

GABRIEL FAURÉ

(1845-1924)

La Chanson d'Ève, Op. 95 (26:20)

poems by Charles van Lerberghe

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 1 | Paradis (7:19) |
| 2 | Prima verba (2:20) |
| 3 | Roses ardentes (1:10) |
| 4 | Comme Dieu rayonne... (2:07) |
| 5 | L'aube blanche (1:25) |
| 6 | Eau vivante (1:15) |
| 7 | Veilles-tu, ma senteur de soleil (1:26) |
| 8 | Dans un parfum de roses blanches... (2:46) |
| 9 | Crépuscule (2:48) |
| 10 | O mort, poussière d'étoiles (2:57) |

Jan DeGaetani, mezzo-soprano

Lee Luvisi, piano

**Recorded in concert July 20, 1981
Aspen Music Festival, Aspen, Colorado**

JACOB DRUCKMAN

(b. 1928)

Dark Upon the Harp (20:30)

text from the book of Psalms

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 11 | Psalm 22 – <i>Allegro</i> (1:40) |
| 12 | Psalm 58 – <i>Lento</i> (4:04) |
| 13 | Psalm 18 – <i>Affretando</i> (3:27) |
| 14 | Psalm 30 – <i>Poco scherzando</i> (2:51) |
| 15 | Psalm 16 – <i>Adagio</i> (3:40) |
| 16 | Psalm 16 – <i>Moderato</i> (4:195) |

Jan DeGaetani, mezzo-soprano

The American Brass Quintet

Raymond Mase, trumpet • Chris Gekker, trumpet

David Wakefield, horn • Michael Powell, tenor trombone

Robert Biddlecome, bass trombone

Jonathan Haas, percussion • Benjamin Herman, percussion

Jacob Druckman, conductor

Recorded in concert August 6, 1988

Aspen Music Festival, Aspen, Colorado

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NOTES

by Patrick Mason

Gabriel Fauré conceived *La Chanson d'Eve* as a companion to his earlier cycle of Verlaine melodies, *La Bonne Chanson*. He had already completed one song when he wrote to his wife in 1906, "It's basically a question of this poem, 'La Chanson d'Eve', by a Belgian, van Lerberghe. This is the poem I took 'Crépuscule' from. What I am trying to do is go back to the beginning with the idea of drawing a certain number of pieces from it that would form a whole and make a pendant to *La Bonne Chanson*. The difference in character between the two poems will inevitably lead to a difference in the music, and from this point of view I find the project interesting." (Nectoux, 1984). In the same way that his setting of Verlaine's passionate verse defines the style of his middle period, so Fauré's *Song of Eve* fully introduces the more restrained, less immediately accessible works of his later years.

Charles van Lerberghe (1861-1907), the symbolist poet and friend of Maurice Maeterlinck, published "La

Chanson d'Eve" in 1904 after much deliberation. It is a long work, over one hundred poems consisting of a Prelude and four sections: First Words, Temptation, Fall, and Twilight. Eve, the first woman, is seen as the ingenuous participant of the delights of a new and pristine world. The poet's pantheistic valuation (like the composer's) shows Eve's sin more in its transforming, maturing aspect than in any sense of sin's power to separate one from a holy God. Van Leberghe's use of language is remarkably subtle, eschewing all virtuosity or precision. "How should I express clearly things that I imagine as indistinct and can only glimpse through a luminous fog?", he wrote to his friend Fernand Severin (Orledge, 1979).

Fauré's choosing and ordering of the poems was a lengthy process, accomplished intermittently during the creation of his opera, *Pénélope*. To the early song, "Crépuscule", he added, in 1906, "Paradis" and "Prima verba", followed by "Roses ardentes" and "L'aube blanche" in 1908. The

remaining songs were written in the last half of 1909 and the premiere of the complete "suite" (as he once called it), took place on April 20, 1910 at the first concert of the Société Musicale Indépendante. The dedicatee, Jeanne Raunay, sang, with the composer at the piano.

