

= Gabriel Fauré =

Gabriel Urbain Fauré ( French : [ ʒabʁiʁl yʁbɛʁ fœʁe ] ; 12 May 1845 ? 4 November 1924 ) was a French composer , organist , pianist and teacher . He was one of the foremost French composers of his generation , and his musical style influenced many 20th @-@ century composers . Among his best @-@ known works are his Pavane , Requiem , nocturnes for piano and the songs " Après un rêve " and " Clair de lune " . Although his best @-@ known and most accessible compositions are generally his earlier ones , Fauré composed many of his most highly regarded works in his later years , in a more harmonically and melodically complex style .

Fauré was born into a cultured but not especially musical family . His talent became clear when he was a small boy . At the age of nine , he was sent to a music college in Paris , where he was trained to be a church organist and choirmaster . Among his teachers was Camille Saint @-@ Saëns , who became a lifelong friend . After graduating from the college in 1865 , Fauré earned a modest living as an organist and teacher , leaving him little time for composition . When he became successful in his middle age , holding the important posts of organist of the Église de la Madeleine and director of the Paris Conservatoire , he still lacked time for composing ; he retreated to the countryside in the summer holidays to concentrate on composition . By his last years , Fauré was recognised in France as the leading French composer of his day . An unprecedented national musical tribute was held for him in Paris in 1922 , headed by the president of the French Republic . Outside France , Fauré 's music took decades to become widely accepted , except in Britain , where he had many admirers during his lifetime .

Fauré 's music has been described as linking the end of Romanticism with the modernism of the second quarter of the 20th century . When he was born , Chopin was still composing , and by the time of Fauré 's death , jazz and the atonal music of the Second Viennese School were being heard . The Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians , which describes him as the most advanced composer of his generation in France , notes that his harmonic and melodic innovations influenced the teaching of harmony for later generations . During the last twenty years of his life , he suffered from increasing deafness . In contrast with the charm of his earlier music , his works from this period are sometimes elusive and withdrawn in character , and at other times turbulent and impassioned .

= = Biography = =

= = = Early years = = =

Fauré was born in Pamiers , Ariège , Midi @-@ Pyrénées , in the south of France , the fifth son and youngest of six children of Toussaint @-@ Honoré Fauré ( 1810 ? 85 ) and Marie @-@ Antoinette @-@ Hélène Lalène @-@ Laprade ( 1809 ? 87 ) . According to the biographer Jean @-@ Michel Nectoux , the Fauré family ( pronounced " Faoure " in the occitan local dialect ) dates to the 13th century in that part of France . The family had at one time been substantial landowners , but by the 19th century its means were reduced . The composer 's paternal grandfather , Gabriel , was a butcher whose son became a schoolmaster . In 1829 Fauré 's parents married . His mother was the daughter of a minor member of the nobility . He was the only one of the six children to display musical talent ; his four brothers pursued careers in journalism , politics , the army and the civil service , and his sister had a traditional life as the wife of a public servant .

The young Fauré was sent to live with a foster mother until he was four years old . When his father was appointed director of the École Normale d 'Instituteurs , a teacher training college , at Montgauzy , near Foix , in 1849 , Fauré returned to live with his family . There was a chapel attached to the school , which Fauré recalled in the last year of his life :

I grew up , a rather quiet well @-@ behaved child , in an area of great beauty . ... But the only thing I remember really clearly is the harmonium in that little chapel . Every time I could get away I ran there ? and I regaled myself . ... I played atrociously ... no method at all , quite without technique , but I do remember that I was happy ; and if that is what it means to have a vocation , then it is a very

pleasant thing .

An old blind woman , who came to listen and give the boy advice , told his father of Fauré 's gift for music . In 1853 Simon @-@ Lucien Dufaur de Saubiac , of the National Assembly , heard Fauré play and advised Toussaint @-@ Honoré to send him to the École de Musique Classique et Religieuse ( School of Classical and Religious Music ) , which Louis Niedermeyer was setting up in Paris . After reflecting for a year , Fauré 's father agreed and took the nine @-@ year @-@ old boy to Paris in October 1854 .

Helped by a scholarship from the bishop of his home diocese , Fauré boarded at the school for 11 years . The régime was austere , the rooms gloomy , the food mediocre , and the required uniform elaborate . The musical tuition , however , was excellent . Niedermeyer , whose goal was to produce qualified organists and choirmasters , focused on church music . Fauré 's tutors were Clément Loret for organ , Louis Dietsch for harmony , Xavier Wackenthaler for counterpoint and fugue , and Niedermeyer for piano , plainsong and composition .

