Early Twentieth Century Vocal Performance Practice and the French School: An Exploration of the Lectures and Selected Songs by Reynaldo Hahn

Mary P. Hubbell
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EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY VOCAL PERFORMANCE PRACTICE AND THE FRENCH SCHOOL: 
AN EXPLORATION OF THE LECTURES AND SELECTED SONGS BY REYNALDO HAHN

by

MARY HUBBELL

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Music in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts, The City University of New York

2019
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Mary Hubbell

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Music in
satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Musical
Arts.

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THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
Abstract

Early Twentieth Century Vocal Performance Practice and the French School: An Exploration of the Lectures and Selected Songs by Reynaldo Hahn

by

Mary Hubbell

Advisor: Sylvia Kahan

Composer, conductor, singer, and critic Reynaldo Hahn (1874–1947) was a highly influential figure in Paris’s artistic circles during the first half of the twentieth century. Today he is primarily remembered as a composer of art song. However, during his lifetime he was also admired as a sophisticated composer of operetta and chamber music, and his keen intellect and attention to detail also made him a discerning music critic and arbiter of taste. In 1913, he was invited to present a series of five lectures on the art of singing to the “Université des Annales.” This organization produced presentations by prominent figures on cultural topics and subsequently disseminated these lectures in its own publication, the *Journal de l’Université des Annales*.

This dissertation analyzes these five lectures and related recordings of several of Hahn’s songs. Each chapter explores one of his lectures in depth and seeks to put Hahn’s remarks in their context and to elucidate any references to treatises, performances, or musical figures that Hahn mentions. After analyzing each lecture, I apply Hahn’s remarks to performances of his songs in both historical and modern recordings by prominent performers. Specifically, I examine aspects of performance practice such as use of *rubato*, tempo, diction, and dynamic and color contrasts. I compare Hahn’s lectures with historical and modern recordings in order to determine the extent to which the performance practice of his songs—both in his own time and in ours—
falls in line with his stated theories on the art of singing. The songs examined are: “Cimetière de campagne,” “Offrande,” L’Heure exquise,” “Tyndaris,” “La barcheta,” “Che pecà!,” and “L’Énamourée.”
Acknowledgments

My first and deepest thanks go to my advisor, Professor Sylvia Kahan, whose patient and diligent editing was indispensable throughout this process. I am also grateful to my first reader, Paul Sperry, whose comments were always insightful. Their steadfast support and encouragement was vital to the completion of this work.

I have been lucky throughout my career to encounter many outstanding voice teachers, but my love for mélodie is primarily a result of studying with Meinard Kraak during my years at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague. I am grateful to him for opening the door to this beautiful world and encouraging me to explore it. My teachers Gerda van Zelm, Lenie van den Heuvel, and Joke Boon provided further essential instruction and appreciation of this music.

When I undertook this research, many professional singers kindly took time to speak with me about Hahn’s music, particularly François Le Roux, Amy Burton, Claude Corbeil, and Maureen O’Flynn. I also owe a debt of gratitude to Denise Rochat, Professor Emerita of French Studies at Smith College, for helping me with translations from French sources.

Finally, I am profoundly thankful for the steady support of my family. My parents, Doug and Marilyn Hubbell, and my sister, Erin Hubbell, are sources of constant encouragement and kindness. I am also deeply grateful to my husband, Gregory Brown, whose gentle presence and unwavering reassurance made it possible for me to finish this dissertation.
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Chapter One

Introduction

Reynaldo Hahn (1874–1947), who was dubbed by his biographer Jacques Depaulis as “the most Parisian of French composers,” was born in Caracas, Venezuela to Elena Maria Echenagucia, of Spanish Basque origin, and Carlos Hahn, who was German. As Depaulis points out, Hahn must have acquired diverse languages during his childhood, including Spanish, German, and English.¹ When he was four years old, the Hahn family moved to Paris, and the young Reynaldo quickly added French to his linguistic repertoire. His passion for the written and spoken word began early and drew him inexorably toward vocal music. A major figure in the artistic salons of Paris, Hahn socialized with the writers, painters, actors, and fellow musicians of the “Belle Époque,” a period of peace and artistic flowering between 1885 and the beginning of World War I. It was in this milieu that he developed as a composer.

Hahn’s influence was wide-ranging: in addition to composing vocal music, chamber music, and ballet music, he served as a critic for cultural journals such as La Flèche and La Presse, as well as the newspaper Le Figaro.² He was also a noted conductor, leading performances of his own works in the Opéra du Casino de Cannes (in the 1920s and 1930s) a production of Don Giovanni in Salzburg (1906), and serving as director of the Paris Opera from 1945 until his death in 1947. He published several

² La Flèche, a self-described “satirical and anecdotal Parisian journal” was published from 1904-1905. Hahn contributed three music reviews. La Presse, a much more serious journal of culture and politics, was published from 1836-1952. Hahn contributed almost thirty reviews in 1899. Hahn contributed twenty articles to Le Figaro in 1934, which was established in 1826 and still operates today.
books: *Du Chant* (1920), a collection of lectures and essays on singing; *La Grande Sarah* (1930), describing his friendship and admiration for the actor Sarah Bernhardt; *Notes, journal d’un musician* (1933), a collection of essays on travel and study; *L’Oreille au guet* (1937), essays on singing; and *Thèmes variés* (1946, a collection of essays on the works of Mozart, Fauré, and Bizet, as well as more essays on various topics related to music and singing. And, it is worth noting, he provided a comprehensive education to arguably the most important French writer of the twentieth century: Marcel Proust, who, from 1894 to 1896, was Hahn’s lover and, subsequently, his close and lifelong friend.

Hahn introduced Proust to many of the most important music salons, and Proust’s experiences were immortalized in his great novels.

Lorraine Gorrell sums up his significance in this way:

Composer, conductor, singer, critic and author, Reynaldo Hahn (1874–1947) was a brilliant member of a brilliant artistic era in France. He was a classmate of Ravel, an intimate friend of Marcel Proust and Sarah Bernhardt, beloved student of Massenet, friend of Fauré and acquaintance of many other notables of his age, including Debussy, Stravinsky, Saint-Säens, Dyagilev and Nijinski. He is now remembered for only a few of his more than one hundred melodies, but during his life he also achieved recognition and fame for his operas, operettas, concertos, quartets, ballet music and piano pieces.³

In 1913 Hahn was asked to present a series of lectures on singing at the “Université des Annales,” an organization that sponsored presentations by historians, artists, poets, and performers. Some of the most prominent artists and academicians of the time participated, such as composer Gabriel Fauré, actor Sarah Bernhardt, singer Lucien Fugère, and historian Jean Richepin. In addition to the lectures, there were often musical

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performances as well. For example, in February 1913, historian Henry La Auze delivered a lecture on the sixteenth-century court of Isabella d’Este, which was followed by a performance of Hahn’s *Le Bal de Béatrice d’Este*, a suite for wind instruments, two harps, and piano. Hahn himself conducted.

The organizing force behind all of this activity was Madeleine Brisson, daughter-in-law of Jules Brisson, who, in 1883, founded the weekly journal *Les Annales politiques et littéraires*. Madeleine Brisson contributed to the journal under the pseudonym Yvonne Sarcey⁴; it was she who started the lecture series under the aegis of her father-in-law’s publication in 1907. The lectures were promoted in *Les Annales politiques et littéraires*, and subsequently published in Madeleine Brisson’s monthly journal *Journal de l’Université des Annales*. Hahn’s five lectures were announced in October 1913 (see Fig.1.1) and presented in November and December of that year. The lectures were published in the subsequent volumes of the *Journal*, one per month from December 1913 through April 1914. In addition to the spoken content, the published lectures also include photographs of performers that Hahn mentioned and scores of arias that he performed for the audience as he lectured, accompanying himself at the piano.

⁴ Sarcey was Madeleine Brisson's maiden name: she was the daughter of the well-known critic Francisque Sarcey.
Press coverage from the time recounts a positive reception to Hahn’s presentations. After the first lecture, *La Presse* reports that “[Hahn] was acclaimed, asked for an encore and had to promise to deliver the lecture again on Wednesday at 2:00.”

A report in *Le Figaro* also describes it as a success:

> Why do we sing? It was to that question that the pure artist who is Reynaldo Hahn addressed himself yesterday before a charming and charmed audience of the University of *les Annales*. This talk, the first that the composer of so many delicious melodies will dedicate to the art of singing, was both a delight and an enchantment.

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7 “Pourquoi chante-t-on? C’est à cette question que le pur artiste qu’est M. Reynaldo Hahn répondait hier devant l’auditoire charmant et charmé de l’Université des *Annales* et cette conférence, la première que l’auteur de tant de mélodies délicieuses consacrera à l’art du chant, a été à la fois un régal et un enchantement.” *Le Figaro*, no. 327 (November
The lectures were so successful that Hahn was invited to return the following year, and this second series consisted of four lectures. In 1920, both series of lectures were collected and published as a book with a short introduction by Hahn. A second edition appeared in 1957 with the addition of a discography detailing recordings of the arias and songs that Hahn performed. An English translation by Léopold Simoneau appeared in 1990 with an introduction by Lorraine Gorrell and a discography of Hahn’s recordings by William R. Moran.

At the same time that Hahn was preparing and presenting these lectures, he was participating in the relatively new technology of sound recording. He recorded his own songs, but he also recorded songs by composers he admired, such as Chabrier and Fauré.

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10 Reynaldo Hahn, *On Singers and Singing: Lectures and an Essay*, trans. Léopold Simoneau, ed. Reinhard G. Pauly, with an introduction by Lorraine Gorrell (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1990). Léopold Simoneau (1916–2006) was a Canadian tenor and considered one of the greatest Mozartians of his time. In 1949, he made his Opéra-Comique debut in Gounod’s *Mireille* and remained in Paris for five seasons. He performed Mozart roles at La Scala (1953), the Vienna Staatsoper (1954), Salzburg Festival (1956), and The Metropolitan Opera (1963). He sang with the Lyric Opera of Chicago from 1954-1961, including a production of *La traviata* opposite Maria Callas. After retiring from singing, he taught in various schools, most notably at the Banff Centre. Simoneau was made a Knight of the National Order of Quebec in 1997.
12 William R. Moran (1919–2006) was a discographer, author, and philanthropist. He cofounded the Victor Project, a comprehensive discography of the Victor Talking Machine Company from 1900 to 1955. His collection is housed in the Special Collections at the University of California, Santa Barbara.
Often, he is singing and accompanying himself; at other times, he is accompanying other singers, including Ninon Vallin\textsuperscript{13} and Arthur Endrèze.\textsuperscript{14} From 1909 to 1919, the recordings were made by the acoustical process; recordings made between 1919 and 1936 were electrical.\textsuperscript{15} Therefore, during the period that he wrote and delivered his lectures, Hahn was preoccupied with the art of singing, both as an interpreter and a scholar.

Hahn was a celebrated musician in his lifetime, though he became aware that the musical world was shifting quickly around him. Even during his life, he knew that his music was falling out of fashion, but he had no interest in adapting to new styles in order to please any arbiters of taste. In a letter to the Princesse de Polignac, he asserts his defiance while acknowledging that he will suffer for his intransigence:

My music is \textit{what it is} but it will never be \textit{what they like}, and I’m very glad of it! . . . Real taste doesn’t indicate, certainly, that one has heart; but it signals a little corner of the heart, secret and privileged. Unfortunately, that little corner is very sensitive, very sad, and those who cultivate it rarely know “perfect happiness.”\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{13} Ninon Vallin (1886–1961) was a French soprano. She received her early training in Lyon and later in Paris. She was a favorite of contemporary composers such as Debussy, Hahn, and Roussel. Her opera appearances include roles at the Opéra-Comique (including Mimi in \textit{La bohème}) and La Scala (1916) and the Paris Opéra (1920), as the title role of \textit{Thaïs}. She was also active in French operetta and music halls.

\textsuperscript{14} Arthur Endrèze (1893–1975) was an American baritone, who enjoyed a successful career mainly in France. He studied with Jean de Reszke and made his Paris Opéra debut in 1929 as Valentin in Faust. He also appeared at the Opéra in \textit{Thaïs}, \textit{Samson et Dalila}, \textit{Les Huguenots}, and created the roles of Mosca in Sauguet’s \textit{La chartreuse de Parme} Metternich in Honegger and Ibert’s \textit{L’aiglon}.

\textsuperscript{15} These recordings were collected and restored by Richard Bebb and final mastering was completed by Ward Marston. \textit{Reynaldo Hahn: The Complete Recordings}. Romophone, 82015-2, 2000, 3 compact discs.

After Hahn’s death in 1947, his music was not performed often outside of France, and his stature diminished among French luminaries of the early twentieth century, such as Debussy, Fauré, Poulenc, and Messiaen. However, while his instrumental and large-form works all but disappeared from the concert stage, some singers—such as Martial Singher, Jennie Tourel, and Gerard Souzay—kept his songs in their recital repertoire. Hahn’s reputation increased among vocalists in the United States when the American mezzo-soprano Susan Graham released the 1998 album *La Belle Époque: The Songs of Reynaldo Hahn*. It is no longer unusual to encounter Hahn’s songs during vocal recitals or on art song recordings by prominent singers.

In his 2000 treatise, *A French Song Companion*, English pianist Graham Johnson alludes to Hahn’s rise in popularity as he explains his reasoning behind devoting more than four pages to Hahn as well as translations for the poems for 20 of his songs: “The purist may raise his eyebrows when he sees so much space allotted to a so-called minor

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17 Martial Singher (1904–1990) was a French baritone who had a significant career in Europe and North America. He sang at the Paris Opéra, the New York City Opera, and the Metropolitan Opera. He also taught at the Curtis Institute as well as the Conservatoire de musique du Québec à Montréal.

18 Jennie Tourel (1900–1973) was an American mezzo-soprano, originally born in what is now Belarus. Her family settled in Paris after the Russian Revolution and she took voice lessons from Hahn. She sang at the Opéra Russe in Paris, as well as the Opéra-Comique. After emigrating to the United States in 1940, she debuted at the Chicago Civic Opera. In her later years, she focused on recital engagements and taught at the Juilliard School and the Aspen School of Music in Colorado.

19 Gerard Souzay (1918–2004) was a French baritone who specialized in French and German art song, though he also sang roles in operas by Monteverdi, Mozart, Massenet, and Debussy. He studied with Claire Croiza at the Paris Conservatoire and later with Pierre Bernac and Lotte Lehmann. He became an important pedagogue himself, giving popular master classes in the United States, Europe, and Japan.

figure, but there has been a Hahn revival in the last twenty years, and an ever-widening range of his mélodies is to be heard regularly on the recital platform.”\textsuperscript{21} In February 2013, the Opéra Comique in Paris presented a new production of Hahn’s 1923 operetta Ciboulette with great fanfare and to rave reviews.

**Existing Scholarship**

Two biographies of Reynaldo Hahn appeared in the late twentieth century, one in Spanish and one in French: Reynaldo Hahn: su vida y su obra\textsuperscript{22} and Reynaldo Hahn: le musician de la Belle Époque.\textsuperscript{23} However, as recently as 2007, Hahn’s third biographer Jacques Depaulis still feels the need to defend his choice of subject:

Why attempt to revive a personality who honored French music of his time? Because we find ourselves, with Reynaldo Hahn, in the presence of a paradoxical situation. Indeed, if we peruse all the newspapers of the period, we notice that he is much talked about, whether to admire…or to criticize. The creation of his works, his orchestral conducting, his brilliant lectures at Annales, his musical criticism—these events never pass unnoticed…We expect therefore to find a number of biographies of Reynaldo Hahn. It is not so!\textsuperscript{24}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
  \item[24] “Pourquoi essayer de faire revivre une personnalité qui a fait honneur à la musique française de son temps? Parce qu’on se trouve, pour Reynaldo Hahn, en présence d’une situation paradoxe. En effet, si l’on parcourt tous les journaux de l’époque, on constate qu’il s’agit de quelqu’un dont on parle beaucoup, que ce soit pour l’admirer…ou critiquer. La création de ses œuvres, ses directions d’orchestre, ses brillantes conférences aux Annales, ses critiques musicales, ne passent jamais inaperçues…On s’attendrait donc à trouver de nombreuses biographies sur Reynaldo Hahn. Il n’en est rien!” Jacques Depaulis, *Reynaldo Hahn* (Biarritz: Atlantica, 2007), 7–8.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
There are many dissertations and theses that explore the world and the music of Reynaldo Hahn. Several of these works focus on his relationship to other performers and artists of his generation, while others examine his instrumental works (particularly his use of the flute). Three dissertations focus solely on Hahn’s song output: “A Study of the Solo Vocal Works of Reynaldo Hahn with Analysis of Selected Mélodies,”25 “A Detailed Study of Reynaldo Hahn’s Settings of the Poetry of Paul Verlaine,”26 and “The mélodies of Reynaldo Hahn.”27 All of these dissertations give the background of Hahn’s life and explore his significance in Parisian artistic society before examining the form, harmonic structure, and overall affect of selected songs.

**Purpose and methodology**

This dissertation does not examine Hahn’s songs from a compositional standpoint, but from the perspective of a performer. It seeks to elucidate performance practice issues surrounding Hahn’s mélodies, drawing on the primary sources of the published remarks he made to the “Université des Annales,” as well as his own recordings and those of contemporaneous singers. This dissertation also compares these sources with more recent recordings, attempting to trace the evolution of presentation of Hahn’s songs to current-day norms. Other primary sources include treatises by singers

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27 Thea Sikora Engelson, “The mélodies of Reynaldo Hahn” (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 2006).
from Hahn’s era, such as Jean-Baptiste Faure’s *La Voix et le Chant: Traité Pratique* and Lilli Lehmann’s *Meine Gesangskunst*.

In addition to primary sources, this dissertation compares Hahn’s ideas with approaches articulated in secondary sources, such as accepted treatises on French vocal performance practice, in particular *The Interpretation of French Song* by Pierre Bernac and *Le chant intime* by François Le Roux. These works offer general advice on singing French *mélodie* and provide detailed performance notes for a selection of songs. Martha Elliott’s *Singing in Style: A Guide to Vocal Performance* is a practical guide to historical singing styles from the early Baroque era until present day in Europe, Russia, and the United States. Finally, *Voice Lessons: French Mélodie in the Belle Époque* by Katherine Bergeron explores the educational reforms that were woven into the poetic and musical ideals of French artists during the Belle Époque.

Each chapter starts with a discussion of one of Hahn’s lectures, providing context for his views and explaining his references to various singers, writers, pedagogues, and impresarios. I have paired one or two of Hahn’s songs with each lecture, attempting to

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choose music that provides opportunities to explore the ideas presented in the lecture. Finally, I provide analysis of recordings of the chosen song or songs. The criteria for this choice include: inclusion of both historical and modern recordings, the representation of a variety of voice types, the prominence of the performer’s career, and a mix of performer nationalities. In my discussion of these recordings, I attempt to assess how closely the performer adheres to Hahn’s vocal recommendations (even if that performer is Hahn himself).

All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.
Chapter Two

Lecture: “Pourquoi chante-t-on?” (“Why do we sing?”)

Song: “Cimetière de campagne”

In his first address to the “Université des Annales,” entitled “Pourquoi chante-t-on?” (“Why do we sing?”), Hahn immediately confesses that he is not a trained singer, but a composer. He explains that his intention is not to offer a singing methodology in the traditional sense, but to suggest the desired result of singing. He believes that he is qualified to speak on the subject because of his great love for singing: “True love produces great clear-sightedness, and—when it comes to the subject of singing—many things that I did not learn I believe I have now figured out, up to a certain point, through the power of love.” 34 Hahn explains that he has been a keen observer of all possibilities of vocal sound his entire life. Today, at a remove of one hundred years, these observations are worth examining, particularly in the context of Hahn’s music and that of his contemporaries. As Reinhard G. Pauly, editor of the English translation, explains, “These chapters are far removed from being another ‘method on learning how to sing.’ Though they contain much information on vocal technique, they are also valuable to

readers today for the picture they paint of Hahn’s musical world: France (and Central Europe) during the first half of our century.”

After explaining his intentions, Hahn makes the first of many remarks on the essence of singing and what he believes is the only preferred outcome of the art: “Indeed (and this, I will repeat tirelessly, in order to imbue you with it), that which constitutes genuine beauty, the true prize, the genuine raison d’être of singing, is the combination, the amalgamation, the indissoluble union of sound and thought. Sound, however beautiful it may be, amounts to nothing if it expresses nothing.” Throughout the ensuing four lectures, Hahn does indeed “repeat this tirelessly.” Whether he is discussing articulation, diction, expression, or almost any of the vocal issues he touches on, he constantly refers to this idea of communication through the special connection of imagination and sound. He continually reminds his listeners that no matter the vocal goals of the singer, they will not be accomplished if he or she loses sight of this desire to communicate.

Hahn goes further with this idea. In order to communicate the ideas of the text, he writes, the words must be even more important than the music: “If either the word or the melody must dominate, there is no question that it must be the word. Both common sense and artistic instinct demand it.” Hahn confesses that, in his youth, he believed so

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36 “En effet (et ceci, je vous le répéterai sans me lasser afin de vous en imprégner), ce qui constitue la véritable beauté, le véritable prix, la véritable raison d’être du chant, c’est la combinaison, le mélange, l’union indissoluble du son et de la pensée. Le son, si beau qu’il soit, n’est rien s’il exprime rien.” Du Chant, 15–16.
37 “Si, de la parole ou de la mélodie, l’un devait dominer, il n’est pas discutable que ce serait la parole; le bon sens l’ordonne en même temps que le sens artistique.” Ibid., 17.
strongly in the importance of text over sound that he rejected purely vocal aspects of
singing and even cultivated an “anti-vocal” (“antivocale”) technique.\(^{38}\)

Hahn offers this comment in passing and does not dwell on it. However, this remark is important because it firmly places Hahn’s vocal education in the world that Karen Henson describes in her book *Opera Acts: Singers and Performance in the Late
Nineteenth Century*.\(^{39}\) She discusses the careers of singers of the late nineteenth century, including the French baritone Victor Maurel and the Polish tenor Jean de Reszke (whom Hahn greatly admired), through reports of their performances, noting that their voices are often described as “ordinary” or “limited.” Hahn himself often referred to his own voice as “mediocre.”\(^{40}\) Henson concludes that “this was not a generation concerned with singing in the strict or conventional sense.”\(^{41}\) They have other concerns, particularly their physical presentation of a role, as well as their vocal expressivity of the character. As Henson explains, Verdi himself admonished that the role of Lady Macbeth must “not be sung”; rather, the performer must adapt to the demands of the character and produce a “harsh, stifled, and hollow voice.”\(^{42}\) Therefore, Hahn was not the first composer to advocate for non-traditional vocal sounds to convey expression, although his concerns are embedded in the French language and sensibilities, as we shall see.

But Hahn also explains in his lecture that his views have evolved further since his days of an “anti-vocal” approach, and he has reached a new conclusion, one which

\(^{38}\) Ibid., 18.
\(^{40}\) Richard Bebb, *Reynaldo Hahn: The Complete Recordings*, Romophone 82015-2, 2000, 3 compact discs, liner notes. “In his own words, he had only ‘une voix bien médiocre.’”
\(^{41}\) Ibid., 4.
\(^{42}\) Ibid., 5.
combines his emphasis on text with the physicality of vocalization. Now he believes that the dominance of the word does not preclude stable vocalization, but encourages it:

The well-articulated word, after having been well thought out, places the voice naturally where it should be and gives it the color that it must have at that precise moment; thus, half of the task is already accomplished. As soon as the sound, inspired and suggested by the word, is placed around the word, it helps it on its way; it exalts, refines and amplifies this word from which it is born. The idea is well-served by the sound; the sound is analyzed and justified by the idea; the physical and psychological work is harmonious and unerringly balanced.43

Therefore, if a singer focuses on producing the word, and not the sound, he or she will actually improve the sound itself. The physical act of uttering a word “places the voice.”

Hahn here moves into the realm of concrete vocal technique through his philosophy of singing. He is already alluding to the subject of his next lecture, “Comment chante-t-on?” (“How do we sing?”). His very next words are perhaps even more interesting: “This is my idea of singing. But you see already the unusual and difficult implications it brings up.”44 Are his ideas about the connection of text and music “unusual”?

Hahn’s description of his visit with renowned soprano Pauline Viardot45 seems to bear out his assertion that his views were new and “unusual.” In 1901, when he was 25, he

43 “Le mot bien dit, après avoir été bien pensé, place naturellement la voix où il faut qu’elle soit, lui donne la couleur qu’il faut qu’elle ait à ce moment précis et ainsi la moitié de la tâche est déjà accomplie. Dès que le son, inspiré, suggéré par le mot, vient se placer autour de lui, il l’aide à son tour, il exalte, affine ou amplifie ce mot qui l’a fait naître. L’idée est servie par le son, le son est expliqué, justifié par l’idée, travail physique et psychique, harmonieux, infailliblement équilibré.” Ibid., 19.
45 Pauline Viardot (1821-1910) came from a musical family: her father was the elder Manuel García, a famous singer and vocal pedagogue whose work was carried on by Viardot’s brother, the younger Manuel García. Her sister was the celebrated opera singer Maria Malibran. Viardot also had a distinguished opera career that took her all over Europe; she was especially praised for her performances in Bellini’s Norma and
visited Viardot, who was 80. As he tells the story, the great diva bluntly began their conversation with “Do you really like the vapid manner with which your music is sung? Is it necessary to have this pointed [i.e. overly articulated] diction?”

When Hahn then attempted to answer with a discussion on diction, Viardot interrupted and asked him to sing for her. He sang “Néeère” from his newly-written *Etudes latines* and (at her request) “Cimetièrè de campagne.” Hahn relates her pleased reaction in this way: “‘I like how you sing,’ she said calmly, as if awarding congratulations. ‘Yes, yes, it is simple; it is good.’”

Viardot’s initial question indicates that she already had an idea of what she would hear. Apparently, she had heard his songs sung by other singers and found their “new” vocal style lacking; she may also be alluding to the vocal approaches that Henson describes in the performances of Maurel and de Reszke. According to Hahn’s account, Hahn himself was able to persuade her that his new and more direct style was convincing.

Katherine Bergeron explains that this meeting reflects more than simply an amusing story:

> [T]he anecdote also exposed a more general development in the history of French singing, a development affecting both musical style and, more basically, musical taste. Things had obviously changed in the salons of Hahn’s day, enough to arouse the skepticism of a great performer from an earlier era. When the former diva asked her guest how he could possibly like “the vapid manner” in which people tended to sing his songs…she did more than put him on the spot. She evoked the performance habits of a new generation and revealed her own historical distance in the process.

Meyerbeer’s *Le prophète*. Fluent in several languages, she composed over 100 songs and mélodies to texts by Pushkin, Gautier, Mörike, Goethe, and others.


47 “J’aime comme vous chantez, dit-elle posément et comme décernant un satisfecit. Oui; oui, c’est simple ; c’est bien.” Ibid., 4–5.

Therefore, Hahn’s singing philosophy must have indeed been “new” at the time of his lecture, and this originality must have stemmed in some way from his approach to the “indissoluble union of sound and thought.” This intimate connection between words and melody—especially as it relates to performance practice—will arise repeatedly in subsequent chapters.

At this point in his lecture, Hahn pivots back to the question “Why do we sing?” and ruminates on the reasons. He imagines song enlivening the work of a plowman, giving rhythm as well as pleasure to his work. Hahn even sings for his audience to demonstrate the sound of the plowman. This short folk song, “Le pauvre laboureur,” does not appear in the 1920 published lecture, but it was published in the *Journal de l’Université des Annales*. The journal reports that the audience responded enthusiastically to Hahn’s performance. While singing, Hahn takes on the character of the plowman, explaining that he must adopt even the flaws that must be present in such a rendition:

[This plowman] has never taken voice lessons, he is unaware that it is possible to place the voice well or not well, to breathe well or not well, that there are different registers and timbres. He sings loudly, crudely, while taking, frequently, big gulps of breath. And since there are ornaments or turns in this song that he does not know how to execute, he rushes through them, with a break in the voice, making here and there what we would call a *canard*, a duck quack. But these very imperfections in his singing give it still more character; and if I, too, want to sing this song, I must force myself to imitate him.49

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49 “Il n’a pas pris de leçons de chant, il ignore qu’on place ou ne place pas bien sa voix, qu’on respire bien ou mal, qu’on a des registres et des timbres divers. Il chante largement, rudement, en prenant par grandes bouffées des respirations fréquentes. Et comme, dans cette chanson, il y a des ornement, des ‘groupes’ et qu’il ne sait pas les faire, il les brusque, avec une brisure de la voix, faisant, de-ci de-là, ce que nous appelons un canard, un couac. Mais ces défectuosités mêmes de son chant lui donnent plus de caractère encore; et si je veux, à mon tour, chanter cette chanson, je devrai m’efforcer de les imiter.” *Du Chant*, 22–23.
Hahn is suggesting that in some genres of singing, the well-trained voice—one with a technique that can remove register breaks and negotiate difficult melismas—must be set aside. In the service of “character,” the singer must imagine himself or herself to be wholly untrained, and he or she must allow—perhaps even seek out—the imperfections he or she worked so hard to discard. Hahn is not yet discussing the refined realm of opera and art song, but it is interesting that he begins his lectures with this example. He has already mentioned that all possible vocal sounds must be investigated by a musically curious would-be vocalist; he views the color palette for a singer to be broad enough to incorporate vocalizations that are not specifically sought after in conservatory voice lessons.

However, Hahn was also speaking during a period during which all French artists were attempting to define their national identity, when vocal pedagogues—along with composers, dancers, and writers—were searching for a uniquely French approach. During the nineteenth century, the Italian school of singing, particularly as taught by Manuel Garcia and his son, dominated vocal exercises and repertoire. The German mezzo-soprano Mathilde Marchesi50 studied with the younger García and subsequently taught his methods in Paris. One of her pupils, Mary Garden,51 attributed her successful

50 Mathilde Marchesi (1821–1913) made her debut in 1844 but had a short career as a singer; in 1849, she abandoned performance for teaching. Many of her students went on to have impressive careers: Emma Calvé, Nellie Melba, Sybil Sanderson, and Mary Garden all sang in major opera houses throughout Europe.
51 Mary Garden (1874—1967) was an American soprano of Scottish birth. She was celebrated as much for her acting skills as for her vocal abilities. Debussy chose her to create the role of Mélisande for the premiere of Pelléas et Mélisande in 1902. She also sang other famous French roles to great acclaim, including Juliette in Gounod’s Roméo et Juliette at Covent Garden (1902–1903 season) and the title role of Massenet’s Thaïs at the Metropolitan Opera (1907).
career to the Italian method: “Italian is inimitable for the singer. The dulcet, velvet-like character of the language gives something which nothing else can impart.”

But when the American singer Emma Eames came to Paris to study with Marchesi, she observed the growing frustration with this Italian dominance when she met the composer Charles Gounod:

I was taken to Gounod by my master [singing teacher], Mme. Mathilde Marchesi, who, perhaps, had some reason to regret her kindness in introducing me, since Gounod did not favor what he conceived as the Italian method of singing. He had a feeling that the Italian school, as he regarded it, was too obvious, and that French taste demanded more sincerity, more subtlety, better balance and a certain finesse which the purely vocal Italian style slightly obscured.

Gabriel Fauré seems to have agreed with Gounod that the Italianate training of an opera singer could result in inattention to nuance. As he searched for a new and quintessentially French approach to the composition of songs, he expressed preference for the performances of his song by amateurs over conventionally trained singers, as the critic Louis Aguettant describes: “Fauré spoke to me about his performers—amateurs like

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53 Emma Eames (1865–1952) was an American singer who had great success in Paris, particularly as Juliette in Gounod’s *Roméo et Juliette*. She became Nellie Melba’s greatest rival at Covent Garden, and later took on Wagnerian roles as well as French repertoire.
Bagès, Mme Bardac, Mlle Girette, and others—who, he said, came closer to realizing his musical intentions than the professionals did. The professional singers want to ‘exteriorize’ everything. They remove the charm of intimacy from music.”

Jean-Michel Nectoux points out that the term “amateur” at this time did not necessarily imply that the performer’s skills were inferior to those who were professional: “In this regard, it is essential to understand that the line between amateur and professional was not clearly drawn in the nineteenth century. Indeed, this distinction was only consistently made after the First World War. It was a common practice for amateurs—whether singers or instrumentalists—to appear in public concerts alongside professionals.”

It was not until 1910 that Fauré found fulfillment in collaborations with professional singers such as Jane Bathori and Claire Croiza; for most of his life, he entrusted his songs to those amateurs who understood the “charm of simplicity.” In 1905,

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55 Maurice Bagès Jacobé de Trigny (1862–1908) was a bureaucrat in Paris and a noted amateur tenor. Fauré entrusted him with premieres of some of his most important song cycles, such as *Cinq mélodies “de Venise”* (1892) and, in a private performance, *La Bonne Chanson* (1894).
56 Emma Bardac (1862–1934) was an amateur soprano. The wife of a banker, she had a celebrated affair with Fauré (1892–1893) and had a daughter, Dolly, with him. Fauré’s *La Bonne Chanson* was written for her, although Bagès gave the first private performance and another soprano, Jeanne Remacle, gave the first public performance in 1895. Emma Bardac married Debussy in 1908 and, although their relationship was stormy, they remained married until his death in 1918.
57 Emilie Girette’s (1877–1917) family held musical soirees at their home, at which both Emilie and her mother often sang. Fauré was quite taken with her mezzo-soprano voice and wrote the song “Accompagnement” for her in 1902. She married the pianist Édouard Risler in 1903 and died during the influenza epidemic of 1917.
Fauré became the director of the Paris Conservatoire and announced his intention to reform singing instruction. One of his reforms further demonstrated his desire to escape the Italian school of singing: he instructed students to include in their repertoire “the admirable lieder of Schubert and Schumann.”

The Polish singer Jean de Reszke—who Hahn greatly admired—summed up all of these conflicting ideas with this advice for singing students:

You should endeavor to effect a compromise between the three prevailing schools. The old Italian school, which now, alas, has vanished, taught us ‘il bel canto,’ the broad, smooth style of singing and the art of florid vocalization which should be acquired by every artist who respects himself, just as every doctor should provide himself with a diploma. By studying the French school, you will gain charm and sobriety in your fermate and legature [sic] and add a special character to your singing. The German school is the complement of the two others. It teaches energy of diction, the violence required in certain dramatic situations and a particular poetic vehemence, or exuberance, which the singer will find useful to acquire, so that he may not be at a loss or embarrassed whatever works he may be called to interpret.

It was in this environment that Hahn delivered his lecture: as the influence of the Italian method was waning, French composers and singers were trying to establish the best path for studying and performing the music of their era. Like de Reszke and Marchesi, Hahn wanted to preserve earlier vocal traditions, but—like Gounod and Fauré—he was looking

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61 Jean de Reszke (1850–1925) began his career as a baritone, singing roles such as Don Giovanni. He became a tenor after studying with Giovanni Sbriglia. After singing a wide variety of roles in London and Paris, he retired from performing and, in 1904, began teaching. His best-known pupils included Claire Croiza, Maggie Teyte, and Arthur Endrèze.

for ways to revitalize the art of singing, particularly in regard to the French *mélodie* that was on the rise in popularity. Hahn's discussion of the vocal technique of the plowman was a way to connect his ideas to the past, as well as to join with other artists in a modern dialogue of a new approach to classical singing.

As Hahn returns again to the title of his lecture ("Why do we sing?"), he connects the act of singing with physical activity. He mentions that marching soldiers use music to keep rhythm and pass the time, and he also suggests that singing is useful for inspiring movement for dancing. In fact, he asserts that movement and singing are intertwined and that all singers should incorporate simple movement and dance into vocal their practice every day. Again, he focuses on text while doing this, not particularly singing, in order to gain precision of rhythm and accenting syllables.

Hahn is not alone in suggesting that movement and rhythm are part of everyday life and that a singer can use this fact for his or her benefit. Claire Croiza, a prominent interpreter of French song, also looks to ordinary motions to inform the act of singing: "Many concert arias would gain by being practised while doing something else: either sewing or sorting a work-basket or something of the kind. They would gain in naturalness, in suppleness, in life. I was always told how the second Madame Debussy sang as she arranged a vase of flowers, and carried on her every day life with absolute naturalness." Therefore, Hahn’s reference to every day movement is not unheard-of, although his interest in non-vocal sounds is rare.

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63 Claire Croiza (1882–1946) was a French mezzo-soprano who sang a wide variety of opera roles. She began teaching at the Paris Conservatoire in 1934 and was acclaimed especially for her clear French diction and reserved interpretation.

64 The lectures given by Claire Croiza in her master classes were transcribed and translated by Hélène Abraham and published privately in Paris in 1954. These were
Hahn concludes his lecture by asserting that the main impetus to sing is love.

Love has inspired the majority of folk songs, he says, and as an example he sings “Mona,” a love song from Lower Brittany. Just as with the song sung by the plowman, Hahn insists that the singer must be aware of the origins of the music and be willing to immerse himself in that world, both in imagery and vocal approach:

And, I repeat, as we are in the heart of Brittany, this reciter, this humble bard who is supposed to sing, must be imbued with Brittany, with the sadness of the land, with all the wide wafts of sweet and bitter scents. And, above all, the voice must be rather plain, with neither roundness or resonance, a naive and plaintive voice, devoid of artifice, a mournful emanation, saturated with melancholy, with prolonged phrases, which reflects the peaceful, dreary evenness of existence led by fishermen and by their wives, who have resigned themselves to the passivity of long waits.

Again, Hahn insists that a singer who wishes to sing a folk song must discard traits that are associated with trained vocalization. A conservatory voice teacher would rarely

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65 Louis-Albert Bourgault-Ducoudray, *Trente Mélodies populaires de Basse-Bretagne* (Paris: Henry Lemoine & Cie, 1885). Hahn cites this source in the published lectures. Bourgault-Ducoudray (1840–1910) was a pianist, composer, and professor of music theory, as well as a Prix de Rome laureate. He was one of the first European composers to find inspiration in what is now called world music. He was interested in folk music of all countries and his fascination with pentatonic Eastern scales led him to write a piece for gamelan instruments in 1882, which was finally premiered in 1889 after the World’s Fair introduced more Parisians to gamelan music. Charles Koechlin and Claude Debussy were among his pupils.

66 “Et comme, je le répète, nous sommes ici en pleine Bretagne, il faut que ce récitant, cet humble rapsode qui est censé chanter, soit imprégné de Bretagne, de cette tristesse de la lande, de tous ces effluves du large aux relents doux et amers. Et, surtout, il faut une voix un peu plate, point du tout ronde ni vibrante, une voix naïve et plaintive, dépourvue de roublardise, une émanation dolente, saturée de mélancolie, aux prolongements un peu traihards, où se reflète l’égalité paisible et morne de l’existence que mène ce peuple de pêcheurs et de femmes de pêcheurs, résignées à la passivité des longues attentes.” Ibid., 33.
advise a student to sing without “roundness” or “resonance,” but that is precisely what Hahn is advocating.

In this first lecture, Hahn brings up themes that will recur throughout the entire series of lectures. He has a strong interest in folk music and finds a great deal of vocal inspiration in how untrained singers sing. In fact, he advocates mimicking their vocal traits in order to produce an authentic rendition, even if one is a trained singer and has worked to eradicate such traits from his or her singing. Furthermore, Hahn finds it necessary to be conversant with the images that were present at the birth of this music: the landscapes, the labors, and the daily minutia that make up rural life. Perhaps most important of all, he broaches the subject of the relationship of text and music, and this preoccupation will be discussed in more detail in forthcoming lectures.

“Cimetière de campagne” (1893)

“Cimetière de campagne” is one of Hahn’s earliest and most popular songs, and it is the song that Madame Viardot requested to hear during their meeting. Hahn extracted nine verses from a lengthy poem by Gabriel Vicaire.\(^\text{67}\) The poem celebrates the simple pleasures of country life: a quiet space under a tree, the view of a field, an unadorned church, and the comfort of long acquaintance. This peaceful scene softens the inevitability of death and offers a nostalgic longing for the people associated with childhood. In addition to the content of the poem, the song contains other hallmarks of folk song: the piano accompaniment moves along with a steady walking motion and the

\[\text{67} \text{ Louis-Gabriel-Charles Vicaire (1848–1900) was a celebrated poet who extolled country life. “Cimetière de campagne” appears in his 1884 volume of poetry } \text{Émaux bressans (Paris: G. Charpentier, 1884).}\]
vocal line takes on a *parlando* quality, echoing the patter of speech and containing few melodic leaps. Because Hahn chooses to infuse the song with these folk-like characteristics, it is an excellent opportunity to explore the themes that he brings up in his lecture.

The poem is declaimed in steady eighth notes that alternate between groups of two and three to echo the natural pattern of speech. The vocal line and bass line are in parallel octaves—the simplest possible contrapuntal motion—evoking both an earlier time (the poet’s return to his hometown) and sacred music (the religious context of a cemetery).

