une flamme,
12 Met de l'idéal sur mon idéal.

Le ciel bleu prolonge, exhausse et couronne
L'immuable azur où rit mon amour.
La saison est belle et ma part est bonne
16 Et tous mes espoirs ont enfin leur tour.

Que vienne l'été! que viennent encore
L'automne et l'hiver! Et chaque saison
Me sera charmante, ô Toi que décore
20 Cette fantaisie et cette raison!

Romance

I

Au pays où se fait la guerre
 Mon bel ami s'en est allé;
 Il semble à mon coeur désolé
 4 Qu'il ne reste que moi sur terre!
 En partant, au baiser d'adieu,
 Il m'a pris mon âme à ma bouche.
 Qui le tient si longtemps, mon Dieu!
 8 Voilà le soleil qui se couche,
 Et moi, toute seule en ma tour,
 J'attends encore son retour.

II

Les pigeons, sur le toit roucoulent,
 12 Roucoulent amoureusement
 Avec un son triste et charmant;
 Les eaux sous les grands saules coulent.
 Je me sens tout près de pleurer;
 16 Mon coeur comme un lis plein s'épanche,
 Et je n'ose plus espérer.
 Voici briller la lune blanche,
 Et moi, toute seule en ma tour,
 20 J'attends encore son retour.

III

Quelqu'un monte à grand pas la rampe:
 Serait-ce lui, mon doux amant?
 Ce n'est pas lui, mais seulement
 24 Mon petit page avec ma lampe.
 Vents du soir, volez, dites-lui
 Qu'il est ma pensée et mon rêve,
 Toute ma joie et mon ennui.
 28 Voici que l'aurore se lève,
 Et moi, toute seule en ma tour,
 J'attends encore son retour.

La vie antérieure

J'ai longtemps habité sous de vastes portiques
2 Que les soleils marins teignaient de mille feux,
Et leurs grands piliers, droits et majestueux,
4 Rendaient pareils, le soir, aux grottes basaltiques.

Les houles, en roulant les images des cieux,
6 Mêlaient d'une façon solennelle et mystique
Les tout-puissants accords de leur riche musique
8 Aux couleurs du couchant reflété par mes yeux.

C'est là que j'ai vécu dans les voluptés calmes,
10 Au milieu de l'azur, des vagues, des splendeurs
Et des esclaves nus, tout imprégnés d'odeurs,

12 Qui me rafraîchissaient le front avec des palmes,
Et dont l'unique soin était d'approfondir
14 Le secret douloureux qui me faisait languir.

L'Invitation au voyage

- Mon enfant, ma soeur,
 Songe à la douceur
 D'aller là-bas vivre ensemble!
 Aimer à loisir,
 Aimer et mourir
 6 Au pays qui te ressemble!
 Les soleils mouillés
 De ces ciels brouillés
 Pour mon esprit ont les charmes
 Si mystérieux
 De tes traîtres yeux,
 12 Brillant à travers leurs larmes.
 Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté
 Luxe, calme et volupté.

 Des meubles luisants,
 Polis par les ans
 Décoreraient notre chambre;
 18 Les plus rares fleurs
 Mêlant leurs odeurs
 Aux vagues senteurs de l'ambre,
 Les riches plafonds,
 Les miroirs profonds,
 La splendeur orientale,
 24 Tout y parlerait
 A l'âme en secret
 Sa douce langue natale.
 Là, tous n'est qu'ordre et beauté,
 Luxe, calme et volupté.

 Vois sur ces canaux
 30 Dormir ces vaisseaux
 Dont l'humeur est vagabonde;
 C'est pour assouvir
 Ton moindre désir
 Qu'ils viennent du bout du monde.
 Les soleils couchants
 36 Revêtent les champs,
 Les canaux, la ville entière,
 D'hyacinthe et d'or;
 Le monde s'endort
 Dans une chaude lumière.
 Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté,
 42 Luxe, calme et volupté.

Harmonie du soir

Voici venir les temps où vibrant sur sa tige
Chaque fleur s'évapore ainsi qu'un encensoir;
Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir;
4 Valse mélancolique et langoureux vertige!

Chaque fleur s'évapore ainsi qu'un encensoir;
Le violon frémit comme un coeur qu'on afflige;
Valse mélancolique et langoureux vertige!
8 Le ciel est triste et beau comme un grand reposoir.