When Niedermeyer died in March 1861 , Camille Saint @-@ Saëns took charge of piano studies and introduced contemporary music , including that of Schumann , Liszt and Wagner . Fauré recalled in old age , " After allowing the lessons to run over , he would go to the piano and reveal to us those works of the masters from which the rigorous classical nature of our programme of study kept us at a distance and who , moreover , in those far @-@ off years , were scarcely known . ... At the time I was 15 or 16 , and from this time dates the almost filial attachment ... the immense admiration , the unceasing gratitude I [ have ] had for him , throughout my life . "

Saint @-@ Saëns took great pleasure in his pupil 's progress , which he helped whenever he could ; Nectoux comments that at each step in Fauré 's career " Saint @-@ Saëns 's shadow can effectively be taken for granted . " The close friendship between them lasted until Saint @-@ Saëns died sixty years later . Fauré won many prizes while at the school , including a premier prix in composition for the Cantique de Jean Racine , Op. 11 , the earliest of his choral works to enter the regular repertory . He left the school in July 1865 , as a Laureat in organ , piano , harmony and composition , with a Maître de Chapelle diploma .

= = = Organist and composer = = =

On leaving the École Niedermeyer , Fauré was appointed organist at the Church of Saint @-@ Sauveur , at Rennes in Brittany . He took up the post in January 1866 . During his four years at Rennes he supplemented his income by taking private pupils , giving " countless piano lessons " . At Saint @-@ Saëns 's regular prompting he continued to compose , but none of his works from this period survive . He was bored at Rennes and had an uneasy relationship with the parish priest , who correctly doubted Fauré 's religious conviction . Fauré was regularly seen stealing out during the sermon for a cigarette , and in early 1870 , when he turned up to play at Mass one Sunday still in his evening clothes , having been out all night at a ball , he was asked to resign . Almost immediately , with the discreet aid of Saint @-@ Saëns , he secured the post of assistant organist at the church of Notre @-@ Dame de Clignancourt , in the north of Paris . He remained there for only a few months . On the outbreak of the Franco @-@ Prussian War in 1870 he volunteered for military service . He took part in the action to raise the Siege of Paris , and saw action at Le Bourget , Champigny and Créteil . He was awarded a Croix de Guerre .

After France 's defeat by Prussia , there was a brief , bloody conflict within Paris from March to May 1871 during the Commune . Fauré escaped to Rambouillet where one of his brothers lived , and then travelled to Switzerland , where he took up a teaching post at the École Niedermeyer , which had temporarily relocated there to avoid the violence in Paris . His first pupil at the school was André Messager , who became a lifelong friend and occasional collaborator . Fauré 's compositions from this period did not overtly reflect the turmoil and bloodshed . Some of his colleagues , including Saint @-@ Saëns , Gounod and Franck produced elegies and patriotic odes . Fauré did not , but according to his biographer Jessica Duchon , his music acquired " a new sombreness , a dark @-@ hued sense of tragedy ... evident mainly in his songs of this period including L 'Absent , Seule ! and La Chanson du pêcheur . "

When Fauré returned to Paris in October 1871 , he was appointed choirmaster at the Église Saint @-@ Sulpice under the composer and organist Charles @-@ Marie Widor . In the course of his duties , he wrote several canticles and motets , few of which have survived . During some services , Widor and Fauré improvised simultaneously at the church 's two organs , trying to catch each other out with sudden changes of key . Fauré regularly attended Saint @-@ Saëns 's musical salons and those of Pauline Viardot , to whom Saint @-@ Saëns introduced him .

Fauré was a founding member of the Société Nationale de Musique , formed in February 1871 under the joint chairmanship of Romain Bussine and Saint @-@ Saëns , to promote new French music . Other members included Georges Bizet , Emmanuel Chabrier , Vincent d 'Indy , Henri Duparc , César Franck , Édouard Lalo and Jules Massenet . Fauré became secretary of the society in 1874 . Many of his works were first presented at the society 's concerts .

In 1874 Fauré moved from Saint @-@ Sulpice to the Église de la Madeleine , acting as deputy for the principal organist , Saint @-@ Saëns , during the latter 's many absences on tour . Some admirers of Fauré 's music have expressed regret that although he played the organ professionally for four decades , he left no solo compositions for the instrument . He was renowned for his improvisations , and Saint @-@ Saëns said of him that he was " a first class organist when he wanted to be " . Fauré preferred the piano to the organ , which he played only because it gave him a regular income . Duchén speculates that he positively disliked the organ , possibly because " for a composer of such delicacy of nuance , and such sensuality , the organ was simply not subtle enough . "