Hahn’s interpretation of the poetry is encapsulated in his compositional choices, particularly in regard to harmonic language. The short piano prelude of measures 1–4 establishes the key of B-flat major (Ex. 2.1), as well as a double neighbor figure in the bass. When the voice enters, it mimics the gesture in the bass, alternating between duple and triple rhythms as the texts requires. The simplicity of the music so far reflects the bucolic scene painted by the poetry.
Cimetière de campagne

J'ai revu le cimetière
Du beau pays d'Ambérieux
Qui m'a fait le cœur joyeux
Pour la vie entière,
Et sous la mousse et le thym,
Près des arbres de la cure,
J'ai marqué la place obscure
Où, quelque matin,
Libre enfin de tout fardeau,
J'irai, tranquillement faire,
Entre mon père et ma mère,
Mon dernier dodo.
Pas d'épitaphe superbe,
Pas le moindre tra la la,
Seulement, par-ci, par-là,
Des roses dans l'herbe,
Et de la mousse à foison,
De la luzerne fleurie,
Avec un bout de prairie
À mon horizon!
L'église de ma jeunesse,
L'église au blanc badigeon,
Où jadis, petit clergeon,
J'ai servi la messe,
L'église est encore là, tout près,
Qui monte sa vieille garde
Et, sans se troubler, regarde
Les rangs de cyprès.
Entouré de tous mes proches,
Sur le bourg, comme autrefois,
J'entendrai courir la voix
Légère des cloches...
Elles ont vu mes vingt ans!
Et n'en sont pas plus moroses.
Elles me diront des choses
Pour passer le temps.

A Country Cemetery

I saw once more the cemetery
Of the lovely village of Ambérieux
Which gladdened my heart
For my whole life,
And under the moss and thyme,
Near the trees by the presbytery,
I marked the obscure spot
Where some morning,
Free at last of every burden,
I will go serenely to begin,
Between my father and my mother,
My final sleep.
No proud epitaph,
Not the slightest fuss,
Just here and there
Roses in the grass
And teeming moss,
Flowering alfalfa,
With a patch of meadow
As my horizon!
The church of my youth,
The church with the whitewashed walls,
Where once as a choirboy
I served Mass,
The church is still there, close by,
Keeping its age-old watch
And imperturbably watching
The rows of cypresses.
Surrounded by all my loved ones,
As in the old days,
I will hear the gentle voice
Of the bells pealing over the village...
They saw me when I was twenty,
And have grown no sadder since.
They will tell me things
To pass the time.

However, in measure 28, where the poet mentions his own inevitable death (“Mon dernier dodo” – “my final sleep”), the music shifts into A-flat major through a whole step descent in the bass (Ex. 2.2). A similar event occurs at measure 62 as the poet describes the church’s “vieille garde” (age-old watch) and “les rangs de cypress” (the rows of cypresses). Again, the bass descends to A-flat, G-flat, and finally F in measure 66, and the music maintains F major until measure 80 (Ex. 2.3). During both of these harmonic shifts, the poet is ruminating on events outside the regular events of everyday life. In the first instance, he is contemplating his transformation into death, while in the second instance, he is remarking on the quiet persistence of religion and nature. The home key of B-flat major, then, represents the passage of time—the “fardeau” (burden) he mentions in the third stanza. The relentlessness of time is reinforced by the circling double neighbor gesture in the bass and vocal line.
When the final stanza of the poem begins in measure 80, the poet is describing the bells of the church: “Elles ont vu mes vingts ans! Et n’en sont pas plus moroses” (They saw me when I was twenty, and have grown no sadder since) (Ex. 2.4). Again, the poet
addresses the endurance of a religious symbol, and the bass line descends, destabilizing the harmony. The music passes through the key centers suggested by the bass notes, pivoting on a dominant chord each time. At measure 82, E-flat major arrives by means of a B-flat 6-5 chord on the last beat of measure 81, and the music shifts to E-flat minor in measure 84. After another dominant chord in first inversion, D-flat major appears in measure 86, again shifting into the parallel minor (respelled as C-sharp minor) in measure 88. Meanwhile, the vocal line descends by a half step until it is left unaccompanied on a D-sharp in measure 92, proclaiming the final line: “Elles me diront des choses pour passer le temps” (They [the bells] will tell me things to pass the time). Finally, the harmony resolves unexpectedly to the tonic (B-flat major), the vocal line completes its final half step descent on the word “temps,” and the initial musical material returns.

Thus, when the poet speaks to symbols and ideas outside of the normal rush of life and time, the harmony wanders into unexpected realms. The home key of B-flat major contains the musical gestures presented at the beginning of the song, which represent daily life and the insistent movement of time.
The piano writing also plays an active role in this piece, particularly at two moments. While it most often behaves as accompaniment, the piano abruptly moves into a higher register in measure 44, with both staves in treble clef, as the vocal line reaches its highest note of the song (Ex. 2.5). The moment serves as word painting for the word
“horizon,” but it also temporarily moves the tonal center to F major and the pianist briefly acts as a soloist, joyfully delineating an F major scale in an exuberant rhythm until it relaxes, both in terms of register and harmony, with a return to the tonic in measure 52.

**EXAMPLE 2.5** Measures 43–52 of “Cimetière de campagne” by Reynaldo Hahn © 1894 by Heugel, rights transferred to Alphonse Leduc, Paris. Used with permission.

The second time the piano part breaks out into prominent expression is in measures 90 and 91 (Ex. 2.4). The poet has just finished saying that the bells of the church “will tell me things,” and the ascending dyads in the piano part represent the peals of these bells. Harmonically, this moment in the song is as far away from the home key as possible: the piano outlines a B dominant 4-2 chord, implying E major which is a tritone away from B-flat. This intervallic distance reinforces the idea that the pastoral and
religious life exists far from the poet’s normal world. While the piano accompaniment had previously been the one to establish new key centers by moving down by step, this time it is the voice that moves from a D-sharp to a D-natural (m. 94) to bring the music back to B-flat major. Just as the poet attempts to escape the normal pace of life by returning to the countryside of his youth, the piano part finds ways to briefly escape the tonic key. The return of B-flat major, as well as the initial musical material, suggests that the escape for both poet and pianist is only temporary.

Hahn imbues this poem about pastoral joys and a simpler time with the harmonic sophistication of the mélodie. While the singer must express nostalgia for childhood, he or she must also be aware of the harmonic shifts of the music, combining an affect of naïveté with trained musicianship.

Hahn alludes to this dichotomy of simplicity combined with artifice in his lecture:

We cannot replicate [the setting of a folk song] when we sing a popular song accompanied on the piano, surrounded by the furniture of the living room, or in the concert hall. We must replace [the poem's setting] with artifice, or if you will, art, finding through poetic means all the things a peasant singer finds in his surroundings. Occasionally we are able to create this illusion by imitating the voice of a peasant and adopting for the sake of interpretation this uneducated voice: a droning voice, be it sad or joyful, which is not the least bit concerned with shaping itself, only taking the diverse forms of the words that it pronounces.68

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68 “Il n’en est pas de même quand nous chantons une chanson populaire en nous accompagnant au piano, entourés de meubles de salon, ou dans une salle de concert; il faut alors remplacer par l’artifice, ou, si vous voulez, par l’art, tout l’appoint poétique que fournit au chanteur paysan l’ensemble des choses dont il est entouré. Quelquefois on peut en donner l’illusion en imitant la voix du paysan, en adoptant pour son interprétation cette voix inéduquée, monocorde, qu’elle soit dolente ou joyeuse, et qui ne se soucie point de se modeler, de prendre des formes diverses d’après les paroles qu’elle énonce.” Du Chant, 35–36.
Is this imitation of an untrained singer that Viardot referred to (and objected to) when she asked Hahn about the “vapid manner” of interpretations of his songs and “pointed diction?” If Hahn indeed advocated a singing style that was new to her, that style must be rooted in the philosophies he explains in his lectures. Examining the recording legacy of this song in particular will elucidate this singing style.

**Exploring performance practice through recordings**

The writer Marcel Proust—who, from 1894–1896, was Hahn’s lover and, subsequently, his close and lifelong friend—was present for the first performance of the song at the salon of Madeleine Lemaire. He reacted to Hahn’s performance with fulsome praise:

> From the first notes of *Cimetière*, the most frivolous audience members and the most rebellious listeners were tamed. Not since Schumann has music that depicts pain, tenderness and the peacefulness of nature had so many characteristics of human truth and absolute beauty. Each note is a word—or a cry! His head slightly thrown back, his mouth melancholy and a bit disdainful, lets the rhythmic flow forth from the most beautiful, the saddest and warmest voice that has ever been. This ‘instrument of musical genius’ named Reynaldo Hahn grips our hearts, moistens our eyes. In the thrill of admiration that engulfs us and makes us tremble, we bend, one after the other, like a silent and solemn undulation of wheat in the wind.  

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69 “Dès les premières notes du *Cimetière*, le public le plus frivole, l’auditoire le plus rebelle est dompté. Jamais, depuis Schumann, la musique pour peindre la douleur, la tendresse, l’apaisement devant la nature, n’eut des traits d’une vérité aussi humaine, d’une beauté aussi absolue. Chaque note est une parole—ou un cri! La tête légèrement renversée en arrière, la bouche mélancholique, un peu dédaigneuse, laissant s’échapper le flot rythmé de la voix la plus belle, la plus triste et la plus chaude qui fut jamais, cet ‘instrument de musique de génie’ qui s’appelle Reynaldo Hahn étreint tous les coeurs, mouille tous les yeux, dans le frisson d’admiration qu’il propage au loin et qui nous fait trembler, nous courbe, tous l’un après l’autre, dans une silencieuse et solennelle undulation des blés sous le vent.” Dominique [Marcel Proust], “Le cour aux lilas et l’atelier des roses,” *Le Figaro*, May 11, 1903, 3.
Proust describes each note of Hahn’s performance as a word (parole); like Hahn, he emphasizes the “speech.” He also goes on to say that a note is not only a word, but a cry (cri). This calls to mind Hahn’s description in his lecture of folk-music singing: he suggests that a singer must incorporate any sounds necessary to evoke the character of the song—including unrefined vocal sounds, such as the “duck squawk.” Proust’s description of Hahn’s performance confirms that Hahn did not shy away from incorporating unexpected techniques.

Proust’s effusive description of the song was reflected in its immediate popularity, which can be measured, in part, by the number of recordings that exist. Many of these recordings were made by singers who knew and worked with Hahn (Table 2.1). Charles Panzéra⁷⁰ and Yvonne Printemps⁷¹ may be the most famous of the early interpreters of this song, but singers David Devriès⁷² and Adrien Legros⁷³ also had impressive careers.

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⁷⁰ Charles Panzéra (1896–1976) was a Swiss baritone. His career was focused on mélodie, although his performance of Pelléas in Debussy’s opera Pelléas et Mélisande was highly praised. He championed French art song in recitals throughout Europe and America, premiering Fauré’s final song cycle, L’horizon chimérique, in 1922. He taught at the Paris Conservatoire after his retirement in the early 1950s.

⁷¹ Yvonne Printemps (1894–1977) had a varied career. At a young age, she seemed poised to enter the repertoire of the Opéra-Comique, but her relationship with the actor-playwright Sacha Guitry led her into a career that revolved around musical comedy, operetta, and film. However, composers as diverse as Noël Coward, Francis Poulenc, and Reynaldo Hahn wrote music for her. In 1925, Guitry approached Hahn to write the music for his comedy about the young Wolfgang Mozart. Printemps played the young composer in a breeches role and both Mozart and her performance in particular was critically praised.

⁷² David Devriès (1881–1936) was a French tenor. He studied at the Paris Conservatoire and upon completion of his studies was immediately engaged by the Opéra and then the Opéra-Comique. He also sang in New York at Oscar Hammerstein’s Manhattan Theatre and at Covent Garden in London. He sang a wide variety of roles, but was most acclaimed for his French roles, such as Pelléas and Werther.

⁷³ Adrien Legros (1903–1993) was a bass-baritone who excelled in the dramatic roles of Escamillo, Scarpia, and Mephistopheles (Gounod). He did not often work under contract,
Recordings of “Cimetière de campagne” are scarcer in the post-1945 era than they were in the first half of the twentieth century. The recent professional recordings considered here are by French singers Didier Henry and Stéphane Degout.

### TABLE 2.1 Comparison of tempi of seven recordings of Hahn’s “Cimetière de campagne”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singer/Pianist</th>
<th>year</th>
<th>Length of Recording</th>
<th>Initial tempo range/Final phrase (beat=½)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reynaldo Hahn</td>
<td>1909</td>
<td>2:38</td>
<td>82–96/48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Panzéra/Magdeleine Panzéra-Baillot</td>
<td>1924</td>
<td>3:19</td>
<td>66–77/46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Devriès/Emile Nérini</td>
<td>between 1928 and 1933</td>
<td>2:39</td>
<td>86–94/58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yvonne Printemps/Louis Beydts</td>
<td>1952</td>
<td>2:13</td>
<td>92–112 (much slower in stanzas 6 and 7: ca. 104)/53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adrien Legros/Tasso Janopoulo</td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>2:46</td>
<td>89–97/40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

but sang as a free agent all over France, Belgium, North Africa, Spain, and Switzerland. In addition to opera, he sang operetta and *mélodie.*

74 Didier Henry (b. 1953) is a French baritone. His career took off in 1987 when he sang the role of Pelléas in Debussy’s *Pelléas et Melisandre* in Moscow and subsequently won a Grammy award for the recording of the opera under the direction of Charles Dutoit. He has performed roles such as Albert in *Werther,* the title role in *Eugene Onegin,* and the Count in *Le Nozze di Figaro.* He also enjoys a busy career in operetta (including Hahn’s *Ciboulette*) and art song, particularly French *mélodie.*

75 Stéphane Degout (b. 1975) is a French baritone trained in Lyon. His opera roles, many of them commercially recorded, are wide-ranging: Pelléas, Gugliemo in *Così fan tutte,* Theseus in Rameau’s *Hippolytus and Aricia,* among others. He is also active in oratorio and art song. He has sung under the direction of William Christie, Emmanuelle Haim, Laurence Equilbey, René Jacobs, Simon Rattle, Riccardo Muti, and many others.
The first tempo listed in the right-hand column of the table is the range of tempo for the first five stanzas for all of the singers. The tempo for the last four stanzas generally slows down in all of the performances. All of the singers observe the \textit{rallentando} beginning at measure 88 (Ex. 2.5), and by the final phrase “pour passer le temps” \textit{(in order to pass the time)}, they are in the range of \textit{♩} =48-58, with the exceptions of Legros and Henry, who are even slower (♩ =40-41). Printemps's performance stands out in regard to tempo because it is the fastest overall. Printemps is also the most flexible with time: she slows down quite a bit at the end of the first stanza (0:22 in the recording), then begins the second stanza without taking a breath, returning to her original tempo. At the end of the fourth stanza, she also slows down and then picks up the tempo so quickly for the fifth stanza that the pianist has to scramble to catch up with her (0:40–0:44). Her background in lighter music, including operetta and theater music, may account for her extreme flexibility with time and less regard for ensemble issues.

All of the singers surveyed here display a flexibility of tempo, employing \textit{rubato} for the cadences at the end of stanzas and taking some time to emphasize particular words. For example, Panzéra pulls back the tempo quite a bit on the word “tranquillement” \textit{(calmly)}, which appears in the third stanza (0:42 in the recording). Devriès and Degout only suggest a slight \textit{rubato} at that point. Hahn, Printemps, Legros, and Henry do not change tempo at all. Otherwise, none of the singers linger very often or very long on any word, using only subtle shifts within phrases to provide variety of tempo. None of the performers sing metronomically, but the regularity of the bass line encourages consistent forward movement.
Panzéra singles out “Cimetière de campagne” for discussion in his 1964 monograph:

Although the metronome marking is not specified, the large slurs of six or seven measures—which must be observed—clearly indicate that the motion should not linger: dotted quarter=96. Duplets and triplets are conspicuously differentiated (it will be the same as the song progresses). The voice remains always underneath its possibilities [of volume and speed]. It is dreamy, a bit distant, tinged with a smiling melancholy.76

However, in his recording, Panzéra does not follow his own advice: his tempo is the slowest of the seven surveyed here and it never reaches $J. = 96$, averaging around $J. = 72$. Furthermore, his breaths seem to be dictated less by the notated slurs than by the breaks in the poetry. For example, the first vocal phrase is slurred from measure 5 to measure 12, but Panzéra takes a breath at measure 8 before the word “Qui” (Ex. 2.2). At the end of the third stanza (“J'irai, tranquillement faire, Entre mon père et ma mère, Mon dernier dodo”), he takes a breath both before and after the phrase “Entre mon père et ma mere” (0:44 in the recording), setting off the clause vocally, just as it is set off with commas in the poetry (Ex. 2.3). This breath also enables Panzéra to have enough air to support the last syllable of the last word, “dodo,” which lasts for almost two measures. Degout makes the same choice as Panzéra, while Henry and Legros take a breath before “Entre,” but not before “Mon.” Printemps and Devries both take their breath before “Mon.” In Printemps’ case, her breath causes her to enter after the pianist plays the downbeat of measure 27.

76 “Quoique le mouvement ne soit pas métronomiquement précisé, les grandes liaisons de six ou sept mesures—liaisons auxquelles l’on se conformera—signifient clairement qu’il ne faut pas s’attarder: noire pointée=96. Doublets, triolets, sont ostensiblement différenciés (il en ira de même par la suite). La voix demeure toujours en deçà de ses possibilités. Elle est rêveuse, quelque peu lointaine, empreinte de souriante mélancolie.” Charles Panzéra, 50 mélodies francaises: Leçons du style et d’interprétation (Brussels: Schott, 1964), 20.
The static that is present in Hahn’s recording makes it difficult to be certain, but he seems to breathe just before the word “faire” in measure 25. He then sings without another breath to the end of measure 29 (“dodo”).

As the song progresses, Panzéra continues to disregard the very slurs he says must be observed. In his book, he reproduces the vocal line from measure 30 to 37, which is slurred (Ex. 2.2). There are several rests in this line, however, and in his book Panzéra draws attention to these moments with small cross signs. However, he does not allow actual intake of air: “As the ‘breathing points’ are indicated in the score, let us simply mark with a cross the points of breath-suspension which, of course, allow no inhalation.”77 In his recording, Panzéra observes most of the rests by stopping phonation briefly (perhaps without an actual breath, as he suggests), but seems to take a real breath before the word “Seulement” in measure 33. Hahn himself definitely breathes before “Seulement” and then sings through the subsequent rests. The other singers (with the exception of Printemps, who uses a portamento to connect the words) do create breaks between the words, and they all breathe before the word “Seulement.”

Given the varied interpretations among the recordings, it is possible to interpret the slurs as simply indicating a long thought, and the phrases may or may not be broken by a breath. Perhaps that is Panzéra’s meaning: his conclusion that the slurs must be observed refer mainly to maintaining and delivering a coherent phrase. His description is unfortunately quite short and incomplete, raising questions that he does not answer. But his emphasis is clearly on adherence to the rhythm of the vocal line and the overall

77 “Les ‘prises d’air’ étant mentionnées sur la partition, contentons-nous de signaler d’une croix les suspensions, lesquelles ne comportement, bien entendu, point d’aspiration.” Ibid, 22.
feeling of the song, which he calls “smiling melancholy.” Hahn himself, however, clearly does not feel compelled to observe the rests in his score, and he sings through them often.

When comparing the overall affect of the first five recordings with the final two recordings, several aspects stand out. The earlier singers (Hahn, Panzéra, Devriès, Printemps, and Legros) display the “pointed diction” that Viardot mentioned. This attention to detail often obscures “shaping the line”: often a singer will place less emphasis on a syllable that is less important for the meaning of the phrase. For example, the mute ‘e’ that occurs at the end of words such as “cimetières” and “entières” would not be heard in spoken French but must be sung. The cadence at measures 11–12 offers an example of a mute ‘e’ occurring on a downbeat at the end of the word “entières.” Of the earlier singers, Devriès and Panzéra soften the mute ‘e’ slightly by offering a slight decrescendo on the pitch of the downbeat of measure 12, but both of the modern singers—Henry and Degout—shape the line much more definitively. By both bringing the dynamic down and darkening the vowel as well, the mute ‘e’ that they produce has a different color than the rest of the syllables in the phrase. In stark contrast, Hahn, Legros, and Printemps all keep the vowel and the dynamic level of the mute ‘e’ the same as the preceding line, providing little shape for the phrase in that regard. This technique recalls the words from Hahn’s lecture about the folk singer taking little care of shaping the line himself but letting it take “the diverse forms of the words that it pronounces.”

The early twentieth century singers also create “pointed diction” by placing much more emphasis on the consonants than the later singers. Their diction separates not only words from one another, but even syllables within words. Legros’ performance of the third line of the second stanza, “J’ai marqué la place obscure” (I found the obscure spot)
(at the 0:20 mark of his recording), is an excellent example of his declamatory delivery. The consonants ‘m,’ ‘pl,’ and ‘scr’ all receive clear treatment. The same forcefulness with initial consonants occurs throughout his performance, especially with the initial consonants of the words “vieille” and “vingt” (at 1:29 and 2:02, respectively).

Printemps employs the same crisp diction that Legros does, particularly on the words “pas d’épitaphe superbe” (no proud epitaph) at the start of the fourth stanza (0:32 in the recording). She emphasizes the alliteration of the consonant ‘p’ in the phrase, and she gives each eighth note of the phrase equal weight. Comparing Henry’s delivery of the same line (0:47 in his recording), we find that the initial consonant of “pas” is barely heard, and the second syllable of “superbe” (which occurs on a downbeat) has an unmistakable emphasis. Degout approaches the phrase in exactly the same way as Henry (in his recording, the passage occurs at 0:43).

Because the recordings of Hahn, Devriès and Panzéra were created when the technology was still in its infancy, the exact level of the crispness of their consonants is often difficult to discern. However, in all the earlier recordings, the deliberate nature of the diction is particularly clear in the ‘r’ consonant. Both Degout and Henry lightly roll the ‘r’ with the tip of tongue in front of the mouth. This approach reflects the traditional classical school of French mélodie, even though in spoken French, the ‘r’ is usually pronounced in the back of the mouth (often referred to as the “uvular r” or grasseyement).

In The Interpretation of French Song, the most widely disseminated treatise on French diction, Pierre Bernac describes the letter in this way:

There is sometimes a misconception of the French ‘r’ in singing. In speaking French we use the so-called uvula [sic] ‘r,’ and night-club singers or folk singers use it in their popular songs. But it should never be used in serious music, as it gives the diction a great vulgarity. Of course, one should not overdo the rolling of
the ‘r,’ generally one flip is enough, but it must be clearly pronounced with the tip of the tongue only.\textsuperscript{78}

Hahn himself is quite forceful while discussing the topic in his collection of essays, *Thèmes variés*:

The rolled ‘r’, that is to say the *r* pronounced with the tip of the tongue, has always been recommended by singing teachers—I do not only mean the Italian teachers (who are not familiar with another pronunciation, along with the Spanish, Oriental, and Slavic teachers), but also French and German teachers—as being the most agreeable to the ear and most conducive to vocal emission.\textsuperscript{79}

The pronunciation of the letter ‘r’ clearly affects the overall flow of the phrases of this song. Furthermore, Hahn often does not follow his own advice, and in fact the first five singers all offer a variety of approaches to the consonant. For example, the first stanza of the poem contains six words with ‘r’:

- “revu” (returned)
- “cimetière” (cemetery)
- “Ambérieux” (the name of a town)
- “cœur” (heart)
- “pour” (for)
- “entière” (entire)

Henry and Degout both use a flipped ‘r’ in all of these words and they also restrict the roll to one flip, as Bernac prescribes. (In contrast, the singers of the earlier era find a variety of ways to produce the ‘r.’ Despite his strong feelings on the rolled ‘r,’ Hahn himself sometimes uses the uvular ‘r.’ Both he and Panzéra seem to use a uvular ‘r’ before the mute ‘e’: “cimetière” and “entière,” although it is not perfectly clear due to the intermittent white noise that permeate these early recordings. Hahn goes beyond the one flip rule for the ‘r’ with the words “revu” and “cœur”—he gives a true


\textsuperscript{79} “Parce que l’r roulé, c’est-à-dire prononcé avec la pointe de la langue, a toujours été préconisé par les maîtres du chant, je ne dis pas seulement par les Italiens (qui n’en connaissent pas d’autre, pas plus que les Espagnols, les Orientaux et les Slaves), mais aussi par les Français et les Allemands, comme étant le plus agréable à l’oreille et le plus favorable à l’émission vocale.” *Thèmes variés* (Paris: J.B. Janin, 1946), 228.
Italianate roll to both of these ‘r’s. Panzéra restrains himself from more than one flip, with the exception perhaps of the word “cœur.” Devriès’ performance is fascinating—all of his ‘r’s are uvular in this stanza. As the song progresses, he uses some flipped and some truly rolled ‘r’s, but in this opening stanza, all of them are clearly uvular. We might assume that Yvonne Printemps, the singer of popular and theater music, would employ almost exclusively a uvular ‘r,’ but in fact she often flips the ‘r’ lightly. She uses an excessively rolled ‘r’ for “cœur” and a clearly uvular ‘r’ for the final consonant of “pour.”

These details of “pointed diction,” particularly in the approach to the consonant ‘r,’ combine to create a markedly different experience in listening to the early and the modern performances. The performances of the late twentieth century and the early twenty-first century offer a smoother and more liquid line, and in some cases the consonants are barely noticeable. The earlier performances reflect the virtuosity of imagination that Hahn espouses in his lecture. The singers are not stuck in one way to produce text (and therefore sound), but they allow the physicality of the words to take over. Hahn even goes against his advice on the subject of the ‘r’—or perhaps he is swayed by the folk-like tendencies of the story and music to cast aside a more “trained” aesthetic. If Proust’s description of his performance is correct, and “each word is a note—or a cry,” Hahn might be deliberately setting aside his classical training, employing the “artifice” that he alludes to in his lecture.

In the beginning of his lecture, Hahn asserts that the goal of singing is the “union of sound and thought” and that singing is nothing without communication. Perhaps it was these ideas Roland Barthes had in mind so many years later when he compared Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau’s singing unfavorably with Panzéra’s in his famous essay, “The Grain of
the Voice.” His comments are germane to this discussion when we consider the degree to which he prides the physicality of singing:

With Fischer-Dieskau, I seem only to hear the lungs, never the tongue, the glottis, the teeth, the mucous membranes, the nose. All of Panzéra’s art, on the contrary, was in the letters, not in the bellows (simple technical feature: you never heard him breathe but only divide up the phrase)…With regard to the consonants, too readily thought to constitute the very armature of our language (which is not, however, a Semitic [sic] one) and always prescribed as needing to be ‘articulated,’ detached, emphasized in order to fulfill the clarity of its meaning, Panzéra recommended that in many cases they be patinated, given the wear of a language that had been living, functioning, and working for ages past, that they be made simply the springboard of for the admirable vowels.\textsuperscript{80}

Although Fischer-Dieskau had impeccable diction, Barthes seems to be taking issue with the goal of this diction. Just as Hahn takes issue with singers who are only concerned with producing lovely sounds, Barthes dismisses treating the role of consonants as merely articulation. For him, the language is a connection to the “living, functioning” world. Barthes’ emphasis on the “wear of the language” also connects to Hahn’s insistence that the physical surroundings inform the way a peasant sings a song. The physicality of the performances of Hahn, Panzéra, Devriès, Printemps, and Legros are heard in each syllable. As Jonathan Dunsby explains:

Barthes was on the hunt not only for pleasing, popular, contemporaneous virtuosity, which he genuinely finds in Fischer-Dieskau, but also for embodiment, the audible presence; not just the song, but a physicality that he believed to be part of a largely lost world of Romantic intimacy between composer, singer and audience.\textsuperscript{81}

For both Barthes and Hahn, the song (and its interpretation) cannot be unmoored from real life, even if that life must contain imperfections—or even a “duck squawk.” If the performance practice is connected to real life, rules such as the pronunciation of ‘r,’ are easily discarded in service of character, especially if the song in question hearkens back to the “uneducated voice” of the folk singer Hahn describes in his lecture. In more recent recordings, shaping and smoothing the line has taken precedence over Hahn’s considerations, and the intimacy that Dunsby evokes remains lost.
Chapter Three

Lecture: “Comment chante-t-on?” (“How do we sing?”)

Songs: “Le parfum impérissable” (Fauré) and “Offrande” (Hahn)

Hahn opens his second lecture with a memorable description of a glass manufacturing plant on the island of Murano, north of Venice. Hahn visited Venice many times, and his description of the glassblower’s work shows that he observed this activity keenly:

He subjects [the glass] to infinitely rapid manipulations, because he must act while the glass is burning hot. He twirls it in spirals, stretches it, smoothes it, and fashions it into a ball; from this ball he draws out rays of light, which he shapes in succession. He imparts to this malleable material undulations, protuberances, and depressions, giving it the most diverse and imaginative forms while the glass is still white-hot. Not only does he lend form to the flexible glass, he also colors it by dipping it into vats of boiling and bubbling pigments of various hues.

Watching the glassblower at work reminds Hahn of the singer’s art because, like the glassblower, the singer must give shape to his or her voice at the moment that it is created. There is no time to “fix” any mistakes or re-imagine the text or the music.

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82 Marie Nordlinger, Hahn’s English cousin, explored the city in 1900 with both Hahn and Proust during what was a first visit for her and for Hahn. His reaction is described in a biography of Nordlinger’s relationships with both men: “For Reynaldo it was the first of many visits. He fell in love with Venice the first morning when, standing on the Piazzetta, he looked at St. Mark’s Cathedral.” P.F. Prestwich, The Translation of Memories (London: Peter Owen Publishers, 1999), 96.

83 “[I] lui fait subir avec une prestesse extrême—car il faut agir pendant que le verre est brûlant—des manipulations infinies: il le tourne en spirales, l’allonge, l’aplatit, le met en boule; de cette boule, il tire des rayons, il les façonne à leur tour; il inflige à l’ébauche malléable des sinuosités, des protubérances, des dépressions, lui donne les formes les plus variées, les plus fantaisistes tandis que le verre brûle toujours. Non seulement il donne au verre souple une forme, mais encore des couleurs, puisant dans des cuves bouillantes et bouillonnantes des pigments de tons divers.” Reynaldo Hahn, Du Chant (Paris: Éditions Pierre Lafitte, 1920), 38.
Katherine Bergeron ties in this analogy to Hahn’s oft-repeated emphasis on the role of the text in vocal technique:

The analogy was meant to evoke the public face of the performer, who like the glassblower always worked before an assembled audience. But it also embodied, more pointedly, the pure sensation of the song. Singing, Hahn suggested, involved the same sorts of manipulations in sound: pulling and then crystallizing not just notes but nuances—the myriad colors and shapes of the spoken word—from the “heat” of a malleable melody. 84

Bergeron brings in the “spoken word” into this analogy of the glassblower, even though Hahn himself has not mentioned text specifically at this point. But he himself brings it up almost immediately, insisting that the singer must shape his or her singing with “sonorous beauty, but he must also infuse it with emotion, poetry, thought.” 85 If we connect these comments to those in his first lecture about the importance of text to vocal stabilization, Bergeron’s analysis appears astute. For Hahn, the act of declaiming text cannot be separated from the art of singing; therefore, there is not just an intellectual aspect to the text, but a physical, even visceral, component as well. When Hahn speaks of the “flexible forms” and “colors” that are the tools of both the glassblower and the singer, he includes poetry and emotion as tools that are just as important as sound. His further remarks on vocal technique hang upon this concept.

After beginning the lecture with this image of the glassblower, Hahn delves into the technical issue of breath control; but, as always, any technical issue for Hahn is indistinguishable from the expression of the text. While he does spend time on the

physical realities of the act of breathing, he is quick to point out that organizing breath around the expressive demands of a song is desirable because it follows the act of speaking: “Let us remember that we wish most of all for singing to be nothing but more beautiful speech, always inspired by language.”

Hahn puts this sentiment into practice when he moves from discussing the purely physical realities of breathing to a detailed discussion of where to breathe in Gabriel Fauré’s song “Le Parfum impérissable.” At first glance, Hahn’s approach to the piece appears surprising to the modern musician, but if considered in the context of the educational climate during the late nineteenth century, the logic of his ideas become clear. Finally, at the end of the lecture, Hahn sums up his philosophy of breathing with one rule: “One may, in the course of a phrase, breathe between the subject and the verb, but not between the verb and its object.” However, this maxim produces some surprising results when applied to Fauré’s song, especially when we review recordings of the song, including Hahn’s own.

**Breath control: Inhalation**

Hahn asserts that singing is founded on the mastery of breath control: “Do not believe that one may sing well and breathe poorly. This is impossible, illogical, and only those who have never sung could believe such a thing.” Hahn received his musical

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86 “…rappelons-nous que nous voulons avant tout, que le chant ne soit qu’une parole plus belle, qu’il s’inspire toujours du langage parlé.” Hahn, *Du Chant*, 50.
87 “On peut, dans le courant d’une phrase, respirer entre le sujet et le verbe, mais non entre le verbe et le complément,” Ibid., 70.
88 “Il ne faut pas croire qu’on puisse bien chanter et mal respirer; c’est là une chose impossible, illogique et que peuvent seuls croire les gens qui n’ont jamais chanté.” Ibid., 53.
training at the Paris Conservatoire, whose voice faculty members promoted the teaching methods of Manuel García, both as García's former students and through his treatise, *Traité complet de l'art du chant*, with Part One published in 1840 and Part Two published in 1847. In this treatise, García devotes surprisingly little space in his work to matters of breath. He merely describes a full breath, achieved by combining a lowered diaphragm with a high chest: “This double procedure, upon which I insist, enlarges the exterior of the lungs, first at the base, and then laterally, permitting the lungs to achieve complete expansion and receive all the air which they can hold. Teaching abdominal breathing exclusively would voluntarily cut in half the element of strength most indispensable to the singer, which is the breath.”

In his final treatise, *Hints on Singing* (1894), García addresses the subject of breathing in a bit more detail, clarifying the earlier description:

In the first attempt to emit a sound, the diaphragm flattens itself, the stomach slightly protrudes, and the breath is introduced at will by the nose, by the mouth,

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89 Manuel García (1805–1906) was an influential singer and teacher, as was his father, Manuel del Pópulo Vicente Rodriguez García (1775–1832). The younger García taught at the Paris Conservatoire from 1830 until 1848 and mentored some of the most celebrated singers of their day, including Mathilde Marchesi, Jenny Lind, and Julius Stockhausen, all of whom went on to teach as well. García’s two sisters, Pauline Viardot and Maria Malibran, were also influential performers of the nineteenth century. Viardot was also a composer.


91 “Ce double procédé, sur lequel j’insiste, agrandit l’enveloppe des poumons, d’abord pas la base, puis par la pourtour, et permet aux poumons d’accomplir toute leur expansion et de recevoir tout l’air qu’ils peuvent contenir. Conseiller exclusivement la respiration abdominale serait vouloir reduire de moitié l’élément de force le plus indispensable au chanteur, la respiration.” Ibid., 10.
or by both simultaneously. During this partial [inhalation] which is called abdominal, the ribs do not move, nor are the lungs filled to their full capacity, to obtain which the diaphragm must and does contract completely. Then, and only then, are the ribs raised, while the stomach is drawn in. This [inhalation]—in which the lungs have their free action from side to side, from front to back, from top to bottom—is complete, and is called thoracic or intercostal. If by compression of any kind the lower ribs are prevented from expanding, the breathing becomes sternal or clavicular.

Breaking this down, it seems that García acknowledges three types of breathing (abdominal, thoracic, and clavicular), but only endorses only the thoracic manner of breathing, finding the abdominal manner alone incomplete. He explains that his method allows the lungs to retain the air, creating a low exhalation of the air while singing, without fatigue. He believes that clavicular breathing is the worst choice, describing it as a breath that it is “scanty, hurried, noisy, or drawn in by raising the shoulders.”

García was one of the strongest influences on the French school at the time of Hahn’s lecture, but he was not the only one. The ideas of Francesco Lamperti (and his son, Giovanni) were also part of the culture, connected to the city by the work of the Parisian doctor, Louis Mandl. Mandl’s ideas put forth in Hygiène de la voix (1876) are absorbed into the Lampertis’ treatises, Guida teorico-pratica-elementaire per lo studio del canto (1864) (published in London in 1877 as A Treatise on the Art of Singing) and Die Technik des Belcanto (1905) (published in New York in the same year as The Technics of Bel Canto), respectively. Although father and son both cite Mandl in their work, they reach somewhat different conclusions. Francesco Lamperti, like Garcia,

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92 Translator Beata García uses the word “inspiration” instead of “inhalation.”
94 Ibid., 5.
95 The fact that these treatises were published in different languages may be explained by the fact that Francesco Lamperti taught in Milan, while his son taught in Berlin.
recognizes the three manners of inhalation: abdominal, lateral (thoracic), and clavicular. However, he also recognizes that they are not always separate activities: “These different types of respiration are often combined, or rather succeed one another; for instance, a continued abdominal respiration will become also lateral.”96 This description echoes García’s idea that inhalation begins as an abdominal movement, with no movement in the ribs, but then expands to the upper part of the lungs as the diaphragm approaches full contraction.

Giovanni Lamperti rejected the idea that correct breathing can be separated into categories at all:

It cannot be too strongly emphasized, that the diaphragm is the principal and essential breathing-muscle (if it should be crippled, breathing would cease and death ensue), and that [exhalation] is effected chiefly by the abdominal muscles. There are also so-called auxiliary breathing-muscles, those of the neck, back, and thorax, which may aid in sustaining an impaired breathing, but can never replace the regular function of the diaphragm. This shows that a sharp distinction between chest and abdominal breathing, such as was formerly generally accepted, cannot be maintained.97

García and both Lampertis acknowledge that three sections of the torso (abdomen, rib cage, and sternum) can be involved in inhalation. Although they reach slightly different conclusions about how full expansion of the lungs is best achieved, none of them advocate for breathing solely into the top of the rib cage, or “clavicular” breathing.

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Hahn, however, endorses an anti-dogmatic approach. As he does in the first lecture, he walks a line between reverence for and frustration with the established methodologies. He praises voice teachers, but also takes issue with their approach:

The authors of the methods—the voice teachers—are correct in placing huge importance on breathing. However, it seems to me that they are wrong to impose one inflexible method, each according to their own ideas. All singing treatises should contain a complete and carefully examined list of the different manners of breathing …Indeed, it has less to do with learning to breathe in a particular manner than with learning how one breathes naturally and then applying that manner consciously and methodically according to the circumstances.\(^\text{98}\)

Although Hahn believes that there are innumerable methods of inhalation, he focuses on the three types of breathing that García and both Lampertis mention: abdominal, lateral, and clavicular (which he calls “wounded bird” breathing). However, he does not fully endorse one approach over another, but feels that each type has a role to play:

Abdominal breathing is excellent, especially for the theater. Breathing [that fills] the ribs also seems to have advantages. I will go even further: I believe that the “wounded bird” breathing can sometimes be useful, and that we must learn all manners of breathing, each according to circumstances.\(^\text{99}\)

This “wounded bird” idea recalls the “duck squawk” Hahn mentions in the first lecture: while he shows deference to the expertise of singing teachers, he also wants to

\(^{98}\) “Les auteurs de méthodes, les professeurs, ont raison d’accorder à la respiration une grande importance; seulement, ils ont tort, ce me semble, de vouloir imposer, chacun selon sa conformation propre, une manière invariable de respirer. Les traités de chant devraient tous contenir une liste complète et soigneusement établie des différentes façons de respirer...En effet, il s’agit moins d’apprendre à respirer d’une certaine manière que de contrôler la façon dont on respire naturellement et de l’employer consciemment, méthodiquement, d’après les circonstances vocales où l’on se trouve.” Ibid., 46–47.

\(^{99}\) “La respiration abdominale est excellente, surtout au théâtre. La respiration des côtes paraît aussi avoir des avantages. J’irai plus loin: je crois même que la respiration d’”oiseau blessé” peut parfois servir utilement et que nous devons savoir respirer de toutes les manières, en employant chacun de ces modes de respiration selon les circonstances.” Ibid., 49.
infuse vocal pedagogy with flexibility for unique expression. Unfortunately, he never offers an example of an appropriate use of this “wounded bird” method. However, with these remarks, he clearly expresses a different approach to inhalation from both García and the Lampertis.

He does not mention their treatises at all in this lecture, but he does express admiration for the treatise of the German soprano Lilli Lehmann. While he does not delve deeply into her treatise, he describes her as “the most scholarly singer of our era,” and mentions that her description of the vocal mechanism is “meticulously and authoritatively described.” Lehmann, unlike Hahn, does not leave room for other methods of breathing, depending upon the student or the situation:

I draw in the diaphragm and my abdomen just a little, only to relax it immediately. I raise the chest, distend the upper ribs, and support them with the lower ones like pillars under them. In this manner, I prepare the form for my singing, the supply chamber for the breath, exactly as I had learned it from my mother. At the same time I raise my palate high toward the nose and prevent the

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100 Lilli Lehmann (1848–1929) was a German soprano who sang a wide range of operatic roles by Wagner, Mozart, Bellini and Gounod. Wagner praised her singing in the first Ring cycle in Bayreuth in 1876, and she debuted at the Metropolitan Opera in the role of Carmen in 1885. Between 1901 and 1910, she sang a variety of roles in Salzburg, where she established the International Mozart Festival in 1916. After WWI, this festival expanded to become the current Salzburg Festival. Her most famous pupil is Geraldine Farrar.


