



Mirages

BETTINA SMITH | MEZZO-SOPRANO

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«Det er i sangene Fauré virkelig avslører sitt blomstrende geni», skrev komponistens tidligere elev Maurice Ravel. Ingen annen komponist gjorde så mye for å omskape den franske *mélodie*, i løpet av en karriere som strakte seg over seks tiår og mer enn hundre sanger. Denne samlingen tar oss med på en reise fra Faurés første sangsyklus, *Poème d'un jour* (1878), til hans siste, *L'Horizon chimérique* (1921), via den jublende *La Bonne Chanson* (1892–94) og den intenst konsentrerte *Mirages* (1919).

Poème d'un jour blander personlig refleksjon med bredere kunstnerisk utforskning. I 1870-årene ble Fauré en del av kunstnerkretsen rundt den store mezzosopranen Pauline Viardot. Han ble forlovet med Viardots datter Marianne i 1877, bare for å bli avvist av henne noen få uker senere. Om den påfølgende smerten – hendelsen gjorde dypt inntrykk på Fauré – delvis kan leses inn i *Poème d'un jour*, blir den balansert av kunstnerisk relevante forhold. Fauré grupperte sine tidlige sanger systematisk rundt bestemte diktere, ofte i form av løst sammensatte kvasi-sykluser. (Peters' nye kritiske utgave av sangene understreker denne poetiske og kronologiske sammenhengen.) Spesielt de tre Baudelaire-sangene fra rundt 1870 antyder at komponisten hadde planlagt en triptyk, men dette gikk han sannsynligvis bort fra som følge av at han ennå ikke hadde et fast forlag. Åtte år senere lå forholdene bedre til rette for *Poème d'un jour*, ettersom kontakt med et forlag var etablert (Durand, som ga ut syklusen i 1880). Charles Grandmougin, en mindre betydelig dikter knyttet til den parnassiske skolen, kjente Fauré og kan godt ha skrevet disse diktene til ham (vi kjenner ikke til noen egen utgivelse av dem). I dag kan vi bare spekulere på om Grandmougin skrev disse tre diktene som en minisuite, eller om Fauré valgte dem fra en større gruppe. Det forblir også uklart hvordan vi skal fortolke syklusen – som uttrykk for uskyldig forelskelse eller et kort, men flammende og hemmelig forhold.

Under diktets overflate ligger de parnassiske poetenes konstante fascinasjon for antikke modeller. Sangpoesiens verbale eleganse, med en gjennomtenkt formalisme som reflekterer den parnassiske søken etter platonisk perfektion, videreføres i Faurés tonesettinger fra 1870- og 1880-årene av dikt av andre parnassiske diktere som Leconte de Lisle, Sully-Prudhomme, Armand Silvestre og skolens åndelige mentor Théophile Gautier. Fauré-forskeren Stephen Rumph har hevdet at *Poème d'un jour* også følger en litterær utvikling fra en relativt klisjépreget romantikk (det ujevne tolvstavelse verse-målet og forslitte bildespråket i «Rencontre»), via de ville bølgene i «Toujours!» til en ulastelig parnassisk kortfattethet og følelses-messig beherskelse i «Adieu».

En annen snedig parnassisk forbindelse i «Adieu», denne gangen skapt av Fauré, ligger i den forbigående bruken av lydsk toneart (med hevet fjerde trinn), et ekko av skalaen Fauré brukte så treffende i åpningen av den første sangen med tekst av Leconte de Lisle, «Lydia» (ca. 1870). Den umiskjennelige melodiske linjen i «Lydia» vender tilbake som en noe gåtefull tråd som løper gjennom *La bonne chanson*, der klaverstemmen eksplisitt siterer den tidligere sangen i syklusens tredje, femte og åttende sang. Tjuefem år senere begynner åpningssangen i *Mirages*, «Cygne sur l'eau» – skrevet i samme toneart som «Lydia» – med en nærmest identisk akkordtekstur og stigning i sangstemmen (den «lydiske» kvarten høres i andre strofe, i svanens jakt etter «et tomt speilbilde», mens samme noter karakteriserer åpningen av «Jardin nocturne»). Et siste flyktig ekko kommer i *L'Horizon chimérique*, ved den første vokalinnsatsen i «Diane, Séléne», der de mykt pulserende pianoakkordene også gjenkaller teksturen i «Adieu».

«De la musique avant toute chose» («Musikken framfor alt»), skrev Paul Verlaine i sitt dikt «Art poétique» fra 1884. Den sterke musikaliteten i Verlaines linjer gjorde ham til den kanskje høyest elskede franske dikteren i

komponistkretser. Hans tekniske virtuositet kombinert med en ledighet i rytme og betoning må ha appellert spesielt til Fauré, ettersom musikken hans på samme måte oppviser en usedvanlig fleksibilitet og djervhet i rytme, metrum og klang rundt en streng intellektuell kjerne.

«Verlaine er en vidunderlig poet å tonesette», skrev Fauré i 1911. Hans sytten Verlaine-sanger utgjør et av høydepunktene i hele sangrepertoaret og også et betydelig vendepunkt i Faurés tonespråk. Sentralt i Faurés Verlaine-år finner vi *La Bonne Chanson*, komponert mellom sommeren 1892 og februar 1894. Verlaines større samling med samme navn ble skrevet i 1870 til ære for hans tenåringsbrud Mathilde Mauté. Samlingen ender lykkelig med poetens håp for framtida sammenfattet i den djerve og jublende finalesangen «L'hiver a cessé» (som Fauré beholdt som siste dikt i sin egen syklus). Men i virkeligheten varslet diktet den voldsomste omveltningen i Verlaines turbulente liv, da han forlot sin kone og lille sønn i 1872 til fordel for dikteren Arthur Rimbaud.

Til tross for dette er Faurés *La Bonne Chanson* ikke bare en av 1800-tallets store sangsykluser, men også en av de få uhemmet lykkelige. Utvalget av dikt (ni av de tjueen i Verlaines samling) endrer Verlaines rekkefølge for å skape et mer sammenhengende narrativ, fra betraktninger over den elskedes navn («Une Sainte en son auréole»), via gryende kjærlighet omgitt av bilder av dagry og kveld («Puisque l'aube grandit» og «La Lune blanche») til en nervøs, men etter hvert frydefull, anerkjennelse og erklæring av kjærligheten («J'allais par des chemins perfides» og «J'ai presque peur»). Det mest intense poetiske øyeblikket kommer på slutten av «J'ai presque peur», idet henvendelsesformen plutselig skifter fra det formelle *vous* i «que je vous aime» («at jeg elsker Dem») til det intime *tu* i «que je t'aime» («at jeg elsker deg»). Fauré lar dette klimakset langsomt avta, med den ettertenksomme «Avant que tu ne t'en ailles» (der

dikteren ser den elskede i den naturlige verden, som i andre og tredje sang) før de siste «Donc, ce sera par un clair jour d'été», «N'est-ce pas?» og «L'Hiver a cessé» ser direkte fram mot det kommende ekteskapet og livet.

Nærmere tretti år etter at han ble ferdig med *La Bonne Chanson*, og bare et år før sin egen død, skrev Fauré:

Jeg har aldri skrevet noe like spontant som jeg skrev *La Bonne Chanson*. Jeg kan, ja jeg må tilføye at jeg ble hjulpet av en minst like spontan forståelse hos den personen som fremdeles er sangerens mest bevegende fortolker. Gleden over å føle de små arkene våkne til liv etter hvert som jeg ga dem til henne, er noe jeg aldri har opplevd senere.