The year 1877 was significant for Fauré , both professionally and personally . In January his first violin sonata was performed at a Société Nationale concert with great success , marking a turning @-@ point in his composing career at the age of 31 . Nectoux counts the work as the composer 's first great masterpiece . In March , Saint @-@ Saëns retired from the Madeleine , succeeded as organist by Théodore Dubois , his choirmaster ; Fauré was appointed to take over from Dubois . In July Fauré became engaged to Pauline Viardot 's daughter Marianne , with whom he was deeply in love . To his great sorrow , she broke off the engagement in November 1877 , for reasons that are not clear . To distract Fauré , Saint @-@ Saëns took him to Weimar and introduced him to Franz Liszt . This visit gave Fauré a liking for foreign travel , which he indulged for the rest of his life . From 1878 , he and Messager made trips abroad to see Wagner operas . They saw *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* at the Cologne Opera ; the complete Ring cycle at the Hofoper in Munich and at Her Majesty 's Theatre in London ; and *Die Meistersinger* in Munich and at Bayreuth , where they also saw *Parsifal* . They frequently performed as a party piece their joint composition , the irreverent *Souvenirs de Bayreuth* . This short , up @-@ tempo piano work for four hands sends up themes from *The Ring* . Fauré admired Wagner and had a detailed knowledge of his music , but he was one of the few composers of his generation not to come under Wagner 's musical influence .

= = = Middle years = = =

In 1883 Fauré married Marie Fremiet , the daughter of a leading sculptor , Emmanuel Fremiet . The marriage was affectionate , but Marie became resentful of Fauré 's frequent absences , his dislike of domestic life ? " *horreur du domicile* " ? and his love affairs , while she remained at home . Though Fauré valued Marie as a friend and confidante , writing to her often ? sometimes daily ? when away from home , she did not share his passionate nature , which found fulfilment elsewhere . Fauré and his wife had two sons . The first , born in 1883 , Emmanuel Fauré @-@ Fremiet ( Marie insisted on combining her family name with Fauré 's ) , became a biologist of international reputation . The second son , Philippe , born in 1889 , became a writer ; his works included histories , plays , and biographies of his father and grandfather .

Contemporary accounts agree that Fauré was extremely attractive to women ; in Duchén 's phrase , " his conquests were legion in the Paris salons . " After a romantic attachment to the singer Emma Bardac from around 1892 , followed by another to the composer Adela Maddison , in 1900 , Fauré met the pianist Marguerite Hasselmans , the daughter of Alphonse Hasselmans . This led to a relationship which lasted for the rest of Fauré 's life . He maintained her in a Paris apartment , and

she acted openly as his companion .

To support his family , Fauré spent most of his time in running the daily services at the Madeleine and giving piano and harmony lessons . His compositions earned him a negligible amount , because his publisher bought them outright , paying him an average of 60 francs for a song , and Fauré received no royalties . During this period , he wrote several large @-@ scale works , in addition to many piano pieces and songs , but he destroyed most of them after a few performances , only retaining a few movements in order to re @-@ use motifs . Among the works surviving from this period is the Requiem , begun in 1887 and revised and expanded , over the years , until its final version dating from 1901 . After its first performance , in 1888 , the priest in charge told the composer , " We don 't need these novelties : the Madeleine 's repertoire is quite rich enough . "

As a young man Fauré had been very cheerful ; a friend wrote of his " youthful , even somewhat child @-@ like , mirth . " From his thirties he suffered bouts of depression , which he described as " spleen " , possibly first caused by his broken engagement and his lack of success as a composer . In 1890 a prestigious and remunerative commission to write an opera with lyrics by Paul Verlaine was aborted by the poet 's drunken inability to deliver a libretto . Fauré was plunged into so deep a depression that his friends were seriously concerned about his health . Winnaretta de Scey @-@ Montbéliard , always a good friend to Fauré , invited him to Venice , where she had a palazzo on the Grand Canal . He recovered his spirits and began to compose again , writing the first of his five *Mélodies de Venise* , to words by Verlaine , whose poetry he continued to admire despite the operatic debacle .

About this time , or shortly afterwards , Fauré 's liaison with Emma Bardac began ; in Duchen 's words , " for the first time , in his late forties , he experienced a fulfilling , passionate relationship which extended over several years " . His principal biographers all agree that this affair inspired a burst of creativity and a new originality in his music , exemplified in the song cycle *La bonne chanson* . Fauré wrote the *Dolly Suite* for piano duet between 1894 and 1897 and dedicated it to Bardac 's daughter Hélène , known as " Dolly " . Some people suspected that Fauré was Dolly 's father , but biographers including Nectoux and Duchen think it unlikely . Fauré 's affair with Emma Bardac is thought to have begun after Dolly was born , though there is no conclusive evidence either way .