102 Hahn describes Lehmann in this manner: “Mme Lehmann, qui est la cantatrice la plus savant de notre époque, dit, dans son traité, après avoir minutieusement et magistralement décrit certains phénomènes de mécanisme vocal:” (Madame Lehmann, who is the most scholarly singer of our era, says in her treatise, after having meticulously and authoritatively described certain aspects of the vocal mechanism:”) Hahn, Du Chant, 45. Hahn then offers a quote from her treatise about the singer Adelina Patti in which Patti admits to understanding little of how her vocal apparatus works, but is still able to sing beautifully.
escape of breath through the nose. The diaphragm beneath reacts elastically against it, and furnishes pressure from the abdomen. Chest, diaphragm, and the closed epiglottis form a supply chamber for the breath.\textsuperscript{103}

Lehmann’s description of inhalation closely resembles Garcia’s in \textit{Hints on Singing}: the diaphragm and the rib cage work together to create full expansion. She also echoes Francesco Lamperti’s view that one type of inhalation can grow into another: releasing the abdomen and lowering the diaphragm while opening the upper ribs combines abdominal and lateral expansion. She does not suggest that any variation on this breath could be appropriate to singing, nor does she address the concept of clavicular breathing at all, so it is doubtful that she would espouse Hahn’s “wounded bird” idea. Although Hahn references her treatise, her discussion on the subject of proper inhalation aligns more with the García and Lamperti than with Hahn.

**Breath control: exhalation**

However, Hahn does agree with his contemporaries in his belief that a small amount of air is necessary to sustain a sound. He demonstrates this during his lecture by singing an “ah” vowel before a flame which (apparently) does not flicker very much, explaining: “Sometimes, after contracting the diaphragm and inhaling deeply, I lock myself—to use an expression from Madame Lehmann—on my upper ribs like two supports, and I exhale slowly.”\textsuperscript{104} Hahn uses the phrase “lock myself” to refer to Lehmann’s idea of maintaining the “supply chamber for the breath.” In Lehmann’s

\textsuperscript{103} Lehmann, \textit{How to Sing}, 11.

\textsuperscript{104} “Parfois, après avoir contracté le diaphragme et aspiré à fond, je me cale—pour employer l’expression de M\textit{me} Lehmann—sur mes côtes supérieures comme sur deux supports, et j’expire lentement” Hahn, \textit{Du Chant}, 50.
description, the lower ribs support the upper ribs “like pillars.” Like Hahn, she advocates for a slow exhalation: “The longer the form remains unimpaired, the less breath escapes, and the longer it may flow from the form.”

Garcia agrees with this approach; he also advises against taking in too much breath, which could cause the singer to allow the breath to then escape too quickly.

Therefore, Hahn’s ideas about exhalation align more with the mainstream views than his ideas about inhalation. However, he addresses the frequency of breaths a singer may take when he brings up singer and pedagogue Jean-Baptiste Faure. Faure also published a vocal treatise, which Hahn mentions by name and calls “very interesting” (“si intéressant”). Faure advocates for frequent breaths, and Hahn finds a way to show deference and dissent at almost the same time: “I am sure that M. Faure is correct. And yet, it seems to me that singing that is constantly interrupted by breaths does not really resemble speaking.” As always, Hahn is interested in maintaining as close a link as possible between speaking and singing. Faure’s recommendation for frequent breaths would ruin Hahn’s concept that breathing should be a natural part of singing: “Above all, breathing should be effortless (or at least seem to be so), and should not attract any more

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106 Jean-Baptiste Faure (1830–1914) was a French baritone who was celebrated for his flexible and warm tone and for his acting skills. He trained at the Paris Conservatoire and sang with the Opéra-Comique, the Paris Opéra and the Royal Opera House in London. He taught at the Paris Conservatoire from 1857–1860.
108 Hahn, *Du Chant*, 50.
109 “Je ne doute pas que M. Faure ait raison. Et, pourtant, il me semble qu’un chant constamment entrecoupé par des respirations ne peut véritablement ressembler à la parole.” Ibid., 50.
attention than it does in spoken speech.” Again, Hahn demonstrates his knowledge of the techniques that have been published and praises well-known performers while simultaneously separating himself somewhat from their pedagogy. In his desire to continually allow room for the individuality of the performer and for the supremacy of the text, he sets himself apart from his contemporaries.

Hahn wraps up his discussion of breathing by declaring that breath is an expressive tool as well as a physical necessity. The demands of the poetry, the sensation of the text, and the emotional situation at any given moment, should be the guiding force behind technical as well as expressive decisions: “When the need for breathing occurs, it is always necessary to justify and excuse this breath must; it must seem to arise from the sense of the words or from the emotion.” He does not feel that enough voice teachers and singers make this connection between breath control and text expression and puts out a call for reform:

Routine and habit have made people who listen to singing generally accept certain arbitrary breaths, which would be surprising in the spoken language. This is a century-old convention of which singers take advantage. I find that we must avoid this as often as possible. We must renew and rejuvenate pieces worn out by a long and mediocre tradition of performances, and revitalize this music by reestablishing an approach to breathing that conforms to common sense.

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110 “Avant tout, la respiration doit être aisée ou du moins le sembler et ne doit pas plus attirer l’attention qu’elle ne le fait dans le discours parlé” Ibid., 49.
111 Quand le besoin matériel de respire s’impose, il faut toujours justifier, excuser cette respiration, il faut qu’elle semble exigée par le sens des paroles ou par le sentiment.” Ibid., 54.
112 “La routine, l’habitude font que les personnes qui entendent chanter ne s’étonnent pas, en général, de certaines respirations arbitraires qui les surprendraient dans le langage parlé. Il y a là une convention établie depuis des siècles, dont les chanteurs profitent. Je trouve qu’on doit, le plus souvent possible, éviter d’en profiter; on renouvelle, on rajeunit bien des morceaux fatigués par un usage long et médiocre, on redonne à la musique une nouvelle vie, en rétablissant une respiration conforme au bon sens.” Ibid., Du Chant, 54–55.
**Educational reform during Hahn’s time**

To demonstrate his ideas on breathing, Hahn uses as an example not one of his own songs, but one by Gabriel Fauré, “Le Parfum impérissable.” Hahn discusses this song at length: he goes through the song line by line, offering a great deal of advice about how to sing it, focusing particularly on *when* to take a breath. He re-emphasizes the notion that a singer’s breath must seem natural, and even go almost unnoticed, because that is how it will most closely resemble speech. For Hahn, it follows logically that the singer’s breath must be dictated by the grammatical sense of the phrases—even if that breath is counterintuitive musically.

To understand Hahn’s approach to this topic, it is helpful to know that he came of age during an explosion of interest in the French language, both in its orthographic representation and its delivery. After the fall of the Second French Empire in 1870 and the establishment of the Third Republic, one of the ways that the government tried to unify the country was through language education. Reformers set out to instill a love and reverence for the French language by requiring not only reading, but speaking during classes. Declamation, particularly of poetry, became an integral part of a French student’s day.\(^\text{113}\)

As part of this reform effort, the playwright and author Ernest Legouvé\textsuperscript{114} produced a treatise entitled \textit{L’Art de la lecture} (\textit{The Art of Reading})\textsuperscript{115} which was adopted as a standard text for all levels of the French school system. The work was quickly disseminated (it was printed in three editions between 1877 and 1879 and was translated into English in 1879\textsuperscript{116}) and its publisher also quickly issued abridged primers for primary school children and home use.\textsuperscript{117} Therefore, although we do not know which school Hahn attended before entering the Conservatoire at age 11 in 1885, the book was probably ubiquitous enough to come to his attention, especially considering his particular interest in language. Furthermore, Legouvé sat on the advisory board of the Conservatoire during the 1870s, making it even more likely that Hahn was acquainted with his ideas. But the greatest argument that Hahn knew Legouvé’s work is in the similarities of their approaches to reciting verse.

\textit{L’Art de la lecture} is split into two sections: “Preliminary” (a description of the practicalities of reading aloud) and “Practical Application of Reading” (an exploration of the repertoire of public speakers and actors). The first section is the most interesting in regard to Hahn because Legouvé dwells on the details of declamation in much the same way that Hahn does in his lecture. Legouvé draws on his experience with professional

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{114} Ernest Legouvé (1807–1903) was a French playwright, author, and educator. In 1855, he was elected to the Académie française on the strength of his plays \textit{Adrienne Lecouvreur} (1849) and \textit{Medée} (1855). However, later in life, he focused on education, becoming famous for lecturing on women’s rights and the advanced education of children. He was awarded the highest grade of the Legion of Honor in 1887.
\bibitem{115} Ernest Legouvé, \textit{L’Art de la lecture} (Paris: Hetzel, 1877).
\bibitem{116} Ernest Legouvé, \textit{The Art of Reading}, trans. Edward Roth (Philadelphia: Claxton, Remsen &Co., 1879). This edition is available online: https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433082522651;view=1up;seq=13
\end{thebibliography}
actors, often sharing self-congratulatory anecdotes to make his point. Taken together, these stories reveal that Legouvé believes that the first job of an actor or orator of any kind is to make the sense of the text clear to the reader. For example, a chapter entitled “Punctuation” presents a scene between a young pupil and the renowned French actor Joseph Samson.\textsuperscript{118} The pupil has come to Samson to learn how to read aloud effectively.

Legouvé reports their conversation:

\begin{quote}
The pupil begins: “The Oak one day, said to the Reed—“
“But,” interrupts Samson, cold and dry, “but why do you join the adverb to the noun rather than to the verb?....This is the way it should go: ‘the Oak (comma) one day said to the Reed.’\textsuperscript{119}

When the pupil remarks that Samson is suggesting that the reader create his own punctuation with his voice, Samson agrees:

“Certainly he does, quite independently too of the printer’s points, though it must be acknowledged that sometimes both coincide. By a certain cadenced silence the reader marks his period; by a half silence, his comma; by a certain accent, an interrogation; by a certain tone, an exclamation. And I must assure you that it is exclusively on the skillful distribution of these insensible points that not only the interest of the story, but actually its clearness, its comprehensibility, altogether depends.”\textsuperscript{120}
\end{quote}

By relating this story about Samson’s advice, Legouvé presents his own conviction: when a text is delivered orally, the speaker must provide the hearer with the information that punctuation gives. In the same way, when Hahn discusses Fauré’s \textit{Le Parfum imperissable}, he also suggests breaths based on punctuation, such as breathing at

\textsuperscript{118} The actor and playwright Joseph Samson (1793–1871) joined the Comédie-Française in 1812. Many of his comedies were performed at the Théâtre-Français, and he became a professor of elocution at the Paris Conservatoire in 1829.

\textsuperscript{119} Ernest Legouvé, \textit{The Art of Reading}, trans. Edward Roth (Philadelphia: Claxton, Remsen & Co., 1879), 64.

\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 64.
the commas to make the delineation of a list obvious or to offset an appositive clause. He translates Samson’s “cadenced silence” and “half silence” into the expressive breathing of the singer. While it is logical that a singer must breathe for purely physical reasons, Hahn believes in giving every breath a textual—and grammatically sound—argument.

Another example of Legouvé’s interest in clarity occurs in a chapter devoted to the reprint of notes from the memoirs of the actress Cecile Vanhove.121 She presents each line from a speech from the play *Agamemnon* by Lemercier,122 explaining where and why she would take a breath:

Tu n’en crois pas le Dieu dont je suis inspirée.
(Thou dost not believe in the God by whom I am inspired.)
NOTE. Here no more being required to complete the sense, I can take a full breath.

A l’oracle trop vrai, par ma bouche dicté,
(To the most true oracle dictated by my lips.)
NOTE. Here only a quarter breath, the sense being suspended.

Il attacha le doute et l’incrédulité.
(He would yield nothing but doubt and incredulity.)
NOTE. Meaning complete, full breath.123

121 Cecile Vanhove (1771–1860) was a Dutch actress praised for her ability in both tragic and comedic roles. She married actor François Joseph Talma (1763–1826) in 1802 and retired from the stage in 1811. She devoted herself to writing books about Talma’s acting techniques after his death. Talma himself was a classical actor, renowned for his physical presence and matchless elocution. After political dissension arose at the Comédie-Française, he helped establish a new theater known as the Théâtre de la République, on the site of what is now called either the Théâtre Français or Comédie-Française (Rue de Richelieu).

122 Népomucène Lemercier (1771–1840) was a prolific poet and playwright. *Agamemnon*, considered to be his masterpiece, was premiered at the Théâtre de la République in 1797.

Vanhove’s notes for each breath indicate that she correlates those moments with whether the listener has heard enough text to comprehend a thought. The first breath is after a complete sentence, which constitutes a complete idea. She allows the second breath (but only a “quarter breath”), because a clause is completed and a pause before proceeding will not confuse the listener (she explains it as “the sense being suspended”). The third instance is again at the end of a sentence, and she allows a full breath as the meaning is complete. Legouvé does not analyze Vanhove’s notes, but lets them speak for themselves. He simply concludes the chapter: “Many will no doubt skip this chapter as useless, perhaps senseless, but to others it will suggest ideas fertile as well as novel.”

“Le Parfum impérissable” (1897)

It is entirely possible that Hahn found Vanhove’s ideas to be fertile, as he uses precisely this argument in his discussion of “Le Parfum impérissable.” First, he explains in detail where he believes that the breaths should occur, but he refrains from presenting his complete reasoning until the end of the lecture. After his lengthy discussion, he finally asserts: “One may, in the course of a phrase, breathe between the subject and the verb, but not between the verb and its object.” Because Hahn refuses to include musical considerations in his choices, the breaths he suggests are based purely on the demand for textual clarity, as Samson and Vanhove prescribe. This tension between the grammatical and musical flow makes Hahn’s discussion of this song provocative. If Hahn’s advice on

124 Ibid., 47.
125 “On peut, dans le courant d’une phrase, respirer entre le sujet et le verbe, mais non entre le verbe et le complément,” Hahn, Du Chant, 70.
where to breathe in this song were followed to the letter, the result would be a
performance of the song that is rarely, if ever, heard.

Le parfum impérissable

Quand la fleur du soleil, la rose de Lahor,
De son âme odorante a rempli goutte à goutte
La fiole d'argile ou de cristal ou d'or,
Sur le sable qui brûle on peut l'épandre toute.

Les fleuves et la mer inonderaient en vain
Ce sanctuaire étroit qui la tint enfermée:
Il garde en se brisant son arôme divin
Et sa poussière heureuse en reste parfumée!

Puisque par la blessure ouverte de mon cœur
Tu t'écoules de même, ô céleste liqueur,
Inexprimable amour, qui m'enflammais pour elle!

Qu'il lui soit pardonné, que mon mal soit béní!
Par delà l'heure humaine et le temps infini
Mon cœur est embaumé d'une odeur immortelle!

The imperishable perfume

When the flower of the sun, the rose of Lahore,
Has drop by drop from her scented soul
Filled the phial of clay or crystal or gold,
It can all be scattered it on the burning sands.

Rivers and oceans would flood in vain
This narrow sanctuary where it was confined:
On shattering it keeps its heavenly scent,
Which still perfumes its happy dust.

Since through the gaping wound of my heart
You likewise flow, O heavenly nectar,
Ineffable love which inflamed me for her,

May she be pardoned and my pain be blessed!
Beyond this world and infinity
My heart is embaumed with immortal fragrance!

“Le parfum impérissable” by Charles Marie René Leconte de Lisle (1818–1894).
Translation by Richard Stokes, A French Song Companion (New York: Oxford
EXAMPLE 3.1 Measures 1–13 of “Le Parfum impérissable” by Gabriel Fauré.
Hahn asserts that the first three lines of the poem, despite commas and line breaks, are in fact one phrase. He acknowledges that it is impossible to sing all three lines without a breath, as they constitute more than six measures sung at moderate speed (Ex. 3.1). After some discussion, he decides that he will breathe after the word “Lahor” in measure 3, but with this caveat:

Therefore, by virtue of a principle that I will try to explain later (and which, I think, has not yet been formulated), I will breathe after “Lahor.” But this breath is possible only if I justify it by seeming to say the following words within parentheses: “la rose de Lahor.” Therefore I must detach them from the first part of the phrase, and since I do not want to breathe after “Quand la fleur du soleil” (because that would be childish and compromise the musical phrase), here is what I will do:\footnote{126}

Hahn then (presumably) goes on to sing the phrase with a slight break after “soleil” (“sun”), a breath after “Lahor” and a pause in singing after “goutte” (“drop”) in measure 5. He then examines the few measures he just sang and puzzles over where to breathe:

The only spot where one could breathe without offending reason would be between “rempli” and “goutte à goutte”, which would imply elsewhere a new breath before “La fiole.” This would be detestable, almost ridiculous as this would produce a panting affect, and then, this onset of singing on the words “La fiole”…well, I do not know why, but it is impossible. It is therefore imperative to say without taking a new breath:

\[\text{De son âme odorante a rempli goutte à goutte} \]
\[\text{La fiole d’argile}\]\footnote{127}

\footnote{126} “Donc, en vertu d’un principe que j’essaierai de déterminer tout à l’heure (et qui je crois, n’a pas encore été formulé), je respirerai après “Lahor”; mais cette respiration n’est possible que si je la justifie en ayant l’air de dire entre parenthèses ces mots: la rose de Lahor. Il faut donc que je les isole du premier membre de la phrase, et comme je ne veux pas respirer après: Quand la fleur du soleil (parce que ce serait puéril et couperait la phrase musicale), voici ce que je ferai:” Ibid., 57–58.

\footnote{127} “Le seul endroit où l’on pourrait respirer sans choquer la raison serait entre “rempli” et “goutte à goutte” ce qui impliquerait, d’ailleurs, une nouvelle respiration avant La fiole. Ce serait détestable, presque ridicule; ce serait haletant, et puis, cette reprise du chant sur les mots La fiole…enfin, je ne sais pourquoi, mais c’est impossible. Il est donc
However, Hahn will not allow a breath after “d’argile” (“of clay”) either; if one chooses to breathe before “ou de cristal” (“or crystal”), he says, one must also breathe before “ou d’or” (“or gold”) to make it seem that the breath only elucidates the rhetorical listing of three items and is not a breath of necessity. Therefore, he ends up insisting that the phrase from “de son âme” (“her soul”, m. 3:3) to the middle of measure 7 after “d’or” (m. 7:1) be sung without a breath.

At this point in the lecture, Hahn has not yet revealed his reasoning behind these breath choices. He has mentioned that he will explain an unknown rule that will justify his decisions. But he has also admitted that he does not fully understand himself why he finds it so wrong to breathe before the words “La fiole” (“the phial”). In fact, none of the singers whose recordings of this song have been included in this study follow Hahn’s advice. The British mezzo-soprano Sarah Walker (b. 1943),128 the Dutch soprano Elly Ameling (b. 1933),129 and the French baritone Gérard Souzay (1918-2004)130 all take a breath before the words “La fiole” in measure 5. Only Hahn himself, in a recording from 1930, carries the phrase all the way to measure 7.

Hahn’s insistence on carrying the phrase over “La fiole” (which is explained more fully soon after) is based on a grammatical consideration, but the choices of the other

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128 Fauré—Mélodies Vol 1., Sarah Walker, mezzo-soprano; Malcolm Martineau, piano. CRD Records Ltd. ADD 3476, 1992, CD.
singers are based on musical realities. The first nine measures of this song can be
considered as two large phrases, broken exactly in the middle by the cadential gesture to
E Major (measure 5, first beat). Within the two phrases, there are two smaller sections as
well. On the second beat of measure 3, a cadential gesture to the subdominant is
consistent with a descending vocal line and a comma in the poetry: this is a natural spot
to relax and breathe, and all of the singers discussed here choose to do so. The next
musically natural spot to breathe is at the tonic cadence in measure 5 – which is where
Hahn specifically does not want a breath. Finally, there is both a break in the poetry and
an interesting harmonic shift on the second beat of measure 7 after the word “d’or.” All
of the singers take a breath here. Souzay is a bit of an outlier: he also takes a breath at the
third beat of measure 6 before the word “ou.” He may be delineating the three types of
the phial (clay, crystal or gold) or preparing to create the crescendo that he executes on
the first beat of measure 7. It is difficult to discern if this breath is necessitated by the
demands of vocal technique or is an expressive choice.

Hahn makes another surprising suggestion regarding measures 10–12, again
referencing a mysterious rule that he promises to explain eventually:

It is out of the question, isn’t it, to breathe between en vain and Ce sanctuaire; but
one could, by virtue of a principle that I will explain later, breathe after Les
fleuves et la mer, in order to be saying, on one breath, inondueraient en vain Ce
sanctuaire, etc.131

Again, Walker, Ameling, and Souzay do not follow Hahn's advice; in this particular spot,
they all breathe before the words “Ce sanctuaire” (“This sanctuary”) in measure 11.

131 “Il n’est pas question, n’est-ce pas? de respire entre en vain et Ce sanctuaire; mais
l’on peut, en vertu d’un principe que je vous exposerai tout à l’heure, respirer après Les
fleuves et la mer, pour dire, ensuite, d’une seule haleine, inondueraient en vain Ce
sanctuaire, etc.” Hahn, Du Chant, 60.
These words not only begin a new line in the poetry, but the most natural and easiest exhalation of breath could be achieved by singing through the pickup to measure 10, breathing before “Ce sanctuaire,” and breathing again at the next rest in measure 13, after the word “enfermée” (“confined”). It is not until the end of the lecture and during a short discussion of a mélodie by Gounod that Hahn finally explains his logic:

One may, during the course of a phrase, breathe between the subject and the verb, but not between the verb and its object. This is because when the verb is followed by a short pause—however short—there is a risk of giving the impression that the thought is finished, while the object, if it follows a breath, actually seems to be the subject of a new thought, which delays the comprehension of the phrase for a second or two.132

This rule finally throws light on both of the examples from “Le Parfum impérissable.” In measure 5, “fiole” (“phial”) is the object of the verb “a rempli” (“has filled”). The short phrase “goutte à goutte” (“drop by drop”) does come between the verb and its object, and Hahn allows that the singer may offset this phrase with short breaths or breaks to make the rhetoric clear. However, he ultimately rejects that idea because the short breaths in quick succession would sound like panting. In the second example, he again follows this rule: the subjects are “les fleuves” and “la mer” (“the rivers” and “the ocean”), and so a breath may be taken before the verb “inonderaient” (“would flood”)—but this verb must be connected to its object, which is “sanctuaire” (“sanctuary”). Again, there are words in

132 “On peut, dans le courant d’une phrase, respirer entre le sujet et le verbe, mais non entre le verbe et le complément; car le verbe suivi d’un temps arrêt, si court soit-il, risque toujours de donner l’impression d’une proposition terminée, et le complément, venant après une respiration, semble, tout d’abord, être le sujet d’une nouvelle proposition, rendant par là incompréhensible durant une seconde ou deux le sens véritable de la phrase.” Ibid., 70–71.
between the verb and its object ("en vain" ["in vain"]) but for Hahn that is not an excuse for taking a breath before the object.

Hahn’s explanation echoes Legouvé’s sentiments in *L’Art de la lecture*. The singer is responsible for not only the clarity of the sound of each word (which students of singing today study in diction classes) but for the clarity of the sense of each phrase. Deciding where to take a breath is the most powerful tool with which a singer may create that clarity. Therefore, the singer must follow the grammatical sense of the text or the listener may become confused. Hahn’s comments here reflect the fact that, for those educated in France in Hahn’s era, Legouvé’s ideas held sway.

Because he follows a grammatically governed—rather than musically governed—rule for breathing, Hahn produces a performance that is significantly different from subsequent performances, even performances by renowned interpreters of mélodie. Jean-Michel Nectoux acknowledges that Hahn’s approach is original, but does not find it convincing: “Sadly, the performance is marred by tempo rubato, excessive emphasis of certain words and above all, by an evident affectation in the phrasing which seems to us quite the opposite of the correct performance style for this music.”\(^{133}\) The performance style that Nectoux refers to is one that has crystallized since Hahn recorded this song. It would be more accurate to state that Hahn’s approach was not taken up by subsequent performers, and sounds bizarre today. The “affectation” Nectoux mentions relates directly to Hahn’s choices of where to breathe. While Hahn sought a “natural” approach,

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evoking a feeling of simply speaking, the result actually sounds rather unnatural, because
the breaths do not align with the harmonic gestures of the music.

Hahn's lecture is titled “How do we sing?” and while Hahn spends most of his
time on breathing, he also provides specific suggestions on other technical aspects of
singing. For example, he spends a great deal of time on measures 20–24 (Ex. 3.2). He
explains that he does not want to breathe before “Inexpressible amour” (“Ineffable love”)
in order to be expressive; he must therefore breathe before “ô céleste liqueur” (“o
heavenly nectar”). He then proceeds at length:

Follow me closely: Tu t’écoules de même (breath), ô céleste liqueur!
*Inexpressible amour qui m’enflammais pour elle.* After the panting breath that I
explained, we will crescendo on ô celeste liqueur!, while emphasizing the hissing
sound of the c and the s of céleste, and doubling the l of liqueur!, and
pronouncing very clearly the two i’s of Inexpressible, without mixing in any other
vowel, true and unaffected i’s, with closed jaw and gently pulled back lips. From
amour forward, diminish the sound, always keeping the mi [pitch E] of
enflammais very warm, with an interior yawn. But in order to make it clear that
this final verse is consequential, one may, without breathing at all, stop the sound
after liqueur! and before the i of Inexpressible, give the slight impression of a
glottal stop (all this, of course, should be rapid, light, almost undetectable). I
know that this approach is difficult, even very difficult. And that is why it is
interesting.134

134 “Suivez-moi bien: Tu t’écoules de même (respiration), ô céleste liqueur! *Inexpressible
amour qui m’enflammais pour elle.* Après la respiration haletante que je vous ai indiquée,
nous ferons sur ô céleste liqueur! un crescendo, en faisant bien siffler le c et l’s de
céleste, en doublant l’l de liqueur!, en prononçant très purement les deux i
de*Inexprimable*, sans mélange d’autre voyelle, des i véritables, crus, les
mâchoires rapprochées, le coin des lèvres légèrement tiré en arrière. A partir d’amour,
diminuez le son, tout en prisant le mi d’enflammais très chaud, avec un bâillement
intérieur. Mais afin de faire sentir que ce dernier vers est une incidente, on peut, tout en
ne respirant pas, arrêter le son après liqueur! et, avant l’i d*Inexprimable*, donner très
légèrement l’impression d’un coup de glotte (tou cela, bien entendu, rapide, léger,
presque insensible). Cette manière est difficile je le sais, très difficile même. Et c’est pour
In this passage, Hahn addresses the expressive possibilities of the music by advising the singer about dynamic control, but also by asking for specific mannerisms in diction, technical control of the jaw, and a glottal stop. This level of detail recalls the work of the glassblower: just as the worker refines the shape of the hot glass with his instruments, the singer must refine the sound by lingering on consonants, manipulating the lips and the interior of the mouth, and even by manipulating the vocal cords themselves with the glottal stroke. Hahn’s desire to control the dynamics and the diction so precisely is always linked to his desire to place the text in the foreground. While the glassblower has tools to manipulate the glass, the singer has words to manipulate the sound.
Elly Ameling does not breathe before “ô céleste liqueur,” but before “inexprimable.” She does execute a slight decrescendo at that point and creates a warm tone on the pitch E on the third syllable of “enflammais,” but we cannot know if she achieves it with an “interior yawn” as Hahn advises. She also does not employ a glottal stroke (in fact, this is not a tool that Ameling ever seems to use), nor does she double the c of “céleste” or the l of “liqueur.” Sarah Walker also sings through to “ô celeste liqueur,” but she does highlight the sibilance in the word “celeste,” as Hahn desires. She breathes before and after the words “inexprimable amour”; it is not clear how Hahn would feel about that second breath before the relative clause “qui m’enflammais pour elle.” It is not clear if Walker uses a glottal stroke, because pianist Martineau’s dynamic for the accompanying diminished chord covers up the onset on the word. Walker does bring the dynamic level down as the phrase continues, finishing at a lower dynamic level than Ameling. Of all three singers, Souzay follows Hahn’s diction advice most closely: he takes a breath before and after “ô celeste liqueur,” lingering on the initial consonants of both words. He also follows the dynamics closely, providing a strong crescendo to the D-flat for the second syllable of “liqueur” and bringing the dynamic level very low and almost sotto voce for the end of the next phrase.

In his recording, Hahn himself does not follow his own advice for the words “inexprimable amour,” taking an audible breath for that emotional moment. However, this recording dates from 1930. Hahn is 56 at this point, and the effects of age have taken a toll on his voice; there is a marked difference between his recordings from the first two decades of the century and this one. He struggles with intonation throughout the recording, especially with high notes marked forte. It is safe to assume that he is simply
physically unable to follow his own advice and sing through to “inexprimable amour” without another breath, since that phrase lies in an increasingly uncomfortable range for him.

There are other indications that age is taking its toll on Hahn's singing. He sings the wrong words in the first line of the final verse (1:49 in the recording): instead of “Que mon mal soit béni” (“may my pain be blessed”) he sings “Que son nom soit béni” (“may his name be blessed”). There are also moments when he alters the rhythm slightly and the accompanist has to rush to keep up with him, indicating either that he has forgotten the written rhythm or has chosen to follow his own interpretation of the textual flow. As the song comes to a close, his voice is noticeably weaker and he has trouble holding the final note for the four indicated beats. However, his diction is constantly delineated by clear consonants and many glottal strokes before words that begin with a vowel. This is in contrast with more recent recordings: the consonants in these performances have smoother edges and the phrases consequently glide from vowel to vowel.

As a result of these differences, Hahn’s performance seems more casual and conversational than the later recordings. But we know from his lecture that Hahn thought through every word in great detail; there was nothing casual in his study of the piece. We also know that this detailed approach stems from his educational background and the emphasis that education placed on declamation. Although his approach is not observed in modern-day practice, he does achieve an affect that is nostalgic, intimate, and rather world-weary; as he himself says, it is interesting.
Offrande (1891)

Although he was only 17 years old when he wrote it, Hahn’s setting of Verlaine’s celebrated poem “Green” is one of his most revered. Graham Johnson declares that it “shows an enviable mastery of harmony and ability to colour the mood of the poem through the accompaniment.” It is interesting to compare Hahn’s setting with those of Debussy and Fauré. Debussy’s breathless triplets in the piano accompaniment evoke youthful desire, while Fauré’s insistent chordal accompaniment propels the vocal line ahead in a candid and sincere declaration of love. Their settings are optimistic and seem to assume that the expressed desire will be requited. Hahn, on the other hand, sets the poem to a slow and unvarying accompaniment, which gives the poem the color that Johnson mentions. This color is decidedly forlorn and meek, suggesting that Hahn does not share the optimistic interpretation of the poem that both Debussy and Fauré evoke.

Although the song receives many performances today, Hahn himself did not have much hope for it, as he describes it in a letter:

The song I sang at Daudet’s is not going to be printed; it is a thing the public never likes and the success it had came because all those who were there knew Verlaine, the author of the words, and felt that my music was in connection with the poetry; it is a very short, quiet and sad little song and doesn’t contain what you call melody and gives an impression of general discouragement.”

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136 A great friend of Hahn’s, Lucien Daudet (1878–1946) was a prolific novelist and painter, although his father, Alphonse, is the more celebrated literary figure in France today. Alphonse recognized Hahn’s talent after the publication of his first song “Si mes vers avaient des ailes,” and invited him to provide music for his play *L’Obstacle* in 1890 (Hahn was only 16). Through his friendship with both Daudets, Hahn entered the artistic circles of the salons and met such figures as Paul Verlaine and the soprano Sybil Sanderson.

137 Angus Morrison, “Reynaldo Hahn and the art of singing: his writings and recordings,” *Recorded sound* 76 (1979), 97.
Hahn is referring to the lack of expressiveness in the song’s vocal line and pallid harmonic vocabulary. The vocal line is devoid of dramatic leaps, moving predominantly in step-wise motion, and the piano accompaniment is mainly chordal. The poem is set in three identical strophes, with the only alteration in the rhythm of the vocal line to suit the words. Furthermore, the harmony is static, offering little more than a gentle rocking back and forth between a dominant 6/5 and an extended secondary dominant chord that serves no function. The G in the tenor voice remains constant for eight measures, serving as a hinge for the second chord of each measure to swing back and forth. The song never shakes off this suspended dominant feeling: even though each verse finally cadences to the tonic at the end (see measure 11), the rocking harmony returns for the last two measure of the song after the voice is done, and the song ends as it begins, on a dominant 6/5 chord. The only concession to a feeling of ending is the final note, which is a low G.

Graham Johnson finds justification for this stark treatment of the poetry: Hahn’s empathy with the closeted homosexuality of the poet, Paul Verlaine. Like Blyth, Johnson compares Hahn’s setting favorably to those of Debussy and Fauré:

Debussy and Fauré, with the confidence of men destined to win fair ladies with ease, composed fast songs which offer baskets of fruit and bouquets of flowers with breathless delight. In Hahn’s empty accompaniment of listless minimis, and a vocal line that is all but a monotone, we hear the helplessness of a man who knows that he will be treated unkindly by the object of his passion, who knows his offering will be scornfully rejected, and that nowhere will he find sympathy for his plight. Here is the state of depression which descends when love dares not speak its name.\(^{138}\)

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It is tempting to give credence to this interpretation because it weaves Hahn’s personal life into the music and also fits with the overall morose affect of the song. The mysterious dedication of the song “to ***” leaves open the possibility that Hahn was expressing his feelings toward another man. However, there is no evidence in Hahn’s correspondence to support Johnson’s theory, so it must remain speculation. Whatever Hahn’s motivation for his severe setting, the result is that the song’s interest lies almost entirely in the delivery of the text—that mysterious alchemy of words and music that Hahn esteems.

Like “Le Parfum impérissable,” “Offrande” offers an opportunity to explore various performers’ approach to breathing, as well as their attempts to delineate the details of the poetry. In light of Hahn’s pessimistic prediction of the song’s future, he would probably be surprised to learn that there are several recent recordings of the song. The recordings surveyed here are two recordings by Reynaldo Hahn (self-accompanied), Jane Bathori (1877–1970), Maggie Teyte (1888-1976), Martyn Hill (b. 1944), Susan Graham (b. 1960), and Philippe Jaroussky (b. 1978).
Offrande

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

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

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

Offering

Here are flowers, branches, fruit and fronds,
And here too my heart that beats just for you.
Do not tear it with your two white hands
And may the humble gift please your lovely eyes.

I come all covered still with the dew
Frozen to my brow by the morning breeze.
Let my fatigue, finding rest at your feet,
Dream those dear moments that will give it peace.

On your young breast let me roll my head
Still ringing from your recent kisses;
After its sweet tumult grant it peace,
And let me sleep a while, since you rest.

One of the most interesting aspects of this song’s recording history is that Hahn himself recorded it twice, once in 1909 and again in 1919. In the first recording, Hahn’s approach to rhythm is not dogmatic; he prioritizes the rhythm of speech over the written rhythm. For example, the nouns listed in the opening phrase are separated by commas “Voici des fruits, des fleurs, des feuilles” (“Here are fruits, flowers, leaves”). They are also separated by eighth note rests in the score, but Hahn does not observe these rests, singing the phrase without a breath until “Et puis,” which starts the next phrase (Ex. 3.3). It is possible that Hahn feared that breathing for each rest would result in a sort of panting on the part of the singer, as he did in the discussion of the phrase “goutte à goutte” in “Le Parfum impérissable” (see page 19, note 45). Hahn also slightly lengthens the note value

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**Table 3.1 Comparison of tempi of seven recordings of Hahn’s “Offrande”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singer/Pianist</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Length of Recording</th>
<th>Basic Tempo (beat = J)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reynaldo Hahn (self-accompanied)</td>
<td>1909</td>
<td>2:11</td>
<td>72-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reynaldo Hahn (self-accompanied)</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>2:27</td>
<td>65-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Bathori (self-accompanied)</td>
<td>1929</td>
<td>2:34</td>
<td>66-74 (extreme rubato)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maggie Teyte/ Gerald Moore</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>2:45</td>
<td>48-77 (extreme rubato)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martyn Hill/ Graham Johnson</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>2:57</td>
<td>50-55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan Graham/ Roger Vignoles</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>2:53</td>
<td>44-58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippe Jaroussky/ Jérôme Ducros</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2:35</td>
<td>54-65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
for “voici,” both at the start of the song and at the start of the second phrase (m. 5). However, the longest and highest notes in these two opening phrases—the A on “branches” (m. 4) and the G on “vous” (m. 6)—are not given any weight or longer value. He does indeed achieve simply “more beautiful speech,” as he says in his lecture.

Without significantly affecting the rather brisk pace, he manages to create nuances in his diction. For example, the alliteration of the “f” in the words “fruits,” “fleurs,” and “feuilles” (fruits, flowers, and branches) are highlighted but do not affect the tempo. Hahn lingers more on the tenuto marking above the word “cœur” (“heart,” m. 5), emphasizing the first consonant and resulting in a slight rubato, while the attention given to the tenuto marking above “bat” (“beats,” m. 6) also does not significantly affect the tempo.

In the second recording, Hahn observes the rests breaking up the list in the first phrase of the song and takes a slightly slower, almost weary tempo. This tempo will become even slower, almost completely breaking down, in the final verse. However, the length of the second recording is not much greater than the first: it is, in fact, the quality of Hahn’s voice that gives the sensation of a much slower tempo. He has lost some of the forward resonance that he has in the 1909 recording, and when singing some of the dark vowels, such as “branches” and “bat,” the pitch is flat. The combination of the slower tempo and muted resonance creates a more depressing and less hopeful interpretation, although Hahn makes many of the same choices that he made before, such as lingering a bit on the words with tenuto markings (“cœur” [heart] and “beaux” [beautiful]). Both recordings create a rather bleak affect, reflecting his comment that the song is “discouraging.”
Because his diction does not result in a pronounced *rubato*, Hahn’s two recordings are the fastest of the group (Table 3.1). Blyth believes that this pace is an aesthetic choice: “Hahn’s dry, evocative baritone runs through the song rather more quickly than one would expect; I cannot make up my mind whether that is because he wants it to be heard as a single, trancelike supplication to the loved one with many phrases taken in a single breath, or whether his frail voice simply could not sustain it at a slower pace. I incline to the former view.”\(^{139}\) Blyth’s comments refer to the 1909 recording; Hahn moves especially quickly through the first verse. He takes no extra time between the phrases leading into measure 7, and slightly rushes the dotted quarter note on the third beat of that measure. He reaches the end of the first verse at the 0:37 mark of the recording.

Maggie Teyte, however, reaches the end of the first verse at the 0:50 mark. She not only takes a slower tempo than Hahn, but she uses a great deal more *rubato*, which slows her down especially between measures 6 and 7 and also measures 8 and 9. But the sharpest contrast lies in the breath choices. Teyte sings “Voici des fruits, des fleurs” and then takes a breath before “des feuilles.” It is startling to hear the list broken up in this way: not observing the first rest, but executing the second rest. She also breathes before “Et puis” and after “cœur,” which is contrary to the score. Perhaps the oddest choice she makes is to breathe after “pas” in measure 7. Because she takes the breath, she cannot make the liaison between “pas” and “avec.” However, she is not breaking Hahn’s

\(^{139}\) Alan Blyth, *Song on Record 2* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 52.
grammatical rule about breathing between a verb and its object; the strangeness lies in the fact that it is not a place one would breathe if simply speaking the sentence.

Because Teyte takes breaths contrary to the breath markings in the score, she also ends up changing the rhythm. Her entrance is another strange moment: she holds the first syllable of “voici” and then rushes the second two eighth notes, effectively singing a dotted eighth note followed by two sixteenth notes instead of the even eighth notes in the score. She also indulges in quite a bit of portamento: between the two syllables of “branches” in measure 4, between the syllables of “Avec” in measure 8, and between “si beaux” in measure 9. There is even a slight portamento from “présent” to “soit” in measure 10. The use of portamento does not necessarily make the delivery of the text unclear, but it adds a layer to her interpretation. If one prefers a simpler interpretation, Teyte’s performance seems too fussy.

Jane Bathori was in her fifties when she finally turned to recording in 1928, and her sound is therefore mature. Blyth complains that Bathori overuses rubato, but is ultimately won over by precise diction and overall sensibility, concluding that in her performance of the final phrase “the whole era of great interpretation seems to be summarized.”140 Her approach to the first verse lies somewhere between Hahn’s nonchalant performance and Teyte’s idiosyncratic one. She uses some portamento on the word “branches” in measure 4, but does not use it again for the rest of the verse. She is also flexible with the rhythm but not as free as Teyte, and she follows the slurring of the phrases except for measure 5 when she chooses the breathe between “cœur” and “qui” instead of before “voici.” Both Teyte and Bathori create a slight accelerando in measure

140 Ibid., 52.
4, reaching the word “branches” with a feeling of excitement. Bathori’s emphasis is clearly on text and rhythm and although by this time in her life she had sung a great deal, the clarity is still present. Teyte and Bathori both offer a hopeful and positive interpretation of the situation, which is in contrast to Hahn’s recordings, particularly the second one in 1919.

