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## Barcarolles

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## Preface

Like his thirteen Nocturnes, Fauré's Barcarolles span a full and extraordinary four decades, from 1881 (possibly even earlier) to 1921. They also comprise the first extended series of Barcarolles, taking a prompt from the single Barcarolles of Chopin and Offenbach as well as the Venetian Gondola Songs in Mendelssohn's *Lieder ohne Worte*. The original edition of Fauré's First Barcarolle sets the scene graphically with a title page featuring an elegant Venetian vignette (see facsimile on p. xvi). We may note the lack of numbering in the title at that stage; nor was it strictly Fauré's first barcarolle, given his existing song *Barcarolle* of 1873 and the second movement of his A major Violin Sonata op. 13 of 1875–6, a magnificent barcarolle in all but name. By 1885, in the wake of his Fifth Nocturne and Second *Valse-caprice*, Fauré had evidently decided to extend and build the genre. Even then, a degree of genre overlap is inherent: the main climax of the Fifth Barcarolle almost meets that of the Fifth Nocturne for a few bars, the Eighth Barcarolle has elements of both scherzo and waltz, and the Eleventh Barcarolle sails close, in rhythm and mood, to the seascape-like Twelfth Nocturne. Indeed, Fauré is reported as remarking—with perhaps an endearing lack of commercial acumen—that he would just as happily have seen his piano works printed as “piano piece number such-and-such”.<sup>1</sup>

Whatever the case, Fauré's First Barcarolle sets a quietly confident benchmark of quality and originality, with its condensed recapitulation and, on the last page, some capricious ambiguity across the hands as to where the main beat really falls. This sort of playfulness pervades the Barcarolles, notably through hemiolas that juxtapose or alternate  $\frac{3}{4}$  and  $\frac{6}{8}$  patterns, sometimes in alternation, sometimes across the hands, sometimes straddling the barline (the Sixth Barcarolle from bar 24), or inside larger groupings, such as the  ostinato that drives much of the Fifth Barcarolle. This characteristic doubtless reflects the Occitan and Mediterranean folk traditions of Fauré's native Ariège region (near the Pyrenees), and links interestingly to similar rhythmic patterns that pervade the music of his friend Albéniz.

Published in 1881, the First Barcarolle may date from any of the preceding few years, given Fauré's observation later in life that many of his early works were composed long before they were published.<sup>2</sup> Surviving manuscripts suggest that the Second and Third Barcarolles—whose central episodes intriguingly echo Weber and Bizet respectively—were conceived as a pair in summer 1885. Their publication in 1886 was followed within a few months by that of the more compact Fourth Barcarolle, whose seemingly effortless fluency can easily disguise the mastery underlying these qualities.

The Fifth Barcarolle hails from 1894, something of an *annus mirabilis* that saw Fauré complete the song cycle *La bonne chanson* along with *Prison* and *Soir*, several choral works, the Fourth *Valse-caprice* and the Sixth Nocturne. Following the completion of the Nocturne in August, Fauré signed off the Fifth Barcarolle on 18 September (a day after the funeral of his old friend Chabrier) at the summer home of his parents-in-law, by Bougival on the Seine. It now seems hard to believe that the 49-year-old creator of these masterpieces was being determinedly blocked from teaching at the Paris Conservatoire (“too dangerous”), his attempts to gain a seat at the Institut de France outvoted. Meanwhile, he earned his keep as choirmaster at the Madeleine church, supplemented by mind-numbing provincial inspection tours for the Ministry of Education. His perseverance emerges from a letter he wrote at exactly that time to the Princess Winnaretta de Polignac: “Modern piano music of any interest is *very hard to come by*, in fact there is virtually none!”<sup>3</sup>

Composed probably in 1895, the Sixth Barcarolle was Fauré's first work to appear from his new London publisher Metzler (in 1896, a few months before it also appeared from his regular Parisian publisher Hamelle). That autumn, Fauré was finally appointed

