

ART SONGS BY FRENCH COMPOSERS ON SUBJECTS RELATED TO VENICE,  
WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON REYNALDO HAHN'S (1874-1947) VENEZIA (1901)

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**Title**

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**DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS**

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## ABSTRACT

Venice, Italy has received a considerable amount of attention throughout the centuries from French poets, painters, and composers. However, little scholarship exists to date that has drawn any definitive connection between Venetian culture and the French humanities and even less regarding art song. In this disquisition, I concentrate on how French art song composers treated cultural themes of Venice in their music.

I establish a field of study by selecting art songs for voice and piano written by French composers from Hippolyte Monpou (1804-1841) to Jacques Leguerney (1906-1997). From this selection, I discuss several composers that demonstrate contrasting approaches to using cultural themes in their songs. I then choose to emphasize Reynaldo Hahn's (1874-1947) *Venezia* (1901) because of its deep connection with Venetian culture.

Hahn's *Venezia* exemplifies Venetian culture. This is evident through the composers' use of the Venetian dialect and Venetian street-song forms. The lighthearted and charming character in Hahn's six musical settings reflects the composer's positive outlook on his stay in Venice, and historical documents confirm that he had a deep admiration for the city's culture. The musical analysis I perform on *Venezia*, together with the analysis of its respective texts and authors, provides evidence that Venetian culture had significant effects on Hahn. By extending my analysis to other songs from my selection, I establish that there exists a strong connection between Venetian culture and French composers' art songs.

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## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Venice, Italy has received a considerable amount of attention from poets, painters, and composers throughout the centuries. Its cultural influence has reached far beyond those who have visited its canals and can be found in the art, poetry, and music of other countries. France is one such country whose people have demonstrated a fascination with Venice. This fascination manifested in various ways throughout the French humanities. French artists painted gondolas floating on the Venetian canals like in Claude Monet's (1840-1926) many canvases from his sole voyage to Venice in 1908. French writers set their works in Venice as seen in the first act of Victor Hugo's (1802-85) play *Le crève Borgia* (1833) during the *Mardi Gras* carnival. This disquisition concentrates on how nineteenth- and twentieth-century French composers treated cultural themes of Venice in their music. Through analysis of these treatments, particularly those found in Reynaldo Hahn's (1874-1947) *Venezia* (1901), it was determined that Venetian culture had significant effects on French composers' songs.

This study investigates selected art songs for voice and piano by French composers from Hippolyte Monpou (1804-1841) to Jacques Leguerney (1906-1997). From this selection, only art songs with French or Venetian texts are included. After establishing these parameters, I then determine if each song is directly or indirectly connected to Venetian culture. Art songs that exhibit direct connections to Venice were written while the composer was in the city and contain forms or thematic material found in Venetian music. An indirect connection is an art song that may or may not have been written while the composer was in Venice and contains only vague references to Venetian music.

In addition to these connections found in the music, this study also takes into consideration the poetry of each art song and their respective authors. Some of these poems

make reference to Venice directly and, in some cases, use the Venetian dialect.<sup>1</sup> Others only mention the city indirectly, but they contain enough idiomatic language to place the locale of the text in Venice. Each of these connections is pertinent to this study and is used to evaluate the influence of Venetian culture on each song.

Previous studies have discussed many of the songs presented here but refer to them only in the context of their respective composers' overall output. Graham Johnson and Richard Stokes' *A French Song Companion* (2000) catalogues French art songs and groups them by composer.<sup>2</sup> The authors provide song texts and translations for selective songs, and within the biography of each composer, briefly discuss their major works—including Reynaldo Hahn's *Venezia*. It is neither within the scope of their book to delineate Hahn's stay or experiences in Venice, nor to discuss in any detail the folk influences within his songs. Furthermore, the texts and translations for *Venezia* are not included in Johnson and Stokes' selection of song texts. A more detailed study of Hahn's songs by Thea Sikora Engelson titled "The Mélodies of Reynaldo Hahn" (2006), surveys each song individually.<sup>3</sup> In her dissertation, Engelson discusses *Venezia* at length and provides texts and translations absent in Johnson and Stokes; however, it exceeds the parameters of Engelson's dissertation to discuss in any detail the influences Venice had on Hahn's songs.

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<sup>1</sup> Venetian is commonly referred to as a dialect, but it is a separate language from Italian. It is a sister language of the Romance varieties, much like Catalan in Spain. The term dialect first appeared in Italy in the sixteenth century, and for many years Venetian had a dual existence with Italian to varying degrees.

<sup>2</sup> Graham Johnson and Richard Stokes, *A French Song Companion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 236.

<sup>3</sup> Thea S. Engelson, "The Mélodies of Reynaldo Hahn" (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 2006), 268-77.

The connection between French composers' art songs and Venice is evident in historical documents and in the textual and musical analysis of each song. Journals and letters by each composer, as well as the journals and letters from their colleagues, provide an account of each composer's travels to and experiences in Venice. These documents contain information regarding the genesis and composition process of each song. My analysis focuses on the composers' use of folk themes and language in each song. The results from my textual and musical analyses, coupled with historical accounts of each composers' songs and writing processes, provide significant evidence that Venetian culture influenced each composer's songs.

## CHAPTER 2. VENETIAN CULTURE IN ART SONGS BY FRENCH COMPOSERS

### 2.1. Influences of Venetian Culture on Visiting French Composers

French composers that visited Venice in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries encountered a variety of Venetian cultural influences. These influences are seen in the songs each composer wrote while in Venice or shortly after leaving the city. This chapter delineates which influences are unique to Venice and validates the inclusion of each composer's songs in this study.

The *canzoni da battello* (little boat songs) were uniquely Venetian and were among the greatest influences on composers visiting Venice. These songs are often mislabeled as *barcarolles*, but the two terms should not be used interchangeably. The term *canzoni da battello* refers to a genre of simple songs, usually in binary form, that were often strophic.<sup>4</sup> The term *barcarolle* refers to a specific type of *canzoni da battello* that is characterized by a rocking motion from its duple time signature, typically 6/8, that signifies the rowing of the boatman (example 1).

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<sup>4</sup> Michael Talbot, "Canzoni da battello (1740-50) by Sergio Barcellona and Galliano Titton," *Music & Letters* 73, no. 2 (May 1992): 333, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/735967>.



Example 1. Barcarolle titled “La Biondina in gondoleta” by Johann Simon Mayr (1763-1845).

Another misconception is that the *canzoni da battello* always took place on a gondola. “Battello” is a nonspecific word for “boat”, and in the context of *canzoni da battello* indicates that the song is performed aboard a boat.<sup>5</sup> The most familiar type of vessel on which these songs took place was the gondola. This is how the English term “gondola song,” or sometimes “gondolier song,” came to be. According to Michael Talbot, these terms are “unsatisfactory” because a gondola was only one type of boat (a rather modest one at that) used in Venice.<sup>6</sup> The

<sup>5</sup> Eleanor Selfridge-Field, “Canzoni da battello (1740-50) by Sergio Barcellona and Galliano Titton,” *Notes* 49, no. 2 (Dec 1992): 806, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/897972>.

<sup>6</sup> Talbot, “Canzoni da battello,” 333.

*canzoni da battello* took place on vessels of various sizes—some even large enough to hold an entire musical ensemble. The term “gondolier song” also indicates that the boatman himself is singing, which, although common, was not always the case.<sup>7</sup> Professional singers would be hired on occasion to accompany a party and serenade them on their voyage.<sup>8</sup> These performances would be heard not only by the passengers aboard, but also by the pedestrians passing by on the numerous bridges over the canals, and undoubtedly by visiting French composers.

The *canzoni da battello* charmed French composers with their lighthearted and simplistic character. This is because they were written by amateur composers. Sergio Barcellona, an ethnomusicologist and leading scholar on this subject, stated that, “Many of the songs found in Venetian manuscripts are composed in a rather simplified language on both a poetic and musical level: the absence of modulation, the limited range of the melodies, and metrical and syntactical errors are all elements which doubtlessly reveal the hands of amateur composers.”<sup>9</sup> Barcellona qualifies the majority of these songs as written by amateurs because they lack the sophistication existent in the arias and ariettas from the same time period. Barcellona, however, says that some *canzoni* were quite refined and used embellishments, modulating sections, and complex harmonic progressions.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Talbot, “Canzoni da battello,” 333.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. Notable examples of these singers include Faustina Bordoni (1697-1781), Rosana Scalfi (1704/05-1742), and Agnese Amurat (?).

<sup>9</sup> Sergio Barcellona, liner notes for *Canzoni da battello: del Settecento Veneziano volume primo*, translation by Candace Smith, Cristina Miatello, soprano, Carlo Gaifa, tenor. CD (Naxos TC700001, 2008), 5.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

The *canzoni da battello* exposed French composers to both popular and cultured elements of Venetian music. Barcellona reinforces this idea of mixed musical elements in his study and labels these songs “hybrid-music,” or a fusion of both low and high cultural elements.<sup>11</sup> This label alludes to the idea that although these songs were mostly written by amateurs, the informal music contained within them was tinged with sophistication. In a review of Barcellona’s study, Michael Talbot expands on this by saying, “Certainly some songs are simplified, even debased versions of operatic arias, but others are original miniatures as polished and perfect as the contemporary Lieder with continuo written by [Georg Philipp] Telemann [1681-1767] and his followers of the Berlin School.”<sup>12</sup> This variance in refinement that Talbot mentions was largely due to the varying quality of the source material to which their authors were exposed.

