

Pittsburg State University

Pittsburg, Kansas

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

Graduate Recital

JANICE GORDON, Lyric Soprano

Assisted by

Erma Rose, Pianist

Markwood Holmes, Violinist

Monday, May 2, 1977

McCray Auditorium

8:00 p.m.

PROGRAM

I

Aurore

Chanson d'amour

Le Secret

Nôtre Amour

----- Faure
(1845-1924)

Miss Gordon, Miss Rose

II

Vier Letzte Lieder

Frühling

September

Beim Schlafengehen

Im Abendrot

----- Strauss
(1864-1949)

Miss Gordon, Miss Rose

III

Four Songs for Voice and Violin

Jesu Sweet

My soul has nought but fire and ice

I sing of a maiden

My Leman is so true

----- Holst
(1874-1934)

Miss Gordon, Mr. Holmes

IV

Siete canciones populares Españolas

El paño moruno

Murcian seguidilla

Asturiana

Jota

Nana

Cançion

Polo

----- Falla
(1876-1946)

Miss Gordon, Miss Rose

This recital partially fulfills thesis requirements for the Master of Music degree program for Miss Gordon.

PROGRAM NOTES

Janice Gordon

I

Fauré chose the minor Parnassian poet, Paul Armand Silvestre (1837-1901), as poet for eleven of his solo songs and one work for chorus and orchestra. Important in Fauré's development as a song writer, the group of poets known as Parnassians came into prominence in the 1860's and were predecessors of the later Symbolists. With their love for precision and formal beauty, they sought a Hellenic classicism, rebelling against the excessive emotionalism they saw as marring the romantic lyrics of Victor Hugo (1802-1885) and others. It can readily be seen how these poets would appeal to Fauré, innately a classicist himself. Norman Suckling, in his biography of Fauré describes Silvestre's influence as still part of Fauré's "apprenticeship, yet...an influence which at least set him on his own truest path, rather than deflecting him from it, as that of Victor Hugo had rather tended to do." The four Silvestre settings, "Aurore" (1884, op. 39), "Chanson d'Amour" (1883, op. 27), "Le Secret" and "Nôtre Amour" (1882, op. 23) all are found in the composer's second collected volume of songs and fall into the latter part of his first period of composition. This period is characterized by generally tuneful melodies (with wider ranges than in later songs) and accompaniments that function in a secondary role to the vocal line. (According to Pierre Bernac, Fauré's melodies fall into three periods, following "a direct line along which his music becomes always more subtle in form and harmony, and likewise purer and more restrained in expression.") In some songs towards the end of his first period, Fauré began to mitigate the metric aspect of his *mélodies*, in consideration for the flow of the French prosody. This softening of meter is apparent in "Aurore", considered along with "Le Secret" to be the best of the Silvestre settings. Suckling interprets "Aurore" as "the dawn after a night of love", but stanza two would seem to indicate that the poet's desires have their origin not in reality, but only in a "languid dream" which has "intoxicated" his heart. His desires can only "seek to come near" the beloved before perishing with the coming of morning (implying the dream's end). This interpretation might be related to a theme common to many of the Parnassians - that of the unpossessable ideal, at times personified as a beautiful woman. Fauré sets the three quatrains of "Aurore" in ternary form (ABA), with the A sections in major and the middle part in the parallel minor, a mode in keeping with the intoxicating languid dream of stanza two. "Chanson d'Amour" is a little more straight-forward love lyric, written in three octosyllabic quatrains (a favorite form of the Parnassians). Fauré takes liberties in his setting of these stanzas, arranging them 1, 2, 1, 3, 1, and creating a rondo with his music as well. One senses a certain ambivalence in the stanzas of "Le Secret", and wonders why the poet has told his love to the night, wishes the morning to ignore it, the day to proclaim it, and the sunset to carry it away. Though this poem lends itself to a variety of interpretations, the key to its meaning may well lie in a second glance at the title. Of interest in Fauré's ternary setting is his use of the Lydian mode in stanzas one and three. (Fauré frequently made use of the church modes in his compositions.) The verses of "Nôtre Amour" pose no particular problem of interpretation. Fauré sets its five stanzas in five sections, dropping the one-line refrain from stanza four, then expanding it into a little coda section in stanza five.