During the 1890s Fauré 's fortunes improved . When Ernest Guiraud , professor of composition at the Paris Conservatoire , died in 1892 , Saint @-@ Saëns encouraged Fauré to apply for the vacant post . The faculty of the Conservatoire regarded Fauré as dangerously modern , and its head , Ambroise Thomas , blocked the appointment , declaring , " Fauré ? Never ! If he 's appointed , I resign . " However , Fauré was appointed to another of Guiraud 's posts , inspector of the music conservatories in the French provinces . He disliked the prolonged travelling around the country that the work entailed , but the post gave him a steady income and enabled him to give up teaching amateur pupils .

In 1896 Ambroise Thomas died , and Théodore Dubois took over as head of the Conservatoire . Fauré succeeded Dubois as chief organist of the Madeleine . Dubois ' move had further repercussions : Massenet , professor of composition at the Conservatoire , had expected to succeed Thomas , but had overplayed his hand by insisting on being appointed for life . He was turned down , and when Dubois was appointed instead , Massenet resigned his professorship in fury . Fauré was appointed in his place . He taught many young composers , including Maurice Ravel , Florent Schmitt , Charles Koechlin , Louis Aubert , Jean Roger @-@ Ducasse , George Enescu , Paul Ladmirault , Alfredo Casella and Nadia Boulanger . In Fauré 's view , his students needed a firm grounding in the basic skills , which he was happy to delegate to his capable assistant André Gedalge . His own part came in helping them make use of these skills in the way that suited each student 's talents . Roger @-@ Ducasse later wrote , " Taking up whatever the pupils were working on , he would evoke the rules of the form at hand ... and refer to examples , always drawn from the masters . " Ravel always remembered Fauré 's open @-@ mindedness as a teacher . Having received Ravel 's String Quartet with less than his usual enthusiasm , Fauré asked to see the manuscript again a few days later , saying , " I could have been wrong " . The musicologist Henry Prunières wrote , " What Fauré developed among his pupils was taste , harmonic sensibility , the

love of pure lines , of unexpected and colorful modulations ; but he never gave them [ recipes ] for composing according to his style and that is why they all sought and found their own paths in many different , and often opposed , directions . "

Fauré 's works of the last years of the century include incidental music for the English premiere of Maurice Maeterlinck 's *Pelléas et Mélisande* ( 1898 ) and *Prométhée* , a lyric tragedy composed for the amphitheatre at Béziers . Written for outdoor performance , the work is scored for huge instrumental and vocal forces . Its premiere in August 1900 was a great success , and it was revived at Béziers the following year and in Paris in 1907 . A version with orchestration for normal opera house @-@ sized forces was given at the Paris Opéra in May 1917 and received more than forty performances in Paris thereafter . From 1903 to 1921 , Fauré regularly wrote music criticism for *Le Figaro* , a role in which he was not at ease . Nectoux writes that Fauré 's natural kindness and broad @-@ mindedness predisposed him to emphasise the positive aspects of a work .

= = = Head of Paris Conservatoire = = =

In 1905 a scandal erupted in French musical circles over the country 's top musical prize , the *Prix de Rome* . Fauré 's pupil Ravel had been eliminated prematurely in his sixth attempt for this award , and many believed that reactionary elements within the Conservatoire had played a part in it . Dubois , who became the subject of much censure , brought forward his retirement and stepped down at once . Appointed in his place , and with the support of the French government , Fauré radically changed the administration and curriculum . He appointed independent external judges to decide on admissions , examinations and competitions , a move which enraged faculty members who had given preferential treatment to their private pupils ; feeling themselves deprived of a considerable extra income , many of them resigned . Fauré was dubbed " Robespierre " by disaffected members of the old guard as he modernised and broadened the range of music taught at the Conservatoire . As Nectoux puts it , " where Auber , Halévy and especially Meyerbeer had reigned supreme ... it was now possible to sing an aria by Rameau or even some Wagner ? up to now a forbidden name within the Conservatoire 's walls " . The curriculum was broadened to range from Renaissance polyphony to the works of Debussy .

Fauré 's new position left him better off financially . However , while he also became much more widely known as a composer , running the Conservatoire left him with no more time for composition than when he was struggling to earn a living as an organist and piano teacher . As soon as the working year was over , in the last days of July , he would leave Paris and spend the two months until early October in a hotel , usually by one of the Swiss lakes , to concentrate on composition . His works from this period include his lyric opera , *Pénélope* ( 1913 ) , and some of his most characteristic later songs ( e.g. , the cycle *La chanson d'Ève* , Op. 95 , completed in 1910 ) and piano pieces ( *Nocturnes* Nos. 9 ? 11 ; *Barcarolles* Nos. 7 ? 11 , written between 1906 and 1914 ) .

