



Les amoureuses sont des folles

Songs by Jules Massenet (1842-1912)

SOMMCD 0151



DDD

Sally Silver *soprano* Richard Bonyngne *piano*

with Christine Tocci *mezzo-soprano*, Nico Darmanin *tenor*, Gabriella Swallow *cello*

1 Les amoureuses sont des folles 2:20	10 Sainte Thérèse prie 3:25	18 Le temps et l'amour 3:44 C. Tocci, N. Darmanin only
2 Si vous vouliez bien me le dire 1:38	11 Horace et Lydie 4:06 with N. Darmanin	19 Dans le sentier, parmi les roses 1:45
3 À Mignonne (<i>Chants intimes</i> , No.2) 1:53	12 Coupe d'ivresse 2:17	20 Amoureuse 2:42
4 Beaux yeux que j'aime 2:22	13 Tout passe! 1:42	21 Les yeux clos 1:59 with G. Swallow
5 La chanson du ruisseau 2:39 with C. Tocci	14 On dit! 3:07 with G. Swallow	22 Les extases 2:25
6 Dialogue nocturne 2:51 with N. Darmanin	15 O ruisseau 1:54 with C. Tocci, N. Darmanin	23 Éternité 2:13
7 Adieu! (<i>Poème d'avril</i> , No. 8) 2:08	16 Départ 2:25	24 Menteuse chérie 2:18
8 Je t'aime! 2:11 with G. Swallow	17 Oh! ne finis jamais 2:59 (<i>Poème d'amour</i> , No. 6) with C. Tocci	Total duration: 58:53
9 Oiseau des bois 2:13 with C. Tocci		

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Songs by Jules Massenet

IT WAS Sir Thomas Beecham who once said 'I would willingly give the whole of the Brandenburg Concertos for Massenet's *Manon* and consider I had profited greatly from the exchange.' Whilst Beecham's remark was doubtless made with a twinkle in his eye, to cause consternation in certain quarters, his comment reveals more than a spirited defence of the undoubted qualities of this often under-rated composer in challenging the attitude to received opinion at the time.

Eighty or so years ago, when Beecham made his comment to the critic Sir Neville Cardus, Massenet's reputation was at a low ebb, albeit not so low as it had become following his death in 1912 at the age of 70. Massenet's greatest successes lay in his series of operas, which matched perfectly the cultural needs of the *belle époque* – broadly, the period extending from the end of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71 to the outbreak of the Great War in 1914. That was the era which saw the appearance of almost all of Massenet's greatly significant operas which are acknowledged today to be amongst his finest works, and which have stood the test of rehabilitation to the point where Beecham's coded assertion of the composer's quality can be seen – as so often with this conductor's pronouncements – to be based on a deep knowledge and appreciation of the subject.

Manon, *Werther* and *Thaïs* may be arguably the finest examples of Massenet's operatic mastery on a large scale, but alongside those scores has to be set such as the wonderful two-act *La Navarraise* of 1894 (which was premiered at Covent Garden,

and from which Queen Victoria commanded Emma Calvé to sing an aria at Windsor Castle). *La Navarraise* shows Massenet's undoubted command of the newly-emergent verismo drama, yet what each of those works reveals above all is Massenet's love, and genius in writing, for the human voice – and, perhaps more especially, for the female voice.

It may sometimes be thought that the sheer number of Massenet's operatic works has dissuaded a detailed investigation of them all, and has tended to detract from a full appreciation of the best of them, but such a view does not explain the number of operas of, say, Rossini, Donizetti or Bellini, or even Verdi, the finest of which have not suffered from being part of a large output. We ought not to state our claim too forcefully with regard to Massenet's often under-appreciated qualities, but there can surely be no doubt that he was a complete master of his craft. His compositional style may have suited the character of the time, a style which has been said to combine a genuine melodic sensuousness, not unlike that of Gounod, with the more immediately appealing characteristics of Wagner's instrumental colouration and harmonic palette, suffused with Massenet's own undoubted gifts for richly sentimental melody. Yet however one describes the essence of Massenet's compositional character, it was revealed through a craft that was practised more widely than is generally realised, the product of a complete musician who – in his post as a director of the Paris Conservatoire – encouraged a wide range of composers, including those with whom one might expect he would have had little sympathy.

