

Francis Poulenc *Sacré et profane*
Simon Phipps vokalensemble



Francis Poulenc, 1924. Photograph by Man Ray © Man Ray Trust

FRANCIS POULENC (1899–1963) was born into an affluent Parisian family with artistic interests. While music was to become his profession he had an equally precocious interest in poetry and this was to have a decisive influence on the content of his oeuvre. Most of his greatest music can be found in the songs, choral music, oratorios or operas which he composed, often to texts of high literary merit.

At the end of the first world war Poulenc began to make a name for himself as a composer of witty, exotic music, clearly influenced by Stravinsky and Satie. He belonged to a group of composer-friends with similar tastes (including Milhaud, Honegger and Auric), labelled “Les Six”, who had the writer and artist Jean Cocteau as their common denominator. In 1924 Poulenc established an international reputation with *Les Biches* composed for Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes. In the next decade he was able to consolidate this reputation with further stage works, a concerto for two pianos and above all a series of song cycles. He was fond of high society and was often to be found in the fashionable salons of the day.

The brutal death of a colleague in a car accident in 1935 seems to have brought about a change in Poulenc’s outlook. Consoled and inspired by a visit to Notre Dame de Rocamadour with its black Madonna he composed the exquisite *Litanies de la vierge noire*

for women’s voices. This was a completely new departure both in mood (reverent and mystic) and technique (restrained chordal harmonies): evidence, on the one hand, of his reawakened interest in the church, and on the other, the influence of Nadia Boulanger’s performances of Monteverdi madrigals at the Princesse de Polignac’s salon. Over the next twenty years choral music, both sacred and secular was to be an important feature of Poulenc’s output.

Sept chansons, composed in 1936, is the first of the great choral suites, with strikingly suggestive texts by Apollinaire (long since a favourite) and Eluard (a newer acquaintance). Eluard’s elusive-allusive surrealism was a fitting challenge for the composer who was emerging as the greatest master of French song since Fauré. His success may be gauged by the poem which Eluard subsequently wrote to the composer “Francis, I need you to hear myself”. The common theme which runs through all the texts is a bitter-sweet longing for an absent lover – a sort of French *An die ferne Geliebte*. The first two songs are calm, “La blanche neige” and “A peine défigurée”, a deceptive calm, as the next two songs show, with passionate outbursts alternating with caressing words of love. A mood of almost sacred solemnity follows with the fifth song “Belle et ressemblante”, contrasting in its turn with the effervescent dance of “Marie” in the sixth. The

suite which began in the sombre winter snow concludes with the dazzling summer sun of "Luire".

Quatre motets pour un temps de pénitence were composed in 1938 and 1939. Poulenc described them as being "as realistic and as tragic as a Mantegna painting", and it is natural that these dramatic evocations of Christ's agony should have taken on a special, foreboding intensity in a country on the threshold of war. The Latin texts are taken from the liturgy for Holy Week.

The first motet, "Timor et tremor", declaims its message of fear and dread in stark Aeolian harmonies though ending in a consolatory A major. "Vinea mea electa" marvellously expresses the bitterness of defeat in Christ's crucifixion and Barrabas' release through the undermining of the honeyed harmonies of the c# major opening. Depicting Christ's agony on the cross, the third motet, "Tenebrae factae sunt", is the most overtly dramatic of the set, with Poulenc resorting to richly expressive harmonies in the pathos of Jesus' last words. The enharmonic close perfectly enacts the transformation of death. "Tristis est anima mea" closes the set with an evocation of Gethsemane. The calm opening is dispersed by the drama of the disciples' flight but returns to G minor for the ritual sacrifice of the ending.

A perfect contrast in style and mood can be heard in the two motets composed in 1941. *Salve Regina* is a restrained, reverential setting of poised beauty, while *Exultate Deo* is a boisterous outburst of old-testament joy (the climax is marked "extremely violent").

Un soir de neige was composed in 1944 and the suite of four poems by Eluard perfectly evokes the frozen limbo of France under German occupation. The harmonic stability of the first two numbers suggests a reassuring if gloomy stasis before absolute zero is reached in the third poem "Bois meurtri". Here a kind of existential ecstasy is achieved with the words "J'avoue ma vie, j'avoue ma morte, j'avoue

autrui", before subsiding into death. The cheerful start of the final song is deceptive and there is a sense of definitive enprisonment in the concluding phrase "Le froid brûlant m'eut bien en main". Despite its austere theme the suite is one of Poulenc's most subtly expressive works.

In the joyful aftermath of liberation Poulenc arranged a collection of French folksongs under the title *Chansons françaises*. The sophisticated and cosmopolitan composer had always had a paradoxical liking for simple country pleasures and the songs are an affectionate evocation of story-book peasant life. The charming melodies are presented in an appropriately straightforward and unpretentious way. Two of the set are for male voices and they are not recorded here.

Quatre motets pour le temps de Noël were composed in 1951 and 1952 and they provide a joyful counterweight to the earlier, penitential motets. In the dozen years which had elapsed since their composition Poulenc's career had blossomed. He was by now the most successful living French composer and beginning work on the opera which was to be his masterpiece: *Dialogues des carmélites*. The first motet, "O magnum mysterium", is rightly one of Poulenc's most popular compositions. The shadowy, shifting harmonies of the initial lower voices prepare for a soprano melody of affecting grace and simplicity which returns as a refrain. Next: "Quem vidistis", where flowing melismas setting the scene for the shepherds' description of the nativity are contrasted with forthright declamation "Dicite quidnam". "Videntes stellam" describes the journey of the magi in stately, homophonic style, resorting to chromatic colouring only for the gifts "aurum thus et myrrham". Finally "Hodie Christus natus est" which dances its way to a jubilant climax. These motets were Poulenc's last work for a cappella mixed choir and a worthy conclusion to a marvellously varied and expressive canon.