Boatmen were given free admission to Venetian theaters. Their *canzoni da battello* show the influences of the music they heard during these theatre performances. Philosopher and composer Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78), acting as secretary to the French ambassador in Venice in 1743, included the following statement in his *Dictionnaire de Musique* (1768) under the definition of barcarolle: “[Boatmen] educate their own ears and tastes at no expense, so that they compose and sing their arias in the manner of persons who, though not ignorant of musical refinements, do not wish to alter the simple and natural style of their Barcarolles.”<sup>13</sup> In this passage, Rousseau suggests that not all of the *canzoni da battello* that lack refinement were, as

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<sup>11</sup> Barcellona, “Canzoni da battello,” 5.

<sup>12</sup> Talbot, “Canzoni da battello,” 333.

<sup>13</sup> Barcellona, *Canzoni da battello*, 4.

Barcellona states, the product of amateurs, but that in some cases, these composers deliberately chose simplicity.

The choice between simplicity and refinement by these composers is further demonstrated in the fusion of high and low cultural elements in the poetic texts of the *canzoni da battello*. These texts were primarily in the Venetian dialect and were often written by the composers. Rousseau comments on this by saying, “Though the airs of these Barcarolles are chiefly formed for the people, and are often composed by the gondoliers themselves; they have so great a melody, and so pleasing an accent, that there is no musician in Italy but piques himself on knowing and singing them.”<sup>14</sup> Not only does Rousseau confirm that boatmen were frequently the authors of the songs’ texts, but he also specifies that these pieces were “formed for the people,”—meaning they contain language pertaining directly to Venetian culture. This is demonstrated in the translation below.

***La biondina in gondoleta***

*La biondina in gondoleta  
L'altra sera g'ho menà:  
Dal piacer la povereta,  
La s'ha in bota indormenzà.  
La dormiva su sto brazzo,  
Mi ogni tanto la svegiava,  
Ma la barca che ninava  
La tornava a indormenzar.*

**The blonde girl in the gondola**

The other night I took  
my blonde out in the gondola:  
her pleasure was such  
that she instantly fell asleep.  
She slept in my arms  
and I woke her from time to time,  
but the rocking of the boat  
soon lulled her to sleep again.

Translation for Example 1.

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<sup>14</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “Dictionnaire de musique” Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Complete Collection of Works 9 (Oct 2012), p. 24, [http://www.rousseauonline.ch/Text/dictionnaire-de-musique.php#heading\\_id\\_5](http://www.rousseauonline.ch/Text/dictionnaire-de-musique.php#heading_id_5).



The *canzoni da battello* are difficult to place into a genre. Some scholars refer to them as “pseudo-folk.”<sup>15</sup> However, evidence that this was music of ordinary Venetians is lacking. In a review of Barcellona’s study, Eleanor Selfridge-Field elaborates on this by saying, “It seems more likely that it was an affection of the music of ordinary Venetians intended for the burgeoning ranks of tourists with a nostalgic love of what they believed to be indigenous.”<sup>16</sup> Selfridge-Field brings into question the legitimacy of these songs existing as a folk tradition and instead proposes that they existed for a commercial reason.

The commercial aspect of the *canzoni da battello* is important to consider when evaluating their impact on French composers' songs. These songs existed organically as a folk tradition for only a decade, roughly from 1740 to 1750.<sup>17</sup> Selfridge-Field offers the explanation that during this brief time there was an abundance of tourism in Venice and there arose a need to entertain passengers during their boat voyages throughout the city.<sup>18</sup> The *canzoni da battello* were implemented to meet this need. However, as time passed and that need subsided, these songs remained and were perpetuated throughout the remainder of the century and well into the next. As Selfridge-Field suggests, this happened because of tourists’ expectations to hear these compositions. Even refined tastes like that of Rousseau could not resist their charm. Upon his arrival in Venice, Rousseau wrote the following about the *canzoni da battello* he heard: “I had

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<sup>15</sup> Luca Zoppelli, “Venice (3. After 1750)” *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed September 10, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/41311>.

<sup>16</sup> Selfridge-Field, “Canzoni da battello,” 807.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

brought from Paris the prejudice in reign there against Italian music [...]. Listening to a few barcaroles, I realized that up until then I had never heard singing.”<sup>19</sup> Like Rousseau and the tourists, French composers were captivated by the *canzoni da battello* and the cultural themes contained within them.

## 2.2. Treatment of Cultural Themes of Venice in Art Songs by French Composers

French composers treated cultural themes of Venice in their art songs in various ways. Some composers used the melodies, rhythms, meters, and language found in the music of the city, and their songs are directly connected to Venice. Other composers’ songs are indirectly connected to Venice, because they contain little to no cultural material. These indirect treatments are products of a surge of creativity incited by Venice rather than the methodical use of cultural themes like that of direct treatments. The diversity of these treatments is further explained in the following discussion of art songs taken from the survey. These songs were selected based on their contrasting approaches to cultural themes of Venice.

Among the first and most notable art songs from the survey are the settings of Louis Charles Alfred de Musset’s (1810-57) texts by Hippolyte Monpou (1804-1841), Charles Gounod (1818-1893), and Jules Massenet (1842-1912). Alfred de Musset was a French dramatist, poet, and novelist. His texts regarding Venice exhibit direct treatments of cultural themes. Musset was fascinated with Venice. His first produced play in 1830 was titled *La nuit vénitienne* (The Venetian Night). That same year, he published his first collection of poems, *Contes d’Espagne et d’Italie* (Tales of Spain and Italy), which contains the poem “Venise” that both Monpou and

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<sup>19</sup> Rousseau, “Dictionnaire de musique,” 24.

Gounod set to music. Musset's fascination with Venice is even more pronounced considering that both of these works predate his trip to Venice in 1834.

Musset traveled to Venice with Amantine-Lucile-Aurore Dupin (1804-76), a French novelist best known by her pseudonym "George Sand," with whom he had a love affair from 1833-35.<sup>20</sup> Musset stayed in the Danieli palace, and his sentiments regarding his room and his arrival are best described in his memoir written by his brother, Paul de Musset (1804-80):

"He never wearied, he said, of gazing on those ceilings under which the head of some great Venetian family must have walked long ago, or of contemplating, through the window, the entrance to the grand canal and the dome of La Salute. He knew that he should not be able to resist the temptation of laying amid these surroundings the scene of a romance or comedy; and he therefore took notes on Venetian customs and peculiarities of dialect, and made his gondolier chatter incessantly."<sup>21</sup>

Musset's wrote the poem "Chanson" (À Saint-Blaise, à la Zuecca)," during his stay in Venice. It is filled with imagery pertaining to La Zuecca, Venetian for Giudecca (a series of eight little islands, linked by bridges, next to San Giorgio Maggiore).<sup>22</sup> "Chanson" is dated February 3, 1834 and was published in Musset's *Poésies nouvelles* (1850).<sup>23</sup>

February marked the turn of the tide for Musset and Sand. According to Musset's brother, the pair was stricken by brain fever and became dangerously ill.<sup>24</sup> They were tended to by a young physician who, during the course of their treatment, fell in love with Sand. She

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<sup>20</sup> Paul de Musset, *The Biography of Alfred de Musset* (Boston: Roberts Bros., 1877), 109.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Johnson and Stokes, *A French Song Companion*, 277.

<sup>23</sup> Alfred de Musset, *The Complete Writings of Alfred de Musset*: vol. 2 (New York: James L. Perkins and Co., 1908), 216.

<sup>24</sup> Paul de Musset, *The Biography of Alfred de Musset*, 110.

returned his love and left Musset with a broken heart as well as an ailing body. We know the physician to be Pietro Pagello (1807-98) from the prescription he gave Musset. Paul de Musset recounts, “The prescription was actually found among Alfred’s papers, with the signature of Pagello.”<sup>25</sup> Musset wrote to his family, “I shall bring you a sick body, a depressed mind, and a bleeding heart, but one which loves you still.”<sup>26</sup>

Musset returned to France heartbroken and alone after recovering from the fever that nearly caused his death in Venice. This change in outlook towards Venice is punctuated by Musset’s revisiting of his 1828 text “Venise” after his return to France. He kept the first stanza, but changed the remaining text to address his brother returning from a trip to Italy. The mood of the text is far less enchanting, and in the poem, Musset asks if his brother saw his poor heart that he left there. Musset included the amended version of “Venise” in his *Poésies Nouvelles: À mon frère, revenant d’Italie* (1844).

Hippolyte Monpou set Musset original version of “Venise” between 1833-34. He set many of Musset’s poems, including his setting of *L’andalouse* (1830), which was his most successful and credited him his recognition.<sup>27</sup> Monpou was the first of his colleagues to set the great contemporaries of romantic poetry; like that of Hugo, Musset, and Gautier, as well as Goethe and Bürger in translation.<sup>28</sup> Monpou’s “Venise” is not musically exciting, but his settings of texts that deal with real emotions and real people was, as Johnson and Stokes puts

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<sup>25</sup> Paul de Musset, *The Biography of Alfred de Musset*, 110.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

<sup>27</sup> Dennis Stevens, *A History of Song* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1970), 201.

<sup>28</sup> Johnson and Stokes, *A French Song Companion*, 339

it, “... an important turning point in the musical life of Paris.”<sup>29</sup> It is also important to this study, because of the carnal and bawdy themes oftentimes found in literature about Venice. Monpou revisited the theme of Venice in art song in his setting of Émile Barateau’s (1792-1870) text “Dans ma gondole de Venise” in 1842. Monpou’s boldness with setting these themes paved the way for composers like Gounod and Massenet.

Charles Gounod’s setting of “Venise” in 1842 shows the influences of Monpou in his evocative illustration of Musset’s text. Carol Kimball comments on this illustration in her book *Song* saying, “[The] quickly moving piano introduction calls to mind the exciting sights and sounds of a sultry Venetian night.”<sup>30</sup> Johnson and Stokes further expand on the song’s evocative nature in *A French Song Companion* saying, “...its turbulent interludes [paint] the city’s ability both to intoxicate and disturb.”<sup>31</sup> Gounod’s was not only more successful than Monpou in evoking cultural themes of Venice, but his “Venise” was also more refined. His incorporation of the Italian barcarolle in his setting is one example of his craftsmanship.