Denne «mest bevegende fortolker» – som syklusen både var inspirert av og ble tilegnet til – var den særdeles talentfulle sopranen Emma Bardac, da gift med bankmannen Sigismond Bardac og vertinne for en populær musikalsk *salong*, senere den andre Mme Claude Debussy (paret rømte i 1904). Spontaniteten i komposisjonsprosessen skyldtes ikke bare Mme Bardacs ferdigheter som utøver og musiker (hun samarbeidet visstnok tett med Fauré for å gi syklusen dens endelige form, og «sendte ham ofte tilbake for å foreta justeringer»), men også hennes personlige tiltrekningskraft: De to hadde en lidenskapelig affære gående da syklusen ble komponert.

Til å begynne med ble den ekstreme friskheten (til tider ren villskap) i harmonikk, rytmikk og tekstur i *La Bonne Chanson* møtt med mistro i flere kretser: «Fauré har gått fullstendig fra vettet!» klagde hans gamle lærer Saint-Saëns, mens Marcel Proust fortalte at den unge Debussy mente sangene var «unødig kompliserte, slett ikke på høyde med de andre». Hvis Proust siterte ham korrekt, kan Debussy ha endret mening senere i livet; like etter hans død i 1918 skrev Emma Debussy

et rørende brev til sin tidligere elsker, der hun rundet av med et etterskrift: «[Debussy] satte slik pris på å studere *La Bonne Chanson* i fjor sommer ...»

Fra etterkrigsårene kommer Faurés to siste bidrag til vokallitteraturen. *Mirages* ble komponert for den unge Madeleine Grey (strengt tatt sopran, men hun framførte mye mezzopertoar). Grey var nylig uteksaminert fra Paris-konservatoriet, der den 74 år gamle Fauré fremdeles var direktør, og ble kjent som en forkjemper for ny musikk: På 1920-tallet arbeidet hun tett med Ravel og urframførte hans *Chansons madécasses*, og hun gjorde også Joseph Canteloubes verk *Chants d'Auvergne* berømt (en av sangene er tilegnet henne).

Det var tidlig på sommeren 1919 at Mlle Grey ba Fauré skrive et vokalverk med orkester. Han svarte 10. august: «Jeg arbeider også med noe som du, faktisk, vil synge spesielt godt. Dessverre er det ikke med orkester ...» Dette skulle bli *Mirages*, fire sanger til dikt fra en samling med samme navn av baronesse Renée de Brimont. 2. august hadde Fauré skrevet til sin kone: «Jeg er ferdig med én sang, jeg er i ferd med å avslutte den andre og har laget utkast til en tredje», og 14. august hadde han «nettopp gjort ferdig sang nummer tre. Jeg ser etter en fjerde ...». I løpet av en uke var samlingen komplett, ifølge et annet brev.

Madeleine Grey urframførte syklusen, angivelig med Fauré ved klaveret (hans siste kjente opptreden på et konsertpodium), 27. desember 1919. Etterpå skrev han til henne: «De har lagt for dagen [...] en stemme, et talent og en musikalsk fornemmelse som er bemerkelsesverdig *hinsides alle grenser!*» På et senere tidspunkt uttrykte hun på sin side forbløffelse over hvor eksakt Fauré fulgte hver note hun sang, til tross for døvheten som plaget ham de siste årene han levde.

Fauré kan ha fattet interesse for *Mirage*-diktene på grunn av en innledning som beskriver samlingen som «Musiques chantant à l'oreille du poète» («Musikk som synger i dikterens øre»). Første del av den poetiske samlingen kretser rundt vann («Refleksjoner i vannet», «Sol på vannet», «Ensomhet ved vannet» og så videre); av disse valgte Fauré «Cygne sur l'eau» og «Reflets dans l'eau». Andre del har et mer eksotisk skjær og vender tilbake til et duftende Østen ikke fjernt fra Leconte de Lisle «Les roses d'Ispahan»: Fra denne delen valgte Fauré «Jardin nocturne». «Danseuse» er hentet fra den siste seksjonen, som har undertittelen «Drømmer og ord». Det hvileløse ostinatet i den smidige klaverstemmen gjenspeiler følelsen av tvang i diktets gjentatte oppfordring til å danse. De Brimonts tette, ordrike poesi med den blomstrende bruken av metaforer og allusjoner i kombinasjon med Faurés intime, men ofte raske vokale foredrag gjør *Mirages* til det nærmeste vi kommer deklamert tale i hele hans sangproduksjon. Et dramatisk punkt kommer i «Reflets dans l'eau» idet det stillferdige, men hastende narrativet plutselig viker for et truende «Si je glisse», og de siste linjene etterlater en farefylt spenning.

L'Horizon chimérique erstatter det stille innsjøvannet i *Mirages* med dramatiske havbilder. I likhet med *Mirages* er samlingen tilegnet sangeren som urframførte den, nemlig barytonen Charles Panzéra, enda en av Faurés protesjeer fra konservatoriet. Diktene, hentet fra en samling med samme navn av Jean de La Ville de Mirmont, ble skrevet i 1912–13, men utgitt først i 1920, seks år etter den unge dikterens altfor tidlige død i begynnelsen av første verdenskrig. I den uforvarende profetiske tittelen på denne diktsamlingen som den eldre Fauré tok for seg etter krigen, kan vi kanskje lese en bitter erkjennelse av krigens meningsløshet, med det tragiske tapet av en hel generasjon.

L'Horizon chimérique avdekker Faurés evner til tonemaleri på sitt mest subtile og uttrykksfulle. Nøkkelord og -fraser framkaller livlige musikalske bilder gjennom hele sanger. I «La mer est infinie» framkalles havets «uendelige» omfang av vokallinjenes stigende bevegelser og ostinat-akkompagnementet i klaveret. «Je me suis embarqué» illuderer skipets innstendig gyngende bevegelser, som bare dempes idet sangeren ønsker at vinden skal «vugge meg som et barn». I «Diane, Séléné», en stille lovsang til månegudinnen, roer bevegelsen seg før den tar seg opp igjen med barcarole-rytmen i «Vaisseaux, nous vous aurons aimés». Dette var det femte diktet i Mirmonts samling (de tre foregående sangene er henholdsvis dikt nr. 13, 14 og 11). Synet av skipet som forsvinner, får sangeren til å utbryte: «Jeg har store, uoppfylte oppbrudd i meg.» Ved å flytte på dette diktet slik at det avslutter syklusen (og dermed også hele hans karriere som sangkomponist, noe han sikkert var klar over), erkjenner kanskje Fauré at reisene som er skildret i de forrige sangene, er illusoriske – kimære.

Emily Kilpatrick og Roy Howat
utgivere av *Gabriel Fauré: Complete Songs*
(Peters Edition, 2014–)

'It is truly in his songs that Fauré reveals the flower of his genius', wrote the composer's former pupil Maurice Ravel. No other composer did so much to transform French *mélodie*, in the course of a career that encompassed six decades and over a hundred songs. The present collection takes us on a journey from Fauré's first song cycle, *Poème d'un jour* (1878), to his last, *L'Horizon chimérique* (1921), via the exultant *La Bonne Chanson* (1892–4) and the intensely concentrated *Mirages* (1919).