Simon Phipps

FRANCIS POULENC (1899–1963) föddes i en förmoden, konstnärligt intresserad familj i Paris. Även om musiken skulle bli hans yrke ägde han en lika brådmogen faiblesse för poesis, ett intresse som skulle komma att ha ett avgörande inflytande på hela hans produktion. De flesta av hans mest framstående verk hittar man bland sånger, körmusik, oratorier och operor som han komponerade utifrån litterärt högtstående texter.

Vid första världskrigets slut började Poulenc bli känd som en kompositör av slagkraftig och exotisk musik, tydligt influerad av Stravinsky och Satie. Tillsammans med några andra kompositörer med likartade preferenser (bl a Milhaud, Honegger och Auric) ingick han i gruppen »Les Six« som hade författaren och artisten Jean Cocteau som gemensam nämnare. 1924 fick Poulenc internationellt erkännande genom *Les Biches*, komponerad för Diaghilevs Ballets Russes. Under följande decennium befäste han sitt rykte genom ytterligare verk för musikteaterscenen, konserten för dubbelbas och framför allt en serie av sångcykler. Han tyckte mycket om att umgås med societeten och besökte ofta dåtidens fashionabla salonger.

En kollegas brutala död i en bilkrasch 1935 verkar ha förändrat Poulencs inställning till sitt konstnärskap. Tröstad och inspirerad av ett besök i Notre Dame de Rocamadour med sin svarta madonna komponerade han den utsökta *Litanies de la vierge noire* för damkör. Detta verk blev ett nytt avstamp såväl i karaktär (vördnadsfull och mystisk) som i teknik

(strikt ackordiska harmonier). Man finner tecken på, å ena sidan, hans nyväckta intresse för kyrkan och religionen, och å andra sidan intrycken från Nadia Boulangers framföranden av Monteverdi-madrigaler i Prinsessan de Polignacs salong. Under de kommande tjugo åren blev körmusiken, såväl profan som sakral, en viktig del av Poulencs produktion.

Sept chansons (1936) är den första av de stora körsviterna. Musiken skrevs till slående suggestiva texter av Apollinaire, sedan länge en av Poulencs favoriter, och den nyare bekantskapen Eluard. Eluards svår-gripbara och mångtydiga surrealism var en passande utmaning för kompositören som då höll på att träda fram som den störste mästaren inom fransk sång sedan Fauré. Framgångarna kanske kan förstås genom den dikt som Eluard senare skrev till tonsättaren:

»Francis, jag behöver ditt lyssnande öra«. Det genomgående temat i texterna är en bitterljuv längtan efter en frånvarande älskad – en sorts fransk *An die ferne Geliebte*. De två första sångerma, »La blanche neige« och »A peine défigurée«, är lugna. Ett förrädiskt lugn visar det sig, för de följande två sångerna växlar mellan passionerade utbrott och ömma ord om kärlek. I den femte sången, »Belle et ressemblante«, följer en stämning av nästan andlig högtidlighet som bryter av mot den sprudlande dansen i den sjätte sången, »Marie«. Sviten som inleddes med dyster vinterstämning avslutas i den bländande sommarsolen i »Luire«.

Quatre motets pour un temps de pénitence komponerades 1938–1939. Poulenc beskrev dem som »lika realistiska och tragiska som en målning av

Mantegna». Det förefaller kanske naturligt att dessa dramatiska bilder av Jesu lidande skulle locka fram en säregen, förebådande kraft hos ett land på tröskeln till krig. De latinska texterna är hämtade från Stilla veckans liturgi.

Den första motetten, »Timor et tremor«, proklamerar sitt budskap om fruktan och bävan i rena mollackord men avslutas förtröstansfullt i A-dur. »Vinea mea electa« uttrycker genom det gradvisa uppluckrandet av inledningens honungssöta Ciss-durharmonier på ett förunderligt sätt besvikelsens bitterhet i Kristi korsfästelse och Barrabs frigivning. Den tredje motetten, »Tenebrae factae sunt«, är i sin skildring av Jesu lidande på korset den mest dramatiska av de fyra. Här tar Poulenc till rikt uttrycksfulla harmonier i sin tonmålning av Jesu sista ord. Den enharmoniska avslutningen gestaltar på ett utmärkt sätt människans förvandling genom döden. »Tristis est anima mea« avslutar sviten med en bild av Getsemane. Den fridfulla inledningen störs av dramatiken när lärjungarna flyr, men musiken återvänder till g-moll inför avslutningens rituella offerscen.

De båda motetterna från 1941 framstår som mycket kontrasterande, såväl i karaktär som i stämning. *Salve Regina* är en återhållen, vördnadsfull och mycket vacker sats medan *Exultate Deo* är ett våldsamt utbrott av gammaltestamentlig glädje (höjdpunkten har föredragsbeteckningen »extremt våldsamt«).

Un soir de neige komponerades 1944. Eluards diktsvit framkallar bilden av ett Frankrike som står fruset och förstenat under den tyska ockupationen. Den harmoniska stabiliteten i de första två sångerna skänker en känsla av lugn och ödesmättad stagnation innan den absoluta nollpunkten nås i den tredje satsen, »Bois meutri«. Orden »J'avoue ma vie, j'avoue ma mort, j'avoue autrui« skapar en sorts existentiell extas inför den kommande döden. Den fjärde sångens jublande start är bedräglig. I den sista frasen, »Le froid brûlant m'eut bien en main«, härskar en känsla av slutgiltig och total instängdhet. Trots dess anspråks-

lösa melodiföring är sviten ett av Poulencs mest subtila och uttrycksfulla verk.