Gounod was able to evoke these attributes of Venice because of his familiarity with Venice and Italian culture. Gounod spent part of his youth in Rome as a result of winning the Prix de Rome. Johnson and Stokes expand on the significance of this residence by saying, “The people Gounod met in Rome were to influence him for the rest of his life.”<sup>32</sup> This statement is

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<sup>29</sup> Johnson and Stokes, *A French Song Companion*, 339

<sup>30</sup> Kimball, p. 164.

<sup>31</sup> Johnson and Stokes, *A French Song Companion*, 222.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

further validated by Gounod's very Italianate song "Biondina" (1871-72) written much later in his career.

Jules Massenet won the Prix de Rome in 1863. The prize for winning was a four-year stipend: two years in Rome, one year in Germany, and a final year in Paris.<sup>33</sup> Like Gounod, Rome shaped Massenet's career and exposed him to Italian culture. Massenet arrived in Venice in September 1865 and remained there for two months. He dedicated the entire first two weeks of his stay to sightseeing. During this time, he composed "Souvenir de Venise".<sup>34</sup> It is a charmingly Italianate setting of Musset's text "Chanson (À Saint-Blaise, à la Zuecca)." Later that year, he set the same text as a duet for two sopranos under the title "À la Zuecca, chanson vénitienne" (1865).<sup>35</sup>

Five days into his stay in Venice, Massenet set Victor Hugo's "Nouvelle chanson sur un vieil air" (1865). This song, though composed in Venice, is not directly connected in text or in music to cultural themes of Venice. However, the composer's muse was inarguably Venice, and it is pertinent to this study.

A finer example of an indirect treatment of cultural themes is Gabriel Fauré's (1845-1924) *Cinq mélodies 'de Venise'* (Five songs of Venice), op. 58 (1891). It is not directly connected to Venetian culture either in its choice of text or in its musical style. However, the connection between Venice and this cycle is exhibited in the maturation of Fauré's compositional style

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<sup>33</sup> Demar Irvine, *Massenet: A Chronicle of His Life and Times* (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1994), 27.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 329.

during his stay in Venice. This connection is evident in the letters he wrote while composing the cycle, in the work itself, and in the relationship between this work and his other compositions.

Fauré wrote several letters to the Princess Edmond de Polignac in 1891 while he was composing *Cinq mélodies 'de Venise.'* The significance of these letters and the cycle has been described by Fauré scholar and biographer Jean-Michel Nectoux (b. 1946):

The cycle [Cinq mélodies 'de Venise'] is one of the composer's masterpieces, and in these letters [to the princess] he discusses it in great detail—which is something unusual enough to merit attention being drawn to it. But in addition to their musical importance, these documents are of equally outstanding psychological interest. Fauré 'opened up' to the princess as to no one else; he felt that she understood him, saw his true worth as few people had done up until then."<sup>36</sup>

Nectoux points out that Fauré discussed the details of *Cinq mélodies 'de Venise'* in his letters. These details include the cycle's form and a description of the premiere of each of the five songs. In addition, Fauré illustrates in these letters the timeline of the cycle's completion. More importantly, these letters verify that the cycle was conceived in Venice, and they describe Fauré's thoughts on his stay there. Besides discussing the importance of Fauré's letters, Nectoux also highlights the connection between the composer and the Princess Edmond de Polignac.

The Princess, born Winnaretta Singer (1865-1943) and heiress to the Singer sewing machine fortune, was a lifelong patron of the arts. The letters between herself and Fauré reveal that she was a patron to Fauré during the time he was composing *Cinq mélodies 'de Venise.'* She and her husband, Prince Edmond de Polignac (1834-1901), a composer himself, established a salon in Paris that attracted many composers, such as Claude Debussy (1862-1918), Maurice

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<sup>36</sup> Jean-Michael Nectoux, *Gabriel Fauré: His Life through His Letters* (New York: Marion Boyars, 1984), 158.

Ravel (1875-1937), and Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971). Fauré frequented the Polignac salon often enough that he became known as its official house musician.<sup>37</sup>

It is clear from their correspondence that Fauré came to Venice upon the princess' invitation and stayed at her palazzo in the city from May until June of 1891. The princess wished to give the composer a vacation, because he was overworked and was suffering from stress.<sup>38</sup> She wrote the following in her memoirs about the preparations for Fauré's arrival: "I had carefully prepared a quiet room with a piano for Fauré to work in, but I had forgotten how much he liked cafés, and I have to admit that he wrote the Five Venice Songs on a little marble table at the Café Florian in the Piazza, amidst the noise and bustle of the Venetian crowds and not in the quiet drawing-room I had laid on for him."<sup>39</sup> Even though Fauré chose a public space over her hospitality, the princess was successful in giving the composer the break he so desperately needed. This is confirmed in a letter Fauré wrote to Marguerite Baugnies (1850-1930) from Venice saying, ". . . I'm having an excellent holiday, feeling better than I have ever felt before, and filling my eyes with marvelous things and my mind with delightful memories!"<sup>40</sup>

From Fauré's letters we discover that his stay in Venice was a hopeful venture by the princess to initiate an operatic collaboration between the French poet Paul Verlaine (1844-1896)

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<sup>37</sup> Stella Di Virgilio, "A Parisian Music Salon: A 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Imitation of the Salon of Winnaretta Singer, Princess de Polignac." <https://parisianmusicsalon.wordpress.com/gabrielfaure-and-the-salon-of-winnaretta-singer/> (via Kahan, Sylvia. 'Edmond de Polignac and the Octatonic Scale in Nineteenth-Century France', *19th-Century Music* 29/2 (2005), 9.

<sup>38</sup> Johnson and Stokes, *A French Song Companion*, 166.

<sup>39</sup> Nectoux, *Gabriel Fauré*, 157.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 175.



and Fauré. Before coming to Venice, Fauré was in close contact with Verlaine via personal letters, hoping to secure an opera libretto from him. Verlaine had agreed to provide the text, but the prospect proved to be hopeless after Fauré arrived in Venice.<sup>41</sup> Verlaine was an alcoholic and spent much of the time in the hospital. Upon visiting him on one of these occasions, Fauré wrote this in a letter to the princess:

I have seen Verlaine! What a uniquely strange and incomprehensible character! How was so wonderfully gifted a human being [taking] pleasure in this endless to-and-fro between pub and poorhouse! . . . he has promised me on my first visit that he would set to work immediately: but yesterday he had done nothing at all nor even decided what he is going to do.<sup>42</sup>

Although Fauré never obtained a libretto from Verlaine, their correspondence did result in the conception of *Cinq mélodies 'de Venise'*.

Fauré began composing the first two songs of *Cinq mélodies 'de Venise'* while in Venice. He selected texts for the cycle from two of Verlaine's publications—*Fêtes galantes* (Gallant parties, 1869) and *Romances sans paroles* (Songs without words, 1874). The first two songs, “Mandoline” and “En sourdine,” were written while Fauré was in Italy. He completed “Mandoline” in Venice, but he may have completed “En sourdine” on route to Florence, Italy, as he dated the song's manuscript June 20, the day before his arrival there. In a letter to the Princess on June 22, Fauré remarked on his Italian visit “. . . I can no longer separate the two names Venice and Florence and am unable to say which I prefer. Venice where the flower opened? Or Florence where it reached full bloom?”<sup>43</sup> However, Fauré stated his preference of

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<sup>41</sup> Nectoux, Gabriel Fauré, 157.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 163-65.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 178.

the two cities when he entitled the cycle his “Venetian songs.” When he returned to Paris, he set the three remaining texts—“Green,” “À Clymène,” and “C’est l’extase.” The cycle was completed in September of 1891.

Fauré conceived *Cinq mélodies ‘de Venise’* as a song cycle rather than a set of songs like his previous works.<sup>44</sup> However, in a letter to the princess on June 22, he only mentioned the first three songs, and it is apparent that the last two were an afterthought.<sup>45</sup> After completing all five songs three months later, he wrote to the Princess saying, “I have tried out a form that I believe to be new, at least I do not know of anything similar.”<sup>46</sup> This form was a great success, and *Cinq mélodies ‘de Venise’* became the first of six song cycles Fauré composed in his lifetime.

In relation to his other compositions, *Cinq mélodies ‘de Venise’* was a pivotal work in Fauré’s career. The maturity of what scholars term the second of his three composition periods came into fruition in this cycle and was epitomized in his second song cycle *La bonne chanson*, op. 61 (1892-94), which also used poetry by Verlaine. This second period (1887-1906) is characterized by an increasing sense of poetic awareness, self-criticism, and emotional depth.<sup>47</sup> Stylistically, this meant subtler cadences, more restraint, and an increasing use of modality.

Verlaine’s poetry was a major factor in sparking the new creativity in Fauré’s composition style. Fauré’s first Verlaine setting, “Clair de lune” (1887), marks the transition from his early writing period to his second. It is further evident in his second setting, “Spleen”

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<sup>44</sup> Nectoux, Gabriel Fauré, 178.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Orledge, Gabriel Fauré, 78.

(1888), which dates from the following year. It is fitting that his next creative development coincided with his return to Verlaine's texts.

The connection between *Cinq mélodies 'de Venise'* and Venice is made clear in Fauré's letters. They describe Fauré's holiday in Venice as well as his positive outlook of the city. Venice is also the place where the cycle was conceived and the place that gave the composer cause enough to call the work his Venetian songs. This connection is significant because it shows Fauré's maturity as a composer through his exploration of form in *Cinq mélodies 'de Venise'*.

