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by

CAROLYN THAYER

B.S., Kansas State University, 1979

A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF MUSIC

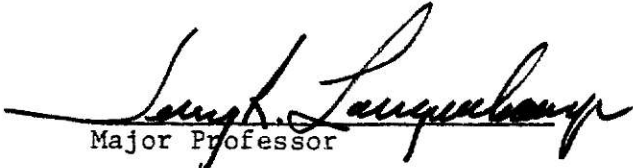
Department of Music

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Manhattan, Kansas

1981

Approved by:


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Department of Music

Season 1980-81

presents

CAROLYN THAYER, Soprano
B.S., Kansas State University, 1979

assisted by
SUZANNE TORKELOSON, Piano and Organ

Wednesday, February 18, 1981

All Faiths Chapel

8:00 p.m.

presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Music

PROGRAM

- "With verdure clad," *The Creation* *Joseph Haydn*
(1732-1809)
- "Ich folge dir gleichfalls," *St. John Passion* *J.S. Bach*
Laurel Brunken, Flute (1685-1750)
Sheldon Lentz, Cello
- Proses Lyriques *Claude Debussy*
(1862-1918)
De Rêve
De Grève
De Fleurs
De Soir

INTERMISSION

- Der Gärtner *Hugo Wolf*
Auf ein altes Bild (1860-1903)
Nixe Binsefuss
- "Quel guardo il cavalier," *Don Pasquale* *Gaetano Donizetti*
(1797-1848)
- Knoxville: Summer of 1915 *Samuel Barber*
(1910-1981)

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JOSEPH HAYDN: "WITH VERDURE CLAD," THE CREATION

The Creation was composed by Joseph Haydn in 1798, becoming his most significant vocal work. Even though it is not often performed in America, it remains one of the best known oratorios in the literature. It has enjoyed enormous success in Vienna and Germany, being performed annually almost without a break from 1798 to the present.

Haydn spent a good part of his life in the service of the Esterházy's, acting as composer, teacher, and administrator of all the musical events taking place at the estate. Following the death of Prince Nicolaus in 1790, Haydn made his first trip to England in 1791, becoming familiar with the works of Handel. In 1794, Haydn made a second trip to England, becoming even more familiar with the works of Handel by attending the regular performances of his oratorios during Lent both at Covent Garden and Drury Lane. Through these two experiences, he became quite aware of the significance that Handel's works had on the nation as a whole, and was fully convinced that an oratorio was what he needed to give his name national and lasting fame, as that of Handel's. Many different types of oratorios were being written at that time in Austria and Germany, but it was the oratorio of Handel that really attracted him. It was the unorthodox construction, the massive choruses, and the strong feeling for nature that deeply impressed Haydn, and he decided to follow the model of this English oratorio rather than the German model.

While in England, Haydn acquired a libretto that was originally written for Handel, but rejected by him. The text, by Lidley, was compiled from the contents of the first chapter of Genesis and the seventh and eighth books of Milton's Paradise Lost. Haydn brought the English

libretto back to Vienna and had his friend, Baron van Swieten, translate it into German. Wherever possible, the sentimental paraphrases used at the time in German Oratorios were replaced by the powerful words of the Bible. The old narrator was replaced by three singers, the archangels Gabriel (soprano), Uriel (tenor), and Raphael (bass). These names were taken from books IV, V, and VII of Paradise Lost. Van Swieten also gave Haydn directions as to how to set the words to music. These instructions are contained in a manuscript of the libretto preserved in the library of Prince Esterházy. Haydn followed van Swieten's advice for the most part, which was quite beneficial to the composition.

The first printed edition of The Creation, published in 1800 by Haydn, was in both German and English, possibly being the first bilingual score ever. Van Swieten did the English version, which is the basis for most English editions, but it is not very good and not always intelligible.

Haydn worked very slowly and carefully on The Creation, making sketches and reworking. This is in contrast to his earlier works, many of which he wrote in a short time. Twenty-three pages of sketches are preserved in the National Library in Vienna.

The entire work of The Creation resembles Handel in style and form. Chorus and soloists are sometimes used together and sometimes alternate. The form of the arias changes from number to number, but it is always dependent on the text. The recitatives are often like accompanied ariosos, displaying Haydn's deep love of nature in their tone color.

