

La vie d'une rose

Songs by Jules Massenet (1842-1912)

SOMMCD 0600

Céleste Series

Sally Silver *soprano*

Christine Tocci *mezzo-soprano* *duet **solo

Richard Bonyngne *piano*

1	Sérénade d'automne	2:35	13	Le sais-tu?	2:16
2	Passionnément	2:44	14	La dernière chanson	2:27
3	L'heure solitaire*	3:31	15	Aux étoiles*	4:15
4	Nuit d'Espagne	3:11	16	Chanson pour elle	2:25
5	Souhait	2:19	17	Être aimé	1:56
6	La mélodie des baisers**	1:59	18	Salut, printemps!*	3:28
7	Rien ne passe!	2:14	19	Le coffret d'ébène	2:30
8	La vie d'une rose (Quatre mélodies Op.12, No.3)	4:15	20	Vous aimerez demain (Poème d'avril, No.5)	3:13
9	Le poète et le fantôme*	3:06	21	Joie!*	2:52
10	Puisqu'elle a pris ma vie (Poème d'amour, No.4)	1:50	22	L'âme des fleurs	1:40
11	Dieu créa le désert	3:49	23	Les fleurs*	3:29
12	La dernière lettre de Werther à Charlotte (Expressions Lyriques, No.5)**	4:08	24	Le petit Jésus	2:57
			25	Amoureux appel	2:15
				Total duration:	71:41

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Front cover: *The Pink Rose* (oil on canvas) by Charles-Amable Lenoir (1860-1926).

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Massenet's *Mélo*dies

The *mélodies* of Massenet form an essential part of his output with some 285 songs currently identified. Massenet's work is often characterized by its eclecticism, as much in its content as in its form: its variety of subjects, aesthetic tendencies and vocal or orchestral invention are all equally signs of the richness of his works. But thinking in this way can be a double-edged sword. In spite of the unquestionable renown of the composer, critics did not refrain from criticizing this virtue as a sign of weakness – “with Massenet you find *everything* – and that's a problem!” But could it be otherwise with a composer known to have loved experimenting and searching for more and greater musical and emotional depths?

What is valuable about Massenet's work, and particularly of his operas which account for his current reputation, applies just as much to his songs, numerous yet, with one or two exceptions, hardly known.

We have an image of Massenet, man of the theatre, feverishly pacing up and down the stage, wings and proscenium of opera houses to keep an eye on the preparation and performances of his works. Massenet, the song composer, was, in his own words, rather more at home in salons – this “bourgeois artist at the fireside” as he liked to describe himself. If posterity characterizes him as the composer of women, then this is so much more the case in his *mélodies*. Of the hundred or so dedicatees known for his songs, a large majority are women – singers, wives of artistic collaborators,

women of letters, but also those whom one might ironically call “society singers”. This diversity shows that Massenet composed as much for professional sopranos and mezzos as for the world of the salon with its enlightened amateurs of variable talent. For all that, Massenet's songs are of pretty consistent quality, showing little evidence that he changed approach according to his intended audience.

Just like the world of his operas or orchestral works, the world of Massenet's songs contains numerous themes. Love, of course, takes a special place, but this is in no way peculiar to Massenet alone. Unfortunately, still today, the composer at his most melodic suffers from being only associated with lighter music, inspired by the “listening ladies’ of the salon” but this ignores the many titles which, alone or in groups, hold the key to wider horizons, such as the invitation to travel, the exaltation of nature, other periods of history, the evocation of religion, fantasy and the reference to traditional songs from the provinces of France.

Massenet's songs are not only wide-ranging in their subjects but in their forms, in which he developed a broad palette. The songs of his youth, not so different from traditional romances, alternating verses and refrains then stringing together verses with identical settings, become increasingly freer in his artistic maturity. The introduction of a sort of *Sprechstimme* particularly for his last muse, the singer Lucy Arbell, completes this evolution. Neither did he hesitate to add other instruments to the basic structure of voice and piano, and the cello was a particular favourite. Occasionally, he orchestrates his songs. Whether in cycles or as stand-alone compositions, his songs sometimes take the form of vocal duets, trios or even quartets. Some are arrangements of pieces for piano or orchestra, or arias from operas. So here, as well, one could never accuse Massenet of conforming or being repetitive in his musical approach.

A last extremely important element for our understanding of the *mélodies* of Massenet is the relationship between music and text. The composer was unquestionably mindful of verse prosody and the careful matching of the vocal line. His detractors have sometimes accused him of choosing relatively weak poems simply to support his melodies. This is to forget that for Massenet, just as for Brahms or Debussy, the text is taken to be one of two inseparable elements – the other being the musical support – which, by osmosis, aim for the transformation of an ambience, an atmosphere or an emotion.

In the end, armed with these different characteristics and just like the man who wrote them, the songs of Massenet represent experimentation and transition. Far from being understood as belonging to the end of one century, they look forward into the next.

This second disc curated by Sally Silver and Richard Bonyngé for SOMM Recordings, here with the participation of mezzo-soprano Christine Tocci, offers a fresh sample of 25 *mélodies* which perfectly illustrate the points already laid out.

Springtime, nature, flowers, birds, trees – all sing here in the harmony of an exalted young love. The duet *Joie!* ('Joy!', DO 233/DO C.XV, 5) presents a wonderfully idyllic setting. Singing and hopping on jaunty rhythms, the little bird announces the timing of the dance and of a betrothal. The stream answers him against the backdrop of a revitalized nature.

"Queen amongst flowers" (René de Buxeuil), the rose is omnipresent in Massenet's evocations of love. In *L'âme des fleurs* ('The souls of the flowers', DO 102), which he dedicated to the soprano Sibyl Sanderson, his first real muse – "seduced by her perfumed grace and her tenderly melodic softness" as he writes in the score –

he celebrates in the glimmer of the stars the survival of love in contrast to the faded roses given in the past. *La vie d'une rose* ('The life of a rose', DO 370) is the monologue of the blood-red flower, symbol of fleeting beauty, sacrificed for love of the beloved. *Le sais-tu?* ('Do you know?', DO 236) combines the springtime charms of the woodland birds and the sweetly smelling rose, pledge of a constantly renewing attachment. The rose was also one of the 'codes' between Massenet and the mezzo-soprano Lucy Arbelle, his final muse.

However, with *La mélodie des baisers* ('The song of kisses', DO 250), it is the countless lilacs which spread in clusters of grand arpeggios, followed by lighter and shorter chords, marking the fleeting moment before a final, grandiloquent take-off. *Vous aimerez demain* ('You will love tomorrow', DO 180/ DO C.VI, 5) offers the promise of a nascent or renewed love. Throughout three verses, the vocal line develops in soft waves to its ethereal conclusion on a bed of repetitive left-hand rising arpeggios. Likewise, *Sérénade d'automne* ('Autumn serenade', DO 334) welcomes the permanence of love, beyond the seasons, beyond time, in a kind of perpetual motion. After nightfall, the stars are guaranteed to shine in the duet *Aux étoiles* ('To the stars', DO 122), the voices gliding lightly over the sparkling vellum and the subtle harmonic shifts of the piano accompaniment.