### **2.3. Survey of Songs by French Composers that Contain Cultural Themes of Venice**

The remainder of the songs from this study, alongside with those already discussed, are presented as an annotated list in Table 1. This list represents the survey conducted on art songs for voice and piano by French composers from Hippolyte Monpou (1804-41) to Jacques Leguerney (1906-97) that contain French or Venetian texts. Furthermore, only songs with significant cultural themes of Venice are included.

The list is separated into four categories: song title, author of text, composer, and both composition and publishing dates where applicable. The list is organized systematically to group texts with the same author together. This is done to emphasize the different settings of same texts for future analytical studies. It is then organized chronologically by the composition date within each grouping.

Table 1. Survey of French art songs with Venetian themes

<b>Song</b>	<b>Poet</b>	<b>Composer</b>	<b>Date</b>
Nella	Émile Deschamps (1791-1871)	Giacomo Meyerbeer (1791-1864)	c. 1838
À Venise	Émilien Pacini (1810-1898)		c. 1856
Dans ma gondole de Venise	Émile Barateau (1792-1870)	Hippolyte Monpou (1804-1841)	p. 1842
Venise	Louis Charles Alfred de Musset (1810-1857)	Hippolyte Monpou	c. 1833
		Charles Gounod (1818-93)	c. 1842, p. 1855
Jules Massenet (1842-1912)		p. 1872	
Edouard Lalo (1823-1892)		p. 1870	
Souvenir de Venise (À Saint-Blaise, à la Zuecca)		Aimé Champommier (1823-82)	p. 1865
		Charlotte Devéria (1856-85)	n/a
		José André (1881-1944)	p. 1928
		Paul Charles Marie Puget (1848-1917)	n/a
<i>Vingt mélodies, Vol. 1</i> 14. Le Gondolier 15. Le Serenade du Titien 17. La Nuit sur la lagune	Casimir Delavigne (1793-1843)	Jean-Théodore Radoux (1835-1911)	n/a
Le Gondolier		Alfredo Catalani (1854-93)	p. 1880
Barcarolle	Marc Monnier (1827-1885)	Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)	c. 1873, p. 1877
<i>Cinq mélodies de Venise</i> 1. Mandoline 2. En sourdine 3. Green 4. Á Clymène 5. C'est l'extase	Paul Verlaine (1844-96)		p. 1891
Chant Vénitien	Georges Roussel	Hermann Bemberg (1861-1931)	c. 1896
<i>Venezia</i> 1. Sopra l'acqua indormenzada 2. La Barcheta 3. L'Avertimento 4. La Biondina in Gondoleta 5. Che Pecà! 6. La Primavera	1. Pietro Pagello (1807-98) 2. Pierto Buratti (1772-1832) 3. Pierto Buratti 4. Antonio Lamberti (1757-1832) 5. Francesco dall'Ongaro (1808-73) 6. Alvise Cicogna (1791-1863)	Reynaldo Hahn (1874-1947)	p. 1901
Le carnaval de Venise	Théophile Gautier (1811-72)	Jacques Dupont (1906-85)	n/a
		François Joseph Luc (1850-1909)	p. 1910

Table 1. Survey of French art songs with Venetian themes (continued)

<b>Song</b>	<b>Poet</b>	<b>Composer</b>	<b>Date</b>
Le carnaval de Venise	Théophile Gautier (1811-72)	Jacques Dupont (1906-85)	n/a
		François Joseph Luc (1850-1909)	p. 1910
Le carnaval de Venise	n/a	Luigi Bordèse (1815-86)	n/a
Venise marine	Henri François-Joseph de Régnier (1864-1936)	Pierre de Bréville (1861-1949)	p. 1911
Carnaval	André Alexandre (1860-1928)	Félix-Alfred Fourdrain (1800-1923)	c. 1913, p. 1916
Le carnaval	Erik Satie (1866-1925)	Erik Satie (1866-1925)	c. 1914
Le vieux canal, dans l'ombre monotone	Paul-Louis Couchoud (1879-1959)	Jacques Brillouin (1892-1971)	c. 1920, p. 1926
<i>Vers l'île mystérieuse, 6 villanelles de Bédât de Monlaur</i> 5. Dans la brillante gondola 6. Sur le canal de Venise	Pierre Bédât de Monlaur (1907-90)	Marius-François Gaillard (1900-73)	p. 1932
1904	Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918)	Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)	c. 1931
Toréador	Jean Cocteau (1889-1963)		c. 1933
Fantasio	André Bellesort (1866-1942)	Henri Dutilleux (1916-2013)	c. 1942
<i>Variations sur Le carnaval de Venise</i> 1. Dans la rue 2. Sur les lagunes 3. Carnaval 4. Clair de lune sentimental	Théophile Gautier (1811-72)	Virgilio Mortari (1902-93)	p. 1945
Le Carnaval	Antoine Girard de Saint-Amant (1594-1661)	Jacques Leguerney (1906-1997)	c. 1952, p. 1953
Petit mercier! Petit panier!	Charles, Duc d'Orléans (1394-1465)	Jean Françaix (1912-1998)	n/a
		Pierre de Bréville (1861-1949)	n/a
Comme un verre de Venise	Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926)	Louis Durey (1888-1979)	n/a
Belle, viens à moi	Marceline Desbordes-Valmore (1786-1859)	Antony Choudens (1849-1902) Maria Felicia Garcia Malibran (1808-1836)	n/a

### CHAPTER 3. REYNALDO HAHN (1874-1947) IN VENICE AND THE GENESIS OF *VENEZIA* (1901)

Reynaldo Hahn (1874-1947) went to Venice, Italy for the first time in the spring of 1900.<sup>48</sup> The composer was warmly received there and was enchanted by the architectural sights and musical sounds of the city. When he returned to Paris, freshly inspired from his trip, he promptly set six texts by various Venetian poets in the style of Venetian street songs.<sup>49</sup> He entitled the work *Venezia* and published it in Paris in 1901. This work demonstrates the effects a culture can have on composers and their compositions, as well as the attitudes and biases that a composer can have towards another culture. Musical and textual analysis of *Venezia* reveals the lighthearted and charming character of Hahn's musical setting and reflects the composer's positive outlook on his stay in Venice, as well as his admiration for the city's culture. Hahn's journal and the journals of his colleagues, as well as the letters they exchanged, provide an account of the composer's travels to and experiences in Venice.

Hahn's trip to Venice was inspired by John Ruskin's (1819-1900) *Stones of Venice* (1851-53). This three-volume treatise on Venetian art and architecture outlined a cultural pilgrimage throughout the city for Hahn.<sup>50</sup> Ruskin was an English artist and leading critic on the art of the Victorian era. He believed that there is a connection between morality and architecture. *Stones of Venice* discusses the moral and spiritual condition of the city by tracing

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<sup>48</sup> Andrew Stewart, liner notes for *L'alba separa dalla luce l'ombra*, Anna Caterina Antonacci, soprano, Donald Sulzen, piano. CD (Naxos WHLive0054, 2012), 4.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

the growth and deterioration of its structures and edifices. Ruskin's death on January 20, only months prior to Hahn and his colleagues' departure, may have sparked the trip.

Hahn made the journey to Venice with Marcel Proust (1871-1922), a French poet, critic, and essayist. Hahn met Proust in May 1894, and the two struck up a passionate relationship that lasted until the summer of 1896.<sup>51</sup> During this time, they collaborated on Proust's first publication *Les plaisirs et les jours* (Pleasures and Days) (1894-96)—a work containing Proust's poetry and stories, as well as musical scores by Hahn and images by Madeleine Lemaire (1845-1928). Even though Proust and Hahn's intimate relationship ended, they remained lifelong friends through later correspondence.<sup>52</sup>

According to Proust's journal, Hahn was accompanying a trip that had already been planned by Proust's mother. Proust writes the following about this trip: "My mother had brought me for a few weeks to Venice and—as there may be beauty in the most precious as well as in the humblest things—I was receiving there impressions analogous to those which I had felt so often in the past at Combray, but transposed into a wholly different and far richer key."<sup>53</sup> This journal entry not only verifies the logistics of the trip, but it also gives Proust's overall impressions of Venice. For the duration of the trip, Proust stayed with his mother at the hotel Danieli.<sup>54</sup> Hahn lodged with his cousin, Marie Nordlinger, who also accompanied them on this trip.

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<sup>51</sup> David R. Ellison, *A Reader's Guide to Proust's "In Search of Lost Time"* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 9.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>53</sup> Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past* (London: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 2006), 959.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 959.

Marie Nordlinger (1876-1961), may have introduced Hahn and Proust to Ruskin, and was a major instigating force behind their trip to Venice. She was an aspiring painter and sculptor who moved to Paris from England in 1896 in hopes of becoming an established artist. She moved in with Hahn, and the pair was quite close. However, she found she had much more in common with Proust, with whom she shared a deep passion for architecture. A letter from Proust to Nordlinger suggests that she inspired Proust to explore Ruskin's writings. In the letter, Proust inquires of Nordlinger, "This Poetry of Architecture of Ruskin's, which you speak of, is there anything in it about cathedrals? Which ones? And the other works you speak of, do they mention anything, even incidentally, about certain cathedrals?"<sup>55</sup> Nordlinger not only encouraged him to explore Ruskin's texts, but later assisted him in translating them.

Hahn and his colleagues arrived in May 1900. Hahn immediately fell in love with the city, and upon seeing St. Mark's Cathedral he wrote, "At first sight (that's just a figure of speech, for I have looked at everything) all this piling on of richness and colour [...] is much to my liking . . . ."<sup>56</sup> His journal is filled with his impressions of paintings by artists such as Veronese, Tintoretto, Titian, Bellini, and others, all discussed in Ruskin's *Stones of Venice*. Nordlinger noted, "[We] enjoyed endless sights and sounds . . . .,"<sup>57</sup> suggesting their holiday was by no means Ruskin all the time.