The Creation is in three parts, the first two parts covering the first six days of Creation. Each day has its own internal organization, opening with a biblical narration, a middle section of descriptive or

lyrical commentary, and closing with a song of praise. The narrative is taken from Genesis, chapters one and two. Paradise Lost is the chief source for the descriptive and lyrical passages, and the songs of praise are often paraphrases of Psalms. Part III has no biblical narrative and the mood is entirely lyrical and idyllic. The basic key is C major. However, it ends in B flat, which symbolizes the fall from grace by Adam and Eve.

"With verdure clad," sung by Gabriel in Part I, is probably the most famous single aria from The Creation. It shows Haydn's late pastoral style, revealing a love for the fields "in verdure clad." The meter is a gently rocking $\frac{6}{8}$, the time-honored meter for a pastorale, and is marked Andante ($\text{♩}=92$). The $\text{♩} \text{♪}$ rhythmic figure is predominant and gives added pulse throughout the aria. The melody is very simple and classical in style. There is just enough coloratura to enhance the melodic line and give the sense of the lightness of nature. The texture is totally homophonic, the accompaniment being purely reinforcement for the voice. The orchestration, for flutes, solo clarinet, bassoons, and horn, creates a thin, airy texture. Both the use of the horn and the $\frac{6}{8}$ meter conjure up the idea of hunting another link to nature.

Haydn has chosen a very simple form, A B A, to help capture the simplicity of nature. The A section begins in B flat major. By the end of the A section, the key has modulated to the dominant of F major. An interlude separating the two sections modulates to B flat minor, which is retained throughout the B section. With the return of the A section, the original key of B flat major returns also. Tonic, subdominant chords are predominant, also an element of simplicity. Very few coloristic chords appear, making the harmony totally functional.

"With verdure clad" is a beautiful representation of nature. Its simplicity and swaying rhythm combine to capture the essence of the fields, trees, flowers and all of nature itself.

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH: "ICH FOLGE DIR GLEICHFALLS," ST. JOHN PASSION

The Passion was a form that existed long before Bach's time. It had its roots in the early Christian Church, where the events of Passion-tide were marked in two different ways: the Passion play and a musical presentation of the Passion. The Passion play was a dramatic presentation of the story given in church in the Middle Ages with much elaboration, including costumes, music, and stage properties. The musical setting of the Passion dates back to the fifth century. The liturgy for Holy Week included plain-chant settings of the four Gospel accounts of the Passion which took the place of the normal Gospel reading in the framework of the Mass. St. Matthew's version was given on Palm Sunday, St. Mark's and St. Luke's on Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week, and St. John's on Good Friday. It was originally performed by one deacon, who distinguished the different parts by altering the pitch and inflection of his voice.

In the middle of the fifteenth century, attempts began to be made to elaborate on the Passion. The traditional plainsong was replaced by a freely-composed polyphonic version for three-voices. The roles of Christ and the Evangelist were presumably intended to be sung to a form of plainsong. This form of Passion had its beginning in England. The Englishman Richard Davy is the earliest identified Passion composer, and dates from the end of the fifteenth century. The choral versions of the crowd are grafted on to the traditional plainsong Passion tones which are used for the roles of the Evangelist and of Christ. This custom was followed by many Passion composers during the sixteenth century.¹

¹Basil Smallman, The Background of Passion Music (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1957, pp. 23-24.

The Motet Passion came into being at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The entire text is sung by an unaccompanied choir. Solo voices are not used, but reduced voice sections give a limited degree of characterization. The lack of dramatic realism in the Motet Passion led to its decay in the early seventeenth century.

It was the development of opera and its sacred counterpart, oratorio, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, which laid the groundwork for the Passion in the form it existed in at Bach's time. The plainsong narration of the ancient Dramatic Passion was replaced by the new recitative style, instrumental accompaniments were added, and lyrical movements in the form of arias, chorales, and orchestral symphonias were added. Bach, especially, incorporated the operatic structure in his passions. The recitative style, with organ continuo, is prominent in the roles of the Evangelist and Jesus, and contrasts with the numerous choruses and arias. The recitative assumes the role of telling the story, while the choruses and arias are merely reflection on the action.