Often tender and bucolic, the sense of love that Massenet depicts in music becomes at times ardent and fiery. Thus, *Passionnément* ('Passionately', DO 286) begins with loud, tormented chords, then develops into grand arpeggios which get progressively impassioned and only subside in the final bars. There is similarly no lack of loving ardour in *Souhait* ('Desire', DO 349), where the poet, to quench his fever, dreams of becoming the blood in the lips or the gold in the hair of his beloved. *Être aimé* ('To be loved', DO 196) is an ode to intensely close love, in

which the voice takes its sweeping flight above grand arpeggiated chords which punctuate the line in the piano.

In the same way, *Amoureux appel* ('Loving call', DO 109) proposes the union of bodies and hearts, built upon big vertical chords which are intoxicating and obsessive, and which paradoxically confer on this melody a note of troubling strangeness. The duet *L'heure solitaire* ('The solitary hour', DO 214) points the way to total serenity with its soft, fluid melodic lines on a bed of crystalline piano octaves. Massenet highlights the contralto as the principal voice to lend more velvet to the light of the setting sun. The impressionistic atmosphere is magnified in *Rien ne passe!* ('Nothing fades', DO 322) in which the almost jazzy harmony develops a bittersweet languidness expressing ever-constant vows of love. In a similar aesthetic, the duet *Salut, printemps!* ('Greetings, oh Spring!', DO 328), underpinned by a gentle swaying motion, celebrates springtime love and seduction.

Other aspects of love are also frequently developed by Massenet – whether melancholy, unrequited feelings, or even love that has perished. Alternating between one state of mind and another, *Les fleurs* ('Flowers', DO 205) are in turn presented as joyful or sad. From a calm carpet of harmonies they burst out in bouquets on the subject of joy and love. The subject darkens as mourning, the arrival of winter, despair and painful memories take centre stage. *Chanson pour elle* ('Song for her', DO 152), with a troubadour accompanying himself on guitar or mandolin, beautifully encapsulated in piano *gruppetti*, exposes the hopes and inconstancies of love.

After tender medieval reminiscences come Romantic desires. *La dernière lettre de Werther à Charlotte* ('Final letter from Werther to Charlotte', DO 170/DO

C.III, 5) with its unusual *Sprechstimme* specially conceived by Massenet for Lucy Arbell in the cycle *Expressions Lyriques*, takes up the moonlight theme from Act I of *Werther*. Just as in the letter scene of this opera, this melody reflects the characters: Charlotte who reads, Werther who writes. The dramatic tension grows progressively according to the outpouring of the poet's feelings until the final goodbye, laden with dark omens. Who knows if it isn't Werther again in dialogue with the shadow of death in the duet *Le poète et le fantôme* ('The poet and the phantom', DO 298)? This piece, entirely sung, with its strange twilight atmosphere, has a certain similarity with Schubert's *Death and the Maiden*.

Past love is also central to *Puisqu'elle a pris ma vie* ('Since she has taken my life', DO 312/DO C.V, 4). Rapidly passing time is immediately translated into a fast prelude with harmonies full of torment. Starting undecided, the melody resolutely adopts the minor mode before returning to the major to evoke the eternal "flower of memory". Similarly, *La dernière chanson* ('The final song', DO 169) rests the inevitability of separation on an accompaniment which sways between consonant chords and longer dissonant chords, as if to emphasise the illusion of romantic stability.

Le coffret d'ébène ('The ebony casket', DO 158) contains, in its own words, "les tristesses d'un souvenir" ('the sorrows of a memory') and the echo of the lover's voice. This strange melody has a medieval quality in its modal writing punctuated with grand arpeggios which might be played on a lute or harp. Its surprisingly wide tessitura, the silences in the vocal line and the spoken quality of the declamation of the text cannot help remind one of certain of the pieces Massenet wrote for Lucy Arbell.

Journeys also feature in the thematic index of Massenet's songs. Under the pretext of evoking an atmosphere for love, the composer transports us under Andalusian

skies with *Nuit d'Espagne* ('A Spanish Night', DO 212). The admirer reminds the young girl who is making him wait that it is important to make use of the brief time available. This type of 'espagnolade' cannot but recall the friendship which tied the young Massenet to one of the great ambassadors of the genre, Pauline Viardot, née García. *Dieu créa le désert* ('God created the desert', DO 175) appears to be both a throw-back to the orientalism dear to Massenet's composer-peer Félicien David, but also a reminiscence of the solitary wanderings of Athanaël in *Thaïs* (1894). It ends on a surprising metaphor, opposing the solitude of the desert to the family, a gift from God.

Indeed, the sacred is not absent from the songs of Massenet. There are around 10 pieces in which the text as well as the music are more suggestive of 'spiritual songs' rather than genuinely religious pieces. Among them, *Le petit Jésus* ('Little Jesus', DO 292) is dedicated to Gisèle Boyer, daughter of the author of the text, and Massenet's god-daughter. The vocal line in crotchets and quavers rests upon intermittent vertical chords, falling like the tears of a child. Undoubtedly, they are those of the Infant Jesus, who when grown up will witness the ultimate suffering – seeing his mother in tears at the foot of the cross.

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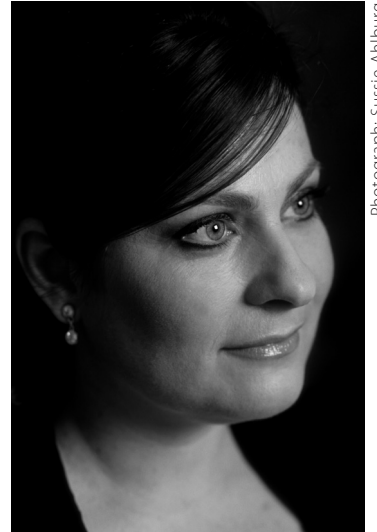
*DO numbers refer to the classification of Massenet's works to be found in *Massenet: Catalogue Général des Oeuvres/Massenet: General Catalogue of Works* by Hervé Oléon and Mary Dibbern (Pendragon Press, 2016).

SALLY SILVER *soprano*

Sally Silver's repertoire spanned Handel to Thomas Ades and newly commissioned works, but she was perhaps best known for bel canto and French roles. She recently made her debut as Eleonora in Donizetti's *Il Furioso all'isola di San Domingo* ('Wild Man of the West Indies') with English Touring Opera.

She recently appeared in Moscow with the Philharmonia Orchestra under Esa-Pekka Salonen in the Russian première of Shostokovich's opera *Orango*, and made appearances in concert with the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra and at Opera på Skaret in Sweden.

Some other concert highlights include the world première of *Songs of Five Rivers* by Naresh Sohal with the BBC Symphony Orchestra; Mendelssohn *Lobgesang* with the London Symphony Orchestra; Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with l'Orchestre de Pau Pays de Béarn and Ulster Orchestra; a concert of operatic mad scenes with Staatskapelle Weimar at Weimar Pelerinages Kunstfest and a Bel Canto Gala with US tenor Lawrence Brownlee in Cape Town.