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<sup>55</sup> Marcel Proust, *Letters of Marcel Proust* (New York: Helen Marx Books, Books and Company, 2006).

<sup>56</sup> Reynaldo Hahn, *Journal d'un musicien* (Paris: Plon, 1933), 178.

<sup>57</sup> P. F. Prestwich, *Translation of Memories: Recollections of the Young Proust* (London: P. Owen, 1999), 96.



Hahn particularly enjoyed the sounds of Venice and became fond of the local dialect. He commented in his journal, “The Venetian dialect is enchanting. It is mostly juvenile. A young man’s voice is heard: it is an old man talking. It is a true language of love, it keeps an eternal adolescence; amorous, racy and graceful.”<sup>58</sup> Like most people, Hahn refers to it as a dialect, but Venetian is actually a separate language. It is a sister language of the Romance varieties, much like Catalan in Spain.<sup>59</sup> The term *dialect* first appeared in Italy in the sixteenth century, and for many years Venetian had a dual existence with Italian to varying degrees.<sup>60</sup>

This dual existence changed drastically during the French and Austrian occupation of Venice in the early nineteenth-century when Venetian lost its official position within Venice.<sup>61</sup> When Venice joined the kingdom of Italy in 1866, the bilingual existence shifted toward spoken language predominated by the Venetian dialect and written by Italian.<sup>62</sup> When Hahn visited Venice at the turn of the twentieth-century, Venetian as a written medium was mostly confined to novels and poetry.<sup>63</sup> To this day, it remains the least stigmatized of Italian dialects, and is spoken across all social classes and age groups.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Hahn, *Journal d’un musicien*, 179.

<sup>59</sup> Ronnie Ferguson, “Venetian Language” In *A Companion to Venetian History: 1400-1797*, edited by Eric R. Dursteler (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2013), 942.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 939.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 940

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

During his stay in Venice, Hahn endeavored to speak the Venetian dialect like a native.<sup>65</sup> He was very successful in doing so and used the dialect for his song cycle *Venezia*. In the published score of the song cycle, he provided a pronunciation guide for a French audience (see fig. 1).

En Dialecte Vénitien :

<b>L' e</b>	se prononce ----- <b>é</b> .
<b>L' u</b>	se prononce ----- <b>ou</b> .
<b>Xe</b>	se prononce ----- <b>zé</b> .
<b>Le c</b>	placé devant un <b>i</b> , se prononce comme en français .
<b>L' l</b>	placé entre deux voyelles comme dans <b>Gondola, Cielo</b> , etc. doit être à peine entendu. -----
<b>Le g</b>	placé devant un <b>e</b> , se prononce ----- <b>yé</b>

Figure 1. *Petit Lexique* (small lexicon). Pronunciation guide by Reynaldo Hahn.

Hahn added his fair share of musical sounds to the city. For instance, when he and Proust visited the Polignac family in Venice in 1900, they moved a piano onto a gondola, from which Hahn entertained their guests nightly by singing his songs.<sup>66</sup> The premiere of *Venezia* took place on a similar occasion a year later. In his journal, Hahn described the event as follows:

Madame de Béarn asked me to sing—just me and a piano—on the ‘Piccoli Canale’. Just a few gondolas—one or two friends hastily gathered together. I was in one boat, lit up for the occasion, with my piano and a couple of oarsmen. The other gondolas were grouped around us. We found a place where three canals met beneath three charming bridges, and I sang all my Venetian songs. Gradually passers-by gathered on the bridges: an audience of ordinary people, pressing forward to listen. The Venetian songs surprised and delighted this little crowd, which made me very happy. “Ancora, ancora” they called from above. These songs that were both light and melancholy sounded well beneath the

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<sup>65</sup> Prestwich, *Translation of Memories*, 96.

<sup>66</sup> Richard Stokes, liner notes for *Songs by Schubert, Beethoven, Britten & Hahn*, Matthew Polenzani, tenor, Julius Drake, piano. CD (Naxos WHLive0048, 2011), 5.

starry skies, and I felt that emotion which reverberates in the composer's heart when it has truly been shared by those around him.<sup>67</sup>

According to Henri de Régnier (1864-1936), a French poet in attendance that night, the performance took place under the arch of a bridge of Campo Santa Maria Formosa (see fig. 2). He described Hahn's voice as "precise and flexible, indolent and nervous . . . filled with tender charm and grace of fine Venetian words."<sup>68</sup>



Figure 2. Photograph titled "Campo Santa Maria Formosa" taken by Scott Marx; shows a modern-day view of the Santa Maria Formosa bridges where Reynaldo Hahn's *Venezia* was premiered. Image downloaded from <http://archipirata.deviantart.com/art/Campo-Santa-Maria-Formosa-201288222> and used with permission by Scott Marx.

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<sup>67</sup> Hahn, *Journal d'un musicien*, 191.

<sup>68</sup> Henri de Régnier, *La Vie Vénitienne* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1963), 84.

## CHAPTER 4. MUSICAL AND TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF REYNALDO HAHN'S

### VENEZIA

Hahn's experiences in Venice, as well as the musical life of the city, inspired the melodies of *Venezia*. In the original publication, Hahn added a secondary title, *Chansons en dialecte vénitien*. The term *chanson*<sup>69</sup> clarifies that these are not to be considered elevated examples of *mélodies*. In a letter to Nordlinger, Hahn described these chansons as “vulgar, sentimental, extremely Grand Canal—neither the Venice of the Doges nor that of Byron or Guardi (except No. 3). This is banal, cosmopolitan, pleasure-loving Venice, floating on a tide of indolence and facile love affairs.”<sup>70</sup> This colorful quote by Hahn aptly summarizes the location and its culture, which is represented in both the texts and the music of the chansons.

#### *Sopra l'acqua indormenzada*

*Coi pensieri malinconici  
No te star a tormentar:  
Vien con mi, montemo in gondola,  
Andaremo fora in mar.  
Passaremo i porti e l'isole  
Che circonda la cità:  
El sol more senza nuvole  
E la luna spuntarà.*

*Oh! che festa, oh! che spettacolo,  
Che presenta sta laguna,  
Quando tuto xe silenzio,  
Quando sluse in ciel la luna;  
E spandendo i cavei morbidi  
Sopra l'acqua indormenzada,  
La se specie, la se cocola,*

#### **Asleep on the water**

Let not melancholy thoughts  
distress you:  
come with me, let us climb into our gondola  
and make for the open sea.  
We will go past harbours and islands  
which surround the city,  
and the sun will sink in a cloudless sky  
and the moon will rise.

Oh what fun, oh what a sight  
is the lagoon  
when all is silent  
and the moon climbs in the sky;  
and spreading its soft hair  
over the tranquil waters,  
it admires its own reflection

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<sup>69</sup> A *chanson* in this context refers to an early form of French song for voice and piano and is the predecessor of the *mélodie*. The *mélodie* incorporates a higher level of sophistication in harmonic language and sensitivity in text treatment.

<sup>70</sup> Prestwich, *Translation of Memories*, 108.

*Come dona innamorada!*

like a woman in love.

*Tira zo quel velo e scòndite,  
Che la vedo comparir!  
Se l'arriva a discoverzarte,  
La se pol ingelosir!  
Sta baveta, che te zogola  
Fra i caveli imbovolai,  
No xe turbia de la polvere  
De le rode a dei cavai. Vien!*

Draw your veil about you and hide  
for I see the moon appearing  
and if it catches a glimpse of you  
it will grow jealous!  
This light breeze, playing  
gently with your ruffled tresses,  
bears no trace of the dust raised  
by cartwheels and horses.

*Se in conchigli ai Greci Venere  
Se sognava un altro di,  
Forse visto i aveva in gondola  
Una zogia come ti,  
Ti xe bela, ti xe zovene,  
Ti xe fresca come un fior;  
Vien per tuti la so lagrime;  
Ridiadesso e fa l'amor!*

If in other days Venus seemed to the Greeks  
to have risen from a shell,  
perhaps it was because they had seen  
a beauty like you in a gondola.  
You are lovely, young  
and fresh as a flower.  
Tears will come soon enough,  
so now is the time for laughter and for love.

Hahn selected texts for *Venezia* from five Venetian authors with significantly diverse backgrounds. The first author to appear in *Venezia* is Pietro Pagello (1807-1898), the Venetian doctor who swept George Sand from Alfred de Musset.<sup>71</sup> Pagello wrote the text “Sopra l’acqua indormenzada” (Asleep on the water). One can speculate that Hahn selected this text to begin the cycle because of its inviting character. Its opening phrase, “come with me, let us climb into our gondola, and make for open sea,” is an invitation to explore Venice and to experience all the sights it has to offer. It is also idiomatically Venetian in its reference to gondolas, harbors, and islands that surround the city. The poem comprises four stanzas of equal length (with the exception of an interjection at the end of the third stanza) and uses an end rhyme scheme. These

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<sup>71</sup> Pagello met George Sand while she was traveling to Italy with Frederic Chopin (1810-49). Pagello was called to attend the composer during a dangerous illness.

characteristics are typical of Italian song texts and are examples of the use of folk elements in *Venezia*.<sup>72</sup>

Hahn wrote each song in the fashion of a Venetian street song. These street songs were typically strophic with simple and tuneful melodies. They were also harmonically simple and mostly diatonic. An example of these songs is the *barcarola*, a Venetian folk song sung by gondoliers. It is more commonly seen with the French spelling, *barcarolle*, and was popular throughout Europe by the seventeenth century.<sup>73</sup> It is characteristically marked by a lilting 6/8 meter that depicts a gondolier rowing his boat. Notable examples of barcarolles, set by song composers besides Hahn, include Franz Schubert's (1797-1828) "Auf dem Wasser zu singen", D. 774 (1823), Felix Mendelssohn's (1809-1847) "Gondellied," op. 19, no. 6 (1829-30), and Gabriel Fauré's (1845-1924) "Barcarolle," op. 7, no. 3 (1873). The barcarolle wasn't only represented in song, but also found its way into instrumental settings, such as Frederic Chopin's (1810-49) Barcarolle, op. 60 (1845-6).

