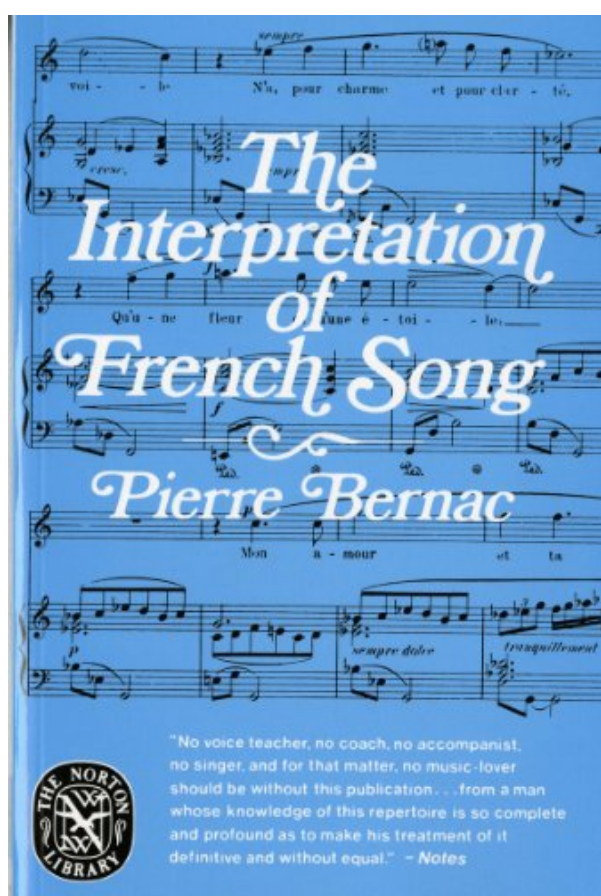
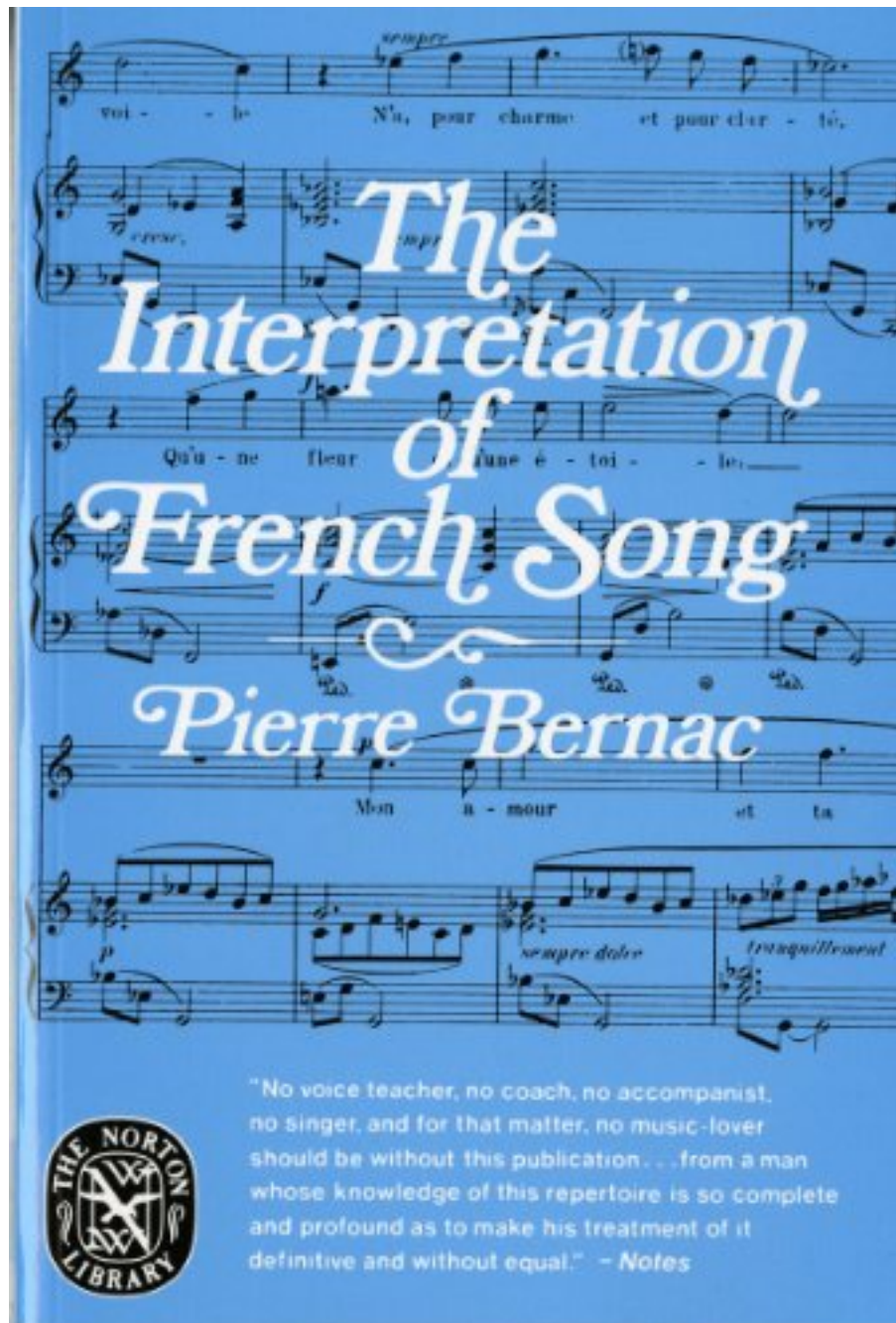