Photograph: Sussie Ahlburg

In the UK, she performed to great critical acclaim the roles of Lucia in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Elvira in *I Puritani* and Angelica in *Orlando* with Scottish Opera and appeared with English National Opera as Annchen in *Der Freischütz* and Mila in the world première of Jonathan Dove's *Palace in the Sky*. Other British operatic appearances included Violetta in *La traviata* at Belfast Grand Opera House, Donna Elvira, Contessa and Fiordiligi in Mozart's Da Ponte operas at Longborough Festival Opera and Elisabetta in *Maria Stuarda* for Chelsea Opera Group. In season 2011/12 she sang the title role in Gounod's *Mireille* at Cadogan Hall, Melissa in *Amadigi di Gaula* at Wigmore Hall and subsequently appeared for Music Theatre Wales as Mother, Waitress and Sphinx in Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Greek* at the Buxton, Cheltenham and Edinburgh Festivals. In 2013/2014, she performed in *Greek* at the Linbury Studio, Royal Opera House which was broadcast live on BBC Radio 3 and also made her role debut as Reiza in Weber's *Oberon* at Cadogan Hall.

Elsewhere in Europe, operatic roles included Gilda in *Rigoletto*, Violetta in *La traviata*, Marguerite in *Les Huguenots*, Olympia/Antonia/Stella/Giulietta in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Stonatrilla in *L'Opera Seria* and Duchess in *Powder Her Face* in France, Germany, Denmark and The Netherlands.

Her collaboration with the conductor and pianist Richard Bonyngé produced several recordings: songs by Massenet, Balfe and Wallace, Wallace's opera *Lurline* and two cantatas by Sullivan – *On Shore and Sea* and *Kenilworth*. There is also another disc of Massenet songs on SOMM Recordings (SOMMCD 0151) and Balfe's opera *Satanella*.

Born in South Africa, Sally was based in London from 1998 where she sang numerous roles for all the major opera companies and was a recipient of the Opera South Africa prize.

RICHARD BONYNGE

Richard Bonyngé, AC, CBE, was born in Sydney and studied piano at the New South Wales Conservatorium of Music and later with Herbert Fryer, a pupil of Busoni, in London. He made his conducting début in Rome in 1962 with the Santa Cecilia Orchestra and has since conducted at most of the world's opera houses. He was Artistic Director of Vancouver Opera and Musical Director of Australian Opera. He was awarded the CBE (Commander of the British Empire) in 1977, Officer of the Order of Australia in 1983, Companion of the Order of Australia in 2012, Commandeur de l'Ordre National des Arts et des Lettres, Paris in 1989 and made *Socio d'onore* of the R. Accademia Filarmonica di Bologna in 2007. He married the late soprano Joan Sutherland in 1954 and has one son.



He has recorded over fifty complete operas, has made videos and DVDs of many operas and recorded numerous ballets. As a conductor Bonyngé is widely regarded as being extraordinarily sympathetic to singers on the stage and his instinct, knowledge and feel for voices has become legendary. Richard Bonyngé is acknowledged as a scholar of bel canto, in 18th and 19th century opera and ballet music.

CHRISTINE TOCCI *mezzo-soprano*

Christine Tocci's recent engagements include her Netherlands Opera debut as Alisa (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) and her return to Opéra de Marseille to sing Second Maid (*Elektra*), Annio (*La clemenza di Tito*) and Annina (*La traviata*).

In recent seasons, Christine made her debuts at Opéra de Marseille as Oreste (*La belle Hélène*), Opéra de Toulon as Myrta (*Thaïs*), Opéra National de Bordeaux as the Shepherd (*Tannhäuser*) and Opéra de Nice as Suzy (*La rondine*).

Other engagements include Lucinda/Armino (Mazzocchi's *L'ègisto*) under Jérôme Correas, Madame Verlaine Rimbaud in Marco-Antonio Perez-Ramirez' *La Parole libérée* in its world-premiere at the Opéra de Montpellier, Marcellina (*Le nozze di Figaro*) for the Nationale Reïsopera (both company and role début) and Concepcion (*L'heure Espagnole*) with the Gulbenkian Orchestra under Lawrence Foster.

Christine's appearances have included Second Dame (*Die Zauberflöte*) for the Théâtre du Châtelet and Opéra de Montpellier, Sméraldine (*The Love for Three Oranges*) for Vlaamse Opéra and Berlin Komische Oper, and Nicklausse (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*) for Opéra de Rennes. She has also performed Alisa (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), the Duenna and Sister Martha (*Cyrano de Bergerac*) alongside Roberto Alagna for Opéra de Montpellier and Opéra de Monte Carlo.



Her repertoire includes Cherubino (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Siebel (*Faust*), L'enfant, La tasse chinoise, La chatte, L'écureuil and Un pâtre (*L'enfant et les sortilèges*), Javotte (*Manon*), Polly (*Die Dreigroschenoper*), Martine (*Le Médecin malgré lui*), Gertrude (*Hansel and Gretel*) and Second Shopgirl (*Der Silbersee*). She has performed extensively in France, including several roles for the Festival de Saint-Céré and for the opera houses of Dijon, Caen, Limoges, Tours, Reims and Massy.

Sally Silver: A Tribute

I first met Sally several years ago when she was auditioning for *Rigoletto*. I was struck by her extreme musicality and her obvious love of singing.

I asked her to sing William Vincent Wallace's *Lurline* and Michael William Balfe's *Satanella*, which she brought immensely to life.

We discovered that we had many musical loves in common and together we recorded many songs of Wallace and Balfe and works of Arthur Sullivan.

I showed her some songs of Massenet and these touched her immensely. We recorded some seventy-five Massenet songs together and her sensibility to the French language and her obvious love of the music shine through.

She worked hard and would never accept second best. As a colleague she was adorable and her death has left a real void in the musical world and in the world of her family and many friends. She was greatly loved. I miss her immensely both as a really serious colleague and a very treasured friend.

Richard Bonyng AC CBE

1 Sérénade d'automne

Augustine-Malvina Souville Blanchecotte (1830-78)

*Non! tu n'as pas fini d'aimer, d'aimer, d'aimer;
Ta chanson d'avril dure encore:
Ta jeune voix sait ranimer
Nos douces, visions d'aurore!*

*Non! tu n'as pas fini d'aimer, d'aimer, d'aimer;
Les songes d'or que tu parsèmes
N'ont pu dans toi se refermer:
Ils t'enivrent, toujours les mêmes!*

*Tu n'auras pas fini d'aimer... d'aimer... d'aimer
Tant que tes yeux, pleins d'étincelles,
Pourront sourire ou s'alarmer
Et que ton rêve aura des ailes!*

2 Passionnément

Charles Fuster (1866-1929)

*Tout recevoir de toi me charme:
Je bois ton cœur dans une larme
Et ton parfum sur tes chers doigts;
Ta caresse aime ma caresse,
Et toute heure est enchanteresse
Du moment que je te la dois,*

*En me donnant d'exquises heures,
Tu m'en prépares de meilleures,
Je n'ai plus d'autre passion,
Car mon orageuse pensée
Est maintenant débarrassée
Du poids de son ambition.*

Autumn serenade

No! you have not ceased to love;
Your April song endures still:
Your young voice can revive
Our sweet, dawn visions.

No! you have not ceased to love;
The golden dreams that you scatter
Have not closed up inside you:
They inebriate you, just as before!

You will not have ceased to love
As long as your eyes, full of sparkle,
Can still smile or worry
And your dream has wings!