It was through the human voice that Massenet, above all, found the most natural and inspiring outlet for his own greatly gifted lyrical invention. He was a cultured, well-read, man, who was genuinely inspired by the wealth of literary output with which he was familiar. He was well-known and much admired for his propensity for sustained

hard work – barely wasting a moment in any day to continue his composing, on train journeys and in hotel rooms: Massenet’s abilities at sustained concentration in all kinds of circumstances which would distract many other creative figures was legendary, but such an approach to life and creativity in those circumstances would naturally tend to produce a body of work encapsulating the initial inspiration within shorter, more concentrated form – in particular, his considerable output of wide-ranging songs, reflections no doubt of whatever social and individual circumstances wherein his busy life had placed him.

There is no doubt, however, that Massenet’s sympathy with, and understanding of, the female voice in particular was indeed profound, and the wide acceptance of his work was considerably enhanced by the world-famous female singers who performed it: one only has to mention Emma Calvé, Mary Garden and Geraldine Farrar – three legendary sopranos who performed Massenet’s operatic roles and his songs regularly, and whose careers were certainly enhanced by their association with his music.

In this collection of Massenet’s songs, we can readily hear his qualities in the genre at their finest, and consider that it was doubtless the reaction against his work that set in soon after his death – certainly in the wake of the end of the Great War in 1918 – that has kept the finest of Massenet’s songs away from the general song recital repertoire, for in the wide-ranging collection on this CD, his contribution to the genre of French song was the equal of any other native composer of the period.

Indeed, Massenet’s significance as a song-writer may have been greater than is generally imagined, even when his music was more often heard, his influence being noticed by no less discriminate a musician than Francis Poulenc, who remarked that ‘I can never hear the second of [Debussy’s] *Chansons de Bilitis*, which belongs to 1897,

without thinking of ‘Miroir, dites-moi que je suis belle’ in *Thaïs* [1894].’ Indeed, we may also recall the penetrating observation of James Harding who said that ‘Debussy could not help being influenced by Massenet in his own earlier works such as *L’Enfant Prodigue*, *La Damaioiselle Éluë*, *Suite Bergamasque*, the *Arabesques* for piano and the *Petite Suite*.’ Whilst such influences are relatively clear, there is equally no doubt that the nature of Massenet’s fluent melodies, with their often unusual and disarmingly subtle emphases – as are heard in the vocal writing of a number of Massenet’s younger contemporaries – caught what was, as one might say, ‘in the air’ at the time. What cannot be denied, of course, is that Massenet’s *mélodies* capture perfectly the nature of French art song of the time.

Be that as it may, our collection ranges across the whole of Massenet’s career as a composer, from the earliest (*circa* 1866) *Adieu* – the last of the cycle *Poèmes d’Avril* (to words by Armand Silvestre) – to the final song in our collection, *Menteuse chérie, lorsque tu m’as dit*, one of Massenet’s last works, written shortly before his death and dedicated to the great Franco-Italian bass-baritone Vanni Marcoux, who was to create the eponymous role of Panurge in Massenet’s last opera, composed during his final illness, and which posthumous premiere at the Théâtre de la Gaîté was not to be counted among his successes.

Our selection includes duets and other settings for solo voice groupings, of which Massenet composed many, and of which the late duet *La chanson du ruisseau* is a particularly delightful example, the nature of the flowing stream being perfectly encapsulated in the rippling music. It is particularly fascinating to hear the occasionally dramatic *Adieu* with its compelling mood changes, for this closes (as we mentioned) Massenet’s first cycle, and points, surely, to the direction his muse was soon to take him, as it just predates his first opera, the one-act *La Grand’tante*.

Indeed, throughout this collection, it is not difficult to feel that quite a few of these settings are, even in the solo writing, almost 'operatic' in the choice of text and in the sheer mastery of Massenet's invention – such as the concluding passage in the duet *Oiseau des bois* (1900), which is, in many ways, an absolute gem of composition for soprano and contralto (from the suite *Chansons des bois d'Amaranthe* for SATB soloists and piano). Here is a composer completely at ease in his task, utterly assured in his fluent and sympathetic marriage of words and music.