Richard Strauss's *Vier Letzte Lieder* (Four Last Songs) have been called "the most consciously and most beautifully delivered 'Abschied' (farewell) in all music." These songs, scored by Strauss for soprano voice and orchestra, stand at the end of a lifetime of involvement with the lied as a genre, whether with the piano or orchestra. All completed in 1948 (though sketches for "Im Abendrot" go back to late 1946), the *Vier Letzte Lieder* are Strauss's last composition, written when he was eighty-four, seriously ill, and aware of approaching death. Thus the subject matter of the poems chosen can hardly be considered coincidental, nor the inclusion of the transfiguration motive from Strauss's own tone poem, *Tod und Verklärung* (Death and Transfiguration) at the end of "Im Abendrot". Hermann Hesse (1877-1962) is the poet for all of these songs except "Im Abendrot", by Joseph von Eichendorff (1788-1857). A common characteristic of each of these texts is their reference to the passage of time, whether by season as in "Frühling" ("Spring"), month as in "September," or time of day as in "Beim Schlafengehen" ("Going to Sleep") and "Im Abendrot" ("At Sunset"). The Strauss settings of these verses are through-composed, and make use of chromaticism (typical of this composer) and word painting. Strauss uses both syllabic and melismatic setting of words, with only one example of text repetition ("deine selige" in "Frühling"). The music of "Frühling" follows the stanza division of the poem, with the overall tonality in the three sections progressively brightening (C minor, C major, A major) in accordance with the mood of the text. Note the obvious word painting in the melismatic setting of "vogelsang" (birdsong), reinforced by the trilling notes of the accompaniment. In the context of these songs, it is reasonable to identify the poetic thought in "Frühling" with the concept of life after death. "September" is basically built on two alternating musical ideas: there is no clear-cut stanza division in the music. This song, the last to be composed, was completed in September (appropriately) of 1948, one year to the month before the composer's death in 1949. The music of "Beim Schlafengehen" is unequally distributed between the poem's three stanzas, the melismatic setting of stanza three consuming the greater proportion. The poem tells of the soul's fatigue at the close of day, and its desire to take wing in the "magic circles of the night". (Note this analogy with the death wish.) The soaring theme in the long interlude, taken up by the voice in stanza three, undoubtedly symbolizes the winged nocturnal journey of the soul. "Im Abendrot" conjures up two old people who, having travelled through the joys and adversities of life, find themselves at the end of their wanderings. The last line, "Ist das etwa der Tod?" ("Is that perhaps death?") Strauss has personalized by changing the "das" to "dies" ("this"). The music follows the four-stanza division of the poem, with an extensive introduction and postlude.

According to Imogen Holst in her biography of her father, the idea for his Four Songs for Voice and Violin (1916 & 1917) "first came to him one night in Thaxted when, in the darkening church, he heard a woman singing and playing the violin at the same time. Obviously it would be unpractical to have only one performer, but he felt there were possibilities in the violin as an accompaniment to the voice." For his texts, Holst chose verses taken from A Medieval Anthology, edited, and with the poems modernized by Mary Segar. Appropriately, the Holst settings, rather austere in their economy of expression, are flavored with a feeling of modality, though he by no means adheres in a strict sense to the modal formulae. Holst's music, with its rhythmic independence of the bar lines, shows an admirable deference to the natural rhythms of these medieval verses. The composer once wrote to a friend, "I find that unconsciously I have been drawn for years towards discovering the (or a) musical idiom of the English language." In these songs, he seems to have come close. In fact, Holst himself once stated that he felt the fourth song of this group was the nearest approach he had yet achieved in his search for the musical idiom of the English language. From a poem entitled "A Song of Love Longing" in the anthology, Holst has chosen four of six verses to set for his first song. The poem is an apostrophe to Jesus, which word Holst has changed to "Jesu" in his setting. The quatrains are set in coinciding musical sections, each separated by a measure interlude and unified by the opening motives on the words "Jesu sweet." (The poem is tentatively credited by Segar to Richard Rolle, c. 1290-1349. Known as the "Hermit of Hampole", Rolle was a religious writer and the first English mystic. His influence is said to be traceable in most medieval religious lyrics.) The single stanza of Holst's second song is set exactly as it appears in the anthology. The tremelo of the violin plus the syncopated rhythms of the vocal line portray well the poet's agitation at the state of soul and body in the first two lines of this verse. The dissonance of the Eb of earth against the violin's octave D also contributes to the poet's feeling of unrest. Holst has set the text of his third song, too, as it appears in the anthology (from a poem entitled "God's Mother"). His music is through-composed, with the middle three phrases (coinciding with the poem's middle quatrains) bearing resemblance to each other; and fittingly so, as the poetic thought in each is basically the same, with a slight variance of simile. The three stanzas of Holst's last song are lifted from six shown by Segar in a poem entitled "A Mourning Song of God's Love". Segar states that the poem as seen in the Vernon manuscript contains thirty-two verses, all equally beautiful. The thought in Holst's second stanza is clearer, knowing that the preceding one (which he omits) speaks of Christ standing outside, "calling at my gate." Holst's setting (AA, B) follows the stanza division of the poem, with a short interlude between the two A sections. According to Imogen Holst, the B section, which is an apostrophe to Christ, begins with the rhythmic feel of "the effortless dance that was his (Holst's) vision of heaven."