Passionately

Every gift from you charms me
I imbibe your heart in a teardrop
And the scent on your dear fingers;
Your caress loves my caress,
And every hour is enchanting
From the moment you bestow it upon me.

While granting me exquisite hours
You prepare for me even better ones.
I no longer have any other passion,
For my raging brain
Is now relieved
Of the weight of its ambition.

*De toi, de toi seule j'implore
Les mots qu'un sourire colore,
Les élans, les émois jaloux,
Le baiser chaud, le regard tendre,
Et quand je ne ferais qu'attendre,
Tout attendre de toi m'est doux!*

De toi tout m'est doux.

3 L'heure solitaire

Jean Ader (1823-1900)

*Viens rêver, viens rêver. C'est l'heure solitaire.
L'astre, vers son déclin, va finir sa carrière.
Le jour fuit pour s'éteindre en l'espace infini.
Mais nos cœurs pleins d'espoir vont renaître avec lui.*

*C'est le rayon divin; c'est l'éternelle aurore,
Qui se voile un instant pour reparaître encore.
Écoute: tout nous dit d'espérer et d'aimer.*

*Dans ces lieux recueillis, auguste sanctuaire,
Viens entendre du soir la sublime prière.*

*Viens rêver, viens rêver, ici, sur cette grève.
Le flot bercé murmure, et le jour qui s'achève
Teint la nappe des eaux. Sur la mer qui s'endort,
Vois vaguer lentement cet esquif vers le port,*

*Céleste vision! Dans l'extase assoupies
Nos deux âmes s'en vont vers d'immortelles vies.
Sens battre nos cœurs; c'est l'heure de s'aimer.*

*L'ombre descend sur nous; tout est plein de mystère.
L'air, comme un encens pur, s'élève de la terre.*

From you, and only from you, I beg
For the words coloured by a smile,
The ecstasies, the pangs of jealousy,
The warm embrace, the tender look.
And were I to do no more than wait,
All waiting for you is sweet!

From you, everything is sweet!

The solitary hour

Come and dream, come and dream! It is the solitary hour!
The setting sun is going to complete its journey.
The day runs off to snuff itself out in infinite space.
But our hearts, full of hope, will be reborn with the day.

It's divine light; it's the everlasting dawn
Which hides itself a moment only to reappear again.
Listen: everything is telling us to hope and to love.

Gathered in this place, a lofty sanctuary,
Come and hear the sublime prayer of evening.

Come and dream, come and dream – here on this shore.
The waning tide is murmuring, and the closing day
Colours the surface of the water. On the drowsy sea,
Watch this vessel drift slowly towards the port,

Celestial vision! Slumbering in ecstasy
Our two souls set off towards eternal life.
Feel our hearts beating: it's the time for loving.

The darkness descends on us; everything is full of mystery.
The air, like pure incense, rises from the earth.

4 **Nuit d'Espagne**

Louis Gallet (1835-98)

*L'air est embaumé,
La nuit est sereine
Et mon âme est pleine
de pensers joyeux;
Viens! ô bien aimée,
Voici l'instant de l'amour!*

*Dans les bois profonds,
où les fleurs s'endorment,
Où chantent les sources;
Vite enfuyons nous!
Vois, la lune est claire
et nous sourit dans le ciel...*

*Les yeux indiscrets
Ne sont plus à craindre.
Viens, la nuit protège
ton front rougissant!
La nuit est sereine,
apaise mon cœur! c'est l'heure!*

*Dans le sombre azur,
Les blondes étoiles
Écartent leurs voiles
pour te voir passer,
Viens, ô bien aimée,
Voici l'instant de l'amour!*

A Spanish Night

The air is balmy,
The night is serene
And my soul is filled
With joyful thoughts;
Come, beloved,
This is the moment of love!

Into the deep woods
Where the flowers slumber
And the streams sing
Let us quickly escape!
Look, the moon is bright
And smiles on us from the sky...

Prying eyes
Are no longer to be feared.
Come, the night is protecting
Your blushing brow!
The night is serene,
Calm my heart! It is the time!

In the azure darkness
The white stars
Move their veils aside
To watch you pass.
Come, beloved,
This is the moment of love!

*J'ai vu s'entr'ouvrir
ton rideau de gaze.
Tu m'entends, cruelle,
et tu ne viens pas!
Vois, la route est sombre
sous les rameaux enlacés!*

*Cueille en leur splendeur
Tes jeunes années,
Viens! car l'heure est brève,
Un jour effeuille
les fleurs du printemps!*

I've seen your net curtain
Half opening.
You can hear me, cruel woman,
Yet you won't come!
Look, the path is dark
Under the entwined branches

Gather in all their splendour
Your years of youth,
Come! for the time is short,
And one day can decimate
The spring flowers!

5 **Souhait**

Jacques Clary Jean Normand (1848-1931)

*Si vous étiez fleur, ô ma bien aimée,
La fleur parfumée
Au corselet vert,
Je serais zéphyr, et viendrais, fidèle,
Vous frôler de l'aile
En glissant dans l'air.*

*Si, quelque beau soir, vous étiez l'étoile
Qui brille sans voile
Dans les cieus discrets,
Je serais rayon, et dans ma lumière,
Belle prisonnière,
Je vous bercerais!*

Desire

If you were a flower, my love,
The perfumed flower
On your green bodice,
I would be the breeze and would come, faithfully,
To brush you with my wing
While gliding through the air

If, one fine evening, you were the star
That shines unveiled
In the discreet skies,
I would be a moonbeam, and in my light,
Beautiful prisoner,
I would cradle you!

*Si vous deveniez la naïade blonde,
Moi, je serais l'onde
Du ruisseau jaseur,
Et vous charmerais, dans la grotte obscure,
De mon doux murmure
Et de ma fraîcheur.*

*Mais puisqu'aujourd'hui vous êtes la femme
Qui séduit mon âme,
Je serais heureux
D'être seulement, pour calmer ma fièvre,
Le sang de vos lèvres,
L'or de vos cheveux!*

6 La mélodie des baisers

André Alexandre (1860-1928)

*Toujours les lilas fleuriront
Avec leurs sœurs les primevères.
Toujours les baisers chanteront,
Lorsque les amants uniront
Avec leurs lèvres, leurs chimères.*

*Dans tes regards il m'a semblé
Voir passer un regret de l'heure fugitive...
Plus près de moi ton front s'est rapproché,
Et d'un baiser j'ai doucement calmé
Ton âme tremblante et pensive.*

If you became the blond naiad,
I would be the wave
From the garrulous stream
And I would charm you, in your dark cave,
With my gentle murmuring
And my coolness.

But since today you are the woman
Who seduces my soul,
I would be happy
Simply to be, to calm my fever,
The blood in your lips,
The gold in your hair!

The song of kisses

Lilacs will always bloom
With their sisters, the primroses.
Kisses will always sing
When lovers combine
Their dreams with their lips.

In your expression I seemed to see
A passing regret for the fleeting hours.
Your forehead came closer to me,
And with a kiss I softly calmed
Your trembling and pensive soul.