Martyn Hill’s approach differs from these earlier recordings in his use of sound. For the opening phrase, he elucidates the listed nouns with a slight swell of dynamic, effectively executing a small *messa di voce* on each word. This approach elucidates the rhetoric of the list with dynamics instead of the consonants or with a breath. He continues to execute this swell on words with tenuto markings, such as “cœur” in measure 5 and “bat” in measure 6. He also allows a significant *decrescendo* on longer notes, such as the dotted half note on the first beat of measure 10, which is the second syllable of “présent.” None of the earlier recordings offer such obvious swells in dynamics or marked decrescendos on long notes.

Susan Graham manipulates dynamics in a similar way during her performance, particularly on the word “branches” in measure four. She also uses an Italianate rolled ‘r’ for the all of the ‘r’s in the first six measures, observing all the rests in the first phrase; even the comma in measure 4 is treated with a slight lift in the voice, not an actual breath. In this regard, she observes punctuation with her breaths, reminiscent of Samson’s instruction as recounted in Legouvé’s *L’Art de la lecture*. She takes some time between measures 6 and 7, unlike Hahn, who moves briskly on to the plea “Ne le déchirez pas avec vos deux mains blanches.” Hahn’s approach to that phrase captures the feeling of discouragement he describes: this plea is more urgent than Graham’s because he does not
hold back the tempo. In contrast, Graham mutes all of the consonants and achieves a creamy legato. Her relaxed tempo and blunted consonants create an unhurried feeling; her performance does not have Hahn’s bleak outlook on the situation or the latent excitement in Teyte’s or Bathori’s performance.

As a countertenor, Philippe Jaroussky offers a different vocal color for this music: the high tessitura of the voice, combined with his rhythmic fidelity and almost vibrato-less approach, creates an impression of simplicity and purity. He only allows vibrato to appear on the weak endings of words, such as the second syllable of “blanches” in measure 8, or for notes of longer length, such as the first syllable of “branches” in measure 4 or the word “vous” in measure 8. He also never uses portamento. Like Martyn Hill, he sometimes allows a slight swell to occur on longer notes, such as on “fruits” and “fleurs” in measure three, but the effect is not as strong as in Hill’s performance. When Jaroussky employs rubato, which is also seldom, it is slight and barely detectable. Jaroussky does take breaths during the rests at measure three, delineating the list, but then sings from “des feuilles” all the way to the end of measure six. He also sings through from the beginning of measure 9 all the way through measure 11. However, because of his steady tempo, the eighth notes sound plodding at times, instead of having the parlando quality that Hahn achieves in both of his recordings. The overall affect of the performance is a gentle and steady rocking feeling, evoking a lullaby.

Details of diction will be discussed in Chapter 4, but it is necessary to point out here that Hahn would certainly not approve of Jaroussky’s constant use of the uvular “r,” but Jaroussky makes it clear that this was a conscious choice: “I have deliberately chosen a pronunciation that corresponds as closely as possible to the way in which the words are
pronounced today in normal speech, so that they resonate as naturally as possible in the imagination of the listener, and I have tried to avoid any affectation or ‘over-interpretation.’”

Jaroussky’s reference to “over-interpretation” is interesting to consider through the lens of Hahn’s lecture. Hahn’s detailed look at where and how a singer might breathe is inextricably bound up in interpretation. As a result, his performances of “Le parfum impérissable” and “Offrande” are different from more modern recordings (as are Teyte’s and Bathori’s). His special rule about never breathing between a verb and its object overrides natural musical gestures, such as cadences, and technical concerns.

As the twentieth century progressed, pedagogical advice regarding performance of the French mélodie came to prioritize restraint. In her overview of French performance practice, Martha Elliott cites Bernac’s admonishment that emotions should be “controlled by reason,” adding that Poulenc also “cautions singers not to overdo the dramatic emotions of his songs” in his treatise Diary of My Songs. However, the reaction that performers had during Hahn’s time to the overly-expressive Italian School did not preclude the presence of personal style. Both Teyte and Bathori prioritize the poetry but make choices, particularly in where to breathe, based on their own technical and aesthetic choices. They were creating the new French tradition, not inheriting it, and Gerard Souzay sums up the dilemma well: “To be an interpreter is fundamentally a paradoxical

143 Martha Elliott, Singing in Style (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 201.
situation…you place yourself at the composer’s service without giving up your identity. Both creator and performer must be reflected in an interpretation. If one of the two is missing, everything is lost.”

As the modern performers Hill, Graham, and Jaroussky attempt to be faithful to the tradition of French *mélodie* and to Hahn’s score, they end up producing performances that differ in affect from the early recordings. They take fewer liberties with rhythm and breath, and to some degree they all manipulate sound rather than text. The result is typically a warmer, more *legato* presentation of the song than the early recordings. The early recordings feature more idiosyncratic performances, full of surprising choices.

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Reynaldo Hahn’s third lecture delves into the topic of diction, and he begins with two anecdotes that address issues of authenticity and naturalness in performance. First, he compares the work of a ventriloquist and a singer, noting that both performers must use their voices in precise ways in order to achieve a particular effect. However, a ventriloquist must produce two voices, one for himself and one for his dummy. He must convince the audience that two different people are speaking to one another, although both voices emanate from his own larynx. Hahn pointedly asserts that singers should not use this approach. For Hahn, the act of singing requires the same physical approach as normal speech. The former, split mindset creates an unnatural quality: “These singers have a speaking voice and a singing voice. Nothing is more absurd.”145

When he comes across a singer who has adopted this mistaken idea, he cannot recognize that the singing he hears comes from the same person who just spoke quite naturally; he instinctively wants to “look under the furniture”146 to find to source of the sound. He finds the singing not only disappointing, but also discomfiting: “Often the voice is lovely, but it has an artificial – and I would even say enameled or sterilized – quality, and that is alarming.”147

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146 “Instinctivement, on cherche sous les meubles...” Ibid.
147 “Souvent, la voix est jolie, mais elle a quelque chose d’artificiel et je dirai d’émaillé, de stérilisé qui fait peur.” Ibid., 74.
Hahn immediately follows this story with another about the artist Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres. An art collector finds a drawing for sale signed with Ingres’ name, buys it, and then shows his purchase to the master himself. Ingres, annoyed that the collector could believe a painting so lifeless had been created by him, proceeds to alter slightly a few lines and contours to prove that he would have done it differently: “As he made these modifications—a sort of tracing that did not deviate much from the drawing itself—the drawing took on extraordinary life, extraordinary truth.”

Hahn then explains that his purpose in relating these two scenarios is to demonstrate that art often comes to life through subtle details. Hahn feels that, in the case of a singer, these nuances are achieved through good diction, and these nuances demonstrate the difference between a singer who simply sounds nice and a singer who truly communicates music and poetry to an audience. In the second story, Ingres does not change the drawing significantly, but his alterations result in a profoundly different impact for the viewer. Hahn insists that the singer of the initial story must make a similarly small change: “And indeed! It is just this small difference that exists between singing and the same singing with the same intentions and style, but based on that which I will call, after M. Jean de Reszke, “the spoken voice.” It becomes clear that Hahn’s approach to diction hinges on this idea of “the spoken voice.”

The singer in the first story does not base his singing on this “spoken voice” and that is why the singing does not sound “natural.” According to Hahn, a “natural” sound is

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148 “A mesure qu’il opérait ces modifications, —une sorte de calque qui ne différait guère du dessin lui-même, —le dessin prenait une vie, une vérité extraordinaires.” Ibid., 75.

149 “Eh bien! c’est cette petite différence-là qui existe entre le chant… chanté et le même chant avec les mêmes intentions et le même style, mais assimilé à ce que j’appellerai, après M. Jean de Reszké, la ‘voix parlée.’” Ibid.
intertwined with diction: “Naturalness of timbre is the most important characteristic of diction.” The only way to achieve this natural timbre (and therefore the best diction) is through building it into vocal technique itself: “But I only know one way to give the impression of being natural: that is to be natural. One must impose no effort on the organs, nor deform their shape through habitually holding them always in a certain position, which has the double disadvantage of inviting tension and giving every sung tone the same character.”

Through these opening anecdotes and his description of “natural” singing, Hahn leads his listeners to this conclusion: only through clear diction can a singer communicate all the colors and emotions of the music – but this diction must be established on a natural foundation of speech. Hahn is not alone in this idea: many voice teachers and treatises of the time advocated some form of this approach. In 1883, two men, a vocal surgeon and a vocal instructor, Lennox Browne and Emil Behnke, respectively, published the collaborative work *Voice, song and speech: a practical guide for singers and speakers*. The book quickly became well known and went through 22 editions; according to Brent Monahan, it is “perhaps the most widely circulated and oft-quoted vocal work of the nineteenth century.”

Browne and Behnke reflect Hahn’s insistence on the connection between speech and singing: “It is not possible to draw a clear line between

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150 “Le naturel du timbre est la première condition de la diction.” Ibid.
151 “Mais, pour donner l’impression du naturel, je ne connais qu’un moyen: c’est d’être naturel; c’est de n’imposer aucun effort aux organes, de ne pas déformer leur contexture par l’habitude d’une certaine position, toujours la même et qui a le double inconvénient d’amener de la contraction et de donner à tout ce qu’on chante un caractère uniforme.” Ibid.
singing and speaking, as both are actions of the same organs. There must be speech in
song, or it would lose all the charm attached to the distinct rendering of the words. There
must also be a certain amount of song in speech, or it would soon become unbearable by
its dreariness and monotony.  

Nineteenth-century baritone and vocal pedagogue Jean-Baptiste Faure (to whom
Hahn refers later in the lecture) also recognizes the role of speech in vocal training. In his
1886 treatise, *La voix et le chant*, he advises the following study technique: “You must
read aloud, and in fragments, the text of the piece that you want to perform. Then
immediately repeat it while singing, in a manner that reproduces with the greatest
scrupulousness all of the sonorities of the spoken voice.”

Therefore, Hahn is not an outlier in this regard, and he is well-acquainted with the
vocal pedagogues and treatises that also advocate for this close relationship between
speech and singing. However, his concept of diction is bound up in both expression and
the fundamental precepts of singing. Ultimately, he connects diction to two aspects of
vocal technique: registers and the “coup de la glotte,” or the glottal stroke.

**Defining diction**

Modern diction textbooks emphasize the need for precision in enunciating text
while studying diction. For example, John Moriarty opens his well-known textbook

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153 Lennox Browne and Emil Behnke, *Voice, song and speech: a practical guide for
154 “Il faut d’abord lire à haute voix, et par fragments, le texte du morceau qu’on doit
interpréter, puis le reprendre immédiatement en chantant, afin de reproduire avec la
fidélité la plus scrupuleuse toutes les sonorités de la voix parlée.” Jean-Baptiste Faure, *La
Diction (1975) with the following statement: “All singers must study diction. But American singers, because their speech tends to be quite imprecise, in particular need to make a thorough study of phonetics and diction.”

Joan Wall’s more recent textbook Diction for Singers (2012) also highlights precision, aligning it with expression:

It is possible to confuse good diction with affected speech. . . . However, precise articulation is imperative for the artistry of your performance. The words form the framework for the music and communicate the emotions and thoughts of your songs and arias. . . . Precise diction, rather than being artificial, actually forms the springboard from which you can project your artistry outward toward your audience.

Hahn also acknowledges the precise physical coordination needed for effective diction, but he immediately places its role within a broader context and attaches it to expression:

Diction consists of many things, of which I will list the most important: it consists of greater or lesser speed [and] the correct management of time between each word, between each part of a phrase, and between each phrase. Diction punctuates and gives the voice the nuances of strength or sweetness; it provides its sound and movement with shadings either subtle or obvious. Diction is to the word what the glance is to the eyes; it gives life to speech, it breathes ideas and emotion into the framework of language.

In fact, Hahn goes on to explain that the text is the only thing that can make a performance interesting. If the voice demonstrates insufficient interaction with the text, the singing is without true substance or character:

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156 Joan Wall et al., Diction for Singers (Redmond, WA: Diction for Singers.com [Celumbra], 2012), 6.
157 “La diction consiste en bien des choses, dont je ne vous énumère que les principales;—elle consiste dans la rapidité plus ou moins grande, dans la juste distribution du temps entre chaque mot, entre chaque membre de phrase, entre chaque phrase; c’est elle qui ponctue, qui imprime à la voix des nuances de force ou de douceur, au son et au mouvement des gradations imperceptibles ou violentes. La diction est à la parole ce que le regard est aux yeux; elle donne la vie au discours, elle met dans l’armature du verbe la circulation de l’idée, du sentiment.” Hahn, Du Chant, 79.
[The voice] is detached from the text and remains separate; it works in parallel to it and is not filled up with it. It does not collaborate with the words and I say further that, through a very curious and beautiful mystery, this song lacks precisely the supreme beauty of sound which is nuance and variety. Because it is not animated by the word, not directed by, subjugated by, or controlled by the text, this song is monotonous. It is always the same color, clear or dark, brilliant or dull, and it does not reflect the multiple successive harmonious shades of color, without which singing is a dead thing.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, 78–79.}

In Hahn’s view, the text even has priority over the voice – the voice is “subjugated by” and “controlled by the word.” Baritone and pedagogue Pierre Bernac, writing almost sixty years later, gives the text equal priority as the music, but not supremacy over it. He compares singing to the legato line of instrumentalists, who rely on the example of the voice for expression:

If, then, the obvious model for the instrumentalist is the human voice, and if he constantly derives from it a lesson for his ‘cantabile,’ it goes to prove that the finest quality of singing is its legato, its phrasing, its human rhythm. \textit{Thus it is the musical line, above all, that the singer must serve and respect}. There can be no question of sacrificing it for the benefit of the words.\footnote{Pierre Bernac, \textit{The Interpretation of French Song} (London: Cassell & Co, 1970), 4.}

A twentieth-century pedagogue and scholar, Richard Miller, also looked at the relationship of text and music in French \textit{mélodie}. He published his study of national singing schools in 1977, seven years after the release of Bernac’s book, and revised it in 1997. While acknowledging that Bernac is an “eminent authority on the proper
interpretation of the French mélodie,” Miller insists that the history of French music and singing does not correspond to Bernac’s view of the collaboration of text and music. One must take this history into account when confronting both French music and French singing, he argues, because “French pedagogical orientation can be understood only when viewed as part of a total cultural attitude among the French toward the merit of the spoken language. The character of the vocal literature of the French School serves to underscore both literary and linguistic heritages.” The divergent purposes of the two studies explain this disparity: Bernac is trying to influence contemporary singers and pedagogues, while Miller is explaining the state of French vocal pedagogy and performance practice as he sees it.

Where does Hahn fit in with these twentieth-century discussions of diction? Katherine Bergeron agrees with Miller that the problem of diction in French song is more than mere pronunciation, and she describes it this way:

In French, though, the concept of diction is more comprehensive. It implies the condition of a text as it makes contact with a voice, a condition that yields two poetic possibilities: the emergence and the evanescence of the articulate word, or its “vibratory disappearance,” to recall Mallarmé’s apt phrase. The verb dire in Old French meant both “to sing” and “to say,” and something of that doubling persists in modern usage. Like a slash separating the two speech acts, the verb embodies the difference between them, the friction between vocalise and articulate language.

Bergeron’s explanation reflects and further elucidates Hahn’s remark, particularly in her reference to the tangible feeling of “contact.” In his conclusion of this lecture,

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160 Richard Miller, National Schools of Singing: English, French, German, and Italian Techniques of Singing Revisited (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1997), 178.
Hahn makes a similar point: “What is support? Support is the contact of breath and sound, and whether it is obvious or barely discernible, it is always exact and strong.”

Both Bergeron and Hahn describe the connection point of text and voice as the crux of the matter. The intersection of words and sound is not simply a theoretical or intellectual argument, but a physicality which is the basis for good vocal technique. Therefore, the concept of “diction” is not related only to clear and accurate pronunciation of language, but the foundation of singing itself.

As Richard Miller points out, Hahn is also speaking during a period of appreciation of the spoken sound of French, which was discussed in Chapter Two of this dissertation. Rather than making the execution of text separate from the skill of singing a melody, as Bernac does, Hahn firmly combines the two issues: “Singing and diction are inseparable, and this is what I will try to demonstrate to you today.”

Vowel Modification

At this point in his lecture, Hahn spends some time on what we would today call “vowel modification.” He acknowledges that as a melodic line ascends, it is more difficult for a singer to rely on the “spoken voice,” and he asserts that “we must forcibly transform the vowels.” Closed vowels in particular often impede free phonation and resonance at higher frequencies. Hahn turns to an aria from Gluck’s opera Orphée as an example. In the first phrase of this aria, “Ombre heureuse” (“Happy shade”), the soprano

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162 “Qu’est-ce que l’appui? L’appui, c’est le contact accusé, ou à peine appréciable, mais toujours exact et ferme, du souffle et du son.” Hahn, Du Chant, 96.
163 “Le chant et la diction sont inséparables, et c’est ce que je vais tâcher de vous démontrer aujourd’hui.” Ibid., 81.
164 “nous sommes obligés de faire subir aux voyelles” Hahn, Du Chant, 82.
must sing from E4 up an F Major scale to A5, with the word “habité” on F5, G5, A5 (see Ex. 4.1). Hahn observes: “In a laudable desire to pronounce well, unskilled female singers make laborious efforts on these two las [note A5]; the i and the é are purely enunciated, and the b and the t are correct, but the voice is strangulated and the sound is shrill and poorly supported.” On the other hand, he says, singers who try to correct this situation often sing the final two vowels of the word as simply open a, which Hahn also objects to.


The solution, Hahn says, lies in tweaking the vowel a bit: “By combining a little u with the i and a little eu with the é, one is able to give the impression of perfect pronunciation while protecting the health of the sound.” The published lecture makes note of the fact that Hahn then proceeded to sing the entire aria, accompanying himself, employing the vowel modifications that he had just explained. (The journal also

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165 “Le louable souci de bien prononcer fait faire aux chanteuses peu habiles des efforts pénibles sur ces deux la; l’i et l’é sont purement énoncés, le b et le t sont corrects, mais la voix est étranglée, le son grèle et avare.” Ibid., 83.
166 “C’est en mêlant à l’i un peu d’u et à l’é un peu d’eu, qu’on peut arriver à donner l’impression d’une prononciation parfaite tout en sauvegardant la plénitude du son.” Ibid., 83
167 “After these explanations, M. Reynaldo Hahn, sitting at the piano himself, sings, as he knows how to sing, the aria from Orphée. It is both a delight and an admirable lesson.” [“Après ces explications, M. Reynaldo Hahn, se mettant au piano, chante, comme il sait chanter, l’air d’Orphée. C’est un délice en même temps qu’une admirable
printed the entire text of the aria, which is omitted in the 1920 and 1990 published editions of the lectures.)

Today, the relationship between frequencies of vowel formants and the formation of vowels is well-understood through voice science\textsuperscript{168}, and a comprehensive discussion of the issue lies outside the scope of this dissertation. However, Hahn’s comments reflect the fact that singers have long employed some form of modification of vowels on high pitches based on experience. Manuel Garcia observes that, for high notes, “the alteration of the vowel in certain syllables is a convenient resource,”\textsuperscript{169} while Lilli Lehmann only allows for the “least possible perceptible modifications.”\textsuperscript{170} While it may be a matter of degree, it is commonplace for voice teachers to incorporate the idea of vowel modification into their pedagogy, just as Hahn describes.

In the most general sense, voice students learn to lower the jaw as the melody ascends, a posture that accommodates open vowels, such as [a] and [o], while making closed vowels more difficult to pronounce distinctly. Accordingly, Hahn remarks on a singer’s approach to the closed vowels in the second and third syllables of the word “habité” (IPA: [a bi ’te]). Instead of accommodating the high notes by completely dropping the jaw and allowing the vowel to relax completely into an [a] shape, he suggests a more subtle change in the shape of the mouth, incorporating the mixed vowels

“u” (which is [y] in IPA, or the German “ü”) and “eu” (which is [ø] in IPA). These vowels require the singer to pull the lips forward and into a rounded position; while the jaw may lower, it will not lower as much as it would to create more open vowels.

Hahn also points out that “it is by no means necessary to grimace with your mouth in order to articulate well.”171 This remark, as well as his description of vowel modification, reflects the French preoccupation with the appearance of ease while still producing good diction. A 1914 handbook on pronunciation by linguist Maurice Grammont172 opens with a comparison of French pronunciation with other languages. The Germans in particular, he says, demonstrate a great deal of effort in cheeks, lips, and jaws while speaking. This contrasts with the ideal French diction: “In French the work of diction takes place almost entirely within the mouth, and it is intense; the muscles are excessively taut. But almost nothing is apparent on the outside: the cheeks hardly move, the lips are only half open, the face remains calm—and all of this contributes to the supreme elegance of French diction.”173 Similarly, Hahn’s recommendations for vowel modification for the Gluck aria call for a greater manipulation of the inside of the mouth, rather than large changes to the facial muscles.

171 “[qu’il n’est nullement nécessaire, pour articuler, de grimacer avec la bouche.” Hahn, *Du Chant*, 84.
172 Maurice Grammont (1866–1946) was a French linguist. He studied in Paris with Michel Bréal (considered one of the founders of modern field of semantics) and Ferdinand de Saussure (founder of field of semiotics). He taught at the Faculty of Letters of Dijon (known today as Université de Bourgogne) and the Faculty of Letters of Montpellier (known today as Université de Montpellier).
173 “En français le travail s’accomplit presque entièrement à l’intérieur, et il y est intense, les muscles étant tendus à outrance; mais presque rien n’en apparaît au dehors, les joues sont presque immobiles, les lèvres ne font que s’entr’ouvrir, le visage reste calme, et tout cela contribue à la suprême élégance de la diction française.” Maurice Grammont, *Traité pratique de prononciation française* (Paris: Librairie Delagrave, 1934), 5.
Grammont’s description of this ideal of outer calm aligns with Hahn’s description of vowel modification, but also helps clarify the curious anecdote with which Hahn ends this section of his lecture. Hahn says that he knows he has some bad habits as a singer, but decides to pay himself this compliment:

My friends are surprised that I am able to sing with a cigarette in my mouth, while smoking. . . . But if I am able to keep it in my mouth without dropping it, that is because I barely move my lips while singing…And this is the compliment that I pay to myself. In order to articulate clearly, it is not necessary to move the lips constantly and impose strange forms on the mouth. First, this motion gives the singing an uncontrolled quality; furthermore, when there are many words to be pronounced, the spectacle becomes grotesque.¹⁷⁴

Upon consideration, this description of singing while smoking seems rather bizarre. After all, to produce a rounded [u] or [o] vowel, the lips must be pushed forward at least a little, which would surely result in the cigarette dropping from the mouth. As Lilli Lehmann explains in her book:

Of special importance for the tone and the word are the movements of the lips, which are so widely different in the bright and dark vowels. . . . Every vowel, every word, every tone, can be colored as by magic in all sorts of ways by the well-controlled play of the lips; can, as it were, be imbued with life, as the lips open or close more or less in different positions. The lips are the final cup-shaped resonators [Schallbecher] through which the tone has to pass.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ “Mes amis s’étonnent souvent que je puisse chanter une cigarette à la bouche, tout en fumant. . . . Mais si je peux la garder dans la bouche sans qu’elle tombe, c’est que je ne remue guère les lèvres en chantant…Et voilà le compliment que je m’adresse. Pour articuler clairement, il n’est pas nécessaire de remuer sans cesse les lèvres et d’imposer à sa bouche des formes étranges. D’abord, cela donne au chant quelque chose de saccadé et, en outre, pour peu qu’on ait beaucoup de paroles à prononcer en un court espace de temps, le spectacle devient grotesque.” Hahn, Du Chant, 84–85.
Lehmann, whom Hahn greatly admired, has a different idea about the role of the lips in diction than Hahn does. While Hahn congratulates himself on “barely moving” his lips, Lehmann advocates for constant shaping with the lips during singing. She calls the lips “Schallbecher”: “Schall” is the German word for “sound” or “tone,” while “Becher” is “beaker” or “cup.” This term also implies a lip shape incompatible, at least some of the time, with Hahn’s description of singing with a cigarette in his mouth.

It is worth considering that Hahn frequently sang in the intimate venue of a salon, which requires less projection. Based on the recordings we have of Hahn’s singing, we can also conclude that he chose to sing mélodie, selections from operetta, and popular songs, which call for a smaller vocal range than the arias of opera and oratorio. The fact that he sang in a room that required less projection than a large concert hall, and that his repertoire consisted of music with moderate technical demands, may have contributed to the possibility for him to sing with the cigarette.

Hahn’s predilection for playing, singing, and smoking has been captured in memoirs and several sketches from the era. There is even evidence in the pages of Proust’s early novel Jean Santeuil that Hahn did indeed perform this way. Scholars agree that the character of the Marquis de Poitiers is modeled on Hahn;[^176] when Proust began writing Jean Santeuil in 1896, the two men were romantically involved and vacationing in Brittany. This scene evokes one of Hahn’s performances during a dinner party:

When dinner was finished and most of those present sat smoking with their half empty brandy glasses before them, Poitiers took his cigarette and glass over to the

[^176]: “Not only can one detect in the description of the Marquis de Poitiers Reynaldo’s unique manner of simultaneously singing, smoking, and playing the piano, but also the name and initials of Jean’s friend Henri de Rêveillon allude directly to Hahn.” Herbert E. Craig, *Marcel Proust and Spanish America: From Critical Response to Narrative Dialogue* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2002), 14.
piano, and began singing everything that Jean asked of him. The various accompaniments, some soft, some loud, rippled easily under his fingers: he had a charming voice and kept his cigarette in the corner of his mouth all the time he was singing, while his head moved with a sort of nervous twitch, though normally he was a somewhat lymphatic young man. Every word of the songs and musical-comedy numbers with which he entertained them, was clearly audible.\textsuperscript{177}

Therefore, we must accept the veracity of Hahn’s statement about his ability to sing with a cigarette constantly in his mouth and, more importantly, that he believes that this accomplishment proves that his diction is good. (Proust’s description also notes that every word could be understood). While other voice teachers likely did not recommend singing with a cigarette in place, Hahn is actually not alone regarding his insistence on relaxed lips. Louis Arthur Russell,\textsuperscript{178} an American organist, pianist, and voice teacher, also aligns with Hahn rather than Lehmann on this topic:

Among the many errors of teaching which have so long stood in the way of singers’ advancement in art is the thought that correct vowel making is a matter of lip shaping. . . . [Vowels are] made in the mouth behind the lips, and practically by the mid and back tongue, the lips have nothing to do with vowel color, although some vowels find their focus at the lips. Every shade of vowel color can be readily made and should always be made without the interference of the lips.\textsuperscript{179}


\textsuperscript{178} Louis Arthur Russell (1854–1925) was an American organist, pianist, and voice teacher who studied in London with William Shakespeare and George Henschel. He published a popular book on English diction in 1905 and his treatise, \textit{The Commonplaces of Vocal Art}, was published in 1907, with a second edition appearing in 1912. He founded the Newark College of Music in 1885 and the Newark Symphony Orchestra in 1893.

\textsuperscript{179} Louis Arthur Russell, \textit{The Commonplaces of Vocal Art: A Plain Statement of the Philosophy of Singing} (Boston: Oliver Ditson Co., 1912), 32. Available online at Hathi
Therefore, while Hahn’s anecdote may be unique, there was clearly a variety of approaches to this issue, just as there is today. While a modern-day singer may choose not to emulate Hahn completely, he or she may glean some insight into the priorities of this era of singing through this story, as Bergeron explains: “Yet the little vice concealed a greater virtue. To keep the cigarette in one’s mouth—even in the midst of performance—showed a certain mastery of diction: it proved that Hahn barely moved his lips. All the real work took place, as Grammont himself asserted, à l’intérieur.”

**Vocal Registers**

At the mid-point of his lecture, Hahn veers away from the topic of diction, at least as a modern singer would think of it, and delves directly into deep waters of vocal technique: the issue of vocal registers. After all, he says, if we acknowledge that diction is incorporated into basic vocal technique, we must therefore consider how the voice is produced at the physical level.

He acknowledges the confusion surrounding the concept of “registers” in the voice: “How many registers do we have? If you want to know, you should not read the singing method books, because they are not in agreement on this issue.” As always, Hahn is well-read on the topic, but he declines to spend much time discussing the various

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181 “Combien avons-nous de registres? Si vous voulez le savoir, gardez-vous de lire des méthodes de chant, car elles ne s’accordent guère sur ce point.” Hahn, *Du Chant*, 85.
treatises, mentioning only that García (among others) declares that there are three,\textsuperscript{182} while Faure asserts that there are two.\textsuperscript{183} He states that he has even read a book that describes five registers. Hahn declines to dwell longer on the subject, concluding:

I hardly dare to give my personal advice on this question; but, after all, why not, since it is corroborated by Madame Lilli Lehmann? I believe, as she does, that there are not actually different registers in the voice. It seems to me that each note, each sound, requires a different position from all the organs from the base of the lungs and the diaphragm up into the muscles of the head, always passing through the other labyrinths of sound. It is not possible to assign one exact place, always the same, to a group of several notes.\textsuperscript{184}

And with that extraordinary—and extraordinarily short—explanation, Hahn moves on. But it is worth pausing here to examine his remark. To a modern singer who has carefully read Richard Miller’s and William Vennard’s work\textsuperscript{185}—both of which spend a great deal of time describing the various registers—not to mention countless recent books steeped in voice science, Hahn seems to be dismissing a fundamental truth of singing. However, his idea is clearly rooted in the European tradition of vocal training which focusses on a practical approach.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{183} Jean-Baptiste Faure, \textit{La voix et le chant} (Paris: Heugel, 1886), 32–42.
  \item \textsuperscript{184} “J’ose à peine donner mon avis personnel sur cette question; mais, après tout, pourquoi pas, puisqu’il se trouve corroboré par Mme Lilli Lehmann? Je crois, comme elle, qu’il n’y a pas, en réalité, différents registres dans la voix…il me semble que chaque note, chaque son, exigeant une position différente de tous les organes depuis la base des poumons et du diaphragme jusqu’aux muscles du front, — en passant par tous les autres labyrinthes du son, — on ne peut assigner une place exacte, et toujours la même, à un ensemble de plusieurs notes.” Hahn, \textit{Du Chant}, 86–87.
\end{itemize}
First, Hahn’s assertion regarding disagreement among treatises is correct. In his presentation to the Académie des sciences de Paris in 1840, Manuel García described essentially two registers, chest and head, but the head register can also be divided into falsetto and head. (Confusingly, García refers to the middle register as “falsetto”). In 1861, he published a small, 18-page tract titled *Observations physiologiques sur la voix humaine*, which is based on a lecture he gave in 1855 to the Royal College of Surgeons of England. In this tract, he further divides chest and head registers, resulting in five discernable registers. Emma Seiler, who studied acoustics with Hermann Helmholtz, further clarifies the five-register theory in an 1868 treatise, which seeks to combine García’s theories of vocal technique with Helmholtz’s acoustic observations. It is possible that Hahn is referring to Seiler’s work when he mentions the book that describes five registers. Brent Monahan explains that the majority of the treatises he surveyed espouse the three-register theory, as does Francesco Lamperti, who, together with García, was the preeminent nineteenth century vocal pedagogue. However, there were clearly no shortage of theories. James Stark sums up the state of affairs in this way: “It is apparent that the late nineteenth century was awash with register theories, some of which

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188 Monahan surveys almost 100 treatises between 1777 and 1927 that specifically discuss vocal registers and concludes that 32 of them identify three registers (ten sources identify zero, seven identify one, eight identify two, twelve identify two for men and three for women, five identify four, and nineteen identify five). Monahan, *The Art of Singing*, 129.
were based on a mixture of traditional methods and fashionable but dimly understood scientific methods—they were, like the proverbial curate’s egg, ‘good in parts.’”¹⁸⁹

Secondly, Hahn claims that Lilli Lehmann agrees with him, and indeed she discusses registers in her book How to Sing. She acknowledges that there are three “ways of singing”: in chest, middle and head ranges. However, she takes issue with the conclusion that most people draw about these “ranges”:

> With all the bad habits of singers, with all the complete ignorance of cause and effect that prevail, it is not surprising that some pretend to tell us that there are two, three, four, or five registers. It will be much more correct to call every tone of every voice by the name of a new additional register, for in the end, every tone will and must be taken in a different relation, with a different position of the organs, although the difference may be imperceptible, if it is to have its proper place in the whole. People cling to the appellations of chest, middle, and head register, confounding vocal position with register, and making a hopeless confusion, from which only united and very powerful forces can succeed in extricating them.”¹⁹⁰

Like Hahn, Lehmann orients each sound to an often-imperceptible change in the organs of the body. Therefore, she feels that it is not logical to consider “registers” that dictate that a group of notes can require the same physiological position. Hahn knows that this view is not unheard-of (especially since a singer as renowned as Lehmann espouses it) but not truly mainstream; he prefaces his remark with an acknowledgement:

> “If there are singers or singing teachers in the audience and if I offend their ideas, I beg their pardon.”¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁰ Lehmann, How to Sing, 56.
¹⁹¹ “Si, dans l’auditoire, il se trouve des chanteurs ou des professeurs de chant, et si je froisse leurs idées, je leur en demande pardon.” Hahn, Du Chant, 86.
Whether a teacher advocates for theories of many or no registers within the voice, it is purely a pedagogical question, as voice science has made it clear that significant shifts must and do occur at the laryngeal level. A teacher adopts an approach that he or she feels best addresses the need to sing easily throughout the range, eliminating obvious shifts between registers. This student anecdote from a lesson with Manuel García sums up the issue well:

The subject of registers is avoided by Signor García. “There are no registers; or, if so, they should be drilled out of sight. There is but one voice; make it of the same quality throughout and you see no registers; therefore, you have none.” When, however, the certain changes which one discovers constantly in untrained voices are referred to, the master readily explains the mechanism which produces such changes of quality, but adds in a tone which ends all questioning: “Practice! Practice! Time will make the quality alike throughout the voice.”

Because Hahn is well-read on vocal matters, and often refers to the work of García and other well-known pedagogues, it is safe to assume that he does not mean to pretend that register shifts do not occur while singing. He also refers to a passage from Gounod’s Faust, which requires the soprano to sing from a C4 to B5, complaining that traversing this lower break often forces the singer to produce the sound of a “Tyrolean yodel.” Therefore, while he acknowledges the unwanted effects of the phenomenon, he wants singers to consider the healthiest approach to the entire range of singing, not only

192 Frank Herbert Tubbs, *The Voice: Devoted to the Human Voice in All Its Phases*, vol. 8, no. 1 (January 1886): 10. Tubbs was an American voice teacher who studied with García, Lamperti, and Shakespeare, among other European studios. *The Voice*, later known as *Werner’s Voice Magazine* and finally simply as *Werner’s Magazine*, was published monthly between 1879 and 1902 by Edgar Werner in Albany, NY. The publication was devoted to the subject of speech, but, until 1900, often included articles on singing as well. Tubbs also advertised for his New York City vocal studio in *The Voice.*

193 “une espèce de tyrolienne.” Hahn, *Du Chant*, 86.
those difficult moments. Focusing on an issue can often call unwanted attention to it; apparently, Manuel García “avoided” the topic of register breaks during his lessons, presumably for this reason. When he had to discuss the topic, he could explain it well, but his initial choice was to let the discipline of practice take care of the problem. Hahn is taking the role of pedagogue at this moment of his lecture, and he is following García’s example.

In his brief discussion of vocal registers, Hahn mentions the topic as a quick description of how the voice is set, and he moves on in his lecture. Richard Miller, however, concludes that inattention to vocal registers has led to a weakness in the vocal technique of the French School. Miller notes that, for French tenors and light baritones, the upper range of the voice is often mainly comprised of the falsetto technique. He compares this approach unfavorably to the Italian School:

Falsetto as a coloristic effect in the top voice is considered an indication of technical deficiency among teachers of the Italian School. . . . Were such a technique to become accepted practice (and such acceptability has become marked in the non-Italianate schools in the current decade), it could revolutionize the sound of the cultivated singing voice, much to the detriment of the vocal art. Failing to understand the mechanical practices of traditional vocal registration (and therefore unable to direct the student toward the legitimate upper voice), a number of pedagogues in the non-Italian schools seem increasingly to be persuaded that the “easy, effortless” falsetto upper voice is preferable to the time-consuming rigors of ironing out the techniques of passing into the fully resonated upper voice.194

Miller concludes that, according to his observations, the French ideal of “easy” and “effortless” production (as advocated by both Grammont and Hahn) has had a detrimental effect on technical instruction. However, Hahn acknowledges “time-

consuming rigors” in learning singing; he often notes that vocal training takes a great deal of time and discipline and he has certainly taken the time to study the work of his colleagues. His version of diction—which inexorably leads him to foundational technical concerns—stems from his approach to the French language and poetry. Hahn’s approach is also best suited to the context of the salon and to the particular form of the mélodie; Miller’s objections may reflect this approach having a poor effect in another style and venue. Furthermore, as we will see in the discussion of recordings, there are examples of French-trained baritones, both from Hahn’s era and the modern era, who have the ability to produce “fully resonated” upper ranges.

The Glottal Stroke

Hahn then proceeds to delve into another controversial topic in singing: the coupe de la glotte, or the glottal stroke. The glottis refers to the portion of the larynx containing the vocal cords and the opening between them, and the term “glottal stroke” refers to a method of “onset,” or the start of a vocal phrase, advocated by Manuel García. Hahn is well aware of the arguments surrounding this idea: “Ah, the glottal stroke! How much we have talked about it!”

When García began teaching at the Paris Conservatoire in 1840, he presented his theories on vocal technique to the Académie des sciences de Paris, and he published these theories in his treatise Traité complet de l’art du chant (1841), which was republished in an expanded version in 1847. In 1848, García moved to London, where he continued to refine his theories; his research was aided by the laryngoscope, which he first used to

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195 “[A]h! ce coup de glotte, en a-t-on assez parlé!” Hahn, Du Chant, 87.
view the action of the vocal cords in 1855. He published his final work, *Hints on Singing*, in 1894, in which he further clarified his views. Throughout his years of research, he never backed down from the fundamental ideas of the initial *Traité*, even in the face of controversy and misunderstandings of his theories, including the glottal stroke.

The technique of the glottal stroke is meant to provide a clean onset of a phrase. Phonation occurs when the vocal cords come together, closing the opening, and air passes through the cords. The cords achieve various pitches through the contraction and expansion of their length. García believed that the best way to begin a vocal phrase clearly is with a pre-phonatory closure of the glottis, achieved by firm pinching of the arytenoid cartilages which sit at the back of the larynx and are attached to the vocal cords. When the arytenoids are firmly closed together, the vocal cords are fully closed, or “adducted.” In his research, García observed that the firm closure of the arytenoids provided the deepest and fullest adduction of the cords, producing the most brilliant tone. Therefore, his theory of the stroke of the glottis rests on the position of the arytenoids: if they are firmly pinched together before phonation occurs, they can then remain in this position during the continuation of the tone, resulting in continual full adduction of the vocal cords and the best possible sound. In addition to producing the fullest tone, this approach was meant to be a cure for an aspirated, or “soft attack” (beginning a phrase with an “h”), as well as for sliding up and into a pitch, usually referred to as “scooping.”

This pre-phonatory closure of the glottis inevitably results in some sub-glottal pressure. García describes the technique in the second edition of his *Traité* in this way: “It is necessary to prepare the stroke of the glottis by closing it, which stops and momentarily accumulates some air in the passage; then, much as rupture operates as a
means of relaxation, one opens it with an incisive or vigorous stroke, similar to the action of the lips in pronouncing the consonant [p].”

In his book *Bel Canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy*, James Stark outlines and untangles the uproar that followed García’s presentation and published work. Many teachers felt that the technique was a harsh movement for the vocal cords and led to damage of the instrument. The French baritone Victor Maurel delivered a lecture in 1892 in London in which he argued against the use of the glottal stroke. Hahn himself notes Maurel’s opposition, as well as that of his beloved teacher Massenet and the opera impresario Henry Verdhurt.

Stark notes that opposition to García’s technique was strong in Paris at the end of the nineteenth century. However, he contends that any opposition to García’s technique is based on a misunderstanding: many teachers focused on the action of the onset, convinced that the “stroke” was unhealthy. However, not only did García intend the stroke to be mild and not harsh, the entire point of the action was to encourage firm

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198 Victor Maurel (1848–1923) was a French baritone who was trained at the Paris Conservatoire and sang in the opera houses of Paris, London, and New York. Verdi selected Maurel to sing the premieres of the roles of Iago in Otello (1887) and the title role of Falstaff (1893). After retiring from singing, Maurel taught in both Paris and New York.
199 Stark contributes this opposition to the influence of Louis Mandl (1812–1881). Mandl was a Hungarian physiologist who served on the faculty of the medical university in Pest, and published articles with the Société anatomique de Paris. Stark calls him an “influential consultant for the Paris Conservatoire” (Stark, *Bel Canto*, 16). Mandl’s most prominent work is *Hygiène de la voix* (Paris and London: J.B. Bailliére et Fils), 1876. Francesco Lamperti quotes Mandl extensively in his own treatise: *A Treatise on the Art of Singing* (New York: E. Schuberth), 1871. The aforementioned authors Lennox Browne and Emil Behnke were also advocates of Mandl’s work.
adduction of the cords throughout the phrase, not merely facilitate a harsh attack. Stark asserts that García often tried to make himself clear, but he unfortunately remained misunderstood: “Despite García’s attempts to describe it as firm glottal closure leading to firm phonation, it was most commonly interpreted as a glottal plosive, an initial burst of tone in which the vocal folds smacked together violently and then rebounded to allow a breathy tone.”\(^{200}\)

Hahn also feels that the technique is only maligned because it is misunderstood, but for different reasons than Stark offers. Hahn seems to feel that the technique is simply overused, and he explains that the glottal stroke should not begin *every* note or even every phrase. Moreover, he contends that it is almost impossible to use it before a consonant. Hahn bolsters his view by asserting that both Lilli Lehmann and Jean-Baptiste Faure are advocates for the glottal stroke.

