



# Gabriel FAURÉ

SONGS FOR BASS VOICE AND PIANO

Jared Schwartz, bass  
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INCLUDES FIRST RECORDINGS

# FAURÉ SONGS: POETS AND PERSPECTIVES

by Roy Howat

Gabriel Fauré's *mélodies* – over 100 in total – span six epoch-changing decades, from 'Le papillon et la fleur' of 1861 to his masterly final cycle, *L'horizon chimérique* (Op. 118) of 1921. Hailing from the Ariège region near the Mediterranean, Fauré was a southerner by temperament – a point often made by his family and colleagues – and his music is often infused with depths of passion ranging from calm to explosive, combined with a constant sense of rhythmic and harmonic play which can be related to Mediterranean idioms (in his youth he was a skilled singer of his native Ariégeois folk songs). Fauré's quiet but firm manner – in 1905 he became the most radical director the Paris Conservatoire ever experienced<sup>1</sup> – is constantly reflected in his music: various of his colleagues (notably the distinguished mezzo Claire Croiza<sup>2</sup>) recalled his insistence on firm rhythm, strong support from the bass, and an absolute avoidance of any wallowing, sentimentality or feebleness. Fauré's son, Philippe Fauré-Fremiet, underlined the importance of 'playing out the drama' in his father's music.<sup>3</sup> It may be relevant to observe, relative to Fauré's character, that one of his most characteristic slower tempo markings is *Quasi adagio* – literally, 'almost at ease'; that is, not completely at ease. 'Prison' (Op. 68, No. 1) 13, which he marked with this tempo, vividly illustrates the restless undercurrent that often underlies even his slower songs.

In sum, if Fauré's songs have often been regarded as being material for light voices and the 'salon', they are replete with dramatic expression, and perfectly suited to a well-controlled, powerful yet agile bass voice. A skilled répétiteur, Fauré worked throughout his life with a wide range of singers and voices. Some of his songs were written for specific singers, but just as often he wrote first and then found his singer, transposing when necessary. His entrancing 'Venetian' cycle, for example, the *Cinq mélodies* of Op. 58, Fauré premiered (at the piano) with the distinguished tenor Maurice Bagès, although four of the five songs had originally been written in mezzo or baritone range. He had most of his songs published in two or more keys, and it is clear that his approach to voices and transpositions

<sup>1</sup> His first and most urgent priority as Director was a complete overhaul of how singing was taught, including the introduction of art-song as a major component of students' education.

<sup>2</sup> Betty Bannerman (ed. and trans.), *The Singer as Interpreter: Claire Croiza's Master Classes* (Gollancz, London, 1989) offers a compendium of Croiza's teaching advice and quotations.

<sup>3</sup> Philippe Fauré-Fremiet, *Gabriel Fauré*, Albin-Michel, Paris, 1957, pp. 158–62.

was pragmatic, ensuring that a song could lie well for a variety of singers while remaining texturally sensible at the piano. This ethos underlies the present recording, bringing many of his songs into the range of a bass voice, ideally combining depth with suppleness and a wide range of expressive colour, qualities that Fauré particularly valued.

Only one of Fauré's songs – 'Nocturne' (Op. 43, No. 2, from 1886) <sup>[20]</sup> – was originally published for alto or bass (before then being made available in transpositions), though one or two others have an original compass narrow enough to suit both medium and low voices (notably 'Dans la forêt de septembre' (Op. 85, No. 1) <sup>[14]</sup>). His earliest song written for low voice appears to be the Baudelaire setting 'La rançon' <sup>[2]</sup>, the surviving manuscript of which is in B minor (as on this recording); the resulting tessitura vividly highlights the stark opening, the vocal line rubbing close against the bass in the piano. This key for the song has long been unknown, for it was first published in C, doubtless to make it available to a larger range of voices – probably a publisher's decision at a time when Fauré was still little known and had limited sway in such matters.

This recording takes considerable impetus from a new critical edition of all Fauré's songs, presently underway from Peters Edition (edited by myself and Emily Kilpatrick). Besides correcting literally hundreds of errors in the old prints, and offering many optional variants from manuscripts and original editions, the new edition puts Fauré's earliest songs in logical sequence (since 1879 the traditional old 'First Collection'<sup>4</sup> had printed them in a garbled, meaningless order<sup>5</sup>). This re-ordering clarifies Fauré's methodical progression, following his early Victor Hugo settings, to poets such as Baudelaire and Gautier, each new poet spurring him to explore new musical techniques and expressive directions. With the exceptions of Hugo and Baudelaire, Fauré knew most of his poets personally, a natural trait for a composer who as a schoolboy won prizes in literature and who, all his life, could amuse friends like Saint-Saëns and Dukas by writing to them in rhyming couplets. Not surprisingly in that context, Fauré's colleagues recalled his insistence on making sense of any poem being sung: his natural sense of tempo related to that of the spoken poem; on his prompting, Claire Croiza urged her students to practise reciting the poem before adding the music.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> From 1908 the main body of Fauré's songs, apart from his larger song-cycles, became available in three twenty-song 'Collections', the first of which had first appeared from the publisher Choudens in 1879, containing songs that had been published from 1869 onwards.

<sup>5</sup> The opus numbers 1–8 sometimes attached to Fauré's first twenty published songs are a spurious accretion from the 1890s: pasted over the already garbled sequence of the 'First Collection' for cataloguing purposes, they have no musical or chronological basis, and the 'First Collection' itself never used these labels. As it happens, that collection does start with Fauré's first surviving work, 'Le papillon et la fleur', resulting in the one technically accurate label of Op. 1, No. 1. The present essay thus lists only the later authentic opus numbers, labelling 'Prison' by its correct original opus number, 68, as in the new Peters Edition.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Bannerman, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

Fauré's three Baudelaire settings, long dispersed across the traditional 'First Collection', are in fact so tautly linked as to suggest a mini-cycle. 'Hymne' [1], appears to be the earliest, composed in 1870, the year of the Franco-Prussian War and Siege of Paris, at the same time as Fauré's friends Chabrier and Duparc both set Baudelaire's 'L'invitation au voyage'; until this time Baudelaire's poetry had been set only to light music by his *chansonnier* friends. Such a sudden synchronicity across three major composers suggests collusion, perhaps a joint initiative designed at giving French song a turbo-charge of avant-garde poetry. Fauré's other two Baudelaire settings – 'La rançon' [2] and 'Chant d'automne' [3] – were published in the late 1870s, but their character suggests they were conceived with or just after 'Hymne'. The three songs share thematic material and some compositional elements (such as leitmotif-like techniques) found nowhere else in Fauré's output of songs – qualities that remarkably suggest a subtle bow to Baudelaire's musical hero, Wagner. ('La rançon' and 'Chant d'automne', incidentally, are Fauré's first two entirely through-composed songs.) His choice of poems also suggests an aptly Baudelairean trilogy of love, reason and mortality; Jared Schwartz notes an apt whiff of the two biblical testaments across the contrasted halves of 'La rançon'.<sup>7</sup> The wildest ride of the three comes from the macabre 'Chant d'automne', a poem that highlights Baudelaire's fascination with Edgar Allen Poe. This song is by far Fauré's most adventurous piece of composition up to then, with its breathless piano prologue, the hammer-blows of its central part and a coda featuring metrical augmentation (a device harking back to Renaissance music), the voice re-entering at half the previous sounding speed over piano figurations that continue the preceding pattern, as the music moves into the major key. Fauré then masterfully undermines that new key from so many angles that it manages to make the ending aptly sound more uneasy than anything in the minor key could have done. Read from that background, and performed with requisite vigour, these three songs suggest the most radical advance in Fauré's musical language of his first forty years; they equally mark the most radical re-evaluation in the first volume of the new Peters Edition (which gives the three songs in the present order), and are recorded here for the first time as an integral set.