7 Rien ne passe!

Lucien Monrousseau

*Rien ne passe, ma bien aimée,
Toujours... le buisson est fleuri,
La brise est toujours embaumée,
Et par le Temps rien n'est flétri.*

*Toujours... pour nous est la jeunesse,
A toi toujours est la beauté,
Et nos cœurs palpitent sans cesse
De vrai bonheur... de volupté...*

*Le soleil bannit le nuage
Qui pourrait assombrir nos jours,
Et, devant lui chassant l'orage,
Met de sa flamme en nos amours.*

*Autour de nous tout est sourire,
Enchantement et douce paix...
Toujours est vrai ce qu'on veut dire:
Serment d'amour dure à jamais...*

*O doux rêve, ivresse infinie...
Tout ici-bas est éternel,
Et mon âme à ton âme unie
Sur la Terre a trouvé le Ciel.*

Nothing fades

Nothing fades, my love,
Forever... the bush remains in flower,
The breeze is always perfumed,
And nothing is ravaged by Time.

Forever... for us is youth,
To you forever is beauty,
And our hearts beat incessantly
With true happiness... with sensuality...

The sun banishes the cloud
Which could otherwise darken our days,
And, chasing away the storm before it,
Places its flame inside our love.

Around us everything smiles
Enchantment and gentle peace...
Our words remain forever true:
Love's vow lasts evermore...

O sweet dream, infinite intoxication...
Everything here below is eternal,
And my soul, united with your soul,
Has found Heaven on Earth.

8 La vie d'une rose

Jules Ruelle (1834-92)

*Par un beau matin,
Pimpante et ravie
J'ai reçu la vie
Dans le vert satin.*

*De ma beauté que j'étais fière!
Pour mieux répandre ma senteur,
Je balançais ma tige altière;
Déjà le zéphir tentateur
Murmurait: "ô ma belle rose,
Ils seront bien longs tes beaux jours
Si tu n'écoutes les amours
Qui vont t'admirer fraîche éclosée".*

*Au zéphir je restai rebelle.
Deux amoureux passant par là
Alors me trouvèrent si belle
Qu'entre leurs baisers me voilâ;
Puis au sein de la bien-aimée
Je devins un gage d'espoir,
Et rose – moi – j'étais le soir
Par son haleine parfumée.*

*Lorsque s'éveilla la Cigale,
Lorsque le Rossignol chanta,
Dans sa chambrette virginale
L'enfant rêveuse m'emporta.
Puis elle s'endormit joyeuse...
Mais durant cette nuit d'été,
Hélas! ma fragile beauté
S'éparpilla sur l'oubliuse;*

The life of a rose

On a beautiful morning,
Excited and enthralled
I received life
Inside the satin green.

How proud I was of my beauty!
So better to spread my scent
I swayed on my tall stem;
Immediately the teasing zephyr
Murmured, "Oh, my beautiful rose,
Your beautiful days will be long
If you ignore the lovers
Who admire you when you are newly opened".

I ignored the zephyr.
Two lovers who happened to pass
Found me so beautiful
That I suddenly found myself between their embraces;
Then, on the breast of the lovely maiden
I became a token of hope.
And I – a rose – was perfumed
That evening by her breath.

When the grasshoppers awoke,
When the nightingale sang,
The dreamy child carried me
Into her pristine little room.
Then, happy, she fell asleep.
But during that summer night,
Alas! my fragile beauty
Began to wane;

*Et vers le matin
À l'aube ravie
S'éffeuilla ma vie,
Dans le blanc satin.*

9 Le poète et le fantôme

Anonymous

*Le poète: Qui donc es-tu, forme légère
Que devant moi je vois toujours?*

*Le fantôme: Je n'appartiens plus à la terre:
Je suis l'ombre de tes amours.*

*Le poète: Ils sont bien morts les anciens charmes
Et je ris du temps où j'aimais.*

*Le fantôme: Je suis le spectre de tes larmes,
Rappelle-toi quand tu pleurais.*

*Le poète: Oui, j'ai souffert de durs martyres;
L'oubli seul a séché mes yeux.*

*Le fantôme: Je suis l'âme de tes sourires:
Rappelle-toi les jours heureux.*

*Le poète: J'ai dû rêver toutes ces choses:
Ce vain songe s'en est allé...*

*Le fantôme: Oseras-tu nier les roses
Parce qu'Avril s'est envolé?*

*Le poète: Fantôme aimé de ma maîtresse,
Reprends ton vol et laisse-moi!*

And towards morning
And the ravishing dawn,
My life was extinguished
In the satin white.

The poet and the phantom

Poet: So who are you, faint outline
that I constantly see before me?

Phantom: I no longer belong to the earth:
I am the shadow of your love affairs.

Poet: Those ancient charms are well dead
And I laugh at the time when I used to love.

Phantom: I am the spectre of your tears;
Remember when you would weep.

Poet: Yes, I have suffered harsh times;
Only forgetting has dried my eyes.

Phantom: I am the soul of your smiles:
Recall your happy days.

Poet: I have had to dream all these things:
This vain fantasy has gone...

Phantom: Will you dare deny the roses
Because April has flown?

Poet: Beloved phantom of my mistress,
Take up your flight and leave me!

Le fantôme: *Je suis l'âme de ta jeunesse,
Rappelle-toi, rappelle-toi...*

Le poète: *Ainsi, jadis, en ma demeure
L'amour descendit du ciel bleu!*

Le fantôme: *Si vite qu'en ait passé l'heure,
Tu fus aimé, rends grâce à Dieu!*

Le poète: *Oh! ma jeunesse, êtes-vous morte...
Où sont les jours où l'on m'aimait?*

Le fantôme: *Je suis celui qui les rapporte,
Reviens vers moi: Dieu le permet.*

Le poète: *Ô Fantôme qui me réclame,
D'où donc peux-tu me revenir?*

Le fantôme: *J'ai ma demeure dans ton âme.
Ami, je suis le souvenir...*

[10] Puisqu'elle a pris ma vie

Paul Robiquet (1848-1928)

*Puisqu'elle a pris ma vie et que j'ai pris la sienne;
Puisque chaque matin d'extase est embaumé;
Puisque chaque printemps fleurit la tige ancienne,
Puisque je fus aimé:*

*Le vent peut emporter les feuilles épuisées,
Le ciel peut se voiler et le bois peut jaunir;
Mais rien n'arrachera, de nos mains enlacées,
La fleur du souvenir!*

Puisque je fus aimé!

Phantom: I am the soul of your youth,
Remember, remember...

Poet: Thus, long ago in my home
Love came down from the blue heavens!

Phantom: However quickly that time may have passed,
You were loved, so thank God!

Poet: Oh! My youth, you are dead...
Where are the days when I was loved?

Phantom: I am the one who will bring them back,
Come towards me: God will allow it.

Poet: Oh Phantom – you are calling me
But from where can you return to me?

Phantom: I reside in your soul.
Friend, I am memory...

Since she has taken my life

Since she has taken my life, and I have taken hers;
Since every morning is imbued with ecstasy;
Since every springtime makes the ancient stem bloom,
Since I have been loved:

The wind may carry away the fallen leaves,
The sky may cloud over and the wood turn yellow;
But nothing will wrench from our entwined hands
The flower of memory!

Since I have been loved!

