

signum
CLASSICS

THE COMPLETE SONGS OF *F*
FAURÉ

Lorna Anderson • Nigel Cliffe • Ann Murray • John Chest
Iestyn Davies • Ben Johnson • Janis Kelly • Joan Rodgers
Malcolm Martineau

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Ann Murray [AM]

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In sixty years of songwriting, between 1861 and 1921, Fauré's craft understandably developed in richness and subtlety. But many elements remained unchanged: among them, a distaste for pretentious pianism ('Oh pianists, pianists, pianists, when will you consent to hold back your implacable virtuosity !!!' he wrote, to a pianist, in 1919) and a loving care for prosody – not infrequently he 'improved' on the poet for musical reasons. Above all, he remained his own man. Henri Duparc was a close friend, but his songs, dubbed by Fauré's pupil Ravel 'imperfect works of genius', had only a passing impact on Fauré's own. Where Duparc embraces the grand gesture, Fauré for the most part prefers the suggestion, the nuance. In this respect, if in no other, his music resembles that of Erik Satie: it tends to speak to each of us singly in familiar tones. Therefore recording is an ideal medium for it, free of all the material distractions of dress, gesture or facial exercise.

Fauré's preference for suggestion and nuance may seem to sit uneasily with his choice of Victor Hugo as the poet for his six earliest songs (one thinks of André Gide's famous reply to the question of who was France's greatest poet: 'Victor Hugo, hélas !'), but the composer, even at the age of sixteen, was careful over what he set. By 1861 he had been a pupil for seven years at the Ecole Niedermeyer in Paris which set out primarily to train church musicians. However, in that year Saint-Saëns joined the staff, bringing with him a breath of modernist air nourished on such dangerous influences as Liszt and Wagner, and he and Fauré became lifelong friends. Not that the Hungarian or the German show up in these early Fauré songs – the three unchanging verses of '*Le papillon et la fleur*' mirror the light, even vapid fantasy of Hugo's poem, and if there is any influence at work it's that of Gounod. In '*Mai*', written in 1862, once again the easy grace and balancing four-bar phrases speak of Nature at its most peaceful. '**Dans les ruines d'une abbaye**', composed in 1865, underlines Hugo's tight rhythmic and rhyming structure by building the whole song out of 20 consecutive four-bar phrases.

A similarly firm hand is at work in '**Les matelots**', probably written around 1870 on a poem by Théophile Gautier, in which Fauré achieves urgent forward movement by a semi-chromatic descent in the bass. But Gautier was, in Fauré's mature opinion, an easier poet to set than Hugo (or indeed than Leconte de Lisle whose '**Lydia**' he treated with a sublime simplicity concealing considerable craft – why is the piano epilogue so perfect ?) because his poetry was not so self-sufficient. Nonetheless, the Gautier poems he chose were far from light. '**Chanson du pêcheur**', on a poem previously set by Berlioz in *Nuits d'été* as 'Sur les lagunes', is subtitled 'Lamento' and is a portrait of utter desolation and despair. Fauré gives it a cumulative structure by starting with vocal phrases that are initially abandoned by the piano, then accompanied, then abandoned again before a final determining confluence that lasts through the second half of the song. Also dating from the early 1870s, '**Tristesse**' is a deliberately monotonous song, with only the slightest variations throughout its four verses. Although the shape of these is to contrast the happiness everywhere else with the poet's misery, Fauré envelops the whole song in gloom, encompassing the return of April, a group of jolly drinkers and young girls in a modicum of *déshabillé*.

In 1872 he was introduced into the circle of the distinguished mezzo-soprano Pauline Viardot, to whom '**Chanson du pêcheur**' is dedicated, and in due course he became engaged to her daughter Marianne. But in 1877 she broke off the engagement, on the grounds that the young Gabriel was 'too ardent'. The triptych '**Poème d'un jour**' from the following year may be read as Fauré's response. In '**Rencontre**' he responds to the poet's uncertainty with unsettling modulations. Now the two matching verses show meaningful variations in rhythm: note the new dotted rhythm in the second verse on 'immensité', a disruption that looks forward to the next song, '**Toujours**', in which the poet refuses to abandon his love in the face of his mistress's rebuffs. Here, perhaps, Duparc supplied a model. Gone anyway are the balancing verses: the music sweeps ever onward, climaxing paradoxically in an unusual bar of rests before the clinching cadence. Finally '**Adieu**' is a song of resignation –

or in Graham Johnson's apt description, 'an elegantly veiled retreat'. We may note how Fauré suggests the poet's loss of confidence by varying the rhythm in the four-bar introduction, and how in the middle section the arrival of triplets and the minor mode is enough to invoke intensity of feeling without grand gestures.

Whether owing to the break with Marianne or not, the late 1870s saw a distinct maturing of Fauré's art, as the other seven songs on this disc dating from that period all testify. '**Après un rêve**' is too well known to need comment, other than to remember that Fauré was against sentimentalising it. '**Sérénade toscane**' is another song with Italian roots, in which the piano, while imitating a guitar or mandolin, also comments in the right hand on the singer's tune – a loose-limbed melody of 19 bars that is an early example of Fauré's penchant for harmonic teasing. By now Fauré was also learning to value monotony (as Satie and Ravel would later), not least because then surprise could burst upon the listener with increased *éclat* – as in the fifth of the six verses of '**Sylvie**', where the poet admits to loving 'à la folie Tes yeux brillants', and the sudden mediant modulation does sound, in the context, close to mental disorder...

'**Nell**', composed in 1878, is a song of calm and refinement and, as the Fauré scholar Jean-Michel Nectoux says, 'There is in "Nell" a masterly rightness of phrasing, a flow and a melodic suppleness through which the constraints of the barline are barely felt...[it] is the archetype of Fauré's songs during the 1880s, celebrating the pleasures of love in a voluptuous style that sometimes verges on the sentimental.' Before that, though, in 1879 he wrote '**Les berceaux**', in which his own experiences of death as a soldier and heartache as a lover coalesce, with further assistance from monotony, to produce one of his most powerful utterances. In the same vein is '**Le voyageur**' of 1878, in which Fauré emphasises the traveller's disturbed state of mind by starting with two five-bar phrases and ending with a seven-bar one. He concludes the song on a high note for the 'elle', who (Marianne ?) is finally identified as the cause of all the trouble.

Perhaps '**La Féee aux chansons**' of 1882 does verge on the sentimental. If so, it is surely redeemed by Fauré's mastery of elusive harmonies that briefly colour the music and then are gone; and by the tiny, slower interlude that marks the arrival of autumn. In '**Aurore**' of 1884 we learn only in the last of the three verses that this is a love song, with the words 'tes pieds', 'ta beauté' and, most emphatically, 'jusqu'à toi', but the 'voluptuous style' has already prepared for this. Similarly, we may wonder why the second verse should be in the minor key... until we reach the word 'plaintif'. Such longer-term thinking was a key aspect of Fauré's growing maturity. Sentimentality gets short shrift in '**Fleur jetée**' of the same year. The pounding octaves and chords, the unusual Fauréan marking 'Allegro energico' and the 'serious' key of F minor together give the lie to the description of the composer (which he hated) as 'the composer of the shadows'.

The stylistic gap between '**Arpège**' of 1897 and, say, 'La Féee aux chansons' gives an indication of where Fauré was heading: towards further obliquity of utterance, characterised by yet more complex harmonies and in general a determined avoidance of anything approaching the obvious. In '**Arpège**', the tonic minor key reappears from time to time, but always as a surprise, as if Fauré is checking up, 'Are you still with me?' In fact, the 'gap' was filled by an unceasing song output, including the *Cinq mélodies de Venise* written in 1891. Fauré had been treated to a holiday in Venice in the palazzo of his supporter who was later to become the Princesse de Polignac, and while there had sketched out a 'tiny scrap on a poem Verlaine [that] could perhaps turn into something'. He had already set that poet's 'Clair de lune' four years earlier, and now began to realize more fully the joy of turning Verlaine's musical verse into real music.

'**Mandoline**' (which the 'tiny scrap' became) evokes, as Nectoux puts it, 'the dreamlike, shadowy, rather vague scenery against which the four love poems are to be played out.' '**En sourdine**', if any of Fauré's songs does, 'celebrates the pleasures of love in a voluptuous

style'. He is now thinking in longer paragraphs (the first two verses are run together), firmly anchored by his mastery of modulation. The playfulness of '**Green**' is clearly set out for us in the naughty harmonies of the first two lines, initially suggesting that 'my heart which beats only for you' is perhaps not to be taken entirely seriously; but what follows makes clear that playfulness does not exclude passion. '**A Clymène**', which Fauré claimed lay, like '**Mandoline**', outside the true cycle formed by the other three songs, nonetheless contains the cycle's motto theme of descending quavers finally curling round in two semiquavers on to a longer note, even though here the semiquavers become smoother triplets. Fauré was concerned that he had maybe adopted too classical an approach for this poem, and certainly the temperature cools slightly at this point, though one can see how tempting it must have been to let the opening words '**Mystiques barcarolles**' colour all that follows.