Fauré had used as the theme for "Crépuscule" a motive from his incidental music to Maeterlinck's play, *Pelléas et Mélisande*. There, the fragile, rising figure portrays the timid, lost child, Mélisande and it was borrowed most effectively to represent the undifferentiated quality of nascent being. This music is heard at the beginning of "Paradis" and in "Comme Dieu rayonne". The other unifying figure first occurs as the second theme of "Paradis". It is a chromatic, wandering melody devoid of anxiety, also heard in "Comme Dieu rayonne", and appearing fragmented in "Dans un parfum de roses blanches..." and at the close of the final song, "O mort, poussière d'étoiles".

Perhaps more important as a structural element is the music itself. By the time he came to write these songs Fauré had committed himself to a

simpler, more direct harmonic and melodic style. Chords were permitted to resolve with little or no preparation. Melodies lovingly followed the words. The piano writing was generated by the repetition of distinctive rhythmic motives which responded to the particular atmosphere of each poem. The music is structured internally, not made to conform to a predetermined mold. Concerning the song "Le Don silencieux", composed in 1906, he wrote, "... there is not even a principal theme. . . It gives expression to the words as and when they occur, it begins, unfolds, and ends, nothing more, and yet it is one." (Nectoux). The key of E Major in the first song, "Paradis", is itself almost a motif which recurs in response to the poetry. In "L'aube blanche", the end of the first stanza is in the tonic, D-flat, but only because the thought is being brought to a close, not to define an area of harmonic stability in the traditional sense. Fauré chooses vague and undefined sounds to reflect the wonder of Eve at the continuously discovered beauty around her.

Important, too, is Fauré's linking of ideas in his ordering of the poems.

He freely shortened and altered some of them and positioned them in such a way as to create his own vision of the first days of life. "Paradis", by far the longest of Fauré's many songs (139 bars, compared to a usual length of 30 or so), describes the first day from morning to the appearance of the evening star. The next two are sung at evening and night respectively. As the next day dawns and moves to midday (songs four through six), the music becomes more animated, the piano more active, the vocal line more impulsive. Songs seven and eight deal abstractly with sensuality and suggest the presence of Adam and physical love. The first hint of decay occurs here, in the last line of song eight, "In the silence some petals fall. . .". The two final songs are more resigned, the last particularly ambiguous in its harmonies, recalling the uncertainty of the "chemins perdus" in *La Bonne Chanson*. This symbolist reading of annihilation seems quite real in contrast to the contrived theatricality of Wagner's Liebestod.

Fauré would once more turn to the work of Charles van Lerberghe for

the text of his next set of eight songs, "Le Jardin Clos", even further refining and distilling his means of expression. Like Mozart, whom he revered, Fauré discovered "bare simplicity. . . which is always the most difficult thing to imagine". (Orledge).

REFERENCES

- Nectoux, J-M. (1984). "Gabriel Faure". Transl. Marion Boyers Ltd. and J.A. Underwood, New York: Marion Boyers Publishers, 344-345.
Orledge, R. (1979). "Gabriel Faure". London: Ernst Eulenberg Ltd., 137-138.



Jan DeGaetani

GABRIEL FAURÉ
La Chanson d'Ève

Poems by Charles van Leberghe

1. Paradis

C'est le premier matin du monde,
Comme une fleur confuse exhalée dans la nuit,
Au souffle nouveau qui se lève des ondes,
Un jardin bleu s'épanouit.
Tout s'y confond encore et tout s'y mêle,
Frissons de feuilles, chants d'oiseaux,
Glissements d'ailes,
Sources qui sourdent, voix des airs, voix des eaux,
Murmure immense
Et qui pourtant est du silence.
Ouvrant à la clarté ses doux et vagues yeux,
La jeune et divine Ève s'est éveillée de Dieu,
Et le monde à ses pieds s'étend comme un beau rêve.
Or, Dieu lui dit: "Va, fille humaine
Et donne à tous les êtres
Que j'ai créés, une parole de tes lèvres,
Un son pour les connaître."
Et Ève s'en alla, docile à son seigneur,
En son bosquet de roses,
Donnant à toutes choses
Une parole, un son de ses lèvres de fleur:
Chose qui fuit, chose qui souffle, chose qui vole...
Cependant le jour passe, et vague, comme à l'aube,
Au crépuscule, peu à peu,
L'Eden s'endort et se dérobe
Dans le silence d'un songe bleu.
La voix s'est tue, mais tout l'écoute encore,
Tout demeure en l'attente,
Lorsqu'avec le lever de l'étoile du soir,
Ève chante.