The remainder of this recital mixes poet-based groupings with relationships more subtly based on affinities of mood or of topic. 'Tristesse' [4], dating from the mid-1870s, can hardly be taken at face value as merely 'sad': Gautier's poem operates on several literary and evocative planes, some of them clearly parodic. The curious limping waltz with which Fauré responds (the bass sounding only on the weak beats) evokes the *café-concert*, an idiom that can be explosively passionate: here it imparts an almost Piaf-like fury through the irony of the text. The overtly tragic 'Labsent' [5] conceals a subtler irony: dating from April 1871, during the devastating upheaval of the Paris Commune, it sets a poem from the collection

<sup>7</sup> In conversation during the recording sessions.

*Les châtiments*, written by Victor Hugo in protest at the 1851 coup of Napoléon III. As Fauré's last solo setting of Hugo, 'L'absent' might be read as a deadly, apt rejoinder, marking the violent end of Napoléon III's Second Empire.

The later 'Le parfum impérissable', (Op. 76, No. 1, of 1897) [6], links subtly to these two songs, now sublimating sorrow and loss. It is the last of Fauré's five settings of Leconte de Lisle, of whom Fauré unusually would set only one poem every few years, always to particularly rich lyrical effect. A key to this treatment may lie in Leconte de Lisle's birth and childhood on the island of La Réunion in the Indian Ocean: his poetry habitually revisits the exotic, whether ancient Greece or Robert Burns' Scotland (as in Fauré's first two settings of his verse, 'Lydia' and 'Nell') or Asian rose-beauties ('Les roses d'Ispahan' and 'Le parfum impérissable'). In this last setting Fauré focuses the quietly plangent drama by marking it at a moderate rather than slow tempo, keeping the vocal narrative remarkably mobile within the slower pulsation of the piano.

With 'Après un rêve' [8], probably Fauré's most famous song, this recording explores two less well-known elements: its original pairing with 'Sérénade toscane' [7] (they date from 1877–78), and their shared source in *Canti popolari*, an anthology of Tuscan poems collected by Niccolò Tommaseo and published in Venice in 1841. From this volume Fauré's singer friend Romain Bussine<sup>8</sup> extracted two song texts and added free French adaptations for Fauré to set. The original editions gave both songs in French, with the Tuscan added below as an ostensible option, but so badly misprinted as to be largely unusable. The new Peters edition remedies this problem, prompting this first recording of the two songs in Tuscan. Each song emerges in vivid colours (Fauré's southern origins again, perhaps), including some musical word-painting specific to the Tuscan, notably for the opening phrase 'Levati, sol' in 'Après un rêve', and again with Fauré's *più mosso* marking for the line 'L'ho ben paura di perderlo il tempo' near the end of 'Sérénade toscane'. A further surprise is how naturally 'Sérénade toscane' – ostensibly an affectionate (and brilliant) spoof on the Italian tenor aria – adapts to a bass voice.

On the face of it, 'Les matelots' [9], probably from 1870 and Fauré's first setting of Théophile Gautier, appears oddly conventional in its simple strophic exuberance. The key probably lies in its sheer bravado, under which lurking dangers and tragedies hardly need stating: they would become plain enough in songs like the later 'Les berceaux' (1879), but even more immediately through the poignancy of another Gautier setting that suggests itself as a direct companion to 'Les matelots', the grief-stricken fisherman's lament of 'Chanson du pêcheur' [10]. Although the dedicatee of this song, the mezzo Pauline Viardot, was no longer

<sup>8</sup> Bussine (1830–99), a poet and professional baritone as well as an influential vocal teacher, was a co-founder in 1871, with Camille Saint-Saëns and Henri Duparc, of the Société Nationale de Musique, where many of Fauré's works were first heard.

singing in public by the 1870s, the song is one of Fauré's most operatic, and was orchestrated by him to considerable effect, becoming famous in that form.

Sixteen years after that first injection of energy from Baudelaire, Fauré's encounter with Verlaine's poetry in 1886 marked the biggest stylistic leap of his career, opening up a new degree of emotional concentration and compositional daring that also flowed into his instrumental music. Around 1890, one of France's major patrons of the arts, the Princesse de Scey-Montbéliard (born Winnaretta Singer, heiress to the sewing-machine fortune, and soon to become the Princesse de Polignac<sup>9</sup>), took up Fauré's cause, hoping in particular to persuade Verlaine to provide Fauré with an opera libretto. None ensued, the poet being too far gone in his alcoholism, but in spring 1891 Winnaretta, observing Fauré exhausted by overwork, invited him to join her and a small group of artist friends for a few 'relaxed' weeks in Venice – during which, of course, she hoped he would be inspired to compose. The result, completed in Paris that summer, was the cycle *Cinq mélodies*, Op. 58, often referred to as *Cinq mélodies de Venise*, opening with the enchanting 'Mandoline' [11] and 'En sourdine' [12]. It appears these two songs may have received first performances, at least in early versions, on evening boat excursions on the Venetian lagoon.

Fauré's final Verlaine setting, 'Prison' (Op. 68, No. 1, of December 1894) [13], forms an appendage to his Verlaine experience, most particularly to *La bonne chanson*. Verlaine's marriage in 1870 to Mathilde Mauté (the inspiration and dedicatee of *La bonne chanson*) had been followed two years later by his desertion of her for Arthur Rimbaud, on whom he subsequently pulled a pistol during an inebriated quarrel, resulting in the prison sentence that inspired this poem. As with 'L'absent', Fauré perhaps was quietly noting the violent dénouement while keeping it quarantined from *La bonne chanson* itself ('Prison' was published in 1896 as a companion song to 'Soir', on a poem by Albert Samain). The opening of 'Prison' is possibly the uneasiest calm before any storm: what breaks halfway through mixes ferocity with implacability, with alternating dynamic extremes from bar to bar. 'Qu'as-tu fait de ta jeunesse?' ('What have you done with your youth?'), Verlaine's poem devastatingly concludes, as Fauré's piano part literally ticks away the seconds (he specifically marked it 60 beats to the minute). Although 'Prison' might look like a slow song, never were appearances so deceptive, for the harmonic rhythm becomes vertiginously fast, each successive chord leaping a step or more beyond what any ear would expect.

The wide appeal of Fauré's *Requiem* reflects its subtle and unusual equilibrium of liturgy with nature and life, suggesting consolation in both life and death. A related thread of quasi-pantheistic fatalism,

<sup>9</sup> Her father was Isaac Singer, founder of what became The Singer Manufacturing Company. After the annulment of her first marriage, to Prince Louis de Scey-Montbéliard, Winnaretta entered into what turned out to be a warmly companionable *mariage blanc* with Prince Edmond de Polignac (both were homosexual), one that was based on their love of the arts and particularly music; their salon in Paris saw, and often sponsored, first performances of many important works.

endemic to the long nineteenth century, finds its most explicit expression in Fauré's song-cycle *La chanson d'Ève* (Op. 95; 1906–10), but is also fed by a variety of his poets. Two poems by Catulle Mendès (one of the prominent French *wagnériens* of his era) spurred Fauré to dramatic contrasts in 1902 with his 3 *Mémoires* of Op. 85, opening with 'Dans la forêt de septembre' [14], a poem that evokes the artist's identification with an autumn forest in implacable decay. As early as the mid-1870s Fauré had taken up a related theme of aging in Victor Hugo's 'Tristesse d'Olympio' [15], setting it in a two-part form redolent of a Schubertian *scena*. 'Olympio' (Hugo's sobriquet for himself) returns to a spot where natural surroundings had formerly matched his youthful happiness, only for it now to seem as if he were walled off from it, forgotten by a Nature implacably continuing its cycle of death and rebirth. This powerful *scena* is still almost unknown, Fauré having left it unpublished, perhaps because it sets only a part of Hugo's much longer poem.