It is in that marriage that Massenet's greatly significant and still not wholly appreciated contribution to French, and indeed world, art is to be found. Quite apart from the mastery of Massenet's settings – how well the line matches the voice! – is his extraordinarily apt piano writing. An excellent example of this aspect of his skill is to be found in the brief – although not aphoristic – setting *Tout passe!* in which the singer contemplates the loves of yesteryear. Massenet transcribed this song, rewriting it as a solo piano piece, and giving it the new title *Simple phrase* – a memento, perhaps, or 'what-you-will'. The resultant recomposition makes a brief Fauré-esque or Debussyan keyboard miniature, as far from the epic *Le Cid* as may be imagined.

Indeed, it is the mention of those larger-scaled works of Massenet which, in comparison with the songs in our collection – even those, such as *O ruisseau* for vocal trio and piano (1900) – that brings home to us the range of this remarkably gifted composer's output, and his still too-little-appreciated originality and influence on French music of his own and, indeed, later times. For, as Camille Saint-Saëns wrote with telling insight and understanding on learning of Massenet's death: 'Massenet has been much imitated; he imitated no-one.'

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SALLY SILVER *soprano*

Sally Silver's repertoire spans Handel to Thomas Ades and newly commissioned works, but she is perhaps best known for bel canto and French roles. She is currently making 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.



In the UK, she has performed to great critical acclaim the roles of Lucia in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Elvira in *I Puritani* and Angelica Orlando with Scottish Opera and has appeared with English National Opera as Annchen *Der Freischütz* and Mila in the world première of Jonathan Dove's *Palace in the Sky*. Other British operatic appearances have included Violetta *La traviata* at Belfast Opera House, Donna Elvira, Contessa and Fiordiligi in Mozart's Da Ponte operas at Longborough Festival Opera and Elisabetta *Maria Stuarda* for Chelsea Opera Group. In season 2011/12 she sang the title role in Gounod's *Mireille* at Cadogan Hall, Melissa *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, 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 include Gilda *Rigoletto*, Violetta *La traviata*, Marguerite *Les Huguenots*, Olympia/Antonia/Stella/Giulietta *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Stonatrilla *L'Opera Seria* and Duchess *Powder Her Face* in France, Germany, Denmark and The Netherlands.

Her collaboration with the conductor and pianist Richard Bonyngé has produced several recordings: songs by Massenet, Balfe and Wallace, Wallace's opera *Lurline* and two cantatas by Sullivan – *On Shore and Sea* and *Kenilworth*. A second disc of Massenet and Balfe's opera *Satanella* are due for release in the coming months.

Sally has been based in London since 1998, and was born in South Africa, 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.

NICO DARMANIN *tenor*

Nico was born in Malta and studied in London at the Royal College of Music and the National Opera Studio. As a Samling Artist he has participated in master classes with Juan Diego Flórez and Joyce DiDonato. He has also worked with Dame Kiri Te Kanawa and Sir Thomas Allen at the Georg Solti Accademia, and with Mirella Freni in Modena.

In the 2013/14 season he sang Daniéli *Les vêpres siciliennes* (Royal Opera House, Covent Garden) and the Italian Tenor *Der Rosenkavalier* (Vlaamse Opera and Grand Théâtre de Luxembourg).

He has also sung Almaviva *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Opera Holland Park), Belfiore *Il viaggio a Reims* (Rossini Opera Festival), Ramiro *La Cenerentola* (Scottish Opera) and Ottavio *Don Giovanni* (Vlaamse Opera).

Concert repertoire includes songs and operas by Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, Tosti, Fauré, Massenet and Debussy. Nico has also recorded Sullivan's *On Shore and Sea* under the baton of Maestro Richard Bonyngge.



CHRISTINE TOCCI *mezzo soprano*

Christine Tocci's opera engagements have included Zweite Dame *Die Zauberflöte* for the Théâtre du Châtelet and Opéra de Montpellier, Sméraldine *The Love of Three Oranges* for the Vlaamse Opéra and Berlin Komische Oper, Nicklausse *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* for Opéra de Rennes, the Duenna and Sister Martha *Cyrano de Bergerac* beside Roberto Alagna for the Opéra de Montpellier and for the Opéra de Monte Carlo, Annio *La Clemenza di Tito* for the Opéra de Marseille, Marcellina *Le Nozze di Figaro* for the Reisopera, Concepción *L'Heure espagnole* with the Gulbenkian orchestra.