Under befrielseens glädjefyllda efterdyningar arrangerade Poulenc en samling franska folksånger med samlingsnamnet *Chansons Françaises*. Den sofistikerade och världsvane kompositören hade alltid känt en paradoxal attraktion till enkla lantliga nöjen och sångerna är en passionerad hyllning till sagornas lantliga idyller. De charmiga melodierna presenteras på ett enkelt och opretentiöst sätt. Två av sångerna är satta för mansröster och återfinns inte på denna inspelning.

Quatre motets pour le temps de Noël skrevs 1951–52 och de utgör en välgörande motvikt till de tidigare fastemotetterna. Under det dussin år som förflutit sedan deras tillkomst hade Poulencs karriär slagit ut i full blom. Han var vid den här tiden den mest framgångsrike levande franske kompositören och hade precis börjat arbetet med den opera som skulle bli hans mästerverk: *Dialogues des Carmélites*. Den första motetten, »O magnum mysterium«, är med rätta en av Poulencs mest omtyckta sånger. Understämorna förbereder med inledningens skuggiga och växlande harmonik för en enkel och gracil sopranmelodi som sedan återkommer i refrängen. Därefter »Quem vidistis«, där böljande melismer som gestaltar herdarnas berättelse om Kristi födelse står i kontrast mot den rättframma exklamationen »Dicit quidnam«. »Videntes stellam« berättar om de tre vise människans resa i raka, homofona tongångar som för en kort stund färgas av kromatik vid överlämnandet av gåvorna, »aurum thus et myrrham«. Avslutningsvis »Hodie Christus natus est« som dansar sig fram till sin jublande höjdpunkt. Dessa motetter blev Poulencs sista verk för blandad kör a cappella och de är en värdig avslutning på en verkliga som präglas av stor variationsrikedom och uttrycksfullhet.

Simon Phipps

Quatre motets pour le temps de Noël

1. O MAGNUM MYSTERIUM

O magnum mysterium,
Et admirabile sacramentum,
Ut animalia viderent Dominum natum
Jacentem in præsepio.
Beata virgo cujus viscera meruerunt
Portare Dominum Christum.

2. QUEM VIDISTIS PASTORES DICITE

Quem vidistis pastores dicite:
Annuntiate nobis in terris quis apparuit:
Natum vidimus, et choros angelorum
Collaudantes Domino.
Dicite quidnam vidistis,
Et annuntiate Christi Nativitatem.

3. VIDENTES STELLAM

Videntes stellam
Magi gavisus sunt gaudio magno:
Et intrantes domum
Obtulerunt Domino
Aurum thus et myrrham.

4. HODIE CHRISTUS NATUS EST

Hodie Christus natus est
Salvator apparuit, alleluia.
Hodie in terra canunt angeli,
Laetantur archangeli.
Hodie exsultant iusti, dicentes:
Gloria in excelsis Deo, alleluia.

5. *Salve Regina*

Salve Regina, Mater misericordiae,
Vita, dulcedo et spes nostra, salve.
Ad te clamamus, exsules filii Hevae.
Ad te suspiramus gementes et flentes
In hac lacrimarum valle.
Eia ergo, advocata nostra,
Illos tuos misericordes oculos
Ad nos converte.

O great mystery
And wonderful sacrament
That animals should see the infant Lord
Lying in a manger.
Blessed is the virgin whose womb
Was worthy to bear the Lord Christ.

Whom did you see, shepherds, tell us,
Proclaim to us: who has appeared on the earth?
We saw the newborn child and choirs of angels
Praising the Lord.
Tell us, what have you seen?
Tell us about the birth of Jesus Christ.

When they saw the star,
The wise men were filled with great joy
And they went into the house.
There to the Lord they offered gold,
Frankincense and myrrh.

Today Christ is born:
Today the Saviour has appeared:
Today the Angels sing,
The Archangels rejoice:
Today the righteous rejoice, saying:
Glory to God in the highest. Alleluia.

Hail holy Queen, Mother of mercy,
Hail our life, our sweetness and our hope.
To you do we cry poor banished children of Eve,
To you we send up our sighs,
Mourning and weeping in this valley of tears.
Turn then, most gracious advocate
Thy eyes of mercy toward us.
And after this, our exile,

Et Jesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui,
Nobis post hoc exsilium ostende.

O clemens, o pia, o dulcis Virgo Maria.

Quatre motets pour un temps de pénitence

6. TIMOR ET TREMOR

Timor et tremor venerunt super me; et caligo
cecidit super me. Miserere mei Domine! Miserere
quoniam, in te confidit anima mea. Exaudi Deus
deprecationem meam quia refugium meum es
tu et adiutor fortis Domine invocavi te non
confundar.

7. VINEA MEA ELECTA

Vinea mea electa, ego te plantavi: quomodo
conversa es in amaritudinem, ut me crucifigeres
et Barrabam dimitteres. Sepivi te et lapides elegi
ex te et aedificavi turrim.

8. TENEBRAE FACTAE SUNT

Tenebrae factae sunt, dum crucifixissent Jesum
Judaei: et circa horam nonam exclamavit Jesus
voce magna: Deus meus, ut quid me dereliquisti?
Et inclinato capite emisit spiritum. Exclamans
Jesus voce magna: Pater in manus tuas
commendo spiritum meum.