Armand Silvestre was personally well known to Fauré, who set a dozen of his poems from 1887 onwards. With a light poetic (and musical) touch, 'Aurore' (Op. 39, No. 1, of 1884) [16] reflects happily on the cycles of day and night, light and dark, in a setting that Fauré crafted with minute architectural care. Sunset and sunrise receive very different treatment in Mendès's metaphoric 'La fleur qui va sur l'eau' [17], the second of the three Op. 85 songs, as wind, storm and wave threaten a lone buoyant flower. This 1902 setting carries the metaphor to the performers, the vocal line buffeted by a wild piano part with an ostinato theme that first lurks half-under the surface, only later emerging clearly. Silvestre was the author also of 'Fleur jetée' (Op. 39, No. 2, of 1884) [18], the lone flower becoming a metaphor for the fury of thwarted love – a topic that prompts surprising vehemence from a Fauré who perhaps was still affected by Marianne Viardot's rejection a decade earlier (the pair had been engaged for a short period). The piano part clearly recalls Schubert's *Erlkönig*, though Fauré articulates his quick repeated octaves in pairs (grouped in slower threes) rather than Schubert's fast triplets.

If the topic of love hardly requires explanation in this repertoire, a subtler shade comes from love tenderly shared. *Le don silencieux* (Op. 92) [19], was the fruit of a few concentrated days in 1906 towards the end of Fauré's happy summer stay in Vitznau, near Lucerne. To his wife he wrote, 'as it doesn't at all resemble any of my other works, nor anything else I know, I'm very happy'.<sup>10</sup> The title of the song (which doesn't appear on the poem) appears to have been suggested by the Belgian author of the poem, Marie Closset, whom Fauré at the time still knew only by her *nom de plume*, Jean Dominique. As often with Fauré, over an ostensibly slow pulse the vocal line unrolls with disconcerting nimbleness and the harmonic rhythm is swift, combining urgency with underlying calm.

<sup>10</sup> Philippe Fauré-Fremiet (ed.), *Gabriel Fauré: Lettres intimes*, Grasset, Paris, 1951, p. 121.

Although published in separate opus groups, ‘Nocturne’ (Op. 43, No. 2) [20], and ‘Les présents’ (Op. 46, No. 1) [21], make an obvious pair as Fauré’s two settings of the symbolist poet Villiers de l’Isle-Adam. One song raptly contemplates the stars reflecting the poet’s love, the other addresses the beloved in a manner that presages the more perfumed late symbolism of Marie Closset. ‘Au bord de l’eau’ [22], composed around 1875, probably as a pair with ‘Ici-bas’ of 1874 [23], illustrates how the poetry of Sully Prudhomme prompted from Fauré a new quality of picturesque dialogue between piano and voice. Love again is contemplated in unison with nature, both seen here, at least for once, as never-ending.

‘Ici-bas’ reciprocates ‘Au bord de l’eau’ with longing for such ideals, contrasting them with the inevitable disappointments of earthbound realms. For over a century a major edition headed this song *Adagio*, although other prints maintained Fauré’s original marking *Andantino*; although the *Adagio* marking has prompted some heavily tragic interpretation, the literal connotation of the word as ‘at ease’ rather suggests that Fauré may still have meant a flowing conception of a wistful rather than tragic mood – in which, indeed, a sinuous flow enhances the depths. Fauré originally ended the song with a rising piano figure, as if ‘from down here’ up to the dreamt-of realms; for publication he reversed its direction, ending instead with the poet in the here-and-now. Apparently contradictory, the two gestures effectively convey the same metaphor.

Not wistful at all is the proud gondolier of ‘Barcarolle’ [24], in a masterly Venetian evocation (the poet, Marc Monnier, was Italian-born). Fauré retained a special fondness for this song, the manuscript of which he gave many years later to one of his favourite singers, Mimi Girette-Risler. Vehement restlessness returns for the tragic ‘Le Voyageur’ (Op. 18, No. 2) [25], with shades of Schubert again, in the first of Fauré’s Silvestre settings (probably of 1878). Tellingly, most of the Silvestre poems set by Fauré were sub-headed by the poet *Vers pour être chantés* (‘Lines to be sung’).

For over a century, Fauré’s songs have remained little explored by deeper voices. In fact, they lend themselves superbly to bass voice (enhanced here by the exceptionally clear registers of a Bösendorfer piano), inviting low-voice singers on a journey of new exploration and discovery.

# THE BASIS FOR A BASS RECORDING

by Jared Schwartz

Out of the hundreds of recordings devoted to classical French song repertoire, there are few for the low male voice. This lacuna stems from the rarity of the bass voice itself; it is the rarest voice-type, with the lowest range, or tessitura, of all human voices. Most concert song-repertoire for male voices has been typically written for the medium range (baritone) because that is the most common type, and a composer understandably writes with the intention of being performed. So the male voices in the two extremes, high (tenors) and low (basses) often search for song-repertoire or, as is the case with this album, resort to the transposition of pre-existing works. This predicament confronted me as I began to perform solo voice recitals and struggled to find songs that fit the low tessitura of a bass.

The defining characteristic of a bass voice is that it must adjust technically during the passage from the low (chest voice) to the high (head voice) pitches. Every voice-type tends to make this shift on a different set of notes. For me, this shift must occur much lower than for any of the other, higher male voice-types. As I sing from very low (the lowest G on most pianos) to very high (the G below a soprano's high C), there is a sensation of change, called a *passaggio*, when I sing the F below middle C. Then, as I sing each higher pitch, every successive ascending note requires a certain proportional adjustment within my pharyngeal cavity (my throat). In contrast, a tenor does not begin adjusting until he reaches the middle C of the piano, a fifth higher in pitch.

During the selection of repertoire for this album, we tested all of Fauré's songs to decide which ones could be performed in lower keys without losing their intrinsic musical qualities. We quickly realised that for a bass recording most of the songs would have to be transposed lower than even the lowest previously published key. Only three songs did not require transposition because Fauré had originally written them for low voice. The first of these is 'La rançon' [2]. Its poem describes a man ploughing a field of rock-hard lava, perhaps mirroring the biblical curse laid upon Adam, obliging him to toil the earth perpetually. The low, God-fearing range is appropriate for the way in which the melody forces itself through the turmoil of the rhythmic textures in the piano part. When the song suddenly turns to the hopeful message of art and love, the melody is transformed into a flowing legato line wrapping the listener in the comfort of peace. The second, 'Nocturne' [20], contains a beautiful melody that could be performed by a cello. Above its vocal melody, the right hand of the piano

depicts the twinkling stars of the poem. Using a key that allows the voice a low, rich vocal timbre, Fauré created a melody that winds in and out of the crystalline piano-texture, thus creating a moment of sheer tranquillity. The remaining song originally written for low voice is ‘Dans la forêt de septembre’ [14]. The mellow consolation of the forest described in the poem must have inspired Fauré to choose a key lower than that of most of his songs. The melody dwells in a low range as the poet meditates on his human mortality. The singer’s vocal tone implies solidarity with the surrounding trees as his impending death unites him with the auburn hues of autumn.

The choice of a few songs on this album may come as a surprise: for instance, ‘Mandoline’ [11], ‘Barcarolle’ [24] or ‘Fleur jetée’ [18]. Most people associate the low pitches of a bass voice with heavy, slow-moving repertoire. Although this vocal colour may be true for some basses, I have always had an affinity for quickly moving notes (coloratura), and so the rapid, lively, florid passages (melismas) of ‘Mandoline’ and ‘Barcarolle’ were an instant draw for me. ‘Fleur jetée’ is typically performed by sopranos or tenors, but I think there is a degree of frustration and anger that is enhanced by the sound of a bass voice as it expresses the poet’s exasperation over his lost love.

Some of these songs take on a new dimension when sung by a bass voice, particularly ‘Le Voyageur’ [25] and ‘Tristesse’ [4]. In the former, the tolling of the death bell in the piano part opens a resounding ode to self-destruction. The man has reached the point of complete despair and his cries are only deepened through the low tones of the bass voice. His final notes ring out on a D, a bass high note that trumpets out with one terminal call that life has betrayed him. Disillusionment with all of life is also powerfully conveyed in ‘Tristesse’, a song that has often been sung in a very gently resigned mood. I found that my voice was able to convey different colours in this story of a pathetically lonely man who sees parading before him three typical life-situations that encompass everything he lacks. Typical life-like scenes that bring happiness to most people create in him only dark despair as he realises that he is friendless and will never find love. It is effective for my voice to pour out his resulting hatred for the world in the final verse, using the dark tones of the bass voice in its low registers.