She has worked under the baton of Lawrence Foster, Marco Guidarini, Michail Jurowski, Herve Niquet, Enrique Mazzola, Pinchas Steinberg, Jerome Correas, Mark Shanahan and Carlo Rizzi.

GABRIELLA SWALLOW *cello*

Gabriella studied at the RCM with Jerome Pernoo where she was awarded the Tagore Gold Medal. She also won the concerto competition, performing Hugh Wood's Cello Concerto which firmly launched her on the contemporary music scene.

In 2007 Gabriella made her South Bank debut as soloist with the London Sinfonietta in the premiere of *About Water* by Mark-Anthony Turnage and performed the Paul Max Edlin Cello Concerto with the South Bank Sinfonia at the Deal Festival. She has recorded all the chamber music of Hugh Wood and performed at Helmut Lachenmann's 75th birthday celebrations at the Berlin Konzerthaus where she worked closely with the composer on his work *Pression*.



In 2012 she joined Sally Silver and Richard Bonyng on a first collection of Massenet songs, *Ivre d'amour*. 2013 saw her Wigmore Hall debut with Ruby Hughes and the release of *Carpentersville*, a collection of songs with Lucy Schauerfer.

SONG TEXTS and TRANSLATIONS

1 Les amoureuses sont des folles

Jacques Etienne Joseph Alexandre Macdonald,
Duc de Tarente (1765-1840)

*Les amoureuses sont des folles
Dont l'âme est faite de mystère,
Et le meilleur est de se taire
Sans rien croire de leurs paroles.
Les amoureuses, dans leurs yeux,
Ont des regards faux et cruels;
Et ce sont les regards auxquels
Se prennent les audacieux.*

*Les amoureuses sont des folles
Dont l'âme est faite de mystère,
Et le meilleur est de se taire
Sans rien croire de leurs paroles.
Les amoureuses bien aimées
Ont raison de tous les courages,
Car l'arrêt de nos esclavages
Rit sur leurs bouches parfumées.*

Women who love are fools

Women who love are fools
Whose souls are made of mystery,
And it's best to remain silent
Without believing anything they say.
Women who love, in their eyes,
Have false and cruel expressions;
And these are the expressions
Which ensnare bold men.

Women who love are fools
Whose souls are made of mystery,
And it's best to remain silent
Without believing anything they say.
Women whose love is returned
have control of their efforts
For the sentence of our enslavement
Laughs on their perfumed mouths.

2 Si vous vouliez bien me le dire

Léon Landau, under the pseudonym Ludana

*Si vous vouliez bien me le dire,
Combien j'en deviendrais heureux!
Et rien qu'avec votre sourire
Vous me rendriez tant joyeux!*

If you did want to tell me

If you did want to tell me
How happy I would become!
And with no more than your smile
You would make me so joyful!

*Sachez que toute mon âme éperdue...
Ah! certes, vous pouvez en rire...
A vos lèvres est suspendue!*

*Que m'importeraient l'aube, l'aurore,
La nuit, l'enfer, et mille fois pire,
Tu es ma vie, et je t'adore!*

③ **À Mignonne** (Chants intimes, no. 2)
Gustave Chouquet (1819-1886)

*Pour qui sera, Mignonne,
L'ondoyante couronne
De vos cheveux châtaines?
Pour qui votre sourire,
Vos yeux où j'aime à lire,
Vos petits pieds mutins?*

*Pour qui tant de sveltesse,
Tant d'éclat de jeunesse
Et de charme vainqueur?
Par qui seront bercées
Vos nuits et vos pensées?
Pour qui donc votre coeur?*

*Ah! que ce soit, Mignonne,
Pour qui t'aime et te donne
Les trésors de sa foi!
Pour qui veut, dans la vie,
Marcher, l'âme ravie,
Ton esclave ou ton roi!*

You should know that my ardent soul...
Ah yes – you can laugh...
Is hanging on your every word!

Why would I care about the dawn, morning,
Night, hell and anything a thousand times worse,
You're my life and I adore you!

To Mignonne (Intimate songs, no. 2)

For whom, Mignonne, will be
The wavy crown
Of your chestnut hair?
For whom your smile,
Your eyes in which I love to read,
Your little, unruly feet?

For whom so much elegance,
So much youthful sparkle
And persuasive charm?
By whom will your nights
And your thoughts be cradled?
For whom then your heart?