Poème d'un jour mixes personal reflection with broader artistic exploration. In the 1870s Fauré became part of the artistic circle around the great mezzo-soprano Pauline Viardot. He became engaged to Viardot's daughter Marianne in 1877, only to be rebuffed by her a few weeks later. If the resulting hurt – it affected Fauré deeply – might be read partly into *Poème d'un jour*, it is balanced by two reciprocal artistic issues. Fauré systematically grouped his early songs around specific poets, often in the manner of loose quasi-cycles. (The new Peters critical edition of the songs highlights this poetic and chronological coherence.) In particular, his three Baudelaire settings of around 1870 suggest an intended triptych, one that was probably dispersed through Fauré not yet having a regular publisher. Eight years later *Poème d'un jour* provided a more focussed opportunity, with a publisher at hand (Durand, who issued the cycle in 1880). Charles Grandmougin, a minor poet associated with the Parnassian school, knew Fauré and may well have written these poems for him (no separate publication of them is known). We can now only wonder whether Grandmougin wrote just the three, as a mini-cycle, or whether Fauré selected them from a larger group. Exactly how we interpret the cycle remains ambiguous, too, whether as the expression of a lovelorn innocent or of a brief but fiery clandestine affair.

Under the poem's surface lies the Parnassian poets' constant fascination with antique models. Their poetry's verbal elegance, whose studied formalism reflects the Parnassian quest for Platonic perfection, extends to Fauré's settings, through the 1870s and 1880s, of poems by other Parnassians such as Leconte de Lisle, Sully-Prudhomme, Armand Silvestre and the school's spiritual mentor Théophile Gautier. Fauré scholar Stephen Rumph has argued that *Poème d'un jour* also traces a literary evolution from rather clichéd Romanticism (the sprawling 12-syllable metre and well-worn imagery of 'Rencontre'), through the wild waves of 'Toujours!' to an impeccably Parnassian concision and emotional restraint in 'Adieu'.

Another ingenious Parnassian link in 'Adieu', devised this time by Fauré, lies in its passing use of Lydian mode (with a raised fourth degree), echoing the scale Fauré used aptly to open his first Leconte de Lisle setting, *Lydia* (c. 1870). The unmistakable melodic line of *Lydia* then returns as a somewhat enigmatic thread running through *La Bonne Chanson*, whose piano part explicitly quotes the earlier song in the cycle's third, fifth and eighth songs. Twenty-five years later again, the opening song of *Mirages*, 'Cygne sur l'eau' – set in the same key as *Lydia* – opens with a near-identical chordal texture and vocal ascent (the 'Lydian' fourth is heard in the second strophe, in the swan's pursuit of 'vain reflections', while the same notes characterise the opening of 'Jardin nocturne'. A final fleeting Lydian echo comes in *L'Horizon chimérique*, at the first vocal entry of 'Diane, Séléne', whose gentle pulsing piano chords also echo the texture of 'Adieu'.

'De la musique avant toute chose' ('Music above everything'), wrote Paul Verlaine in his poem 'Art poétique' of 1884. The sheer musicality of Verlaine's lines rendered him the French poet perhaps most beloved of composers. His technical virtuosity, combined with fluidity of rhythm and accent, would have

particularly appealed to Fauré, whose music similarly moulds an extraordinary flexibility and boldness of rhythm, metre and sonority around a highly rigorous, intellectual core.

'Verlaine is a marvellous poet to set', wrote Fauré in 1911. His seventeen Verlaine *mélodies* mark one of the peaks of the entire song repertoire, as well as a major turning point in Fauré's musical language. At the centre of Fauré's Verlaine years lies *La Bonne Chanson*, composed between summer 1892 and February 1894. Verlaine's larger collection of that name had been penned in 1870 in honour of his teenage bride, Mathilde Mauté. The collection ends happily, the poet's hopes for the future encapsulated in the courageous and exultant final 'L'Hiver a cessé' (which Fauré maintained as the last poem in his cycle); in reality it presaged the worst cataclysm of Verlaine's turbulent life, in which he abandoned his wife and baby son in 1872 for the poet Arthur Rimbaud.

Despite that, Fauré's *La Bonne Chanson* is not merely one of the great nineteenth-century song cycles but one of the only unrestrainedly happy ones. His choices of poems (nine of the twenty-one in Verlaine's collection) amend Verlaine's sequence to create a more coherent narrative, passing from meditations on the beloved's name ('Une Sainte en son auréole'), through the dawning of love amidst imagery of dawn and evening ('Puisque l'aube grandit' and 'La Lune blanche') to love's anxious but ultimately joyous recognition and declaration ('J'allais par des chemins perfides' and 'J'ai presque peur'). The most intense poetic moment comes at the end of 'J'ai presque peur', as the form of address suddenly shifts from the formal *vous* ('...que je vous aime' [...that I love you]) to the intimate *tu* – 'que je t'aime'). Fauré lets this climax subside slowly, through the reflective 'Avant que tu ne t'en ailles' (viewing the beloved, like the second and third songs, within the natural world), before the

final 'Donc, ce sera par un clair jour d'été', 'N'est-ce pas?' and 'L'Hiver a cessé' look forward directly to the coming marriage and future life.

Nearly thirty years after completing *La Bonne Chanson*, and just a year before his own death, Fauré wrote:

I have never written anything as spontaneously as I wrote *La Bonne Chanson*. I might, I must add that I was helped by an at least equal spontaneity of understanding on the part of the person who remains its most moving interpreter. The pleasure of feeling those little sheets come alive one by one as I supplied them is something I have never known since.

This 'most moving interpreter' – the cycle's inspiration and its dedicatee – was the highly talented soprano Emma Bardac, then the wife of the banker Sigismond Bardac and hostess of a popular musical *salon*, and later the second Mme Claude Debussy (the pair eloped in 1904). Fauré's spontaneity in composing this happiest of cycles was due not just to Mme Bardac's skills as a performer and musician (she apparently worked closely with Fauré to get the cycle into its final form, frequently 'sending him back to make corrections'), but also to her personal attraction: the two pursued a passionate affair during the years of the cycle's composition.

The extreme harmonic, rhythmic, and textural boldness (sometimes sheer wildness) of *La Bonne Chanson* was initially viewed with suspicion in several quarters: 'Fauré has gone completely mad!' his old teacher Saint-Saëns lamented, while Marcel Proust reported the young Debussy as considering the songs 'needlessly complicated, very inferior to the rest'. If Proust was quoting accurately, Debussy may later have revised his view: shortly after his death in 1918, Emma Debussy wrote a moving letter to her former lover,

which ends with the postscript, '[Debussy] was so happy, last summer, to study *La Bonne Chanson*...'

From the post-war years come Fauré's final contributions to the vocal literature. *Mirages* was composed for the young Madeleine Grey (nominally a soprano, though she performed much mezzo repertoire). A recent graduate of the Paris Conservatoire, of which the 74-year-old Fauré was still Director, Grey became known as a champion of new music: in the 1920s she worked closely with Ravel, premiering his *Chansons madécasses*, and brought fame to Joseph Canteloube's *Chants d'Anvergne*, one of which is dedicated to her.

It was early in summer 1919 that Mlle Grey asked Fauré for a vocal work with orchestra. He responded on 10 August: 'I'm even working at something which you, in fact, will sing particularly well. Unfortunately it's not with orchestra...' This was to be *Mirages*, four songs on poems drawn from an eponymous collection by Baronne Renée de Brimont. On 2 August Fauré had written to his wife, 'I have completed one song, I am finishing a second and have sketched a third'; by 14 August he had 'just completed song number three. I am looking for a fourth...' Within a week, according to another letter, the set was complete.

Madeleine Grey premiered the cycle, reportedly with Fauré at the piano (his last known platform appearance) on 27 December 1919, after which he wrote to her, 'You have revealed ... a voice, a talent and musical feeling remarkable *beyond all bounds!*' She in turn later expressed amazement at how exactly Fauré kept with every note she sang, despite the deafness that afflicted his last years.

