

## SCORE REVIEW

Gabriel Fauré, *Shylock*, op. 57; *Pelléas et Mélisande*, op. 80, *Pénélope: Prelude, Masques et Bergamasques*, op. 112. Edited by Robin Tait. Gabriel Fauré Œuvres complètes, Série IV, (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2015). lvi + 208 pp. € 310.

The Complete Works critical edition that is being published by Bärenreiter-Verlag under the general direction of Jean-Michel Nectoux and Nicolas Southon is the most substantial undertaking in Gabriel Fauré scholarship to date. The significance of the new Fauré edition is that it gathers into one collection for the first time all of the music published while the composer was living, as well as previously unpublished compositions that were either unknown, incomplete or presumed lost. Additionally, the detailed critical commentaries that accompany each volume reveal a wealth of sources containing notations and corrections by Fauré and his colleagues that illuminate his composition and editorial process throughout his long and remarkably prolific career. As Nectoux suggests in the general preface,

This will give a more complete picture of Fauré's aesthetic development, a musician who started composing when classical impulses prevailed but quickly found his own personal harmonic language which continually developed to include the boldness of *Pénélope* and the late chamber as well as piano works (p. viii).

Once completed, this edition – its research beginning in the 1970s – will include 29 volumes organized into seven series, of sacred and secular vocal music, stage works, chamber music, piano solos and orchestral or concertant works. (Seven volumes have been published, with the first appearing in 2010.) To complement the musical scores a catalogue of works and an iconography will also be published in the final series.

The volume under review here (the second of three volumes of Fauré's orchestral and concertant music) was edited by Robin Tait, author of *The Musical Language of Gabriel Fauré*.<sup>1</sup> The four works it covers span 30 years: the suites *Shylock*, op. 57, and *Pelléas et Mélisande*, op. 80 (drawn from Fauré's incidental music for the plays by Edmond Haraucourt and Maurice Maeterlinck, respectively), the concert version of the *Pénélope* prelude, and the suite *Masques et Bergamasques*, op. 112.<sup>2</sup> (The complete opera *Pénélope* will be published separately in two volumes.) Tait's informative preface includes an overview of Fauré's life during this period, using the Paris Exposition of 1889 as a point of departure to establish the modern and dynamic atmosphere of the city from the time of the composition of *Shylock* that year through *Masques et Bergamasques* in 1919. To acclimate the reader to Fauré in the context of Parisian musical life as it unfolded around him, Tait identifies familiar landmarks in music history (for example,

<sup>1</sup> Robin Tait, *The Musical Language of Gabriel Fauré* (New York: Garland, 1989).

<sup>2</sup> The other volumes of Series IV include: Volume 1: Fauré's Symphony in F Major, op. 20, and two pieces for chorus and orchestra, *Pavanne*, op. 50, and *Caligula*, op. 52; and Volume 3: *Berceuse* op. 16, *Ballade* op. 19, *Élégie* op. 24, *Romance* op. 28, *Fantaisie* op. 111, and the Violin Concerto in D minor, op. 14.

Stravinsky's time spent in the city, Debussy's death and the emergence of *Les Six*) as well as the context of the First World War and the changes it brought to the city. He observes, 'Throughout this period, as Fauré pursued his own self-contained creative development, far-reaching changes took place around him in music, the arts in general and political life' (p. xxiv). Expanding his discussion to encompass Fauré's personal life, Tait addresses the composer's family, social connections, patronage and, eventually, his declining health – particularly his hearing loss. These facts, which will be familiar to some readers and new to others, provide an engaging personal framework for the music contained in this volume.

Tait's discussion of each work provides an overview of the musical structure, the circumstances surrounding the composition, details concerning the orchestration and revision process, and the performance history. Some of the information is drawn from Fauré's personal and professional correspondence, with quotations that illustrate key points and bring the reader into that moment in time. For the *Pelléas* suite, which Tait identifies as 'Fauré's masterpiece in the field of orchestral music', the discussion is the most extensive in the volume (p. xxviii); additional individual treatment is given to the 'Sicilienne' due to its unique composition and publishing history beyond the suite. By contrast, the details concerning *Shylock* are the briefest. Extending the discussion well beyond Fauré's position as a master composer, Tait includes details that illustrate much about Fauré's personality and character. These include his humility in admitting that his student Charles Koechlin was 'a hundred per cent right' concerning a point of orchestration in the *Pelléas* incidental music, which Fauré had initially rejected (p. xxv), to the sensitivity and thought he put into transforming his incidental music for *Shylock* into a concert suite (p. xxiv), and even his carefully tempered understanding for the limitations of the brass players in the first performances of *Pénélope* (p. xxx). Certain trials in his professional life also emerge here, including the conflict he felt, at the time of *Pénélope*, between his roles as director of the Conservatoire and composer (p. xxix); and by 1920, his declining health as suggested by observable physical changes in his manuscripts for *Masques et Bergamasques* (Tait recognizes the 'crescendo markings slightly erratic, writing a touch less neat than earlier scores', p. xxxii). And, perhaps most poignantly, the reader learns of Fauré's struggle with his hearing as early as 1902, a secret that he carefully guarded overall (pp. xxvi–xxvii).