Passion returns in '**C'est l'extase**', but is this fulfilment? Once again, Fauré looks at the song as a whole and, reading the lines '*Cette âme qui se lamente/Et cette plainte dormante/C'est la nôtre, n'est-ce pas?*', infuses the whole song with a barely expressed anxiety, adumbrated from the start in the off-beat repeated chords. He himself mentioned the word 'frustration' in talking about this cycle. Once again, perhaps this was life impinging on art, and the frustration that of a composer still, at 46, condemned to spend his life in suburban trains travelling from one piano pupil to another. Returning from those magical weeks in Venice cannot have made this any easier to bear.

His life took an easier turn in 1896 when he succeeded Massenet as a professor of composition at the Paris Conservatoire and even easier, from some points of view when he was appointed Director in 1905. But he took his duties in both posts very seriously and as Director took an especial interest in the teaching of singing. Between 1906 and 1916 he wrote at least 29 vocalises for the sight-singing examinations. These exercises, recently unearthed by Roy Howat and Emily Kilpatrick and edited by them for publication by

Peters in 2014, range from the relatively simple to the decidedly taxing and, as the editors point out 'With no phrasing marked in most of the manuscripts, sight-singing students had to use their wits and read ahead to judge and shape phrase lengths, particularly when Fauré prolongs a melody or suddenly transfers it up an octave just as it seems about to relax into a cadence.' **No 20**, written for the women's final examination on 12 June 1912, is an example of the simpler style, reminiscent of 'Lydia'; **No 29**, for the mid-term examination for instrumentalists (who had to sing, even if not to the highest standard of production) in May 1907, is considerably more complex, and even at times outrageous...

After completing the cycle *La chanson d'Eve* in 1910, Fauré returned to the poetry of the Belgian Charles van Lerberghe in 1913, choosing eight poems from his collection *Entrevisions (Le Jardin Clos)*. This volume had appeared in 1898 and when Fauré finally got down to composing the music in July 1914 he wrote to his wife 'I can't find anything, I'm afraid, in the contemporary French poets, at least nothing that calls for music.' Commentators have often remarked on the pre-Raphaelite tone of the words, and no less of the music – no sign here of *Le sacre du printemps*, nor indeed of Ravel's Piano Trio, premiered together with these songs in 1915. The keyboard writing is pared down to the bone, while the singer is given a continual arioso that emphasises the natural rhythms of the words. As so often in late Fauré, much of the interest lies in the interplay of harmony and bass, with dissonances resolving in all kinds of unexpected ways, and within the steadily pulsing rhythms we hear these surprises with unusual clarity : in the first song, the sudden B flat on 'lèvre' is replete with veiled eroticism.

Some of the original poems bore epigraphs from *The Song of Songs*, and the 'walled garden', the title of the central group of poems, clearly refers to this Old Testament text. But it could, possibly, also refer to the predicament of France, now 'walled in' by the German army, or to Fauré's own deafness that was increasingly shutting him off from the

outside world. Certainly there is an inwardness in these songs that speaks of things spiritual, even though Fauré was not any kind of believer, as well as a harmonic boldness (for example in the chromaticisms of the fifth song) that prompted Saint-Saëns to tell his one-time pupil that he couldn't find pleasure in 'this garden pitilessly blocked off by thorns'. The final song, the only one in the minor mode, closes the work in a spirit of acceptance that recalls Fauré's earlier patient, resigned response to death in his *Requiem*.

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1. Le papillon et la fleur

Victor Hugo (1802-1885)

La pauvre fleur disait au papillon céleste:
Ne fuis pas!

Vois comme nos destins sont différents. Je reste,
Tu t'en vas!

Pourtant nous nous aimons; nous vivons sans les hommes,
Et loin d'eux!

Et nous nous ressemblons, et l'on dit que nous sommes
Fleurs tous deux!

Mais hélas! l'air t'emporte, et la terre m'enchaîne.
Sort cruel!

Je voudrais embaumer ton vol de mon haleine
Dans le ciel!

Mais non, tu vas trop loin! Parmi les fleurs sans nombre
Vous fuyez!

Et moi je reste seule à voir tourner mon ombre
À mes pieds!

Tu fuis, puis tu reviens, puis tu t'en vas encore
Luire ailleurs!

Aussi me trouves-tu toujours à chaque aurore
Tout en pleurs!

Oh! pour que notre amour coule des jours fidèles,
Ô mon roi,

Prends comme moi racine, ou donne-moi des ailes
Comme à toi!

The butterfly and the flower

The humble flower said to the heavenly butterfly:
Do not flee!

See how our destinies differ. Fixed to earth am I,
You fly away!

Yet we love each other, we live without men
And far from them,
And we are so alike, it is said that both of us
Are flowers!

But alas! The breeze bears you away, the earth holds me fast.
Cruel fate!

I would perfume your flight with my fragrant breath
In the sky!

But no, you flit too far! Among countless flowers
You fly away,
While I remain alone, and watch my shadow circle
Round my feet.

You fly away, then return; then take flight again
To shimmer elsewhere.

And so you always find me at each dawn
Bathed in tears!

Ah, that our love might flow through faithful days,
O my king,
Take root like me, or give me wings
Like yours!

2. Mai

Victor Hugo

Puisque mai tout en fleurs dans les prés nous réclame,
Viens! ne te lasse pas de mêler à ton âme
La campagne, les bois, les ombrages charmants,
Les larges clairs de lune au bord des flots dormants,
Le sentier qui finit où le chemin commence,
Et l'air et le printemps et l'horizon immense,
L'horizon que ce monde attache humble et joyeux!
Comme une lèvre au bas de la robe des cieux!
Viens! et que le regard des pudiques étoiles
Qui tombe sur la terre à travers tant de voiles,
Que l'arbre pénétré de parfums et de chants,
Que le souffle embrasé de midi dans les champs,
Et l'ombre et le soleil et l'onde et la verdure,
Et le rayonnement de toute la nature
Fassent épanouir, comme une double fleur,
La beauté sur ton front et l'amour dans ton cœur!

May

Since full-flowering May calls us to the meadows,
Come! do not tire of mingling with your soul
The countryside, the woods, the charming shade,
Vast moonlights on the banks of sleeping waters,
The path ending where the road begins,
And the air, the Spring and the huge horizon,
The horizon which this world fastens, humble and joyous,
Like a lip to the hem of heaven's robe!
Come! and may the gaze of the chaste stars,
Falling to earth through so many veils,
May the tree steeped in scent and song,
May the burning breath of noon in the fields,
And the shade and the sun, and the tide and verdure,
And the radiance of all nature -
May they cause to blossom, like a double flower,
Beauty on your brow and love in your heart!

Poème d'un jour

Charles Grandmougin (1850-1930)

3. 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 cœur 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 frémît, par l'amour envahie
Et mon cœur te chérit sans te connaître bien.

4. II. Toujours

Vous me demandez de me 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!

Poem of a day

I. Meeting

I was sad and pensive when I met you,
Today I feel less my persistent pain;
O tell me, could you be the unhoped-for woman,
And the ideal dream pursued in vain?

O passer-by with gentle eyes, could you be the friend
To restore the lonely poet's happiness,
And will you shine on my steadfast soul
Like the native sky on an exiled heart?

Your timid sadness, like my own,
Loves to watch the sun set on the sea!
Such boundless space awakes your rapture,
And your fair soul prizes the evenings' charm.

A mysterious and gentle sympathy
Already binds me to you like a living bond,
And my soul quivers, overcome by love,
And my heart, without knowing you well, adores you.

II. Forever

You ask me to be silent,
To flee far from you forever
And to go my way alone,
Forgetting whom I loved!

Rather ask the stars
To fall into infinity,
The night to lose its veils,
The day to lose its light!

Demandez à la mer immense
De dessécher ses vastes flots
Et quand les vents sont en démence,
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!

5. III. Adieu

Comme tout meurt vite, la rose
Déclose,
Et les frais manteaux diaprés
Des prés;
Les longs soupirs, les bien-aimées,
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!

Ask the boundless sea
To drain its mighty waves,
And when the winds are raging
To calm their dismal sobbing!

But do not expect my soul
To tear itself from bitter sorrow,
Nor to shed its passion
As springtime sheds its flowers!

III. Farewell

How swiftly all things die, the rose
In bloom,
And the fresh dappled mantle
Of meadows;
Long-drawn sighs, beloved-ones,
All smoke!

In this fickle world we see
Our dreams
Change more swiftly than waves
On the shore,
Our hearts change more swiftly than patterns
Of frosted flowers!

To you I thought I would be faithful,
Cruel one,
But alas! the longest loves
Are short!

And I say, taking leave of your charms,
Without tears,
Almost at the moment of my avowal,
Farewell!

6. Lydia

Charles-Marie-René Leconte de Lisle (1818-1894)

Lydia, sur tes roses joues,
Et sur ton col frais et si blanc,
Roule étincelant
L'or fluide que tu dénoues.