Similar to these settings, *Venezia*'s identification with Italian street song is mainly stylistic. Hahn borrowed their simple construction, which is mostly text driven. Each of his songs comprises a diatonic melody with a harmonically simple, chordal accompaniment. The accompaniment largely plays a supportive role—mostly ostinato patterns or arpeggiated chords over a simple bass line—with the exception of introductions, interludes, and postludes. Hahn

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<sup>72</sup> Thea S. Engelson, "*The Méloides of Reynaldo Hahn*" (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 2006), 268.

<sup>73</sup> Maurice J. E. Brown and Kenneth L. Hamilton, "Barcarolle" *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed February 20, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/02021>.

also borrowed the heavy use of *rubato*, as well as elements like ornamentation, rhythmic diversity, and patter song, from the Italian style.

This Italian style is illustrated well in “Sopra l’acqua indormenzada.” In the first two measures of this barcarolle, the piano sets up a rising ostinato eighth-note pattern that outlines simple harmonies (example 2). This ostinato appears throughout most of the song and only changes at the interludes between strophes. The melody ascends in the tessitura from this airy texture and immediately returns. Hahn continues to use this rise-and-fall pattern throughout the song. His frequent use of leaps in the vocal line invites *portamenti* and dynamic swells in order to maintain a legato articulation throughout the range of the voice. Hahn dedicated “Sopra l’acqua indormenzada” to Emma Calvé (1858-1942), a French dramatic soprano. Her recordings give insight to the liberties in *rubato* and expression that Hahn might have intended to be taken in this song

The image shows a musical score for the first two measures of the barcarolle "Sopra l'acqua indormenzada." The score is written in 6/8 time and B-flat major. The vocal line (soprano) begins with a rest in the first measure, followed by a melodic phrase starting on a whole note G4, moving to an eighth note A4, then a quarter note Bb4, and ending with a quarter note A4. The piano accompaniment (piano) features a rising ostinato eighth-note pattern in the right hand, starting on a whole note G3, moving to an eighth note A3, then a quarter note Bb3, and ending with a quarter note A3. The left hand provides harmonic support with chords. Dynamics include *pp* (pianissimo) for the piano and *p* (piano) for the vocal line.

Example 2. Mm 1-3 “Sopra l’acqua indormenzada.”

***La barcheta***

*La note è bela,  
Fa presto, o Nineta,  
Andemo in barcheta*

**The little boat**

The night is beautiful.  
Make haste, Nineta,  
let us take to our boat

*I freschi a ciapar!  
A Toni g'ho dito  
Ch'el felze el ne cave  
Per goder sta bava  
Che supia dal mar.  
Ah!*

and enjoy the evening breeze.  
I have asked Toni  
to remove the canopy  
so that we can feel the zephyr  
blowing in from the sea;  
Ah!

*Che gusto contarsela  
Soleti in laguna,  
E al chiaro de luna  
Sentirse a vogar!  
Ti pol de la ventola  
Far senza, o mia cara,  
Chè zefiri a gara  
Te vol sventolar.  
Ah!*

What bliss it is to exchange sweet nothings  
alone on the lagoon  
and by moonlight,  
to be borne along in our boat!  
You can lay aside  
your fan, my dear,  
for the breezes will vie with each other  
to refresh you.  
Ah!

*Se gh'è tra de lori  
Chi tropo indiscreto  
Volessè dal pèto  
EI velo strapar,  
No bada a ste frotole,  
Soleti za semo  
E Toni el so' remo,  
Lè a tento a menar.  
Ah!*

If among them  
there should be one so indiscreet  
as to try to lift the veil  
shielding your breast,  
pay no heed to its nonsense,  
for we are all alone  
and Toni is much too intent  
on plying his oar,  
Ah!

Pietro Buratti (1772-1832), a Venetian satirist, wrote both the second and the third song texts of *Venezia*—“La Barcheta” (The little boat) and “L’Avertimento” (The warning). When Buratti’s family moved from Venice to Bologna, he elected chose to stay behind, continuing to lead the relatively carefree and privileged life of a bachelor in the most romantic of cities.

Another reason for Buratti to stay in the city was that Venice celebrated prose in the vernacular dialect—a major reason that attracted Hahn to Buratti’s texts. His satirical verses are on the verge of obscenity, and his texts demonstrate the risqué aspect of *Venezia*. Like “Sopra l’acqua indormenzada,” “La Barcheta” has stanzas of equal length and also uses a rhyme scheme—in this case, AAAB with the last line of each stanza ending in “Ah!” In these



suggestive verses, the speaker makes very clear to his lady that they are alone, with the exception of Toni their gondolier, who, according to the speaker, is much too busy to pay them any notice. The speaker goes on to say “If among them there should be one so indiscreet as to try to lift the veil shielding your breast, pay no heed to its nonsense, for we are all alone . . .” Not only is this text in the vernacular, but it also contains very sexually suggestive and pointedly satirical language. Hahn may have chosen this text to contrast the good-natured text of the first song and give *Venezia* a more promiscuous angle.

“La Barcheta” is the only song in *Venezia* that does not have a dedication. It is stylistically similar to the previous song and opens with an ostinato rhythmic pattern that remains constant throughout the piece. The suggested use of pedal and arpeggiated chords in the piano create a seductive mood (example 3). Hahn marks the tempo of this song as “Andantino con moto, ma languido” (a little faster than Andante with motion, but languid). This texture, combined with the rocking feeling of duple time, creates a watery atmosphere for “the little boat.”



Example 3. Mm 1-4 “La Barcheta.”

Another interesting aspect of this setting is that the piano is scored in 2/4, whereas the vocal line is scored in 6/8 (example 3). By juxtaposing the meter between the voice and the accompaniment, Hahn creates a built-in *rubato* and gives the piece a sultry character. This is very effective, as “La Barcheta” is a seduction from beginning to end. The speaker gets increasingly suggestive with each verse, and before long, reveals his true intentions. Hahn translates this musically, by marking the vocal line at *mf* for the first verse and becoming increasingly softer with each verse until the song ends in a hushed *ppp*. The final “Ah!” is a sigh of ecstasy as the speaker has taken his prize. Hahn writes “dim. molto” (decreasingly softer) for the postlude of the piano as if a curtain was closing on the scandalous scene.

***L'avvertimento***

*No corè, puti, smaniosi tanto  
 Drio quel incanto  
 Che Nana g'ha  
 Xe tuto amabile  
 Ve acordo, in ela,  
 La xe una stela  
 Cascade qua  
 Ma...ma...la Nana cocola  
 G'ha el cuor tigrà.*

*L'ocio xe vivo  
 Color del cielo,  
 Oro el cavelo  
 Balsamo el fià;  
 Ghe sponta in viso  
 Do' rose intate.  
 Invidia al late  
 Quel sen ghe fa  
 Ma...*

*Ogni ochiadina  
 Che la ve daga,  
 Da qualche piaga*

**The warning**

Do not rush so eagerly, lads,  
 after the charms  
 of the lovely Nana.  
 All is enchantment  
 in her, I grant you;  
 she is like a star  
 fallen to earth,  
 but ... but ... that lovely Nana  
 has the heart of a tiger!

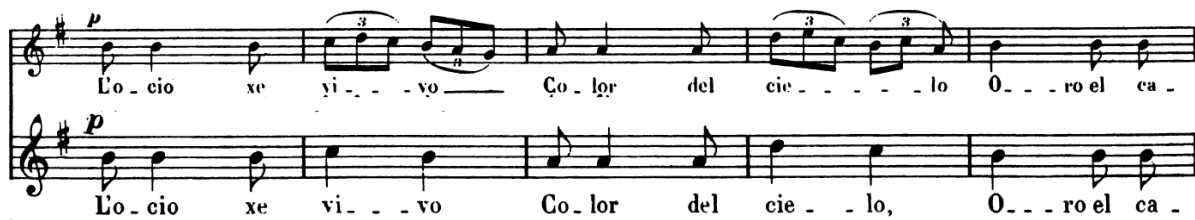
Her eye is lively  
 and heavenly blue;  
 her hair is spun gold  
 and her breath a balm;  
 roses glow  
 in her cheeks,  
 her breasts are whiter  
 than milk,  
 but...

Every glance  
 she darts at you  
 carries its own

<i>Voda no va!</i>	sweet poison!
<i>Col so' granelo</i>	Nor is guile
<i>De furbaria</i>	ever absent
<i>La cortesia</i>	from her
<i>Missiar la sa ...</i>	gentle manner
<i>Ma...</i>	but...

“L’avvertimento” is just as direct in tone as “La Barcheta,” but deals with the aftermath of a lover having been scorned. The male speaker warns other men of the lovely Nana, a woman who entices men but does not keep them. In the poem’s three strophes, the speaker addresses the charms and beauty of the lady in question. Each verse ends the same: “But. . . but. . . the lovely Nana has the heart of a tiger.” Hahn may have chosen to position this text after “La Barcheta” in order to group the songs by author. This arrangement also provides a nice contrast of mood and character.

“L’avvertimento” is marked “con moto” (with motion) and increases the tempo as well as the energy of the entire cycle. It is strophic with possible ornaments for each verse provided by the composer (example 4). These embellishments are stylistically reminiscent of the Italian *bel canto* style.