Falla's *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas* (Seven Popular Spanish Songs) date from 1914, and were completed before the outbreak of World War I. After the first performance of *La Vida Breve* (Falla's two-act opera), a Spanish singer from Málaga who was in the cast sought his advice as to which Spanish songs would be most suitable for her to give in a concert in Paris. Falla was most interested and told her that he would try to arrange some for her himself. In his arrangements, Falla closely observed not only the modal nature of each song, as advocated by his teacher Felipe Pedrell, but also their place of origin. Pedrell (1841-1922), courageous idealist and composer, worked energetically for a national revival of Spain's musical culture in the rich field of native folksong. To him, Falla admitted owing "the clearest, the firmest orientation" for his work in a national musical form. There is considerable dissension among authorities as to the extent of literal usage of folksong in Falla's compositions, but most will agree that the *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas* are based on genuine folk originals. Manuel Garcia Matos (), musicologist and Falla scholar, has seen four of these melodies, basically unretouched, in folksong collections he cites. "Nana", he claims, is only slightly retouched, but the folk theme in "Jota" is strongly modified, and "Polo" is also retouched and enlarged. The first song in this cycle is "El Paño Moruno" ("The Moorish Cloth"), which comes from the almost Andalusian province of Murcia. It is composed in two stanzas of two periods each, the second verse widening the compass of the first. Falla's accompaniment makes use of chords arpeggiated in the manner of the "rasgueado" (strummed chords) of a guitarist. The text of "El Paño Moruno" metaphorically compares the recipient of its insult to stained goods on the counter. The "Seguidilla Murciana", as its name indicates, is a dance from the province of Murcia. A voluble song of muleteers, this number makes an excellent reply to the first song of the cycle. Musically, it consists of two strophes, the second identically repeating the first. Falla's accompaniment imitates the crackling of a guitar played in the "punteado", or contrapuntal style. "Asturiana" (from "Asturias") takes us to the north of Spain. It is a peaceful lamentation: again, musically in two strophes. The folk poem is an example of "pathetic fallacy": the poet in his loneliness transfers his sorrow to the pine tree, seeing it as capable of sharing his feelings. The "Jota" belongs to the province of Aragon. One of the most popular dances of northern Spain, the jota's origin dates from the twelfth century and is attributed to a Moor, Aben Jot. It is a kind of waltz, but with more freedom in the dancing. The melody of this "Jota" divides itself into two strophes; the accompaniment, with its long prelude, interlude, and postlude, evokes a feeling of lilting dance appropriate for this song. The "Nana" ("Lullaby") is a cradle song, an Andalusian lullaby, musically in two similar sections. Jaime Pahissa, friend and biographer of Falla, says that Falla heard this song as a child from "his mother's lips before he was old enough to think." Different from all other "cradle songs" of Spain, the sources of the Andalusian nana, according to the composer, appear to lie in India. The "Cancion", ("Song") in two strophes, tells of betrayed love, and is full of emotion. The untranslated expressions in the text, "Del aire" and "Madre, a la orilla" are interpolations, probably idiomatic cries of despair. This song leads well into the "Polo", which curses love, and "the one who professed it to me." The polo belongs to the flamenco or Gypsy world, with its origin in Andalusia. A Spanish dance accompanied by singing, it is full of wild energy and contortions of the body. Falla's setting of this "Polo" begins with a brilliant and rapid "punteado" in the accompaniment, with accents evoking the "palmadas", or handclappings, of the spectators. The "cantaor" begins on a long "Ay," the plaintive cry of Andalusian singers.