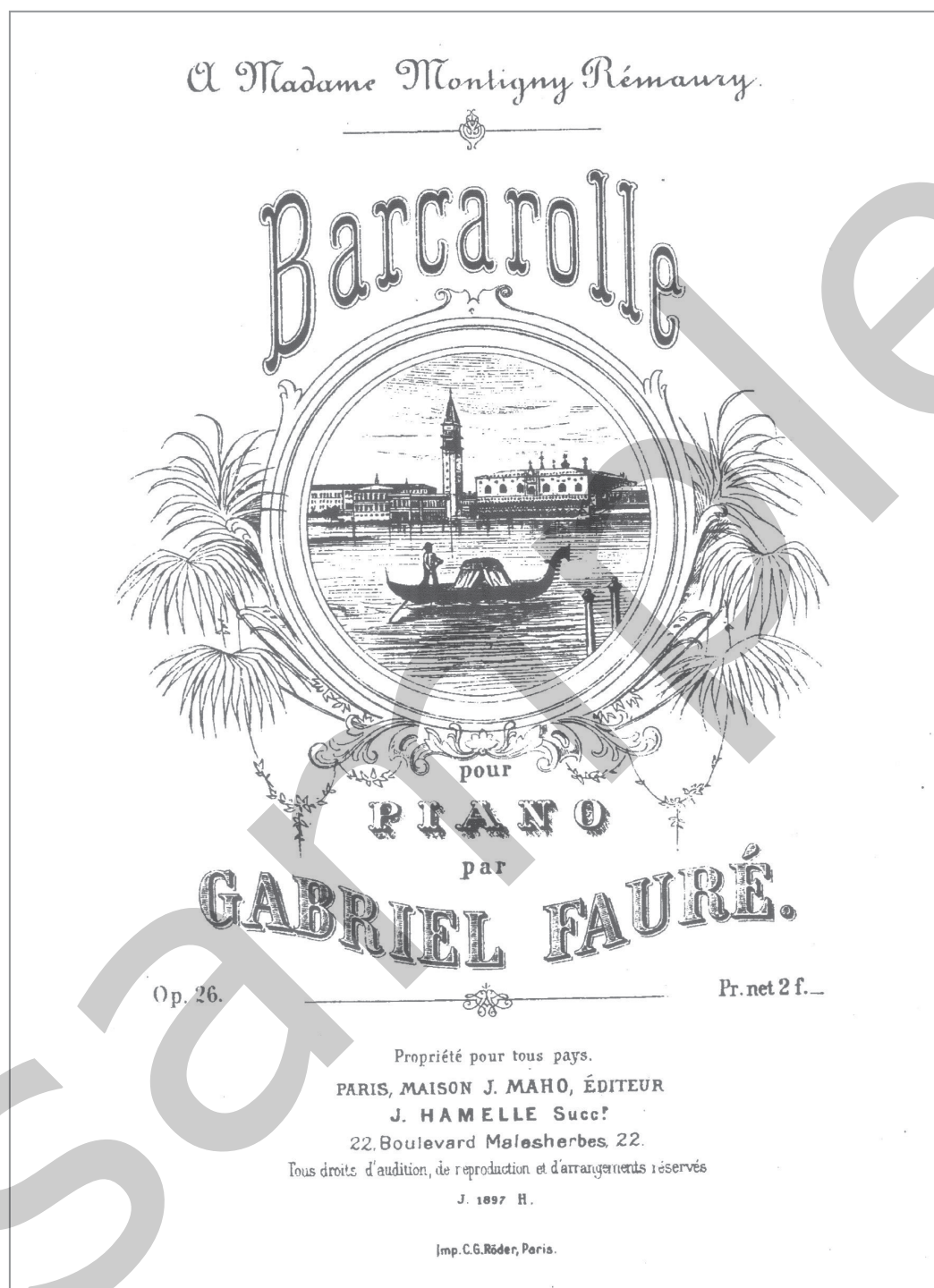
composition professor at the Paris Conservatoire, where he rapidly accumulated an array of outstanding pupils including Ravel and Enesco. Nine years later came the most momentous event of Fauré's official career, his appointment in 1905 as Director of the Paris Conservatoire. Long frustrated with the almost legendary avarice of Hamelle, Fauré found a new Parisian publisher in Henri Heugel, for whom he wrote the haunting Seventh Barcarolle over a few days in August 1905, during his summer break in Zürich. (This appears to have been as much relaxation as came his way: the rest of that summer was devoted to completing his First Piano Quintet.) The Eighth Barcarolle, apparently written by mid-1906,<sup>4</sup> was published only in 1908, along with the Ninth Nocturne. Several observers have likened its vigorous ending to the idiom of Fauré's close friend Albéniz, who was then completing his cycle *Iberia*; one might be tempted to envisage a degree of creative interaction if the two composers played draft versions of their new pieces to each other.<sup>5</sup>