Hahn admits that Lehmann does not specifically recommend the glottal stroke but “implicitly recommends it through her descriptions of the proper approach to the emission of sound.”\(^{201}\) It is difficult to pinpoint the exact passage in Lehmann’s book to which Hahn refers (perhaps he was even referring to a conversation he had with her), but it could be this passage in a chapter on breath:

> The vocal cords, which we can best imagine as inner lips, we do not feel. We first become conscious of them through the controlling apparatus of the breath, which teaches us to spare them, by emitting breath through them in the least possible quantity and of even pressure, thereby producing a steady tone. I even maintain that all is won if we regard them directly as breath regulators, and relieve them of all overwork through the controlling apparatus of the chest-muscle tension.\(^{202}\)


\(^{201}\) “le conseille implicitement par les descriptions qu’elle fait de la manière dont un son doit être émis.” Hahn, *Du Chant*, 87.

When Lehmann says we can become aware of the vocal cords through breath activity, she may be referring to the tangible feeling of the glottal stroke. There are few other motions that allow a person to truly feel the action of the cords coming together. Furthermore, she refers to the cords as “breath regulators,” which could also allude to the close relationship of the flow of air with the adduction of the cords. If the flow of air is steady following the glottal stroke, the adduction can remain firm for the duration of the phrase, which is the entire point of García’s technique.

Hahn is correct that Jean-Baptiste Faure explicitly advocates for the glottal stroke in his treatise, *La voix et le chant*. He seems to acknowledge some of the opposition to the idea in his reminder that the attack should not be too harsh:

> The glottal stroke is to the voice what the stroke of the finger is to the piano; depending on the force or the lightness of the touch, the sound is more intense or weaker, but the attack is no less instantaneous. Just as the *pizzicato* of the violin or cello must be created by scratching the string, not with the fingernail but with the pad of the finger, the glottal stroke must be done directly, but without an abruptness that can offend or harm the vocal cords. An exaggerated attack can introduce dryness and tightness to the sound.²⁰³

Having established that the glottal stroke is an indispensable, if often misunderstood, technique, Hahn offers an example of its use in an aria from *Amadis* by Lully, “Amour, que veux-tu de moi?” (“Love, what do you want of me?”). The character Arcabonne, a magician, is wrestling with her first experience of love, and she calls out to Love three times with the question “Amour, que veux-tu de moi?” (Ex. 4.2). For the first

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²⁰³ “Le coup de glotte est pour la voix ce qu’est le coup de doigt pour le piano; selon la force ou la légèreté du toucher, le son est plus intense ou plus faible, mais l’attaque n’en a pas moins la même instantanéité. Comme le *Pizzicato* du violon et du violoncelle qui doit s’obtenir, sous peine d’égratigner la corde, non pas avec l’ongle, mais avec le gras du doigt, il faut que le coup de glotte soit donné franchement, sans toutefois que son apparente brusquerie puisse offenser les cordes vocales, ni les brutaliser. L’exagération dans l’attaque pourrait amener la sécheresse et l’écrasement du son.” Jean-Baptiste Faure, *La voix et le chant* (Paris: Heugel, 1886), 53.
utterance, Hahn counsels a strong use of the glottal stroke to help demonstrate Arcabonne’s emotional turmoil: “And you see, in this case, how incredibly useful the glottal stroke is on the a of “amour”; a direct glottal stroke, almost hard, which grabs hold of the note.”

![Example 4.2 Phrase from Lully’s Amadis. Reprinted from Reynaldo Hahn, Du Chant (Lavergne, TN: Nabu Public Domain Reprints, 2014), 90.](image)


When Arcabonne poses the question again, she is thinking about her soft feelings for her beloved and has lost some of her anger toward Love. Hahn suggests that her conflicting emotions should affect the intensity of the glottal stroke: “Meanwhile, she is still struggling, and the second “amour” must be executed with a sort of nervous concentration. The glottal stroke will be completely different here than in the beginning, but it must happen, at any price.” When the phrase returns for the third time, Arcabonne has given in to her feelings and therefore Hahn advocates removing the glottal stroke entirely: “And so, since Arcabonne has finally been defeated, since her strength is crushed and she has swooned from tenderness as well as shame, there should be not the least glottal stroke on the third and final “amour”… I would breathe after Amour, inhaling

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204 “[E]t vous voyez, dès lors, de quelle utilité remarquable sera le coup de glotte sur l’a d’amour; un coup de glotte franc, presque dur, qui agrippe la note.” Hahn, Du Chant, 91.

205 “Cependant, elle lutte encore et il faut que ce second “amour” soit émis avec je ne sais quelle concentration nerveuse. Le coup de glotte sera donc, ici, tout différent de celui du début; mais il en faut un, à tout prix.” Ibid.
as if in anguish, making audible the scraping of the air on the sides of the larynx and I would declaim the entire ending with a sad expression full of restrained sobs.”  

These remarks call to mind the discussion of Chapter One, in which Hahn describes the goal of singing as the “union of sound and thought.” In both the first lecture (“Why do we sing”) and the current lecture, Hahn refuses to explore any technical demands of singing without also considering the expressive demands of the situation. He does not delineate the anatomical details of the glottal stroke as García does, and he does not delve into the technical advantages that the glottal stroke provides. Instead, he connects the technique to the expressive possibilities that a glottal stroke can create for a singer. Just as he advocates for non-traditional sounds in the first lecture (such as the “duck squawk”), he allows for harsh sounds such as “scraping the air on the sides of the larynx” in order to produce the appropriate anguished emotion. Roland Barthes would certainly have approved of this idea, which brings about what Jonathan Dunsby calls the “embodiment” of the sound. The audience is allowed an intimacy with the performer through the sometimes-audible physicality of the vocal technique. In this lecture, Hahn makes it clear that a vocal technique predicated on the visceral and “every day” actions of speech and glottal closure provides the singer with tools to enhance his or her performance with nuance, clarity, and naturalness. Only when a singer is in full

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206 “Aussi, puisque Arcabonne est maintenant vaincue, que sa force est anéantie et qu’elle défaille de tendresse en même temps que de honte, pas le moindre coup de glotte dans le troisième et dernier “amour”… je respirerai après Amour, en aspirant comme avec angoisse, en faisant bien entendre le raclement de l’air sur les bords du larynx et dirai toute la fin avec une expression douloureuse pleine de sanglots contenus.” Ibid., 92.  
207 See pages 32–33.  
possession of these tools can he or she also be in full possession of effective and expressive diction.

**L’Heure exquise**

Hahn’s *mélodie* “L’Heure exquise” was completed in June 1892 and published in the set *Chansons grises* by Heugel the following year. The seven songs of the collection are all set to the poetry of Paul Verlaine, and when the music was premiered at the home of Alphonse Daudet by soprano Sybil Sanderson with Hahn at the piano, Verlaine himself was present. The poet’s reaction must have been gratifying to the nineteen-year-old composer: “Although prematurely aged and ill, [Verlaine] was able to hear these old verses of his given a musical life which he could understand. Indifferent to Fauré’s more musically demanding settings of his poems, Verlaine wept to hear Hahn’s songs.”

“L’Heure exquise” has always been one of Hahn’s most popular songs: several singers from the first half of the twentieth century recorded it, and many contemporary singers continue to program and record it. Graham Johnson describes its appeal in this way: “A flowing accompaniment which starts in the bottom of the left hand’s stave and flows to the upper reaches of the keyboard sets up a hypnotic pattern. Over this the voice begins a gentle melody which is hardly a melody at all, rather a recitation with a ghost of

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a tune. Modulations in the interlude are eloquent beyond all measure of their sophistication, or even ingenuity.” (Ex. 4.3)


The poem describes a moonlit forest which encourages the poet to dream of the beloved. It is divided into three verses, and the voice almost chants the first six lines of each verse in a restricted tessitura which indeed seems a “ghost of a tune,” as Johnson describes it. The final line of each verse offers the chance for the voice to soar higher on the phrases “Ô bien aimée” (“O my beloved”) and “Rêvons” (“Let us dream”). The last syllables of “aimée” and “Rêvons” leap from F-sharp 4 to D-sharp 5. This leap of a sixth creates the sense that the poet is calling out to the beloved, but the dynamic marking in both cases is *piano*, which maintains the otherworldly atmosphere of the song. In the final verse, concluding with the title words “C’est l’heure exquise” (“It is the exquisite hour”) at measures 41–42, the leap expands to a seventh: E4 to D-sharp 5 (Ex. 4.4). This wider leap depicts a call to the beloved, but also expresses wonder at the natural beauty of the

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scene and the intensity of the poet’s feelings. The slow and deliberate pace of the vocal line during most of the declamation provides an opportunity to discuss the choices that various performers make regarding articulation and diction, while the three large intervallic leaps provide an opportunity to study the way that they handle possible register shifts.

**La lune blanche**

La lune blanche  
Luit dans les bois;  
De chaque branche  
Part une voix  
Sous la ramée...

Ô bien aimée.

L'étang reflète,  
Profond miroir,  
La silhouette  
Du saule noir  
Où le vent pleure...

Rêvons, c'est l'heure.

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**The White Moon**

The white moon  
Gleams in the woods;  
From every branch  
There comes a voice  
Beneath the boughs...

O my beloved.

The pool reflects,  
Deep mirror,  
The silhouette  
Of the black willow  
Where the wind is weeping...

Let us dream, it is the hour.

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The song is marked “infiniment doux et calme” (“infinitely sweet and calm”) which is vague in terms of setting an actual tempo, but the phrase does provide an idea of ambience for the piece. In the surveyed recordings (Table 4.1) the four earlier performers (two of which Hahn himself accompanies) take the song at a much slower pace than the three modern singers. All of the performers take time to some extent during the final line.
of each verse as the vocal line ascends. With the exception of Marie-Nicole Lemieux\(^{211}\) and François Le Roux,\(^ {212}\) all the performers also take some \textit{rubato} at measure 25–26, on the phrase “ou le vent pleure” (“where the wind weeps”), although no \textit{rubato} is marked in the score. All of the singers observe the \textit{rallentando} indicated at measure 35 (Ex. 4.4), although Le Roux’s is slight. Le Roux is also an outlier from the group in regard to the tempo of the final verse (beginning at measure 31); all of the other performers interpret the marking “plus calme encore” (“even more calmly”) to indicate that the tempo should be slower for the final verse, while Le Roux takes a nearly identical tempo to the other two verses. Even with these disparate tempo interpretations, all of the performances have a similar affect due to the fact that they all employ restrained dynamics.

\(^{211}\) Marie-Nicole Lemieux (b. 1975) is a Canadian coloratura contralto who has performed in many Baroque opera roles, including Handel’s \textit{Giulio Cesare} (Canadian Opera Company) and Monteverdi’s \textit{Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria} (Staatsoper Berlin). She has also sung roles in French opera, including Debussy’s \textit{Pelleas et Mélisande} (Théâtre du Champs-Élysées and Theater an der Wien) and Berlioz’ \textit{Les Troyens} (Strasbourg Opera). She won the first prize for opera at the Queen Elisabeth International Music Competition in Brussels in 2000. In 2015 she was appointed a member of the Order of Canada.

\(^{212}\) François Le Roux (b. 1955) is a French baritone who is closely associated with \textit{mélodie} and with his performances as both Pelleas and Golaud in Debussy’s \textit{Pelleas et Mélisande}. His book on the interpretation of French song, \textit{Le chant intime}, won the 2004 René Dumesil Award from the French National Académie des Beaux Arts and in 1996 he was awarded the grade of “Chevalier” in the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.
As discussed earlier, Hahn turns to an aria from *Amadis* by Lully to explore the application of the glottal stroke. Because the character Arcabonne is succumbing to the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singer/Pianist</th>
<th>year</th>
<th>Length of recording</th>
<th>Tempi (beat=1.)</th>
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</table>
| Ninon Vallin/ Reynaldo Hahn       | 1928 | 2:33                | First verse (m. 1–16): 40-45  
Second verse (m. 17–30): 43-48  
Third verse (m. 31–49): 37–44; m. 35–37 (rall): 31–37 |
| Arthur Endrèze/ Reynaldo Hahn     | 1937 | 2:42                | First verse (m. 1–16): 39–44  
Second verse (m. 17–30): 37–42  
Third verse (m. 31–49): 32–36; m. 35–37 (rall): 29–31 |
| Maggie Teyte/ Gerald Moore        | 1941 | 2:46                | First verse: 37–45  
Second verse: 37–45 (marked *rubato* at “Ou le vent pleure”)  
Third verse: 27–34; m.35–37: 31–33 |
| Renée Doria/ Simone Gouat         | 1953 | 2:24                | First verse: 43–50  
Second verse: 37–48  
Third verse: 37–42; m. 35–37: 39 |
| François Le Roux/ Jeff Cohen      | 1990 | 1:54                | First verse: 54–58  
Second verse: 50–57  
Third verse: 47–53; m. 35–37: 49–50 |
| Marie-Nicole Lemieux/Daniel Blumenthal | 2005 | 1:51                | First verse: 59–65  
Second verse: 58–64  
Third verse: 47–51; m. 35–37: 46 |
Second verse: 47–53  
Third verse: 47–51; m. 35–37:39–42 |
power of love, by the end of the aria, Hahn recommends no glottal stroke at all.

Therefore, he considers the technique vocally healthy, but not always suited to the emotion of the moment. Just as Arcabonne’s tender feelings make the technique unadvisable at the end of her aria, none of the seven singers here surveyed apparently feel that the glottal stroke would be an appropriate sound for the atmosphere of the song.

Ninon Vallin employs a nuanced glottal at the phrase “O bien aimée” (“O my beloved”), but nowhere else. As we will see, she uses the technique often in the song “Tyndaris,” so this is clearly a choice she has made for this song. Renee Doria and Maggie Teyte also both use a slight glottal stroke at that moment, but not in any other discernable place. Arthur Endrèze and the three contemporary singers (Le Roux, Lemieux, and Jaroussky) avoid the technique altogether.

The most fascinating difference between the performances from the early part of the century and the three more recent singers in regard to articulation lies in the treatment of the consonants. The poem offers few unvoiced plosive consonants (“t” and “k”) (which are not aspirated in French as they are in English or German), but many voiced plosives, such as “b” and “d”, as well as the lateral consonant “l.” These are softer consonants that allow the voice to continue resonating through the line, which is one of

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213 Renée Doria (b. 1921) was a protégée of Hahn’s and sang Costanze in The Abduction from the Seraglio under his baton in Cannes in 1942. She made her Paris Opéra debut as the Queen of the Night in The Magic Flute in 1943. Other major roles include the title role of Mireille, Lakmé, Marguerite in Faust, and Ophélie in Hamlet. She recorded many roles as well as recitals.

214 Arthur Endrèze (1893–1975) was an American baritone, who enjoyed a successful career mainly in France. He studied with Jean de Reszke and made his Paris Opéra debut in 1929 as Valentin in Faust. He also appeared at the Opéra in Thaïs, Samson et Dalila, Les Huguenots, and created the roles of Mosca in Sauguet’s La chartreuse de Parme Metternich in Honegger and Ibert’s L’aiglon.
the reasons Verlaine’s poetry is considered well-suited for vocal settings. The three singers from the earlier era linger on these consonants much more than their modern counterparts do; for example, consider the difference between Teyte’s performance (1941) and that of Lemieux (2005), especially comparing the length and weight of the five “l”s that appear in the opening line “La lune blanche/Luit dans les bois” (“The white moon/Gleams in the woods”). In this passage, Teyte leans into the physical effort of creating the consonants, while Lemieux minimizes them to pass more directly on to the vowels. Le Roux likewise minimizes the consonants; Jarrousky takes mainly the same approach, but he allows the initial consonants of “dans” and “bois” to have some significance. Doria and Vallin treat the repeated “l”s, as well as the “d” and “b” in the same manner as Teyte. Endrèze also gives more weight to the consonants, although not quite as much as Teyte and Vallin. However, his “bl” on “blanche” and the rolled “r” in “branche” place him squarely in the earlier approach.

This observation highlights Bernac’s influence on contemporary singers’ approach to singing in French. Bernac sets down what he calls a “fundamental rule”: “In French, more so than in any other language, to obtain a proper line, a proper legato, one must fill the entire duration of each note with the vowel sound.” In other words: in French, one has to carry the vowel sound unaltered right through the whole duration of the musical sound, without anticipating at all the following consonant.”215 All of the singers surveyed here certainly follow this rule: every performance is seamlessly legato and the vowels are all unaltered, whether the note duration is long or short.

As Bernac continues, however, he makes this statement: “It is strictly forbidden in French to sing on the consonants (except, of course, for a very special effect).”\textsuperscript{216} It is interesting that Bernac insists on this rule in his book, because, in his recordings, both vowels and consonants are equally clear. For example, in his 1950 recording of “Hôtel” by Poulenc (with Poulenc at the piano),\textsuperscript{217} Bernac lingers on some consonants, particularly the initial “m” and “ch” in the first phrase: “Ma chambre a la forme d’une cage” (“My room has the form of a cage). He also gives some extra time to the two “m”’s and “f” in the phrase “mais moi qui veux fumer” (“but I want to smoke”) (0:38). Perhaps this song offers the opportunity of creating a “special effect,” as Bernac mentions, but his clear consonants are on display throughout his recordings, whether the song is languid or rapid (as is the case with Satie’s \textit{Trois mélodies}).\textsuperscript{218} Bernac travelled throughout the United Kingdom, Canada, and the USA, and his book, \textit{The Interpretation of French Song}, is aimed mainly at English speakers. Many of his instructions highlight the differences between French and English (“\textit{French is a language based completely on vowels, the opposite of English}”).\textsuperscript{219} Clearly, his travels revealed to him that English speakers needed instruction that emphasized the length of French vowels, but in practice, he does not diminish the role of the consonants in order to create the proper vowel length.

Therefore, Bernac’s approach to diction resembles that of Vallin, Teyte, and Doria, who all give more weight to the consonants in “L’Heure exquise” than do Le Roux, Jaroussky, and Lemieux. For the earlier singers, the soft consonants are all

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{216} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{218} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{219} Bernac, \textit{The Interpretation of French Song}, 22. Italics in the original.
\end{itemize}
integrated into their diction, not disguised or reduced. When Hahn describes diction as “the correct management of time between each word,” he does not explain how much time he thinks should be, but the singers from his era place a different amount of time on these linking consonants than the modern singers do. Apparently, as the performance practice of French song developed over the course of the twentieth century, a new emphasis on the reduction of the time given to consonants evolved.

It is difficult to ascertain how professional singers approach the question of moving between vocal registers because their training enables them to minimize the shifts, effectively erasing the “breaks.” However, they also have the skills to handle the shifts in various ways, and so their choices must reflect their expressive goals. The three moments of the high D-sharp (or F, when the song is sung in the higher key of D-flat) offer opportunities for the performer to vary their approach each time.

It is interesting to note that, of the three sopranos, only Renée Doria (who recorded in 1953) sings the song in the higher key: Vallin (1928) and Teyte (1941) choose to record the song in the original lower key of B. This choice reflects the differences among the singers’ careers and voice types: Doria was a coloratura soprano who sang purely high soprano roles, while Vallin sang a range of roles: from the mezzo-soprano role of Charlotte in Werther to the three heroines in Offenbach’s Tales of Hoffman. Teyte also had a varied career, singing roles as diverse as Mélisande in Pelleas et Mélisande (Debussy himself chose her to succeed Mary Garden in the role), Cherubino in Le Nozze di Figaro, and the title role in Puccini’s Madame Butterfly. She made her recording of “L’Heure exquise” in 1941, after coming out of retirement and after performing in music halls and cabaret venues. Therefore, while all women whose
performances are considered here are sopranos, they recorded at different points in their lives and after careers that encouraged strength in different parts of their ranges.

Richard Miller explains that, for sopranos, the two large zones of register breaks occur at E-flat 4 and F-sharp 5, referred to as the lower passaggio and upper passaggio. By choosing the lower key, Vallin and Teyte avoid the upper passaggio on the final line of each verse (the highest note being D-sharp 5), but they must deal with the lower passaggio during the first part of each verse. Although in both keys the tessitura of the song is not particularly difficult for a trained singer to achieve, the final ascending line (m. 40–42) is unaccompanied, putting the singer in an exposed situation and prompting Graham Johnson to ask whether “a mere D-sharp—on the third line of the treble stave—ever seemed so unattainably high?”220 For Vallin and Teyte, it was probably more comfortable to spend more time in their lower range, considering that their careers strengthened that part of the voice, and have the higher lines comfortably below the upper passaggio.

The opening of the first two verses toggle between D-sharp 4 and F-sharp 4, which straddles the lower passaggio for sopranos. Vallin displays no difficulty in this part of the voice; she has unified the registers through her technique. When she sings the wide intervals at the end of each verse (occurring at 0:46, 1:16, and 2:03), it is likewise not a problem; in this key, it is also not necessary to traverse the upper passaggio. She generally keeps the dynamic quite strong, and the quality of tone does not change significantly (although she lightens the timbre on “Rêvons!” to reflect the text).

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Doria, singing in the higher key, has unified the upper *passaggio* and, like Vallin, displays ease throughout the song, both in the lower and higher range. All the moments of the high note (which for her is F5, just below where Miller tells us the upper *passaggio* begins), her tone is even and strong (0:41, 1:10, and 1:55). Also like Vallin, she does not employ a lower dynamic often, although she also creates a decrescendo on the final notes.

Teyte, however, displays some difference in timbre on the two pitches of D-sharp and F-sharp, throwing the two registers into relief. The F-sharps in her singing are lighter in quality and the lower D-sharps, particularly on the phrase “De chaque branche” at measures 8 and 9. Later in the song, there is discernable pressure in the sound in measure 36 as the line ascends through the lower *passaggio* from D-sharp 4 to G-sharp 4 (1:59). She also presses the tempo on the final ascending line “C’est l’heure exquise” (1:25) and the final top note has a very light timbre, suggesting that she allows the register to shift, although the top note remains below the upper *passaggio*.

Miller is careful to explain that the register breaks he describes do not restrict singers to sing predominantly in chest or head voice; training allows a singer to traverse the whole tessitura of his or her voice, constantly mixing registers: “There is no single, arbitrary pitch in the scale below which chest [voice] is sung and above which head [voice] predominates, with all vocal categories rotating around it.” Miller, *The Structure of Singing*, 117.

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chest register into the note, and the timbre of his voice does not alter much from the lower note. At the end of the second verse, however (1:20), the tone is lighter, and for the final high note (2:14), Endrèze chooses to allow the register shift to be more obvious and have the predominant quality of the head voice.

Le Roux (1990) chooses to shift into the head voice register all three high notes, giving the entire song the same muted color. This choice demonstrates that his interpretation of the marking “infinitely sweet and calm” applies to the manner of handling the register shifts, as well as tempo or articulation. In another song by Hahn, “Chanson d’Automne,” Le Roux often chooses to sing in the same range with full resonance, not allowing the shift into the lighter head voice. Therefore, with “L’Heure exquise,” he is clearly making a choice to use the lighter color all the time to express his interpretation of the poem and its musical setting.

Miller identifies the upper register shift for contraltos at D5, which means that Marie-Nicole Lemieux (2005) is traversing this place for the final lines of each verse. She chooses to approach each moment in a different manner. For the first time (0:30), she lightens the tone and observes the marking of “délicatement” (“delicately”) and the piano dynamic marking. On the word “Rêvons!” at the end of the second verse (0:52), she creates a crescendo, in spite of the piano marking, and unifies the registers with a full resonant sound. On the final line of the song (1:27), she again contradicts the dynamic markings by offering a crescendo on both the D-sharp 5 and the following note as the line descends. Lemieux therefore only allows the register shift to affect the timbre of her sound for the first D-sharp, but the other two similar moments maintain or even increase the dynamic level, and the register shift event is minimized.
Philippe Jaroussky (2009) is a countertenor, and it is only recently that voice science has attempted to develop descriptions of registers of this voice type. In a dissertation for Florida State University, Raymond Chenez uses VoceVista Pro software to analyze countertenor voices and define their registers. He concludes that countertenors have a range similar to mezzo sopranos and that the upper register shift occurs for all countertenors somewhere between C-sharp 5 and E5.\textsuperscript{222} If Chenez’s conclusions are correct, Jarrousky must sing the high notes in “L’Heure exquise” either just above or just below the upper passaggio. In all three moments of the song, he sings the D-sharp with a completely straight tone, extremely quietly, and with audible air in the voice, suggesting that he is singing with pure head voice. In another song by Hahn, “Fêtes galantes,” Jarrousky sings an F5 with full adduction of the vocal cords and vibrato, so his approach to the D-sharp in “L’Heure exquise” is a deliberate sound color he feels is appropriate for the song.

Every performer’s approach to shifts in register is unique; however, any singer who studies “L’Heure exquise” must grapple with this issue due to the musical setting. It may affect which key he or she chooses to sing it in, or how he or she interprets the poem or tempo markings. This small survey suggests that, in the past thirty years, singers are more likely to exploit the register shift to offer varied approaches to the three tricky moments in the song. The singers from the first half of the twentieth century maintain the unification of registers so that, although the dynamics may alter, the quality of tone is mainly consistent. Only Maggie Teyte’s performance deviates slightly from this

approach, and that may be attributed to the fact that she had come out of retirement at this point (she was 53). She had also spent the majority of her late career in music halls and cabarets, not classical music settings.

**Tyndaris**

“Tyndaris” is part of a set of choruses and songs called *Études latines*, which Hahn began to compose in 1898 and completed during a visit to Rome in 1900. Heugel published the set the same year. The poetry is by Leconte de Lisle who figures prominently in the musical world of France during the Belle Époque. In addition to Hahn, composers such as Fauré, Duparc, Roussel, Debussy, and Ravel found inspiration in Leconte de Lisle’s poetry. The *Études latines* also reflect Hahn’s interest in antiquity, although that interest is not always exact: the poetic allusions in the set are sometimes Roman, sometimes Greek. As Graham Johnson explains: “For the purposes of this ‘revival’ the words ‘Greek’ and ‘Roman’ seem fairly interchangeable and there is no sign that composers differentiated between the two (very different) cultures when transporting us to a sort of all-purpose antiquity.”

The speaker of the short poem entices Tyndaris to meet in a bucolic scene of fragrant hills, running springs, and cooing birds. The song starts with an opening similar to “L’Heure exquise”: the piano accompaniment offers a limpid and flowing melody,

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223 Charles Marie René Leconte de Lisle (1818–1894) was an important figure in the Parnassian movement, which bridged the Romantic and Symbolist periods in poetry. In addition to his own poetry, he is also well-known for his translations of Greek and Roman poets, including Aeschylus, Euripides, and Horace. He was elected to the French Academy in 1886, succeeding Victor Hugo.

224 Johnson, *Songs by Reynaldo Hahn*, 33.
over which the vocal line unspools. A defining characteristic of the song, however, lies in Hahn’s rhythmic ideas. With subtle syncopations (such as the singer’s entrance on the final eighth of measure 4) and hemiolas (such as in the vocal line in measure 11), Hahn provides the music an intriguing lilt (Ex. 4.5). Susan Graham describes Hahn’s rhythmic ideas throughout his song output in this way: “He’ll insert a little extra beat to a bar, change the meter suddenly. It’s his way of showing that the song isn’t ancient, it’s how he uses rhythm if you like to underline some of the images of the poetry.” Graham Johnson calls the song “the jewel of the cycle”: “Here is a song as fresh and unspoiled as Hahn imagined the civilisation which inspired it to be. Distance has truly lent enchantment.”

Ô blanche Tyndaris, les Dieux me sont amis:  
Ils aiment les Muses Latines;  
Et l'aneth et le myrte et le thym des collines  
Croissent aux prés qu'ils m'ont soumis.

Viens! mes ramiers chéris, aux voluptés plaintives,  
Ici se plaisent à gémir;  
Et sous l'épais feuillage il est doux de dormir  
Au bruit des sources fugitives.

O white Tyndaris, the Gods are friends to me:  
They love the Latin Muses;  
And dill and myrtle and thyme from the hills  
Thrive in the meadows they gave me.

Come! My beloved ring-doves, delighting in grief;  
Here are pleased to moan;  
And beneath dense leaves it is sweet to sleep  
To the sounds of running springs.


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226 Johnson, Songs by Reynaldo Hahn, 34.
TABLE 4.2 Comparison of tempi in recordings of “Tyndaris” by Reynaldo Hahn.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singer/Pianist</th>
<th>year</th>
<th>Length of recording</th>
<th>Basic tempo (beat=½)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Ninon Vallin/Reynaldo Hahn     | 1930 | 1:47                | Verse 1: 34
Verse 2: 34
m. 20–23: 32, rubato in measure 23 |
| Martyn Hill/Graham Johnson     | 1982 | 1:55                | Verse 1: 33
Verse 2: 33
m. 20–23: 30 at “doux de dormir”; slight rubato at m. 22–23 |
| Susan Graham/Roger Vignoles    | 1998 | 1:50                | Verse 1: 34
Verse 2: 34
m. 20–23: 30 at “doux de dormir”; slight rubato at m. 22–23 |
| Ian Bostridge/Graham Johnson   | 1996 | 1:43                | Verse 1: 35–37
Verse 2: 37
m.20–23: 34 |
| Véronique Gens/Susan Manoff    | 2015 | 1:35                | Verse 1: 38–40
Verse 2: 36 |

There is greater agreement among the performers regarding tempo for this song than perhaps for any other song examined in this dissertation. The tempo marking is simply “doux, modéré” (“sweet, moderate”) and all five singers surveyed here maintain a fairly steady, non-rushed tempo. Vallin, Hill, Graham, and Bostridge\(^{227}\) all begin the

\(^{227}\) Ian Bostridge (b. 1964) is an English tenor. He made his Wigmore Hall recital debut in 1993 and his opera debut at Covent Garden in 1995 (as the Fourth Jew in *Salome*). He is frequent recitalist, particularly in the *Lieder* of Schubert and Schumann, the songs of Britten, and *mélodie*.
second verse, “Viens!” (“Come!”), in the initial tempo, while Gens\textsuperscript{228} takes a slightly slower tempo here. All of the performers slow their speed in some way for the final measures (Ex. 4.6). Vallin, Bostridge, and Gens interpret the \textit{espressivo} marking at measure 20 as an indication to relax the tempo. Vallin and Bostridge also create a slight \textit{rubato} for the final word in measure 23 (“fugitives”), and they both follow the marking of decrescendo in measure 22. However, Gens does the opposite: she moves slightly faster on the ascending line and allows the top E-flat to grow a bit in dynamic. Graham and Hill delay their slower tempo until the phrase “il est doux de dormir” (“it is sweet to sleep”), offering still a bit more \textit{rubato} on the final ascent to “sources fugitives” (“running springs”).

\textsuperscript{228} Veronique Gens (b. 1966) is a French soprano who studied at the Paris Conservatoire. She is well-known for her work in early music, particularly with Les Arts Florissants under the direction of William Christie. She has appeared with the Lyons Opera, Théâtre du Châtelet, and is a frequent soloist at the Aix-en-Provence Festival.

Vallin’s approach to the text calls to mind Hahn’s comments about the “spoken voice.” Just as she does with “L’Heure exquise,” she gives weight to many of the voiced consonants, such as the initial sounds of “blanche,” “Dieux,” and “Croissent.” She also uses Hahn’s beloved glottal stroke at times, particularly when delineating the list of herbs—“l’aneth,” “myrte,” and “thym” (“dill,” “myrtle,” and “thyme”)—at measures 8–10. By separating the phrases with a lift and slight glottal stroke, she connects technique, expression, and diction, just as Hahn describes. This choice also reflects his initial comments about the “spoken voice”: her mastery over the technique of the glottal stroke clarifies the rhetoric, just as one might if speaking the list instead of singing it.

For the more recent singers (Hill, Graham, Bostridge, and Gens), the goal of their interpretation seems to be a dream-like effect. Hill and Graham both articulate all
consonants gently, and they follow Bernac’s instruction about maintaining the “proper line” and not singing on the consonants. Graham minimizes the consonants even further for the final phrase of “sources fugitives” (1:15). Hill and Graham also both create small dynamic swells on longer notes, such as the second syllable of “collines” (hills) or the first syllable of “croissent” (thrive). Bostridge offers a crisper approach to his diction, but he maintains a smooth, glasslike line with his straightforward tempo which allows him to sing from measure 9–12 without a breath. Gens lies in the middle of these approaches: while she creates the small swells that Hill and Graham do, her consonants are sometimes more weighted, such as the “d”s of “il est doux de dormir” (it is sweet to sleep) (1:05). She also employs the glottal stroke at times, such as “Il aiment” (they love) (0:18) and “Ici” (here) (0:50).

Just as with the performances of “L’Heure exquise,” the differences between the early performances and the modern performances of “Tyndaris” lie mainly in articulation. Again, the modern singers place a priority on the vowels, minimizing the consonants, and rarely employing the glottal stroke. While all the performances provide a dreamlike atmosphere (perhaps this serves the “doux” part of the tempo indication), the singers from Hahn’s era allocate more time for the voiced consonants in the vocal line, not shying away from their weight. This choice highlights what Bergeron calls “the condition of a text as it makes contact with a voice,” making all the articulators (tongue, teeth, and lips) audible. Or, as Hahn puts it, their diction “punctuates and gives the voice the
nuances of strength or sweetness; it provides its sound and movement with shades either subtle or obvious.”

229 c’est elle qui ponctue, qui imprime à la voix des nuances de force ou de douceur, au son et au mouvement des gradations imperceptibles ou violentes.” Hahn, *Du Chant*, 79.
Chapter Five

Lecture: “What Do We Mean by Having Style?”

Songs: “La Barcheta” and “Che pecà!” from *Venezia*

Reynaldo Hahn devotes his fourth lecture to the interpretation of style. To a modern musician, the term “style” often evokes practical matters, such as how to execute an ornament in Baroque music, how much *rubato* is permissible in the Classical style, or whether or not *portamento* is allowed in any pre-Romantic repertoire. In the introduction to her *Singing in Style*, Martha Elliott, for example, confirms that her guide is meant to help singers “make informed stylistic choices about such topics as ornamentation, articulation, use of vibrato, working with period instruments, and language issues, to name just a few common concerns.”\(^{230}\)

In addition to addressing the issues that Elliott lists, many style treatises also attempt to define aesthetics of the period. Defining aesthetics helps musicians make decisions that affect the overall style of their performance. For example, Robert Donington draws on a wide variety of primary sources to elucidate Baroque style, concluding that the sources reveal that aesthetics of the period required “transparent sonority” and “incisive articulation.”\(^{231}\) Singers of Baroque music, he asserts, employed the Italian *bel canto* technique in order to achieve these characteristics: “The placing is very far forward, right up in the mask…. The forward placing not only projects the tone

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but makes the words audible as no other vocal technique can do.”

Determining the priorities of the aesthetics can therefore have an impact on the technical decisions that the performer makes.

Pierre Bernac also uses the aesthetics of early twentieth-century France to draw conclusions about the proper performance style for French song of the period. He remarks that, while *Lied* is “essentially a Romantic phenomenon,” *mélodie* “often reacts against sentimental effusion.”

He concludes: “The ‘clarity of expression and the precision’ of French music have already been stressed; hence the first duty of the performer is to cultivate this precision in performance. It can even imply a certain severity, particularly as regards tempo: as a general rule *rubato* is virtually excluded.”

Both Donington and Bernac rely on aesthetic considerations to inform performative decisions, and these decisions coalesce into the overall style of performance.

Hahn, however, defines the word “style” differently: “If I am not mistaken, and without specifying this or that art, style consists of all the particular means used by an artist to convey his or her expression or emotions.”

This definition is vague, but as his lecture progresses, it becomes clear that Hahn’s discussion on this topic is consistent with the earlier lectures: his emphasis is, as always, on the performer’s imagination. For Hahn, the “particular means” in his definition of the term “style” encompasses more than simply vocal technique, but also the research and curiosity of the singer; if a singer does

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232 Ibid., 168.
234 Ibid.
not sufficiently explore the history of the music (and, in regard to opera, the character),
the “style” of the performance will be unconvincing.

More than half of his lecture dwells on the general historical information,
including even the mundane details, that Hahn feels a singer must acquire before
attempting to perform various operatic roles. For example, Hahn asserts, if a baritone
wishes to sing the title role of Henry VIII in Saint-Saëns eponymous opera, he must
not only be aware of the basic historical facts of Henry’s reign, but must also know “that
Henry VIII was large, blonde, that he had affable manners and hid his threatening
character under a reassuring stoutness.” Hahn laments that students at the Paris
Conservatoire, focused exclusively on vocal technique, do not attend classes on dramatic
literature and music history. As a result, he claims, young singers attempt the role of Dido
without reading her story in Virgil, while others sing the role of Aida without reading any
history of Egypt. It is not immediately clear how Hahn expects these historical studies to
have an impact on a performance of these stories rooted in the emotions of love and
betrayal, but perhaps his complaints speak to what he perceives to be a lack of curiosity
on the part of young singers. Hahn has strong words for these students: “Even if we allow
that they know how to sing, which is frequently debatable, they know nothing of what
makes singing interesting or moving.”

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236 Hahn refers to the opera *Henry VIII* by Saint-Saëns, which debuted in 1883 at the
Académie Nationale de Musique.
237 “qu’Henri VIII était gros, blond, qu’il avait des manières affables et cachait son âme
terrible sous un embonpoint rassurant.” Hahn, *Du Chant*, 112.
238 “En admettant même qu’ils sachent chanter, ce qui est souvent contestable, ils ne
savent rien de ce qui rend le chant intéressant ou émouvant.” Ibid., 110.
Hahn’s harsh assessment of vocal education at the Paris Conservatoire may reflect the debate that was underway within that school. In 1905 Gabriel Fauré became the director of the conservatory, and he announced a number of reforms for the school. In an address to the Conservatoire, Fauré made it clear that he was particularly interested in raising the level of singing. This address was delivered by the Under-Secretary of State for Fine Arts, Henri-Etienne Dujardin-Beaumetz, but it reflected both his and Fauré’s vision for the school. Dujardin-Beaumetz apparently believed that singing students were rushing their study: “If the art of singing is dying, it is perhaps because it is not cultivated as methodically now as it was in the past. Thus, we will remind students in voice classes that nothing is gained by shortening the period of study, and that the future of their careers will be all the more certain when they have devoted all the time necessary to vocal technique.”

First-year singing students were required to focus on exercises and vocalises; furthermore, when they chose repertoire for concerts and competitions, they were encouraged to include Lieder and modern composers. Formerly, singing students restricted their focus to vocally showy arias from the Opéra and Opéra-Comique canon.

While many applauded both Fauré’s appointment and his intended reforms, a number of professors, especially professors of voice, did not. When Hahn gave his lectures for the Université des Annales in 1913, he clearly did not feel that reforms had gone far enough and that the singing instruction was still not adequate. It is possible that these remarks were intended to support Fauré against his detractors, or perhaps to prod

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him to move more quickly or in another direction. However, by the time Hahn published his collection of essays, *Thèmes variés*, in 1946, he was defending the vocal pedagogy at the Conservatoire:

In truth, it is time to put an end to these rants against the Paris Conservatoire. They are unjustified, sometimes ridiculous, and they make anyone who is familiar with its laws, methods, and traditions and is able to estimate the true value of its results shrug his shoulders. As for its shortcomings and defects, as well as the reforms that should be considered and carried out, no one is more aware of them, believe me, than the eminent men who watch over its future and no one regrets more the difficulties which hinder their desires and obstruct or delay their realization.²⁴⁰

**Hahn’s definition of style**

After expressing this frustration with the state of vocal instruction, Hahn continues to explore the topic of “style.” Although Hahn presents his definition of the term at the beginning of the lecture (“all the particular means used by an artist to convey his or her expression or emotions”), he soon admits that he does not know what the term “style” actually means, at least insofar as he has heard it used. He enters the discussion through the music of the Baroque era, citing Bach, Monteverdi, and Lully as examples of what he calls “early music.” He maintains that singers often sing all music from this era in a reserved manner: “Once a work is deemed ‘early,’ people wish to sing it with an air of restraint, with barely perceptible nuances and a cold and chaste demeanor. I have never

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²⁴⁰ “En vérité, il serait temps de mettre fin à ces déblatérations contre le Conservatoire de Paris. Elles sont injustifiées, parfois ridicules et font hausser les épaules à quiconque est familiarisé avec ses lois, ses méthodes, ses habitudes et capable d'estimer à leur juste valeur ses résultats. Quant à ses lacunes, à ses défauts, comme aux réformes qu'il conviendrait d'envisager et d'y effectuer, nul ne les connaît mieux, croyez-le bien, que les hommes éminents qui veillent sur ses destinées et nul plus qu'eux ne regrette les difficultés qui contrarient leurs désirs et en entravent ou en retardent la réalisation.” Reynaldo Hahn, *Thèmes variés* (Paris: Janin, 1946), 155.
understood this point of view.”