Fauré himself may have been attracted to the *Mirages* poems by a prefatory page that describes the volume as 'Musiques chantant à l'oreille du poète' ('Musics singing in the poet's ear'). The first part of the po-

etic collection centres round water ('Reflections in the water', 'Sun on the water', 'Solitude by the water' and so on); from these Fauré drew 'Cygne sur l'eau' and 'Reflets dans l'eau'. The second part takes on a more exotic hue, returning to a perfumed Orient not so far from Leconte de Lisle's 'Les Roses d'Ispahan': from there Fauré took 'Jardin nocturne'. 'Danseuse' is drawn from the final section, which is subtitled 'Dreams and words'. The restless ostinato of the sinuous piano part echoes a sense of compulsion in the poem's repeated call to 'Dance!' De Brimont's dense, wordy poetry, with her flowery use of metaphor and allusion, combine with Fauré's intimate but often fast-moving vocal delivery to make the *Mirages* the closest approach to declaimed speech in all his song output. A dramatic crux comes in 'Reflets dans l'eau', whose quietly urgent narrative suddenly pauses for the menacing 'Si je glisse', the final lines leaving the air tense with danger.

L'Horizon chimérique replaces the still, inland waters of *Mirages* with dramatic seascapes. Like *Mirages* it is dedicated to its first performer, another of Fauré's Conservatoire protégés, the baritone Charles Panzéra. The poems, drawn from an eponymous collection by Jean de La Ville de Mirmont, were penned in 1912–13 but published only in 1920, six years after the young poet's untimely death in the early months of the First World War. In this unwittingly prophetic title, taken up post-war by the elderly Fauré, we might read a poignant acknowledgement of the futility of war, with the tragic loss of a generation.

L'Horizon chimérique reveals Fauré's gift for word-painting at its most subtle and expressive, with key words and phrases prompting vivid musical imagery across entire songs. In 'La mer est infinie' the continual upward sweep of the vocal lines and ostinato piano accompaniment evoke the sea's 'infinite' scope. 'Je me suis embarqué' echoes the urgent rocking of

the departing ship, easing only as the singer wishes that the wind might 'rock me, like a child'. In 'Di-ane, Séléné', a serene hymn to the moon goddess, the motion slows before resuming in the barcarolle lilt of 'Vaisseaux, nous vous aurons aimés'. This was the fifth poem of Mirmont's collection (the preceding three songs are respectively poems nos. 13, 14 and 11): watching the ship depart, the singer despairingly laments, 'I have unfulfilled voyages within me.' In repositioning this poem to close his cycle – and with it his song-writing career, as he would have known – Fauré perhaps admits that the voyages depicted in the preceding songs are illusory, a chimera.

Emily Kilpatrick and Roy Howat
editors of *Gabriel Fauré: Complete Songs*
(Peters Edition, 2014–)

Poème d'un jour, Op. 21

Poem of one day, Op. 21

TEXT: CHARLES GRANDMOUGIN
(1850-1930)

I. Rencontre.

J'étais triste et pensif quand je t'ai rencontrée,
Je sens moins aujourd'hui mon obstiné tourment;
Ô dis-moi, serais-tu la femme inespérée,
Et le rêve idéal poursuivi vainement?
Ô, passante aux doux yeux, serais-tu donc l'amie
Qui rendrait le bonheur au poète isolé,
Et vas-tu rayonner sur mon âme affermie,
Comme le ciel natal sur un coeur d'exilé?
Ta tristesse sauvage, à la mienne pareille,
Aime à voir le soleil décliner sur la mer!
Devant l'immensité ton extase s'éveille,
Et le charme des soirs à ta belle âme est cher;
Une mystérieuse et douce sympathie
Déjà m'enchaîne à toi comme un vivant lien,
Et mon âme frémit, par l'amour envahie,
Et mon coeur te chérit sans te connaître bien!

II. Toujours.

Vous me demandez de ma taire,
De fuir loin de vous pour jamais,
Et de m'en aller, solitaire,
Sans me rappeler qui j'aimais!
Demandez plutôt aux étoiles
De tomber dans l'immensité,
À la nuit de perdre ses voiles,
Au jour de perdre sa clarté,
Demandez à la mer immense
De dessécher ses vastes flots,
Et, quand les vents sont en démençe,
D'apaiser ses sombres sanglots!
Mais n'espérez pas que mon âme
S'arrache à ses âpres douleurs
Et se dépouille de sa flamme
Comme le printemps de ses fleurs!

Meeting

Lost in thought and saddened when I met you,
Today I feel my stubborn torment less;
Oh, say, are you the unexpected woman,
The dream ideal I fruitlessly pursued?
Oh, sweet-eyed passer-by, are you the friend
To bring a lonely poet happiness,
And will you shine upon my hardened soul,
Like native sky upon an exiled heart?
Your savage sadness, so akin to mine,
Loves to watch the sun set on the sea!
Your ecstasy awakens at the vastness,
And evening charm enchants your beautiful soul;
Mysterious and sweet complicity
Already joins us like a living bond,
And my soul trembles, invaded by love,
And my heart adores you though I know you not!

Always

You ask me to say nothing,
To flee far from you forever,
And to leave, alone,
Never to recall the one I loved!
Ask instead that the stars
Should fall in the vastness,
That the night should shed its veils,
That the day should lose its brightness.
Ask the boundless sea
To dry its giant swells,
And, when the winds are in their madness
That they quell their woeful wails!
But do not bid my soul
Be torn from these cruel sorrows
Or stripped of its flaming passion
Like the spring of its flowers!

III. Adieu.

Comme tout meurt vite, la rose
Déclose,
Et les frais manteaux diaprés
Des prés;
Les longs soupirs, les bienaimées,
Fumées!
On voit dans ce monde léger
Changer,
Plus vite que les flots des grèves,
Nos rêves,
Plus vite que le givre en fleurs,
Nos coeurs!
À vous l'on se croyait fidèle,
Cruelle,
Mais hélas! les plus longs amours
Sont courts!
Et je dis en quittant vos charmes,
Sans larmes,
Presqu'au moment de mon aveu,
Adieu!

Adieu

As everything dies quickly, so the rose
Does unclose,
And the cool, motley mantles
Of the meadows;
The long sighs, those we have loved,
Smoke!
In this fickle world we see,
Changing,
Faster than the waves upon the beach,
Our dreams,
Faster than the frost upon the flowers,
Our hearts!
You, whom I thought to be faithful,
Are cruel.
But alas! The longest loves
Are short!
And I say, quitting your charms,
Tearless,
Almost at the moment of my vow,
Adieu!

Mirages, Op. 113

Mirages, Op. 113

TEXT: BARONNE DE BRIMONT
(1880-1943)

I. Cygne sur l'eau.

Ma pensée est un cygne harmonieux et sage
Qui glisse lentement aux rivages d'ennui
Sur les ondes sans fond du rêve, du mirage,
De l'écho, du brouillard, de l'ombre, de la nuit.
Il glisse, roi hautain fendant un libre espace,
Poursuit un reflet vain, précieux et changeant,
Et les roseaux nombreux s'inclinent quand il passe,
Sombre et muet, au seuil d'une lune d'argent;
Et des blancs nénuphars chaque corolle ronde
Tour à tour a fleuri de désir et d'espoir.
Mais plus avant toujours, sur la brume et sur l'onde,
Vers l'inconnue fuyant glisse le cygne noir.
Or j'ai dit: « Renoncez, beau cygne chimérique,
A ce voyage lent vers de troubles destins;
Nul miracle chinois, nulle étrange Amérique
Ne vous accueilleront en des havres certains;
Les golfes embaumés, les îles immortelles
Ont pour vous, cygne noir, des récifs périlleux;
Demeurez sur les lacs où se mirent, fidèles,
Ces nuages, ces fleurs, ces astres et ces yeux.