Le jour qui luit est le meilleur:
Oublions l'éternelle tombe.
Laisse tes baisers de colombe
Chanter sur ta lèvre en fleur.

Un lys caché répand sans cesse
Une odeur divine en ton sein:
Les délices, comme un essaïm,
Sortent de toi, jeune déesse!

Je t'aime et meurs, ô mes amours!
Mon âme en baisers m'est ravie.
Ô Lydia, rends-moi la vie,
Que je puisse mourir toujours!

Lydia

Lydia, onto your rosy cheeks
And your neck so fresh and pale,
The liquid gold that you unbind
Cascades glittering down.

The day that dawns is the best;
Let us forget the eternal tomb.
Let your dove-like kisses
Sing on your flowering lips.

A hidden lily unceasingly sheds
A heavenly fragrance in your breast;
Delights without number
Stream from you, young goddess!

I love you and die, O my love!
My soul is ravished by kisses.
O Lydia, give me back my life again,
That I may ever die!

7. Tristesse

Théophile Gautier (1811-1872)

Avril est de retour.
La première des roses,
De ses lèvres mi-closes
Rit au premier beau jour;
La terre bienheureuse
S'ouvre et s'épanouit;
Tout aime, tout jouit.

Hélas! j'ai dans le cœur une tristesse affreuse.

Les buveurs en gaité,
Dans leurs chansons vermeilles,
Célébrent sous les treilles
Le vin et la beauté;
La musique joyeuse,
Avec leur rire clair
S'épargille dans l'air.

Hélas! j'ai dans le cœur une tristesse affreuse.

En déshabillé blanc,
Les jeunes demoiselles
S'en vont sous les tonnelles
Au bras de leur galant;
La lune langoureuse
Argente leurs baisers
Longuement appuyés.

Hélas! j'ai dans le cœur une tristesse affreuse.

Moi, je n'aime plus rien,
Ni l'homme, ni la femme,
Ni mon corps, ni mon âme,
Pas même mon vieux chien.
Allez dire qu'on creuse,
Sous le pâle gazon,
Une fosse sans nom.

Hélas! j'ai dans le cœur une tristesse affreuse.

Sadness

April has returned.
The first of the roses
From half-open lips
Smiles at the first fine day;
The happy earth
Opens and blooms:
All is love and ecstasy.

Alas! a dreadful sadness afflicts my heart.

The merry drinkers
With their crimson songs
Drink, beneath trellises,
To wine and beauty;
The joyous music
With their bright laughter
Scatters in the air.

Alas! a dreadful sadness afflicts my heart.

In scanty white dresses
Young girls
Pass beneath the arbours
On their lovers' arms;
The languishing moon
Silvers their long
Insistent kisses.

Alas! a dreadful sadness afflicts my heart.

But I love nothing any more,
Neither man nor woman,
Neither my body nor my soul,
Nor even my old dog;
Send for them to dig
Beneath the pallid turf
A nameless grave.

Alas! a dreadful sadness afflicts my heart.

8. Dans les ruines d'une abbaye

Victor Hugo

Seuls tous deux, ravis, chantants!
Comme on s'aime!

Comme on cueille le printemps
Que Dieu sème!

Quels rires étincelants
Dans ces ombres
Jadis pleines de fronts blancs,
De coeurs sombres!

On est tout frais mariés.

On s'envoie
Les charmants cris variés
De la joie.

Frais échos mêlés au vent
Qui frissonne!
Gaieté que le noir couvent
Assaisonne!

Seuls tous deux, ravis, chantants!
Comme on s'aime!

Comme on cueille le printemps
Que Dieu sème!

Quels rires étincelants
Dans ces ombres
Jadis pleines de fronts blancs,
De coeurs sombres!

On effeuille des jasmins
Sur la pierre
Où l'abbesse joint les mains
En prière.

In the ruins of an abbey

Alone, together, enraptured, singing!
How we love each other!
How we reap the springtime
That God sows!

What sparkling laughter
In these shadows
Once full of pale faces
And sombre hearts!

We are newly married.
We send each other
Charming and varied
Cries of joy.

Fresh echoes mingling with
The shivering wind!
Gaiety that the black convent
Flavours!

Alone, together, enraptured, singing!
How we love each other!
How we reap the springtime
That God sows!

What sparkling laughter
In these shadows
Once full of pale faces
And sombre hearts!

We pluck the jasmine flowers
On the stone
Where the abbess joins her hands
In prayer.

On se cherche, on se poursuit,
On sent croître
Ton aube, amour, dans la nuit
Du vieux cloître.

On s'en va se becquetant,
On s'adore,
On s'embrasse à chaque instant,
Puis encore.

Sous les piliers, les arceaux,
Et les marbres.
C'est l'histoire des oiseaux
Dans les arbres.

9. Le voyageur

Armand Silvestre (1837-1901)

Voyageur, où vas-tu, marchant
Dans l'or vibrant de la poussière?
— Je m'en vais au soleil couchant,
Pour m'endormir dans la lumière.

Car j'ai vécu n'ayant qu'un Dieu,
L'astre qui luit et qui féconde.
Et c'est dans son linceul de feu
Que je veux m'en aller du monde!

— Voyageur, presse donc le pas:
L'astre, vers l'horizon, décline ...
— Que m'importe, j'irai plus bas
L'attendre au pied de la colline.

Et lui montrant mon cœur ouvert,
Saignant de son amour fidèle,
Je lui dirai: j'ai trop souffert:
Soleil! emporte-moi loin d'elle!

We seek each other, chase each other,
We feel your dawn
Grow in the night, o love,
Of the old cloister.

On we go, kissing and cuddling,
Adoring one another,
Embracing each other every moment,
Then again,

Beneath the pillars, beneath the vault,
And the marbles;
Just as all the birds do
In the trees.

The Wanderer

Wanderer, where are you bound,
Walking in the golden dust?
— I am going towards the sunset,
To fall asleep in the light.

For I have lived with only one God,
The sun which shines and makes fertile.
It is shrouded in his fire
That I wish to leave the world!

— Wanderer, you must hurry, then:
The sun slips towards the horizon ...
— What do I care, I shall descend further
And wait at the foot of the hill.

And showing the sun my open heart,
Bleeding with faithful love,
I shall say: I have suffered too much:
Sun! Take me away from her!

10. Sérénade toscane

Romain Bussine, from an anonymous Italian text

Ô toi que berce un rêve enchanteur,
Tu dors tranquille en ton lit solitaire,
Éveille-toi, regarde le chanteur,
Esclave de tes yeux, dans la nuit claire!

Éveille-toi mon âme, ma pensée,
Entends ma voix par la brise emportée:
Entends ma voix chanter!
Entends ma voix pleurer, dans la rosée!

Sous ta fenêtre en vain ma voix expire,
Et chaque nuit je redis mon martyre,
Sans autre abri que la voûte étoilée,
Le vent brise ma voix et la nuit est glacée;

Mon chant s'éteint en un accent suprême,
Ma lèvre tremble en murmurant je t'aime.
Je ne peux plus chanter!
Ah! daigne te montrer! daigne apparaître!

Si j'étais sûr que tu ne veux paraître
Je m'en irais, pour t'oublier, demander au sommeil
De me berger jusqu'au matin vermeil,
De me berger jusqu'à ne plus t'aimer!

Tuscan serenade

You whom a lovely dream lulls,
You sleep quietly in your lonely bed,
Awake, gaze at the singer,
Enslaved by your eyes in the moonlit night!

Awake, my soul, my thoughts,
Hear my voice borne on the breeze:
Hear my voice sing,
Hear my voice weep in the dew!

Beneath your window my voice fadés in vain,
And each night I tell my torment anew,
With no shelter but the starlit vault:
The wind breaks my voice and the night is cold:

My song dies on a final cadence.
My lips quiver as they murmur: I love you,
I can no longer sing!
Ah! deign to show yourself! Deign to appear!

If I was sure you did not wish to appear,
I would go away to forget you, I would ask of sleep
To cradle me until the rosy dawn,
To cradle me till I loved you no more!

11. **Les berceaux**

Sully Prudhomme (1839-1907)

Le long du quai les grands vaisseaux,
Que la houle incline en silence,
Ne prennent pas garde aux berceaux
Que la main des femmes balance.

Mais viendra le jour des adieux,
Car il faut que les femmes pleurent,
Et que les hommes curieux
Tentent les horizons qui leurrent.

Et ce jour-là les grands vaisseaux,
Fuyant le port qui diminue,
Sentent leur masse retenue
Par l'âme des lointains berceaux.

12. **Chanson du pêcheur**

Théophile Gautier (1811-1872)

Ma belle amie est morte,
Je pleurerai toujours;
Sous la tombe elle emporte
Mon âme et mes amours.
Dans le ciel, sans m'attendre,
Elle s'en retourna;
L'ange qui l'emmena
Ne voulut pas me prendre.
Que mon sort est amer!
Ah! sans amour s'en aller sur la mer!