Tait drew upon numerous musical sources for this volume, including first editions by Fauré's publishers (Durand, Huegel, Hamelle), autograph manuscripts, personal conducting scores, individual parts and transcriptions, and even notes made in printed libretti. (In fact, the sheer number of extant sources for this repertoire is intriguing, given the quantity of autograph material and ephemera known to have been destroyed at Fauré's explicit request to his wife near the end of his life.<sup>3</sup>) In the critical notes for each work Tait identifies his principal and secondary sources and addresses salient points of textual disagreement. His editorial policy favours annotations given specifically in Fauré's hand, or those reflecting his known compositional preferences and practices. This is evident in a variety of localized decisions. For instance, in the 'Entr'acte' of *Shylock* the addition of staccato markings for the trumpet part accords with Fauré's preference for

<sup>3</sup> Fauré's last-known letter to his wife (dated 14 October 1924) includes instructions for her to burn his sketches and rough drafts. A transcription of this letter is given in Jean-Michel Nectoux, ed., and J. A. Underwood, trans. *Gabriel Fauré: His Life Through His Letters* (London: Marion Boyars, 1984), 337–9.

clarity in that instrument, despite their absence from Hamelle's published edition (p. 191); and in portions of *Masques et Bergamasques* bowing indications present in the autograph source are deemed 'uncharacteristic of Fauré's style' (and, indeed, not given in his hand) and are thus omitted here (p. 195). Similar source-based decisions are attended throughout the volume, as are more general alterations made for the sake of consistency, visual clarity or the simple deletion of elements deemed 'unnecessary' to the score (for instance, the removal of stage directions in *Shylock*, p. 191). Tait demonstrates a great deal of care and consideration in both the scores and the critical commentary; his thoughtful application of his source findings is what one would expect from a high-quality critical edition such as this, and presumably reflects the larger Bärenreiter edition as a whole.

Of course, with any new edition of previously published works the natural questions arise: Do the editorial notes or alterations provide significant enough fodder to influence a new interpretation of the music, and should the new edition effectively replace existing sources already in use? To step beyond the present volume for a moment, if the potential value of the Bärenreiter edition as a whole could be estimated by the response to the Requiem, Fauré's most frequently performed work, one might say the answer to both questions is largely yes. That volume (edited by Christina M. Stahl and Michael Stegemann in 2010), which is based on the version of the Requiem first published by Hamelle in around 1900 for full orchestra, rather than the so-called '1893 version' for chamber orchestra that was popularized through John Rutter's edition for Oxford University Press (1984), was awarded the Deutscher Musikeditionspreis 'Best Edition', a particularly notable accolade considering the numerous trusted editions already in use.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, there is no shortage of existing performance materials for Fauré's orchestral music, as each of the works in the volume under review here has been in print since the time of composition, with numerous extracts, adaptations and reprints issued by various publishers over the years.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, the in-depth scholarly approach taken by the editors for Bärenreiter yields a finished product that stands apart from other editions. For scholars, performers, music critics and advanced students, it offers an invaluable resource for gaining a deeper understanding of this music from a historical perspective, and a broader sense of the extant sources for Fauré manuscript studies. While there will be some natural overlap between certain volumes of the Bärenreiter edition and those adroitly edited by Roy Howat and his colleagues as *The Music of Gabriel Fauré* for the Urtext Peters Editions (I recently reviewed editions of Fauré's vocal music from this series for this journal), Peters does not indicate any plans to publish Fauré's complete works. In fact, the only overlap in content within the present volume of orchestral music is Howat's edition of the 'Sicilienne' from *Pelléas*, arranged for violin/viola and piano.

The elegant and durable volumes of the new Bärenreiter edition, with the composer's signature emblazoned on the cloth binding, will be well worth the financial investment for any music research library. For the price-conscious

<sup>4</sup> 'Gabriel Fauré, *Messe de Requiem*, op. 48', Bärenreiter: The Musicians' Choice, [www.baerenreiter.com/shop/produkt/details/BA9461\\_01/](http://www.baerenreiter.com/shop/produkt/details/BA9461_01/) (accessed 18 December 2017).

<sup>5</sup> The suites *Shylock* and *Pelléas et Mélisande* were both published by Hamelle soon after their composition; the latter has been especially popular as a concert work in Europe and abroad. Heugel published the complete opera *Pénélope* (1913), and although stagings are rare today the prelude is occasionally included on concert programmes. *Masques et Bergamasques* was published by Durand (1919).

consumer, or one specifically interested in a particular work, Bärenreiter currently offers study-score versions of the *Pelléas* suite, and *Masques et Bergamasques*. (*Shylock* and the *Pénélope* prelude are available for hire through Bärenreiter.) At a purchase price of €24.90 each, these soft-cover stapled volumes are slightly smaller in format overall, and include a brief editorial note rather than the prefatory comments and complete critical report of the hardcopy version. These scores will serve the consumer well for practical use, in either performance, analysis or general perusal.<sup>6</sup> This Complete Works edition will in time surely prove a landmark contribution to Fauré studies, a field that has gained momentum in recent years. With these carefully prepared volumes, of which Tait's edition stands as a fine example, Fauré's rich musical output is finally being accorded the critical editorial attention it deserves.

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<sup>6</sup> According to Bärenreiter's press release on the *Masques et Bergamasques* study score, the parts are also available for purchase; the five string parts at €3.95 each, and the set of wind parts for €39.95.