Ah! Let it be, Mignonne,
For him who loves you and gives you
The treasures of his faith!
For him who wants, in this life,
To walk, his soul in rapture,
As your slave or your king!

④ **Beaux yeux que j'aime**
Thérèse Maquet (1858-1891)

*Il est des étoiles aux cieux
Qui vous ressemblent, ô beaux yeux,
Beaux yeux que j'aime!
Elles ont votre éclat joyeux,
Votre long regard sérieux,
Vos larmes mêmes!...*

*Elles ont ce charme si doux
Qui remplit nos cœurs vains et fous
D'un trouble extrême...
Mais elles brillent loin de nous...
Toujours, hélas, ainsi que vous,
Beaux yeux que j'aime!...*

*Il est des lacs mystérieux
Qui vous ressemblent, ô beaux yeux,
Beaux yeux que j'aime!
Leurs flots purs et silencieux
Ont vos reflets capricieux,
Votre azur même!*

*Jamais ils ne s'ouvrent à nous
Et leur attrait subtil et doux
Reste un problème...
Ils sont profonds, fiers et jaloux,
Impénétrables comme vous,
Beaux yeux que j'aime...*

Beautiful eyes that I love

There are stars in the heavens
Which resemble you,
Beautiful eyes that I love!
They have your joyous radiance,
Your long, serious gaze,
Even your tears!...

They have that so sweet charm
Which fills our mad, vain hearts
With profound agitation...
But they shine far away from us...
Always, alas, just like you,
Beautiful eyes that I love!...

There are mysterious lakes
Which resemble you,
Beautiful eyes that I love!
Their pure, silent waves
Have your capricious way of reflecting,
And are equally as blue!

They never open up to us
And their sweet, subtle attraction
Remains a problem...
They are deep, proud and jealous,
Impenetrable like you,
Beautiful eyes that I love...

5 La Chanson du Ruisseau

Antonin Lugnier (1869-1946)

*Toi qui répands sur la prairie,
A ta fantaisie,
La fraîcheur du miroir changeant
De tes flots d'argent,
Quelle est la chanson que murmure
Ton onde si pure?
Est-ce l'espoir, ou le regret?
Petit Ruisselet!*

*Quand, sous la brise printanière,
La nature entière
Resplendit en l'éclat du jour
De joie et d'amour,
Tu voudrais, dis-tu, vers ta source,
Reprenant ta course,
Suivre à nouveau le chemin fait?
Petit Ruisselet!*

*C'est l'écho des douleurs humaines
Qu'aux vallons, aux plaines,
Ton flot répète ainsi, tout bas!
Tu ne sais donc pas
Qu'on ne peut, malgré son envie,
Au cours de la vie,
Recommencer le long trajet?
Petit Ruisselet!*

Song of the Stream

You who unfurl in the meadow,
At your whim,
The freshness of the changing mirror
Of your silver tide,
What is the song murmured by
Your waves so pure?
Is it hope, or regret?
Tiny little stream!

When, in the spring breeze,
The whole of Nature
Gleams in the radiance of the day
With joy and love,
Would you want, as you say,
On the way back to your source,
To retrace the same journey?
Tiny little stream!

It is the echo of human sorrows
Which in the vales, on the plains,
Your tide repeats, this quietly!
But don't you know
That one can't, even if one wishes,
In the course of one's life
Begin the long journey again?
Tiny little stream!

*Cesse ta triste cantilène,
Toute plainte est vaine!
Avril vainqueur du froid hiver
Règne en le ciel clair.
A sa voix, dans l'aube vermeille,
Le printemps s'éveille...
Au doux espoir dis ton couplet
Petit Ruisselet!*

6 Dialogue Nocturne

Armand Silvestre (1837–1901)

MYRTO
Écoute-moi pasteur, j'ai peur dans la nuit sombre.

LE BERGER
*Moi, j'ai peur de ta main qui me cherche dans
l'ombre.*

MYRTO
Ne trouves-tu donc pas ce silence effrayant?

LE BERGER
*Je crains bien plus ta voix qui m'appelle
en fuyant.*

MYRTO
Un ciel si noir ne peut que présager l'orage...

LE BERGER
Un tel trouble ne peut que briser mon courage...

MYRTO
Si quelqu'étoile encor nous montrait le chemin!

LE BERGER
L'aimant de tes regards m'attire vers ta main!