9. TRISTIS EST ANIMA MEA

Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem: sustinete
hic, et vigilate mecum: nunc videbitis turbam,
quae circumdabit me. Vos fugam capietis, et ego
vadam immolari pro vobis. Ecce appropinquat
hora et Filius hominis tradetur in manus
peccatorum.

10. Exultate Deo

Exultate Deo, adiutori nostro,
Jubilate Deo Jacob.
Sumite psalmum, et date tympanum
psalterium jucundum cum cithara.
Buccinate in neomenia tuba
insigni die solemnitatis vestrae.

Show us the fruit of your womb, Jesus.

O merciful, o loving, o sweet Virgin Mary.

Fear and trembling have come upon me, and
darkness has fallen upon me: have mercy upon me,
o Lord; have mercy, for I have entrusted my soul to
thee. Hear, o God, my supplication, for thou art my
refuge and my strength. O Lord, I have called upon
thee and shall not be confounded.

O my chosen vine, I did plant thee; how then art
thou turned into bitterness, that thou hast crucified
me, and released Barrabas? I have surrounded
thee with a hedge, and have taken away the stones
before thy feet, and built unto thee a watchtower.
Darkness came over the land, when they had
crucified Jesus of Judea: and around the ninth hour
Jesus cried in a loud voice, saying: My God, why
hast thou forsaken me? And bowing his head he
gave up the spirit. Jesus cried with a loud voice,
saying: Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.

My soul is exceedingly sad, even to death: stay here,
and watch with me: you will see a crowd that shall
surround me. You will take flight, and I will go to
be sacrificed for you. Behold, the hour draws near
and the Son of Man will be betrayed into the hands
of sinners.

Sing aloud unto God our strength,
Make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.
Sing a psalm and bring hither the timbrel,
The pleasant harp with the psaltery
Blow the trumpet in the new moon,
On this solemn day of his glory.

Sept chansons

11. LA BLANCHE NEIGE (*Guillaume Apollinaire*)

Les anges dans le ciel
L'un est vêtu en officier
L'un est vêtu en cuisinier
Et les autres chantent.

Bel officier couleur du ciel
Te doux printemps longtemps après Noël
Le médaillera d'un beau soleil.

Le cuisinier plume les oies.
Ah! Tombe neige,
Tombe et que n'ai je
Ma bien-aimée entre mes bras.

12. À PEINE DÉFIGURÉE (*Paul Éluard*)

Adieu tristesse.
Bonjour tristesse.
Tu es inscrite dans les lignes du plafond.
Tu es inscrite dans les yeux que j'aime.
Tu n'es pas tout à fait la misère,
Car les lèvres les plus pauvres te dénoncent
Par un sourire.

Bonjour, tristesse.
Amour des corps aimables.
Puissance de l'amour
Dont l'amabilité surgit
Comme un monstre sans corps.
Tête désappointée.
Tristesse, beau visage.

13. PAR UNE NUIT NOUVELLE (*Paul Éluard*)

Femme avec laquelle j'ai vécu,
Femme avec laquelle je vis,
Femme avec laquelle je vivrai,
Toujours la même, la même.
Il te faut un manteau rouge,
Des gants roug' un masque rouge.
Il te faut des bas noirs.
Des raisons, des preuves,

THE WHITE SNOW

Angels, angels in the sky;
One is dressed as an officer
One is dressed as a cook
And the others sing.

Handsome officer, colour of the sky,
Long after Christmas, the sweet spring
Will decorate you with a fine sun.

The cook plucks his geese.
Ah! Snow is falling,
Falling – if only I had
My beloved in my arms.

HARDLY DISFIGURED

Goodbye, sadness.
Hello, sadness.
You are written in the lines of the ceiling.
You are engraved in the eyes I love.
You are not quite misery itself,
Since the poorest lips betray you
With a smile.
Hello, sadness.
Friend of kind souls.
Power of love
Whose kindness rises up
like a bodiless monster.
Disappointed face,
Beautiful face of sadness.

A NEW NIGHT

Woman with whom I have lived.
Woman with whom I live.
Woman with whom I shall live.
You never change
You need a red coat,
Red gloves, a red mask
And black stockings.
Motives, proof

De te voir toute nue.
Nudité pure, ô parure parée.
Seins, ô mon coeur.

14. TOUS LES DROITS (*Paul Éluard*)

Simule
L'ombre fleurie des fleurs
Suspendues au printemps,
Le jour le plus court de l'année
Et la nuit esquimau.
L'agonie des visionnaires de l'automne,
L'odeur des roses,
La savante brûlure de l'ortie.
Étends des linges transparents,
Dans la clairière de tes yeux.
Montre les ravages du feu,
Ses oeuvres d'inspiré,
Et le paradis de sa cendre,
Le phénomène abstrait,
Luttant avec les aiguilles de la pendule.
Montre les blessures de la vérité,
Montre les serments qui ne plient pas,
Montre toi.
Tu peux sortir en robe de cristal,
Ta beauté continue.
Tes yeux versent des larmes,
Des caresses, des sourires.
Tes yeux sont sans secret,
Sans limites.
Simule l'ombre fleurie des fleurs
Suspendues au printemps.

15. BELLE ET RESSEMBLANTE (*Paul Éluard*)

Un visage à la fin du jour
Un berceau dans les feuilles mortes du jour
Un bouquet de pluie nue
Tout soleil caché
Toute source des sources au fond de l'eau
Tout miroir des miroirs brisé
Un visage dans les balances du silence

To see you quite naked.
Pure nakedness, oh perfect finery
Your breasts, oh my heart!