1. Paradise

It is the first morning of the world,
Like an obscure flower exhaled in the night,
In the new breath which rises from the shadows,
A blue garden blooms.
Everything mingles there and everything mixes,
Trembling of leaves, songs of birds
Gliding of wings,
Murmuring springs, sound of air, sound of water,
Immense murmur
And which, nevertheless, is silence.
Opening her gentle and vague eyes to the light,
The young and divine Eve is awakened by God,
And the world lies at her feet like a beautiful dream.
Then, God said to her: "Go, human girl
And give to all the beings
That I have created a word from your lips,
A sound by which we may know them."
And Eve went, obedient to her Lord
In her thicket of roses
Giving to all things
A word, a sound, from her flowerlike lips:
Thing that glides, thing that breathes, thing that flies...
However the day passes and, vague, as at dawn
In the twilight, little by little,
Eden sleeps and disrobes
In the silence of a blue dream.
The voice is stilled, but everything still listens for it,
Everything waits,
When with the rising of the evening star
Eve sings.

2. Prima verba

Comme elle chante dans ma voix
L'âme longtemps murmurante des fontaines et des bois.
Air limpide du paradis,
Avec tes grappes de rubis,
Avec tes gerbes de lumière,
Avec tes roses et tes fruits.
Quelle merveille en nous à cette heure!
Des paroles depuis des âges endormies.
En des sons, en des fleurs sur mes lèvres enfin prennent vie.
Depuis que mon souffle a dit leur chanson,
Depuis que ma voix les a créées,
Quel silence heureux et profond
Naît de leurs âmes allégées!

3. Roses ardentes

Roses ardentes
Dans l'immobile nuit,
C'est en vous que je chante
Et que je suis.
En vous, étincelles
A la cime des bois,
Que je suis éternelle
Et que je vois.
O mer profonde,
C'est en toi que mon sang
Renaît, vague blonde,
Et flot dansant.
Et c'est en toi, force suprême,
Soleil radieux,
Que mon âme elle même
Atteint son dieu!

2. First Words

How it sings in my voice
The long-murmuring soul of the fountains and the woods.
Clear air of paradise,
With its cluster of rubies
With its sheaves of light,
With its roses and its fruits.
What marvel is in us at this hour!
Words asleep for ages,
In sounds, in flowers on my lips come to life.
Since my breath has said their song,
Since my voice has created them,
What a happy and profound silence
Is born from their lightened souls!

3. Fiery Roses

Fiery roses
In the still night
It is in you that I sing
And that I exist.
It is in you, flames
It is in the summit of the woods
That I am eternal
And that I see.
Oh deep sea
It is in you that my blood
Is reborn, vague, pale,
And dancing waves.
And it is in you, supreme force
Radiant sun,
That my soul itself
Reaches its God!

4. Comme Dieu rayonne...

Comme Dieu rayonne aujourd'hui,
Comme il exulte, comme il fleurit parmi ces roses et ces fruits!
Comme il murmure en cette fontaine!
Ah! comme il chante en ces oiseaux...
Quelle est suave son haleine
Dans l'odorant printemps nouveau!
Comme il se baigne dans la lumière
Avec amour, mon jeune dieu!
Toutes les choses de la terre
Sont ses vêtements radieux.