Stop your sad refrain,
To complain is futile!
April, conqueror of the cold winter,
Reigns in the clear sky.
At its voice, in the crimson dawn,
Springtime awakens...
Say your refrain to sweet hope,
Tiny little stream!

Nocturnal conversation

MYRTO
Hear me, Shepherd, I'm afraid in the dark night.

SHEPHERD
I'm afraid of your hand that seeks me in
the darkness.

MYRTO
But don't you find this silence frightening?

SHEPHERD
I fear far more your voice, which calls to me
while getting more distant.

MYRTO
Such a dark sky can only foretell a storm...

SHEPHERD
Such trouble can only break my courage...

MYRTO
If only some star would show us the way!

SHEPHERD
Your magnetising stare pulls me towards your hand!

MYRTO
Le souffle des esprits dans mes cheveux se joue...

LE BERGER
Ton haleine en passant, Myrto, brûle ma joue...

MYRTO
C'est la mort, n'est-ce pas?

LE BERGER
Non!...

MYRTO
C'est la mort!...

LE BERGER
Non! C'est l'amour, c'est l'amour vainqueur!

MYRTO
La nuit est sous mon front!...

LE BERGER
L'orage est dans mon coeur!

7 **Adieu** (Poème d'avril, No. 8)
Armand Silvestre (1837–1901)

*"Je pars! Adieu, ma chère âme,
Garde bien mon souvenir!"
– Quoi! Si tôt partir, ma Dame,
Ne devez-vous revenir?*

*"Si, je reviendrai peut-être...
Si, bien sûr, je reviendrai!
Va m'attendre à la fenêtre,
De plus loin te reverrai!"*

MYRTO
The breath of the spirits is playing in my hair...

SHEPHERD
Your breath, Myrto, burns my cheek as it passes...

MYRTO
Isn't this death?

SHEPHERD
No!...

MYRTO
It is death!...

SHEPHERD
No! It's love, conquering love!

MYRTO
The night is right in front of me!...

SHEPHERD
The storm is in my heart!

Adieu (Poem of April, No. 8)

"I'm leaving! Adieu, dear love,
Remember me well!"
What! You leave so soon, my Lady;
Are you not to return?

"Yes, I will return, maybe...
Yes, for certain I will return!
Go and wait for me at the window,
I will see you from further away."

*– J'attendis à la fenêtre
Le retour tant espéré,
Mais, ni bien sûr, ni peut-être,
Ni jamais la reverrai!*

*Bien fol qui croit quand sa Dame
Lui jure de revenir.
Je meurs! Adieu, ma chère âme!
J'ai gardé ton souvenir.*

8 **Je t'aime!**
Suzanne Bozzani

*J'ai cherché dans mon cœur qui t'adore les causes,
Les causes de mon grand amour.
Mais le printemps sait-il la raison de ses roses?
Comme aux nuits succède le jour,
Je t'aime! Et mon amour n'a pas eu d'autres causes!*

*Si le printemps ne sait la raison de ses roses,
Je sais quel grand baiser d'amour
A mis dans notre cœur des tendresses écloses.
Comme aux nuits succède le jour,
Ton baiser sur ma lèvre a fait fleurir des roses*

I waited at the window
For the return I was so hoping for,
But neither for certain, nor maybe,
Nor ever will I see her again!

He is a fool to believe
When his Lady vows to return.
I am dying! Adieu, dear love!
I have remembered you well.

I love you!

I have sought within my heart which adores you
The cause of my great love.
But does springtime know the reason for its roses?
Just as day follows night
I love you! And my love has had no other cause!

If springtime doesn't know the reason for its roses,
I know what great loving kiss
Has put such burgeoning feelings in our hearts.
Just as day follows night
Your kiss on my lips has brought roses into bloom.