EVER RIGHT

Simulate
The flowery shadow of flowers
Hanging in Spring
The shortest day of the year
And the night of daylight.
The death-agonies of autumn dreamers
The scent of roses,
The clever nettle's sting.
Hang out transparent clothes
In the clearing of your eyes
Show the devastation of fire
Its inspired works
And paradise in its ashes
The abstract phenomenon
Fighting with the hands of the clock.
Wounds of truth,
Unbending oaths
Show yourself.
You can go out in a crystal dress
Your beauty is everlasting.
Your eyes shed tears,
Caresses, smiles.
Your eyes have no secrets,
Are limitless.
Simulate the flowery shadow of flowers
Hanging in spring.

BEAUTIFUL AND RESEMBLING

A face at the end of the day
A cradle in the dead leaves of the day
A scent of naked rain
Not a ray of sun in sight
Every well-spring beneath the water
Every mirror broken
A face suspended in silence

Un caillou parmi d'autres cailloux
Pour les frondes des dernières lueurs du jour
Un visage semblable à tous les visages oubliés.

16. MARIE (*Guillaume Apollinaire*)

Vous y dansiez petite fille
Y danserez-vous mère-grand
C'est la maclotte qui sautille
Toutes les cloches sonneront
Quand donc reviendrez-vous Marie?
Les masques sont silencieux
Et la musique est si lointaine
Qu'elle semble venir des cieux
Où je veux vous aimer mais vous aimer à peine
Et mon mal est délicieux

Les brebis s'en vont dans la neige
Flocons de laine et ceux d'argent
Des soldats passent et que n'ai-je
Un coeur à moi ce coeur changeant
Changeant et puis encore que sais-je

Sais-je où s'en iront tes cheveux
Crépus comme mer qui moutonne
Sais-je où s'en iront tes cheveux
Et tes mains feuilles de l'automne
Que jonchent aussi nos aveux

Je passais au bord de la Seine
Un livre ancien sous le bras
Le fleuve est pareil à ma peine
Il s'écoule et ne tarit pas
Quand donc finira la semaine
Quand donc reviendrez-vous Marie?

17. LUIRE (*Paul Éluard*)

Terre irréprochablement cultivée,
Miel d'aube, soleil en fleurs,
Coureur tenant par un fil au dormeur.
(Noeud par intelligences)
Et le jetant sur son épaule:
"Il n'a jamais été plus neuf,

A stone amongst other stones
By the last light of day
A face like all forgotten faces.

MARIE

You dance here like a little girl
Does your grandmother also dance here?
It is Maclotte who leaps this way
All the bells will ring
When are you coming back, Marie?

The masks are silent
And the music so far away
As if it came from heaven
Yes, I want to love you, but only a little
And my suffering is delicious

The sheep move away in the snow
Flakes of wool and silver
Soldiers pass by – If only I had
A heart, this fickle heart of mine.
Fickle, but then, what can I know?

If only I knew where your hair blew away to
Curly like the sea, crowned with foam
If only I knew where your hair blew away to
And your hands autumn leaves
Which also hide our promises

I went along the banks of the Seine
With an old book under my arm
The river is like my suffering
Flowing along and not sinking away
When will this week finally be over?
When are you coming back, Marie?

GLEAMING

Faultlessly cultivated earth,
Honey of dawn, sun in bloom,
Runner, still holding the sleeper by a thread
(Bond of understanding)
And throwing him over his shoulder, says:
'He has never been so new,

Il n'a jamais été si lourd.
Usure, utile.
Il sera plus léger,
Clair soleil d'été avec,
Sa chaleur, sa douceur, sa tranquillité.
Et, vite,
Les porteurs de fleurs en l'air touchent de la terre.
Terre irréprochablement cultivée,
Miel d'aube, soleil en fleurs,
Coureur tenant par un fil au dormeur.
Clair soleil d'été.

Un soir de neige (Paul Éluard)

18. DE GRANDES CUILLERS DE NEIGE

De grandes cuillers de neige
Ramassent nos pieds glacés
Et d'une dure parole
Nous heurtons l'hiver tête
Chaque arbre a sa place en l'air
Chaque roc son poids sur terre
Chaque ruisseau son eau vive
Nous nous n'avons pas de feu.

19. LA BONNE NEIGE

La bonne neige le ciel noir
Les branches mortes la détresse
De la forêt pleine de pièges
Honte à la bête pourchassée
La fuite en flèche dans le coeur
Les traces d'une proie atroce
Hardi au loup et c'est toujours
Le plus beau loup et c'est toujours
Le dernier vivant que menace
La masse absolue de la mort
La bonne neige le ciel noir
Les branches mortes la détresse
De la forêt pleine de pièges
Honte à la bête pourchassée
La fuite en flèche dans le coeur.

He has never been so heavy.
Useful erosion,
He will become lighter.-
Bright summer sun with
Its warmth, its softness, its stillness,
And, quickly,
The flower-carriers of the air touch the ground
Faultlessly cultivated earth,
Honey of dawn, sun in bloom,
Runner, still holding the sleeper by a thread
Bright summer sun.

A snowy evening

GREAT LUMPS OF SNOW

Great lumps of snow
Are collected by our freezing feet
And with deep groans
We confront the onset of winter
Each tree has its place in the air
Each rock its place on the earth
Each stream its flowing water
We have no fire.