La blanche créature
Est couchée au cercueil;
Comme dans la nature
Tout me paraît en deuil!
La colombe oubliée
Pleure et songe à l'absent;

The cradles

Along the quay the great ships,
Listing silently with the surge,
Pay no heed to the cradles
Rocked by women's hands.

But the day of parting will come,
For it is decreed that women shall weep,
And that men with questing spirits
Shall venture toward enticing horizons.

And on that day the great ships,
Leaving the dwindling harbour behind,
Shall feel their hulls held back
By the soul of distant cradles.

Song of the Fisherman

My dearest love is dead:
I shall weep for evermore;
To the tomb she takes with her
My soul and all my love.
Without waiting for me
She has returned to Heaven;
The angel who took her away
Did not wish to take me.
How bitter is my fate!
Alas! to set sail loveless across the sea!

The pure white soul
Lies in her coffin.
How everything in nature
Seems to mourn!
The forsaken dove weeps,
Dreaming of its absent mate;

Mon âme pleure et sent
Qu'elle est dépareillée.
Que mon sort est amer!
Ah! sans amour s'en aller sur la mer!

Sur moi la nuit immense
Plane comme un linceul,
Je chante ma romance
Que le ciel entend seul.
Ah! comme elle était belle,
Et combien je l'aimais!
Je n'aimerai jamais
Une femme autant qu'elle
Que mon sort est amer!
Ah! sans amour s'en aller sur la mer!

14. *Sylvie*

Paul de Choudens (1850-1925)

Si tu veux savoir, ma belle,
Où s'envole à tire d'aile
L'oiseau qui chantait sur l'ormeau,

Je te le dirai, ma belle,
Il vole vers qui l'appelle,
Vers celui-là
Qui l'aimera.

Si tu veux savoir, ma blonde,
Pourquoi sur terre et sur l'onde
La nuit tout s'anime et s'unit,

Je te le dirai, ma blonde,
C'est qu'il est une heure au monde
Où, loin du jour,
Veille l'amour!

My soul weeps and feels
Itself adrift.
How bitter is my fate!
Alas! to set sail loveless across the sea!

The immense night above me
Is spread like a shroud;
I sing my song
Which heaven alone can hear.
Ah! how beautiful she was,
And how I loved her!
I shall never love a woman
As I loved her.
How bitter is my fate!
Alas! to set sail loveless across the sea!

Sylvie

If you wish to know, my sweet,
Where the bird is hastening
That was singing in the elm,

I shall tell you, my sweet,
It flies to the one who calls it,
To the one
Who will love it!

If you wish to know, my fair one,
Why on land and sea
All things revive at night and blend,

I shall tell you, my fair one:
There is one hour in the world,
When far from day
Love awakens!

Si tu veux savoir, Sylvie,
Pourquoi j'aime à la folie
Tes yeux brillants et langoureux,

Je te le dirai, Sylvie,
C'est que sans toi dans la vie
Tout pour mon cœur
N'est que douleur!

15. Après un rêve

Romain Bussine, after an anonymous Tuscan poem

Dans un sommeil que charmait ton image
Je rêvais le bonheur, ardent mirage,
Tes yeux étaient plus doux, ta voix pure et sonore,
Tu rayonnais comme un ciel éclairé par l'aurore;

Tu m'appelais et je quittais la terre
Pour m'enfuir avec toi vers la lumière,
Les cieux pour nous entr'ouvriraient leurs nues,
Splendeurs inconnues, lueurs divines entrevues.

Hélas! hélas!, triste réveil des songes,
Je t'appelle, ô nuit, rends-moi tes mensonges;
Reviens, reviens, radieuse,
Reviens, ô nuit mystérieuse!

If you wish to know, Sylvie,
Why I love to distraction
Your bright and yearning eyes,

I shall tell you, Sylvie,
That without you in my life,
My heart feels
Naught but pain!

After a dream

In sleep made sweet by a vision of you
I dreamed of happiness, fervent illusion,
Your eyes were softer, your voice pure and ringing,
You shone like a sky that was lit by the dawn;

You called me and I departed the earth
To flee with you toward the light,
The heavens parted their clouds for us,
We glimpsed unknown splendours, celestial fires.

Alas, alas, sad awakening from dreams!
I summon you, o night, give me back your delusions;
Return, return in radiance,
Return, o mysterious night!

17. Aurore

Armand Silvestre (1837-1901)

Des jardins de la nuit s'envolent les étoiles,
Abeilles d'or qu'attire un invisible miel,
Et l'aube, au loin tendant la candeur de ses toiles,
Trame de fils d'argent le manteau bleu du ciel.

Du jardin de mon cœur qu'un rêve lent enivre
S'envolent mes désirs sur les pas du matin,
Comme un essaim léger qu'à l'horizon de cuivre,
Appelle un chant plaintif, éternel et lointain.

Ils volent à tes pieds, astres chassés des nues,
Exilés du ciel d'or où fleurit ta beauté
Et, cherchant jusqu'à toi des routes inconnues,
Mèlent au jour naissant leur mourante clarté.

18. Fleur jetée

Armand Silvestre

Emporte ma folie
 Au gré du vent,
Fleur en chantant cueillie
Et jetée en rêvant.
- Emporte ma folie
 Au gré du vent!

Comme la fleur fauchée'
 Pérît l'amour.
La main qui t'a touchée
Fuit ma main sans retour.
- Comme la fleur fauchée,
 Pérît l'amour!

Que le vent qui te sèche,
 Ô pauvre fleur,
Tout à l'heure si fraîche
Et demain sans couleur!
- Que le vent qui te sèche,
 Sèche mon cœur!

Dawn

From the gardens of night the stars take wing,
Golden bees drawn by invisible honey,
And the dawn, spreading afar the candour of its veils,
Weaves with silver thread the blue mantle of the sky.

From the garden of my heart, intoxicated by a slow dream,
My desires take wing in the steps of the morning,
Like a troubled swarm that to the copper horizon,
Is called by a plaintive song, eternal and distant.

They fly to your feet, stars chased from the clouds,
Exiled from the golden sky where your beauty flowers,
And, seeking unknown paths to reach you,
Blend with the dawning day their dying light.

Discarded flower

Bear away my folly
 At the whim of the wind,
Flower, plucked while singing
And discarded while dreaming.
Bear away my folly
 At the whim of the wind!

Like a scythed flower
 Love perishes.
The hand that touched you
Shuns my hand for ever.
Like a scythed flower
 Love perishes!

May the wind that withers you,
 O poor flower,
So fresh but now
And tomorrow faded,
May the wind that withers you,
 Wither my heart!

19. Arpège

Albert Samain (1858-1900)

L'âme d'une flûte soupire
Au fond du parc mélodieux;
Limpide est l'ombre où l'on respire
Ton poème silencieux,

Nuit de langueur, nuit de mensonge,
Qui pose d'un geste ondoyant
Dans ta chevelure de songe
La lune, bijou d'Orient.

Sylva, Sylvie et Sylvanire,
Belles au regard bleu changeant,
L'étoile aux fontaines se mire,
Allez par les sentiers d'argent.

Allez vite – l'heure est si brève!
Cueillir au jardin des aveux
Les coeurs qui se meurent du rêve
De mourir parmi vos cheveux...

Arpeggio

The soul of a flute is sighing
Deep in the melodious park;
The shade is limpid where one breathes
Your silent poem,

Night of langour, night of delusion,
That with a flowing gesture
Sets in your dreamy hair
The moon, that Orient jewel.

Sylva, Sylvie and Sylvanire,
Beauties with eyes of shimmering blue,
The morning star is reflected in fountains -
Go along the silvery paths,

Go quickly - time is so short,
To gather in the garden of vows
The hearts which are dying of the dream
Of dying enveloped in your hair...

20. Les matelots

Théophile Gautier (1811-1872)

Sur l'eau bleue et profonde,
Nous allons voyageant.
Environnant le monde
D'un sillage d'argent.
Des îles de la Sonde,
De l'Inde au ciel brûlé,
Jusqu'au pôle gelé!

Nous pensons à la terre
Que nous fuyons toujours.
À notre vieille mère,
À nos jeunes amours.
Mais la vague légère
Avec son doux refrain
Endort notre chagrin!

Existence sublime,
Bercés par notre nid.
Nous vivons sur l'abîme,
Au sein de l'infini,
Des flots rasant la cime.
Dans le grand désert bleu
Nous marchons avec Dieu!

The sailors

We journey
On the deep blue sea,
Encircling the world
With a silver wake.
From the Sunda Isles,
From India's burning sky,
As far as the frozen pole!

We think of the land
We are leaving behind,
Of our old mother,
Of our young loves.
But the light wave
With its sweet refrain
Lulls our sorrow to sleep!

Sublime existence,
Rocked in our crow's-nest,
We live on the abyss
At the heart of the infinite,
Skimming the crests of waves.
In the great blue desert
We go with God!