Example 4. Mm. 29-33 “L’avvertimento.”

***La biondina in gondoleta***

**The blonde girl in the gondola**

*La biondina in gondoleta*  
*L'altra sera g'ho menà:*  
*Dal piacer la povereta,*

The other night I took  
my blonde out in the gondola:  
her pleasure was such

*La s'ha in bota indormenzà.  
La dormiva su sto braccio,  
Mi ogni tanto la svegiava,  
Ma la barca che ninava  
La tornava a indormenzar.*

that she instantly fell asleep.  
She slept in my arms  
and I woke her from time to time,  
but the rocking of the boat  
soon lulled her to sleep again.

*Gera in cielo mezza sconta  
Fra le nuvole la luna,  
Gera in calma la laguna,  
Gera il vento bonazzà.  
Una sola bavesela  
Sventola va i so' caveli,  
E faceva che dai veli  
Sconto el sento fusse più.*

The moon peeped out  
from behind the clouds;  
the lagoon lay becalmed.  
the wind was drowsy.  
Just the suspicion of a breeze  
gently played with her hair  
and lifted the veils  
which shrouded her breast.

*Contemplando fisso fisso  
Le fatezze del mio ben,  
Quel viseto cussi slisso.  
Quela boca a quel bel sen;  
Me sentiva drento in peto  
Una smania, un missiamento,  
Una spezie de contento  
Che no so come spiegar!*

As I gazed intently  
at my love's features,  
her little face so smooth,  
that mouth, and that lovely breast;  
I felt in my heart  
a longing, a desire,  
a kind of bliss  
which I cannot describe!

*M'ho stufà po', finalmente,  
De sto tanto so' dormir,  
E g'ho fato da insolente,  
No m'ho avuto da pentir;  
Perchè, oh Dio, che bele cosse  
Che g'ho dito, a che g'ho fato!  
No, mai più tanto beato  
Ai mii zorni no son stà.*

But at last I had enough  
of her long slumbers  
and so I acted cheekily,  
nor did I have to repent it;  
for, God what wonderful things  
I said, what lovely things I did!  
Never again was I to be so happy  
in all my life!

“La Biondina in Gondoleta” (The fair-haired maid in the gondola) is a lengthy poem-by Antonio Lamberti (1757-1832). Featured in a setting by German composer Johannes Simon Mayr (1763-1845), this poem was very well known at the time Hahn wrote his own song. Hahn wrote the following comment on the original manuscript of his own song (see fig. 3):

“The author knows that this new ‘Biondina in Gondoleta’ will not make us forget the charming and famous song Mayr so popularized throughout the Veneto. But perhaps it will find a more immediate echo in the modern soul and it will speak more directly than its glorious predecessor can to the amorous sensibility of our times.”<sup>74</sup>

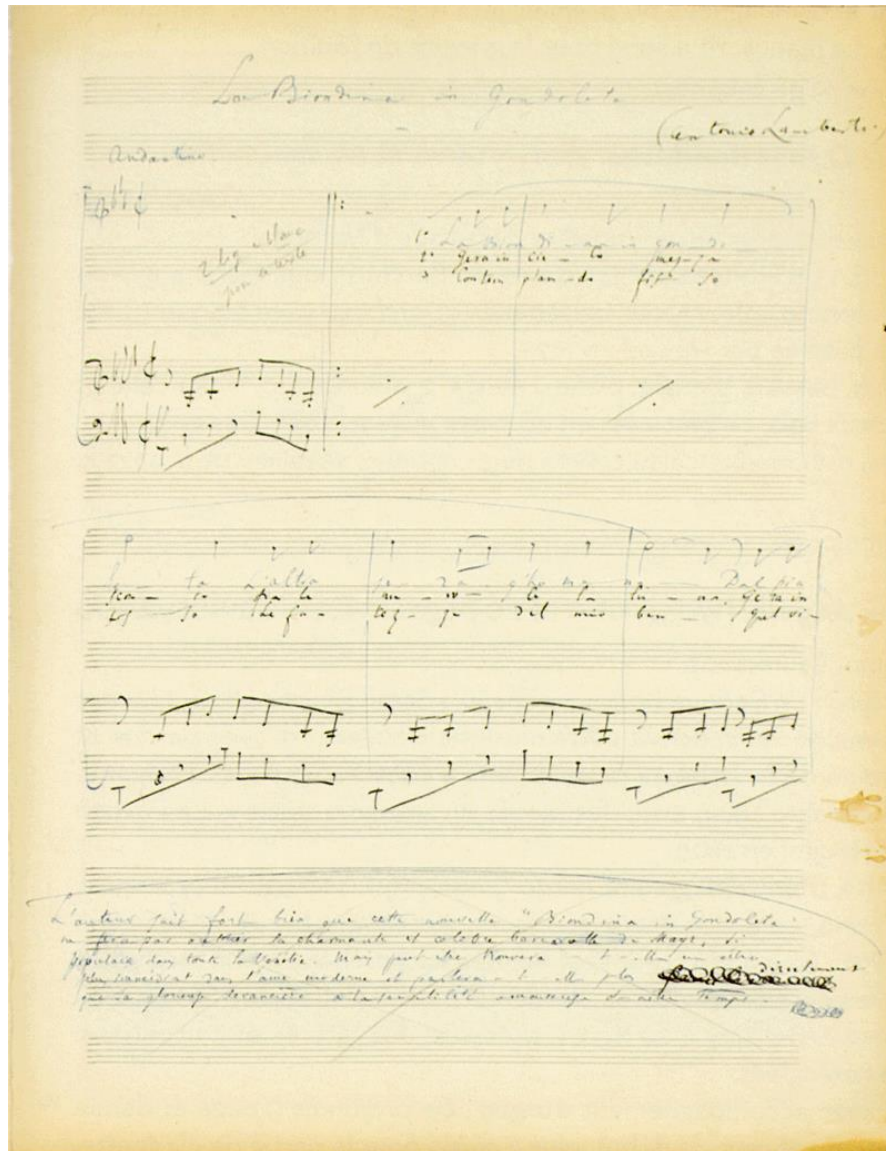


Figure 3. Manuscript of “La Biondina in Gondoleta.”

<sup>74</sup> Reynaldo Hahn, *Venezia: For Voice and Piano* (Boca Raton, FL: Masters Music Publications, 2000), Table.

In addition to the text, the piece is filled with Venetian imagery and provides contrast with the mood of the previous two songs. It is a somber and quiet moment in the cycle. The vocal line demands fluidity throughout the singer's range as it extends into the uppermost regions of the tessitura at a soft dynamic (example 5).

-gia - va, Ma la bar - ca che ni - na - va La tor - na - va a indor - men -  
 -ve - li, E fa - ce - -va che dai ve - li Scon - to el sen no fus - - se

*Ped.* *Ped.* *sempre pp* *Ped.* *Ped.*

Example 5. Mm. 14-17 “La Biondina in Gondoleta.”

“La Biondina in Gondoleta” tells the story of a man taking a maiden on a gondola ride, during which the rocking of the boat lulls her to sleep. However, the excursion is far from innocent. By the end of the second stanza, when the breeze revealed her breast, his intentions turned to passion. As he gazed at her, his desire got the best of him and he “acted cheekily,” but he reports that he has no regrets, for never has he been so happy. It is clear by this point in *Venezia* that Hahn was heavily affected by the passionate climate of Venetian culture.

***Che Pecà!***

*Te recordistu, Nina, quei ani*  
*Che ti geri el mio solo pensier?*  
*Che tormento, che rabie, che afani!*  
*Mai un'ora de vero piacer!*  
*Per fortuna quel tempo xe andà.*  
*Che pecà!*

**What a shame!**

Do you remember those years, Nina,  
 when you were my one and only thought?  
 What torment, what rage, what anguish!  
 Never an hour of untroubled joy!  
 Luckily that time is gone.  
 But what a shame!

*Ne vedeva che per i to' oci,  
No g'aveva altro ben che el to' ben  
Che schempiezzi! che gusti batoci,  
Oh, ma adesso so tor quel che vien;  
No me scaldo po' tanto el figà.  
Che pecà!*

I saw only through your eyes;  
I knew no happiness but in you ...  
What foolishness, what silly behaviour;  
oh, but now I take all as it comes  
and no longer get agitated.  
But what a shame!

*Ti xe bela, me pur fi xe dona,  
Qualche neo lo conosco anca in ti;  
Co ti ridi co un'altra persona,  
Me diverto co un'altra anca mi.  
Benedeta la so' libertà.  
Che pecà!*

You are lovely, and yet you are woman,  
no longer perfection incarnate;  
when your smile is bestowed on another,  
I too can find solace elsewhere.  
Blessed be one's own freedom!  
But what a shame!

*Te voi ben, ma no filo caligo,  
Me ne indormo de tanta virtù.  
Magno a bevo, so star co' l'amigo  
E me ingrasso ogni zorno de più.  
Son un omo che sa quell che'l fa...  
Che pecà!*

I still love you, but without all that  
and am weary of all that virtue.  
I eat, drink, and enjoy my friends,  
and grow fatter with every day.  
I am a man who knows what he's about...  
But what a shame!

*Care gondole de la laguna  
Voghè pur, che ve lasso vogar!  
Quando in cielo vien fora la luna,  
Vago in leto a me meto a ronfar,  
Senza gnanca pasargh' al passà!  
Che pecà!*

Lovely gondolas on the lagoon  
row past, I'll hold you back!  
When the moon appears in the sky  
I'll take to my bed and snore  
without a thought for the past!  
But what a shame!