Fauré was elected to the Institut de France in 1909 , after his father @-@ in @-@ law and Saint @-@ Saëns , both long @-@ established members , had canvassed strongly on his behalf . He won the ballot by a narrow margin , with 18 votes against 16 for the other candidate , Widor . In the same year a group of young composers led by Ravel and Koechlin broke with the *Société Nationale de Musique* , which under the presidency of Vincent d 'Indy had become a reactionary organisation , and formed a new group , the *Société Musicale Indépendante* . While Fauré accepted the presidency of this society , he also remained a member of the older one and continued on the best of terms with d 'Indy ; his sole concern was the fostering of new music . In 1911 he oversaw the Conservatoire 's move to new premises in the rue de Madrid . During this time , Fauré developed serious problems with his hearing . Not only did he start to go deaf , but sounds became distorted , so that high and low notes sounded painfully out of tune to him .

The turn of the 20th century saw a rise in the popularity of Fauré 's music in Britain , and to a lesser extent in Germany , Spain and Russia . He visited England frequently , and an invitation to play at Buckingham Palace in 1908 opened many other doors in London and beyond . He attended the London premiere of Elgar 's *First Symphony* , in 1908 , and dined with the composer afterwards . Elgar later wrote to their mutual friend Frank Schuster that Fauré " was such a real gentleman ? the

highest kind of Frenchman and I admired him greatly . " Elgar tried to get Fauré 's Requiem put on at the Three Choirs Festival , but it did not finally have its English premiere until 1937 , nearly fifty years after its first performance in France . Composers from other countries also loved and admired Fauré . In the 1880s Tchaikovsky had thought him " adorable " ; Albéniz and Fauré were friends and correspondents until the former 's early death in 1909 ; Richard Strauss sought his advice ; and in Fauré 's last years , the young American , Aaron Copland was a devoted admirer .

The outbreak of the First World War almost stranded Fauré in Germany , where he had gone for his annual composing retreat . He managed to get from Germany into Switzerland , and thence to Paris . He remained in France for the duration of the war . When a group of French musicians led by Saint @-@ Saëns tried to organise a boycott of German music , Fauré and Messager dissociated themselves from the idea , though the disagreement did not affect their friendship with Saint @-@ Saëns . Fauré did not recognise nationalism in music , seeing in his art " a language belonging to a country so far above all others that it is dragged down when it has to express feelings or individual traits that belong to any particular nation . " Nonetheless , he was aware that his own music was respected rather than loved in Germany . In January 1905 , visiting Frankfurt and Cologne for concerts of his music , he had written , " The criticisms of my music have been that it 's a bit cold and too well brought up ! There 's no question about it , French and German are two different things . "

= = = Last years and legacy = = =

In 1920 , at the age of 75 , Fauré retired from the Conservatoire because of his increasing deafness and frailty . In that year he received the Grand @-@ Croix of the Légion d 'honneur , an honour rare for a musician . In 1922 the president of the republic , Alexandre Millerand , led a public tribute to Fauré , a national homage , described in The Musical Times as " a splendid celebration at the Sorbonne , in which the most illustrious French artists participated , [ which ] brought him great joy . It was a poignant spectacle , indeed : that of a man present at a concert of his own works and able to hear not a single note . He sat gazing before him pensively , and , in spite of everything , grateful and content . "

Fauré suffered from poor health in his later years , brought on in part by heavy smoking . Despite this , he remained available to young composers , including members of Les Six , most of whom were devoted to him . Nectoux writes , " In old age he attained a kind of serenity , without losing any of his remarkable spiritual vitality , but rather removed from the sensualism and the passion of the works he wrote between 1875 and 1895 . "

In his last months , Fauré struggled to complete a string quartet . Twenty years earlier he had been the dedicatee of Ravel 's String Quartet . Ravel and others urged Fauré to compose one of his own . He refused for many years , on the grounds that it was too difficult . When he finally decided to write it , he did so in trepidation , telling his wife , " I 've started a Quartet for strings , without piano . This is a genre which Beethoven in particular made famous , and causes all those who are not Beethoven to be terrified of it . " He worked on the piece for a year , finishing it on 11 September 1924 , less than two months before he died , working long hours towards the end to complete it . The quartet was premiered after his death ; he declined an offer to have it performed privately for him in his last days , as his hearing had deteriorated to the point where musical sounds were horribly distorted in his ear .

Fauré died in Paris from pneumonia on 4 November 1924 at the age of 79 . He was given a state funeral at the Église de la Madeleine and is buried in the Passy Cemetery in Paris .

After Fauré 's death , the Conservatoire abandoned his radicalism and became resistant to new trends in music , with Fauré 's own harmonic practice being held up as the farthest limit of modernity , beyond which students should not go . His successor , Henri Rabaud , director of the Conservatoire from 1922 to 1941 , declared " modernism is the enemy " . The generation of students born between the wars rejected this outdated premise , turning for inspiration to Bartók , the Second Viennese School , and the latest works of Stravinsky .