[11] Dieu créa le désert

Madeleine Grain

*Dieu créa le désert, et le désert sauvage,
Brûlé par le soleil, dévasté par le vent,
N'offrit au voyageur que son sable mouvant,
Sa solitude immense et son air lourd d'orage.*

*Puis, quand le voyageur vint, à bout de courage,
A se laisser tomber sur la terre en pleurant,
Dieu fit naître à ses yeux le spectacle riant
De l'oasis prochaine et de son frais ombrage...*

*Ainsi dans le désert, plus grand de la douleur,
Du doute et de l'angoisse où se débat son cœur,
Dans la nuit éternelle où nul espoir ne brille,*

*Parmi tous les soucis, les chagrins d'ici-bas,
A l'homme qui souffrait Dieu donna la Famille
Pour qu'il trouve toujours à qui tendre les bras!*

God created the desert

God created the desert, and this savage desert,
Burnt by the sun, devastated by the wind,
Could only offer the traveller its shifting sands,
Its immense solitude and its heavy, stormy air.

Then, when the traveller came, exhausted,
And threw himself to the ground, weeping,
God produced before his very eyes the laughing spectacle
Of the next oasis and its cool shade...

Just like in the desert, bigger than the pain,
The doubt and the anguish with which man's heart is wrestling,
In the eternal night where no hope shines,

Amongst all the worries and sorrows of this world,
To man in his suffering God gave the Family
To whom he may forever outstretch his arms!

[12] La dernière lettre de Werther à Charlotte

[12] La dernière lettre de Werther à Charlotte

Roger de Gontaut-Biron (1884-1944)

*Il faut nous séparer... Au bord de cet abîme,
L'heure a sonné pour nous de l'éternel adieu;
Et j'irai, s'il est vrai que l'amour est un crime,
En demander pardon à Dieu.*

*C'est fini! Pour toujours! J'entreprends un voyage
Dont, pour vous retrouver, je ne reviendrai pas;
Mais, en mon cœur brisé j'emporte votre image,
Afin d'enchanter mon trépas!*

Final letter from Werther to Charlotte

We must part... On the edge of this abyss,
The hour has chimed for our everlasting farewell;
And I will go, if it is true that love is a crime,
To ask God for forgiveness.

It is over! Forever! I embark on a journey
From which, in search of you, I shall not return;
But, in my broken heart I carry your image
In order to brighten my death.

*Jusqu'au moment suprême, enivré par vos charmes,
Mon cœur n'aura battu dans l'ombre que pour vous,
Et mon dernier baiser, et mes dernières larmes,
Je les dépose à vos genoux.*

*Je vous fais mes adieux de la petite chambre
D'où je ne sortirai plus que dans mon linceul,
Et, pour me consoler en ce jour de Décembre,
Personne! Je suis seul, seul!*

*D'ailleurs, il se fait tard; d'ici quelques minutes,
A partir pour là-bas je vais me préparer...
Noë!!... j'entends au loin des airs gais sur des flûtes...
Charlotte! Je t'aime! Adieu! Il faut nous séparer!*

Till the very final moment, intoxicated by your charms,
My heart will only have beaten in the shadows for you.
And my final kiss, and my final tears,
These I lay at your feet.

I take my leave of you from the little room
Whence I will only emerge in my shroud,
And, to console me on this December day,
There is no-one! I am alone, alone!

Besides, it is getting late. A few minutes from now
I will prepare to set off for the depths...
Christmas!...I hear flutes playing merry tunes in the distance...
Charlotte! I love you! Farewell! We must part!

*Sais-tu ce qu'est l'espérance
Quand nous croyons au bonheur?
Et ce que notre âme pense
Du secret de notre cœur?*

*Eh bien! tout cela, ma belle,
N'est plus rien quand je te vois;
Je n'aime plus l'hirondelle,
Je n'entends plus que ta voix.*

*Et si je veux une rose,
Tu le sais, ange d'amour,
Sur ta bouche demi-close
Je la prendrai chaque jour!*

Do you know what hope means
When we believe in happiness?
And what our souls think
About the secrets of our hearts?

Well! None of this, my beautiful one,
Has any more meaning when I see you;
I no longer like the swallow,
I can only hear your voice.

And if I want a rose,
You know, angel of love,
From your half-open mouth
I will take it every day!

13 Le sais-tu?

Stéphan Bordèse (1847-1919)

*N'as-tu pas vu l'hirondelle
Se bercer sur le roseau,
Et, se croyant la plus belle,
Se mirer au fond de l'eau?*

*As-tu senti de la rose
Le parfum délicieux,
Ce baiser que Dieu dépose
Le matin du haut des cieux?*

*Connais-tu de l'alouette
Le joyeux refrain d'amour,
Ce chant que l'écho répète
Quand dans le bois vient le jour?*

Do you know?

Have you not seen the swallow
Rocking in the reeds,
And, believing itself the fairest of all,
Gazing at its reflection in the deep water?

Have you smelt the delicious
Perfume of the rose,
That kiss which God brings down
In the morning from the heavenly heights?

Do you know the lark's
Joyous refrain of love,
That song which is echoed
When day breaks in the woods?

14 La dernière chanson

Louis Lefebvre (1871-1947)

*Si désormais vivre ensemble
N'est plus un bonheur permis,
Du moins partons bons amis,
Cela vaut mieux, que t'en semble?*

*Tu vas suivre ton chemin.
Moi, je vais en prendre un autre.
Ton chemin n'est plus le nôtre,
Pour un éternel demain.*

*Je t'appellerai Madame
Quand je te rencontrerai
Et même... je sourirai,
En ayant la mort dans l'âme,*

The final song

If, from now on, we are no longer permitted
The pleasure of living together,
At least let us part good friends,
That would be best, don't you think?

You are going to follow your path.
I am going to take another.
Your path is no longer our path
For an everlasting tomorrow.

I will call you "Mrs."
When I meet you,
And – I will even smile,
Though my soul feels like death.

*Et toi, tu me diras: vous,
En détournant tes prunelles,
Mais j'aurais su voir en elles
La flamme des désirs fous.*

*Ce sera chez la comtesse
Ou dans quelqu'autre salon,
Tandis qu'un doux violon
Bercera notre tristesse.*

*Puis, à l'instant du départ,
Nous reprendrons notre route,
Sachant aux heures de doute
Qu'on nous aime... quelque part*

15 Aux étoiles

Thérèse Maquet (1858-91)

*À pas légers, le jour a fui...
Effleurant la forme des choses;
Quelques reflets pâles et roses
S'attardent encor après lui.*

*L'ombre a des frissonnements d'aile
Entre ses plis mystérieux,
La terre sent du fond des cieux
De clairs regards glisser vers elle!*

*On dirait qu'un charme est dans l'air!
Tout s'apaise et tout s'abandonne,
Le grand sourire de l'éther
Sur le monde ébloui rayonne!*

And you will address me respectfully
While turning your eyes away,
But I will have noticed in them
The flame of mad desire.

It will be on a visit to the Countess
Or some other society host,
While a gentle violin
Soothes our sadness.

Then, when it is time to leave,
We will set off, each on our own journey,
Knowing in the hours of doubting
That we are loved... somewhere.

To the stars

Treading lightly, the day escaped,
Brushing past the outline of things;
Some pale, pink reflections
Linger still in its wake.

There is some flapping of wings
In the mysterious folds of the darkness,
The earth senses from the depths of the skies
Clear gazes descending towards it!