THE BEAUTIFUL SNOW

The beautiful snow, the black sky
The dead branches, the pain
Of the forest full of traps
Disgrace to the hunted creature
Fleeing as an arrow in the heart
The tracks of a cruel hunt
Courage to the wolf which is always
The finest wolf and is always
The last survivor threatened by
The inevitable burden of death.
The beautiful snow, the black sky
The dead branches, the pain
Of the forest full of traps
Disgrace to the hunted creature
Fleeing as an arrow in the heart.

20. BOIS MEURTRI

Bois meurtri bois perdu d'un voyage en hiver
 Navire où la neige prend pied
 Bois d'asile bois mort où sans espoir je rêve
 De la mer aux miroirs crevés
 Un grand moment d'eau froide a saisi les noyés
 La foule de mon corps en souffre
 Je m'affaiblis je me disperse j'avoue ma vie
 J'avoue ma mort j'avoue autrui
 Bois meurtri bois perdu
 Bois d'asile bois mort.

21. LA NUIT LE FROID LA SOLITUDE

La nuit le froid la solitude
 On m'enferma soigneusement
 Mais les branches cherchaient
 Leur voie dans la prison
 Autour de moi l'herbe trouva le ciel on verrouilla
 Le ciel ma prison s'écroula
 Le froid vivant le froid
 Brûlant m'eut bien en main

Chansons françaises

22. MARGOTON VA T'A L'IAU

Margoton va t'a l'iau avecque son cruchon.
 La fontaine était creuse, elle est tombée au fond,
 Aïe, Aïe, Aïe, Aïe, Se dit Margoton.
 Margoton va t'a l'iau avecque son cruchon.
 Par là passèrent trois jeunes garçons
 Aïe, Aïe, Aïe, Aïe, Se dit Margoton.
 Margoton va t'a l'iau avecque son cruchon.
 Que don'rez vous la belle qu'on vous tir' du fond
 Aïe, Aïe, Aïe, Aïe, Se dit Margoton.
 Margoton va t'a l'iau avecque son cruchon.
 Tirez d'abord dit elle après ça nous verrons
 Aïe, Aïe, Aïe, Aïe, Se dit Margoton.

SCARRED WOODS

Woods scarred, woods wrecked in the course
 of winter
 Ship where the snow takes hold
 Woods of refuge, dead woods, where I dream
 without hope
 Of a sea of broken mirrors
 A surge of cold water has gripped the drowning
 My whole body cries in suffering
 I grow weak, my strength is scattered
 I am reconciled to my life,
 To my death and to others.

THE NIGHT THE COLD THE LONELINESS

The night the cold the loneliness
 I was locked in carefully
 But the branches sought
 Their way into the prison
 Around me grass found the sky
 The sky was bolted my prison crumbled
 The living cold the burning cold
 Had me in its grip.

MARGOTON GOES TO FETCH WATER

Margoton goes to fetch water with her little jug
 The spring was in a deep hollow and she fell in
 Oh dear ... said Margoton to herself.
 Margoton goes to fetch water with her little jug
 Three handsome young men pass by
 Oh dear ... said Margoton to herself.
 Margoton goes to fetch water with her little jug
 What will you give, pretty one, if we pull you out?
 Oh dear ... said Margoton to herself.
 Margoton goes to fetch water with her little jug
 Pull me out first, she says, and then we'll see
 Oh dear ... said Margoton to herself.

Margoton va t'a l'iau avecque son cruchon.
Quand la belle fut tirée commence une chanson
Aïe, Aïe, Aïe, Aïe, Se dit Margoton.

Margoton va t'a l'iau avecque son cruchon.
Ce n'est pas ça la bell' que nous vous demandons
Aïe, Aïe, Aïe, Aïe, Se dit Margoton.

Margoton va t'a l'iau avecque son cruchon.
C'est votre petit coeur savoir si nous l'aurons
Aïe, Aïe, Aïe, Aïe, Se dit Margoton.

Margoton va t'a l'iau avecque son cruchon.
Mon petit coeur messir's n'est point pour
greluchons
Aïe, Aïe, Aïe, Aïe, Se dit Margoton.

23. LA BELLE SE SIED AU PIED DE LA TOUR
La belle se sied au pied de la tour,
Qui pleure et soupire et mène grand dolour.
Son père lui demande: fille qu'avez-vous
Volez-vous mari ou volez-vous seignour?

Je ne veuille mari, je ne veuille seignour,
Je veuille le mien ami qui pourrit en la tour.
Par Dieu ma belle fille alors ne l'aurez-vous
Car il sera pendu demain au point du jour.

Père si on le pend enfouyé moi dessous,
Ainsi diront les gens ce sont loyales amours.

24. PILONS L'ORGE
Thrash l'orge, pilons l'orge,
Pilons l'orge, pilons la.

Mon père m'y maria
pilons l'orge, pilons la.
À un vilain m'y donna,
Tirez vous ci, tirez vous la.

A un vilain m'y donna,
Pilons l'orge, pilons la.
Qui de rien ne me donna.
Tirez vous ci, tirez vous la.

Margoton goes to fetch water with her little jug
When the pretty one was out she strikes up a song
Oh dear ... said Margoton to herself.

Margoton goes to fetch water with her little jug
This is not what we want, pretty one
Oh dear ... said Margoton to herself.

Margoton goes to fetch water with her little jug
It is to hold your little heart if we may
Oh dear ... said Margoton to herself.

Margoton goes to fetch water with her little jug
My little heart, sirs, is not for fancy men
Oh dear ... said Margoton to herself.

THE FAIR MAID SITS AT THE FOOT OF THE TOWER
The fair maid sits at the foot of the tower,
And weeps and moans and sighs with great grief.
Her father asks: daughter what is wrong
Do you want a husband or do you want a lord?