Hahn argues that early composers—just like composers of all eras—wished to express a range of emotions, not merely discreet feelings. Lully, he reports, told a singer that she must observe the famous actress and interpreter of Racine, Marie Champmeslé, for hints on how to perform his music well. This anecdote suggests to Hahn that singers in this period were encouraged to draw on myriad emotions, just as an actor must, despite the musical context: “One must, therefore, while respecting the exterior character of [Lully’s] music which is noble and pompous, express the concealed fire and emotion.” This anecdote also highlights the deep connection that Hahn observes between the skills of an actor and a singer. As discussed in Chapter Two, Hahn grew up during a period of education reform that emphasized the practice of declamation and, as a result, he imbues his understanding of the art of singing with the art of speaking. Therefore, he sees the skills of an actor and a singer as related: both must infuse text with emotion and expression.

Hahn is therefore frustrated by what he views as a narrow and illogical approach to singing the music of an earlier time always in a reserved manner. He says that singers must have a wide variety of approaches available since “there are as many styles as there

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241 “Il suffit qu’un ouvrage mérite l’appellation ‘d’ancien’ pour que ces gens-là veuillent qu’on le chante d’un air compassé, avec des nuances à peine perceptibles, une allure froide et pudique. Je n’ai jamais pu partager cette manière de voir.” Hahn, Du Chant, 104.

242 Marie Champmeslé (1642–1698) was famous for originating tragic roles, particularly in the plays of Racine. She was married to celebrated actor and playwright Charles Chevillet Champmeslé (1642–1701). For more than thirty years, the couple performed with the Théâtre Guénégaud which merged with the new Comédie-Française in 1680.

243 “Il faudra donc, tout en respectant l’allure extérieure de sa musique, qui est noble et pompeuse, faire sentir ce qu’elle dissimule de fougue et de sensibilité.” Ibid., 103.
are musical genres, and even perhaps as there are different composers and different compositions.” A singer’s task, therefore, is to find the right style for the piece he or she is performing. Hahn gives a wonderfully detailed example of the goals he believes a singer should keep in mind when approaching art song in a discussion of Schubert:

If you sing well a beautiful song of Schubert, whether it is “Das Zügenglöcklein,” “Der Winterabend” or “Der Wanderer,” your singing must, of course, reflect what is on the page, but you must also have a style—that is to say, a manner—of articulating, of singing, and finally of expressing yourself that is completely different from the manner that you use while singing Lully or Gluck. In this way, you must remind me of the era and the atmosphere in which Schubert lived; while listening to you, I must envision a Viennese salon, lit by glowing lamps, where some women in bright-colored gowns and men in fitted frock coats with large cravats upon ruffled shirts are listening attentively to the throaty yet strong singing of a big blonde young man with gold-rimmed spectacles under a domed forehead framed by curly hair sitting at the piano.

Hahn uses almost exactly this image of a Schubertiade when reviewing a recital of Lilli Lehmann in the journal Femina. He was a great admirer of Lehmann (he

244 “[il] y a autant de styles qu’il y a non seulement de genres musicaux, mais presque d’auteurs divers et d’œuvres diverses.” Hahn, Du Chant, 102.
245 “Si vous chantez bien une belle mélodie de Schubert, La Cloche des Agonisants, par exemple, Le Soir d’Hiver ou bien Le Voyageur, il faut, certes, que votre chant évoque ce qui est retracé dans ces pages; mais il faut que ce soit avec un style, c’est-à-dire une façon de prononcer, de chanter, de vous exprimer enfin, toute différente de celle que vous auriez eue en chantant du Lully ou du Gluck et que vous me rappeliez, par ce moyen, l’époque, l’atmosphère où a vécu Schubert; il faut que je pense confusément, en vous écoutant, à un salon de Vienne éclairé par des globes opaques, où quelques femmes en robes claires et des hommes portant des redingotes pincées, de larges cravates au-dessus de plastrons à jabot, sont attentifs au chant voilé mais pénétrant d’un gros jeune homme blond qui, des lunettes d’or sous un front bombé encadré de cheveux crépus, est assis au piano.” Hahn, Du Chant, 103.
246 “When Lilli Lehmann sang “Das Zügenglöcklein,” I was transported to a salon in Vienna or Mainz, lighted by opaque globes; dark furniture of curved forms, a few attendants, some women in light-colored dresses, some men in fitted frock coats with large cravats upon ruffled shirts, all attentive to the singing, throaty yet strong, of a big blonde young man who, with gold spectacles under a full brow and frames of curly hair, is sitting at the piano and accompanying himself by barely brushing against the yellowed keyboard.” [“Et quand Lilli Lehmann chanta la Cloche des Agonisants, je fus transporté
conducted her in *Don Giovanni* in Salzburg in 1906), and his description of her performance style in 1910 aligns perfectly with the advice that he would give at the Université des Annales three years later.

In both his lecture and his article in *Femina*, Hahn dwells on the qualities that he finds essential to a stylistic and effective performance by emphasizing the imaginative powers of the performer. These powers will only exist if the singer has the kind of historical and intellectual curiosity Hahn outlines earlier in his descriptions of the roles of Henry VIII and Aida. His insistence on this approach is reflected in this remark:

This is why I maintain and persist in saying that it is necessary for a singer to have “some clarity of the whole”; [the singer is] not simply concerned with singing and various genres of vocal music, but also with the particulars of history, of art, of all the arts through successive periods of civilization. A composer, like all artists, is both a creative force and the reflection of the times and milieu in which he lived.\(^{247}\)

Hahn insists on this holistic approach to avoid the pitfalls of the stilted performances of early music he has apparently observed. His most important reflection on the topic, however, is relevant in regard to his own music:

It is all of this then that establishes *style* and not this severity that so many...
wrongly assume for the interpretation of early music…Before it was “ancient,” this music was “modern,” and today’s music, as modern as it is, will be ancient one day; should it then be sung differently than we sing it now?248

*Mélodie and style*

More than a century has passed since Hahn delivered his lectures, and his music is certainly no longer “modern.” While the music of his era is not classified as “early music,” it is far enough in the past for performance practice scholarship to have developed around *mélodie*. It is interesting to observe that many treatises advise an approach to *mélodie* that seems to echo the approach to early music that Hahn found objectionable. For example, at the conclusion of his chapter on the interpretation of French *mélodie*, Bernac concludes:

To sum up: in the French *mélodie* the singer and the pianist must succeed in combining precision with lyricism. But it must be controlled lyricism, for just as the French composer never gives way to sentimentality or emphasis and abominates overstatement, so in the same way his interpreters must have a sense of moderation of expression, a critical capacity, which after all is no more than one of the most vigorous forms of intelligence.249

We can find other descriptions that recommend control and precision. In her treatise, Elliott points out that French composers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries separated themselves from their Italian counterparts by emphasizing restrained beauty rather than exaggerated ornamentation. She contends that the practice continued into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when composers such as Fauré and Debussy

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248 “C’est l’ensemble de tout cela qui compose le style et non cette sévérité dont bien des gens exigent à tort qu’on revête l’interprétation de la musique ancienne…Avant d’être ‘ancienne’, la musique ancienne a été ‘modern’, et la musique d’aujourd’hui, si modern qu’elle soit, sera ancienne un jour; faudra-t-il alors la chanter autrement que nous la chantons à présent?” Ibid., 104.

249 Bernac, *The Interpretation of French Song*, 35.
looked for performers who had a “purity and simplicity of style that was governed by nuance.”

If a modern singer finds these descriptions unsatisfying and incomplete, he or she might turn to primary sources such as the teaching anecdotes, recordings, and written works of Jane Bathori. As discussed in Chapter Two, Bathori was a singer who worked with Hahn, Debussy, and Ravel, as well as many other prominent composers of her time. Her performance style was often remarked upon as clear and pure. As Carol Kimball puts it: “Her simplicity allowed the music to take center stage.” Bathori herself explains that “one must have taste and must not want to substitute one’s own personality for that of the composer…The role of the interpreter must be above all one of understanding and self-abnegation.” These comments are easily in line with the conclusions of both Bernac and Elliott.

However, when we delve further into Bathori’s writings, we also find comments that advocate for expressivity and emotional connection, reminding us of Hahn’s lecture. In her 1939 treatise, *Conseils sur le Chant*, Bathori devotes less than a page to the subject of interpretation, claiming that it is too difficult to explain. Many singers, she says, are blessed with “voix du Bon Dieu” (“a voice of God”) and their rich sounds encompass expression without much effort. But many other singers must work to achieve the desired result:

[They] must draw out from within themselves the essence of expression and discover how to externalize it, which is another skill. Expression consists of

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251 Carol Kimball, “Jane Bathori’s Interpretive Legacy” *Journal of Singing* 57, no. 3 (January/February 2001): 17.
making listeners experience the feelings that animate us, and the sensibility of the artist is the only source for this expression. To achieve this result, [the singer] must engage in the longest work, and the most difficult research. But the emotion of the artist, along with the communication of this emotion, are perhaps the greatest joys of the art of singing.\textsuperscript{253}

These remarks are tantalizingly brief, although Bathori clearly expects singers to explore expression and seek to move the audience. But how exactly? Bathori does allude to “the most difficult research,” which recalls Hahn’s own insistence on historically informed style. Unfortunately, she does not further elaborate on what sort of research she means, and only insists that a singer must “try to be fair, simple and humane.”\textsuperscript{254} As modern singers seek stylistic authenticity for \textit{mélodie}, they are torn between the admonitions towards restraint and a desire to communicate the emotional content of the music and poetry.

In 2004, baritone François Le Roux published his monograph \textit{Le chant intime}, which provides insights into the style of \textit{mélodie} that are helpful for the modern singer. For Le Roux, the answer to the question of style lies in both the poetry and the venue of the original performance. He explains his argument by comparing the poetry of \textit{Lieder} with that of \textit{mélodie}:

\begin{quote}
[T]he \textit{Lied} is often a sort of dramatic mini-scene, where the poet only expresses himself, without a mask, and where the music depicts intimate emotions…The particularity of the \textit{mélodie} is that it is never a direct expression of the poet, of a voyager, or of a hero…In France however, the poetry used for \textit{mélodie} remains
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{253}\textemdash{}``Les autres doivent puiser en eux-mêmes l'essence de l'expression et chercher à l'extérioriser, ce qui est encore autre chose; faire éprouver aux auditeurs les sentiments dont nous sommes animés, c'est en cela que consiste l'expression, dont la sensibilité de l'artiste n'est que la source. Pour y parvenir, il faut se livrer à un travail des plus longs, à une recherche des plus difficiles. Mais l'émotion de l'artiste, la communication de cette émotion, sont peut-être les plus grandes joies de l'art du chant.” Jane Bathori, \textit{Conseils sur le Chant} (Paris: La Schola Cantorum, 1939), 19.

\textsuperscript{254}\textemdash{}``Tâchez qu'il soit juste, simple et humain.” Ibid., 19.
more aesthetic, more experimental, less cathartic. The poet is not there (except for rare exceptions) to express his sadness.255

The difference in musical settings of German and French poetry originates in this difference between the externalized emotion of German Romantic poetry and the emotional distance presented in French poetry. Bernac explains that the consequence for mélodie is often ambiguity: “It is indeed possible that the art of the greatest French composers is an art of suggestion, more often expressing moods and impressions than precise emotions.”256 A performer may feel expressively trapped in the aloof nature of French poetry at first, but understanding the aesthetic goals of the poetry helps a singer locate the expressivity in the imagery and language. Both Hahn and Bathori suggest that some historical research on the part of the singer is necessary to arrive at the required style of any music. Le Roux and Bernac specify that a particular research into the role of poetry (whether he or she is studying Lieder, mélodie, or another style) is appropriate. An appreciation of the aesthetic goals of the poetry effects the style of performance, which is why both Bernac and Le Roux are careful to describe the poetic world of the mélodie in their books.

After discussing the poetry, Le Roux explores the world in which the original singers of mélodie performed:


256 Bernac, The Interpretation of French Song, 33.
What are the consequences for the singer? Let’s see how that went during concerts during which first performances of mélodies were given. The singer was generally an amateur performing for a small audience. This inspired more of a collective enjoyment of “initiates” – very well described by Proust – than a collective catharsis.257

Le Roux asks us to consider not only the original performers, but their audience. These performances usually took place in music salons, gatherings in the homes of the composers themselves and their artist friends, or in the homes of the aristocracy or the haute bourgeoisie, which boasted the presence of the artistic “initiates” that Le Roux mentions. As Sylvia Kahan explains, both the performers and the audience members at these salons were knowledgeable:

The artists who performed these works were often of great renown, as many of the greatest artists of the capital devoted a significant amount of their professional lives to performances in the salons: these venues were perceived as important stepping-stones to greater visibility in the public sphere. Composers, too, aspired to have their pieces performed in private gatherings, as important contacts could be made: conductors, critics, directors of theater were frequently in attendance.258

Therefore, everyone present at these performances was likely aware of trends and aesthetics in both poetry and music. If a vocal performance of the songs of Hahn or Fauré, for example, were overly emotive or descriptive, such an audience would have found it incompatible with the poetry. The poetry of any of the preferred poets of the time, such as Verlaine or Louÿs, suits both the venue and the educated listeners, and any modern singer who attempts mélodie should take all of this into account in order to

257 “Quelles consequences pour le chanteur? Observons comment cela se passait lors des séances où des melodies étaient créées. Le chanteur était généralement un amateur qui s’adressait à un petit auditoire. Cela induisait advantage une jouissance collective d’initiés – très bien décrite par Proust – qu’une catharsis collective.” Ibid.
present a performance in the proper style. This is the preparation, based on knowledge of
the historical circumstances and aesthetic preoccupations of the time, that Hahn is
advocating in his lecture.

At this point, a modern researcher might reasonably be disappointed not to find
more detailed suggestions of how a singer may find the correct “style.” As the lecture
progresses, Hahn offers further reflections on the topic, but they are rather vague:
according to him, everyone sings too loudly; embellishments and *portamenti* are not
always in poor taste, but these ornaments must be used sparingly. Finally, he laments that
most students do not take care to learn rhythm properly. These complaints are not unique
to Hahn and his contemporaries; however, we will return to his ideas in more detail when
discussing his music.

**Venezia: “La Barcheta”**

To consider Hahn’s ideas on style within the context of his music, let us turn to
his collection *Venezia* (published in 1901). This set marks roughly the midpoint of
Hahn’s song output, composed just after the *Études latines* (written during the last decade
of the nineteenth century and published in 1900) and just before *Les Feuilles blessées*
(written between 1901 and 1906 and published in 1907). While the other two collections
took several years to complete, Hahn dashed off all six songs of *Venezia* within the
calendar year 1900 after visiting the city with his cousin, Marie Nordlinger, and Marcel
Proust. The poetry is by Venetian poet Pietro Buratti (1772–1832) and is written not in
standard Italian, but in the Venetian dialect. Hahn himself first performed the set,
accompanying himself on an old piano while sitting in a gondola on a Venetian canal.
He wanted the set of songs to conjure up a particularly hedonistic Venice, as he describes in a letter to Marie: “This is banal, cosmopolitan, pleasure-loving Venice, floating on a tide of indolence and facile love affairs.”

**La Barcheta**

La note è bela,  
Fa presto, o Nineta,  
Andemo in barcheta  
I freschi a ciapar!  
A Toni g’ho dito  
Ch’el felze el ne cava  
Per goder sta bava  
Che supia dal mar.  
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!

Se gh’è tra de lori  
Chi troppo indiscreto  
Volessa da pèto  
El velo strapar,  
No bada a ste frotole,  
Soleti za semo  
E Toni el so’ remo  
Lè a tento a menar.  
Ah!


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LA BARCHETA.

PIETRO BURATTI.

Andantino con moto, ma languido.

CHANT.

PIANO.

Pedale.

be - la,______ Fa pres - to, o Ni - ne - ta,______ An - de - mo in bar -

che - ta____ I fres - chi a cia - par!______ A To - ni g’ho di - to______
“La Barcheta” is the second song in the set and its appealing, lilting refrain makes it popular and often recorded (Ex. 5.1). The song offers an interesting rhythmic scheme: the vocal line begins in 6/8 while the piano part begins in 2/4. The two parts are both in 3/4 for the repeated “Ah” refrain (measures 19–25, 44–50, 69–75) and then resume their original respective meters for each verse. The effect created by the different meters combined with the rolled chords of the accompaniment brings to mind the rocking gondola of the poetry. The text also constantly references the breezes that the couple experiences on the canals, and the triplets of the refrain reflect this image.

With this song, Hahn contributes to a genre already well in place in French music: the barcarolle. According to Grove Music Online, this genre of music evokes the songs of the Venetian gondolier (whether or not it is actually sung), and a basic feature of the music is a 6/8 time signature. In Hahn’s case, the connection to Venice is explicit, but in other cases, the gondoliers’ songs are implied by the time signature and rocking rhythm. An example of the barcarolle in vocal music that Hahn would have known well is Offenbach’s barcarolle duet for two sopranos from Les contes d’Hoffman, “Belle nuit, ô nuit d’amour.” Therefore, Hahn was not only reacting to inspiration from his

261 Examples of barcarolles for solo piano include Chopin’s Barcarolle in F-sharp major, Op. 60 (1845–6) and Fauré’s thirteen barcarolles for piano composed between 1880 and 1921.
262 Offenbach’s Les contes d’Hoffman premiered at the Opéra-Comique in 1881. Offenbach died just before the premiere and the opera underwent revisions in subsequent productions in Vienna and Berlin before becoming the popular and often-performed opera it is today. However, stand-out scenes such as Olympia’s “Doll Song” and the barcarolle duet were popular from the outset.
Venetian experience, but seizing the opportunity to combine this inspiration with the popularity of the well-known genre.

Because Hahn employs compositional techniques that evoke the natural world, the tempo of the performance greatly influences the overall effect of the song. In Hahn’s recording from 1919, the tempo varies only slightly between \( \dot{J} \) (or \( J \)) = 72–75. He takes a slight ritard at the end of the refrain (for example, in measure 25), ending at roughly \( J = 65 \). The other recordings that were surveyed for this study—those of Gerard Souzay (1959), Anthony Rolfe Johnson (1987), Anne Sofie von Otter (2000), Joyce DiDonato (2006) and Matthew Polenzani (2011)—all take slower tempi, some significantly so, and most of them offer more extreme rubati throughout the song. The disparate tempi relate to the tempo marking “Andantino con moto, ma languido” (“a bit faster than a walking pace with movement, but languid”), which seems to contain a contradiction: the first phrase describes a forward motion, while the second suggests holding back. Hahn’s interpretation emphasizes the “andantino con moto,” while the other recordings, particularly Souzay’s, emphasize the “languido” idea of the marking.
TABLE 5.1 Comparison of tempi in six recordings of Hahn’s “La Barcheta.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singer/Pianist</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Length of Recording</th>
<th>Average tempo:♩</th>
<th>Slowest sustained tempo:♩</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reynaldo Hahn</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>2:49</td>
<td>72–75</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne Sofie von Otter/ Bengt Forsberg</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>3:03</td>
<td>61–65</td>
<td>52–58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joyce DiDonato/ Julius Drake</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>3:58</td>
<td>46–51</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew Polenzani/ Julius Drake</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>3:41</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While Hahn maintains the beat at around 75 for the dotted quarter, Souzay takes the song at ♩ = 64; Souzay’s significantly longer recording time (3:33, compared to Hahn’s 2:49) is also due to his frequent use of rubato: for example, at measures 14, 39, and 64 (the same moment in each verse), Souzay hangs on to the high note for almost two seconds, while Hahn does not slow down at all the first time and only slows slightly at that spot for the second two verses. There are no markings regarding tempo at these moments, but the dynamic markings become progressively softer: at measure 39 the marking is p, while at measure 64, the marking is pp. Perhaps Hahn wished to create an increasingly intimate atmosphere as the song progressed, and he allowed some rubato to occur in his performance at these moments to help create that effect. Both Hahn and Souzay take some extra time at the hemiola at the end of the “Ah” refrain (m. 24–26), but Souzay’s slower tempo requires that he take an extra breath in the middle, while Hahn moves through the refrain each time without taking a breath.
Anthony Rolfe Johnson’s 1987 recording begins with a slightly slower tempo than Souzay’s, with the dotted-quarter note roughly equaling 59, but his rubati are less frequent and do not slow down as much; his overall time is slightly shorter than Souzay’s.

Anne Sofie von Otter’s approach to the song suggests familiarity with all of Hahn’s ideas: she judiciously incorporates small portamenti, such as a slight scoop at the onset of the “ah” refrain and at measure 32, but not at other entrances such as measures 33 and 37; she sings the written grace notes with scrupulous detail; the “ah”s are limpid but do not significantly disturb the general beat. Overall, her use of rubato and other effects never distract from the integrity of the metric demands. She also makes the greatest use of color changes among all the performances considered here: her final iteration of the “ah” employs little to no vibrato and she carries the entire phrase to the end without an extra breath, producing a ghostly ending.

Joyce DiDonato employs the slowest tempo, demonstrating great breath control throughout. She often disregards rests and instead links phrases together, such as the first two phrases and the third and fourth phrases. She also creates a delayed onset for the “ah” phrases, especially at measure 45. Before the final high note in the last verse “soleti za semo,” (“for we are all alone”), she does not take the breath before the phrase in measure 64 and she does not hang onto the note as long as Souzay. However, she retains the slower tempo for the next phrase instead of speeding it up (Hahn goes back to the original tempo, while Souzay goes slightly faster). Like Souzay and von Otter, she chooses to sing without vibrato from the final “ah” and to end the song with a quiet murmur, following the score’s indications of diminuendo molto and its final dynamic of pp.
Polenzani makes many of the same choices that DiDonato does. He is the only singer to begin the final “ah” refrain without a breath. He moves through measures 69–70 without breathing, taking a breath only at measure 73 and again at measure 75.

He is sometimes less scrupulous with the rhythm: at measure 14 he enters on the first beat of the measure instead of the second eighth-note beat, and he drops a beat at the end of measure 63 as well.

In light of these different interpretations, it is useful to look closely at Hahn’s discussion of *rubato* in his lecture:

> The rhythm must be always nothing less than unimpeachable within the *rubato*; that is to say: *rubato* exists precisely in that it is required to balance the pace and if we are once urged to slow, we must next, through a sort of reflex, do the opposite to reestablish the rhythm on its axis; in a word, it is the law of rhythmic compensation. If one slows down, it is necessary in the next moment to accelerate to regain lost time; but during this phrase, the rhythm must remain immutable, mysteriously inflexible.²⁶³

Other composers of Hahn’s day, such as Gabriel Fauré, were also frustrated with performers’ approach to tempo and *rubato*. Martha Elliott points out:

> Fauré, with his dislike of flamboyance, wished for a simpler, more accurate approach to rhythm and tempo in his songs. As he became more famous and respected, his attitude influenced the younger generation of composers and performers. They in turn began to insist on a precise and accurate execution of the rhythms and tempos specified in the music. Yet we must remember that what they considered to be precise and accurate is quite different from what we are used to hearing today. They were reacting against the excesses of the Romantic style.

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²⁶³ “Jamais le rythme ne doit être plus infaillible que dans le rubato, c'est-à-dire que le rubato consiste précisément en ce que l'on est tenu d'équilibrer le rythme et que, dès que l'on a pressé pour ralentir, il faut, ensuite, par une sorte de mouvement réflexe, faire le contraire pour rétablir le rythme sur son axe; en un mot, c'est une loi de compensation rythmique. Si l'on a ralenti, il faut, ensuite, presser pour regagner le temps perdu ; mais, pendant ce temps, le rythme doit rester immuable, mystérieusement inflexible.” Hahn, *Du Chant*, 124.
while still somewhat under its influence.264

Performers who worked with Debussy also relate that he insisted on fidelity to the tempo markings in his scores. The pianist Marguerite Long recounts:

A pianist once came to play to him some of his pieces. He stopped at a certain passage and said: “Master, according to me this should be ‘free.’ Recalling this, Debussy would say: “There are some who write music, some who edit it, and there is that gentleman who does what he pleases.” I asked him what he had said at the time. Scornfully he remarked: “Oh, nothing. I looked at the carpet, but he will never tread on it again.”265

Singers also noticed Debussy’s exacting nature. English soprano Maggie Teyte described him as “precise and pedantic to the nth degree.”266 One of Hahn’s favorite French sopranos, Ninon Vallin, recalled Debussy’s rhythmic precision: “The duplets and triplets which so often feature in the melodic line of Debussy’s songs, and which are nearly always opposed to the rhythmical movement of the accompaniment, had to be perfectly balanced. He hardly ever made any remarks, he only insisted that the performer should look closely at what he had written.”267 Jane Bathori published a short treatise in 1953 entitled Sur l’interprétation des mélodies de Claude Debussy [On the interpretation of the mélodies of Claude Debussy].268 In her words of advice on singing Debussy’s

264 Elliott, Singing in Style, 212–213.
songs, she often returns to the theme of rhythm and tempo of the music:

Try to enter into the essence of this music, which is at one with the text. Once you are in possession of this foundation, if you truly have a [musical] personality, it will have a chance to manifest itself. But don’t begin there or you will forever compromise the true interpretation. . . . [W]hy permit alterations of time, tempo, or shading in a song just because there are words, and because one believes that one feels them otherwise, and better, than they way they have been set by the composer.269

This paragraph suggests that Bathori had observed singers imposing their own sense of the text onto the music, neglecting Debussy’s musical demands. If the poetry is already “one with the music,” the singer must only pay strict attention to the music and the words will be expressed within that context. Bathori wrote these sentences in 1953; it would seem that, since Debussy’s death in 1918, vocal performances had become increasingly erratic in regard to rhythmic integrity in her opinion. Bathori echoes Hahn, Fauré, and Debussy in her admonition to performers to pay closer attention to the rhythmic choices of the composers, and, presumably, to steer clear of dramatic shifts of tempo and uses of rubato.

If one takes all of these writings into account, it would seem then that Souzay is the most out of step with Hahn’s ideas of rubato, as his lingering on the highest note in each verse almost amounts to a fermata; in each instance, the pianist is obliged to stop and wait for Souzay to continue the descending line. Von Otter’s performance, perhaps,

269 “Essayez d’entrer dans le sens même de cette musique qui ne fait qu’un avec les paroles et, une fois en possession de cette base, si vous avez vraiment une personnalité, elle aura l’occasion de se manifester; mais ne commencez pas par là, vous compromettriez pour toujours la véritable interprétation. . . . [P]ourquoi se permettre dans une mélodie d’altérer la mesure, le mouvement, les nuances parce qu’il y a des paroles et qu’on croit les sentir autrement et mieux qu’elles ne sont traduites par l’auteur.” Ibid., 34–38.
comes the closest to Hahn’s interpretation of rubato—particularly in the third verse, where her vocal line constantly takes liberties with time while the accompaniment adjusts to her nuances without changing the overall steady beat of the song. Her rubato on the high note of the final verse most closely resembles Hahn’s own approach, and the pianist slows without actually stopping.

In his lecture on style, Hahn also touches on two other issues: embellishments and portamenti. Embellishments are written into this piece in the form of grace notes that appear in measures 10, 17, and 18 of each verse. Performers of Hahn’s era did not have the modern tradition of adhering strictly to the written score, and Hahn’s performance of this song bears that out particularly in his treatment of the grace notes. Hahn does not place his embellishments where they are written, but at the beginning of each measure. For example, he does not embellish the B-flat in measure 10, but rather the C, which is on the first beat (Ex. 5.2). Whenever the embellishment occurs, Hahn places it on the first note of the measure, rather than the note indicated in the score. The other singers surveyed here all choose to follow the score, placing the embellishment on the note indicated. However, there are differences in text underlay. In measure 18, both Souzay and Polenzani carry the first syllable of “supia” through the grace notes, only changing to the second syllable on the D pitch (see m. 18 of Ex. 5.1). The other singers place the second syllable on the F (the first pitch of the embellishment). There are other differences in text underlay in regard to the grace notes among the recordings in the later verses, but all embellish the pitch as written. Hahn himself is the only one who embellishes another pitch altogether. It is impossible to know if he changed his mind about where the embellishment should occur after publication, or if he simply did not feel compelled to
follow the score rigorously. In either case, this discrepancy may give a modern performer more freedom to interpret the vocal line in the manner he or she feels is appropriate.

As written:  

As performed:

EXAMPLE 5.2 Measures 10–11 of vocal line of “La Barcheta” as written in the score ©Huntsville: Recital Publications, 1986, 9. Used by permission. The second example as performed by Reynaldo Hahn in 1909 recording.

The use of portamenti is also varied. Hahn himself employs portamento sparingly. He writes that some portamento is necessary as a means of legato singing, but he has harsh criticism for its overuse:

If singers completely refused to use portamento, the melody would be too dry. Singers always use it unconsciously and in small amounts. The portamento is barely audible, but it creates, in short, legato singing. But this subtle sliding is not really portamento in the strict sense of the word. The true portamento is much more marked, more conscious. It is a tool that is often overused in order to add expression to singing; but this expression easily takes on a whining, silly, and, above all, abominably vulgar character.270

During the first verse at measures 5 and 14 (see Ex. 5.1), Hahn approaches the words “bela” (“beautiful”) and “felze” (“canopy”) from below the pitch, but, just as he

270 “Si l’on ne faisait jamais de port de voix, le chant serait trop sec; on en fait toujours, inconsciemment, de très insignifiants qui sont à peine appréciables par l’oreille et qui constituent, en somme, le legato du chant. Mais ce ne sont pas là des ports de voix proprement dits. Le vrai port de voix est beaucoup plus marqué, plus conscient. C’est un moyen dont on a souvent abusé pour donner au chant de l’expression; mais cette expression prend aisément un caractère pleurnichard, niais et surtout odieusement vulgaire.” Hahn, Du Chant, 122.
explains, this is barely a true *portamento*; it is more of an expressive “scoop.” In his second lecture, “How Do We Sing?,” Hahn also refers to this “scoop” in a discussion of Fauré’s “La parfum impérissable” (Ex. 5.3). He suggests that the singer approach the word “parfumée” (“perfumed”), which occurs in measure 17, “from below the note F sharp upon which the syllable ‘fu’ is sung.”\(^{271}\) Elliott suggests that this approach reflects a harmonic consideration, as the line is approaching a cadential gesture: “In this particular harmonic context, the F-sharp at the end of m. 16 helps to turn the harmony back toward the tonic E major after a brief excursion into more distant flat keys; Hahn probably believed that shading the pitch from below would clarify the harmony in addition to being expressive.”\(^{272}\)

While a case for this harmonic consideration could be made for the word “felze”—this measure consists of a V7 chord on G leading to a cadence in C Major in the following measure—the word “bela” occurs within two measures of the tonic chord. As the song progresses, Hahn often approaches pitches from below, regardless of harmonic shifts. Therefore, his reason for this “scoop” is not necessarily predicated on harmonic shifts: perhaps the gesture is purely expressive.


\(^{272}\) Elliott, *Singing in Style*, 209.
Elliott suggests that while singers of Hahn’s era often approached a note from below, singers today rarely do so. However, all of the recordings surveyed here demonstrate that this approach, from below the note, is still very much in use: Souzay, DiDonato, and Rolfe Johnson all follow Hahn’s example (even employing a more obvious “scoop” at times); von Otter and Polenzani also use it, but more sparingly. Interestingly, all of these modern singers also use a great deal more *portamento* on descending lines, even if the intervallic distance is small. For example, von Otter executes an obvious slide between pitches A and G (measures 10 and 11) on the word “ciapar” (“enjoy”), while Polenzani makes the same choice in measure 7, moving from pitches D to C on the second to the third syllables of “Nineta.” Like von Otter, DiDonato sings many *portamenti* on small intervals, such as on the words “ciapar” (“enjoy”), “laguna” (“lagoon”), and “luna” (“moon”). Hahn himself has only one truly clear descending *portamento* on the word “luna.” But Hahn’s tempo is the fastest (*j* = 72–75), while DiDonato’s is the slowest (*j* = 46–51), which perhaps makes the *portamenti* more

**Example 5.3** Measures 17–18 of “La parfum impérissable” by Gabriel Fauré. Public domain.
obvious or practical. Overall, the use of *portamenti* is clearly greater in more recent recordings, rather than less.

Echoing Hahn, Jane Bathori writes that *portamenti* are desirable as long as they are executed in good taste: “Beware of effects which the *tessitura* of certain descending phrases could permit: I speak of too-obvious *portamenti*, which would be in bad taste.” Unfortunately, she does not clarify in this passage what she means by *tessitura*, but an overview of her recordings shows that she uses *portamento* sparingly and almost never below G, even in songs that sit lower, such as Debussy’s “C’est l’extase.” In the case of “La barcheta,” it is possible to reach more than one conclusion. The increase of *portamenti* on descending intervals is clearly linked with a slower tempo, but Hahn’s recording and lectures suggest that expressive approaches from below the note are in keeping with his tempo and with his personal aesthetic.

Another issue that confronts an interpreter of these songs is that of pronunciation. Hahn clearly wanted the singer to employ the Venetian dialect, and he includes a little pronunciation guide (*petit lexique*) in the score:

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**Figure 5.1** *Petit lexique* from Reynaldo Hahn’s *Venezia*, p. iv. © Huntsville: Recital Publications, 1986. Used by permission.

Converted into symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet, a translation of Hahn’s lexicon looks like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Small Lexicon</th>
<th>In the Venetian Dialect:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The e</td>
<td>is pronounced...............[e]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The u</td>
<td>is pronounced...............[u]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xe</td>
<td>is pronounced...............[ze]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The c placed before an i, is pronounced as in French ([s])</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The l placed between two vowels as in <em>Gondola, Cielo</em>, etc. should be barely heard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The g placed before an e, is pronounced.........[je]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Example 5.4** Translation of Reynaldo Hahn’s *petite lexique*

Hahn himself sings the text with the pronunciation laid out in his lexicon. However, there are some situations that his lexicon does not cover. In the second verse, the word “chiaro” (“clear”) appears, but the combination of “ch” is not considered in the lexicon. Hahn sings it with a hard [tʃ], which differs from the standard Italian pronunciation of [k]. Furthermore, in Venetian the double consonants disappear: the word “bella” (“beautiful”) becomes “bela.” Venetian is a dialect with many variations, and, in view of these omissions, a modern singer might wonder if she or he can rely on Hahn’s understanding of the dialect to sing the text effectively. The singer must confront this question: does he imitate Hahn’s pronunciation on his own recording and follow the lexicon, or does he do further research to determine a more precise understanding of the dialect? Is his responsibility to the language or to Hahn’s idea of the language (even if it is incomplete)? Which approach would be more “stylistic”?

The singers already discussed chose various paths. Souzay, who only recorded “La Barcheta” and not the other songs of the set, treats the text as if it were standard Italian. His “l” is clearly the standard Italian dental “l,” on words such as “bela” and “soleti” (measures 5 and 31), although Hahn suggests that the “l” between two vowels is “heard as little as possible.” Hahn pronounces the “e” of “ciapar” (measures 10–11) as [s], as indicated in the lexicon, but Souzay uses the standard Italian [tʃ]. DiDonato and Rolfe Johnson both employ the authentic Venetian dialect, but some of their choices nonetheless differ from those of Hahn and Souzay. They both pronounce the “e” (such as in “bela” and “Nineta”) in a much more closed manner: [e]. They also both use a clear [j] between two vowels, which differs from the instructions in Hahn’s lexicon and Souzay’s standard Italian pronunciation. They both sing “ciapar” with the standard [tʃ] like Souzay,
but they both also pronounce “ch” of “chiaro” (“clear”; m.33) as [tʃ], while Souzay uses [k]. Hahn sings “chiaro” with a light [tʃ].

Matthew Polenzani also combines the suggestions from Hahn’s lexicon with standard Italian pronunciation. He treats the “l” in a similar fashion to that of DiDonato and Rolfe Johnson ([j]), but his “e” vowel in words such as “bela” is not as closed as theirs is: it is more [ɛ] than [e]. Polenzani also sings “ciapar” with the standard Italian [tʃ] like Souzay, but in the second verse, on the word “chiaro,” he chooses a light [tʃ] over the standard [k]. Von Otter adheres to the standard Italian pronunciation throughout.
Venezia: Che pecà!

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

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

Ti xe bela, ma pur ti xe dona,  
Qualche neo lo conosso anca in ti;  
Co ti ridi co un’altra persona,  
Me diverto co un’altra anca mi.  
Benedeta la so’ libertà.  
Che pecà!

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

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

“Che pecà!” poem by Francesco Dall’Ongaro (1808–1873). Translation by © Laura Sarti. Lieder.net. Used with permission.
**CHE PECÀ!**

*au Prince GIOVANNI BORGHESE.*

**FRANCESCO DALL’ONGARO.**

Allegrato vivo.

1. Te recorristi, Ninna, quinci, Che ti
genero solo pensier? Che torni, che rabia, che a
ni? Mai un’
ora de veropiacer! Per fortuna quel tempo andà! Che pè

The recordings of the fifth song of the set, “Che pecà!,” also offer interesting differences in performance approaches (Ex. 5.5). In his performance, Hahn brings out the humor in the music and the text, treating it as a music-hall number. According to Hahn’s biographer Jacques Depaulis, this approach would have come easily to Hahn. The composer’s parents were sophisticated people, and Depaulis describes how Hahn accompanied them, even as a child, not only to the Opéra and Opéra-Comique, but also to cafés and music halls. The young Hahn immediately internalized what he was hearing: “He begins at an early age to amuse himself at his parents’ piano, recalling with astonishing ease the songs of Offenbach, who is at this time all the rage in Paris, or the music-hall songs which he has heard.”

A modern singer would do well to acquaint himself or herself with this genre of song in order to sing “Che pecà!” convincingly.

For example, Hahn also recorded “Les charbonniers et les fariniers” from Offenbach’s *La Boulangère a des Écus*, and he sings both Offenbach’s music and his own “Che pecà!” with a similar approach. In both performances, he often deviates from the written score, and he is free with vocal technique, often abandoning classical sounds. He simply speaks the text of the fifth line of the verse in “Che pecà!,” nonchalantly tossing off phrases such as “No me scaldo po’tanto el figà” (“and no longer get agitated”) and “Benedeta la so’ libertà” (“Blessed be one’s own freedom”). Hahn also follows the score loosely: he opens the song with the small *ritornello* that occurs between the verses, nonchalantly tossing off phrases such as “No me scaldo po’tanto el figà” (“and no longer get agitated”) and “Benedeta la so’ libertà” (“Blessed be one’s own freedom”). Hahn also follows the score loosely: he opens the song with the small *ritornello* that occurs between the verses,

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276 Offenbach’s *La Boulangère a des Écus* [“The Baker’s Wife Has Plenty of Money”] debuted at the Théâtre des Variétés in 1875. A second version was presented the next year at the same theater.
not the introductory measure of two chords indicated in the score. He consistently sings the downbeat of the repeated phrase “che pecà!” later than indicated on the page. He also deviates from the score in the final postlude (Ex. 5.6) by altering the first two dyads in the right hand, interpolating a high B-flat and maintaining the tonic harmony (Fig. 5.1, m. 69). Finally, in the last measure, in place of the solitary tonic chord on beat one in the printed score, the recorded version contains two tonic chords, with the second chord played up an octave for emphasis (Fig. 5.1, m. 71). The overall effect is one of poised nonchalance and controlled indifference.

**Example 5.6** Final measures (68–71) of Reynaldo Hahn’s “Che pecà!” ©Huntsville: Recital Publications, 1986, 28. Used by permission.

**Figure 5.2** Final measures (68–71) as played by Reynaldo Hahn in 1919 recording, 2:06.

Rolfe Johnson, DiDonato, Polenzani, and von Otter take a more formal approach to the song, adhering more strictly to the score than the composer does. However, their
performances are still infused with humor and varied colors, illuminated by creative choices on the part of the pianists. Julius Drake, accompanist to both DiDonato and Polenzani, brings a new color to the fifth and final verse by sustaining the chords. The score is marked *legato* in the vocal line, but Drake applies this to the piano part as well, effectively erasing the rests in the bars and removing the jaunty feeling. DiDonato and Polenzani slow down as well, although a *poco ritard* is not indicated until five measures later. Bengt Forsberg, von Otter’s pianist, not only employs the *sostenuto* pedal, but rolls the chords in the final verse, underscoring von Otter’s *legato* line. Graham Johnson, who accompanies Anthony Rolfe Johnson, maintains an unchanging character throughout the song.

**Table 5.2** Comparison of tempi in five recordings of Hahn’s “Che pecâ!”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singer/Pianist</th>
<th>Length of Recording</th>
<th>Average Tempo</th>
<th>Fifth Verse (beat=J.)</th>
<th>Final line of the poem (beat=J.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reynaldo Hahn</td>
<td>2:15</td>
<td>136–143</td>
<td>No change</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthony Rolfe Johnson/ Graham Johnson</td>
<td>2:36</td>
<td>87–98</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne Sofie von Otter/ Bengt Forsberg</td>
<td>2:29</td>
<td>91–117</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joyce DiDonato/ Julius Drake</td>
<td>2:14</td>
<td>115–126</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew Polenzani/ Julius Drake</td>
<td>2:12</td>
<td>117–123</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rolfe Johnson’s tempo, $J=97$, is the steadiest. It does not deviate substantially until the final line of the poem, “Senza gnanca pensarghe al passâ!” (“without a thought for the past”), which Hahn has marked *molto espressivo* and *ritardando*. All of the singers take time with this final moment (see fifth column of Table 5.2). The differences
lie in the preceding verse, especially in the piano accompaniment as described above. Although the vocal line is merely marked *legato*, every singer except for Hahn and Rolfe Johnson also interpolates a *ritard* at the beginning of the verse.