21. La Fée aux chansons

Armand Silvestre

Il était une fée,
D'herbe folle coiffée,
Qui courrait les buissons,
Sans s'y laisser surprendre,
En avril, pour apprendre
Aux oiseaux leurs chansons.

Lorsque geais et linottes,
Faisaient des fausses notes,
En récitant leurs chants,
La fée, avec constance,
Gourmandait d'importance
Ces élèves méchants.

Sa petite main nue,
D'un brin d'herbe menue
Cueilli dans les halliers,
Pour stimuler leurs zèles,
Fouettait sur leurs ailes
Ces mauvais écoliers.

Par un matin d'automne,
Elle vient et s'étonne
De voir les bois déserts.
Avec les hirondelles,
Ses amis infidèles
Avaient fui dans les airs.

Et tout l'hiver la fée,
D'herbe morte coiffée,
Et comptant les instants,
Sous les forêts immenses,
Compose des romances
Pour le prochain printemps.

The fairy of songs

There was a fairy
Crowned with rank weeds
Who ran through the bushes
Without being caught,
In April, to teach
The birds their songs.

When jays and linnets
Sang wrong notes
As they recited their songs,
The fairy, tirelessly,
Sternly rebuked
Those naughty pupils.

Her little bare hand,
With a tiny blade of grass
Plucked from the thickets,
To stimulate their zeal
Would whip the wings
Of those bad scholars.

One, autumn morning
She comes and is amazed
To find the woods deserted.
With the swallows,
Her unfaithful friends
Had flown away on the wind.

And all winter long, the fairy,
Crowned with dead grass
And counting time
In the vast forests
Composes songs
For the coming Spring!

22. Nell

Charles Marie René Leconte de Lisle

Ta rose de pourpre, à ton clair soleil,
 Ô Juin, étincelle enivrée;
Pенche aussi vers moi ta coupe dorée:
 Mon cœur à ta rose est pareil.

Sous le mol abri de la feuille ombreuse
 Monte un soupir de volupté;
Plus d'un ramier chante au bois écarté,
 Ô mon cœur, sa plainte amoureuse.

Que ta perle est douce au ciel enflammé,
 Étoile de la nuit pensive!
Mais combien plus douce est la clarté vive
 Qui rayonne en mon cœur charmé!

La chantante mer, le long du rivage,
 Taira son murmure éternel,
Avant qu'en mon cœur, chère Amour, ô Nell.
 Ne fleurisse plus ton image!

Nell

Your crimson rose in your bright sun
 Glitters, o June, in rapture;
Incline to me also your golden cup:
 My heart is like your rose.

From the soft shelter of shady leaves
 Rises a languorous sigh;
More than one dove in the secluded wood
 Sings, o my heart, its love-lorn lament.

How sweet is your pearl in the blazing sky,
 Star of the meditative night!
But sweeter still is the vivid light
 That glows in my enchanted heart!

The singing sea along the shore
 Shall cease its eternal murmur,
Before in my heart, dear love, o Nell,
 Your image shall cease to bloom!

Cinq Mélodies 'de Venise' /

Five 'Venetian' Mélodies

Paul Verlaine (1844-1896)

23. I Mandoline

Les donneurs de sérénades,
Et les belles écoutieuses
Echangent des propos fades
Sous les ramures chanteuses.

C'est Tircis et c'est Aminte,
Et c'est l'éternel Clitandre,
Et c'est Damis qui pour mainte
Cruelle fait maint vers tendre.

Leurs courtes vestes de soie,
Leurs longues robes à queues,
Leur élégance, leur joie
Et leurs molles ombres bleues

Tourbillonnent dans l'extase
D'une lune rose et grise,
Et la mandoline jase
Parmi les frissons de brise.

I Mandolin

The serenading swains
And the fair listening ladies
Exchange sweet nothings
Beneath singing boughs.

Tiris is there, Aminté is there,
And tedious Clitandre too,
And Damis who for cruel maids a-plenty
Writes many a tender song.

Their short silken doublets,
Their long trailing gowns,
Their elegance, their joy
And their soft blue shadows

Whirl madly in the rapture
Of a grey and roseate moon,
And the mandolin bubbles on
Amid the quivering breeze.

24. II En sourdine

Calmes dans le demi-jour
Que les branches hautes font,
Pénétrons bien notre amour
De ce silence profond.

Fondons nos âmes, nos coeurs
Et nos sens extasiés,
Parmi les vagues langueurs
Des pins et des arbousiers.

Ferme tes yeux à demi,
Croise tes bras sur ton sein,
Et de ton cœur endormi
Chasse à jamais tout dessein.

Laissons-nous persuader
Au souffle berceur et doux
Qui vient à tes pieds rider
Les ondes de gazon roux.

Et quand, solennel, le soir
Des chênes noirs tombera,
Voix de notre désespoir,
Le rossignol chantera.

25. III Green

Voici des fruits, des fleurs, des feuilles et des branches
Et puis voici mon cœur qui ne bat que pour vous.
Ne le déchirez pas avec vos deux mains blanches
Et qu'à vos yeux si beaux l'humble présent soit doux.

J'arrive tout couvert encore de rosée
Que le vent du matin vient glacer à mon front.
Souffrez que ma fatigue à vos pieds reposée
Rêve des chers instants qui la délasseront.

Sur votre jeune sein laissez rouler ma tête
Toute sonore encore de vos derniers baisers;
Laissez-la s'apaiser de la bonne tempête,
Et que je dorme un peu puisque vous reposez.

II Muted

Calm in the twilight
Of lofty boughs,
Let us steep our love
In this deep quiet.

Let us blend our souls, our hearts
And our enraptured senses
With the hazy languor
Of arbutus and pine.

Half-close your eyes,
Fold your arms across your breast,
And from your heart now lulled to rest
Banish forever all intent.

Let us both succumb
To the gentle and lulling breeze
That comes to ruffle at your feet
The waves of russet grass.

And when, solemnly, evening
Falls from the sombre oaks,
Voice of our despair,
The nightingale shall sing.

III Green

Here are flowers, branches, fruit and fronds,
And here too is my heart that beats just for you.
Do not tear it with your two white hands
And may the humble gift please your lovely eyes.

I come all covered still with the dew
Frozen to my brow by the morning breeze.
Let my fatigue, finding rest at your feet,
Dream of those dear moments that will give it peace.

On your young breast let me roll my head
Still ringing with your recent kisses;
After its sweet tumult grant it peace,
And let me sleep a while, since you rest.

26. IV A Clymène

Mystiques barcarolles,
Romances sans paroles,
Chère, puisque tes yeux,
 Couleur des cieux,

Puisque ta voix, étrange
Vision qui dérange
Et trouble l'horizon
 De ma raison,

Puisque l'arôme insigne
De ta pâleur de cygne,
Et puisque la candeur
 De ton odeur,

Ah! puisque tout ton être,
Musique qui pénètre,
Nimbes d'anges défunts,
 Tons et parfums,

A, sur d'almes cadences,
En ces correspondances
Induit mon cœur subtil,
 Ainsi soit-il!

IV To Clymene

Mystical barcarolles,
Songs without words,
Sweet, since your eyes,
 The colour of skies,

Since your voice,
Strange vision that unsettles
And troubles the horizon
 Of my reason,

Since the noble scent
Of your swan-like pallor,
And since the candour
 Of your fragrance,

Ah! since your whole being -
Pervading music,
Haloes of departed angels,
 Sounds and scents -

Has in sweet cadences
And correspondences
Led on my susceptible heart -
 So be it!

27. V C'est l'extase

C'est l'extase langoureuse,
C'est la fatigue amoureuse,
C'est tous les frissons des bois
Parmi l'étreinte des brises,
C'est, vers les ramures grises,
Le chœur des petites voix.

Ô le frêle et frais murmure!
Cela gazouille et susurre,
Cela ressemble au cri doux
Que l'herbe agitée expire...
Tu dirais, sous l'eau qui vire,
Le roulis sourd des cailloux.

Cette âme qui se lamenta
En cette plainte dormante
C'est la nôtre, n'est-ce-pas?
La mienne, dis, et la tienne,
Dont s'exhale l'humble antienne
Par ce tiède soir, tout bas?

V It is rapture

It is languorous rapture,
It is amorous fatigue,
It is all the tremors of the forest
In the breezes' embrace,
It is, around the grey branches,
The choir of tiny voices.

O the delicate, fresh murmuring!
The warbling and whispering!
It is like the sweet sound
The ruffled grass gives out...
You might take it for the muffled whirl
Of pebbles beneath the swirling stream.

This soul which grieves
In this subdued lament,
It is ours, is it not?
Mine, and yours too,
Breathing out our humble hymn
On this warm evening, soft and low?

Le Jardin Clos

Charles Van Lerberghe (1861-1907)

The Walled Garden

28. I Exaucement

Alors qu'en tes mains de lumière
Tu poses ton front défaillant,
Que mon amour en ta prière
Vienne comme un exaucement.