The drama of the Passion is based on the four Gospel accounts of the last days of Christ's life. St. John and St. Matthew are by far the most favored of the four. Of these two, the St. Matthew account is perhaps the best. It is the only gospel to include the accounts of Judas's remorse and death, of the dream about Jesus which disturbed Pilate's wife and of the symbolic washing of the governor's hands. The St. John Passion does not even begin until the arrest of Jesus at Gethsemane, therefore omitting the scenes of the Last Supper and the Agony in the Garden. The St. Matthew Passion has a more balanced dramatic construction.

The structural differences between the two Gospels create a marked

contrast between the two great Bach Passions. Each is divided into two parts. In the St. Matthew Passion the break occurs after the arrest of Jesus at Gethsemane. The break occurs after Peter's denial in the St. John Passion. As a result, the first part is very short in the St. John version. It is weaker dramatically and offers very few lyrical movements, the first half containing only three solo arias and four congregational chorales. The greatness of the St. John Passion is seen in the vivid, visual realism of the dramatic presentation of the story.

The St. John Passion (BWV 245) was first performed on Good Friday, 1724. According to recent research, its origin may go back to the Weimar years.² Basically the construction is the same as the St. Matthew Passion. The main part of the text is Biblical, taken from St. John 18-19. Two passages are borrowed from St. Matthew, both for dramatic reasons.³ Bach also uses chorales for some choruses and free texts for the arias, which he wrote himself, based on B. H. Brockes's poems. The narration is done by the Evangelist, a tenor, accompanied by organ and bass instruments. Christ and the other individual characters are sung by soloists and the crowd is sung by chorus. The ariosos and arias express the reaction by that individual to the previous events.

"Ich folge dir gleichfalls" is a free text written by Bach himself, based on Brockes. Whereas Brockes has "Take me with you, here is Peter without a sword," Bach has "I follow thee also..." Brockes uses Peter's actual voice, but Bach's version is represented by a Christian follower, a soprano soloist. The aria follows the Evangelists recitative, "Simon Peter also followed Jesus, and so did another disciple." The aria is the voice of this other disciple, conveying her joy at following Jesus'

²Karl Geiringer, Johann Sebastian Bach (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 195.

³Paul Steinitz, Bach's Passions (London: Paul Elek, 1979), p. 23.

footsteps. This aria is an example of Bach's tendency to use an obligato instrument on arias, being scored for flute obligato, voice and continuo. Bach reflects the meaning of the words in the music by the use of canon. The beginning of the tune is treated in canon almost every time it occurs. The canon is between the basso continuo, voice and flute, in that order, but the continuo drops out after one measure and continues on with bass motion. This use of canon combined with the upward scale movement gives a clear picture of running after someone "with joyful footsteps."

The meter signature is $\frac{3}{8}$. There is sixteenth note motion almost throughout the entire aria. Where the voice is at rest the flute continues the motion and where the flute is at rest the voice continues the motion. The only spots that come to a complete rhythmic stop are at the final cadences. Bach also emphasizes the final cadence in each section by using the rhythmic device of hemiola. Both at the end of the first and middle sections, the last two measures before the final cadence shift from triple meter to a feeling of duple meter. This gives an even stronger sense of finality.

The melody of the aria is actually very functional in that it tends to outline the chordal structure. This melodic skeleton is then embellished with passing tones, appoggiaturas, trills, and turns which give the melodic line that running sensation. A characteristic of the melodic line is that of always going up, which creates a feeling of being uplifted.

The form and harmonic structure are also quite functional. The form is A B B A. The aria begins in the key of B flat. Towards the end of the A section, there is a modulation to F, with the final cadence in

F. The interlude remains in F, but immediately upon the voice entrance a modulation begins, ending with a final cadence in G minor. Again the interlude is in the established key, but another modulation begins with the entrance of the voice. This is a lengthier modulation, which goes through several tonalities before it rests in D minor. There is then an immediate return to B flat upon the return of the A section. The tonality stays in B flat for the rest of the aria. The harmonic scheme establishes two things. First of all it creates a major/minor/major system which is in direct relation with the form of A B B A. It is also interesting to note that the stable areas of tonality are in the interludes and the areas of movement are in the vocal line. This is another device used by Bach to give the sense of movement which is reflected from the text to the music.