The Ninth Barcarolle followed around the end of 1908, in time for Marguerite Long to première it and the Fifth Impromptu at her all-Fauré recital in the Salle Erard, Paris, on 30 March 1909. According to her memoirs, she and Fauré worked out performing nuances together, which they marked on the piece's manuscript.<sup>6</sup> Despite its close opus number, the Tenth Barcarolle—the last of Fauré's three Barcarolles in A minor—came a full three years later in 1913, the opera *Pénélope* having absorbed his creative energies meanwhile. Together with the Eleventh Nocturne (with which it shares an opus number), this Barcarolle was Fauré's first offering to his new publisher Durand.<sup>7</sup>

Jacques Durand was perhaps behind the speed with which the Eleventh Barcarolle followed: completed late in 1913, it brought Fauré's tally of Barcarolles into line with that of his Nocturnes for just the second time in his life. Two years later, after the completion of the song cycle *Le jardin clos*, came the Twelfth Barcarolle and Nocturne, a contrasted pair undertaken in August 1915 during Fauré's prolonged summer stay at Saint-Raphaël on the Côte d'Azur, where he also worked on preparing a Durand edition of Schumann's piano music, in response to the wartime unavailability of German editions. On 7 September Fauré wrote to his wife that the Barcarolle and Nocturne “are well advanced. But I'm licking them all over, like bears with their cubs!” By 16 September both pieces were finished, “but I don't want to let them out before letting them doze for a while.”<sup>8</sup> Although premièred two months later, they took another seven months to appear in print.

Almost six years later Fauré—who in the meantime had completed several major orchestral, chamber and vocal works before retiring from the Conservatoire Directorship at the ripe age of 75—launched an amazingly fruitful year with the Thirteenth Barcarolle (“un petit morceau de piano” he modestly called it in a letter to his wife).<sup>9</sup> Completed in Nice in February 1921, this was his penultimate piano work, followed at the end of that year by the contrastingly dramatic Thirteenth Nocturne.

Premières of the Barcarolles involved a distinguished array of pianists including Camille Saint-Saëns (no. 1 on 9 December 1882), Marie Poitevin (no. 2 on 19 February 1887), Marie Bordes-Pène (no. 4 on 19 March 1889 at the Salle Pleyel), Léon Delafosse (no. 5 on 2 May 1896), Édouard Risler (no. 6 on 3 April 1897 and no. 8 on 12 January 1907), Arnold Reitlinger (no. 7 on 3 February 1906 at the Salle Erard), Marguerite Long (no. 9 on 30 March 1909 at the Salle Erard), Alfredo Casella (nos. 10 and 11 on 10 December 1913 for the Société musicale indépendante), Louis Diémer (no. 12 on 23 November 1916 at the Concerts Jacques Durand), and Blanche Selva (no. 13 on 28 April 1923).<sup>10</sup> These performances took places in Paris, under the auspices (unless otherwise specified) of the Société nationale de musique, which Fauré had helped found in 1871.



First Barcarolle: title page of the first edition (1881)  
 Première Barcarolle: page de titre de la première édition (1881)  
 Barcarolle Nr. 1: Titelseite der Erstausgabe (1881)

À Madame Montigny Rémaury

1<sup>re</sup> Barcarolle

Op. 26

**Allegretto moderato** (♩. = 46 [-63])<sup>(1)</sup>

The musical score is written for piano and consists of 11 measures. The time signature is 6/8. The tempo is marked 'Allegretto moderato' with a quarter note equal to 46 to 63 beats per minute. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

Measure 1: *p* *e cantabile* [m.d.]