Mary Dibbern, artistic advisor for this album, presented a list of possible songs to me, and then I chose the ones that would best suit my voice type. As I reviewed her suggestions, my first priority was that the subject of the poem be credible when expressed by a bass voice. There are certain scenarios that I knew would not work for the simple reason that some poems, such as ‘C’est la paix’ (Op. 114), are written specifically from a woman’s perspective. Some songs in Fauré’s *œuvre*, such as ‘Mai’ (first published as Op. 1, No. 2), celebrate ethereal qualities of spring and budding flowers. Although often sung by other types of male, or female, voices, obviously it would sound a bit silly in mine. After analysing the subject-

matter of each song, I examined the range, or tessitura, and tested several possible keys to work out whether it would sound good in my lower range, and also to hear whether the piano part would either sound too muddy in its low register or include notes that do not even exist on that instrument! We also consulted Roy Howat to make sure that the keys I chose would satisfy his pianistic criteria for each song.

Once I was sure that all of the necessary criteria were met, and that I felt an affinity toward the song in question, it was included on the album. I have transposed songs by other composers and find that Fauré's vocal repertoire lends itself quite well to this transformation. In Schubert's *Lieder*, for instance, the piano part was originally written below the range of the vocal part. It is as if the voice part always rides on top of the pianist's right hand. Transposition of Schubert's songs often results in both hands of the pianist playing continually in the lowest range of the piano, and the intrinsic expressive qualities of the music are lost when the piano uses only the bottom half of its possible range. In the songs of Fauré, by contrast, the range of the voice part is often intermingled with the range of the piano, as if it were moving inside the pianist's hands. When a transposition to a lower key is created, this textural relationship between voice and piano is not destroyed and the music still conveys its original intent.

The songs of Gabriel Fauré are among some of the finest ever crafted. I am pleased that so much of his music can be effectively transposed for the bass voice, and I look forward to performing it throughout the rest of my career. I hope you will enjoy these new recordings and interpretations, which aspire to cast the music of such a well-known composer in a new light.

## THE BACKGROUND TO THIS RECORDING PROJECT

by Mary Dibbern

An explanation of the origins of this project seems relevant, both for those who know Gabriel Fauré's songs and for those hearing them for the first time. If Dallas, Texas, might seem an unusual originating venue for a recording of French *mélodies*, my own relationship with Fauré began there when I studied collaborative piano with Paul Vellucci, an Italian maestro who taught at Southern Methodist University. Half a century before I worked on my Master of Music with him, he had returned to his native Europe to study with Nadia Boulanger in Paris. Maestro Vellucci transmitted to me his love for and understanding of this music, just as Mademoiselle Boulanger, herself a student of Fauré's, had transmitted it to him. A few years later I moved to Paris, and I in turn studied

with ‘Mademoiselle’, as we all called her, in the ninetieth and final year of her life. During my ensuing thirty years’ residence in France, I worked extensively with other renowned Fauré interpreters – most importantly, the outstanding baritone Gérard Souzay. And thus, in the beautifully time-tested tradition of transmission-by-mentoring, it has become my pleasure to restudy the songs found in this recording with a singer of the next generation, the bass Jared Schwartz.

Another component of this CD is the collaborative pianism of the outstanding expert in French music, Roy Howat, who, with his wife and co-editor Emily Kilpatrick, is completing the first critical edition of the *Complete Songs of Fauré* for Peters Edition in London. One evening in Dallas, Roy and Jared met in my house over dinner and, as often happens among musicians, after our meal we performed for one another. After hearing Jared sing three of Fauré’s songs, Roy was especially pleased with his interpretation of ‘Chanson du pêcheur (Lamento)’ exclaiming that he had never before fully appreciated its beauty and power. He in turn sat down at my piano to let us hear a number of songs from his new edition, with Jared joining in to sight-read many of the very songs destined for this album.

By the end of the evening, it was obvious to all of us that Fauré’s songs should be performed by low voices such as Jared’s, and so we began to develop this project, designed to demonstrate that a sonorous yet flexible bass voice was well-suited for repertoire usually programmed for higher, lighter ones. The pleasure I have had as organiser and artistic producer for this recording was born from, and continued with, an international collaboration of these friends who believe in the power and lasting importance of Fauré’s songs.

It is a tribute to any great music that it can continually be reborn decades, or even a century, later and that it can be played higher, lower, faster or slower without altering the quality and sincere beauty emerging from the genius of the composer. We welcome you to our adventure of rediscovering the songs of Gabriel Fauré through the collaboration of Jared Schwartz and Roy Howat.

*Mary Dibbern, the artistic director for this recording, is currently Music Director of Education for The Dallas Opera after having resided in Paris from 1978 to 2009. She is an internationally known specialist in vocal coaching and recital accompaniment, a recording artist for Harmonia Mundi France, Claves and Maguelone, and an author for Pendragon Press. Her website can be found at [www.Mary-Dibbern.com](http://www.Mary-Dibbern.com).*

The young American bass **Jared Schwartz** is a versatile artist with a rich and varied performance experience in opera, art song, oratorio, musical theatre, gospel and chamber music. A review in *Opera America* of his roles in the world premiere of Charles Strouse's opera *East and West* praised him for his 'comedic perfection'. In 2013, he received the 'People's Choice' Award in the American Traditions Vocal Competition (Savannah, Georgia). His recitals in the USA, France and Austria have included collaboration with the pianist Mary Dibbern in the inaugural seasons of the Joan Stockstill Godsey Concert Series at Mercer University (Macon, Georgia) and the Fine Arts Series in Sulphur Springs, Texas, as well as at the University of Texas at Dallas, St Matthew's Cathedral Arts (Dallas) and the Puccini Society (Dallas). Jared Schwartz recently interpreted the bass solos in Verdi's Requiem with the New Jersey Choral Society under the direction of Eric Dale Knapp and in Fauré's Requiem with the conductor Michie Akin. He collaborated with Grammy-nominated harpsichordist Jory Vinikour at the Early Music Festival Rocky Ridge Music Center. He will make his Chicago debut in the role of Erode in the Haymarket Opera's performances of Stradella's *San Giovanni Battista*.



Photo: Beau Burmpas

Jared Schwartz is a graduate of Bethel College (Mishawaka, Indiana) and the Eastman School of Music and currently continues his vocal studies in New York with the renowned pedagogue David Jones. He attended the Franz Schubert Institute (Austria) for masterclasses in Lieder interpretation and studied French at the Alliance française. He is also a composer and instrumentalist with an extensive background in piano, violin and horn. His first recording was *Hope*, an album of his original music, for which he both sang and conducted musicians from the Dallas and Fort Worth Symphonies. In 2012 his score for the film *The Sirens* won the Houston Worldfest Gold Remi award in the Music Shorts category.

His website can be found at [www.jaredschwartz.com](http://www.jaredschwartz.com).

**Roy Howat** is renowned as both pianist and scholar whose concerts, broadcasts and lectures regularly take him worldwide. A graduate of King's College, Cambridge, he studied in Paris with Vlado Perlemuter (who himself worked with Gabriel Fauré), and is regularly invited to teach and perform French music in France. He has also conducted professionally, played violin in major London

chamber orchestras and held university posts on several continents. Following a Creative Arts Fellowship at London's Royal College of Music, he is now Keyboard Research Fellow at the Royal Academy of Music in London and Research Fellow at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow.