In a centenary tribute in 1945 , the musicologist Leslie Orrey wrote in The Musical Times , " ' More

profound than Saint Saëns , more varied than Lalo , more spontaneous than d 'Indy , more classic than Debussy , Gabriel Fauré is the master par excellence of French music , the perfect mirror of our musical genius . ' Perhaps , when English musicians get to know his work better , these words of Roger Ducasse will seem , not over praise , but no more than his due . "

= = Music = =

Aaron Copland wrote that although Fauré 's works can be divided into the usual " early " , " middle " and " late " periods , there is no such radical difference between his first and last manners as is evident with many other composers . Copland found premonitions of late Fauré in even the earliest works , and traces of the early Fauré in the works of his old age : " The themes , harmonies , form , have remained essentially the same , but with each new work they have all become more fresh , more personal , more profound . " When Fauré was born , Berlioz and Chopin were still composing ; the latter was among his early influences . In his later years Fauré developed compositional techniques that foreshadowed the atonal music of Schoenberg , and , later still , drew discreetly on the techniques of jazz . Duchen writes that early works such as the Cantique de Jean Racine are in the tradition of French nineteenth century romanticism , yet his late works are as modern as any of the works of his pupils .

Influences on Fauré , particularly in his early work , included not only Chopin but Mozart and Schumann . The authors of The Record Guide ( 1955 ) , Sackville West and Shawe Taylor , wrote that Fauré learnt restraint and beauty of surface from Mozart , tonal freedom and long melodic lines from Chopin , " and from Schumann , the sudden felicities in which his development sections abound , and those codas in which whole movements are briefly but magically illuminated . " His work was based on the strong understanding of harmonic structures that he gained at the École Niedermeyer from Niedermeyer 's successor Gustave Lefèvre . Lefèvre wrote the book Traité d 'harmonie ( Paris , 1889 ) , in which he sets out a harmonic theory that differs significantly from the classical theory of Rameau , no longer outlawing certain chords as " dissonant " . By using unresolved mild discords and colouristic effects , Fauré anticipated the techniques of Impressionist composers .

In contrast with his harmonic and melodic style , which pushed the bounds for his time , Fauré 's rhythmic motives tended to be subtle and repetitive , with little to break the flow of the line , although he used discreet syncopations , similar to those found in Brahms 's works . Copland referred to him as " the Brahms of France " . The music critic Jerry Dubins suggests that Fauré " represents the link between the late German Romanticism of Brahms ... and the French Impressionism of Debussy . "

To Sackville West and Shawe Taylor , Fauré 's later works do not display the easy charm of his earlier music : " the luscious romantic harmony which had always been firmly supported by a single tonality , later gave way to a severely monochrome style , full of enharmonic shifts , and creating the impression of several tonal centres simultaneously employed . "

= = Vocal music = =

Fauré is regarded as one of the masters of the French art song , or *mélodie* . Ravel wrote in 1922 that Fauré had saved French music from the dominance of the German Lied . Two years later the critic Samuel Langford wrote of Fauré , " More surely almost than any writer in the world he commanded the faculty to create a song all of a piece , and with a sustained intensity of mood which made it like a single thought " . In a 2011 article the pianist and writer Roy Howat and the musicologist Emily Kilpatrick wrote :

His devotion to the *mélodie* spans his career , from the ever fresh " Le papillon et la fleur " of 1861 to the masterly cycle L 'horizon chimérique , composed sixty years and more than a hundred songs later . Fauré 's songs are now core repertoire for students and professionals , sung in conservatories and recital halls throughout the world .

In Copland 's view the early songs were written in the 1860s and 1870s under the influence of Gounod , and except for isolated songs such as " Après un rêve " or " Au bord de l 'eau " there is

little sign of the artist to come . With the second volume of the sixty collected songs written during the next two decades , Copland judged , came the first mature examples of " the real Fauré " . He instanced " Les berceaux " , " Les roses d 'Ispahan " and especially " Clair de lune " as " so beautiful , so perfect , that they have even penetrated to America " , and drew attention to less well known mélodies such as " Le secret " , " Nocturne " , and " Les présents " . Fauré also composed a number of song cycles . Cinq mélodies " de Venise " , Op. 58 ( 1891 ) , was described by Fauré as a novel kind of song suite , in its use of musical themes recurring over the cycle . For the later cycle La bonne chanson , Op. 61 ( 1894 ) , there were five such themes , according to Fauré . He also wrote that La bonne chanson was his most spontaneous composition , with Emma Bardac singing back to him each day 's newly written material .

The Requiem , Op. 48 , was not composed to the memory of a specific person but , in Fauré 's words , " for the pleasure of it . " It was first performed in 1888 . It has been described as " a lullaby of death " because of its predominantly gentle tone . Fauré omitted the Dies Irae , though reference to the day of judgment appears in the Libera me , which , like Verdi , he added to the normal liturgical text . Fauré revised the Requiem over the years , and a number of different performing versions are now in use , from the earliest , for small forces , to the final revision with full orchestra .