Measure 4: *p* *poco cresc.* *mf*

Measure 8: *cantando* *p*

Measure 11: *cresc.* *f*

Rehearsal marks (R:) are indicated at measures 5 and 10.

(1) See Editor's Note Voir Note de l'éditeur Vgl. Anmerkungen des Herausgebers

R:

17

20 *a tempo*

23 *A tempo*

26

R:

(1) See Editor's Note    Voir Note de l'éditeur    Vgl. Anmerkungen des Herausgebers

À Mademoiselle Marie Poitevin

2<sup>e</sup> Barcarolle

Op. 41

Allegretto quasi allegro ♩ = 58–76 [c. 69]<sup>(1)</sup>

(leggiero)

The musical score is written for piano in G major (one sharp) and 6/8 time. It begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a tempo marking of *Allegretto quasi allegro* with a quarter note equal to 58–76 beats, approximately 69 beats per minute. The tempo is marked as *(leggiero)*. The score consists of 10 measures. Measures 1–3 are marked *p*. Measure 4 is marked *mf*. Measures 5–6 are marked *p*. Measures 7–8 are marked *cresc.*. Measures 9–10 are marked *f*. The score includes a *Ped.* (pedal) instruction in measure 5 and an *Ossia* (alternative) passage in measure 6. The score ends with a repeat sign and a double bar line.

(1) See Note on Performance    Voir Note sur l'interprétation    Vgl. Anmerkungen zur Aufführung

(2) See Critical Commentary    Voir Commentaire critique    Vgl. Kritischer Bericht



## CRITICAL COMMENTARY

RH = right hand

LH = left hand

BnF, mus. = Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, music department

Editorial procedure is described in the prefatory **Editor's Note**. The default source is accordingly the 1926 edition of Barcarolles 1–5 and the first French edition of the remainder, variants or departures from which are noted. Nuances, phrasing and articulation that appear only in printed sources are included without mention unless they raise or bear on an editorial problem; the same goes for some accidentals and augmentation dots missing in manuscript sources, except where the omission provides a viable variant. In the 5<sup>e</sup> Barcarolle, omissions of nuances or articulation in the sparsely-marked first print (**E1**) or the poorly-proofed re-engraving (**E3**) are passed over in silence.

Cautionary accidentals are tacitly incorporated as necessary from any source that supplies them, including parallel passages or Fauré's piano rolls when the context allows no doubt; redundant accidentals are tacitly removed unless they are of cautionary use. Repeat accidentals are tacitly added in octave transpositions at the same staff position (provided no editorial problem is involved), where the 1926 edition has not already done so. Dynamics placed above or below the system in sources (mostly because of restricted space) are relocated between the staves (as printed sources often do relative to manuscripts), except where musical logic suggests they were intended for just one hand or voice. In other respects the exact placing of dynamics, nuances and pedalling follows autograph sources unless the placing in printed sources is so different as to suggest deliberate relocation. In the 2<sup>e</sup> Barcarolle, where the autograph omits all pedalling, a degree of inconsistency in release points is left unchanged, since it can suggest some flexibility and avoid repetitiveness. Orthographic variants (*mezzo p*, *m.p.*; *dimin.*) are tacitly standardized (*mp*; *dim.*). Duplications such as  $\leq$  *cresc.* or vice versa are retained, as the  $\leq$  can sometimes be read as an independent gesture or an intensification. Fauré's ambiguous use of 8 under bass notes for either *8va bassa* or *col 8* is clarified according to context, as noted below. Layout across staves is occasionally tacitly modified for clarity, provided this does not obscure polyphonic sense or implied hand distribution (in which regard see in particular the initial remarks below to the 1<sup>re</sup> Barcarolle). Stemming in bass figurations is sometimes inverted for consistency (for example where Fauré added double-stemming to existing figurations for bass emphasis).