You could say there's a charm in the air!
Everything is silent and lost,
The ether's great smile
Shines on the dazzling world!

*Déjà les fleurs ivres d'amour,
Et le cœur tremblant sous leurs voiles
Ont oublié les feux du jour...
Tout leur parfum monte aux étoiles!*

*Sur un ruisseau de vif argent
Une brise tiède et légère
Promène l'ombre passagère
D'un saule au feuillage changeant.*

*La nuit se berce de silence,
Tout bruit s'éteint, tout être dort;
Dans le ciel tout pointillé d'or
La brume ondoie et se balance.*

*Mais tout à coup dans l'air vibrant
L'oiseau jette son chant sublime...
Passionné, presque souffrant,
Inspirant l'amour qu'il exprime!*

*Et la nuit pâle à son front pur
Lentement ramène ses voiles;
L'extase plane sur l'azur:
Et l'hymne saint monte aux étoiles!*

Already the love-drunk flowers
And the heart trembling under their veils
Have forgotten the fires of the day...
Their scents all rise to the stars!

Over a shining silver stream
A light, warm breeze
Wanders in the shade
Of a willow with ever-changing leaves.

The night is cradled in silence,
All sound has stopped, every creature sleeps;
In the sky stippled with gold
The mist swirls and hovers.

But suddenly in the vibrating air
A bird releases its sublime song...
Passionate, almost suffering,
Inspiring the love of which it speaks!

And the pale night with its pure face
Slowly lowers its sails;
Ecstasy hangs over the horizon:
And a holy hymn rises to the stars!

16 Chanson pour elle

Henry Maigrot (1857-1933)

*Pour toi, j'écris cette chanson
Sur une feuille d'églantine;
Avec un air de ma façon
Pour guitare ou pour mandoline.
Chante, chante! J'aime le son
De ta voix troublante et câline...
Pour toi, j'écris cette chanson
Sur une feuille d'églantine;*

*Elle dit que tu m'aimeras
Peut-être à la saison prochaine,
Que, pour moi, s'ouvriront tes bras,
Tes bras blancs! La douce chaîne!
Et puis, que tu me trahiras,
Sans prendre souci de ma peine...
Elle dit que tu m'aimeras
Peut-être à la saison prochaine!*

*Mais, hélas! les chansons d'amour
Disent toutes la même chose:
Elle t'aimera tout un jour;
Demain sa porte sera close.
Chante, chante! gai troubadour:
Demain sera triste et morose...
Car, hélas! les chansons d'amour
Disent, toutes, la même chose!*

Song for her

For you, I am writing this song
On the leaf of a wild rose;
With a tune of my fancy
For guitar or mandolin.
Sing, sing! I love the sound
Of your seductive and tender voice...
For you, I am writing this song
On the leaf of a wild rose;

It says that you will love me
Perhaps next season,
And that your arms will open for me,
Your white arms! That sweet bond!
And then, that you will betray me
Without concern for my suffering...
It says that you will love me
Perhaps next season!

But alas, love songs
All say the same thing:
She will love you for one whole day;
Then tomorrow her door will be closed.
Sing, sing! happy troubadour:
Tomorrow will be sad and morose...
For alas, love songs,
All of them, say the same thing!

17 Être aimé

Jules Massenet after Victor Hugo (1802-85)

*Être aimé!
Tout est là, vois-tu. J'aime et l'on m'aime;
Cela dit, tout est dit. Pour que je sois moi-même,
Fier, content, respirant l'air libre à pleins poumons,
Il faut que j'aie une ombre et qu'elle dise: Aïmons!
Il faut que mon âme une autre âme se double,
Il faut que, si je suis absent, quelqu'un se trouble
Et, me cherchant des yeux, murmure:
Où donc est-il?
Être aimé! tout est là, vois-tu. Être aimé!*

18 Salut, printemps!

Louis Baillet (1834-1917)

*Salut! doux printemps qui ramène
Les chants du rossignol et les buissons en fleurs,
La verdure aux forêts, les parfums à la plaine
Et l'espérance au fond des cœurs!
Tu plais comme plaît un sourire
Après les pleurs amers et le froid désespoir;
Oui, Dieu créa l'hiver, le printemps pour nous dire:
Je donne la peine et l'espoir!*

To be loved

To be loved!
It is everything, you see. I love and am loved;
That says it all. For me to be myself,
Proud, happy, breathing freely and deeply,
I have to have a shadow, and for it to say, "Let us love!"
My soul has to reflect another,
Someone has, if I'm absent, to worry
And, seeking to find me, to murmur,
"So, where is he?"
To be loved! It is everything, you see. To be loved!

Greetings, oh Spring!

Greetings! sweet Spring who brings back
The songs of the nightingale and the flowering shrubs,
The foliage of the forests, the scents of the plains
And hopefulness deep in our hearts!
You give the same pleasure as a smile
After bitter tears and cold despair;
Yes, God created Winter, then Spring to tell us:
I give sorrow and hope!

19 **Le coffret d'ébène**

Jules Massenet after Victor Hugo (1802-85)

*J'ai mis dans un coffret d'ébène
Les tristesses d'un souvenir
Qu'à bout de force, à bout de peine,
Mon cœur ne pouvait contenir.*

*La clef, au loin je l'ai jetée
Pour qu'aux heures sombres du soir
Ma main ne fût jamais tentée
D'ouvrir encor le coffret noir.*

*Mais dans le coffret tout à l'heure
Vient de résonner une voix,
Une voix humaine qui pleure
Avec mes sanglots d'autrefois;*

*Et dans sa douleur souveraine,
Voici que le sanglot vainqueur
A brisé le coffret d'ébène
Comme il avait brisé mon cœur!*

20 **Vous aimerez demain**

Armand Silvestre (1837-1901)

*Le doux printemps a bu, dans le creux de sa main,
Le premier pleur qu'au bois laissa tomber l'aurore;
Vous aimerez demain, vous qui n'aimiez encore,
Et vous qui n'aimiez plus, vous aimerez demain!*

The ebony casket

I placed in an ebony casket
The sorrows of a memory
Which, in the depths of exhaustion and pain,
My heart could no longer contain.

The key I threw into the distance
So that, in the dark hours of the evening,
My hand might never be tempted
To reopen the ebony casket.

But inside the casket, just now,
There has sounded a voice,
A human voice which is crying
With my sobs of times gone by;

And in its sovereign grief,
Now the triumphant sob
Has broken the ebony casket
Just as it had broken my heart!

You will love tomorrow

Sweet springtime has drunk, from her cupped hands,
The first tear that dawn shed in the wood.
You will love tomorrow, you who have not yet loved,
And you who love no more, you will love tomorrow!

