

## Gabriel Faure - The Secret Fauré: Orchestral Songs and Suites (2018)

Written by bluesever

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Caligula op. 52 concert version after the incidental music to Alexandre Dumas' drama for female choir and orchestra (1888) 1 *Prologue: Fanfares, Marche, Chœur* 6'51 2 *Chœur: L'hiver s'enfuit* 2'29 3 *Air de Danse* 2'03 4 *Mélodrame et Chœur: De roses vermeilles* 2'20 5 *Mélodrame et Chœur: César a fermé la paupière* 3'32 ----- 6 *Prélude from Pénélope* 7'49  
Poème lyrique in three acts (1912) Orchestral Songs for soprano and orchestra 7 *Les roses d'Ispahan* op. 39/4, orchestrated by Fauré (1891) 3'35 8 *Soir* op. 83/2, orchestrated by Louis Aubert (no date) 2'22 9 *Clair de lune* op. 46/2, orchestrated by Fauré (1888) 3'10 ----- 10 *Après un rêve* op. 7/1, orchestrated by Henri Busser (1918) 3'08  
Shylock op. 57 concert version after the incidental music to Edmond Haraucourts comedy after Shakespeare for tenor and orchestra (1889) 11 *Chanson* 2'54 12 *Entr'acte* 3'39 13 *Madrigal* 1'34 14 *Epithalame* 3'27 15 *Nocturne* 2'13 16 *Final* 3'39  
Pelléas et Mélisande op. 80 Orchestral Suite after the incidental music to Maurice Maeterlincks play for orchestra (1898) (with *Chanson de Mélisande* in an English translation by John William Mackail) 17 *Prélude* 5'45 18 *Fileuse* 2'45 19 *Sicilienne* 3'35 20 *Mélisande's Song*, orchestrated by Charles Koechlin (1936) 2'36 21 *La mort de Mélisande* 4'12  
Olga Peretyatko - soprano Benjamin Bruns - tenor Balthasar-Neumann-Chor Sinfonieorchester Basel Ivor Bolton - conductor

The Sinfonieorchester Basel is one of the oldest and most innovative orchestras in Switzerland. Ivor Bolton and the orchestra present an interesting selection of orchestral songs and suites by the French composer Gabriel Faure and team with soprano Olga Peretyatko, tenor Benjamin Bruns and the Balthasar Neumann Women's Choir for this recording. The incidental music for "Caligula" was composed by Faure for the eponymous drama by Alexandre Dumas. The second piece on this album is the "Prelude" from Faures opera "Penelope". Olga Peretyatko is the soprano in a selection of songs, which had been originally composed for piano and for the more intimate character of the French salons, before Faure wrote the beautiful orchestral accompaniments. The music from "Shylock" is an concert version after the incidental music to

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Edmond Haraucourts comedy after Shakespeare and the recording finishes with the famous "Pelleas et Melisande" op 80. ---digitales.com.au

Fauré's first biographer Hugues Imbert emphasized in 1888 the composer's "pronounced inclinations towards true symphonic music". From a present-day perspective this assessment seems rather odd, but in the 1870s and 1880s in particular, a series of ambitious orchestral works were created.

### Shylock, op. 57. Orchestral Suite

Fauré himself conducted the first performance of his incidental music to Shylock, Edmond Haraucourt's adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* on 17 December 1889 at the Théâtre de l'Odéon, Paris. In contrast to *Caligula*, composed just a year earlier, it represents a significant advance on his approach: the music is more closely woven into the drama and more prominent in the production. In addition to strings, the score from the Théâtre de l'Odéon requires only single woodwind (except for two clarinets), one horn, one trumpet and a harp; many sections reduce this even further. In contrast, the orchestral suite specifies double woodwind, four horns, two trumpets, harps and a triangle. A comparison of the two scores shows that Fauré did not simply re-score his music, but made many careful revisions as well as introducing new passages. The Suite op. 57 was first performed at a concert of the Société nationale de musique on 17 May 1890, conducted by Gabriel Marie. Shylock contains some of Fauré's most imaginative and colourful orchestration: the Nocturne is beautifully conceived, with its divisi muted strings, and the colours in the final movement perhaps owe something to Fauré's experience in composing the last movement of his Symphony op. 40 (1884–1885).

### Pelléas et Mélisande, op. 80. Orchestral suite

Fauré's next important commission for orchestra was 1898 the incidental music to Maurice Maeterlinck's play *Pelléas et Mélisande*, and the orchestral suite drawn from it may be considered his masterpiece in the field of orchestral music. The work took just one month, although constraints of time obliged him to delegate the task of orchestrating the score to his pupil Charles Kœchlin. Nine performances took place at the Prince of Wales Theatre in London

beginning on 21 June 1898, the composer himself conducting the première. Fauré then set about compiling an orchestral suite, choosing three substantial movements: the Prélude, the second entr'acte, which became the Fileuse, and the fourth entr'acte, which became the Molto adagio (Mort de Mélisande). Orchestration was expanded, with a symphonic string section complemented by double woodwind (one oboe and one bassoon added), four horns instead of two, the original two trumpets and timpani unchanged but an extra harp specified. These additions occasioned many alterations to balance and voicings. The Suite op. 80 was first performed on 3 February 1901 by Camille Chevillard and the orchestra of the Concerts Lamoureux. Not only in France, but further afield, it enjoyed considerable success in its three movements version, and there is evidence that the same is true of the Sicilienne in the years before its incorporation into the suite. The piece owes its existence to a commission for incidental music to the play *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* by Molière. Although performed in four movements since December 1912, it was only in 1920 that Fauré formally requested Edgard Hamelle to incorporate the Sicilienne into the score of op. 80.

### Prélude from *Pénélope* (concert version)

The idea of writing for the operatic stage never quite left Fauré, and his correspondence is peppered with allusions to opera projects, collaborations with librettists and negotiations with producers. The idea of *Pénélope* was proposed to him by the singer Lucienne Bréval in Monte Carlo in February 1907. Mme Bréval offered to put him in touch with a young friend of hers called René Fauchois, a playwright who had just written for her a play based on Homer's *Odyssey*. Fauré accepted the offer with enthusiasm, but because of his duties as Director of the Paris Conservatoire, the vast majority of the opera was composed during Fauré's summer holidays. The opera's first performances were thus only in March 1913 at the Opéra de Monte-Carlo, with Léon Jehin conducting. The Paris première took place in May of that year, at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. It was exceptionally well received, hailed as a masterpiece in many reviews, but the theatre was in severe financial difficulties, going bankrupt soon after the last performance on 28 October. Sets were sold off, and subsequent performances of *Pénélope* were interrupted by the First World War. However, the work was revived at the Opéra-Comique in January 1919, and there were successful performances in Belgium and throughout France between the wars, but the opera has never quite achieved the status in France of being part of the grand répertoire.

Fauré took great care over orchestral colour, mindful that he was establishing the atmosphere for the whole opera. The Prélude is far from a pot-pourri of themes assembled from the finished work: indeed Fauré envisaged it as integral to the opera, similar in approach to Wagner's *Musikdrama* in this respect. In performance, the Prélude runs seamlessly into the first Act, and it was necessary to adapt its closing bars when Fauré came to prepare a concert version. He did this by adding a short passage based on Penelope's love theme, and the Prélude ends in an

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atmosphere of calm, with an echo of the miraculous closing bars of Act I, played as Penelope invites the disguised Ulysses to take shelter. ---takte-online.de

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