5. L'aube blanche

L'aube blanche dit à mon rêve:
"Éveille-toi, le soleil luit.
Mon âme écoute et je soulève
Un peu mes paupières vers lui.
Un rayon de lumière touche
La pâle fleur de mes yeux bleus.
Une flamme éveille ma bouche,
Un souffle éveille mes cheveux.
Et mon âme, comme une rose
Troublante, lente tout le jour,
S'éveille à la beauté des choses
Comme mon âme à leur amour.

6. Eau vivante

Que tu es simple et claire,
Eau vivante,
Qui, du sein de la terre,
Jaillis en ces bassins et chantes!

4. How Radiant Is God

How radiant God is today,
How He exults, how He blooms amid His flowers and fruits!
How He murmurs in the fountain!
Ah! how He sings in His birds...
How sweet is His breath
In the fragrant new springtime!
How He is bathed in light
With love, my young God!
All things of the Earth
Are His radiant raiments!

5. The White Dawn

The white dawn said to my dream:
"Awaken, the sun is shining.
My soul listens and I raise
My eyelids a little towards Him.
A ray of light touches
The pale flower of my blue eyes.
A flame awakens my mouth,
A breeze awakens my hair.
And my soul, like a perplexed
Rose, slowly all day,
Awakens to the beauty of things
As my soul to their love.

6. Running Water

How simple and clear you are
Running water,
Which from the bosom of the Earth,
Splashes in these basins and sings!

O fontaine divine et pure,
Les plantes aspirent
Ta liquide clarté.
La biche et la colombe en toi se désaltèrent.
Et tu descends par des pentes douces des fleurs et des mousses,
Vers l'océan originel,
Toi qui passes et vas sans cesse et jamais lasse
De la terre à la mer et de la mer au ciel. . .

7. Veilles-tu, ma senteur de soleil

Veilles-tu, ma senteur de soleil,
Mon arôme d'abeilles blondes,
Flottes-tu sur le monde,
Mon doux parfum de miel?
La nuit, lorsque mes pas
dans le silence rôdent,
M'annonces-tu, senteur de mes lilas
Et de mes roses chaudes?
Suis-je comme une grappe de fruits
Cachés dans les feuilles,
Et que rien ne décèle,
Mais qu'on odore dans la nuit?
Sait-il, à cette heure,
Que j'entr'ouvre ma chevelure,
Et qu'elle respire?
Le sent-il sur la terre?
Sent-il que j'étends les bras
Et que de lys de mes vallées,
Ma voix qu'il n'entend pas
Est embaumée?

Oh divine and pure fountains,
The plants ingest
Your liquid clarity.
The hind and the dove quench their thirst in you.
And you descend by the sweet slopes of flowers and mosses,
Towards the original ocean,
You who come and go ceaselessly and without tiring
From the land to the sea and from the sea to the sky.

7. Are You Awake, My Aroma of Sunlight

Are you awake, my aroma of sunlight,
My perfume of blond bees,
Do you waft over the earth,
My sweet scent of honey?
Night, while my steps
Roam in the silence
Are you announcing to me, scent of lilacs
And of warm roses?
Am I like a cluster of fruits
Hidden among the leaves,
And that nothing reveals
But what one smells in the night?
Does he know, at this time,
That I loosen my hair,
And that it breathes?
Does he sense it on Earth?
Does he sense that I extend my arms
And that the lilies of my valleys,
My voice that he does not hear
Is perfumed?

8. Dans un parfum de roses blanches...

Dans un parfum de roses blanches,
Elle est assise et songe;
Et l'ombre est belle comme s'il s'y mirait un ange...
L'ombre descend,
Le bosquet dort;
Entre les feuilles et les branches,
Sur le paradis bleu s'ouvre un paradis d'or;
Une voix qui chantait tout à l'heure murmure...
Un murmure s'exhale en haleine et s'éteint.
Dans le silence il tombe des pétales...

9. Crépuscule

Ce soir, à travers le bonheur,
Qui donc soupire, qu'est-ce qui pleure?
Qu'est-ce qui vient palpiter sur mon cœur,
Comme un oiseau blessé?
Est-ce une voix future, une voix du passé?
J'écoute, jusqu'à la souffrance,
Ce son dans le silence.