Fauré 's operas have not found a place in the regular repertoire . Prométhée is the more neglected of the two , with only a handful of performances in more than a century . Copland considered Pénélope ( 1913 ) a fascinating work , and one of the best operas written since Wagner ; he noted , however , that the music is , as a whole , " distinctly non @-@ theatrical . " The work uses leitmotifs , and the two main roles call for voices of heroic quality , but these are the only ways in which the work is Wagnerian . In Fauré 's late style , " tonality is stretched hard , without breaking . " On the rare occasions when the piece has been staged , critical opinion has generally praised the musical quality of the score , but has varied as to the dramatic effectiveness of the work . When the opera was first presented in London in 1970 , in a student production by the Royal Academy of Music , Peter Heyworth wrote , " A score that offers rich rewards to an attentive ear can none the less fail to cut much ice in the theatre . ... Most of the music is too recessive to be theatrically effective . " However , after a 2006 production at the Wexford Festival , Ian Fox wrote , " Fauré 's Pénélope is a true rarity , and , although some lovely music was anticipated , it was a surprise how sure the composer 's theatrical touch was . "

= = = Piano works = = =

Fauré 's major sets of piano works are thirteen nocturnes , thirteen barcarolles , six impromptus , and four vales @-@ caprices . These sets were composed across the decades of his career , and display the change in his style from uncomplicated youthful charm to a final enigmatic , but sometimes fiery introspection , by way of a turbulent period in his middle years . His other notable piano pieces , including shorter works , or collections composed or published as a set , are Romances sans paroles , Ballade in F ? major , Mazurka in B ? major , Thème et variations in C ? major , and Huit pièces brèves . For piano duet , Fauré composed the Dolly Suite and , together with his friend and former pupil André Messager , an exuberant parody of Wagner in the short suite Souvenirs de Bayreuth .

The piano works often use arpeggiated figures , with the melody interspersed between the two hands , and include finger substitutions natural for organists . These aspects make them daunting for some pianists . Even a virtuoso like Liszt said that he found Fauré 's music hard to play . The early piano works are clearly influenced by Chopin . An even greater influence was Schumann , whose piano music Fauré loved more than any other . In Copland 's view , it was with the sixth Nocturne that Fauré fully emerged from any predecessor 's shadow . The pianist Alfred Cortot said , " There are few pages in all music comparable to these . " The critic Bryce Morrison has noted that pianists frequently prefer to play the charming earlier piano works , such as the Impromptu No. 2 , rather than the later piano works , which express " such private passion and isolation , such alternating anger and resignation " that listeners are left uneasy . In his piano music , as in most of his works , Fauré shunned virtuosity in favour of the classical lucidity often associated with the



French . He was unimpressed by purely virtuoso pianists , saying , " the greater they are , the worse they play me . "

= = = Orchestral and chamber works = = =

Fauré was not greatly interested in orchestration , and on occasion asked his former students such as Jean Roger @-@ Ducasse and Charles Koechlin to orchestrate his concert and theatre works . In Nectoux 's words , Fauré 's generally sober orchestral style reflects " a definite aesthetic attitude ... The idea of timbre was not a determining one in Fauré 's musical thinking " . He was not attracted by flamboyant combinations of tone @-@ colours , which he thought either self @-@ indulgent or a disguise for lack of real musical invention . He told his students that it should be possible to produce an orchestration without resorting to glockenspiels , celestas , xylophones , bells or electrical instruments . Debussy admired the sparseness of Fauré 's orchestration , finding in it the transparency he strove for in his own 1913 ballet *Jeux ; Poulenc* , by contrast , described Fauré 's orchestration as " a leaden overcoat ... instrumental mud " . Fauré 's best @-@ known orchestral works are the suites *Masques et bergamasques* ( based on music for a dramatic entertainment , or *divertissement comique* ) , which he orchestrated himself , *Dolly* , orchestrated by Henri Rabaud , and *Pelléas et Mélisande* drawing on incidental music for Maeterlinck 's play ; the stage version was orchestrated by Koechlin , but Fauré himself reworked the orchestration for the published suite .