Swan on the Water

My thoughts are a sage and harmonious swan
Gliding slow by the banks of ennui
On the bottomless waves of dreams, of mirage,
Of echo, fog, shadow and night.
It glides, a haughty king, carving an open space,
It trails a vain reflection, beautiful and shifting,
And the many reeds bow as it passes,
Sombre and mute, on the edge of a silvery moon;
And from the white water-lilies each crown of petals
Has flowered from desire and hope in its turn...
Yet further still, over mist and over waves,
The black swan glides away, towards the unknown.
But, 'Give up,' I said, 'fair, fanciful swan
On this slow trip toward murky fates;
No Chinese miracle, no strange America
Will welcome you into safe harbours;
Perfumed bays and immortal isles
Hold for you, black swan, perilous reefs;
Stay on these lakes, watched faithfully by
These clouds, these flowers, these stars and these eyes.'

II. Reflets dans l'eau

Etendue au seuil du bassin,
Dans l'eau plus froide que le sein
Des vierges sages,
J'ai reflété mon vague ennui,
Mes yeux profonds couleur de nuit
Et mon visage.
Et dans ce miroir incertain
J'ai vu de merveilleux matins,
J'ai vu des choses
Pâles comme des souvenirs,
Sur l'eau que ne saurait ternir
Nul vent morose.
Alors – au fond du Passé bleu –
Mon corps mince n'était qu'un peu
D'ombre mouvante
Sous les lauriers et les cyprès
J'aime la brise au souffle frais
Qui nous évente
J'aimais vos caresses de soeur,
Vos nuances, votre douceur,
Aube opportune
Et votre pas souple et rythmé,
Nymphes au rire parfumé,
Au teint de lune
Et le galop des aegyptiens,
Et la fontaine qui s'épand
En larmes fades.
Par les bois secrets et divins
J'écoutais frissonner sans fin
L'hamadryade,
Ô cher Passé mystérieux
Qui vous reflétez dans mes yeux
Comme un nuage,
Il me serait plaisant et doux,
Passé, d'essayer avec vous
Le long voyage!...
Si je glisse, les eaux feront
Un rond fluide... un autre rond...
Un autre à peine...
Et puis le miroir enchanté
Reprendra sa limpidité
Froide et sereine.

Reflections on the Water

Stretched out on the pond's edge,
In the water, colder than the breasts
Of prudent virgins,
I reflected my hazy ennui,
My deep eyes, the colour of night,
And my face.
In this uncertain mirror
I saw wondrous mornings...
I saw things
As pale as memories,
On the water that no sullen wind
Could taint.
So – against the backdrop of the blue Past –
My spindly body was but a trace
Of shifting shadow;
Beneath the bay trees and the cypresses
I love the breeze whose cool breath
Fans us...
I loved your sisterly caresses,
Your subtleties, your sweetness,
Opportune dawn;
And your lithe, rhythmic steps,
Nymphs with perfumed laughter,
Tinted by the moon;
And the gallop of the fawns,
And the fountain which spreads
With sluggish tears...
Through the secret, holy woods
I heard the hamadryade
Quivering endlessly.
Oh, dear, mysterious Past
Reflecting in my eyes
Like a cloud,
It would be sweet pleasure for me,
Past, to attempt with you
The long voyage...!
If I glide, the waters will form
A flowing circle... Another circle...
Another, barely...
And then the enchanted mirror
Will once again turn clear,
Cold and serene.

La Bonne Chanson, Op. 61 The Good Song, Op. 61

TEXT: PAUL VERLAINE
(1844-1896)

III. Jardin nocturne

Nocturne jardin tout rempli de silence,
Voici que la lune ouverte se balance
En des voiles d'or fluides et légers ;
Elle semble proche et cependant lointaine...
Son visage rit au coeur de la fontaine
Et l'ombre pâlit sous les noirs orangers.
Nul bruit, si ce n'est le faible bruit de l'onde
Fuyant goutte à goutte au bord des vasques rondes,
Ou le bleu frisson d'une brise d'été,
Furtive parmi des palmes invisibles...
Je sais, ô jardins, vos caresses sensibles
Et votre languide et chaude volupté!
Je sais votre paix délectable et morose,
Vos parfums d'iris, de jasmins et de roses,
Vos charmes troublés de désirs et d'ennui...
Ô jardin muet! – L'eau des vasques s'égoutte
Avec un bruit faible et magique... J'écoute
Ce baiser qui chante aux lèvres de la Nuit.

IV. Danseuse

Soeur des Soeurs tisseuses de violettes,
Une ardente veille blémit tes joues.
Danse! Et que les rythmes aigus dénouent
Tes bandelettes.
Vase svelte, fresque mouvante et souple,
Danse, danse, paumes vers nous tendues,
Pieds étroits fuyant, tels des ailes nues
Qu'Eros décuple.
Sois la fleur multiple un peu balancée,
Sois l'écharpe offerte au désir qui change,
Sois la lampe chaste, la flamme étrange,
Sois la pensée!
Danse, danse au chant de ma flûte creuse,
Soeur des Soeurs divines. La moiteur glisse,
Baiser vain, le long de ta hanche lisse.
Vaine danseuse!

Night Garden

Night garden filled with silence,
Behold the full moon rocking
In light, liquid veils of gold;
Seeming near and yet so far...
Her face laughs in the heart of the fountain
And the shadows fade beneath the black orange trees.
No noise, but for the faint sound of the waves
Escaping drop by drop on the banks of the round ponds,
Or the blue quiver of a summer breeze,
Fleeting through the unseen palms...
I know, oh, gardens, your tender caresses
And your languid, warm delights!
I know your delectable, surly peace,
Your perfumes of irises, jasmines and roses,
Your charms, blurred with desires and ennui...
Oh, silent garden! – The water of the ponds drips
With a faint, magical sound... I hear
This kiss singing in the lips of the Night.

Dancer

Sister of Sisters, weavers of violets,
A burning evening glows upon your cheeks...
Dance! And may the high-pitched rhythms
Unleash your ribbons.
Svelte vase, shifting, supple fresco,
Dance, dance, your palms held out towards us,
Straight feet fleeing like naked wings
Set loose by Eros...
Be the motley flower that gently rocks,
Be the sash, offered to fickle desire,
Be the chastened lamp, the weird flame,
Be thought!
Dance, dance to the song of my hollow flute,
Sister of divine Sisters. – The moisture glides,
Vain kiss, along your smooth hip...
Frivolous dancer!

I. Une Sainte en son auréole

Une Sainte en son auréole,
Une Châtelaine en sa tour,
Tout ce que contient la parole
Humaine de grâce et d'amour.
La note d'or que fait entendre
le cor dans le lointain des bois,
Mariée à la fierté tendre
Des nobles Dames d'autrefois;
Avec cela le charme insigne
D'un frais sourire triomphant
Éclos dans des candeurs de cygne
Et des rougeurs de femme-enfant ;
Des aspects nacrés, blancs et roses,
Un doux accord patricien:
Je vois, j'entends toutes ces choses
Dans son nom Carolingien.

II. Puisque l'aube grandit

Puisque l'aube grandit, puisque voici l'aurore,
Puisqu'après m'avoir fui longtemps, l'espoir veut bien
Revoler devers moi qui l'appelle et l'implore,
Puisque tout ce bonheur veut bien être le mien.
Je veux, guidé par vous, beaux yeux aux flammes douces,
Par toi conduit, ô main où tremblera ma main,
Marcher droit, que ce soit par des sentiers de mousses
Ou que rocs et cailloux encomrent le chemin ;
Et comme, pour bercer les lenteurs de la route,
Je chanterai des airs ingénus, je me dis
Qu'elle m'écouterà sans déplaisir sans doute ;
Et vraiment je ne veux pas d'autre Paradis.