Roy Howat was one of the scholar-musicians invited by the late François Lesure, along with Pierre Boulez and others, to found the Paris-based *Œuvres Complètes de Claude Debussy*, for which he has edited much of the piano music. For Peters Edition he has produced critical editions of piano and chamber music by Gabriel Fauré, a series that now embraces Fauré's complete songs (co-edited with Emily Kilpatrick). Their first volume in this new series was awarded the prize for Best New Edition 2015 at the Frankfurt Annual International Music Fair (Musikmesse). Roy Howat has also edited

Fauré's First Piano Quintet for Éditions Hamelle-Leduc (Paris) and Chabrier's solo piano music for a Dover volume. He is the author of the books *Debussy in Proportion* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983) and *The Art of French Piano Music: Debussy, Ravel, Fauré, Chabrier* (Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2009), the latter named 2009 Book of the Year by *International Piano* as well as earning enthusiastic citations in several other major journals. His other publications include an English edition of Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger's classic *Chopin, Pianist and Teacher* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986), and numerous book chapters.

Roy Howat collaborates in concert with numerous distinguished soloists and chamber groups, including the Panocha Quartet of Prague. He has recorded piano and chamber music by Debussy, Fauré, Chabrier and others for ABC Classics, Arte Nova/BMG, Tall Poppies, Editions STIL, Guild Records and Linn. This is his first recording for Toccata Classics.

His website can be found at [www.royhowat.com](http://www.royhowat.com).



photo: Fleur Kilpatrick

1 Hymne

*Poem by Charles Baudelaire*

A la très-chère, à la très-belle  
Qui remplit mon coeur de clarté,  
A l'ange, à l'idole immortelle,  
Salut en l'immortalité !

Elle se répand dans ma vie  
Comme un air imprégné de sel,  
Et dans mon âme inassouvie  
Verse le goût de l'éternel.

Comment, amour incorruptible,  
T'exprimer avec vérité?  
Grain de musc qui gis, invisible,  
Au fond de mon éternité !

A la très-bonne, à la très-belle  
Qui fait ma joie et ma santé,  
A l'ange, à l'idole immortelle,  
Salut en l'immortalité !

2 La rançon

*Poem by Charles Baudelaire*

L'homme a, pour payer sa rançon,  
Deux champs au tuf profond et riche,  
Qu'il faut qu'il remue et défriche  
Avec le fer de la raison ;

Pour obtenir la moindre rose,  
Pour extorquer quelques épis,  
Des pleurs salés de son front gris,  
Sans cesse il faut qu'il les arrose !

1 Hymn

To my dearest, to my most beautiful,  
Who fills my heart with light,  
To the angel, to the immortal idol,  
May you live forever!

She moves through my life  
Like a salt-infused breeze,  
And into my thirsty soul  
Pours the taste of eternity.

Perfect love, how is it possible  
To clearly describe you!  
Are you an invisible grain of musk  
Found in the depth of my heart?

To my best, my most beautiful one,  
Who brings me joy and health,  
To my angel, to my immortal idol  
May you live forever!

2 The Ransom

Man inherits, to pay his ransom,  
Two rich, deep fields  
That he must till and cultivate  
With the hoe of his intellect;

To coax out even the smallest rose,  
To extract just a few heads of grain,  
With the salty sweat of his aging brow,  
He must constantly water them!

L'un est l'Art, et l'autre l'Amour.  
– Pour rendre le juge propice,  
Lorsque de la stricte justice  
Paraîtra le terrible jour,

Il faudra lui montrer des granges  
Plaines de moissons, et des fleurs  
Dont les formes et les couleurs  
Gagnent le suffrage des Anges.

### 3 Chant d'automne

*Poem by Charles Baudelaire*

Bientôt nous plongerons dans les froides ténèbres ;  
Adieu, vive clarté de nos étés trop courts !  
J'entends déjà tomber avec un choc funèbre  
Le bois retentissant sur le pavé des cours.

J'écoute en frémissant chaque bûche qui tombe ;  
L'échafaud qu'on bâtit n'a pas d'écho plus sourd.  
Mon esprit est pareil à la tour qui succombe  
Sous les coups du bélier infatigable et lourd.  
Il me semble, bercé par ce choc monotone,  
Qu'on cloue en grande hâte un cercueil quelque part...  
Pour qui ? – C'était hier l'été ; voici l'automne !  
Ce bruit mystérieux sonne comme un départ.

J'aime de vos longs yeux la lumière verdâtre,  
Douce beauté, mais aujourd'hui tout m'est amer,  
Et rien, ni votre amour, ni le boudoir, ni l'âtre,  
Ne me vaut le soleil rayonnant sur la mer.

### 4 Tristesse

*Poem by Théophile Gautier*

Avril est de retour.  
La première des roses,  
De ses lèvres mi-closes,  
Rit au premier beau jour ;

One is Art, and the other is Love.  
– To gain the judge's favour,  
When strict justice is meted out  
On the Day of the Lord,

He must show Him barns  
Full of harvests, and flowers  
Whose forms and colours  
Earn the votes of the Angels.

### 3 Song of Autumn

Soon we will plunge into the dark shadows;  
Farewell to our too-brief summer's light!  
I already hear the funereal thuds of timber  
Exploding onto the stones of distant courtyards.

I shiver with horror as I hear each log split,  
Building a gallows would sound less sinister.  
My thoughts are like towers crumbling  
Under zealous blows of a relentless battering-ram.  
Hypnotised by this rhythmic thudding, I seem to hear  
A hammer nailing shut a coffin lid. Whose?  
Yesterday was summer; now it's autumn!  
This mysterious noise rings out its adieu.

Gentle beauty, I love your wide eyes with their  
Greenish glow, but now all is bitterness,  
And nothing, neither your love, nor bedroom, nor hearth,  
Can replace the sun shining over the sea.

### 4 Sadness

April is back at it.  
Roses begin to bloom,  
Their half-open lips  
Smile at this spring day;

La terre bienheureuse  
Souvre 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  
Séparille 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 leurs galants ;  
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.

### 5 L'absent

*Poem by Victor Hugo*

- Sentiers où l'herbe se balance,  
Vallons, coteaux, bois chevelus,  
Pourquoi ce deuil et ce silence ?
- Celui qui venait ne vient plus.

Everything in the world  
Celebrates love and delight.  
Love is flaunted everywhere.

But me? A terrible sadness oppresses my heart.

Drunken carousers,  
Chanting raucous songs,  
Lounging around, slurping  
Wine and women;  
Their strident music  
And shrieks of laughter  
Ring through the air.

But me? A terrible sadness oppresses my heart.

In dresses thin as air,  
Fair-skinned girls  
Tarry under the trees  
In the arms of their lovers;  
The voluptuous moon  
Beams silvery light  
Over their lingering kisses.

But me? A terrible sadness oppresses my heart.

And now I forget everything,  
Forget these men, these women,  
Forget my body, my soul,  
Even my mangy dog.  
Tell someone to start digging  
My grave on this patch of grass.  
No need for a tombstone.

For me? A terrible sadness oppresses my heart.

### 5 The Absent One

- Pathways where grass sways,  
Valleys, hills, leafy woods,  
Why such mourning and such silence?
- The one who came will never return.

– Pourquoi personne à ta fenêtre,  
Et pourquoi ton jardin sans fleurs,  
O maison ! où donc est ton maître ?  
– Je ne sais pas, il est ailleurs.

– Chien, veille au logis. – Pourquoi faire ?  
La maison est vide à présent.  
– Enfant, qui pleures-tu ? – Mon père.  
– Femme, qui pleures-tu ? – L'absent.

– Où donc est-il allé ? – Dans l'ombre.  
– Flots qui gémissiez sur l'écueil,  
D'où venez-vous ? – Du baigne sombre.  
– Et qu'apportez-vous ? – Un cercueil.

### 6 Le parfum impérissable

*Poem by Leconte de Lisle*

Quand la fleur du soleil, la rose de Lahor,  
De son âme odorante a rempli goutte à goutte  
La fiole d'argile ou de cristal ou d'or,  
Sur le sable qui brûle on peut l'épandre toute.