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Language Notes

Text: English, French (translation)

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The Interpretation of French Song is the standard work on its subject, and its author the outstanding authority. Among the eighteen composers whose vocal works are covered in the book are Berlioz, Gounod, Duparc, Chausson, Faure, Debussy, Satie, Ravel - as well as Poulenc and others. The greater part of each composer's output in the genre is discussed: texts of nearly 200 songs are given in French, with line-for-line verse translation by Winifred Radford, notes on pronunciation, and simple but detailed suggestions for performance and interpretation.

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"No voice teacher, no coach, no accompanist, no singer, and for that matter, no music-lover should be without this publication . . . from a man whose knowledge of this repertoire is so complete and profound as to make his treatment of it definitive and without equal." ?Notes

This is the standard work on its subject, and its author the outstanding authority. Pierre Bernac had a long and distinguished career as a singer, specializing in the French song (or *mélodie*) repertoire. For many years he was incomparable partnered by Francis Poulenc, one of the composers discussed in this book. M. Bernac later taught and gave master classes in Europe and the United States. He died in 1979.

Among eighteen composers whose vocal works are covered in the book are Berlioz, Gounod, Duparc, Chausson, Fauré, Debussy, Satie, Ravel?as well as Poulenc and others. The greater part of each composer's output in the genre is discussed: texts of nearly 200 songs are given in French, with line-for-line verse translations by Winifred Radford, notes on pronunciation, and simple but detailed suggestion for performance and interpretation. Preceding these sections on the songs themselves are three most important chapters on performance and interpretation in vocal music, on singing in French, and on the particular problems involved in the interpretation of French *mélodies*.

This is the book every serious singer needs?and, more and more, singers are "discovering" French song. It is also an invaluable guide for the concert-goer and record collector.

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Good for native French singers too

By C. Orde

In the Foreword Bernac modestly says that the book "does not claim to be anything more than a guide for English-speaking singers who wish to study a repertoire which may not be very familiar to them". It is in fact far more than that, and French-speaking singers will find his suggestions for interpretation, tempo, expression and dynamics to be invaluable. He has an unerring instinct for when a song merits a few general comments for its interpretation and when it calls for a detailed phrase-by-phrase analysis. His choice of repertoire for inclusion in this relatively compact book is surprisingly comprehensive. Particularly useful are his suggestions for when to use the liaison (final consonants being sounded before a word that begins with a vowel, which happens more frequently in poetic language than in normal speech) and when not to. Liaisons are not always intuitive or obvious, even to those who were born and brought up in French.

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The Interpretation of French Song

By Eileen Davis

Pierre Bernac's book is an invaluable resource for all classical singers, voice teachers and vocal coaches. His writing is eloquent and graceful and the facts he offers on French diction and song interpretation are easy to comprehend. The poems of major French poets, set to music by many foremost French composers, are analyzed with guidance on elision and liaison, breath points and interpretation. He also includes a poetic English translation of each poem. Having been fortunate enough to have worked with Pierre Bernac earlier in my singing career, I have complete confidence in his artistic thoughts on all aspects of diction and performance of the French *mélodie*. My book is falling apart after all these years and I will most certainly buy another! You voice students out there who are interested in performance-GET THIS BOOK!

Eileen Davis, Author of: Sing French, Diction for Singers

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

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By K. Wyatt

What a wonderful and insightful book this is! The tempi recommended are what blows me away-every one suddenly makes the song fit like a glove. The comments and background info for the composers and individual pieces are very thorough-I only wish there was every French *mélodie* in there, I feel so much more secure with the songs that are included!

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