In terms of overall tempo and *rubato*, Hahn, DiDonato, and Polenzani take roughly the same basic tempo. The tempo marking is “Allegretto vivo” (“a bit lively and vigorous”) and these three performers lean on the “vivo” part of the phrase. Hahn’s tempo mainly stays between 136–143, slowing down at the ends of verses to about 120. His slowest pace, which occurs at the final vocal phrase is 55 at its slowest. DiDonato is only slightly slower at a basic tempo of 126, and she does not slow down nearly as much as Hahn. The score indicates *senza rallentando* at the final utterance of “che pecà!”, but Hahn slows down quite a bit, while DiDonato only employs a *ritard* where it is marked two measures later. Polenzani takes the same approach as DiDonato.

Von Otter and Forsberg offer the most variation in tempo and use of *rubato*. It is difficult to ascertain an average tempo because both performers are so flexible. Even in the first measure, Forsberg creates a slight hesitation between the first two chords. When von Otter enters, the tempo seems to settle briefly at $J=97$ but then takes some time at measure 7 with the second syllable of “tormenti” (“torments”), employing a slight *ritard* at measure 13 (even though the score is marked *senza rallentando*). During the first verse, von Otter tends to be deliberate in the first half of the bar, while picking up some speed during the second half of the bar, and Forsberg follows this perfectly. This performance reflects Hahn’s stated definition of *rubato*: according to Hahn, there is a “law of rhythmic compensation”: once the tempo is altered, it is quickly reestablished with a slight acceleration.
Von Otter’s tempo of the third verse is much slower than the first two ($J=88$), but the speed picks up and by the final line of the verse, the tempo is closer to $J=125$. For his part, Forsberg’s interludes between verses are not always stable in terms of tempo: during the first ritornello, his tempo is steady at 114, while the interlude between verses 3 and 4 begins at around $J=115$, but he delays the onset of the initial beat which provides intense interest as the interlude continues. It is interesting to note that, while Hahn himself offers the greatest span of tempo variation (55 at its slowest and 143 at its fastest pace), von Otter and Forsberg offer the greatest tension in regard to tempo. Their tempo variation is smaller (52–117), but their temporal variety within verses—even within a measure—is remarkable. While the meter is always clear, the flow of the music is mysterious to the listener because it is not always perfectly even.

As with “La Barcheta,” questions related to the pronunciation of Venetian arise in “Che pecà!” In keeping with the instructions in his lexicon, Hahn pronounces the word “geri” (“you were”) in the first verse with [j] and the “c” in the words, “piacer” (“joy”), “oci” (“eyes”), and “batoci” (“behavior”) as [s]. (In his lexicon, Hahn mentions the treatment of the “c” before an “i,” but not before an “e.”) DiDonato, Rolfe Johnson, and Polenzani all choose to sing “geri” with [dʒ] and the “c” in “piacer” as [s], but “oci” and “batoci” as [tʃ]. As she does in “La Barcheta,” Von Otter again adheres to standard Italian pronunciation, although she defers to Hahn’s instructions on how to pronounce the letter “x” since no standard Italian word begins with that letter.

As the suggestions for pronunciation in Hahn’s score are sometimes incomplete, a modern singer is left with questions of how to proceed. The varied recordings by distinguished performers suggest that often more than one choice is acceptable. A serious
singer today would certainly research Venetian pronunciation in order to be as accurate as possible, not relying on Hahn’s lexicon. Therefore, it is entirely possible that a modern performance would differ from Hahn’s original performance in respect to diction.

In summation, Hahn’s discussions of style often raise more questions than they answer. The composer’s use of musical imagery, while intriguing, adds to the complications. Hahn would like a singer to evoke a Schubertiade when singing Schubert – but doesn’t guide the singer towards a clear vision of the elements embodied in such an evening. If one undertakes an interpretation of Venezia, must one envision that first performance in a gondola on a canal? What would that mean in terms of tempo, rubato, or pronunciation? While the printed score is available, Hahn himself deviates from it – so how much may a modern singer stray from the printed instructions? As the more modern recordings demonstrate, there is a general tendency toward performances at slower tempi, but that is by no means a concrete indicator of style. And while Hahn, Fauré, and Bathori all lament a lack of strict rhythmic integrity, they also all advocate for rubato and portamenti, albeit in judicious amounts.

As Hahn himself points out, a composer is always immutably of his time. Just as Gluck set music in ancient Greece while still reflecting his own era, Hahn reflects the stylistic preferences of the belle époque. As he writes to his cousin Marie Nordlinger, the Venice he expresses in Venezia is “floating on a tide of indolence and facile love affairs”—a Venice reflected through the lens of a visiting Parisian. Therefore, a modern singer can only imagine Hahn’s Venice, while finding a personal evocation of the impromptu recital on the canal. The singer has the freedom to make choices about
pronunciation and tempo, *portamenti* and *rubato*, based on the fruits of his or her research and the goals for the performance.
Chapter Six

Lecture: “Comment émouvoir” (“How to move an audience”)

Song: “L’énamourée”

In the final lecture of the series, Reynaldo Hahn turns his attention to the question of how a singer evokes emotion from his or her audience. He acknowledges the difficulty of his task:

Indeed, the range of human emotions is infinite, and the capacity for emotion varies according to each individual; furthermore, this very multiplicity is subject to constant evolutions of time periods and mores, just as there are incalculable diversities of areas, countries, and regions. You will therefore understand why we must limit our present discussion, at the risk of prolonging this lecture to the point where we will no longer be here, while current sensibilities will have already changed!277

Hahn proposes to limit the discussion by “getting an idea of some of emotions”278 that can be found in all eras of music and then investigating ways of stirring these emotions. The lecture unfolds in two large sections: in the first, Hahn explains his view of acting, particularly in regard to singing; and in the second, he explores the expressive goals of the music of past eras, especially that of Gluck and Mozart. Hahn sings a great deal during this lecture to underscore his points. Fortunately, the names of the pieces he sings are recorded in the publication of the Journal de l’Université des Annales; in some cases, the entirety of the text of the song is printed. In the 1920 publication of the lectures (as well as the subsequent English translation of 1990), these references are omitted. The later publications also omit the end the lecture, depriving the

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277 “En effet, le champ de la sensibilité humaine est infini, l’émotivité varie selon chaque individu, et cette multiplicité même est soumise encore aux incessantes évolutions du temps et des mœurs, comme à l’innombrable diversité des zones, des pays, des régions les plus infimes. Vous comprendrez donc qu’il faut que nous nous bornions, sous peine de prolonger cette conférence à tel point que nous serions encore ici alors que la sensibilité actuelle aurait déjà changé!” Reynaldo Hahn, Du Chant (Paris: Pierre Lafitte, 1920), 125–126.

278 “nous pourrons, je crois, nous faire une idée des quelques sentiments,” Ibid., 126.
reader of a discussion of the genre of the romance, during which Hahn performs songs by Etienne-Nicolas Méhul, Loïsa Puget, and poet and chansonnier Pierre-Jean de Béranger.

Hahn’s view of acting and singing

Hahn notes that there are many singers who are technically proficient but who are not adept at moving the audience. He claims that their performances are boring, even if their voices are remarkable. In order to produce a moving performance, Hahn recommends that the singer create a vivid inner world while singing:

The singer must hold an image, clear or vague, before his eyes as he sings, suggested by the words that he sings. If he is required to describe objects, he must see them while singing; this is the only way he can transmit the vision to the listener. If it is a question of expressing a state of mind, he must find a personal way—either through splitting his personality or imagining another person to address—to experience in that moment the emotion that he wants to express.


Etienne-Nicolas Méhul (1763–1817) was a French composer whose works for the Opéra-Comique were praised by Berlioz, Weber, and Wagner. His dramatic subjects and inventive orchestration raised the level of French opera, and he was also the most important French symphonist of his time.

Loïsa Puget (1810–1889) was a French composer and singer. She studied with Adolphe Adam and composed over 300 romances; editions appeared in England, Germany, and the United States. She also composed two operettas and several solo piano works.

Pierre-Jean de Béranger (1780–1857) was a French songwriter. He revived the French political chanson, setting the stage for the role of music in political activism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

“Il faut qu’un chanteur ait devant les yeux, tandis qu’il chante, une image nette ou confuse, suggérée par les mots qu’il prononce; s’il s’agit pour lui d’évoquer des objets, il faut qu’il les voie en chantant; à ce prix seul, il en transmettra la vision à l’auditeur; s’il s’agit d’exprimer un
Hahn was not alone in his exhortation to employ visualization. Claire Croiza,\textsuperscript{284} who was considered one of the great conservators of the French vocal tradition and repertoire, recommends the same technique: “Utilize the pictures given by the poet, see them, represent them to yourself, evoke them by thinking of them.”\textsuperscript{285} The technique of visualization is common in the delivery of art song, which requires that the singer face the audience and declaim poetry through the vehicle of music. Hahn goes on, however, to imagine that a singer can “split” his personality in order to portray a state of mind. As we will see, this idea is already part of the theory of acting in France, and it becomes integral to Hahn’s approach to expressive singing.

Hahn then cautions that too much feeling can create a situation that makes singing impossible. As an example, he relates that he has heard people say that Maria Malibran\textsuperscript{286} cried as she sang, but he does not believe it. She may have experienced great emotion upon leaving the

\textsuperscript{284} Claire Croiza (1882–1946) was a French mezzo-soprano and influential vocal teacher. She studied with Jean de Reszke and had a long association with opera theatre La Monnaie in Brussels, where she sang the title role of \emph{Carmen}, Charlotte in \emph{Werther}, and the lead role in Fauré’s \emph{Pénélope}. She made her Paris Opéra debut in 1908 as Dalila in \emph{Samson et Dalila}. She turned increasingly from performing opera roles to \emph{mélodie} and \emph{Lieder}. Admired for her clear diction and subtle expression by Roussel, Saint-Saëns, and Debussy, she made many recordings of art song. She taught at the École Normale from 1922 and the Paris Conservatoire from 1934, and one of her pupils was Gérard Souzay.

\textsuperscript{285} The lectures given by Claire Croiza in her master classes were transcribed and translated by Hélène Abraham and published privately in Paris in 1954. These were republished in English in \textit{The Singer as Interpreter: Claire Croiza’s Master Classes}, ed. and trans. by Betty Bannerman (London: Victor Gollancz, 1989), 56.

\textsuperscript{286} Maria Malibran (1808–1836) was a Spanish mezzo-soprano. She was trained by her father, the elder Manuel García, and her sister Pauline Viardot was also a celebrated singer, pedagogue, and composer. Her brother was the younger Manuel García, whose research influenced vocal pedagogy in Europe and America from the mid-nineteenth century until today. Malibran sang at Covent Garden, La Scala, the Park Theatre (New York), and the Théâtre Italien (Paris). Closely associated with the works of Rossini, Donizetti, and Bellini, she was renowned for her enormous vocal range and emotional intensity.
stage, he says, but “when we are told that as she sang, she shed genuine tears, I do not believe it.”\textsuperscript{287} Hahn explains that it would be impossible to cry and sing difficult music at the same time, because the physical consequences of crying (stimulated mucus membranes, uneven breath control) would interfere with the singer’s technique. He concludes that, while a singer may make the audience cry, he or she should not make himself or herself do the same: “The most profound emotion may affect the singer to the point that the voice trembles, but it must not make singing impossible.”\textsuperscript{288}

An actor who does not sing, however, can allow true tears to fall. To demonstrate this situation, Hahn offers the example of a performance by his friend, the eminent actress Sarah Bernhardt.\textsuperscript{289} At the same time that Hahn was giving this lecture in Paris, in December of 1913, Bernhardt was performing the title role in the play \textit{Jeanne Doré}\textsuperscript{290} at the eponymous Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt in the same city. Hahn observes that, in her performance, Bernhardt “cries so much and the tears are so sorrowful that she can barely speak, and she stops sometimes between

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\textsuperscript{287} “Mais quand on nous dit qu’en chantant, elle pleurait de vraies larmes, je ne le crois pas.” Hahn, \textit{Du Chant}, 129.

\textsuperscript{288} “L’émotion la plus profonde peut envahir le chanteur au point même de faire trembler sa voix, mais il ne faut pas qu’elle rende le chant impossible.” Ibid.,130.

\textsuperscript{289} Sarah Bernhardt (1844–1923) was a French actor. Born Rosine Bernard in Paris, she spent much of her childhood at a boarding school, and then she entered the Paris Conservatoire, where she received prizes in both drama and comedy. Upon her graduation, she was contracted at the Comédie Française and later at the Odéon. She also managed her own Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt for two decades (now the Théâtre de la Ville). She toured extensively in Europe and America, celebrated for the intensity of her performances and her \textit{voix d’or} (voice of gold). She also acted in some of the earliest motion pictures.

\textsuperscript{290} \textit{Jeanne Doré} was a drama written by Tristan Bernard (1866–1947), a French playwright, novelist, journalist, and lawyer. Born Paul Bernard, he changed his first name to Tristan after his first publication appeared in \textit{La Revue Blanche} in 1891. He became well-known for vaudeville-style productions and his witty writing in plays and novels. \textit{Jeanne Doré} is one of his rarer dramatic works and it was premiered with Sarah Bernhardt in the title role at the Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt in 1913. In 1915, the director Louis Mercanond made it into a film with Bernhardt.
words, her voice cut off by the flow that comes from her heart.” Hahn does not claim to know how Bernhardt can summon such emotion every evening, but suggests that she herself might let the audience know: she was scheduled to begin her own series of lectures at the “Université des Annales” the following month (January and February of 1914).

It is worth pausing here to consider what Hahn admired about Bernhardt, given that their friendship was quite close. Hahn even published a short book seven years after the actress’s death, about their relationship, *La Grande Sarah: Souvenirs* (1930). In this memoir, he gives details about several of her performances. While he acknowledges her ability to express extreme emotion and let loose “sobs, tears more bitter than gall,” he spends a great deal of time explaining the nuances and discreet movements she produces. For Hahn, this is the most remarkable characteristic of many of her performances. For example, during a performance of Dumas’s *La Dame aux Camélias,* Hahn observes:

> I am sure that no actress was ever more natural on stage than Sarah in the scene with the powder-puff. . . . She goes up to the table, opens a casket, takes out a mirror and a powder-puff, shakes the puff, then powders herself. She only turns round once (a half

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291 “Elle pleure tellement et des larmes si douloureuses qu’elle peut à peine parler et qu’elle s’arrête parfois entre deux mots, la voix coupée par le flot qui lui sort du cœur.” Hahn, *Du Chant,* 129.


293 Ibid., 2.

294 The play *La Dame aux Camélias* by Alexandre Dumas fils is an adaptation of his novel by the same name. Dumas, who published the novel in 1848, adapted it for the stage and it was premiered in 1852 at the Théâtre du Vaudeville. The play was an immediate success both in France and abroad and indelibly associated Bernhardt’s name with that of the protagonist Marguerite Gautier. Bernhardt continued to perform the role throughout her career, in Paris, London, and New York, as well as in a 1911 silent film, directed by André Calmettes. *La Dame aux Camélias* has been adapted many times. Verdi’s 1853 opera *La Traviata* is based on the play, with the protagonist’s name changed to Violetta. The coveted role of Marguerite Gautier has been played onstage by stars such as Tallulah Bankhead (1930) and in films by Lillian Gish (1932) and Greta Garbo (1936, titled *Camille*). A heavily rewritten theatrical production premiered in 2000 at the Théâtre Marigny, starring Isabelle Adjani.
turn, which produces a far more natural gesture than if she turned right round), then hums while looking at herself in the glass.295

At another performance of the same play, Hahn again lingers on a small and restrained moment. He describes Bernhardt’s reaction when she (as Marguerite) notices her former lover: “‘Oh, what a mistake I made,’ she murmurs, turning away—And that is all, but what a look, what a shudder—and that subtle palpitation of her heart!”296 These observations call to mind Hahn’s insistence in his third lecture on being natural: “But I only know one way to give the impression of being natural: that is to be natural.”297 This quality seems to be what he admires most in Bernhardt’s acting. Although he also admires her ability to express herself with abandon, even giving herself over to wracking sobs, what captures his imagination the most is her control over the nuances that suggest strong emotions. He finds her most “natural” and relatable in those moments.

Bernhardt recorded her ideas about acting and theater in her own book, L’Art du Théâtre: la voix, le geste, la pronunciation (1923). She requires performers to fully experience the emotions they must portray:

Unless [the actor] can enter into the feelings of his heroes, however violent they may be, however cruel and vindictive they may seem, he will never be anything but a bad actor…. How can he convince another of his emotion, of the sincerity of his passions, if he is unable to convince himself to the point of actually becoming the character that he has to impersonate?298

295 “Je suis bien sûr que jamais comédienne n'eut plus de naturel dans un jeu de scène que Sarah dans celui de la houppe. . . . Elle s'approche de la table, ouvre un coffret, y prend une glace et une houppe, la secoue, se met de la poudre. Elle ne se retourne qu'une fois (à demi, ce qui donne au geste bien plus de naturel que si c'était tout à fait), puis chanteuse en se regardant dans la glace.” Hahn, Sarah Bernhardt, 4. Trans. Ethel Thompson, Sarah Bernhardt, 4.
296 “‘Ah! que j'ai eu tort!’ murmure-t-elle en se retournant. Et c'est tout. Mais quel regard! quel frisson! Et cette subite palpitation du coeur!” Ibid., 8.
297 “Mais, pour donner l’impression du naturel, je ne connais qu’un moyen: c’est d’être naturel.” Hahn, Du Chant, 75.
In Hahn’s memoir, he recounts a moment that proves that Bernhardt did indeed experience the emotions of a character fully. He visits a rehearsal and watches her perform a scene that concludes with a tearful farewell. As she greets Hahn afterward, she is pleased to see him but is still crying: “‘I can’t help crying,’ she declares. ‘I absolutely must feel grief at each rehearsal, otherwise I am no good at all.’”

The Paradox

Hahn and Bernhardt both place a high priority on a performer’s ability to experience emotions while performing; however, Hahn emphasizes that this emotion cannot interfere with the technical aspects of singing. This element of control that Hahn espouses recalls the essay Paradoxe sur le Comédien by Denis Diderot. In fact, Hahn brings this essay up, but only in passing, claiming the resultant discussion would “take us far away” from the point of the lecture. Diderot’s essay, which is the source of the debate between the “emotionalists” and the “anti-emotionalists” throughout the nineteenth century, is in the form of a dialogue. The first speaker (who represents Diderot’s views) calls for a rigorously reasoned and rational approach to acting, deploring the actors who work solely from emotion and inspiration:

Konstantin Stanislavski (1863-1938), particularly the idea of “emotional recall,” in which an actor imports the emotions from a similar situation to the one he is playing to produce an authentic and unforced representation for the audience.

299 “Je ne puis m’empêcher de pleurer, déclare-t-elle; il faut absolument que je me fasse du chagrin aux répétitions, sans quoi je ne suis bonne à rien.” Hahn, Sarah Bernhardt, 11. Trans. Ethel Thompson, Sarah Bernhardt, 11.

300 Denis Diderot (1713–1784) was a French philosopher, art critic, and writer. A major figure of the Enlightenment, he is best known for his monumental Encyclopédie, which he compiled over twenty years. His Paradoxe sur le Comédien was published posthumously in 1830.

301 “cela nous entraînerait fort loin.” Hahn, Du Chant, 128.
“[The actor] must have in himself an unmoved and disinterested onlooker. He must have, consequently, penetration and no sensibility; the art of mimicking everything, or, which comes to the same thing, the same aptitude for every sort of character and part. . . . If the actor were full, really full, of feeling, how could he play the same part twice, running with the same spirit and success?”

Clearly, Bernhardt falls on the side of the “emotionalists”; she only refers to Diderot once in her book, calling him “cold and methodical.”

Hahn explains how he thinks that a singer may create the balance between experiencing emotion and maintaining control:

I believe—in fact, I am sure (and recently, a man who would know, my friend Henry Bernstein, completely agreed with me) that in order to produce emotion [the singer] must enter an altered state, in which he neither completely and absolutely forgets himself, nor maintains a cold mastery over himself. He must split his personality, knowing that he has created the split. It is this combination of two psychological states that defines the talent of the singer.

Whether he is aware of it or not (and generally Hahn was aware of published writings about the arts), Hahn is echoing the words of the actor Benoit-Constant Coquelin. In an 1887 article on acting, Coquelin also explores the idea of duality in an actor’s performance:

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304 Henri Bernstein (1876–1953) was a prolific French playwright who wrote in a realistic style. He was particularly associated with “Boulevard theatre,” a theatre aesthetic that emerged in the second half of the eighteenth century. The movement took its name from the Boulevard du Temple, where many popular and bourgeois theaters were situated, and it flourished well into the twentieth century. After 1914, Bernstein adapted many of his plays for the motion-picture medium. During World War II, he lived in America, but he is buried in the Cimetière de Passy.
305 “Je crois, je suis même sûr (et dernièrement encore, un homme qui s’y connaît, je pense mon ami M. Henry Bernstein s’accordait pleinement avec moi), je suis sûr qu’il faut, pour produire de l’émotion être dans un état mitigé, qui n’est ni un oubli complet et absolu, ni de la propre personnalité, ni une froide et savante maîtrise de soi; il faut tout en se dédouble, savoir qu’on se dédouble. C’est cette combinaison de deux états psychiques qui fait précisément le talent du chanteur.” Hahn, *Du Chant*, 131.
306 Benoît-Constant Coquelin (1841–1909) was a French actor. After entering the Conservatoire in 1859, he immediately won the first prize for comedy. In 1860, he joined the Comédie-
He has his first self, which is the player, and his second self, which is the instrument. The first self conceives the person to be created, or rather—for the conception belongs to the author—he sees him such as he was formed by the author, whether he be Tartuffe, Hamlet, Arnolphe, or Romeo, and the being that he sees is represented by his second self. This dual personality is the characteristic of the actor.\footnote{Benoît-Constant Coquelin, “Acting and Actors” \textit{Harper’s New Monthly Magazine}, May 1887, p. 891–909. Reprinted in \textit{Actors on Acting: the theories techniques and practices of the great actors of all times as told in their own words}, ed. Toby Cole and Helen Krich Chinoy (New York: Crown Publishers, 1970), 192.}

It is interesting that Hahn applies Coquelin’s theory of acting to singing, seizing on the idea of a “split personality,” to help the singer maintain his or her technical control over the voice. Bernhardt, who was a colleague of Coquelin, clearly did not hold him in high regard, complaining that he “was insensible to the passions of the dramatic characters that he personated. The public itself remained unmoved, at which Coquelin was most illogically surprised. But he never managed to acquire sensibility.”\footnote{Bernhardt, \textit{The Art of the Theatre}, 104.} Their ideological differences are even clearer on the theory of the “split personality,” which Bernhardt rejects: “The actor cannot divide his personality between himself and his part; he loses his ego during the time he remains on the stage, and thus his consciousness skips from age to age, from one people to another, from one social stratum to another, from one hero to another.”\footnote{Ibid., 105.}

Although Hahn’s admiration for Bernhardt is clear, he appears to differ from her somewhat when it comes to theories of acting. While she can allow no separation of her own person from the character she must portray, Hahn finds some kind of separation necessary to maintain control. Of course, Hahn is speaking mainly of the acting that a singer must produce while in the act of singing, which requires control over the vocal cords. The theories of Diderot Française, and had a relationship on and off with the company his entire life. He also toured America with Sarah Bernhardt, and he performed in her theater in Paris. He is best known for his comedic roles, such as Cyrano de Bergerac, and for his writings on the art of acting.
and Coquelin suit that particular situation well, allowing the singer to express the emotions of the piece, while maintaining the necessary control over vocal function.

**Bel canto and stylization**

At this point in his lecture, Hahn turns his attention to discussing the expressive demands of various eras. He begins with a description of the goals of *bel canto*, and explains that in the beginning of the seventeenth century, composers such as Peri, Caccini, and Monteverdi reacted against polyphony by creating pure vocal lines, emphasizing the expressive character of these lines, with little interest in vocal lightness or flexibility. It is difficult to grasp his idiosyncratic definition of this era at first. According to Hahn, the style of these “early masters of dramatic music” were supplanted by music that depended on virtuosity in the second half of the eighteenth century: “The beautiful calm melody vanishes, and floridity reigns supreme. At this point, the old singers begin to bemoan the disappearance of *bel canto*.” Thus, for Hahn, the *bel canto* era consists of the Italian school of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries before the rise of virtuosic music, such as the “bravura” arias of Handel and Vivaldi.

In contrast, the current definition of the era refers to a later period in music history:

Generally understood, the term “*bel canto*” refers to the Italian vocal style of the 18th and early 19th centuries, the qualities of which include perfect legato production throughout the range, the use of a light tone in the higher registers and agile and flexible delivery. More narrowly, it is sometimes applied exclusively to Italian opera of the time of Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti. In either case, “*bel canto*” is usually set in opposition to the development of a weightier, more powerful and speech-inflected style associated with German opera and Wagner in particular.

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310 “*les maîtres primitifs de la musique dramatique*” Hahn, *Du Chant*, 133.
311 “La belle mélodie calme disparaît, la fioriture règne en maîtresse souveraine et c’est alors que les vieux chanteurs commencent à déplorer la disparition du *bel canto*.“ Ibid., 134.
To a modern musician, the florid singing that arose in Italy in the eighteenth century signals the beginning of the *bel canto* period, but for Hahn this development heralds the end of an era. This discrepancy highlights the confusion over this term that has prevailed even until today, and it must be untangled in order to understand the rest of Hahn’s discussion. Hahn laments the end of what he considers the *bel canto* period because he feels that dependence on virtuosity hinders expression. He reveres early Italian Baroque music for the pure beauty of the vocal lines (hence the term for “beautiful singing”), but also because of the absence of virtuosity in the music that allows singers to express the text and emotion through nuances of diction and phrasing.

Hahn explains that, while he does not feel that *bel canto* music allows for what he would consider “realism” in its expression, it does require the singer to be emotionally involved while singing. He explains that “stylization” characterizes this emotional state:

> But *bel canto* was also concerned with emotion. You know what “stylization” is. This word has been used for several years now with excessive frequency, but it is sometimes used incorrectly. “Stylization” is an artistic process that consists of distorting what we wish to represent for decorative purposes. . . . *Bel canto* contained a bit of this. I do not believe that it permitted realism in sung expression; I believe that [the singer] was inspired by the word, if you follow me, by verbal exteriorization, and that the singer drew out the essential part, embellishing and ennobling it through singing.

313 “The term ‘bel canto’ rapidly became a battle cry in the vocabulary of Italian singing teachers (e.g. Ricci), and the concept became clouded by mystique and confused by a plethora of individual interpretations. To complicate the matter further, German musicology in the early 20th century devised its own historical application for ‘bel canto’, using the term to refer to the simple lyricism that came to the fore in Venetian opera and the Roman cantata during the 1630s and 40s (the era of Cesti, Carissimi and Luigi Rossi) as a reaction against the earlier, text-dominated *stilo rappresentativo*.” Ibid. Hahn is following this early twentieth century interpretation of the term.  
314 “Mais le *bel canto* se préoccupait aussi du sentiment. Vous savez ce que c’est que de styliser. On prononce ce mot depuis quelques années avec une fréquence excessive, mais on l’emploie parfois de travers. La stylisation est un procédé artistique qui consiste à faire subir, dans un but décoratif, des déformations aux choses qu’on représente. . . . C’est un peu ainsi que procédait le *bel canto*. Je ne crois pas qu’il permet le réalisme dans l’expression chantée; je crois qu’on s’inspirait de la parole, comprenez-moi bien, de l’extériorisation verbale, qu’on y prenait ce
This description of expression through stylization recalls Hahn’s earlier discussion of expression in performance: while true emotion is present, there is a divide between the emotion and the presentation of it. He imagines that the singer can focus on “the essential part” of the text and express it through singing, and perhaps that focus provides enough emotional distance for the performer to maintain his or her technique. Just as Hahn—and Coquelin—suggest that a performer can create a “split personality” in order to maintain mastery over emotion, Hahn suggests that this era of music creates a distance from the emotion it conveys through this idea of “stylization.”

According to Hahn, because the music of this period presents characters and events through the prism of “stylization,” there are limitations on how much emotion can be expressed: “It was sad, but it was measured; it was joyful, but it was measured. It would have offended the beauty of singing, the noble vocal ritual to allow an element too human, or too deeply human.”315 In a sense, stylization allows both the composers and performers to come close to emotions without being overwhelmed by them: “Therefore, through these beautiful songs and these beautiful sounds, by the means of this harmonic and melodic artifice, emotions were reflected—every emotion and every thought—but always by the means of this transformation, this vocal stylization.”316

315 “C’était douloureux, mais c’était sobre; c’était joyeux, mais c’était sobre. C’eût été offusquer la beauté du chant, la noblesse du rite vocal que d’y admettre un élément trop humain, trop matériellement humain.” Ibid., 138.
316 “Alors, dans ces beaux chants, dans ces beaux sons, à travers cet artifice harmonieux et mélodieux transparaissaient les sentiments, tous les sentiments, toutes les pensées, mais, toujours, à travers cette transformation, cette stylisation vocale.” Ibid.
Hahn does not further clarify exactly how stylization and expression work together, but he does offer a presentation of what he calls *bel canto* music. According to the lecture printed in the journal, at this point Hahn sings “three pieces in three different styles”: a song called “Archangelo del Lento” (date unknown) by Francesco Durante, “Danza, danza” (1772), also by Durante,\(^ {317}\) and “Pur dicesti” (date unknown) by Antonio Lotti.\(^ {318}\) Of these three songs, only “Pur dicesti” and “Danza, danza” are printed in the *Journal*. “Pur dicesti” is a *da capo* aria, and it is most likely from an unknown opera by Lotti.\(^ {319}\) If the printed song in the *Journal* is a true reflection of the performance, Hahn sang only the first section of the aria (Ex. 6.1).

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\(^{317}\) Francesco Durante (1684–1755) was an Italian composer. He is best known for his church music, as well as some vocal and chamber works, and he was an important educator. His tenure leading the Neapolitan Neapolitan Conservatorio di S Maria di Loreto (from 1742 to his death) stabilized the conservatory and trained many influential composers, including Nicolo Piccini.

\(^{318}\) Antonio Lotti (1666–1740) was an Italian composer and organist. He studied in Venice, where he was a paid singer at the Basilica of San Marco; in 1736, he was elevated to the position of *primo maestro di cappella* which he held until his death. He composed a great deal of sacred music, as well as operas and cantatas. Apparently, those in attendance at Hahn’s lecture were so moved that they forced Hahn to reprise “Danza, danza.” It is possible that the name of the first song is a misprint, and Hahn actually sang a *song* by Arcangelo del Leuto (1615–1679). Very few of his compositions survive, but the cantata “Dimmi, amor” is included in the popular collection of Arie antiche edited by Parisotti.

\(^{319}\) This piece appears in Manuscript D. 7132 at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. It is included, with some alteration, in Alessandro Parisotti’s popular collection, *Arie Antiche* (Milan: Ricordi, 1885).
The reasons for Hahn’s choice to present this particular piece within the context of a discussion of stylization of emotion may be detected in Cecilia Bartoli’s 1992 recording of “Pur dicesti.” The aria consists of a relatively simple melody and accompaniment, allowing Bartoli to use various expressive tools. When she repeats the phrase “o bocca, bocca bella” (“Oh lovely mouth”) (0:27) she reduces the dynamic and produces a covered sound. When the same phrase occurs at 0:57, she again employs a quieter dynamic, but she also includes a small “scoop” into the downbeat, as well as a slight exaggeration of the double consonant “c” in the word “bocca.” When the phrase “quel soave e caro sì” (“that sweet and dear ‘yes’”) repeats at 1:05, she creates

\[ \text{Arie antiche: Se tu m’ami. Cecilia Bartoli, mezzo-soprano and György Fischer, piano. London 436267, 1992.} \]
a new color and soft dynamic, and she slows the tempo down. Her ornamentation on the word “piacer” (“pleasure”) at 1:23 is a graceful and charming evocation of the meaning of the word.

Throughout the piece, there are opportunities for the performer to use many tools of musical expression, and by doing so, he or she can bring out the “essential part” of the emotion, as Hahn says. These musical embellishments create the stylization that he refers to: while expressivity is possible, and even encouraged, the deep root of the emotion remains under the surface and the singer can focus on the execution of the embellishments and colors that he or she wishes to highlight. Like Bartoli, in his performance Hahn likely used all the vocal tools at his disposal to imbue the song with expression. The simplicity of the song makes it a perfect vehicle for a demonstration of the stylization of emotion of the era.

Expression in later styles

After performing these songs, Hahn discusses the emotional goals of the music of Rameau, Gluck, and then Mozart. Rameau, he says, was interested in allowing more realism in his characters than earlier composers did, although still through the construct of “stylization.” However, Hahn feels that there are moments when the musical construction allows for a more realistic emotional state to be portrayed. The example he offers is a short recitative from *Castor et Pollux*, “Ma voix, puissant maître du monde” (“My voice, powerful master of the world”). It is sung at the point in the drama when Pollux begs Jupiter to let him go down to Hades and

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321 *Castor et Pollux* premiered at the Paris Opéra in 1737, but it was only moderately well-received. Revivals in 1754 and 1764, however, were triumphant, and various versions of the opera remained in the repertory until 1817. The first modern revival occurred in Montpellier on January 23, 1908; six days later, it was performed at the Schola Cantorum in Paris. Perhaps Hahn was in attendance.
find his brother. Hahn insists that it would be “absurd to sing this passage with the studied decorum of bel canto.”

EXAMPLE 6.2 Excerpt from “Ma voix, puissant maître du monde” from Castor et Pollux by Jean-Philippe Rameau. (Paris: Durand, 1903), 85. Public domain.

This moment in the opera is indeed highly charged emotionally, and Rameau’s music encourages the performer to demonstrate the character’s desperate mental state. At the midpoint of the recitative, Pollux implores “O mon père, écoute mes vœux! L’immortalité qui m’enchaîne/Pour ton fils désormais n’est qu’un supplice affreux” (“Oh my father, listen to my desire! The immortality that traps me from now on is nothing but a horrible torture for your son”) (Ex. 6.2). For each of the pleas “O mon père” and “écoute mes vœux,” the vocal line begins on a high note and then descends, evoking a musical “sob” as Pollux cries out to Jupiter.

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322 “et qu’il serait absurd de chanter avec les précautions du bel canto.” Hahn, Du Chant, 139.
The next two phrases quickly ascend, depicting the anger and frustration of Pollux. The second syllable of “enchaîne” occurs on the downbeat, which gives the performer an opportunity to emphasize the pain of feeling trapped by his situation. In a live recording of the opera, bass-baritone Hadleigh Adams takes advantage of the musical setting to bring out this emotion: as he cries “O mon père” (1:18) his dynamic increases and he stretches the tempo slightly on the cry “O” to emphasize the pleading of Pollux. As he explains that immortality is torture, his voice cracks slightly with emotion (1:26).

After making his brief comments about Rameau, Hahn sings the recitative for his audience, making further comments on the piece as he performs. Undoubtedly, his performance and his comments further clarify how a singer could shed “studied decorum” and allow greater realism to appear in the performance. Unfortunately, those comments are not recorded, but it is possible that he, like Adams, exploited the musical setting and emphasized the beseeching and frustrated emotions that Pollux feels.

Hahn then turns his attention to the music and emotional world of Gluck, whose music, he believes, presents a specific challenge for the singer. While Gluck writes representations of realistic emotions, as manifested in outbursts and frenetic thoughts, into the music sung by his characters, the strong melodic continuity can also make it difficult to indulge such rough emotions. Gluck’s recitatives are easier to perform, says Hahn, because Gluck follows the prosody of the spoken language, but the arias (or cantilenas) require the emotion to come

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323 *Castor et Pollux*. Pinchgut Opera; Antony Walker, conductor. Recorded on December 6, 8, 9, and 10, 2012 at City Recital Hall Angel Place, London. Pinchgut Live B016FZASDM, 2015.

324 “Here, Mr. Reynaldo Hahn sings and comments on the beautiful page of music by Rameau.” [“Ici, M. Reynaldo Hahn chante et commente la belle page musicale de Rameau”], *Journal de l’Université des Annales* 8, vol.1 (December 1913): 465.
through a lyrical melody, which is difficult. When Hahn considers Gluck’s *cantilenas*, he concludes that a singer must find a balance of realism and vocalism:

The most noble—and sometimes the most seductive—melodic line competes to move with all the expressive resources offered by spoken discourse; but it is not easy to bring out their exterior beauty while inserting a considerable amount of emotion and truth. If one talks too much [through the melodic line], one destroys its plasticity; if one sings it too much, one reduces its expressive power.325

Hahn then sings a piece of music from *Iphigénie en Tauride*,326 which the *Journal de l’Université des Annales* identifies as the aria “Cette nuit, j’ai revu le palais de mon père.” However, “Cette nuit” is actually a recitative, and, in light of Hahn’s comments about Gluck’s *cantilenas*, it seems likely that he would have also sung “Ô toi, qui prolongeas mes jours,” which is the aria that Iphigénie sings shortly after the recitative. It is remarkable that Hahn chooses a female character to explore the idea of emotivity in performance. Perhaps he felt a particular affinity with this character or he knew that many people in the audience would be familiar with it due to its popularity.

In this scene, Iphigénie recounts a horrific dream in the recitative “Cette nuit.” As she describes seeing the murder of her father by her mother in her dream, the music shifts quickly between tempi and contrasting textures, depicting Iphigénie’s fear, anger, and sorrow at various moments. In the aria, she addresses the goddess Diana, begging to die herself: “Ô toi, qui prolongeas mes jours/Reprends un bien que je déteste, Diane!/Je t’implore, arrêtes en le cours”

325 “La ligne mélodique la plus noble, et parfois la plus séduisante, y rivalise pour émouvoir, avec toutes les ressources expressives qu’offre le discours parlé; mais il n’est pas facile de faire valoir leur beauté extérieure tout en y insérant une somme considérable d’émotion et de vérité. Si on les parle trop, on en détruit la plastique; si on les chante trop, on en atténue l’expression.” Hahn, *Du Chant*, 140.
326 *Iphigénie en Tauride* (*Iphigenia in Tauris*) is an opera by Gluck, premiered at the Paris Opera in 1779. The opera is based on the ancient tragedy by Euripides.
(“Oh you who have prolonged my days/Take back a gift that I detest, Diana!/I beseech you, stop
the course of my life”). This emotionally charged text is set in the noble fashion that Hahn
mentions; there are no obvious outbursts or exclamations (Ex 6.3). The singer must vocally
support the long, limpid lines, maintaining the “plasticity” that Hahn emphasizes, while still
imbuing the performance with emotion.

![Example 6.3 Measures 5–15 of “Ô toi, qui prolongeas mes jours” from Iphigénie en Tauride by
Christoph Willibald Gluck. (Paris: Lemoine, 1900), 28. Public domain.](image)

**Example 6.3** Measures 5–15 of “Ô toi, qui prolongeas mes jours” from *Iphigénie en Tauride* by

In a live recording, Victoria de los Angeles performs both the recitative and aria. After
the whirlwind of imagery and emotions of the recitative, the *cantilena* is a moving experience.
When de los Angeles begins the aria (4:24) her dynamic is soft and she sings the phrase simply,

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with little dynamic shift or *rubato*. She maintains this affect as she pleads with the goddess, “Je t’implore,” until the third iteration of the phrase (which is also at the highest point in the *tessitura*) (5:08), when she employs some *rubato* to evoke the feeling of beseeching and of pain. She also gives a clearly rolled “r” on the word “arrêtes,” using her diction to give an expressive inflection to this request. However, she does not do much more than the score indicates, and it is precisely this simplicity after such an emotional recitative that gives the performance such pathos.

It is curious that, in all these discussions of music of *bel canto*, and the recitatives and arias of Rameau and Gluck, Hahn does not mention the function of these pieces. A recitative is usually active, depicting a whirlwind of feelings, while an aria is often contemplative and focuses on one or two prevailing emotional states, as a character considers his or her situation. As de los Angeles’ performance demonstrates, the emotional arc that informs each piece contributes to the impact that the music has on the audience. Perhaps Hahn explores this concept when he speaks to the audience as he presents the music. Just as with the piece by Rameau, the *Journal* explains that Hahn elucidates his approach to the music of Gluck as he performs it:

“[Hahn] interrupts himself a few times to give a precise indication of the style, the movement, or the accent, to explain the interpretation and the meaning of the words. This admirable lesson, which brightly illuminates this piece by Gluck, is greeted with long applause.” 328 Unfortunately, the “admirable lesson” is not included in the text of the lecture, so we cannot know exactly how Hahn succeeds in bringing out the emotion of this aria.