Ile d'oubli, ô Paradis!
Quel cri déchire, dans la nuit,
Ta voix qui me berce?
Quel cri traverse
Ta ceinture de fleurs.
Et ton beau voile d'allégresse?

8. In a Perfume of White Roses

In a perfume of white roses
She sits and dreams;
And the shadow is as beautiful as if an angel were reflected there...
The shadow descends,
The thicket sleeps;
Among the leaves and the branches,
On the blue paradise a golden paradise opens;
A voice which sang now murmurs...
A murmur wafts on the air and is silenced.
In the silence some petals fall...

9. Twilight

This evening, through the happiness,
Who then sighs, who cries?
What comes to palpitate in my heart
Like a wounded bird?
Is it a voice from the future, a voice from the past?
I listen, until the point of suffering, to
This sound in this silence.

Isle of forgetfulness, Oh Paradise!
What cry lacerates, in the night,
Your voice which cradles me?
What cry cuts through
Your girdle of flowers,
And your beautiful veil of joy?

10. O mort, poussière d'étoiles

O mort, poussière d'étoiles,
Lève-toi sous mes pas!
Viens, ô douce vague qui brille
Dans les ténèbres.
Emporte-moi dans ton néant!
Viens, souffle sombre où je vacille,
Comme une flamme ivre de vent!
C'est en toi que je veux m'étendre,
M'éteindre et me dissoudre,
Mort où mon âme aspire!
Viens, brise-moi comme une fleur d'écume,
Une fleur de soleil à la cime des eaux!
Et comme d'une amphore d'or
Un vin de flamme et d'arome divin,
Épanche mon âme en ton abîme,
Pour qu'elle embaume
La terre sombre et le souffle des morts.

10. O Death, Dust of Stars

Oh death, dust of stars,
Arise under my steps!
Come, oh sweet vagueness which shines
In the shadows.
Transport me to your void!
Come somber breeze in which I waver,
Like a flame drunk with wind!
It is in you that I wish to extend myself
Extinguish myself and dissolve myself,
Death to which my soul aspires!
Come, break me like a flower of spray,
A flower of sun in the depths of the waters!
And like a golden amphora
A wine of flame and divine aroma,
Pour out my soul into your abyss,
That it may perfume
The somber earth and the breath of the dead.

NOTES

by Jacob Druckman

Dark Upon The Harp was written in 1961-62 for Jan DeGaetani and marked the beginning of a long and fruitful association with that marvelous musician and inspirational being. At once earthy and spiritual, compassionate and exacting, she seems profoundly to have touched everyone who knew her, even more those who worked with her and especially those of us who had our works brought to life by her.

This work was emotionally charged for me from the very beginning. At a moment in my life when I needed a vote of confidence, Milton Feist, the publisher of Mercury Music, commissioned me to write a work in memory of his music publisher father, Leo Feist. He said the work could be for any medium I chose but his only request was that it should somehow include the line in the 16th Psalm: "He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." This line is preceded by lines that say, in effect, "I am happy with my lot," and this chosen by Milton Feist who was crippled and dwarfed

from birth!

The texts of *Dark Upon the Harp* were selected by working backwards from Psalm 16, seeking a dramatic shape that would move through struggle to resolution and peace. All of the Psalms chosen are attributed to King David, the title coming from a line in the 49th Psalm which reads: "I will open my dark saying upon the harp."

The work was performed by the American Brass Quintet many times over the years even though it was originally written for brass quintet with tuba as the bass instrument. Several of those performances were with Jan singing and with me conducting. I will never forget walking offstage at Aspen after the performance herein recorded (which we all sensed might be the last), and all of us saying at once, "that was the best ever."

The first section, Psalm 22, establishes the contrast between the fragmentary instrumental writing and the comparatively extended lyricism of the vocal lines, which gradually pro-

gress to a more homogenous texture during the course of the entire work. The jagged opening measures are serially identical to the setting of the final line.