I
AURORE (DAWN)

From the gardens of the night the stars fly away,
Golden bees attracted by an unseen honey,
And the dawn, in the distance, spreading the brightness of its canvas,
Weaves silver threads into the sky's blue mantle.

From the garden of my heart, intoxicated by a languid dream,
My desires fly away with the coming of the morn;
Like a light swarm to the coppery horizon,
Called by a plaintive song, eternal and far away.

They fly to your feet, stars chased by the clouds,
Exiles from the golden sky where your beauty blossoms,
And, seeking to come near you on uncharted paths,
Mingle their dying light with the dawning day.

CHANSON D'AMOUR (SONG OF LOVE)

I love your eyes; I love your face,
O my rebel, o my fierce one!
I love your eyes; I love your lips
Where my kisses will exhaust themselves.

I love your voice; I love the strange
Gracefulness of everything that you say,
O my rebel, o my dear angel,
My inferno and my paradise!

I love your eyes; I love your face;
I love everything that makes you beautiful
From your feet to your hair.
O you, to whom ascend all my desires!

LE SECRET (THE SECRET)

I wish the morning to ignore
The name I told the night,
And that in the wind of dawn, silently,
It should evanesce like a tear.

I wish the day would proclaim
The love I hid in the morn,
and learning over my open heart,
Would kindle it like a grain of incense.

I wish the evening to forget
The secret I told to the day,
And carry it away with my love,
In the folds of its pale garment.

NÔTRE AMOUR (OUR LOVE)

Our love is a light thing,
Like the perfumes which the wind
Lifts from the top of the fern
To be inhaled in dreaming.
Our love is a light thing!

Our love is a charming thing,
Like the songs of the morn,
With no regret nor lament,
In which vibrates an uncertain hope.
Our love is a charming thing!

Our love is a sacred thing,
Like the mysteries of a forest,
Where a strange soul is trembling,
Where stillness has a voice;
Our love is a sacred thing!

Our love is an infinite thing,
Like the paths of sunsets,
Where the sea, united to the sky,
Slumbers under declining suns.

Our love is an eternal thing,
Like all things that Almighty God
Has touched with the fire of His wing,
Like all that comes from the heart,
Our love is an eternal thing!

II

VIER LETZTE LIEDER (FOUR LAST SONGS)

FRÜHLING (SPRING)

In twilit valleys
I have long dreamt
of your trees and blue skies,
Your perfumes and your bird-song.

Now you lie visibly before me
In shining splendour,
Flooded with light,
Like a miracle.

You know me again,
You lure me gently,
Your happy presence
Trembles through all my limbs!

SEPTEMBER

The garden mourns;
The cool rain sinks into the flowers.
The summer shudders
Silently towards its end.

Leaf after golden leaf
Drops from the tall acacia.
The summer smiles, astonished and weary,
Into the garden's dying dream.

Long he remains, standing
By the roses, yearning for rest.
Slowly he closes his
Eyes that have grown so tired.

BEIM SCHLAFENGEGEHEN (GOING TO SLEEP)

Now the day has tired me,
I yearn for the starry night.
May she receive me kindly,
Like a tired child.

Hands, leave your doing,
Brain, leave your thinking;
All my senses
Would now sink into slumber.

And the unwatched soul
Wants to soar up freely
To live a thousand times more deeply
In the magic circle of the night.

IM ABENDROT (AT SUNSET)

Through troubles and joys
We have gone hand in hand;
Now we both rest from our wanderings,
High over the still countryside.