I do not want a husband, I do not want a lord,
I want my beloved who languishes in the tower.
By heaven, my dear daughter, you shall not have him,
For tomorrow he is to be hanged at dawn.

Father, if they hang him, bury me beneath,
So people will say these were loyal lovers.

THRASH THE BARLEY
Thrash the barley, thrash the barley,
Thrash the barley, thrash it well.

My father married me off
Thrash the barley, thrash it well
He gave me to a scoundrel
Pull here, pull there.

He gave me to a scoundrel
Thrash the barley, thrash it well
Who never gave me a thing
Pull here, pull there.

Qui de rien ne me donna
Pilons l'orge, pilons la.
Mais s'il continue cela
Mirez vous ci, tirez vous la.
Mais s'il continue cela
Pilons l'orge, pilons la.
Battu vraiment il sera.
Tirez vous ci, tirez vous la.

25. C'EST LA PETIT' FILL' DU PRINCE

C'est la petit' fill' du prince qui voulait se marier.
Sus l'bord de Loire mariez-vous la belle
Sus l'bord de l'eau, sus l'bord de Loire joli matelot.
Elle voit venir un'barque et quarant' galants
dedans.
Le plus jeune des quarante lui commence une
chanson.
Votre chanson que vous dites je voudrais bien la
savoir.

Si vous venez dans ma barque
Belle je vous l'apprendrai.
La belle a fait ses cent toures
En écoutant la chanson.
Tout au bout de ses cent toures
La bell' se mit à pleurer.
Pourquoi tant pleurer ma mie
Quand je chante une chanson?
C'est mon coeur qu'est plein de larmes
Parc'que vous l'avez gagné.
Ne pleur' plus ton coeur la belle car je te le rendrai.
N'est pas si facile à rendre comme de l'argent prêté.

26. AH! MON BEAU LABOUREUR

Ah! mon beau laboureur,
Ah! mon beau laboureur,
Beau laboureur de vigne ô lire ô lire,
Beau laboureur de vigne ô lire ô la.
N'avez pas vu passer
Margueritte ma mie?

Who never gave me a thing
Thrash the barley, thrash it well
But if he goes on like that
Pull here, pull there.

But if he goes on like that
Thrash the barley, thrash it well
He will be soundly beaten
Pull here, pull there.

THE PRINCE'S LITTLE DAUGHTER

The prince's little daughter wanted to marry.
On the banks of the Loire will you marry,
pretty maid
On the banks of the water, of the Loire,
pretty sailor.

She saw a boat coming and in it forty gentlemen.
The youngest of the forty began singing her
a song.

That song you sing, I would like to learn
If you come into my boat, pretty one,
I'll teach you it.
The fair one paced up and down listening
to the song.

As she finished her pacing she began to weep.
Why weep so, my love,
When I sing you a song?
My heart is full of tears
Because you have won it.

Let not your heart weep, pretty one,
I shall give it back.
It is not so easy to give it back as money that is lent.

AH! MY HANDSOME FARM LAD

Ah! my handsome farm lad,
Ah! my handsome farm lad,
Ah! my handsome farm lad,
Handsome farm lad working on the vines,
Handsome farm lad working on the vines.
Have you seen Marguerite,
My love, pass by?

Je don'rais cent écus
Qui dire où est ma mie.

Monsieur comptez-les là,
Entrez dans notre vigne.
Dessous un prunier blanc
La belle est endormie.

Je la poussay trois fois
Sans qu'elle osat mot dire.
La quatrième fois
Son petit coeur soupire.

Pour qui soupirez-vous
Margueritte ma mie?
Je soupire pour vous
Et ne puis m'en dédire.

Les voisins nous ont vu
Et ils iront tout dire.
Laissons les gens parler
Et n'en faisons que rire.

Quand ils auront tout dit
N'auront plus rien à dire.

27. LES TISSERANDS

Les tisserands sont pir' que les évêques:
Tous les lundis ils s'en font une fête.
Et tipe et tape et tipe et tape,
Est-il trop gros, est-il trop fin.
Et couchés tard, levés matin.
En roulant la navette
Le beau temps viendra.

Tous les lundis ils s'en font une fête.
Et le mardi ils ont mal à la tête.
Le mercredi ils vont charger leur pièce.
Et le jeudi ils vont voir leur maîtresse.
Le vendredi ils travaillent sans cesse.
Le samedi la pièce n'est pas faite.
Et le dimanche il faut de l'argent maître.

I'll give a hundred écus
To him who tells me where she is.

Sir, count them out there,
Come into our vineyard
Beneath a plum tree
The pretty maid is sleeping.

I nudged her three times
Without her stirring
The fourth time
Her little heart sighed.

What are you sighing for,
Marguerite, my love?
I sigh for you,
And do not deny it.

The neighbours have seen us
And will tell all.
Let people gossip,
We'll just laugh.

When they've said all,
They won't have anymore to say.

THE WEAVERS

The weavers are worse than the bishops
Every Monday they have a jolly time
And click, clack, click, clack
Is it too coarse? Is it too fine?
Late in bed, early to rise,
Work the shuttle and
Good times will come.

Every Monday they have a jolly time.
On Tuesday they have a headache.
On Wednesday they go to load their looms.
On Thursday they go to see their mistress.
On Friday they work without a break.
On Saturday their cloth is just not ready.
And on Sunday money is needed, sir.

