

ABSTRACT

CREATIVE PROJECT: The Poetry of Symbolism and the Music of Gabriel Fauré

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This study explores the points of connection between the work of symbolist poet Paul Verlaine and the music of Gabriel Fauré, specifically in regards to the song cycle by Fauré, *Cinq mélodies "de Venise."* The dreamlike imagery of symbolist poetry poses unique challenges for the singer. A biography of the composer is presented, outlining early influences, subsequent accomplishments and challenges, as well as Fauré's unique contributions to music. A biography of Verlaine follows, including an exploration of the circumstances in which he and the composer met. For singers, the challenges which arise from performing symbolist poetry are the same qualities that provide the essence of its beauty; Fauré revived modality and stretched tonality with his own distinct harmonic language. This musical-poetic relationship is discussed, followed by a presentation of each song and its unique challenges. One can more clearly interpret these songs by making a personal connection to them and by understanding how the language of symbolism is reflected in the work of Fauré and Verlaine.