9 Oiseau des bois

translation by Marc Legrand (1865-1908) of a German poem by Oscar von Redwitz-Schmölz (1823-1891)

*J'ai cherché dans mon cœur qui t'adore les causes,
Les causes de mon grand amour.
Mais le printemps sait-il la raison de ses roses?
Comme aux nuits succède le jour,
Je t'aime! Et mon amour n'a pas eu d'autres causes!*

*Si le printemps ne sait la raison de ses roses,
Je sais quel grand baiser d'amour
A mis dans notre cœur des tendresses écloses.
Comme aux nuits succède le jour,
Ton baiser sur ma lèvre a fait fleurir des roses*

10 Sainte Thérèse prie

Pierre Sylvestre

*Je le possède; il m'aime; il est là! Je respire
Son haleine et je vois rayonner son sourire.
Il est mon sang, ma vie, et moi... je ne suis plus!
Douce allégresse! O voix des cieux et de la terre,
Élevez-vous! Chantez l'ineffable mystère.
Le Bien-Aimé qui dort sur mon cœur, c'est Jésus!*

*Monde, espoirs, vanités, devant lui tout s'efface...
Mes yeux sont éblouis des splendeurs de sa face;
À sa clarté, mon cœur renaît... et va s'ouvrir.
O Bien-Aimé! fuyons vers l'éternelle aurore!
Viens! je sens en mon âme un feu qui la dévore.
Je souffre et t'aime, et meurs de ne pouvoir mourir!*

Woodland bird

I have sought within my heart which adores you
The cause of my great love.
But does springtime know the reason for its roses?
Just as day follows night
I love you! And my love has had no other cause!

If springtime doesn't know the reason for its roses,
I know what great loving kiss
Has put such burgeoning feelings in our hearts.
Just as day follows night
Your kiss on my lips has brought roses into bloom.

Saint Theresa prays

I possess him; he loves me; he is here! I breathe in
His breath and see his smile beaming.
He is my blood, my life, and I... I no longer exist!
Gentle happiness! O voices of heaven and earth,
Raise yourselves up! Sing of the unspeakable mystery.
The Beloved who sleeps on my heart is Jesus!

World, hopes, vanities – before him everything fades...
My eyes are dazzled by the magnificence of his face;
In his light my heart is reborn... and will open.
O Beloved! Let us escape towards the eternal dawn!
Come! I feel in my soul a fire which consumes it.
I suffer and love you, and die for not being able to die!

11 Horace et Lydie

Louis Charles Alfred de Musset (1810-1857)

*HORACE
Du temps où tu m'aimais, Lydie,
De ses bras nul autre que moi
N'entourait ta taille arrondie;
J'ai vécu plus heureux qu'un roi!*

*LYDIE
Du temps où j'étais ta maîtresse,
Tu me préférerais à Chloé.
Je m'endormais à ton côté,
Plus heureuse qu'une déesse!*

*HORACE
Chloé me gouverne à présent;
Savante au luth, habile au chant,
La douceur de sa voix m'enivre.
Je suis prêt à cesser de vivre
S'il fallait lui donner mon sang!*

*LYDIE
Je me consume maintenant
Pour Calais, mon jeune amant,
Qui dans mon cœur a pris ta place;
Je mourrais deux fois, cher Horace,
S'il fallait lui donner mon sang!*

*HORACE
Eh quoi! si dans notre pensée
L'ancien amour se ranimait?
Si ma blonde était délaissée?
Si, demain, Vénus offensée
A ta porte me ramenait?*

Horace and Lydie

*HORACE
When you loved me, Lydie,
No man but I put his arm around
The curve of your waist;
I lived happier than a king!*

*LYDIE
When I was your mistress,
You preferred me to Chloe.
I would fall asleep at your side
Happier than any goddess!*

*HORACE
Chloe rules my heart now;
Expert at the lute and skilled in song,
The sweetness of her voice intoxicates me.
I'm ready to give up my life
If I had to give her my blood!*

*LYDIE
I'm consumed now by
Calais, my young lover,
Who has taken your place in my heart;
I would gladly die twice, dear Horace,
If I had to give him my blood!*

*HORACE
And what if, in our thoughts,
Our old love were revived?
If I abandoned my blond?
If, tomorrow, the offended Venus
Led me back to your door?*

LYDIE

*Calais est jeune et fidèle,
Et toi, poète, ton désir
Est plus léger que l'hirondelle,
Plus inconstant que le zéphir;*

ENSEMBLE

*Pourtant, s'il t'en prenait envie,
Avec toi j'aimerais la vie!
Avec toi je voudrais mourir!*

LYDIE

*Calais is young and faithful,
And you, poet, your desire
Is lighter than the swallow,
More inconstant than the wind;*

TOGETHER

*Nevertheless, if you so wished,
It's with you I would like to live!
With you I would want to die!*