Les fleuves et la mer inonderaient en vain  
Ce sanctuaire étroit qui la tint enfermée ;  
Il garde en se brisant son arôme divin,  
Et sa poussière heureuse en reste parfumée.

Puisque par la blessure ouverte de mon coeur  
Tu t'écoules de même, ô céleste liqueur,  
Inexprimable amour qui m'enflammais pour elle !

Qu'il lui soit pardonné, que mon mal soit béni !  
Par de là l'heure humaine et le temps infini  
Mon coeur est embaumé d'une odeur immortelle !

– Why is no one at your window,  
And where are your garden's flowers,  
House! Where is your owner?  
– I do not know, he is absent.

– Dog, guard the house. – Why should I?  
The house stands empty now.  
– Child, for whom do you weep? – My father.  
– Wife, for whom do you weep? – The absent one.

– Where has he gone? – To his death.  
– Waves moaning through the reefs,  
From where have you come? – From the dark prison.  
– And what do you carry? – A coffin.

### 6 The Imperishable Perfume

When the sun's flower, the rose of Lahor,  
Using its fragrant essence has filled, drop by drop,  
Flasks of clay, of crystal, or of gold,  
Enough to spread over every scorched desert,

Rivers and the ocean could not flood  
The narrow container enclosing all of it ;  
This divine scent would even remain in the broken bits,  
Fortunate to conserve such imperishable perfume.

In the same way, from my heart's open wound  
You also flow over me, heavenly liquor  
Burning me with indescribable love for her.

Forgive her and transform my pain into a blessing  
So that, during both human and infinite time,  
My heart will be perfumed with immortal fragrance!

**7** **Sérénade toscane (O tu che dormi)**  
*Anonymous Tuscan poem, coll. Tommaseo*

O tu che dormi e riposata stai  
'N testo bel letto senza pensamento,  
Risvegliati un pochino, e sentirai  
Tuo servo che per te fa un gran lamento.  
Risvegliati, madonna, in tempo, un'ora:  
Lo sentirai cantar che lè di fuora.

Non posso più cantar:  
Stanotte son dormito a ciel sereno,  
E son dormito all'ombra d'una noce  
Dove non era nè paglia nè fieno.

Non posso più cantar, che non ho voce,  
E m'entra in bocca, e non mi lassa dire,  
Non posso più cantar, che tira vento!

L'ho ben paura di perdarlo il tempo.  
Fossi sicur, non andere' a dormire.  
Fossi sicuro, a dormir 'n andarei:  
Chesto bel tempo non lo perderei.

**8** **Après un rêve (Levati, sol)**  
*Anonymous Tuscan poem, coll. Tommasco*

Levati, sol, occhi miei tanto dormire,  
Il traditor dell sonno m'ha ingannata;  
Il bello amante m'ha fatto sparire.

Se lo ritrovo quell'amor giocondo,  
Io mai più mi farò tradir del sonno.  
Se lo ritrovo quell'amor gentile,  
Mai più dal sonno mi farò tradire.

**7** **Tuscan Serenade (Oh you who sleep)**

Listen my love, sleeping  
Blissfully in your tender bed,  
Arise and heed your humble servant's  
Passionate lament.  
Wake up, my love, just for a moment:  
Hear the serenade I'm singing outside.

I cannot sing any more:  
Last night I slept alone under the empty sky,  
Slept in the cold shadow of a walnut-tree  
Without the comfort of hay or straw.

I cannot sing any more, I have lost my voice,  
And my mouth cannot even utter a word,  
I cannot sing any more, hear the wind howl!

I am afraid we will never be together again.  
If we were, I would not go to sleep.  
If we were, it would be impossible to sleep.  
I would not want to lose any more time.

**8** **After a Dream (Wake up, sun)**

Wake up, sun, for the moon is awake;  
Shine sleep out of my eyes,  
For the traitorous moon has robbed me;  
My beautiful lover has vanished.

If only I could find again love's happiness,  
I would never let sleep overpower me again.  
If only I could find again love's comfort,  
I would never let sleep overpower me again.

9 Les matelots

Poem by Théophile Gautier

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,  
A notre vieille mère,  
A 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 !

10 La chanson du pêcheur (Lamento)

Poem by Théophile Gautier

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 !

9 The Sailors

Over deep, blue water  
We travel far from land,  
Encircling the world  
With a silvery furrow,  
From the Sunda Islands,  
To India's burnished sky,  
As far as polar icecaps...

We think of terra firma  
That we continue to flee,  
Of our aging mother,  
Of our youthful loves;  
But the gentle wavelet  
With its light refrain,  
Quells all our pain.

Exquisite existence!  
Our hammock is a nest,  
We live above the depths  
Of infinity's dark breast;  
With waves shaving the peaks,  
Of this grand deserted blue,  
We travel on with God!

10 Song of the Fisherman (Lament)

My only love is dead:  
My tears will flow evermore;  
In her grave are buried  
My soul and my love.  
Without waiting for me,  
She escaped to heaven;  
The angel who took her away  
Refused to take me.  
It is too bitter to bear!  
Alone, I retreat to the sea!

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 ;  
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 !

### **II** Mandoline

*Poem by Paul Verlaine*

Les donneurs de sérénades  
Et les belles écouteuses  
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

Her pale body  
Lies in the coffin.  
The whole world  
Joins in my mourning!  
Like an abandoned dove  
Weeping and remembering its loss,  
My soul weeps and feels  
Its lonely despair.  
It is too bitter to bear!  
Alone, I retreat to the sea!

Endless night encloses me  
Like a burial shroud;  
I cry out this song of love  
That only heaven can hear.  
Ah! how beautiful she was!  
And how I loved her!  
I will never love a woman  
As I have loved her.  
It is too bitter to bear!  
Alone, I retreat to the sea!

### **II** Mandolin

The singers of serenades  
And the ladies who listen  
Murmur meaningless platitudes  
Under the swaying branches.

Here is Tircis and there is Aminte,  
And that crashing bore, Clitandre,  
And here comes Damis, whose eloquent pen  
Writes lovely poems for heartless girls.

Dressed in short silk jackets  
Or in long, stylish gowns,  
They seem elegant and happy  
While their hazy blue-black shadows

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

**12 En sourdine**

*Poem by Paul Verlaine*

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

Mêlons nos âmes, nos cœurs  
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 des gazons roux.

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

**13 Prison**

*Poem by Paul Verlaine*

Le ciel est, par-dessus le toit,  
Si bleu, si calme !  
Un arbre, par-dessus le toit,  
Berce sa palme.

Swirl rhapsodically  
Under pink and grey moonlight,  
And the mandolin flutters  
In the frivolously blowing breezes.

**12 Muted**

Tranquility spreads through dappled shadows  
Crafted by the branches high above  
While our love is deeply filled  
With this profound silence.

Our souls, our hearts,  
And our enraptured senses intermingle  
With sensually flowing waves  
Of pines and blossoming branches.

Gently close your eyes,  
Cross your arms over your heart,  
And with complete trust  
Release à jour anguish.

We will be cradled together  
In the rocking, gentle breeze  
Brushing past your feet  
In waves rippling the ruddy grasses.

And then, as the calmness of night  
Descends from the dark oak trees,  
Our sensual longing will find its voice  
In the nightingale's song.

**13 Prison**

The sky, above the roof,  
Is so blue, so calm!  
Branches, above the roof,  
Sway back and forth.

La cloche dans le ciel qu'on voit  
Doucement tinte,  
Un oiseau sur l'arbre qu'on voit  
Chante sa plainte.

Mon Dieu, mon Dieu, la vie est là,  
Simple et tranquille !  
Cette paisible rumeur-là  
Vient de la ville.

Qu'as-tu fait, ô toi que voilà,  
Pleurant sans cesse,  
Dis, qu'as-tu fait, toi que voilà,  
De ta jeunesse?