### Sources

From Fauré's personal library an annotated exemplar of only the 6<sup>e</sup> Barcarolle survives, plus unannotated ones of nos. 1 and 4.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately no annotated exemplars are traced from the libraries of Marguerite Hasselmans, Marguerite Long, Saint-Saëns or Roger-Ducasse (except the 1920s proof copies listed below); those of Robert Lortat were seen by Jean-Michel Nectoux who reports (personal communication) their containing virtually no corrections and nothing in Fauré's hand. Exemplars belonging to Fauré's colleagues or acquaintances Alfred Cortot, Robert and Gaby Casadesus, Ricardo Viñes and Vlado Perlemuter show no markings directly attributable to Fauré; nor are these pianists known to have worked specifically with him on Barcarolles.<sup>2</sup> Marguerite Long's *Au piano avec Gabriel Fauré* bears only on one detail of tempo for the 9<sup>e</sup> Barcarolle, noted below. The correspondence between Fauré and Saint-Saëns is mentioned when it bears on editorial issues (*Camille Saint-Saëns & Gabriel Fauré, Correspondance (1862–1920)*, ed. Jean-Michel Nectoux, Paris, 1994 [English edition: *The correspondence of*

*Camille Saint-Saëns and Gabriel Fauré: sixty years of friendship*, transl. J. Barrie Jones, Aldershot, 2004]).

Barcarolles 1–6 were engraved by the Leipzig firm of C. G. Röder (Hamellet's regular engraver, who also had a base in Paris), nos. 7–12 by Charles Douin (who worked for both Heugel and Durand), no. 13 by Léon Grandjean, and the **E3** re-engraving of no. 5 by M. Fleurot. Metzler's engraver for no. 6 is unidentified.

### 1<sup>re</sup> Barcarolle

**E1** First edition, Paris, J. Hamelle (J. 1897 H.) [1881]. The identical cover and title pages (see facsimile, p. xvi) title the piece "Barcarolle" and name the publisher in the old form of Maison J. Maho, J. Hamelle Succ[esseur]; until 1926 this title page remained unchanged except for the advertised price.

**E2** Amended reprint of **E1**, revised by Fauré and Roger-Ducasse, Hamelle [1926], issued both singly (with a new title page) and in a collected volume of Barcarolles 1–6 and Impromptus 1–5.

### Secondary sources

**AF** Facsimile of an autograph fragment comprising bars 93–96, reproduced below a photograph of Fauré in the 1888 *Album* supplement (entitled *La Danse*) to *Le Gaulois*, as Plate 6 (reproduced also in *Gabriel Fauré, his life through his letters*, p. 135n5); autograph original untraced. The musical text concurs exactly with **E1** and is thus left unmentioned below.

**R** Reproducing piano roll recorded by Fauré probably in 1912, issued in 1913: Welte roll no. 2773.<sup>3</sup> This system of roll, the most sophisticated of that era, encodes the duration of each key depression, pedalling and (to some extent) dynamics from the original performance. **R** serves here mostly to verify details of pitch (including a few bass octave variants), rhythm and – an important issue in this Barcarolle – local tempo fluctuations. While exact dynamics and overall tempo from piano rolls are debatable, note is taken of the convincing tempo range yielded by playback of this roll on the carefully adjusted Steinway-Welte of Denis Hall, London. Obvious fluffs in Fauré's performance are ignored.

No exemplars are presently traceable of an earlier roll recorded by Fauré in May 1908 for the less sophisticated Hupfeld system (no. 55905).<sup>4</sup>

### 2<sup>e</sup> Barcarolle

**A** Autograph manuscript used for engraving **E** below: BnF, mus., Ms. 17740 (donated in 1978 by the composer's daughter-in-law Blanche Fauré-Fremiet). The manuscript (made up of unbound folios sewn together) is mostly written in violet ink (recto and verso), including a cover page with the autograph dedication and title followed by "op: 40 41 / Gabriel Fauré / Taverny – août 1885" plus publisher's annotations in blue pencil that include the instruction to the engraver "Eilt!" [Urgent!]. Some revisions (including a glued-over replacement version of bars 72–75), along with most dynamics, are in grey-black ink, as is the music from bar 138 onwards; a few other revisions are in pencil. No pedalling is marked.

**E** First edition, Paris, J. Hamelle (J. 2499 H.) [1886]. The publisher is now identified as "J. Hamelle, Éditeur / Ancienne Maison J. Maho", as also in Barcarolles 3–6.

**EA** Annotations by Fauré and Roger-Ducasse on a print of **E** serving as proof for the 1926 re-edition: private collection,