SIMON PHIPPS WAS BORN IN LONDON and received his early musical training as a chorister at New College, Oxford. He took his B.A. as a Choral Scholar at King's College, Cambridge and went on to study singing at the Guildhall School in London. Conducting studies in Munich and Manchester followed and he made his professional debut at the Gothenburg Opera in 1985.

The next ten years were largely devoted to opera with engagements at Sadlers Wells and English National Opera in London, Krefeld in Germany, and Malmö in Sweden. In 1994 Simon Phipps moved to Sweden and has since then lived in Gothenburg. Although opera is still an important feature of his career (since 2003 he has been the Artistic Director of Läckö Opera Festival and in November 2005 he conducted the Scandinavian premiere of Britten's *Paul Bunyan* in Gothenburg), orchestral and choral work is now equally important. Simon Phipps has conducted most of the professional orchestras in Sweden including the Swedish National Orchestra, the Gothenburg Symphony.

SIMON PHIPPS VOKALENSEMBLE was formed in 1997. Most of the 26 singers have a professional musical background and many work as musicians in and around Gothenburg on Sweden's west coast. The repertoire is extensive and includes both renaissance and baroque works, though the main concentration of the choir's activity is on the 19th and 20th centuries.

In recent years Simon Phipps Vokalensemble has established itself at the forefront of the Swedish choral scene. Many outstanding broadcasts and several prizes in international competitions (including first prizes at Helsingborg in 2004 and Marktberdorf in 2005) have led to invitations from all over Europe and in 2006 the choir will tour both Germany and Sweden as Rikskonserters »Choir of the year«.

The choir's first CD, "Sacred and Profane" (FRCD 006), with music of Benjamin Britten was released in 2003 to great critical acclaim and has been heard on Swedish Radio many times. A third album is in production for release in 2006 with music by Brahms, completing the triptych of "Sacred and profane".

SIMON PHIPPS FÖDDES I LONDON. Han påbörjade sina musikaliska studier som körsångare vid New College i Oxford och King's College i Cambridge. Därefter följde studier vid Guildhall School i London med sång som huvudämne. Efter vidare utbildning i dirigering i München och Manchester debuterade han 1985 på Stora Teatern i Göteborg.

De följande tio åren ägnades till stor del åt opera, med engagemang vid Sadlers Wells och English National Opera i London, Krefeld i Tyskland och Malmö i Sverige. 1994 flyttade Simon till Sverige och har sedan dess varit bosatt i Göteborg. Orkester- och körmusik står numera för lika stora delar av hans dirigerande även om opera fortfarande också utgör ett viktigt inslag. Sedan 2003 har han uppdraget som konstnärlig ledare för Läckö-operan och i november 2005 dirigerade han det skandinaviska uruppförandet av Britten's *Paul Bunyan*. Simon Phipps har dirigerat de flesta professionella orkestrarna i landet inklusive Sveriges Nationalorkester, Göteborgssymfonikerna.


SIMON PHIPPS VOKALENSEMBLE bildades 1997. De flesta av de 26 sångarna har en professionell musikalisk bakgrund och flera är verksamma som musiker i och kring Göteborg. Repertoaren är omfattande och inkluderar både verk från renessans och barock, även om kören huvudsakligen framför musik från 1800- och 1900-talen.

Under de senaste åren har Simon Phipps Vokalensemble etablerat sig som en av Sveriges mest framstående körer. Genom segrar i flera täv-

lingar både inom landet och ute i Europa har man befäst sin position som en ensemble med högkvalitativ klang och ett särskilt djup i repertoaren. Rikskonserter har utsett ensemblen till Årets kör 2006, och genom ett samarbete med Sveriges Radio P2 kan kören regelbundet höras i radions klassiska kanal. En turné i Rikskonserters regi är planerad till hösten 2006, och innan dess genomförs en resa med flera konserter i Tyskland.

Ensemblen finns tidigare representerad på skiva med musik av Benjamin Britten (FRCD 006). En tredje CD är under produktion och kommer att innehålla verk av Johannes Brahms. Samtliga tre skivor speglar de olika kompositörernas tolkningar av både sakrala och profana texter, därav det gemensamma namnet »Sakralt och profant«.

www.spve.se

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Francis Poulenc *Sacré et profane* Simon Phipps vokalensemble

- Quatre motets pour le temps de noel*
- 1 O magnum mysterium 3.13
 - 2 Quem vidistis pastores dicite 2.48
 - 3 Videntes stellam 2.57
 - 4 Hodie Christus natus est 2.26
 - 5 Salve Regina 4.28

- Quatre motets pour un temps de pénitence*
- 6 Timor et tremor 3.18
 - 7 Vineam electam 4.01
 - 8 Tenebrae factae sunt 4.30
 - 9 Tristis est anima mea 3.04
 - 10 Exultate Deo 2.52

- Sept chansons*
- 11 La blanche neige 1.10
 - 12 À peine défigurée 1.37
 - 13 Par une nuit nouvelle 1.23
 - 14 Tous les droits 2.46
 - 15 Belle et ressemblante 2.14
 - 16 Marie 2.17
 - 17 Luire 2.01

- Un soir de neige*
- 18 De grandes cuillers de neige 1.20
 - 19 La bonne neige 1.36
 - 20 Bois meurtri 2.20
 - 21 La nuit le froid la solitude 1.02

- Chansons françaises*
- 22 Margoton va t'a l'iau 2.08
 - 23 La belle se sied au pied de la tour 1.50
 - 24 Pilon l'orge 0.47
 - 25 C'est la petit' fill' du prince 4.51
 - 26 Ah! mon beau laboureur 3.31
 - 27 Les tisserands 2.01

Total time 69.23