Alors que la parole expire
Sur ta lèvre qui tremble encor,
Et s'adoucit en un sourire
De roses en des rayons d'or;

Que ton âme calme et muette,
Fée endormie au jardin clos,
En sa douce volonté faite
Trouve la joie et le repos.

29. II Quand tu plonges tes yeux dans mes yeux

Quand tu plonges tes yeux dans mes yeux,
Je suis toute dans mes yeux.

Quand ta bouche dénoue ma bouche,
Mon amour n'est que ma bouche.

Si tu frôles mes cheveux,
Je n'existe plus qu'en eux.

Si ta main effleure mes seins,
J'y monte comme un feu soudain.

Est-ce moi que tu as choisi?
Là est mon âme, là est ma vie.

I Fulfillment

When in your hands of light
You rest your swooning head,
May my love enter your prayer
Like a fulfilment.

When words expire
On your still trembling lips,
And mellow into a smile
Of roses and golden rays;

May your calm and silent soul –
Asleep like a fairy in a walled garden –
With its sweet desire now attained,
Find delight and peace of mind.

II When you immerse your eyes in mine

When you immerse your eyes in mine,
I am wholly in my eyes.

When your lips part mine,
My love is my lips alone.

When you stroke my hair,
I no longer exist but there.

If your hand but brushes my breasts,
I quicken there like a sudden fire.

Is it I that you have chosen?
There is my soul, there is my life.

30. III La messagère

Avril, et c'est le point du jour.
Tes blondes sœurs qui te ressemblent,
En ce moment, toutes ensemble
S'avancent vers toi, cher Amour.

Tu te tiens dans un clos ombreux
De myrte et d'aubépine blanche:
La porte s'ouvre sous les branches;
Le chemin est mystérieux.

Elles, lentes, en longues robes,
Une à une, main dans la main,
Franchissent le seuil indistinct
Où de la nuit devient de l'aube.

Celle qui s'avance d'abord,
Regarde l'ombre, te découvre,
Crie, et la fleur de ses yeux s'ouvre
Splendide dans un rire d'or.

Et, jusqu'à la dernière sœur,
Toutes tremblent, tes lèvres touchent
Leurs lèvres, l'éclair de ta bouche
Éclate jusque dans leur cœur.

31. IV Je me poserai sur ton cœur

Je me poserai sur ton cœur
Comme le printemps sur la mer,
Sur les plaines de la mer stérile
Où nulle fleur ne peut croître,
À ses souffles agiles,
Que des fleurs de lumière.

Je me poserai sur ton cœur
Comme l'oiseau sur la mer,
Dans le repos de ses ailes lassées,
Et que berce le rythme éternel
Des flots et de l'espace.

III The Messenger

April, and day has broken.
Your fair sisters who resemble you,
At this moment, all together
Advance towards you, dear Love.

In your shady enclosure
Of myrtle and white hawthorn:
The door opens beneath the branches;
The path is full of mystery.

Slowly, in long gowns,
One by one, hand in hand,
They cross the blurred threshold
Where night becomes dawn.

She who first draws near,
Looks at the shade, discovers you,
Cries out, and her flower-eyes open,
Resplendent in golden laughter.

And the sisters without exception
All tremble, your lips touch
Their lips, the brilliance of your mouth
Erupts into their very hearts.

IV I shall alight on your heart

I shall alight on your heart
Like springtime on the sea,
On the plains of the barren sea,
Where no flower can grow
In its lithe breezes,
Save flowers of light.

I shall alight on your heart
Like a bird on the sea,
Resting its weary wings
And rocked by the eternal rhythm
Of waves and space.

32. V Dans la nymphée

Quoique tes yeux ne la voient pas,
Pense, en ton âme, qu'elle est là,
Comme autrefois divine et blanche.

Sur ce bord reposent ses mains.
Sa tête est entre ces jasmins;
Là, ses pieds effleurent les branches.

Elle sommeille en ces rameaux.
Ses lèvres et ses yeux sont clos,
Et sa bouche à peine respire.

Parfois, la nuit, dans un éclair
Elle apparaît les yeux ouverts,
Et l'éclair dans ses yeux se mire.

Un bref éblouissement bleu
La découvre en ses longs cheveux;
Elle s'éveille, elle se lève.

Et tout un jardin ébloui
S'illumine au fond de la nuit,
Dans le rapide éclair d'un rêve.

33. VI Dans la pénombre

À quoi, dans ce matin d'avril,
Si douce et d'ombre enveloppée,
La chère enfant au cœur subtil
Est-elle ainsi toute occupée?

Pensivement, d'un geste lent,
En longue robe, en robe à queue,
Sur le soleil au rouet blanc
À filer de la laine bleue.

À sourire à son rêve encor,
Avec ses yeux de fiancée,
À travers les feuillages d'or
Parmi les lys de sa pensée.

V In the Nymphaeum

Though your eyes do not see her,
Think, in your soul, that she is there,
Divine and pristine, as of old.

Her hands rest on this bank,
Her head is among the jasmine,
There her feet brush the bougins.

She sleeps amid these branches.
Her lips and eyes are closed,
And her mouth is scarcely breathing.

Sometimes, at night, like lightning
She appears with open eyes,
The lightning mirrored in her eyes.

A brief blue glare
Reveals her with her long tresses;
She awakes, she rises.

And the whole dazzled garden
Is lit up in the depths of night,
In the swift flash of a dream.

VI In the Darkness

With what, this April morning,
So sweet and swathed in shadow,
Is the dear and tender-hearted girl
So preoccupied?

Pensively and slowly,
In a long flowing robe,
Spinning blue wool
On the sun's white wheel.

Still smiling at her dream
With the eyes of one betrothed,
Across the golden foliage
Among the lilies of her thought.

34. VII Il m'est cher, Amour, le bandeau

Il m'est cher, Amour, le bandeau
Qui me tient les paupières closes;
Il pèse comme un doux fardeau
De soleil sur de faibles roses.

Si j'avance, l'étrange chose!
Je paraïs marcher sur des eaux;
Mes pieds plus lourds où je les pose,
S'enfoncent comme en des anneaux.

Qui donc a délié dans l'ombre
Le faix d'or de mes longs cheveux?
Toute ceinte d'étreintes sombres,
Je plonge en des vagues de feu,

Mes lèvres où mon âme chante,
Toute d'extase et de baiser,
S'ouvrent comme une fleur ardente
Au-dessus d'un fleuve embrasé.

35. VIII Inscription sur le sable

Toute, avec sa robe et ses fleurs,
Elle, ici, redevint poussière,
Et son âme emportée ailleurs
Renaquit en chant de lumière.

Mais un léger lien fragile
Dans la mort brisé doucement,
Encerclait ses tempes débiles
D'impérissables diamants.

En signe d'elle, à cette place,
Seules, parmi le sable blond,
Les pierres éternelles tracent
Encor l'image de son front.

VII My Love, the blindfold is dear to me

My Love, the blindfold is dear to me
That screens my eyes;
It weighs like a sweet burden
Of sun on languid roses.

If I move forward – how strange!
I seem to walk on water;
Wherever I place my too heavy feet,
They sink as if into rings.

Who, then, has loosened in the shade
The golden weight of my long tresses?
All enclosed by dark embraces,
I plunge into waves of fire.

My lips, where my soul sings
Of naught but rapture and kisses,
Open like an ardent flower
Above a blazing river.

VIII Writing on the Sand

Entire, with her gown and flowers,
She here became dust once more,
And her soul, borne off elsewhere,
Was reborn in a song of light.

But a light and fragile link,
Gently broken in death,
Encircled her sickly temples
With imperishable diamonds.

As a token of her, in this place,
Alone among the pale sand,
The eternal stones still trace
The image of her brow.

Translations by Richard Stokes

© from *A French Song Companion* (OUP, 2000)

ANN MURRAY

Ann Murray was born in Dublin and studied with Frederick Cox at the Royal Manchester College of Music. She has established close links with both the English National Opera, for whom she has sung the title roles in Handel's *Xerxes* and *Ariodante* and Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda*, and with the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, where her roles have included Cherubino, Dorabella, Donna Elvira, Rosina, Octavian, and new productions of *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Idomeneo*, *Mitridate*, *Re di Ponto*, *Così fan Tutte*, *Mosé in Egitto*, *Alcina* and *Giulio Cesare*.



Much sought after as a concert singer, she has sung with the Orchestre de Paris under Kubelík, the Philadelphia Orchestra under Sawallisch, the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under Muti, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Solti, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra under Haitink and in the Musikverein, Vienna under Sawallisch and Harnoncourt. She sings in Great Britain with the leading orchestras, at the BBC Promenade Concerts (where she has sung at both the First and Last Nights of the Proms) and at the major festivals.