In the chamber repertoire , his two piano quartets , particularly the first , are among Fauré 's better @-@ known works . His other chamber music includes two piano quintets , two cello sonatas , two violin sonatas , a piano trio and a string quartet . Copland ( writing in 1924 before the string quartet was finished ) held the second quintet to be Fauré 's masterpiece : " ... a pure well of spirituality ... extremely classic , as far removed as possible from the romantic temperament . " Other critics have taken a less favourable view : The Record Guide commented , " The ceaseless flow and restricted colour scheme of Fauré 's last manner , as exemplified in this Quintet , need very careful management , if they are not to become tedious . " Fauré 's last work , the String Quartet , has been described by critics in Gramophone magazine as an intimate meditation on the last things , and " an extraordinary work by any standards , ethereal and other @-@ worldly with themes that seem constantly to be drawn skywards . "

= = = Recordings = = =

Fauré made piano rolls of his music for several companies between 1905 and 1913 . Well over a hundred recordings of Fauré 's music were made between 1898 and 1905 , mostly of songs , with a few short chamber works , by performers including the singers Jean Noté and Pol Plançon and players such as Jacques Thibaud and Alfred Cortot . By the 1920s a range of Fauré 's more popular songs were on record , including " *Après un rêve* " sung by Olga Haley , and " *Automne* " and " *Clair de lune* " sung by Ninon Vallin . In the 1930s better @-@ known performers recorded Fauré pieces , including Georges Thill ( " *En prière* " ) , and Jacques Thibaud and Alfred Cortot ( Violin Sonata No. 1 and *Berceuse* ) . The *Sicilienne* from *Pelléas et Mélisande* was recorded in 1938 .

By the 1940s there were a few more Fauré works in the catalogues . A survey by John Culshaw in December 1945 singled out recordings of piano works played by Kathleen Long ( including the *Nocturne* No. 6 , *Barcarolle* No. 2 , the *Thème et Variations* , Op. 73 , and the *Ballade* Op. 19 in its orchestral version conducted by Boyd Neel ) , the *Requiem* conducted by Ernest Bourmauck , and seven songs sung by Maggie Teyte . Fauré 's music began to appear more frequently in the record companies ' releases in the 1950s . The Record Guide , 1955 , listed the Piano Quartet No. 1 , Piano Quintet No. 2 , the String Quartet , both Violin Sonatas , the Cello Sonata No. 2 , two new recordings of the *Requiem* , and the complete song cycles *La bonne chanson* and *La chanson d 'Ève* .

In the LP and particularly the CD era , the record companies have built up a substantial catalogue of Fauré 's music , performed by French and non @-@ French musicians . Several modern recordings of Fauré 's music have come to public notice as prize @-@ winners in annual awards

organised by Gramophone and the BBC . Sets of his major orchestral works have been recorded under conductors including Michel Plasson ( 1981 ) and Yan Pascal Tortelier ( 1996 ) . Fauré 's main chamber works have all been recorded , with players including the Ysaÿe Quartet , Domus , Paul Tortelier , Arthur Grumiaux , and Joshua Bell . The complete piano works have been recorded by Kathryn Stott ( 1995 ) , and Paul Crossley ( 1984 ? 85 ) , with substantial sets of the major piano works from Jean @-@ Philippe Collard ( 1982 ? 84 ) , Pascal Rogé ( 1990 ) , and Kun @-@ Woo Paik ( 2002 ) . Fauré 's songs have all been recorded for CD , including a complete set ( 2005 ) , anchored by the accompanist Graham Johnson , with soloists Jean @-@ Paul Fouchécourt , Felicity Lott , John Mark Ainsley and Jennifer Smith , among others . The Requiem and the shorter choral works are also well represented on disc . Pénélope has been recorded twice , with casts headed by Régine Crespin in 1956 , and Jessye Norman in 1981 , conducted respectively by Désiré @-@ Émile Inghelbrecht and Charles Dutoit . Prométhée has not been recorded in full , but extensive excerpts were recorded under Roger Norrington ( 1980 ) .

= = = Modern assessment = = =

A 2001 article on Fauré in Baker 's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians concludes thus :

Fauré 's stature as a composer is undiminished by the passage of time . He developed a musical idiom all his own ; by subtle application of old modes , he evoked the aura of eternally fresh art ; by using unresolved mild discords and special coloristic effects , he anticipated procedures of Impressionism ; in his piano works , he shunned virtuosity in favor of the Classical lucidity of the French masters of the clavecin ; the precisely articulated melodic line of his songs is in the finest tradition of French vocal music . His great Requiem and his Élégie for Cello and Piano have entered the general repertoire .

Fauré 's biographer Nectoux writes in the Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians that Fauré is widely regarded as the greatest master of French song , and that alongside the mélodies , the chamber works rank as " Fauré 's most important contribution to music " . The critic Robert Orledge writes , " His genius was one of synthesis : he reconciled such opposing elements as modality and tonality , anguish and serenity , seduction and force within a single non @-@ eclectic style , as in the Pelléas et Mélisande suite , his symphonic masterpiece . The quality of constant renewal within an apparently limited range ... is a remarkable facet of his genius , and the spare , elliptical style of his single String Quartet suggests that his intensely self @-@ disciplined style was still developing at the time of his death " .