Psalm XXII, 12-17, 20

*Be not far from me, for trouble is near.
Strong bulls of Bashan have beset
me round.*

*They open wide their mouths against me,
like a ravening and a roaring lion.
I am poured out like water, all my bones
are out of joint: and my heart is become
like wax; it is melted in mine inmost parts.
And my tongue cleaveth to my throat; and
thou layest me in the dust of death.
For dogs have encompassed me; a
company of evil doers has enclosed me;
like a lion they are at my hands and my feet.
But, thou, O Lord be not far off!*

Psalm 58 focuses, textually, on the sources of the fear and anger of the first section and, instrumentally, on the more snarling and maledictory qualities of the percussion and brass.

Psalm LVIII, 4-9

*The wicked are estranged from the womb:
the speakers of lies go astray as soon as
they are born. Their venom is like the
venom of a serpent: they are like the deaf
asp that stoppeth her ear; which hearketh*

*not to the voice of charmers, or the most
cunning binder of spells,
Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth:
break out the cheek teeth of the young lions.
Let them melt away as water which
runneth apace.*

*Let them be as a snail which melteth and
passeth away, like the untimely births of a
woman that have not seen the sun.*

The third section, Psalm 18, dealing with the wrath of God, moves through four rhythmically proportioned tempo changes, the first advancing and the last three retarding the metronomic pulse.

Psalm XVIII, 4-9

*I cry praised is the Lord, and I am saved
from mine enemies*

*The cords of death encompassed me,
And the floods of Belial assailed me;
In my distress I called upon the Lord,
And cried unto my God:
Out of His temple He heard my voice,
And my cry came before Him,
Unto His ears.*

*Then the earth did shake and quake;
Smoke arose in His nostrils,
and fire out of His mouth did devour;
coals flamed forth from Him.
And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly;
yea, he did swoop down on the wings*

*of the wind.
And the Lord thundered in the heavens,
And the most high gave forth His voice;
hail stones and coals of fire.
And he shot forth lightnings,
and discomfitted them.
And the channels of waters appeared,
And the foundations of the earth
were laid bare
at Thy rebuke, O Lord,
At the blast of the breath of Thy nostrils.*

Section four, Psalm 30, in giddy release, plays with the sounds of the words: the "cing" in "dancing" is mimicked by the instruments – the phrase "and not be silent" is followed by a frenetic section in which the sequence of events is unimportant, and in which several wildly bacchanatic motives exhaust themselves in their own time. In its bemused state the movement turns in on itself to the only recapitulatory statement of the entire work.

Psalm XXX, 12, 13

*Thou didst turn for me
my mourning into dancing;
Thou didst loose my sackcloth
and gird me with gladness;
So that my glory may sing
praise to Thee, and not be silent.*

*O Lord my God,
I will give thanks unto Thee forever.
for Thou didst turn for me
my mourning into dancing.*

Psalm 133, used in its entirety for the fifth section is a visionary statement of a universal serenity. The instrumental interlude which surges beyond the line, "And there He commanded the blessing, even life for ever," is a set of ten variations.

Psalm CXXXIII

*Behold, how good and how pleasant
it is for brethren to dwell together
in unity!
It is like the precious oil upon the head,
coming down upon the beard,
even Aaron's beard;
That cometh down on the collar
of his garment;
Like the dew of Hermon,
That cometh down on the
mountains of Zion:
For there the Lord commanded
the blessing, even life for ever.*

Turning again to the completely personal, the sixth section, Psalm 16, restates tranquility and acceptance in the first person. The attenuated lines employ canonic treatment of a series in which the proportional durations

are predetermined.

Psalm XVI, 6-8

*The lines are fallen unto me
in pleasant places;
yea I have a goodly heritage.
I will praise the Lord,
who hath given me council:
yea in the night seasons
my reins instruct me.
Surely He is at my right hand,
I shall not be moved.*

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