*Le printemps a cueilli, dans l'air, des fils de soie
Pour lier sa chaussure et courir par les bois;
Vous aimerez demain pour la première fois,
Vous qui ne saviez pas cette immortelle joie!*

*Le printemps a jeté des fleurs sur le chemin
Que Mignonne remplit de son rire sonore;
Vous aimerez demain, vous qui n'aimiez encore,
Et vous qui n'aimiez plus, vous aimerez demain!*

21 **Joie!**

Camille Distel

*Un oiselet sautille et chante,
Joie aimable et charmante!
C'est comme un paradis
Se jouer aux taillis.
Tout fraîchement fleuris,
De notre forêt verdoyante!*

*Un ruisseau descend et chante,
Joie aimable et charmante!
Les travailleurs sont gais,
Car les champs et les prés
Sont aussi bien parés
Que notre forêt verdoyante!*

*La jeune fille danse et chante,
Joie aimable et charmante!
L'air est plein de chansons,
Le ciel est pur, allons,
Donnons la main, dansons
Dans notre forêt verdoyante!*

Spring has gathered from the air some silken threads
To tie her shoes and run through the woods;
You will love tomorrow for the very first time,
You who have never known this immortal joy!

Spring has strewn flowers on the path
Which my sweetheart fills with her loud laughter;
You will love tomorrow, you who have not yet loved,
And you who love no more, you will love tomorrow!

Joy!

A little bird hops and sings,
What lovely, enchanting joy!
It's as if a paradise
Were playing out in the
Newly flowering thickets
Of our luxurious forest.

A little stream runs down and sings,
What lovely, enchanting joy!
The workers are happy
For the fields and meadows
Are as well adorned
As our luxurious forest.

The young girl dances and sings,
What lovely, enchanting joy!
The air is full of songs,
The sky is clear, come on,
Let's take each other's hand, and dance
In our luxurious forest.

22 L'âme des fleurs

Paul Delair (1842-94)

*Gardez les fleurs que je vous ai données
Elles embaumeront votre chaste séjour
Et comme avec l'âme des fleurs fanées
Dieu fait des astres pour l'amour
Elles m'éclaireront jusques à mon retour!*

*Oh! Respectons la relique des roses!
Rien de ce qui fut beau ne s'en va sans retour.
Et dans les bois du paradis écloses
Nous cueillerons encore un jour
Les fleurs dont ici-bas s'embaumait notre amour!*

23 Les fleurs

Jacques Clary Jean Normand (1848-1931)

*Jetant leur fantaisie exquise de couleurs
A l'étalage des fleuristes
Elles sont tour à tour ou joyeuses ou tristes,
Les fleurs!*

*Joyeuses, elles vont porter les mots frôleurs
A l'oreille des biens aimées,
Disant: "bonheur, espoir, ivresses enflammées",
Les fleurs!*

*Tristes, elles s'en vont mourir, vagues pâleurs,
Dans la nuit des tombes glacées,
Disant: "désespoirs, deuils, soupirs, âmes
blessées..."
Les fleurs!*

The souls of the flowers

Look after the flowers which I have given you.
They will perfume your chaste sojourn
And just as, with the souls of faded flowers,
God makes stars for love,
They will light my way until I return!
Oh! We must respect the remains of the roses!
Nothing that was beautiful goes away without returning...
And once they have opened in the woods of paradise
We will gather again one day
The flowers which perfumed our love on earth!

Flowers

Casting their exquisite fantasy of colours
At the florists' displays
They are in turn happy or sad,
Flowers!

Happy, they will carry caressing words
To lovers' ears,
Saying, "Happiness, hope, burning intoxication",
Flowers!

Sad, they will die, indistinct and pale,
In the night of frozen graves,
Saying, "Despair, mourning, sighs, wounded souls..."
Flowers!

*Joyeuses, elles vont, par groupes enjôleurs,
Briller en nos têtes frivoles,
Disant: "luxe, plaisir, insouciances folles..."
Les fleurs!*

*Tristes, avec novembre, elles viennent en pleurs,
Dire les chers anniversaires,
Les souvenirs aimés et les regrets sincères
Les fleurs.*

*Ainsi, s'associant aux gâités, aux douleurs,
Selon que le veut notre envie,
Elles sont nos témoins et nos sœurs dans la vie,
Les fleurs.*

24 Le petit Jésus

(Chanson pour bercer la misère humaine)
Georges Boyer (1850-1931)

*Le petit Jésus, en habits de neige,
Aux pauvres mignons qui vont les pieds nus
Dit: "La Sainte Vierge, enfants, vous protège,
Pour vous consoler nous sommes venus.*

*Pour vous amuser, ciselant l'étoile,
La lune d'argent qui brille la nuit,
Quand vous grelottez en sarreaux de toile,
J'ai fait le soleil qui chauffe et qui luit.*

*L'hiver est cruel, mais la neige est blanche
Ainsi que votre âme, ô chers innocents,
Et quand vient Avril, l'oiseau sur la branche,
Pour que vous dansiez module ses chants*

Happy, they will, in beguiling groups,
Shine inside our frivolous heads,
Saying, "Luxury, pleasure, crazy carefreeness..."
Flowers!

Sad, when November comes, they come in tears,
To tell of their cherished anniversaries,
Their loved memories and their sincere regrets,
Flowers.

Thus, associating themselves with joy or with sorrow,
According to what we desire,
They are our witnesses and our sisters in life,
Flowers.

Little Jesus

(Song to cradle human misery)

Little Jesus, in snow-white clothes,
To the poor little mites with no shoes
Says, "The Virgin Mary, children, is protecting you;
We have come to console you.

To entertain you, by chiselling the stars
And the silver moon which shines at night,
When you are shivering in your homespun clothes
I've made the sun which warms and glows.

The winter is harsh, but the snow is white
Just like your souls, dear innocent ones,
And when April comes, the bird on the branch
Alters its song in the hope that you'll dance.

*Dormez... nul remords ne vous en empêche;
Certains d'entre vous ont un lit bien blanc.
Et moi je suis né dans la froide crèche,
À côté d'un bœuf au grand œil troublant.*

*Si dure pour vous que soit la misère,
Songez que j'ai vu pleurer, à genoux,
Ma mère, la Vierge, au pied du Calvaire;
Enfants, j'ai souffert, alors, plus que vous."*

25 Amoureux appel

Georges de Dubor (1848-1931)

*Viens, ô le désiré,
viens chanter avec moi l'hymne de l'éternel amour!
Et que nos cœurs unis dans une même palpitation
se disent le charme tout puissant des doux mystères!*

*Viens, ô le bien-aimé!
Que tes lèvres boivent sur mes lèvres
l'exquise ivresse des baisers
et que la mort, à son suprême appel,
trouve encore nos souffles confondus!*

*Viens, ô l'adoré!
J'ai soif de tes caresses!
Viens, mes yeux t'implorent; ma bouche t'appelle;
Mon corps frissonne; tout mon être te désire!
Viens! Viens! Viens!*

Sleep...No regrets must prevent you;
Some of you have a beautifully white bed.
Yet I was born in a cold manger,
Aside an ox with an unsettling stare.

No matter how bitter your hardship,
Just think that I have seen my mother, the Virgin,
on her knees at the foot of the cross, weeping;
Children, thus I have suffered more than you."

Loving call

Come, the one I desire,
come and sing with me the hymn of eternal love!
And let our hearts, beating with one and the same pulse,
understand the all-powerful charm of sweet mystery!

Come, the one I love,
May your lips drink from my lips
the exquisite intoxication of kisses,
and may death, when it comes to claim us,
find our breath still combined!

Come, the one I adore,
I am thirsty for your caresses!
Come, my eyes implore you, my mouth calls you;
My body trembles; my whole being desires you!
Come! Come! Come!