A Saint and her Halo

A Saint and her Halo.
A lady of the chateau in her tower.
All that is within the humane,
Graceful words of love.
The golden note, heard
From the horn in the faraway woods,
Wedded to the tender pride
Of the noble Ladies of yesteryear.
With this, the distinguished charm
Of a cool, triumphant smile
Born in the innocence of swans
And the blushes of young women.
From the mother-of-pearl, white and pink looks,
A sweet, patrician chord:
All this I hear and see
In her Carolingian name.

As Daybreak Grows

As daybreak grows, as I behold the dawn,
As hope, which long deserted me, hopes now
To fly back to me, I who beg and plead for it,
As all of this contentment would be mine,
I crave – led by you, beauteous, sweet-flamed eyes,
Steered by you, oh, hand where my hand will shake –
To walk straight, though the paths be filled with moss
Or rocks and pebbles may obstruct the way;
And since, to lull the slowness of the road,
I'll sing out guileless tunes, I tell myself
She'll listen to me, sure, without dislike;
And truly, I want no other Paradis.

III. La Lune blanche

La lune blanche
Luit dans les bois ;
De chaque branche
Part une voix
Sous la ramée...
Ô bien aimée.
L'étang reflète,
Profond miroir,
La silhouette
Du saule noir
Où le vent pleure...
Rêvons, c'est l'heure.
Un vaste et tendre
Apaînement
Semble descendre
Du firmament
Que l'astre irise...
C'est l'heure exquise.

IV. J'allais par les chemins perfides

J'allais par des chemins perfides,
Douloureusement incertain.
Vos chères mains furent mes guides.
Si pâle à l'horizon lointain
Luisait un faible espoir d'aurore ;
Votre regard fut le matin.
Nul bruit, sinon son pas sonore,
N'encourageait le voyageur.
Votre voix me dit: "Marche encore!"
Mon coeur craintif, mon sombre coeur
Pleurait, seul, sur la triste voie ;
L'amour, délicieux vainqueur,
Nous a réunis dans la joie!

V. J'ai presque peur, en vérité

J'ai presque peur, en vérité
Tant je sens ma vie enlacée
A la radieuse pensée
Qui m'a pris l'âme l'autre été,
Tant votre image, à jamais chère,

The White Moon

The white moon
Shines in the woods;
From every bough
A voice exudes
Beneath the branches...
Oh, beloved.
The pond reflects,
Mirrored depths,
The silhouette
Of black willow
Where the wind weeps...
Let us dream; it is time.
A vast and tender
Peace
Appears to fall
From the sky
Coloured by the stars...
It is the exquisite hour.

I Walked the Perilous Paths

I walked the perilous paths,
Painfully unassured.
Your dear hands were my guides.
If, pale on the far horizon,
There shone a faint hope of dawn,
Your gaze was the morning.
No sound but your sonorous footsteps
Spurred the traveller on.
Your voice said: "Walk on!"
My fearful heart, my sombre heart
Wept, alone, on the sorrowful path;
Love, delicious victor,
United us in joy!

In Truth, I am almost Afeard

In truth, I am almost afeard
When I feel how my life is ensnared
With the shining thought
That seized my soul last summer.
Your image, always dear, dwells so

Habite en ce coeur tout à vous,
Ce coeur uniquement jaloux
De vous aimer et de vous plaire ;
Et je tremble, pardonnez-moi
D'aussi franchement vous le dire,
À penser qu'un mot, qu'un sourire
De vous est désormais ma loi,
Et qu'il vous suffirait d'un geste,
D'une parole ou d'un clin d'oeil,
Pour mettre tout mon être en deuil
De son illusion céleste.
Mais plutôt je ne veux vous voir,
L'avenir dût-il m'être sombre
Et fécond en peines sans nombre,
Qu'à travers un immense espoir,
Plongé dans ce bonheur suprême
De me dire encore et toujours,
En dépit des mornes retours,
Que je vous aime, que je t'aime!

VI. Avant que tu ne t'en ailles

Avant que tu ne t'en ailles,
Pâle étoile du matin
– Mille cailles
Chantent, chantent dans le thym! –
Tourne devers le poète
Dont les yeux sont pleins d'amour ;
– L'alouette
Monte au ciel avec le jour! –
Tourne ton regard que noie
L'aurore dans son azur ;
– Quelle joie
Parmi les champs de blé mûr! –
Et fais luire ma pensée
Là-bas – bien loin, oh, bien loin!
– La rosée
Gaiement brille sur le foin! –
Dans le doux rêve où s'agite
Ma mie endormie encor...
– Vite, vite,
Car voici le soleil d'or! –

In this heart which is no one's but yours,
This heart whose only desire
Is to love and to please you;
And I tremble – pardon
My speaking so plain –
To think that one word, one smile
From you is, from now on, my law,
And that you need only make a gesture,
Speak a word or wink an eye,
To cast my whole being into mourning
For its heavenly delusion.
But I would rather not see you,
My future would be sombre
And full of countless pains,
If it were not through great hope,
Plunged into this supreme happiness
Of saying, still and always,
And despite joyless replies,
That I love you, that I love thee!

Before You Leave

Before you leave,
Pale star of the morning
– A thousand quails
Sing, sing in the thyme! –
Turn towards the poet
Whose eyes are filled with love;
– The lark
Rises with the day, up to the sky! –
Turn your gaze that drowns
The dawn in its azure;
– What joy
Among the fields of ripe wheat! –
And make my thoughts shine
Yonder – far away, oh, far, far away!
– The dew
Glistens gaily on the hay! –
In the sweet dream where my beloved
Stirs, still asleep...
– Quickly, quickly!
For here is the golden sun! –

VII. Donc, ce sera par un clair jour d'été

Donc, ce sera par un clair jour d'été
Le grand soleil, complice de ma joie,
Fera, parmi le satin et la soie,
Plus belle encor votre chère beauté ;
Le ciel tout bleu, comme une haute tente,
Frissonnera somptueux à longs plis
Sur nos deux fronts qu'auront pâlis
L'émotion du bonheur et l'attente;
Et quand le soir viendra, l'air sera doux
Qui se jouera, caressant, dans vos voiles,
Et les regards paisibles des étoiles
Bienveillamment souriront aux époux.

VIII. N'est-ce pas?

N'est-ce pas? nous irons gais et lents, dans la voie
Modeste que nous montre en souriant l'Espoir,
Peu soucieux qu'on nous ignore ou qu'on nous voie.
Isolés dans l'amour ainsi qu'en un bois noir,
Nos deux coeurs, exhalant leur tendresse paisible,
Seront deux rossignols qui chantent dans le soir.
Sans nous préoccuper de ce que nous destine
Le Sort, nous marcherons pourtant du même pas,
Et la main dans la main, avec l'âme enfantine.
De ceux qui s'aiment sans mélange, n'est-ce pas?

So, it Shall Be on a Bright Summer's Day

So, it shall be on a bright summer's day
The great sun, ally to my joy,
Will, among the satin and the silk,
Make your dear beauty more beautiful still;
The sky, all blue, as if a lofty tent,
Will quiver sumptuous in lengthy folds
Upon our two foreheads, which will have paled
From the thrill of expectation and joy;
And when the evening comes, the air will be sweet
As it frolics, caressing, in your veils,
And the peaceful gazes of the stars
Will smile kindly on us, man and wife.

Shall We Not?