Le violon frémit comme un coeur qu'on afflige,
Un coeur tendre, qui hait le néant vaste et noir!
Le ciel est triste et beau comme un grand reposoir;
12 Le soleil s'est noyé dans son sang qui se fige.

Un coeur tendre, qui hait le néant vaste et noir,
Du passé lumineux recueille tout vestige!
Le soleil s'est noyé dans son sang qui se fige...
16 Ton souvenir en moi luit comme un ostensor!

Recueillement

- 2 Sois sage, ô ma Douleur, et tiens-toi plus tranquille.
Tu réclamaï le Soir; il descend; le voici:
Une atmosphère obscure enveloppe la ville,
4 Aux uns portant la paix, aux autres le souci.
- 6 Pendant que des mortels la multitude vile,
Sous le fouet du Plaisir, ce bourreau sans merci,
Va cueillir des remords dans la fête servile,
8 Ma Douleur, donne-moi la main; viens par ici,
- 10 Loin d'eux. Vois se pencher les défuntes Années,
Sur les balcons du ciel, en robes surannées;
Surgir du fond des eaux le Regret souriant;
- 12 Le Soleil moribond s'endormir sous une arche,
Et, comme un long linceul traînant à l'Orient,
14 Entends, ma chère, entends la douce Nuit qui marche.

Verlaine

C'est l'extase

C'est l'extase langoureuse,
C'est la fatigue amoureuse,
3 C'est tous les frissons des bois
Parmi l'étreinte des brises,
C'est, vers les ramures grises,
6 Le choeur des petites voix.

O le frêle et frais murmure!
Cela gazouille et susurre,
9 Cela ressemble au cri doux
Que l'herbe agitée expire...
Tu dirais, sous l'eau qui vire,
12 Le roulis sourd des cailloux.

Cette âme qui se lamente
En cette plaine dormante
15 C'est la nôtre, n'est-ce pas?
La mienne, dis, et la tienne,
Dont s'exhale l'humble antienne
18 Par ce tiède soir, tout bas?

Il pleure dans mon coeur

Il pleure dans mon coeur
Comme il pleut sur la ville.
Quelle est cette langueur
4 Qui pénètre mon coeur?

O bruit doux de la pluie
Par terre et sur les toits!
Pour un coeur qui s'ennuie,
8 O le chant de la pluie!

Il pleure sans raison
Dans ce coeur qui s'écoeure
Quoi! nulle trahison?
12 Ce deuil est sans raison.

C'est bien la pire peine
De ne savoir pourquoi,
Sans amour et sans haine,
16 Mon coeur a tant de peine.

Green

Voici des fruits, des fleurs, des feuilles et des branches,
Et puis voici mon coeur, qui ne bat que pour vous.
Ne le déchirez pas avec vos deux mains blanches
4 Et qu'à vos yeux si beaux l'humble présent soit doux.

J'arrive tout couvert encore de rosée
Que le vent du matin vient glacer à mon front.
Souffrez que ma fatigue, à vos pieds reposés,
8 Rêve des chers instants qui la délasseront.

Sur votre jeune sein laissez rouler ma tête
Toute sonore encor de vos derniers baisers;
Laissez-la s'apaiser de la bonne tempête,
12 Et que je dorme un peu puisque vous reposez.

Chevaux de bois

Tournez, tournez, bons chevaux de bois,
Tournez cent tours, tournez mille tours,
Tournez souvent et tournez toujours,
4 Tournez, tournez au son des hautbois.

L'enfant tout rouge et la mère blanche,
Le gars en noir et la fille en rose,
L'une à la chose et l'autre à la pose,
8 Chacun se paie un sou de dimanche.

Tournez, tournez, chevaux de leur coeur,
Tandis qu'autour de tous vos tournois
Clignote l'oeil du filou sournois,
12 Tournez au son du piston vainqueur!

C'est étonnant comme ça vous soule
D'aller ainsi dans ce cirque bête:
Bien dans le ventre et mal dans la tête,
16 Du mal en masse et du bien en foule.

Tournez, au son de l'accordéon,
Du violon, du trombone fous,
Chevaux plus doux que des moutons, doux
20 Comme un peuple en révolution.