"Ich folge dir gleichfalls" is the most cheerful piece in the entire St. John Passion. It is an excellent example of Bach's creative and expressive vocal writing.

I follow you also with joyful steps,
And leave you not, my life, my light.
Advance the course and cease not to.
Draw near me, to push, to request.

CLAUDE DEBUSSY: PROSES LYRIQUES

French art song of the late nineteenth century was a revitalized form of the chanson. Not since the years of the troubadors, trouvères, Machaut, Dufáy, and Jannequin during the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries had the French secular song been a thriving form of art. France had regained a place of honor in the world of secular song.

One of the leading composers of the late-nineteenth century French art song was Claude Debussy. He sought to translate into music the new beauties and freedoms the poets and painters of the time were seeking, which has led his music to be termed "impressionism." This term was originally used by painting critics, and was inspired by the painting by Claude Monet called Impression. The term then was also applied to paintings by Manet, Renoir, Degas, and others. To call Debussy's music "impressionistic" emphasizes the same elusive quality as seen in the paintings. Debussy disliked the term vehemently, saying: "I am trying to make something new -- realities, as it were! what imbeciles call 'impressionism.'"¹

Debussy's music is perhaps linked more closely with symbolism, which was a literary movement employed by Jean Moréas, Mallarmé, Verlaine, Rimbaud, Maeterlinck, and Debussy's closest friend and the poet of Chansons de Bilitis, Pierre Louÿs. These symbolist poets recommended subtle suggestion and vivid sensuous imagery. Debussy was the musical equivalent of this style, his rhythms being modeled after French speech and gesture.

Poetry fertilizes the art of Debussy, creating a new and revital-

¹William W. Austin, Music in the 20th Century (New York: W. W. Norton, 1966), p. 25.

ized form of the art song with the intimate union of the voice and piano. In all of Debussy's forty-three published songs, there is never a dull moment for the accompanist. New patterns are used, breaking away from the classic and romantic figures. The weight and richness of the fabric of tone give a wonderful foundation for the voice, as well as contributing its own illustration of the text. Its frequent busyness and independence tempt the pianist to drown the voice and upset the delicate equilibrium that Debussy planned.

Debussy was all-involved in melody. Once in Vienna, when some musicians were discussing the way Debussy had freed music, one speaker said that he had suppressed melody. But Debussy protested: "But all my music strives to be, is melody." His melody avoids routine accentuations and intervals, cadences occur infrequently, and it is quite often based on something other than the major or minor scale. Diatonic modes, pentatonic scales and the whole-tone scale, which emphasizes the tritone, are Debussy's favorite melodic devices.

The influence that the poets had on Debussy's music is extraordinary. The catalogue of his works show a predominance of works with text: songs, cantatas, choruses, and dramatic works.² This influence is further seen in the large number of untexted pieces with descriptive titles; some are names of poems or lines from poems, and others contain literary references.³ Debussy did a substantial amount of writing on his own. Around 1892, he wrote four poems, which he took to Henri de Régnier for his opinion. Régnier was impressed enough to recommend the poems to Francis Vièle-Griffin, who published the first two, "De rêve" and "De grève," in his journal in December of 1892. Debussy set these

²See Appendix A in Arthur B. Wenk, Claude Debussy and the Poets (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 279-288.

³See Claude Debussy and the Poets, pp. 4-5.

poems to music in 1893, under the title Proses Lyriques. Two of the songs, "De fleurs" and "De soirs," were performed in 1894 by Debussy's fiancée, Therese Rogers, with Debussy accompanying.

The Proses Lyriques are especially significant as a document of the composer's psychological evolution. They reveal both his literary and musical allegiances during this period and his efforts to achieve a synthesis of words and sounds in a single creative endeavor. The poems were written in the style of the symbolist poets, especially Mallarmé, Baudelaire, R gnier, and Jules Laforgue. The poems contain a preoccupation with inner feelings, corruption, and morbidity, and emphasize personal experience and nostalgia for a better world now lost. The musical settings suggest the end of a line. The melodies lack direction or deliberately avoid a natural climax. The harmonies are based on a rich piling of triad upon triad and the tonality is weakened through chromaticism, the whole-tone scale, and avoidance of strong progressions.