Shall we not? We'll go gaily and slowly along
The humble path Hope shows us with a smile.
Little caring if we are ignored or seen.
Alone in our love as if in a black forest,
Our two hearts, breathing out peaceful affection,
Will be two nightingales singing in the evening.
Not worrying what fate may have in store,
Still we'll walk along with matching step,
And hand in hand, with child-like soul.
Like those whose love is pure; shall we not?

IX. L'hiver a cessé

L'hiver a cessé : la lumière est tiède
Et danse, du sol au firmament clair.
Il faut que le coeur le plus triste cède
À l'immense joie éparse dans l'air.
J'ai depuis un an le printemps dans l'âme
Et le vert retour du doux floréal,
Ainsi qu'une flamme entoure une flamme,
Met de l'idéal sur mon idéal.
Le ciel bleu prolonge, exhausse et couronne
L'immuable azur où rit mon amour
La saison est belle et ma part est bonne
Et tous mes espoirs ont enfin leur tour.
Que vienne l'été! que viennent encore
L'automne et l'hiver! Et chaque saison
Me sera charmante, ô Toi que décore
Cette fantaisie et cette raison!

Winter is Gone

Winter is gone: the light is warm
And it dances from sun to bright sky.
Even the saddest heart must yield
To the great joy scattered on high.
For a year I have carried the spring in my soul,
And sweet Floréal's green returning,
Akin to a flame surrounding a flame,
Heaps dreaming upon my dreaming.
The blue sky extends, exalts and adorns
My love's laughter's constant azure,
The season is fair and my share in it good
And my hopes all at last have their turn.
Let summer come! Let winter and autumn
Come once again! And each season
Will seem charming to me, oh, You, who adorn
My fantasy and my reason!

L'Horizon chimérique, Op. 118

Chimeric Horizon, Op. 118

TEXT: JEAN DE LA VILLE DE MIRMONT
(1886-1914)

I. La mer est infinie

La mer est infinie et mes rêves sont fous.
La mer chante au soleil en battant les falaises
Et mes rêves légers ne se sentent plus d'aïe
De danser sur la mer comme des oiseaux souïs.
Le vaste mouvement des vagues les emporte,
La brise les agite et les roule en ses plis ;
Jouant dans le sillage, ils feront une escorte
Aux vaisseaux que mon coeur dans leur fuite a suivis.
Ivres d'air et de sel et brûlés par l'écume
De la mer qui console et qui lave des pleurs
Ils connaîtront le large et sa bonne amertume;
Les goélands perdus les prendront pour des leurs.

II. Je me suis embarqué

Je me suis embarqué sur un vaisseau qui danse
Et roule bord sur bord et tangue et se balance.
Mes pieds ont oublié la terre et ses chemins ;
Les vagues souples m'ont appris d'autres cadences
Plus belles que le rythme las des chants humains.
À vivre parmi vous, hélas! avais-je une âme?
Mes frères, j'ai souffert sur tous vos continents.
Je ne veux que la mer, je ne veux que le vent
Pour me bercer, comme un enfant, au creux des lames.
Hors du port qui n'est plus qu'une image effacée,
Les larmes du départ ne brûlent plus mes yeux.
Je ne me souviens pas de mes derniers adieux...
Ô ma peine, ma peine, où vous ai-je laissée?

III. Diane, Séléne

Diane, Séléne, lune de beau métal,
Qui reflète vers nous, par ta face déserte,
Dans l'immortel ennui du calme sidéral,
Le regret d'un soleil dont nous pleurons la perte.
Ô lune, je t'en veux de ta limpidité
Injurieuse au trouble vain des pauvres âmes,
Et mon coeur, toujours las et toujours agité,
Aspire vers la paix de ta nocturne flamme.

The Sea is Boundless

The sea is boundless and my dreams are crazed.
The sea sings to the sun as it crashes on the cliffs
And my inconstant dreams take pleasure no more
From dancing on the sea like drunken birds.
The waves' vast movement carries them away,
The breeze shakes and rolls them in its folds;
Playing in the wake they will become a guard
For the boats whose flight my heart has followed.
Drunk on salt and air and burned by the foam
From the tear-washing, consoling sea,
They will meet the wide ocean and its kind bitterness;
And the lost seagulls will take them as their own.

I Have Boarded

I have boarded a vessel that dances,
Rolls side to side, pitches and tilts.
My feet have forgotten the land and its roads;
The lithe waves have taught me new tempos
Fairer than the weary beats of human songs.
When I lived amongst you, alas!, did I have a soul?
My brothers, I have suffered on all of your continents.
I want only the sea, I want only the wind
To rock me, like a child, in the dips of the waves.
Far now from port – just an image, erased –
Farewell tears no longer burn my eyes.
I do not remember my final goodbyes...
Oh, my sorrow, my sorrow, where did I leave you?

Diana, Selene

Diana, Selene, beautiful metal moon,
Reflecting towards us with your barren face,
In the endless ennui of the heavenly calm,
A lament for the sun whose passing we mourn.
Oh, moon, I begrudge you your cleanness
A slight to the vain confusion of poor souls,
And my heart, always weary and always stirred,
Yearns for the peace of your nocturnal flame.

IV. Vaisseaux, nous vous aurons aimés

Vaisseaux, nous vous aurons aimés en pure perte ;
Le dernier de vous tous est parti sur la mer.
Le couchant emporta tant de voiles ouvertes
Que ce port et mon coeur sont à jamais déserts.
La mer vous a rendus à votre destinée,
Au-delà du rivage où s'arrêtent nos pas.
Nous ne pouvions garder vos âmes enchaînées ;
Il vous faut des lointains que je ne connais pas
Je suis de ceux dont les désirs sont sur la terre.
Le souffle qui vous grise emplit mon coeur d'effroi,
Mais votre appel, au fond des soirs, me désespère,
Car j'ai de grands départs inassouvis en moi.

Ships, We'll Have Loved You

Ships, we'll have loved you in vain;
The last of you has left for the sea.
The sunset has seized so many unfurled sails
That this port and my heart are deserted forever.
The sea has sent you to your fate.
Beyond the coast where our footsteps cease.
We could not keep your souls in chains;
You need those far-off places unknown to me.

I am the kind whose desires are on land.
The breath that beguiles you fills my heart with dread,
But in the deep evening your call makes me despair,
For great settings-forth lie unquenched in me yet.

— ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS BY VERBOO
(WWW.VERBOO.CO.UK)

Bettina Smith

MEZZOSOPRAN

Mezzosopranen Bettina Smith er fra Bergen. Etter eksamen ved Bergen Musikkonservatorium studerte hun med Wout Oosterkamp og Elly Ameling ved Koninklijk Conservatorium Den Haag, der hun tok sin diplomeksamen med høyeste karakter. Deretter fulgte to år ved Internationales Opernstudio ved Opernhaus Zürich.

Senere har hun opptrådt ved Europas ledende operahus, festivaler og konserthus, bl.a. Opernhaus Zürich, Staatsoper Berlin, Het Muziektheater Amsterdam, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, KKL Luzern, De Doelen Rotterdam, Zürcher Festspiele, Mozart Tage og Bach Tage Luzern, Brahms Festival Den Haag, Hindemith Festival Den Haag, Rhijnauwen Kammermuziekfestival, Oude Muziek Festival Utrecht, Stravinskij-festival 2000 Amsterdam, Grieg 07, Festspillene i Bergen, Fartein Valen-festivalen, Euterpe, Fresh Voices Festival San Francisco og Laudinella St. Moritz.