Le vent fouettant la tente, les verres,
Les zincs et le drapeau tricolore,
Et les jupons, et que sais-je encore?
24 Fait un fracas de cinq cents tonnerres.

Tournez, dadas, sans qu'il soit besoin
D'user jamais de nuls éperons
Pour commander à vos galops ronds:
28 Tournez, tournez, sans espoir de foin.

Et dépêchez, chevaux de leur âme:
Déjà voici que sonne à la soupe
La nuit qui tombe et chasse la troupe
32 De gais buveurs que leur soif affame.

Tournez, tournez! le ciel en velours
D'astres en or se vêt lentement.
L'église tinte un glas tristement.
36 Tournez au son joyeux des tambours!

La mer est plus belle

- La mer est plus belle
 Que les cathédrales,
 Nourrice fidèle,
 4 Berceuse de râles,
 La mer sur qui prie
 La Vierge Marie!
- Elle a tous les dons
 8 Terribles et doux:
 J'entends ses pardons
 Gronder ses courroux...
 Cette immensité
 12 N'a rien d'entêté.
- Oh! si patiente,
 Même quand méchante!
 Un souffle ami hante
 16 La vague, et nous chante:
 "Vous sans espérance,
 Mourez sans souffrance."
- Et puis sous les cieux
 20 Qui s'y rient plus clairs,
 Elle a des airs bleus,
 Roses, gris et verts...
 Plus belle que tous,
 24 Meilleure que nous!

En sourdine

Calmes dans le demi-jour
Que les branches hautes font,
Pénétrons bien notre amour
4 De ce silence profond.

Fondons nos âmes, nos coeurs
Et nos sens extasiés,
Parmi les vagues langueurs
8 Des pins et des arbousiers.

Ferme tes yeux à demi,
Croise tes bras sur ton sein,
Et de ton coeur endormi
12 Chasse à jamais tout dessein.

Laissons-nous persuader
Au souffle berceur et doux,
Qui vient à tes pieds rider
16 Les ondes de gazon roux.

Et quand, solennel, le soir
Des chênes noirs tombera,
Voix de notre désespoir,
20 le rossignol chantera.

Verlaine

Clair de lune

Votre âme est un paysage choisi
Que vont charmant masques et bergamasques
Jouant du luth et dansant et quasi
4 Tristes sous leurs déguisements fantasques.

Tout en chantant sur le mode mineur
L'amour vainqueur et la vie opportune,
Ils n'ont pas l'air de croire à leur bonheur
8 Et leur chanson se mêle au clair de lune,

Au calme clair de lune triste et beau,
Qui fait rêver les oiseaux dans les arbres
Et sangloter d'extase les jets d'eau,
12 Les grands jets d'eau sveltes parmi les marbres.

Colloque sentimental

Dans le vieux parc solitaire et glacé
Deux formes ont tout à l'heure passé.

4 Leurs yeux sont morts et leurs lèvres sont molles
Et l'on entend à peine leurs paroles.

Dans le vieux parc solitaire et glacé,
Deux spectres ont évoqué le passé.

8 -Te souvient-il de notre extase ancienne?
-Pourquoi voulez-vous donc qu'il m'en souviennne?

-Ton coeur bat-il toujours à mon seul nom?
Toujours vois-tu mon âme en rêve? -Non.

12 Ah! les beaux jours de bonheur indicible
Où nous joignons nos bouches! -C'est possible.

-Qu'il était bleu, le ciel, et grand, l'espoir!
-L'espoir a fui, vaincu, vers le ciel noir.

16 Tels ils marchaient dans les avoines folles,
Et la nuit seule entendit leurs paroles.

Verlaine

Le ciel est, par-dessus le toit

Le ciel est, par-dessus le toit,
Si bleu, si calme !
Un arbre, par-dessus le toit,
Berce sa palme.

La cloche, dans le ciel qu'on voit,
Doucement tinte.
Un oiseau sur l'arbre qu'on voit
Chante sa plainte.

Mon Dieu, Mon Dieu, la vie est là,
Simple et tranquille.
Cette paisible rumeur-là
Vient de la ville.

Qu'as-tu fait, ô toi que voilà
Pleurant sans cesse,
Dis, qu'as-tu fait, toi que voilà,
De ta jeunesse?

FOOTNOTES

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