De R ve

The night has the sweetness of woman
and the old trees under the golden moon
are dreaming!
To her who has just passed with head bepearled,
now heartbroken, for ever heartbroken,
they did not know how to give her a sign...
All! they have passed:
the Frail Ones, the Foolish Ones,
casting their laughter to the thin grass,
and to the fondling breezes the bewitching caress
of hips in the fullness of their beauty.
Alas! of all this, nothing is left but a pale tremor....
The old trees under the golden moon
are weeping their beautiful golden leaves!
None will again dedicate to them the pride of the golden helmets
now tarnished, tarnished for ever.
The knights are dead
on the way to the Grail!
The night has the sweetness of woman,
hands seem to caress the souls,
hands so foolish, so frail,
in the days when the swords sang for them!

Strange sighs rise under the trees.
My sour you are gripped by a dream of olden times!

"De Rêve" is the first of the four songs. The poem appears as an unbroken line of thought, whose main points of articulation are the recurrences of the first two lines of the poem, heard later in the poem in reverse order. The end has been reached in this poem; there is no future, only a past. Life in the present has no substance; it seems only to be part of an ancient dream of tarnished helmets and broken-hearted women. The principal theme conveys a feeling of purposelessness through the absence of either a clearly defined goal or a unifying tonal center. The piano begins with an arpeggiated augmented chord, already suggesting a whole-tone orientation. The opening vocal line is characteristic of Debussy, with little motion and repeated notes. The vocal line is interrupted throughout the song with beautifully expressive piano interludes. At the Andantino, triplets are heard against regular eighth notes, a favorite rhythmic device of Debussy's. The vocal line becomes highly chromatic on "Maintenant navrée, à jamais navrée" and then soars to an arch-like ascending and descending phrase. The piano interlude is again three against two, which carries into the next vocal entrance. Whole tone scales are heard in both piano and vocal lines at the words "aux brises froleuses la caresse charmeuse." The piano returns to the arpeggiated, augmented triads, followed by the repetition of the second line of the verse in the voice. This time, the melody plunges into a new section with a crescendo and an accelerando. This section is much weightier with full, sonorous chords, but dies back down as quickly as it grew. The key changes to C major at the Plus lent, with a restricted vocal line hinting at the message of gloom. Once again the opening bars are repeated, this time with the same text and exactly the same notes. A

final surge follows, resulting in the climax of the song as the highest note in the vocal line is reached. From here on, there is a gradual fading out, as the dreams fade away. The song finally resolves to F# major, after moving through many various keys. The piano fades away on the horn theme, heard several times previously, based on triadic harmonies and perfect intervals, and evoking the days of knighthood.

De Grève

Over the sea twilight falls,
frayed white silk.
The waves like little mad things
chatter, little girls coming out of school,
amid the rustling of their dresses,
iridescent green silk!
The clouds, grave travellers,
hold counsel about the next storm,
and it is a background really too solemn
for this English water-colour.
The waves, the little waves,
no longer know where to go,
for here is the annoying downpour,
rustling of flying skirts,
panic-stricken green silk.
But the moon, compassionate towards all!
comes to pacify this grey conflict.
And slowly caresses his little friends
who offer themselves like loving lips to this warm, white kiss.
Then, nothing more....
Only the belated bells of the floating churches!
Angelus of the waves,
calmed white silk!

"De Grève" is also written in unrhymed lines and uses imagery continuously; clouds seen as "grave voyagers," waves "chattering like school girls" and "offering themselves like loving lips to the moon's caress." Repetition is the structural device in this poem, as it was in "De Rêve," in this case one metaphor for the sea, silk, used in four different lines. Like most musical interpretations of the sea, the piano part is quite busy, full of rapid tremolo figures, surging arpeggios, and rushing scales. The first half of the song is much more frenzied as the storm

builds up and erupts. The stormy figurations in the piano are balanced by single-note, or almost single-note melodic lines. The piano's long, rumbling introduction clearly establishes the key of D major. The tonality of D major is also clearly defined at the end of the piece, making "De Grève" the most tonal of the four songs. The vocal line is quite restricted in the first section, becoming more active and chromatic as the sea is churned up. Trills in the piano usher in the big storm, where the vocal line becomes somewhat frenzied. The rising interval under "envolées" and affolée" are even more effective after following repeated notes, creating the climax of the song. It is interesting to note that the piano part is entirely in treble clef in this section, somewhat contrary to what one would think of for a storm. The remainder of the song is a gradual calming of the waters. The tessitura falls, the dynamic level drops to pianissimo and the rhythm slows, all creating the tranquil effect of the calm following the storm. At the end, the church bells tolling the Angelus are heard in the accompaniment, a single note, the supertonic, which is emphasized by being a non-chord tone. The last few lines of the vocal line barely move, creating the same mesmerizing effect as the calm ocean.