328 “Il s’interrompt parfois pour donner une indication précise de style, de mouvement, ou d’accentuation, pour expliquer l’interprétation et le sens des paroles. Cette admirable leçon, qui éclaire lumineusement ce morceau de Gluck, est saluée de longs applaudissements.” *Journal de l’Université des Annales*, 465.
The inevitable march toward realism in expression culminates, according to Hahn, in Mozart’s work. Hahn’s admiration of Mozart is clear:

Not only was Mozart one of these artists who appears two or three times in a century, who has a divine sense of balance, who instinctively rejects everything excessive, and who possesses, in equal measure, and in exquisitely and infallibly calibrated proportions, the most contradictory qualities, the assemblage and mixture of which creates an absolutely harmonious ensemble; but, what is more, the subjects that he treated, the characters that he brought to life, also forced him not to exceed the limits of normal humanity, even in moments of lyrical exuberance.\(^{329}\)

Because Mozart’s characters are not always gods or kings, but often servants and melancholy aristocrats, Hahn feels that, finally, true realism can be present in the performance. The performer need only adhere to the rhythms and melodies that Mozart supplies, says Hahn, to find the appropriate expression. In fact, Hahn feels that a singer should not try to impose too much of his or her own interpretation on this music: “One of the absolute conditions of interpreting Mozart well is the sobriety of the nuances.”\(^{330}\) However, he apparently did not perform any music by Mozart to demonstrate his point.

It is interesting to note at this point that Hahn’s performance theories always place some sort of barrier between the performer and the raw emotion of the music or scene. In the beginning of the lecture, he explains that actors must create a “split personality” in order to express emotion while retaining control over their actions. His description of the “stylization” of the bel canto period suggests that the core of emotion is always distorted and presented in a

\(^{329}\) “Non seulement Mozart était un de ces artistes comme il s’en trouve deux ou trois par siècle, qui recèlent en eux un sens divin de la mesure, qui répugnent instinctivement à tout ce qui est excessif et qui possèdent à un degré égal, et dans des proportions infailliblement équilibrées, les qualités les plus contradictoires dont l’assemblage et le mélange forment un ensemble absolument harmonieux ; mais, en outre, les sujets qu’il a traités, les personnages qu’il a fait parler, lui imposaient de ne point excéder les limites d’une humanité normale, même dans les moments d’exubérance lyrique.” Ibid.

\(^{330}\) “L’une des conditions absolues pour bien interpréter Mozart est la sobriété des nuances.” Ibid.
formal manner, allowing only the “essential part” of the emotional content to be highlighted. While the music of Rameau and Gluck creates more space for realistic emotion to emerge, Hahn insists that some form of “stylization” remains. Finally, as he discusses Mozart, whose music he feels truly represents authentic emotion, he exhorts the performers to rely on the score more than their own emotional instincts. Hahn embarks on this lecture because he clearly values a singer’s ability to move an audience with his or her performance, but he is often interested in the emotional limits of the music he discusses. Perhaps he feels that these limits provide a direction in which to channel artistic emotion, offering a performer a useful method for creating a moving performance.

The romance: Méhul, Puget, and Béranger

The final discussion of Hahn’s lecture is omitted in the 1920 compilation, as well as in the subsequent editions, but it can be found in the Journal de l’Université des Annales.331 Having focused on the operatic works of Rameau, Gluck, and Mozart, Hahn turns his attention to the early form of French song, namely the romance. The romance was immensely popular in France during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: the sentimentality of the compositions suited the plots and characters of opéra comique, and many were simple enough for amateur musicians to learn and perform at home. In the late eighteenth century, printed collections of romances could be found in many drawing rooms in Paris. The romance was a precursor to the more sophisticated mélodie, which developed in the late nineteenth century. Music historians have

331 The full editions of the Journal are available at hathitrust.org. Hahn’s lectures as printed in the Journal are available at http://www.reynaldo-hahn.net.
tried to pinpoint the exact moment that the mélodie evolved, but François Le Roux explains the event in this manner: “[T]he French mélodie was born when the composers wanted to set themselves apart from what, in their eyes, the romance symbolized – a fashionable, stereotyped object of musical consumption – in order to become more demanding with musical quality and to come closer to the accomplishment of the German Lied.”

Hahn’s description of the romance reflects the preoccupation with nature and sentimentality at the time. In order the sing the music in a convincing manner, he believes that the performer must understand this context:

The romance is a special genre that must be interpreted in a special way. And while we are on the topic of romance at its beginning, that is to say under Marie Antoinette, I must remind you of the state of mind which reigned then in the brilliant and worldly society where it was most commonly sung. At that time, one was steeped, so to speak, in sentiment, or, rather, in sentimentality; it was, as you know, on the instigation of Rousseau, and his return to Nature.

As Hahn explains, composers of the romance do not prioritize expressing profound emotion, merely affectation and superficial beauty. Before he performs a romance from that time period, “Viens, Aurore, je t’implore” (“Arrive, Dawn, I implore you”), he explains how he will approach singing it: “I will endeavor to bring all the elegant affectation, all the modest emotion

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333 “La romance est un genre spécial qu’il faut interpréter de façon spéciale. Et, puisque nous parlons de la romance à son début, c'est-à-dire sous Marie-Antoinette, il faut que je vous rappelle l'état d'esprit qui régnait alors dans la société brillante et mondaine où elle se chantait le plus couramment. À cette époque, on marinait, si je puis dire, dans le sentiment, ou, plutôt, dans la sentimentalité; c'était, vous le savez, sur l'instigation de Rousseau, le retour à la Nature.” Reynaldo Hahn, “Comment émouvoir” Journal de l’Université des Annales, 8, vol. 1 (December 1913): 467.
which was in order then.” The *Journal* indicates that Hahn’s performance is a “delightful evocation.”

Hahn then explains that the *romance* evolved with time, and some composers, such as Etienne-Nicolas Méhul, found a way to ennoble the form, even though some of the affectation of the *romance* remained:

There is still a little of all this in *romances* after the Revolution; they are simpler, but all affectation of candor is not banished; they are of a larger style, but we still catch a glimpse of the composed attitude of the singer: the hand that leans languidly on the heart, or which, with a little finger raised, holds an embroidered handkerchief ready to receive tears. In spite of everything, under the pen of a great musician such as Méhul, this mannerism itself becomes almost touching, and I do not doubt that when Garat sang the *romance* from *Ariodant*, he could not help but gently move the heart.

Hahn is referring to the opera *Ariodant* by Méhul, which was premiered at the Opéra-Comique in 1799. Pierre-Jean Garat (1762–1823) was a singer who was popular at Versailles and with Marie Antoinette herself. His voice was soft and sweet, rather than powerful, but his wide range enabled him to sing both baritone and tenor repertoire. The fact that Hahn could easily reference the opera (and also Garat) attests to the popularity of this music. In fact, the journal printed the score of the aria that Hahn references and then sings: “Femme sensible.”

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334 “Je m'efforcerai d'y apporter toute l'afféterie élégante, tout le pudique émoi qui était de mise alors.” Ibid., 468.
335 “C'est d'une évocation délicieuse.” Ibid.
336 “Il y a encore un peu tout cela dans les romances d'après la Révolution; elles sont plus simples, mais toute affectation de candeur n'en est pas bannie; elles sont d'un style plus large, mais on y entrevoit encore l'attitude composée du chanteur ou de la chanteuse: la main qui s'appuie languissamment sur le cœur ou qui, le petit doigt levé, tient un mouchoir brodé tout prêt à recevoir les larmes...Malgré tout, sous la plume d'un grand musicien tel que Méhul, ce maniérisme même devient presque touchant, et je ne doute pas que, quand Garat chantait la romance d'Ariodant, il ne parvint a émouvoir doucement le cœur.” Hahn, *Journal de l'Université des Annales*, 468.
Luckily, a recording of the song by André Baugé exists, which provides an example of what Hahn sang that day. An excellent example of a *romance*, the song is certainly “steeped in sentiment,” as Hahn describes, and the text presents a view of Nature that reflects human desire: “Femme sensible, entends-tu le ramage/De ces oiseaux qui célèbrent leurs feux?” (“Sensitive lady, do you hear the song of these birds who celebrate their romance?”). The simple, arpeggiated accompaniment, combined with an uncomplicated melody, makes the song accessible to professional and amateur singers alike. Despite its lack of profundity or sophistication, Hahn admits that the song still has some appeal, which is why a performance by Garat most likely did “gently move the heart.”

Hahn then continues his discussion of French song during the nineteenth century, which he describes as “a phenomenal multiplicity of romances, each one more foolish, more insipid, and more ridiculous than the other.” Most composers of this music are forgotten, and rightly so, he says, but he does pause over the name Loïsa Puget. She was so prolific that he could not help but look into her work and concludes (rather cheekily) that some of her music contains “agreeable intentions, and perhaps even some successful pages, composed, no doubt, on the days

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337 André Baugé, “Romance du barde: Femme sensible.” *300 ans d’opéra à Bruxelles.* Malibran Music 169, 4 compact discs, 2001. Originally recorded 1931. André Baugé (1892–1966) was a French baritone. He made his début with the Opéra-Comique in 1917 as Frédéric in *Lakmé*, but he was also well known for his interpretations of Pelleas, Don Giovanni, and Rossini’s Figaro early in his career. Later, he became associated with operetta, especially Léhar.

338 “c’est alors une multiplicité vraiment phénoménale de romances plus sottes, plus plates, plus ridicules les unes que les autres.” Hahn, *Journal de l’Université des Annales*, 470.

339 Loïsa Puget (1810–1889) was a French composer and singer. She studied with Adolphe Adam and composed over 300 *romances*; editions appeared in England, Germany, and the United States. She also composed two operettas and several solo piano works.
when she was not inspired." He then sings one of her songs, “Mire dans le puits tes yeux,” which is well-received.

Finally, Hahn admits that “we are oddly straying from the subject of our conference, which is ‘emotion.’” To remedy that situation, he turns to what he calls a “true song” (“veritable chanson”). Chanson has various definitions, but here Hahn refers to popular songs often created in singing societies, or goguettes, which were small groups of fewer than twenty people who simply met to have fun and sing. A large number of goguettes appeared in 1818, after the defeat of Napoleon I, including the Caveau, which was one of the most famous of these societies. Hahn then sings a song with words by Pierre-Jean de Béranger (one of the best-known singers and composers of this genre), but set to music by a later composer whom he does not name: “It was composed only around 1860; the author was a great musician and endeavored to give to his music the character of the tunes on which de Béranger's verses were sung. He succeeded, while bringing a delicacy of harmonization and a charm that were not known to the good musicians of the Caveau.”

Hahn himself does not name the song, but the Journal recounts that he sang “À mon vieil Habit” (“To my old suit”), a nostalgic song to a beloved, threadbare garment. In 2008, tenor

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341 “Mais vous avouerez que nous nous éloignons singulièrement du sujet de notre conférence, qui est ‘l’émotion.’” Ibid.
342 Pierre-Jean de Béranger (1780–1857) was a French songwriter. He revived the French political chanson, setting the stage for the role of music in political activism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
343 “Elle ne fut composée que vers 1860; l'auteur était un grand musicien et s'est appliqué à donner à sa musique le caractère des airs sur lesquels se chantaient les vers de Béranger. Il y est parvenu, tout en y apportant une délicatesse d'harmonisation et un charme de dessin que ne connurent jamais les braves musiciens du Caveau.” Hahn, Journal de l’Université des Annales, 470.
Arnaud Marzorati released an album of the music of Béranger, with Freddy Eichelberger on the pianette.\(^{344}\) Whether or not Hahn sang this particular setting, this recording may give a sense of what the audience heard that day. The song is simple and strophic, but Béranger’s text takes on more and more passion as it describes all that the old coat and its owner have shared: friends, lovers, and political quarrels. Each strophe ends with “Mon vieil ami, ne nous séparons pas” (“My old friend, do not let us part”). Marzorati’s performance becomes more emotional as the song continues. As he sings “Je me souviens” (“I remember”) (1:06), he almost laughs through the words, and for the third verse (1:57), he chooses to speak the words which recount the memory of a former lover. Hahn’s performance must have been similarly moving, because the Journal reports that he sang “À mon vieil Habit” “in such a manner that brings tears to the eyes.”\(^{345}\)

In this lecture, Hahn sets out to determine how a singer may move an audience, but by the end, he has not offered many concrete instructions. Clearly, the substance of his arguments lay mainly in his performances and the comments he made that were not written down. We can gather that he feels that true expression is difficult to achieve while maintaining vocal control. His solution for this problem lies in having a barrier between the singer and the emotion, aligning himself with the theory of creating a “split personality” promulgated by Diderot and Coquelin, but not espoused by Hahn’s friend Sarah Bernhardt. As he surveys the emotional goals of various eras of music, he argues that the opportunities for realism in singing grew over time: in the opera world, stylization predominated to some degree, giving way slightly in the works of Pierre-Jean de Béranger: Le Pape musulman et autres chansons. Alpha Productions 131, 2008. This recording is included in the audio appendix to this dissertation.

\(^{344}\) “de façon à mettre des larmes dans les yeux” Journal, 470.
Gluck, until the appearance of Mozart, when true realism is finally possible. In the world of
song, Hahn traces the development of realistic and substantial treatment of emotion in the light
genre of the *romance*. His comments and performances are always well-received throughout, and
the *Journal* reports that the series of lectures ends in this way: “Then, for the first time (‘and
because, he says, this is the last meeting’), the composer of so many delightful works decides to
sing one of his own songs, urgently requested each time. A triple ovation is given to the writer,
the performer, the eminent lecturer.”346 Which of his own songs Hahn chose to present is
unknown.

**L’Énamourée**

“L’Énamourée” is an early song from Hahn’s oeuvre, composed in 1891 and published in
the *Premier volume de vingt mélodies* by Heugel in 1896. This volume of Hahn’s songs appeared
just after the success of *Chansons grises* (1893), and contains some of Hahn’s most enduring
works, including “Offrande,” “D’Une Prison,” and “Si mes vers avaient des ailes.” The poem
“L’Énamourée,” by Théodore de Banville,347 first appears in his volume of poetry, *Les Éxilés*,348
published in 1867.

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346 “Alors, et pour la première fois, « et parce que, dit-il, c’est la dernière séance », l’auteur de
tant de délicieux chefs-d’œuvre se décide à chanter une de ses mélodies, instamment réclamées
echaque fois. On fait une triple ovation à l’auteur, à l’interprète, à l’éminent conférencier.” Ibid.
347 Théodore de Banville (1823–1891) was a French poet, often viewed as a bridge between
Romanticism and pre-classical verse tradition (such as the ode, rondeau, and ballad) to the
Symbolist movement, which developed in the late nineteenth century. His work was appreciated
in his time by Hugo, Baudelaire, and Mallarme. He was prolific, producing several volumes of
poetry, plays (which were produced at the Théâtre-Français), essays on Parisian life, and theater
reviews.
L’Énamourée

Ils se disent, ma colombe,
Que tu rêves, morte encore,
Sous la pierre d’une tombe:
Mais pour l’âme qui t’adore,
Tu t’éveilles ranimée,
Ô pensive bien-aimée!

Par les blanches nuits d’étoiles,
Dans la brise qui murmure,
Je caresse tes long voiles,
Ta mouvante chevelure,
Et tes ailes demi-closes
Qui voltigent sur les roses!

Ô délices! je respire
Tes divines tresses blondes!
Ta voix pure, cette lyre,
Suit la vague sur les ondes,
Et, suave, les effleure,
Comme un cygne qui se pleure!


The loved one

They say, my dove,
That, though dead, you dream
Beneath the headstone of a grave:
But for the soul that adores you,
You waken, restored to life,
O pensive beloved!

During sleepless, starlit nights,
In the murmuring breeze,
I caress your long veils,
Your billowing hair,
And your half-folded wings
That flutter over roses!

Oh delight! I inhale
Your divine blonde tresses!
Your pure voice, this lyre,
Follows the waves across the water,
And softly ripples them,
Like a lamenting swan!
**TABLE 6.1** Comparison of six recordings of “L’Énamourée” by Reynaldo Hahn.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singer/Pianist</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Length of recording</th>
<th>Tempi (Quarter Note)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reynaldo Hahn (self-accompanied)</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>3:25</td>
<td>First verse (m. 1–18): 44–57 (end of verse: 35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Second verse (m. 19–34): 45–59</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Third verse (m. 35–52): 50–60</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Retenez (m. 45–50): 30–36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthur Endrèze/Reynaldo Hahn</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>3:12</td>
<td>First verse (m. 1–18): 44–57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Second verse (m. 19–34): 40–66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Third verse (m. 35–52): 55–68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Retenez (m. 45–50): 26–33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lotte Lehmann/Paul Ulanowsky</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>3:10</td>
<td>First verse (m. 1–18): 47–58</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Second verse (m. 19–34): 47–65</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Third verse (m. 35–52): 47–66</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Retenez (m. 45–50): 30–32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruno Laplante/Janine Lachance</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>3:38</td>
<td>First verse (m. 1–18): 38–54</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>End of the verse: 39</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Second verse (m. 19–34): 42–57</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Third verse (m. 35–52): 51–66</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Retenez (m. 45–50): 34–42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hélène Guilmette/Delphine Bardin</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2:59</td>
<td>First verse (m. 1–18): 50–58</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Second verse (m. 19–34): 48–58</td>
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<td>Third verse (m. 35–52): 47–62</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Retenez (m. 45–50): 44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Connolly/Eugene Asti</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>3:08</td>
<td>First verse (m. 1–18): 43–56</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Second verse (m. 19–34): 40–55</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Third verse (m. 35–52): 52–67</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Retenez (m. 45–50): 35–42</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

It is difficult to apply the discussion of Hahn’s lecture to the recording history of this song, or any song, for several reasons. First, Hahn discusses expression in a general sense, and, during the first part of the lecture, considers expression mainly in the realm of theater, which is viewed as well as heard. In the second half of the lecture, he discusses the expressive goals of particular eras and composers, but it seems that most of his methods for eliciting emotion from
the audience occurs in his own performances. He does not spend time explaining the expressive goals in his own music. Therefore, the following discussion of several performances of “L’Énamourée” must rely on an analysis of any singer’s expressive tools, such as use of rubato, diction, and dynamic choices.

Hahn’s setting creates many opportunities for the singers to use these tools: the vocal line spools out the poetry in a succession of short phrases that begin with an ascending gesture, which then resolves with a descending interval, echoing a sob (Ex. 6.4). Each verse opens with an ascending third, and as the music becomes more passionate, this interval widens to a sixth. The piano accompaniment mirrors these expansive gestures.
A distinguishing characteristic of this poem is the proliferation of “mute e’s.” When the poem is read aloud, these ubiquitous vowels give a feeling of pauses, even sometimes within a line. Hahn often sets these final vowels on a descending interval, contributing to the lack of momentum. David Hunter explains that the role of this distinctly French syllable plays an important role in determining the number of syllables per line: “An ‘e,’ ‘ent,’ or ‘es’ at the end of
a line in not included in the tally of syllables, even though in poetry (as opposed to normal speech) it might attract some pronunciation. . . . On the other hand, a mute e within the line does count and in recitation would almost certainly attract some pronunciation.”

Therefore, Banville’s poem consists of three sizains (stanza of six lines) with seven syllables per line.

It is interesting that the singers surveyed here make different choices regarding the pronunciation of a “mute e” at the end of a line. Hahn basically omits the vowel at three distinct moments: measure 16 on the word “bien-aimée” (1:01), measure 32 on the word “roses” (1:54), and measure 50 on the word “pleure” (3:10). Arthur Endrèze (1937), Bruno Laplante (1974), and Sarah Connolly (2006) approach these moments as Hahn does, either eliminating the final vowel or singing it so softly that it is hard to distinguish the “mute e” from the first syllable. Lotte Lehmann (1949) and Hélène Guilmette (2004) both pronounce each “mute e” with precision and clarity. Hahn’s deep understanding of the poetic rules that Hunter sets forth is clear in his compositional choices: when a “mute e” occurs within a line an interval (often a major second) occurs in the vocal phrase, forcing the singer to pronounce the final vowel clearly on a new pitch. When a “mute e” occurs at the end of a line it is often set on the same pitch as the preceding syllable. In these instances, the singer may choose whether to pronounce the “mute e” clearly or subtly. As Hunter explains, such a syllable “might attract some pronunciation,” but the performer is allowed some flexibility. As we will see, the performances of Hahn, Endrèze, and Laplante in particular are intimate and restrained; their decisions to minimize these moments of the “mute e” contribute to the overall hushed affect of their recordings. Their diction-related choices are therefore rooted in expressivity.

Hahn, who normally advocates moderate use of *rubato*, uses the technique liberally in his performance. He starts at a tempo of roughly 56 to the quarter note, but takes more *rubato* at the ends of the short phrases, particularly at measure 8 with the word “tombe” (tomb) (0:28 in the recording). Of all the recordings, Hahn takes the most *ritard* at the end of the first verse, “Ô pensive bien aimée” (“O pensive beloved”), but he picks up the tempo in the short piano interlude. For expressive purposes, Hahn uses a soft dynamic at unexpected moments. For example, toward the end of the third verse, most of these performers execute a *crescendo* on the phrase “sur les ondes” (“on the waves”) to set up the climatic high F in “Et, suave,” and then bring the dynamic down for the repeated phrase “les effleure” (“And softly ripples them [the waves]”) Hahn, however, sings “les ondes” with a great deal of *rubato* and a *piano* dynamic, and he maintains that vocal color for “Et, suave” (2:28). His interpretation highlights the literal meaning of the poetry: singing softly to represent the soft ripples of the water. However, this interpretation does not match the musical “waves” of the vocal line, which is a bit confusing.

However, Hahn’s choice *not* to create a crescendo on the phrase “sur les ondes” recalls remarks he makes in the beginning of his final lecture. He recounts the words of an admirer who had just heard him perform his own song “L’Heure exquise”: “‘Oh, this music! It gives such a kick in the stomach!’” Hahn does not take this as a compliment (“This is not the effect I was searching for.”) He complains that many people believe that only strong emotions are capable of creating a moving work or performance. Even some composers, he says, create music that is so passionate and violent that it lacks refinement: “Such people are ignorant of the benefit of gradual sensations, the immense value at times of an emotion light and fleeting, the delicious

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350 “‘Ah! cette musique! Ça vous flanqué des coups de botte dans l’estomac!’” Hahn, *Du Chant*, 125.
351 “Ce n’était point là l’effet que j’avais recherché.” Ibid.
sorrow of tears, the sweetness of a sigh, the exquisite and bitter charm of melancholy, just as they do not understand at all the despair in a smile and sadness in a ray of sun.”\textsuperscript{352} These remarks, coupled with his own performance of “L’Énamourée,” show that Hahn feels that withholding strong emotion can be more effective than demonstrating emotion in an obvious way. While the music leading to the phrase “Et, suave” encourages a crescendo from the performer—and all of the performers surveyed here do that to some degree—Hahn himself works against this instinct, creating his expression out of the unexpected choice, and through the nuances that he describes in his lecture. The overall effect of his performance is one of intimacy and unspoken passion.

Arthur Endrèze creates his emotional landscape through his use of diction and dynamics. As he sings “Mais pour l’âme qui t’adore” (“But for the soul who adores you”), he lingers on the “t” and “d” in “t’adore,” causing Hahn to arrive on the downbeat at measure 12 just a bit before Endrèze does (0:36 in the recording). This interpretation of the tenuto markings brings out the “calling” effect of the vocal line, with its repeated ascents up a sixth. At the end of the first verse, as he sings "Ô pensive bien aimée,” he gives special weight to each syllable, drawing out the idea of a pensive person in his diction (0:57). Endrèze achieves the same effect when he gives extra weight to the initial consonant of the word “longs” (“long”) which describes the veils worn by the spirit of the beloved (1:22). Throughout the song, Endrèze uses the consonants (often with tenuto markings) to provide expression and text painting to his performance.

\textsuperscript{352} “Ces gens-là ignorent le prix des sensations graduées, la valeur parfois immense, d’une émotion légère et fugitive, le délice douloureux des larmes, la douceur d’un soupir, le charme exquis et amer de la mélancolie, comme ils méconnaissent tout ce qu’il peut y avoir de désespoir dans un sourire ou de tristesse dans un rayon de soleil.” Ibid.
However, he also supports the vowels to evoke the “cry” of the poet who yearns for his beloved. Each verse has a climatic note of F5 and Endrèze both increases the dynamic and takes some *rubato* each time (0:33, 1:33, and 2:25). This technique is especially effective during the final verse, as he cries “Et, suave, les effleure.” As he repeats the phrase “les effleure,” his voice softens in dynamic and resonance. By the time he arrives at the final phrase “Comme un cygne qui se pleure” (“like a lamenting swan”), he sounds as if he is exhausted by his grief, even taking an extra breath just before “se pleure.” The arc of emotion that he outlines with these dynamic choices creates a moving performance.

More than any other performer surveyed here, Lotte Lehmann uses *portamento* to express the poetry. The complete term for the technique, *portamento della voce*, means “carriage of the voice,” and the technique consists of connecting two notes by moving audibly through the intervening pitches. It is an expressive device that can depict emotion, such as a sigh when used on a descending interval or a longing cry during an ascending interval. Lehmann often uses the technique on descending intervals, and it has the effect of expressing yearning for the beloved, or perhaps a sob. During the initial phrase, she employs distinctive *portamento* on the descending intervals for “disent” (“they say”), “colombe” (“dove”), and “rêves” (“you dream”). She also uses it on each descending phrase for the rest of the verse, even if the interval is only a second. This technique is often effective, but she uses it so often that it loses its meaning.

In the score, only one *portamento* is notated, and it is at measure 13 on the phrase “Tu t’éveilles” (“you awaken”). However, there is strong temptation to execute a *portamento* on all

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353 Lotte Lehmann (1888–1976) was a German soprano, closely associated with the operas of Wagner, Strauss, Puccini, and Mozart. She emigrated to the United States in 1938 and founded the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara. She also sang with the San Francisco Opera and the Metropolitan Opera. Renowned as an interpreter of *Lieder*, she presented recitals and gave master classes throughout the United States and Australia until her retirement in 1951.
the descending major second intervals in this verse, as Lehmann does. Hahn himself only creates the *portamento* on the moment indicated in the score, but Endrèze, Connolly, and Laplante have subtle *portamenti* throughout the verse, although not nearly as pronounced as Lehmann’s. Hélène Guilmette refrains from allowing the *portamento* to occur at all, even where indicated in the score.

Lehmann maintains a rather strong dynamic throughout the song. Like Endrèze, she allows her greatest dynamic for the high F (0:34, 1:32, and 2:25). Her most interesting expressive choice occurs at measures 34–40 (Ex. 6.5). The verse is marked “très expressif” (“very expressive”), which Lehmann interprets as rather breathless or excited. Her diction allows some air to enter into the text (particularly at “ta voix pure” and “cette lyre” which is 2:12 in the recording). Combined with the ubiquitous portamenti and generally mezzo forte or forte dynamic, Lehmann’s performance has an overall sense of urgency. The emotions she evokes are passionate, but also unsettled.

Bruno Laplante\textsuperscript{354} takes more muted approach to the song than Endrèze or Lehmann; in some ways it echoes Hahn’s performance. He sings with a covered resonance, almost sotto voce, throughout the first verse. For the first high F at measure 11 (0:37), he does not sing fully yet, waiting for the climax at “Et, suave” in the third verse (2:47) to use his loudest dynamic and clearest resonance. Like Hahn, he also lets the tempo slow steadily for each phrase in the first verse until it reaches a significantly slower tempo than his initial pace.

At the end of the third verse, Laplante uses both of these techniques (rallentando and sotto voce) to bring the song to an expressive close (2:43). After singing his loudest forte of the piece on “suave,” he maintains a rather loud dynamic for the second syllable of “effleure,” but immediately creates a diminuendo on the last syllable. When the phrase repeats, he returns to the covered sound of the beginning. This control over the dynamic, phrasing, and vocal color is

\textsuperscript{354} Bruno Laplante (b. 1938) is a Canadian baritone. He has had an extensive career since receiving first prize in singing at the Conservatoire de Montréal in 1964. In addition to studying German as a fellow at the Goethe-Institut in Munich, he studied with Pierre Bernac for three years with a grant from the government of Quebec. He has concertized extensively throughout Europe and Canada, and, in 2003, received the Medal of the Québec parliament, l'Assemblée nationale du Québec.
effective, and the performance ends with feelings similar to the emotions evoked by Endrèze’s performance: heartbreak, exhaustion, and a profound sadness.

Hélène Guilmette\(^{355}\) maintains the steadiest tempo of all the singers, and both she and her pianist adhere to the score faithfully. Guilmette sings with a consistent dynamic for much of the song, only allowing for a full forte on “Et, suave” (2:21). Her even, silvery soprano sound conveys her crisp diction, but there are few nuances or varied shades of color compared to the other performers. She also misses an expressive opportunity on the repeat of the phrase “les effleure”; while her dynamic decreases, the timbre of her voice does not significantly alter like Endrèze’s or Laplante’s.

More than any of the other singers surveyed here, Sarah Connolly\(^{356}\) relies on dynamic and color control to convey expression. She begins the song with a rather placid tone and little vibrato, but she warms the tone considerably on the word “rêves” (0:17), creating more of a crescendo here than any other singer. She also creates small crescendi on all the long notes in the phrases of the rest of the verse, leaning into the downbeats with sound instead of consonants, as Endrèze does. She replicates that technique for the second verse, creating a strong crescendo on the word “brises” (“breezes”) (1:16) which is indicated in the score.

Connolly’s consonants, particularly “d,” “l,” and “m,” are minimized, allowing her manipulation of sound and dynamic to be the focus of her performance. She executes a

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\(^{355}\) Hélène Guilmette is a Canadian soprano who won second prize at the Queen Elisabeth Competition of Belgium in 2004. She has been acclaimed for her performances in Baroque and Classical opera, as well as French works by Massenet, Poulenc, and Gounod. She has appeared at the Paris Opera, the Canadian Opera in Toronto, and the Dutch National Opera.

\(^{356}\) Sarah Connolly (b. 1963) is a British mezzo-soprano. A graduate of the Royal College of Music, Connolly has appeared at the Royal Opera House, La Scala, De Nederlandse Opera, Bayreuth, and the Vienna State Opera. She is best known for Baroque and Classical opera roles, but has also appeared in Wagner and modern works. She was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 2010.
particularly expressive *diminuendo* on the word “demi-closes” (“half-folded [wings]”) (1:47) to convey the enclosed wings, and she is the only singer to connect the phrase “Et, suave, les effleure” with no breath, employing a *decrescendo* as the phrase continues (2:34). She also uses the technique of *portamento*, but more judiciously than Lehmann does. It is audible on the word “brises,” presumably to paint the picture of the swaying breeze, but also on the word “voiles” (“veils”) (1:29) to evoke the flowing veils worn by the beloved. She also uses the technique on the phrase “je respire/ Tes divines tresses” (“I inhale your divine blonde tresses”) (2:10) which may be a response to the marking “très expressif.” In general, while both Guilmette and Connolly are faithful to the score, Connolly uses a greater range of vocal technique to convey the emotion of the poem, as do Endrèze and Laplante.

After considering the effects of the various performances, it is clear that the expressive choices of Endrèze and Laplante are more closely aligned with Hahn’s than those of the other singers. To convey the passion of the bereft lover, they both rely on an intimate delivery of the text rather than a full and resonant sound or a particularly loud dynamic. Endrèze in particular dwells on consonants and the effect of *tenuto* markings to delineate the details of the lover’s emotions, demonstrating the “indissoluble union of sound and thought” which Hahn extols in his very first lecture. The covered sound that Laplante employs echoes Hahn’s own, and he also allows the tempo to slow at the end of the verses in the same manner that Hahn does. Endrèze and Laplante both reach a louder dynamic than Hahn ever does on the word “suave,” but overall they maintain a lower dynamic level than Lehmann, Guilmette, or Connolly. They seem to agree with Hahn that, in the case of this song, a restrained approach to the soaring vocal lines of the

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music is the most effective method of expressing the underlying grief of the lover. These performances reflect Hahn’s insistence at the beginning of the lecture that refinement is preferable to the exhibition of violent emotion.

This final lecture is both fascinating in its content and frustrating in its lack of detail. In his opening remarks, he describes a singer with a lovely voice but no expressive capabilities as boring. Clearly, Hahn feels that the ultimate goal of a performance is an expressive one; no matter how skillful a singer may be, the entire endeavor is pointless if the audience remains unmoved. However, Hahn also knows that a singer must always have control over vocal function, and therefore he constructs ways for the singer to remain somewhat apart from the emotion he or she must convey — either through the “split personality” theory or through expression diffused by the device of stylization. It is unclear if any of the singers surveyed here agree with Hahn or expressly follow his acting techniques, but each of them has developed a personal approach that makes it possible to maintain vocal control and still imbue the performance with emotion.
Reynaldo Hahn’s lectures provide a tantalizing window into his views on the art of singing. In each lecture, he emphasizes the “indissoluble union of sound and thought,” and his emphasis on this union leads him to advocate for techniques and vocal colors that differentiate from other pedagogues of his time. From his allusion in the first lecture of the “duck quack” (“couac”) to his somewhat bizarre discussion of breathing in his third lecture (in which he imposes the grammatical rule of never breathing between a verb and its object), Hahn constantly highlights aspects of vocal performance that are not necessarily aligned with the production of a beautiful and resonant sound, which is a hallmark of the Italianate school of singing. Like Fauré, Hahn is seeking a particularly French approach to the art of singing, which would support the nuances of the rich collection of French poetry that emerged in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. His search for an approach to singing that emphasizes text declamation over rounded sounds initially creates a conflict with the great diva Pauline Viardot, with whom he meets in 1900 (see pp. 14–15). She objects to his “pointed diction,” but after Hahn performs his own “Cimetière de campagne,” she declares that his singing is good and “simple.” In Hahn’s account, he wins her over to his way of thinking.

I compared Hahn’s lectures with recordings of his songs, both from his era and our own, in order to discover why Viardot found his singing both unique and compelling that day in 1900. In some ways, his ideas are applicable to the performance of all genres of music. In his first

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lecture, he ruminates on why people sing and concludes that the origins of a song, whether it is a folk song or art song, inform the manner of singing. In his second lecture, he explains how breathing can be expressive and communicative, and in his third lecture, he asserts that a singer’s diction must be impeccable in order to properly communicate the music. In his fourth lecture, he admonishes singers to do research on a character or genre before attempting to sing with the correct “style.” Finally, in his fifth lecture, he dwells on the expressive demands of singing, delving into the role of acting while singing. None of these ideas is particularly surprising or limited to the world of *mélodie*.

However, as a singer educated and trained in the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century (mainly at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague), I did find many of Hahn’s remarks startling. Hahn was trained at the Paris Conservatoire and worked with the finest professional singers of his day; yet, he often drives the discussion away from gloriously resonant operatic sounds to express admiration for detailed, text-driven performances, which may even include non-traditional sounds such as a “duck quack.” When he discusses breathing, he advocates for every kind of technique, even clavicular breathing (which he calls “wounded bird breathing”). Furthermore, he predicates choices of where to breathe on a grammatical rule rather than a musical one, declaring that “One may, in the course of a phrase, breathe between the subject and the verb, but not between the verb and its object.”\(^359\) This rule leads to an idiosyncratic performance of Fauré’s “Le parfum imperissable.” Personally, in all my years at the conservatory, I never received instruction that resembles these remarks.

\(^{359}\) On peut, dans le courant d’une phrase, respirer entre le sujet et le verbe, mais non entre le verbe et le complément.” Ibid., 70.
Listening to historical recordings also gave me pause. At times these performances align beautifully with Hahn’s lectures. For example, the early recordings of Hahn’s “L’Heure exquise” by Maggie Teyte, Renee Doria, and Ninon Vallin offer performances that place weight and time on the repeated “l” consonants of the opening phrase “La lune blanche/Luit dans les bois” (see discussion on p. 119). Could this be the “pointed diction” that Viardot observed, at first with distaste? In recent recordings of the song by Marie-Nicole Lemieux and Philippe Jaroussky, these consonants are minimized, indicating that this type of diction is not cultivated today. I observed this phenomenon throughout my research, particularly when I analyzed the recordings of the songs “Offrande” (pp. 72–84) and “Tyndaris” (pp. 126–132).

While studying in the conservatory, I was taught that the spoken uvular “r” of French was not used in singing, and that the flipped “r” was preferable. The rolled “r” was reserved for singing in Italian. Hahn confirms this view in his lectures (and also in his memoir, Thèmes variés), but I found many singers from his era using all of these approaches to “r” in their recordings, including Hahn himself. Other deviations from my own vocal education include a variety of approaches to rubato and register shifts in the voice, as well as often rather loose adherence to the rhythm of the written score. As Hahn emphasizes so often in his lectures, the text is truly foregrounded over the traditional “singing” voice in many of these recordings. Katherine Bergeron also observes this phenomenon when she describes listening to historical recordings: “The most thrilling quality I began to hear was also, in some ways, the most alien: an impeccable feeling for diction. This is not just a technique. On these recordings, the sound of
French has invaded the tone of the singing voice so completely as to produce a wholly new oral object.”  

Hahn offers an anecdote in his second lecture, “How Do We Sing?”, that further elucidates this “wholly new oral object.” He recounts seeing the Polish tenor Jean de Reszke perform the role of Lohengrin while suffering from illness:

The moment he began to sing, when he heard his voice in the enclosure of the stage and the hall and he knew that he would have to struggle for the entire evening against his unfortunate vocal condition, his execution became more beautiful than it would have been without this slight impediment. Changing all that he had previously done with the role of Lohengrin—taking a breath when he normally would not have, but being careful to do it between such words as appropriate—he brought to his singing more expression and seduction than he ever had.

In this situation, de Reszke was physically unable to produce the traditionally beautiful and resonant sounds to which opera-goers were accustomed, but because Hahn values vocal choices that are not predicated completely on an Italianate technique, he still finds much to admire in de Reszke’s performance.

Recently, I found myself in a similar situation: I was scheduled to perform several French songs in a lecture-recital, but my voice was compromised by an upper respiratory infection. Luckily, my vocal cords were not directly affected. I decided to apply Hahn’s advice to my performance. I sang songs by Gounod, Chausson, Debussy, and Hahn. One of the Hahn

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361 “A partir du moment où M. de Reske commença de chanter et où, en entendant sa voix dans le vaisseau de la scène et de la salle, il s’aperçut qu’il aurait à lutter pendant toute la soirée contre les inconvénients de son état vocal, son exécution devint plus belle encore qu’elle ne l’eût été sans ce léger empêchement: changeant tout ce qu’il avait fait jusque-là dans le rôle de Lohengrin, prenant de l’air à des moments où, d’habitude, il ne le faisait point, mais en ayant soin de le faire entre tel et tel mot qui s’y prêtai, il donna à son chant plus d’expression et de séduction que jamais.” Hahn, Du Chant, 68.
selections was “Tyndaris,” which is analyzed in Chapter 4 of this dissertation. To accommodate my illness, I followed one of de Reszke’s adjustments, which was to take more frequent breaths. As a result, I echoed Ninon Vallin’s performance of the song: she separates certain phrases with a lift and slight glottal stroke before each iteration of the conjunction “et” (“and”): “Et l’aneth, et le myrte et le thym de collines” (“And dill and myrtle and thyme from the hills”) (see Ex. 4.5 on p. 128 and discussion on p. 131). Since I took a breath before each “et,” I was also able to employ Hahn’s beloved glottal stroke. I was able to reflect a particularly French approach as well as accommodate my compromised health, and I was also re-focusing my attention away from creating a traditional round and supported sound, just as Hahn advises. Although this was hardly an optimal performance, given the circumstances, I enjoyed finding a way to apply my research throughout the performance, and I will continue to do so in future performances.

My pedagogy has also been altered by this research. When I was a student, I relied on recordings to a large degree to inform my interpretation of mélodie. Specifically, I listened a great deal to recordings of Gérard Souzay, Elly Ameling, and Ian Bostridge, as well as many other late twentieth-century recordings. In regard to Hahn, Susan Graham’s 1998 recording was influential for me. I know that students today also rely on recordings of the artists who are currently active, including Joyce DiDonato and Philippe Jaroussky. While I encourage students to listen to contemporary singers, I also encourage them to listen to historical recordings and ask them to reflect on what they hear in these performances. Recently, in my work with a young baritone on “L’Heure exquise,” we discussed the various approaches of the many recorded examples of the song. The final interval of a major seventh on the phrase “C’est l’heure exquise” (“It is the exquisite hour”) (see Ex. 4.4 on p. 115) is a treacherous one, but our discussion of the
different colors we heard and of the possible ways to handle the register shift removed much of the young singer’s anxiety, enabling him to experiment with the moment.

While the *mélodies* of Reynaldo Hahn have always been part of the canon of recitalists in francophone countries, it is a pleasure to hear his songs performed with more regularity in recent years in the United States. I enjoy programming his music and, as a result of this research, I continue to find new approaches to songs by Hahn that I have performing for years. In the realm of pedagogy, it has also been beneficial to start including Hahn’s music the repertoire that I assign my students, while most American voice teachers often stick with Fauré and a few early songs by Debussy and Poulenc for beginners. I look forward to continuing to research *mélodie*, particularly the music of Hahn, and finding concrete applications in both my performing and teaching endeavors.
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