**[14] Dans la forêt de septembre**  
*Poem by Catulle Mendès*

Ramure aux rumeurs amollies,  
Troncs sonores que l'âge creuse,  
L'antique forêt douloureuse  
S'accorde à nos mélancolies.

O sapins agriffés au gouffre,  
Nids déserts aux branches brisées,  
Halliers brûlés, fleurs sans rosées,  
Vous savez bien comme l'on souffre !

Et lorsque l'homme, passant blême,  
Pleure dans le bois solitaire,  
Des plaintes d'ombre et de mystère  
L'accueillent en pleurant de même.

Bonne forêt ! promesse ouverte  
De l'exil que la vie implore !  
Je viens d'un pas alerte encore  
Dans ta profondeur encor verte.

The bell, I see in the sky  
Slowly tolls,  
A bird, I see in the tree  
Sings its sad song.

My God, my God, life is out there,  
Calm and serene!  
This peaceful tumult  
Belongs to the city.

What have you done, you I see here,  
Endlessly crying,  
Tell me, what have you done, you I see here,  
With your youth?

**[14] In the September Forest**

Softly rustling branches,  
Resounding trees hollowed by time,  
This sombre ancient forest  
Embodies my regrets.

Pines leaning into the void,  
Nests abandoned in broken branches,  
Burnt-out thickets, dried-up flowers:  
You understand my anguish!

And as the pale, heartbroken man  
Weeps in the deserted forest,  
Mournful murmurs of mysterious  
Spirits weep his welcome.

Dear forest! You offer up the promise  
Of life's long-awaited exile  
As I, still sturdy, walk into  
What is remains of your greenness.

Mais d'un fin bouleau de la sente,  
Une feuille, un peu rousse, frôle  
Ma tête et tremble à mon épaule ;  
C'est que la forêt vieillissante,

Sachant l'hiver, où tout avorte,  
Déjà proche en moi comme en elle,  
Me fait l'aumône fraternelle  
De sa première feuille morte !

**[15] Tristesse d'Olympio**

*Poem by Victor Hugo*

Les champs n'étaient point noirs, les cieux n'étaient pas mornes,  
Non, le jour rayonnait dans un azur sans bornes  
    Sur la terre étendue,  
L'air était plein d'encens et les prés de verdure  
Quand il revit ces lieux où par tant de blessures  
    Son coeur s'est répandu !

Hélas ! se rappelant ses douces aventures,  
Regardant, sans entrer, par-dessus les clôtures,  
    Ainsi qu'un paria,  
Il erra tout le jour. A l'heure où la nuit tombe,  
Il se sentit le coeur triste comme une tombe,  
    Alors il s'écria :

– « O douleur! j'ai voulu, moi, dont l'âme est troublée,  
Savoir si l'urne encor conservait la liqueur,  
Et voir ce qu'avait fait cette heureuse vallée  
De tout ce que j'avais laissé là de mon coeur !

« Que peu de temps suffit pour changer toutes choses !  
Nature au front serein, comme vous oubliez !  
Et comme vous brisez dans vos métamorphoses  
Les fils mystérieux où nos coeurs sont liés !

« Eh bien ! oubliez-nous, maison, jardin, ombrages !  
Herbe, use notre seuil ! ronce, cache nos pas !

Then, from a delicate birch tree,  
A withered leaf grazes  
My head and quivers on my shoulder;  
And so the elderly forest,

Seeing that winter's death  
Is as close as my own,  
Gives me the cherished gift  
Of its first fallen leaf.

**[15] The Sadness of Olympio**

The fields were no longer dark, nor the skies dreary,  
No, the day sparkled with untold blueness  
    Over the outstretched land,  
The air was fragrant and the fields full of grass  
When he returned to these spots where his deeply wounded  
    Heart had overflowed!

As he remembered those sweet moments,  
He peered over the walls without entering,  
    Like an outcast  
He wandered around all day. By nightfall  
His heart was dead with sadness,  
    Then he cried out:

– 'I am so sad. My tormented soul wanted  
To know if the urn still held that liquor,  
And to see what this fortunate valley did  
With everything that my heart left behind!

'Everything can change in such a short time!  
Nature's serene countenance forgets it all!  
And with these changes, the mysterious threads  
That united our hearts are broken!

'I give up! Let the house, garden, and shady trees forget us!  
Grasses, erode our threshold! Hedges, hide our  
footprints!

Chantez, oiseaux ! ruisseaux, coulez ! croissez, feuillages !  
Ceux que vous oubliez ne vous oublieront pas.

« Car vous êtes pour nous l'ombre de l'amour même !  
Vous êtes l'oasis qu'on rencontre en chemin !  
Vous êtes, ô vallon, la retraite suprême  
Où nous avons pleuré nous tenant par la main ! »

**16** **Aurore**

*Poem by Armand Silvestre*

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 coeur 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.

**17** **La fleur qui va sur l'eau**

*Poem by Catulle Mendès*

Sur la mer voilée  
D'un brouillard amer  
La Belle est allée,  
La nuit, sur la mer !

Elle avait aux lèvres  
D'un air irrité,  
La Rose des Fièvres,  
La Rose Beauté !

Birds, sing! Streams, flow! Leaves, grow!  
Those whom you forget will not forget you.

'Because you are the shadow of our love!  
You are the oasis that we found on our path!  
Valley, you are the last refuge  
Where we held hands and wept!'

**16** **Dawn**

From the gardens of the night, stars fly away,  
Golden bees attracted by invisible honey;  
And the distant dawn stretches its untouched canvas,  
Weaving with silver threads the sky's azure cloak.

From my heart's dreamily intoxicated garden,  
My desires fly on the morning's footsteps,  
Gently swarming over the coppery horizon  
Singing a plaintive song, eternal and distant.

The stars chased from the clouds rush down to your feet,  
These golden exiles from the sky find your  
    flowering beauty,  
Hoping you will show them unknown paths,  
They mingle their dying light with the dawning day.

**17** **The Flower on the Water**

On the sea, veiled  
By bitter fog,  
At night my Beauty  
Set out to sea!

She indignantly  
Grasped between her lips  
The Rose of Fevers,  
The Rose of Beauty!

D'un souffle farouche  
L'ouragan hurleur  
Lui baisa la bouche  
Et lui prit la fleur !

Dans l'océan sombre,  
Moins sombre déjà,  
Où le trois mâts sombre,  
La fleur surnagea.

L'eau s'en est jouée,  
Dans ses noirs sillons ;  
C'est une bouée  
Pour les papillons.

Et l'embrun, la Houle  
Depuis cette nuit,  
Les brisants où croule  
Un sauvage bruit,

L'alcion, la voile,  
L'hirondelle autour,  
Et l'ombre et l'étoile  
Se meurent d'amour,

Et l'aurore éclosa  
Sur le gouffre clair  
Pour la seule rose  
De toute la mer !

**[18] Fleur jetée**  
*Poem by Armand Silvestre*

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

The wild whistles  
Of the screaming storm  
Kissed her mouth  
And snatched the flower!

Over the ocean's depths  
Where huge ships have sunk,  
The flower still floated  
At the break of day.

The dark furrows of water  
Toyed with it;  
It had become a buoy  
For the butterflies.

And since that night  
The spray, the surging waves,  
The savage sounds  
Of crashing reefs,

The halcyon, the sails,  
The circling terns,  
And the shadows and the stars  
All die of love,

And when dawn breaks  
Over the bright whirlpool  
It reveals the only rose  
In all the sea!

**[18] Discarded Flower**

Hurl my folly  
Into the wind,  
Flower picked as I sang  
And discarded as I dreamt!  
– Hurl my folly  
Into the wind.

Comme la fleur fauchée  
Périt l'amour.  
La main qui t'a touchée  
Fuit ma main sans retour.  
– Comme la fleur fauchée  
Périt l'amour.

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

**[19] Le don silencieux**

*Poem by Jean Dominique (Marie Closset)*

Je mettrai mes deux mains sur ma bouche, pour taire  
Ce que je voudrais tant vous dire, âme bien chère !