De Fleurs

In the tedium so desolately green of the hothouse of grief,
the flowers entwine my heart with their wicked stems.
Ah! when will return around my head
the dear hands so tenderly disentwining?
The big violet irises
wickedly ravished your eyes
while seeming to reflect them,
they, who were the water of the dream into which my dreams plunged
so sweetly enclosed in their colour;
and the lilies, white fountains of fragrant pistils,
have lost their white grace
and are no more than poor sick thing without sun!
Sun! friend of evil flowers,
killer of dreams! Killer of illusions!
This consecrated bread of wretched souls!

Come! Come! Redeeming hands!
Break the window-panes of malefice,
my soul dies of too much sun!
Mirages! the joy of my eyes will not flower again
and my hands are weary of praying,
my eyes are wary of weeping!
Eternally this maddening sound of the black petals of tedium
falling drop by drop on my head
in the green of the hothouse of grief!

The third song in Proses Lyriques, "De Fleurs," also relies heavily on imagery: boredom is desolately verdant, it is the greenhouse of sorrow. This elaborate floral imagery reflects Debussy's preoccupation with the aesthetic theories of the Art Nouveau movement. The opening chords are slow and sad, alternating between major and minor triads. These chords anticipate the vocal line, with each chord harmonizing one melody note. The inactive vocal line, with many repeated notes, contributes to the monotony and boredom of the hothouse of grief. An unexpected rise in the vocal line under "se tendrement," is immediately followed by a fall back down, balanced by rising chords in the accompaniment. The next section is characterized by the triplet figure in the accompaniment while the vocal line stays in duple. A gradual accelerando begins here, with the increased motion in the piano adding to the sense of moving forward. The climax of this section is reached, following a gradual crescendo, on "sans soleil," with the sustained high A-flat making a great impact. The mood changes at this climax, but the triplet figure remains constant as the song continues its forward movement. The ultimate climax occurs after a further increase in tempo and crescendo on the word "Venez." The key changes again, as well as the piano figuration, which now consists of the chordal pattern of the opening, transposed from C to B, and made more turbulent by the rushing scale patterns between the chords. A rapid diminuendo brings the dynamic level back

down to piano and the piano becomes more gentle, the entire final section dying away. The vocal line remains heavy and colorless on a monotone or severely restricted line. The chords of the opening bars are heard at the very end, creating an air of hopelessness and despair.

De Soir

Sunday in the towns,
Sunday in the hearts!
Sunday for the little girls
singing with immature voices
persistent rounds where good Towers
will last only for a few days!
Sunday, the stations are frenzied!
Everyone sets off for the suburbs of adventure
Saying good-bye with distracted gestures!
Sunday, the trains go quickly,
devoured by insatiable tunnels;
and the good signals of the tracks
interchange with a single eye
purely mechanical impressions.
Sunday, in the blue of my dreams,
where my sad thoughts of abortive fireworks
will no longer cease to mourn
for old Sundays long departed.
And the night, with velvet steps,
sends the beautiful, tired sky to sleep,
and it is Sunday in the avenues of stars;
the Virgin, gold upon silver,
lets the flowers of sleep fall!
Quickly, the little angels, overtake the swallows
to put you to bed, blessed by absolution!
Take pity on the towns,
take pity on the hearts,
You, Virgin gold upon silver!

The fourth song, "De Soir," deals more with Sunday (Dimanche) than Evening (Soir). Debussy perhaps chose this title to keep the four titles of the Proses Lyriques symmetrical, each with a two syllable name. The music immediately conveys the aura of Sunday, with its church bell figuration in the first six bars of the piano. The vocal melody is joyous, with two intervals of a fifth, both on the word "Dimanche." The song is divided into two parts, each half having its own dominant motive based