Ann Murray's recital appearances have taken her to Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam, Geneva, Dresden, Zurich, Frankfurt, Madrid, London, Dublin, the Aldeburgh, Edinburgh, Munich and Salzburg Festivals and both the Konzerthaus and Musikverein in Vienna. Her discography reflects not only her broad concert and recital repertoire but also many of her great operatic roles, including Purcell's *Dido* under Harnoncourt, Dorabella under Levine, Cherubino under Muti, Hansel under Colin Davis, Sextus under Harnoncourt and Donna Elvira under Solti.

In 1997 Ann Murray was made an Honorary Doctor of Music by the National University of Ireland, in 1998 she was made a Kammersängerin of the Bavarian State Opera and in 1999 an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music. In the 2002 Golden Jubilee Queen's Birthday Honours she was appointed an honorary Dame Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. In 2004 she was awarded the Bavarian Order of Merit.

JOHN CHEST

American baritone John Chest, winner of the prestigious 2010 Stella Maris International Vocal Competition and the Arleen Auger Prize in the 2012 Hertogenbosch International Vocal Competition, is on the verge of a major operatic career. He is a member of the ensemble at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, where his roles so far have included the title role of *Billy Budd* in a new production by David Alden, Albert *Werther*, Figaro *Il barbiere di Siviglia*; Ford *Falstaff*, Papageno *Die Zauberflöte* and Il Conte Almaviva *Le nozze di Figaro*.



Career highlights to date have included role debuts as Marcello *La bohème* (Washington National Opera) and Fritz *Die tote Stadt* (Nantes and Nancy), and a return to the Aix-en-Provence Festival for Demetrius in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He has also appeared as Eddie in Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Greek* (Salzburg Landestheater), Ned Keene *Peter Grimes* (Norwegian Opera), Il Conte Almaviva *Le nozze di Figaro* (Nationale Reisopera), Nardo *La finta giardiniera* (Aix-en-Provence), and Masetto *Don Giovanni* in Bari. Equally passionate about art song, Chest has given recitals at the Wigmore Hall.

Recent highlights include Silvio *Pagliacci* (Deutsche Oper Berlin), Albert *Werther* at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées, and role debuts as Nick Carraway *The Great Gatsby* (Staatsoper Dresden), Valentin *Faust* (Théâtre du Capitole Toulouse) and the title role of *Don Giovanni* (Angers Nantes Opera). Future plans include major roles for Glyndebourne Festival Opera, the Teatro Real Madrid, Opera Philadelphia, and the Lyric Opera of Chicago.

Chest is a graduate of the Opera Studio at the Bayerische Staatsoper, where he sang over eighty performances. He has held apprenticeships with the Santa Fe Opera and the Chicago Opera Theater, and took part in the prestigious Merola Opera Programme. He holds a master's degree in music from the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University, where he studied with David Holloway.

IESTYN DAVIES

After graduating in Archaeology and Anthropology from St John's College, Cambridge Iestyn Davies studied at the Royal Academy of Music, London. He has sung Ottone (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*/Monteverdi) for Zürich



Opera and Glyndebourne Festival Opera; Arsace (*Partenope*/Handel) for New York City Opera; Oberon (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*/Britten) for Houston Grand Opera, English National Opera and The Metropolitan Opera, New York; Apollo (*Death in Venice*/Britten) for English National Opera and in his house debut at La Scala, Milan; Hamor (*Jephtha*/Handel) for Welsh National Opera and Opera National de Bordeaux; Steffani's *Niobe* at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; his debut at The Metropolitan Opera Unulfo (*Rodelinda*/Handel) where he has also appeared as Trinculo *The Tempest*; the Lyric Opera of Chicago in *Rinaldo*; Bertarido *Rodelinda* for English National Opera; his debuts at the Opéra Comique and the Munich and Vienna Festivals in George Benjamin's *Written on Skin* and the title role *Rinaldo* for Glyndebourne Festival Opera.

In concert he has performed at La Scala, the Concertgebouw, Tonhalle, the Barbican, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Lincoln Centre and the BBC Proms. He has appeared in recital at Carnegie Hall and regularly appears at Wigmore Hall, where he has curated his own Residency.

Recent highlights and future engagements include a theatre project entitled *Farinelli and the King* at The Globe and subsequently at the Duke of York's Theatre with Mark Rylance; concerts with the New York Philharmonic; the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, David Saul for Glyndebourne Festival Opera. A European tour of Handel's *Orlando* with the English Concert, also a Japanese recital tour debut; he also will make returns to London's Wigmore Hall and the Salzburg Festival.

A prolific recording artist, Iestyn Davies is the recipient of the 2014 Gramophone Recital Award for his disc *Arise, my muse* on the Wigmore Live label.

NIGEL CLIFFE

Nigel Cliffe studied at Huddersfield School of Music, Royal Academy of Music, in Zurich with Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and in Amsterdam with Margreet Honig, supported by scholarships from the Countess of Munster Trust and the Royal Society of Arts.

His operatic rôles cover the period from Monteverdi to the present day. As a member of the Royal Opera Covent Garden he has sung under Bennini, Davis, Domingo, Elder, Gardiner, Pappano, Rattle and Wigglesworth. His recital and festival appearances include Adelaide, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Bath, Bologna, Huddersfield Contemporary, Munich, Oxford Lieder, Paris, Prague Spring, South Bank and Wigmore Hall.



The composers Syvie Bodorova, Richard Chew, Peter Copley, Orlando Gough, Roxanna Panufnik and Lynne Plowman have all written works for him and his chamber music partners have included the Emperor, Heath, Martinu, Schidlof and Skâmpa quartets and the Britten Sinfonia.

As an Artistic Director he curated the Norwich Schubert Weekends, the first Waterloo Festival in 2011 and has also directed projects for the Roundhouse and Norwich Festival Voices. He gave the world premiere of Alastair Marriott's *Lieder* at Sadler's Wells with the dancers Mara Galeazzi and Gary Avis, and his teaching has taken him to Amsterdam, Lyons and Versailles.

He is a regular presenter for the Royal Opera House Insight Programme.

BEN JOHNSON

Ben Johnson represented England in BBC Cardiff Singer of the World 2013 and won the Audience Prize. Winner of the Kathleen Ferrier Awards in 2008, and 2011 Wigmore Hall Emerging Talent, Johnson is currently an English National Opera Harewood Artist.

Recent highlights include Carlo *Giovanna d'Arco* at Buxton Festival, Oronte *Alcina* with the English Concert, Alfredo *La Traviata*, Tamino *The Magic Flute*, and Nemorino *The Elixir of Love* for ENO, Don Ottavio for Glyndebourne Festival Opera, ENO and Opéra National de Bordeaux, Novice in Michael Grandage's production of *Billy Budd* at Glyndebourne and Copland's *The Tender Land* at Opéra de Lyon.



In demand on the concert platform, Johnson sang Nielsen *Springtime in Funen* for the BBC Proms, Evangelist in Bach's *St John Passion* and *St Matthew Passion* with the Choir of King's College, Cambridge and The Bach Choir respectively, a Mozart programme with the CBSO, Bach's *St Matthew Passion* with Residentie Orkest, Mendelssohn's *Lobgesang* with Gulbenkian Orchestra, Britten's *St Nicolas* with the Choir of King's College, Cambridge and Britten Sinfonia, Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings* with the Residentie Orkest and the English Chamber Orchestra at the BBC Proms, Tippett's *A Child of Our Time* with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Beethoven's *Mass in C* with Philharmonia and Haydn's *Creation* with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra.

In recital he works regularly with Graham Johnson and James Baillieu, performing at the Wigmore Hall, Aldeburgh Music, the City of London Festival, Rosenblatt Recitals and Kings

Place. Baillieu also accompanied his album of Britten *Canticles* with Signum Classics that was released in early 2013 and earned major acclaim.

Forthcoming highlights include Lysander in Britten *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Bergen National Opera, as well as concerts with the RLPO, BBC Scottish Symphony, and multiple appearances at Wigmore Hall as part of their ongoing Schubert song series.

LORNA ANDERSON

Lorna Anderson was born in Glasgow and studied initially at the RSAMD with Patricia MacMahon before winning a postgraduate scholarship to the RCM. While still a student, she won a number of awards and competitions and has gone on to enjoy a busy and varied career, appearing in opera, concert and as a recitalist all over the world.

As a renowned performer of the baroque and classical repertoire in particular, she has sung as a soloist with all the major orchestras and ensembles, large and small, in the field including The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Les Arts Florissants, The Sixteen, The English Concert, The King's Consort, The London Classical Players, La Chapelle Royale and the Academy of Ancient Music under conductors which include William Christie, Harry Christophers, Robert King, Trevor Pinnock, Phillippe Herrweghe, Richard Egarr and Christopher Hogwood.

Her numerous recordings reflect her love for chamber music and include The Fairy Queen under Harry Christophers, Haydn Masses under Richard Hickox, a disc of Portuguese Love Songs with the Apollo Chamber Orchestra and for Hyperion she has recorded Britten Folksong settings with Malcolm Martineau, Handel's L'Allegro with Robert King and is an artist on Graham Johnson's complete Schubert Edition. She is a part of a three disc set of the complete Poulenc songs, accompanied by Malcolm Martineau and has similarly, recorded a disc of Debussy songs for Hyperion, again accompanied by Malcolm Martineau.