The valleys descend round about us;
The skies are already growing dark.
Only two larks, remembering a dream,
Are rising into the haze.

Come, let them fly-
Soon it is time to sleep.
We must not go astray
In this loneliness.

O wide, still peace!
So deep in the sunset glow.
How weary we are with wandering-
Can this, perhaps, be death?

III FOUR SONGS FOR VOICE AND VIOLIN

1

Jesu Sweet, now will I sing
To Thee a song of love-longing:
Do in my heart a quick well spring,
Thee to love above all thing.

Jesu Sweet, my dim heart's gleam,
Brighter than the sunne-beam!
As Thou wert born in Bethlehem,
Make in my Thy love-dream.

Jesu Sweet, my dark heart's light,
Thou art day withouten night:
Give me strength and eke* might
For to loven Thee aright.

Jesu Sweet, well may he be
That in Thy bliss Thyself shall see.
With love-cords then draw Thou me
That I may come and dwell with Thee.

*in addition

2

My soul has nought but fire and ice
And my body earth and wood:
Pray we all the Most High King
Who is the Lord of our last doom,
That He should give us just one thing-
That we may do His will.

I sing of a maiden
That matchless is:
King of all kings
Was her Son iwis*

He came all so still
Where His mother was
As dew in April
That falleth on grass:

He came all so still
To His mother's bower
As dew in April
That falleth on flower:

He came all so still
Where His mother lay
As dew in April
That formeth on spray.

*indeed, certainly

My Leman* is so true
Of love, and full steadfast,
Yet seemeth ever new,
His love is on us cast.
I would that all Him knew
And loved Him firm and fast:
They never would it rue
But happy be at last.

He lovingly abides*
Although I stay full long;
He will me never chide
Although I choose the wrong.
He says--"behold My side
And why on Rood* I hung:
For my love leave thy pride
And I thee underfong."*

I'll dwell with Thee believe,
Leman, under Thy tree,
May no pain e'er me grieve
Nor make me from Thee flee.
I will in at Thy sleeve
All in Thine heart to be:
Mine heart shall burst and cleave
Ere untrue Thou me see.

*Leman-lover (Christ); *abides-waites for me; *Rood-the cross;
*underfong-receive, take back

IV
SIETE CANCIONES POPULARES ESPAÑOLAS
(SEVEN POPULAR SPANISH SONGS)

EL PANO MORUNO (THE MOORISH CLOTH)


On the fine cloth in the shop
There fell a stain;
It sells at a cheaper price,
because it has lost its worth. Ay!

SEGUIDILLA MURCIANA (SEGUIDILLA FROM MURCIA)

Whoever has a roof
That is made of ~~glad~~^{ss}
Ought not to throw stones
At that of his neighbor.
Let us be muleteers;
Perhaps in the street
We shall meet each other!

For your great inconstancy
I would compare you
To a peseta that passes
From hand to hand
Til it is finally defaced.
Believing it counterfeit,
No one will take it!

ASTURIANA (FROM ASTURIAS)

To see if it would console me,
I leaned against a green pine; 
To see if it would console me.

In seeing me weep, it wept.
And the pine, because it was green,
Wept to see me weeping.

JOTA

They say we don't love each other
Because they don't see us speak.
They should question instead
Both your heart and mine.

Now I take my leave of you,
of your house and your window;
And though your mother doesn't like it,
Farewell, sweetheart, til tomorrow.

Though your mother doesn't like it...

NANA (LULLABY)

Go to sleep, child, to sleep.
Sleep, my dearest.
Go to sleep, little star
Of the morning.
Lullaby, lullaby,
Go to sleep, little star
Of the morning.

CANCION (SONG)

I am going to bury
Your traitorous eyes!
You don't know I pay ("Del aire...")
My child, for looking at them.
("Madre, a la orilla...")

They say you don't love me,
But you loved me once...
It's possible to go away winning ("Del aire...")
In spite of the loss!

POLO

Ay!
I nourish a (Ay!)
I nourish a pain in my breast, (Ay!)
And will tell no one of it!

Cursed be love, (Ay!)
and the one who professed it to me! (Ay!)