Francesco Dall'Ongaro (1808-1873) was a Venetian playwright. His knack for drama is demonstrated in his poem "Che pecà!" (What a shame!). This poem is similar in structure to "L'avvertimento" in that it uses end rhyme scheme and ends each stanza with the same phrase, "Che Pecà!" However, Dall'Ongaro uses subtlety where Buratti used brazenness. Dall'Ongaro set up a pattern where the first two lines of each stanza reveal the speaker's inner torment. The tone shifts dramatically to an outward exclamation in the two lines that follow. The last two lines of each stanza are the most intriguing, as they set up the lyric "Che Pecà!" as a bittersweet irony. For example, in the first stanza the speaker, after exclaiming what a miserable time he

went through, goes on to say “how fortunate that time is gone,” but follows it with “Che Pecà!” As the story progresses, the pattern changes slightly and the first lines take on a more extroverted tone as the subsequent lines take on a milder tone. This change marks the resolve the speaker begins to feel towards the woman. He ends by stating, “I’ll take to my bed and snore without a thought for the past,” but still exclaims, “Che Pecà!”

“Che pecà!” is a tarantella with fast anacrusi in a 6/8 time signature and resembles an Italian patter song. This song requires a great deal of fluency in language in order to sing the syllabic text at the marked *Allegretto vivo* (example 6). In a recording, dating from 1919, of Hahn accompanying himself singing, Hahn demonstrates his ability to sing in the Venetian dialect at a relentless speed. “Che pecà!” is primarily about the text and drama, and Hahn’s own performance of this song indicates that in several instances, he spoke the final text of each verse rather than singing it. The written music does not indicate this change, but in the last verse Hahn slows to an *andante*, for dramatic effect. This gave “Che Pecà!” the charm of a Venetian street song that you would hear a gondolier sing for his paying passengers. Hahn’s recording was filled with the Italianate style and charm of Venice.

**Allegretto vivo.** *p*

1. Te re - cor - dis - tu, Ni - na, quei a - ni, Che ti  
 2. Ne ve - de - va che per i to' o - ci, No g'a -  
 3. Ti xe be - la, ma pur ti xe do - na, Qualche

**Allegretto vivo.** *p* *sf* *p*

Example 6. Mm. 1-4 “Che pecà!”



## ***La Primavera***

*Giacinti e violete  
Fa in tera Baosète  
Che gusto! che giubilo!  
L'inverno è scampà!  
La Neve è svania,  
La brina è finia,  
Xe tepida l'aria,  
El sol chiapa fià.*

*Amici, fa ciera!  
Xe qua primavera!  
Me'l dise quel nuvolo ...  
Senti! senti el ton!  
Ohimé! che sta idea  
El cuor me ricrea,  
E tuto desmentego  
Quel fredo baron!*

*Ancora un meseto,  
E el rusignoleto,  
Col canto, ne sgiozzolo,  
Sul' anima el miel.  
Stagion deliziosa!  
Ti vien cola rosa,  
Ti parti col giglio,  
Fior degno del ciel!*

## **Spring**

Hyacinths and violets  
deck the earth.  
What pleasure, what bliss;  
winter has fled.  
The snow has melted,  
the frost is over,  
the air is warm  
and the sun is gaining strength.

Friends, be of good cheer,  
Spring is here!  
I know it by that cloud ...  
Hark, hark to the thunder!  
Oh, how the thought  
delights my heart,  
the dreary cold  
is now forgotten!

Just one more month  
and the nightingale's song  
will pour its honey  
on my soul.  
Oh delightful season,  
you arrive bearing roses  
and depart with the lilies,  
flowers worthy of heaven!

“La Primavera,” (Spring) was written by Alvisse Cigogna (birth and death dates unknown) and is the final text of *Venezia*. Hahn scored his setting for a tenor and soprano duet, accompanied by a unison chorus and piano. The use of chorus in art song is rare. However, Hahn keeps the chorus in unison and uses it more as a refrain for others to join in rather than uses it for an aesthetic purpose (example 7). Because the chorus adds little musically and is only used for the last song of the cycle, this song is typically performed without a chorus and only by one soloist. The piano typically doubles the chorus line to preserve the melody in the interludes.

**CORO.**

fià. La Ne - - ve è sva - - ni - - a, La bri - - na è fi - -

*p*

Example 7. Mm. 18-21 “La Primavera.”

When performed with the scored ensemble, the song becomes a conversation. The tenor opens the dialogue to wake the earth and call all within it to welcome the warmth of spring. The chorus replies, echoing the soloist’s words back to him. The soprano chimes in to gather friends in celebration, and together they welcome the season. The tenor concludes the text and all voices join in for the last stanza. The last lines of “La Primavera” finish, “you arrive bearing roses, and depart with the lilies, flowers worthy of heaven!” The first song, “Sopra l’acqua indormenzada,” begins *Venezia* with an invitation, whereas “La Primavera” serves as a farewell. Hahn chose to set the tenor’s last note as the mediant rather than the tonic or dominant (example 8). It resolves upward by leap of a sixth in a strong part of the tenor’s range, resulting in a triumphant resolution on the last word “heaven”.

The image displays a musical score for three parts: two vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The vocal parts are in a soprano and alto register, both with lyrics: "de - - - gno del ciell!". The piano accompaniment features a flowing melody in the right hand and a more rhythmic bass line in the left hand. Pedal markings ("Ped.") are present under the piano part. The score is written in a key signature of two flats and a common time signature.

Example 8. Mm. 76-79 “La Primavera.”

*Venezia* illustrates one way in which a French composer treated cultural themes in art songs. Hahn’s experiences in Venice influenced *Venezia* through language, poetry and music. His positive outlook on Venetian culture is shown in the lighthearted and charming character of his Venetian songs. His respect for the culture is demonstrated through his use of the Venetian dialect, as well as his tasteful use of the Italian style.

## CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

Venice drew many French composers of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century to its canals. For composers like Charles Gounod and Gabriel Fauré, the city captivated them with its unique charm. It certainly incited desire and hosted passionate affairs like that of Musset and Sand, as well as Hahn and Proust. It is also a melancholy city, as both relationships ended in heartbreak. Nevertheless, the sights and sounds of the city were influential enough to permeate into the text and music of their songs. From the findings cited earlier in this disquisition, I conclude that Venice did indeed have significant effects on French composers and their art songs.

Aside from its scenic and architectural appeal, French composers were heavily influenced by the music of Venice; particularly that of the *canzoni da battello*. Due to the rise of commercial tourism in Venice, this uniquely Venetian genre arose from the need for entertainment aboard the city's many boats. The tradition was then perpetuated throughout the centuries by popular demand. Visiting composers were exposed to the amorous and oftentimes sultry texts the boatmen sang, which were flavored with the rich sounds of the Venetian dialect. More influential yet was the barcarolle with its strong duple meter depicting the gondolier's strokes. These influences were manifested directly or indirectly in these composers' songs.

This correlated with a time when the music of Paris was shifting from the settings of shepherds and nymphs to real people with real emotions in art song.<sup>75</sup> Among the pioneers of this shift was Hippolyte Monpou, whose songs pushed the boundaries in terms of subject matter—most of which were not deemed appropriate for Paris salons. He paved the way for future composers to set more provocative texts, like those concerning Venice.

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<sup>75</sup> Johnson and Stokes, *A French Song Companion*, 339.

French composers treated the cultural themes of Venice in various ways. Gounod's "Venise," is a clear example of a direct treatment of these themes. The song was conceived while the composer traveled to Venice, evokes the atmosphere of Venice, and uses text that directly refers to Venice. It is a *mélodie*, true to Gounod's style, and is quite refined. Fauré's *Cinq mélodies de Venise* is also refined and represents a turning point in the maturation of the composer's output. Like Gounod, it was conceived while the composer was in Venice. However, it is a representation of an indirect treatment of cultural themes. Apart from the title of the work, very little of the work is Venetian. Its only homage to the city is a brief reference to the Venetian barcarolle in "A Clymène," but even that is obscured in the French composer's interpretation. Orledge describes it as, "...translated in the French imagination into idealized backgrounds for moonlit meetings and refined passions."<sup>76</sup>

Reynaldo Hahn's *Venezia* is the true representation of a direct treatment of cultural themes. It was not only conceived in Venice and contained text directly related to Venice like Gounod's, but it also used the Venetian dialect and directly incorporated musical themes found in the *canzoni da battello*. The songs from *Venezia* are simple and lighthearted in comparison to the serious tone of Faure's songs, and they are unlike any of Hahn's output. Yet Johnson and Stokes refer to "La barcheta" as "...one of the composer's most beloved songs."<sup>77</sup>

It is important to take performance practice into consideration with these findings. How the composer or poet felt towards the city when they put ink to paper greatly influenced the outcome of their song. This is clearly seen in Musset's change of heart towards Venice. The difference between his 1828 text "Venise" and his 1844 updated version with the same title is

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<sup>76</sup> Orledge, *Gabriel Fauré*, 80.

<sup>77</sup> Johnson and Stokes, *A French Song Companion*, 236.

stark. Compositions set to each of these texts would sound just as discordant. One can speculate that a performance of Gounod's "Venise" without the knowledge of Musset's more melancholic revision, would remain un-phased and hopeful. Whereas a performance in which the performer knows full well what the speaker's outcome will be, will jade the optimism in the piece slightly. Understanding the cultural material in any song directly impacts its performance. If we explore the composer's perception of those cultural elements, we can then add a new layer altogether. These subtle nuances can be physicalized by the performer, and the performance has a new sense of authenticity.

Hahn's songs from *Venezia* provide enough data alone to draw the conclusion that there exists a strong correlation between Venice and French composers' art songs. However, the number of songs that were included in the table representing the results from my survey demonstrates the extent of these influences. These findings open the door to further discussion about Venice's influence on composers of different nationalities.

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