JANIS KELLY

Janis Kelly studied at the RSAMD in her native Glasgow, the Royal College of Music and with Elisabeth Grummer in Paris. Widely recognized as one of the great singing actresses of her generation, Janis Kelly's work continues to take her to the world's leading opera houses, as well as Hollywood films and soundtracks.

Janis received worldwide acclaim for her portrayal of the title role in Rufus Wainwright's *Prima Donna*, which she performed at the Manchester International Festival (world premiere), Sadlers Wells, Toronto, Portland, and in concert at ROH and the Teatro Real, Madrid, as well as on CD (Deutsche Grammophon). Further appearances include Mrs Nixon *Nixon in China* (Metropolitan Opera, New York and Athens), Lady Billows *Albert Herring* (Los Angeles Opera), Berta *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Madame Jouvenot *Adriana Lecouvreur* and Nella *Gianni Schicchi* (Royal Opera House), Berta (Glyndebourne Festival) and Hazel George in the world premiere of Philip Glass' *The Perfect American* (Teatro Real, Madrid and English National Opera).

Further appearances include Mrs Naidoo *Satyagraha*, Countess *Marriage of Figaro*, *Alcina*, *Rose Street Scene*, Mrs Nixon, Iris *The Fairy Queen*, Yum Yum *The Mikado*, Despina *Così fan tutte* and Romilda *Xerxes* (ENO), Violetta *La Traviata*, Magda *La Rondine*, Lania *Skin Deep* (world premiere), Magnolia *Showboat*, *The Cunning Little Vixen*, Countess, Musetta *La bohème*, Marschallin *Der Rosenkavalier* and Elettra *Idomeneo* (Opera North), Mrs Lovett *Sweeney Todd* (Welsh National Opera), Miss Jessel *The Turn of the Screw* and Mrs Coyle *Owen Wingrave* (Théâtre du Capitole, Toulouse), Christine *Intermezzo* (Buxton Festival), Sister Helen *Dead Man Walking* (Eugene Opera, Oregon); Foreign Princess *Rusalka*, Alice Ford *Falstaff*, Miss Jessel and Elisabetta *Maria Stuarda* (Grange Park).

Janis can be seen as Liu *Turandot* in the Hollywood blockbuster *The Life of David Gale*, Violetta in Woody Allen's *Match Point* and on the soundtracks for *When Did You Last See Your Father*, *Inspector Morse*, *Lewis* and *Endeavour*.



JOAN RODGERS

Internationally renowned, Joan Rodgers is equally established in opera, concert, and as a recitalist. She has appeared in concert with conductors including Solti, Barenboim, Mehta, Harnoncourt, Mackerras, Ashkenazy, Salonen and Rattle and is a regular guest at the BBC Proms. Operatic engagements have included engagements at the Royal Opera House, English National Opera, Opera North and Glyndebourne in Britain, Paris, Munich, Brussels, Amsterdam and Vienna in Europe, and the Metropolitan Opera, New York. Joan Rodgers has also appeared in recital throughout Europe and the USA including London, Paris, Vienna, Amsterdam, Moscow and New York.



Joan Rodgers' recordings include Mozart's da Ponte trilogy with Daniel Barenboim and the Berlin Philharmonic, *The Turn of the Screw* (Virgin), solo discs of Tchaikovsky, Mozart and Wolf (Hyperion), *The Creation* (Philips), Rachmaninov songs with Howard Shelley (Chandos) and Shostakovich *Seven Romances on Verses by Alexander Blok* with the Beaux Arts Trio (Warner Classics) and a recording of songs by Prokofiev, Mussorgsky, Shostakovich and Britten (Hyperion).

Engagements include the world premiere of Xavier Dayer's *Mémoires d'une jeune fille triste* in Geneva, *Gianni Schicchi* for Covent Garden with Richard Jones and Antonio Pappano, Saariaho *L'amour de loin* for ENO and Lucie Treacher's *Moon Queen of the Undersea* for Tête à Tête at Kings Place as well as various recitals and concerts across the UK and Europe including performances with City of Birmingham Symphony, London Philharmonic, Goldsmiths Choral Union, at the Edinburgh International Festival, Derry City of Song Festival, St Magnus, Oxford Lieder, Brighton, Ryedale, Carlisle, Norfolk and Norwich and Buxton Festivals, Chichester Festivities, Kings Place, Wigmore Hall, St John's Smith Square, Kings' College Cambridge, Dartington International Summer School and in Paris, Vienna, Aarhus, Moscow, Barbados and Ohio.

Joan Rodgers received the Royal Philharmonic Society award as Singer of the Year for 1997, the 1997 Evening Standard Award for outstanding performance in opera for her performance as The Governess in the Royal Opera's production of *The Turn of the Screw* and an Honorary Doctorate of Music from Liverpool University in July 2005. Joan Rodgers was awarded the CBE in the 2001 New Year's Honours List.

MALCOLM MARTINEAU

Malcolm Martineau was born in Edinburgh, read Music at St Catharine's College, Cambridge and studied at the Royal College of Music.



Recognised as one of the leading accompanists of his generation, he has worked with many of the world's greatest singers including Sir Thomas Allen, Dame Janet Baker, Olaf Bar, Barbara Bonney, Ian Bostridge, Angela Gheorghiu, Susan Graham, Thomas Hampson, Della Jones, Simon Keenlyside, Angelika Kirchschlager, Magdalena Kozena, Solveig Kringelborn, Jonathan Lemalu, Dame Felicity Lott, Christopher Maltman, Karita Mattila, Lisa Milne, Ann Murray, Anna Netrebko, Anne Sofie von Otter, Joan Rodgers, Amanda Roocroft, Michael Schade, Frederica von Stade, Sarah Walker and Bryn Terfel.

He has presented his own series at the Wigmore Hall (a Britten and a Poulenc series and *Decade by Decade – 100 years of German Song* broadcast by the BBC) and at the Edinburgh Festival (the complete lieder of Hugo Wolf). He has appeared throughout Europe (including London's Wigmore Hall, Barbican, Queen Elizabeth Hall and Royal Opera House; La Scala, Milan; the Châtelet, Paris; the Liceu, Barcelona; Berlin's Philharmonie and Konzerthaus; Amsterdam's Concertgebouw and the Vienna Konzerthaus and Musikverein), North America (including in New York both Alice Tully Hall and Carnegie Hall), Australia (including the Sydney Opera House) and at the Aix-en-Provence, Vienna, Edinburgh, Schubertiade, Munich and Salzburg festivals.

Recording projects have included Schubert, Schumann and English song recitals with Bryn Terfel (for Deutsche Grammophon); Schubert and Strauss recitals with Simon Keenlyside (for EMI); recital recordings with Angela Gheorghiu and Barbara Bonney (for Decca), Magdalena Kozena (for DG), Della Jones (for Chandos), Susan Bullock (for Crear Classics), Solveig Kringelborn (for NMA); Amanda Roocroft (for Onyx); the complete Fauré songs with Sarah Walker and Tom Krause; the complete Britten Folk Songs for Hyperion; the complete Beethoven Folk Songs for Deutsche Grammophon; the complete Poulenc songs for Signum Records; the complete Mendelssohn songs for Champs Hill Records; and Britten Song Cycles as well as Schubert's *Winterreise* with Florian Boesch for Onyx.

He was given an honorary doctorate at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in 2004, and appointed International Fellow of Accompaniment in 2009. Malcolm was the Artistic Director of the 2011 Leeds Lieder+ Festival.

All works recorded in All Saints' Church,
East Finchley, London, UK

Tracks 1 – 2 & 28 – 35
Recorded 5 June 2012

Tracks 3 – 5, 8, 11, 14 & 17 – 27
Recorded 5 – 8 February 2013

Tracks 10 & 15
Recorded 30 May – 1 June 2013

Tracks 6 – 7, 9, 12, & 16
Recorded 31 January – 1 February 2014

Track 13
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7. **Tristesse** [ID] [2.47]
8. **Dans les ruines d'une abbaye** [JC] [1.51]
9. **Le voyageur** [NC] [1.38]
10. **Sérénade toscane** [BJ] [2.53]
11. **Les berceaux** [LA] [2.44]
12. **Chanson du pêcheur (Lamento)** [NC] [3.25]
13. **Vocalise No. 29** [AM] [2.32]
14. **Sylvie** [JC] [2.37]

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 16. **Vocalise No. 20** [LA] [1.05]
 17. **Aurore** [JK] [2.28]
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 19. **Arpège** [LA] [2.28]
 20. **Les matelots** [JC] [1.30]
 21. **La Fée aux chansons** [JK] [1.48]
 22. **Nell** [BJ] [1.50]
 - 23-27. **Cinq mélodies 'de Venise'** [AM] [13.25]
 - 28-35. **Le Jardin Clos** [JR] [14.05]
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