Je mettrai mes deux mains sur mes yeux, pour cacher  
Ce que je voudrais tant que pourtant vous cherchiez.

Je mettrai mes deux mains sur mon cœur, chère vie,  
Pour que vous ignoriez de quel cœur je vous prie !

Et puis je les mettrai doucement dans vos mains,  
Ces deux mains-ci qui meurent d'un fatigant chagrin...

Elles iront à vous, pleines de leur faiblesse,  
Toutes silencieuses, et même sans caresses,

Lasses d'avoir porté tout le poids d'un secret  
Dont ma bouche et mes yeux et mon front parleraient.

Elles iront à vous, légères d'être vides,  
Et lourdes d'être tristes, tristes d'être timides ;

Like a plucked flower  
Love perishes.  
The hand that touched you  
Shuns my hand forever.  
– Like a plucked flower  
Love perishes.

May the wind that withers you,  
Pathetic flower  
At first so radiant  
Then the next day faded,  
– May the wind that withers you  
Wither my heart!

**[19] The Silent Gift**

I shall cover my mouth with both hands, to silence  
That which I long to share with you, my love!

I shall cover my eyes with both hands, to hide  
That which I long for you to find.

I shall cover my heart with both hands, love of my life,  
So that you will not realize whose heart implores you!

And then I will very gently place in your hands,  
These two hands drooping with sorrow's weariness...

They will go to you, heavy with weakness,  
Completely silent, incapable of the slightest caress,

Weary from carrying the weight of a secret  
That my mouth and my eyes and my face might reveal.

They will go to you, light with emptiness,  
And heavy with sadness, sad with shyness;

Malheureuses et douces, et si découragées  
Que peut-être, mon Dieu, vous les recueillerez.

**20** Nocturne

*Poem by Villiers de L'Isle-Adam*

La nuit, sur le grand mystère,  
Entr'ouvre ses écrins bleus :  
Autant de fleurs sur la terre,  
Que d'étoiles dans les cieux !

On voit ses ombres dormantes  
S'éclairer à tous moments,  
Autant par les fleurs charmantes  
Que par les astres charmants.

Moi, ma nuit au sombre voile  
N'a, pour charme et pour clarté,  
Qu'une fleur et qu'une étoile  
Mon amour et ta beauté !

**21** Les présents

*Poem by Villiers de L'Isle-Adam*

Si tu demandes, quelque soir,  
Le secret de mon coeur malade,  
Je te dirai, pour t'émouvoir,  
Une très ancienne ballade !

Si tu me parles de tourments,  
D'espérance désabusée,  
J'irai te cueillir, seulement,  
Des roses pleines de rosée !

Si, pareille à la fleur des morts,  
Qui fleurit dans l'exil des tombes,  
Tu veux partager mes remords,  
Je t'apporterai des colombes !

Unhappy and gentle, and so heartbroken  
That perhaps, dear God, you will welcome them.

**20** Nocturne

Night opens its blue treasure chest  
To reveal a vast mystery:  
There are as many stars in the skies  
As flowers on earth!

We see night's sleeping shadows  
Lighten moment by moment,  
As much from these charming flowers  
As from the charming planets.

My night's sombre veil  
Obtains its charm and light  
From one flower and one star,  
My love and your beauty!

**21** Gifts

If one evening you ask me  
The secret of my heart's sadness,  
To please you I will recite  
A very ancient ballad!

If you ask me about torment  
Or hope's despair,  
My only answer will be to gather  
Roses heavy with dew!

If, like graveyard flowers  
Blossoming over lonely tombs,  
You decide to share my regrets,  
I will bring to you a few doves!

22 Au bord de l'eau

Poem by Sully-Prudhomme

S'asseoir tous deux au bord du flot qui passe,  
Le voir passer ;  
Tous deux, s'il glisse un nuage en l'espace,  
Le voir glisser ;  
A l'horizon, s'il fume un toit de chaume,  
Le voir fumer ;  
Aux alentours si quelque fleur embaume,  
S'en embaumer ;

Entendre au pied du saule où l'eau murmure  
L'eau murmurer ;  
Ne pas sentir, tant que ce rêve dure,  
Le temps durer ;  
Mais n'apportant de passion profonde  
Qu'à s'adorer,  
Sans nul souci des querelles du monde,  
Les ignorer ;  
Et seuls, tous deux devant tout ce qui lasse,  
Sans se lasser,  
Sentir l'amour, devant tout ce qui passe,  
Ne point passer !

23 Ici-bas

Poem by Sully-Prudhomme

Ici-bas tous les lilas meurent,  
Tous les chants des oiseaux sont courts,  
Je rêve aux étés qui demeurent  
Toujours...

Ici-bas les lèvres effleurent  
Sans rien laisser de leur velours,  
Je rêve aux baisers qui demeurent  
Toujours...

22 By the Water

Sitting together on the banks of the flowing water,  
Watching it flow;  
If a cloud glides through the air, together  
Watching it glide;  
If smoke rises from a thatched roof on the horizon,  
Watching it rise;  
If a nearby flower is fragrantly blossoming,  
Becoming as fragrant.

Listening to water murmuring near the trunk of the willow,  
Water murmuring;  
As long as this dream lasts, never feeling  
Time passing;  
But not with a deep passion  
Only adoring,  
Never worrying over the cares of the world,  
Instead ignoring;  
And alone, together facing discouragement,  
Nothing discouraging,  
Feeling that love, in spite of it all,  
Is never-ending!

23 In This World

In this world all the lilacs die,  
All bird-songs are short,  
I dream of summers that last  
Forever...

In this world lips touch gently  
Without losing any of their velvet,  
I dream of kisses that last  
Forever...

Ici-bas tous les hommes pleurent  
Leurs amitiés ou leurs amours,  
Je rêve aux couples qui demeurent,  
Toujours...

**24** Barcarolle

*Poem by Marc Monnier*

Gondolier du Rialto,  
Mon château  
C'est la lagune,  
Mon jardin c'est le Lido,  
Mon rideau,  
Le clair de lune.

Gondolier du Grand-Canal,  
Pour fanal  
J'ai la croisée  
Où s'allument tous les soirs  
Tes yeux noirs,  
Mon épousee !

Ma gondole est aux heureux ;  
Deux à deux  
Je la promène,  
Et les vents légers et frais  
Sont discret  
Sur mon domaine.

J'ai passé dans les amours,  
Plus de jours  
Et de nuits folles,  
Que Venise n'a d'ilots,  
Que ses flots  
N'ont de gondoles.

In this world everyone mourns  
Their friendships or their loves,  
I dream of couples that last  
Forever...

**24** Barcarolle

Gondolier of the Rialto,  
My castle  
Is the lagoon,  
My garden is the Lido,  
My curtain is  
The moonlight.

Gondolier of the Grand Canal,  
To navigate  
I use the window  
Where every evening your dark eyes  
Are full of light  
My bride!

My gondola is for happy travellers;  
Two by two  
I take them out,  
And the light, cool winds  
Keep their secrets  
Safe with me.

I have shared with these lovers,  
More days  
And intense nights,  
Than Venice has islets,  
Or than its waves  
Have gondolas.

25 Le voyageur

Poem by Armand Silvestre

Voyageur, où vas-tu, marchant  
Dans l'or vibrant de la poussière ?  
– Je mèn 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 mèn 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 !

25 The Wanderer

Wanderer, where are you going, walking  
Into the glittering gold of vibrant dust?  
– I will go as far as the setting sun,  
Where I will fall asleep in its light.

For I have lived with only one God,  
A shining star, creator of life.  
And now, enfolded in his blazing shroud,  
I have decided to leave this world!

– Wanderer, hurry up then:  
That star is setting over the horizon...  
– It doesn't matter, I will go even farther  
To wait for it at the foot of the hill.

Then, showing it my broken heart,  
That bleeds with faithful love,  
I will say: I have suffered too long:  
Sun! Carry me far away from her!

*Translations by Mary Dibbern and Jared Schwartz*

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