Hun har et bredt repertoar som spenner fra middelalder til samtidsmusikk, og hun opptre ofte som solist i oratorier og kantater. Dessuten er hun en aktiv kammermusiker. Som elev av den internasjonalt anerkjente sopranen Elly Ameling, har Bettina utviklet en spesiell forkjærlighet for det franske og tyske romanserepertoaret, og sammen med pianistene Jan Willem Nelleke og Einar Røttingen opptre hun på festivaler i inn- og utland.

Bettina har gjort innspillinger for nederlandsk, tysk, sveitsisk og norsk radio og har mottatt en rekke prestisjetunge stipender, blant dem Edwin Ruud-stipendet og Herbert von Karajan Music Legacy. I 2001 var hun prisvinner i Francesco Viñas-konkurransen i Barcelona. Der fikk hun også en spesiell pris for fremragende romansesang utdelt av Dalton Baldwin.

Hun har tidligere gitt ut tre CD-er på LAWO Classics sammen med pianist Einar Røttingen, som alle har høstet strålende kritikker: *Serres Chaudes* (LWC1008) med sanger av Fauré, Chausson og Saint-Saëns, *Voices of Women* (LWC1067) med sanger av Valen, Stalheim og Hvoslef og *Fêtes Galantes* (LWC1116) med sanger av Debussy og Fauré.

Bettina Smith er førsteamanuensis i sang ved Fakultet for utøvende kunsthøgskole, Universitetet i Stavanger.

www.bettinasmith.com





Jan Willem Nelleke

PIANO

Den nederlandske pianisten Jan Willem Nellekes eksepsjonelle egenskaper som duopartner er kjent og anerkjent. Han har etablert duopartnerskap med mezzo-sopranen Bettina Smith, fløytisten Philippa Davies, cellisten Karine Georgian og barytonen Frans Huijts, og opptrer jevnlig med dem i hele Europa. Spillet er beskrevet som «glitrende regndråper, rike akkorder og vakre mellomspill» og «et alltid årvåkent samarbeid med solisten».

Han er selv en kjent komponist av sanger og kammermusikk og har dessuten laget et stort antall arrangementer som har funnet sin plass på repertoaret.

Jan Willem studerte med Else Krijgsman ved Koninklijk Conservatorium Den Haag og med Thom Bolten i Utrecht.

Innspillingene hans omfatter kammermusikk av Poulenc, verker for cello og klaver av Schumann, Schuberts *Winterreise* og ikke minst Gershwins klaverkonsert etter en kritikerrost framføring i Concertgebouw i Amsterdam.

I tillegg til virksomheten som utøver er Jan Willem Nelleke en svært ettertraktet lærer. Han underviser ved Koninklijk Conservatorium Den Haag og ved Franz-Schubert-Institut i Baden ved Wien i Østerrike.

Bettina Smith

MEZZO-SOPRANO

Bettina Smith is from Bergen, Norway. After graduating from the Bergen Conservatory of Music, she studied with Wout Oosterkamp and Elly Ameling at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Den Haag, Holland, receiving a Masters Degree with distinction. This was followed by specialized study in Switzerland at the Zürich International Opera Studio. Bettina has since performed in Europe's leading opera houses and concert halls and at major European festivals.

With a wide repertoire ranging from medieval to contemporary music, Bettina Smith appears regularly as an oratorio and cantata soloist, in addition to being an active chamber-musician. Her special love for the French and German art-song repertoire, makes her a frequent guest artist at festivals and concert series in Norway and abroad, together with the Dutch pianist Jan Willem Nelleke and the Norwegian pianist Einar Røttingen.

Festivals, opera houses and concert halls at which Bettina has performed include Bergen International Festival, Festspiele Zürich, Rhijnauwen Chamber Music Festival, Utrecht Early Music Festival, Mozart-Tage and Bach-Tage Luzern, Brahms Festival Den Haag, Hindemith Festival Den Haag, Stravinsky Festival 2000 Amsterdam, Staatsoper Berlin, Opernhaus Zürich, Het Muziektheater Amsterdam, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, KKL Luzern, Fresh Voices Festival San Francisco, De Doelen Rotterdam, Grieg 07, Fartein Valen Festival, Euterpe and Laudinella St. Moritz.

Bettina has recorded for Dutch, German, Swiss and Norwegian Radio and has received several prestigious scholarships, among them, the Edwin Ruud Stipend and the Herbert von Karajan Music Legacy. In 2001 she was a prizewinner in the Francesco Viñas Competition in Barcelona, where she received a special prize awarded by Dalton Baldwin for outstanding lieder singing.

She has previously released three critically acclaimed CDs on the LAWO Classics label with pianist Einar Røttingen: *Serres Chaudes* (LWC1008), with songs by Fauré, Chausson and Saint-Saëns; *Voices of Women* (LWC1067), with songs by Norwegian composers Valen, Stalheim and Hvoslef; and *Fêtes Galantes* (LWC1116), with songs by Debussy and Fauré.

Bettina Smith is Associate Professor of singing at the Faculty of Performing Arts, University of Stavanger, Norway.

www.bettinasmith.com

Jan Willem Nelleke

PIANO

Dutch pianist Jan Willem Nelleke's exceptional qualities as a duo partner have been widely recognised; he has established duo partnerships with mezzo-soprano Bettina Smith, flautist Philippa Davies, cellist Karine Georgian, and baritone Frans Huijts and performs frequently with them throughout Europe. His playing has been described as 'sparkling raindrops, rich chords and beautiful interludes' and an 'ever alert co-operation with the soloist'.

Himself a noted composer of songs and chamber music, he has also produced a large number of arrangements that have regularly found their way into the repertoire.

Jan Willem studied with Else Krijgsman at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague and with Thom Bollen in Utrecht.

Recordings include chamber music by Poulenc, works for cello and piano by Schumann, Schubert's *Winterreise*, as well as the Gershwin *Piano Concerto* following a critically lauded performance at the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam.

In addition to his performance schedule, Jan Willem Nelleke is in great demand as a coach. He teaches at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague and at the Franz Schubert Institute in Baden bei Wien, Austria.

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Gabriel Fauré

(1845–1924)

BETTINA SMITH | MEZZO-SOPRANO

JAN WILLEM NELLEKE | PIANO

Poème d'un jour, Op. 21

TEXT: CHARLES GRANDMOUGIN (1850–1930)

01 | I. Rencontre ^(02:07)

02 | II. Toujours ^(01:14)

03 | III. Adieu ^(02:22)

Mirages, Op. 113

TEXT: BARONNE DE BRIMONT (1880–1943)

04 | I. Cygne sur l'eau ^(03:44)

05 | II. Reflets dans l'eau ^(04:43)

06 | III. Jardin nocturne ^(02:54)

07 | IV. Danseuse ^(02:03)

La Bonne Chanson, Op. 61

TEXT: PAUL VERLAINE (1844–1896)

08 | I. Une Sainte en son auréole ^(01:58)

09 | II. Puisque l'aube grandit ^(01:54)

10 | III. La Lune blanche luit
dans les bois ^(02:14)

11 | IV. J'allais par des chemins perfides ^(01:49)

12 | V. J'ai presque peur, en vérité ^(02:14)

13 | VI. Avant que tu ne t'en ailles ^(03:07)

14 | VII. Donc, ce sera par un clair
jour d'été ^(02:41)

15 | VIII. N'est-ce pas? ^(02:28)

16 | IX. L'Hiver a cessé ^(02:59)

L'Horizon chimérique, Op. 118

TEXT: JEAN DE LA VILLE DE MIRMONT (1886–1914)

17 | I. La mer est infinie ^(01:37)

18 | II. Je me suis embarqué ^(02:20)

19 | III. Diane, Séléné ^(02:23)

20 | IV. Vaisseaux, nous vous
aurons aimés ^(01:43)