*D'un trait tu la videras toute
et dans tes veines passera
mon désir, que ta bouche aura
bu, goutte à goutte!...*

*Écoute pétiller les sèves!...
A tes lèvres de satin clair
porte la coupe de ma chair...
Bois de mes rêves!...*

*In one gulp you will empty it all
and into your veins will pass
my desire, which your mouth will have
drunk, drop by drop!...*

*Listen to the sap bubbling!...
To your lips of pure satin
raise the cup of my flesh...
Drink of my dreams!...*

12 Coupe d'Ivresse

H. Ernest Simoni

*Jusqu'à ta bouche, j'ai levé
la coupe pleine de mes rêves
où si longtemps!... de leurs brèves
d'espairs, je me suis abreuvé!*

*Écoute pétiller les sèves!...
A tes lèvres de satin clair
porte la coupe de ma chair...
Bois de mes rêves!...*

*Et la coupe d'or irisé
qui flambe au soleil de la vie
et dont une goutte ravie
suffirait, seule, à me griser...*

Cup of intoxication

*To your mouth, I lifted
the cup full of my dreams
where, for so long, in brief glimmers
of hope, I have immersed myself!*

*Listen to the sap bubbling!...
To your lips of pure satin
raise the cup of my flesh...
Drink of my dreams!...*

*And the cup of iridescent gold
which burns in the sunlight of life
and of which one single, rapturous drop
would be enough to intoxicate me...*

13 Tout passe!

Henriette Fouant de La Tombelle,
under the pseudonym Camille Bruno (1857-1943)

*Les plus ardentes amours
M'ont lassé comme tout lasse.
Les plus ardentes amours
N'ont pas pu durer toujours.*

*Le lien qui nous fut cher
A cassé comme tout casse.
Le lien qui nous fut cher
Ne tenait pas à la chair.*

*Le temps si doux où j'aimais
A passé comme tout passe.
Le temps si doux où j'aimais
Ne reviendra plus jamais.*

Everything passes!

*My most ardent love affairs
Have palled, as everything palls.
My most ardent love affairs
Were unable to last forever.*

*The bond which we cherished
Has broken, as everything breaks.
The bond which we cherished
Could not hold on to the flesh.*

*That sweet time when I loved
Has passed, as everything passes.
That sweet time when I loved
Will never return.*

14 On dit!

Jean Roux

*On dit..., on dit beaucoup de choses...
Beaucoup trop de choses vraiment!
On dit que rien n'est plus charmant
Qu'au printemps voir fleurir les roses.*

*On dit que les hivers moroses
Se sont enfuis en un moment,
Que les eaux sont de diamant,
Que les pervenches sont écloses!*

*On dit qu'avril est un doux mois
Et que, dans les sentiers des bois,
Résonne un mot, toujours le même!*

*Mais... Vous l'êtes-vous figuré?..
On dit... on dit... que je vous aime!
Et, le drôle, c'est qu'on dit vrai!*

15 O ruisseau

translation by Marc Legrand (1865-1908) of a German poem by Oscar von Redwitz-Schmölz (1823-1891)

*O ruisseau, ta voix est câline
Et je t'ai surpris plus d'un jour
Échangeant avec l'églantine
Secrètement des mots d'amour.*

*Dès que tu parlais, d'elle même
Sa branche s'inclinait vers toi,
N'est-ce pas? Si jamais on m'aime,
Tes mots d'amour, apprends-les moi.*

They say!

They say..., they say many things...
Really far too many things!
They say that there is nothing more charming
Than to see the roses bloom in the spring.

They say that the miserable winter
Has flown in an instant,
That the waters look like diamonds,
That the periwinkles have come out!

They say that April is a sweet month
And that, on the woodland paths,
There resounds one word, always the same!

But... Have you worked it out?
They say... they say... that I love you!
And the funny thing is, they're right!

Oh stream!

Oh stream, you have a tender voice
And I have overheard you more than once
Secretly exchanging words of love
With the wild rose.

The moment you spoke, of its own volition
Its branch leant toward you,
Is it not so? If ever I am loved,
Those words of love, teach them to me.

16 Départ

Émile Guérin-Catelain (1856-1913)

*Puisque pour moi le temps a sonné le départ,
Pour éclairer la nuit où s'enfonce mon âme,
Une dernière fois que tes beaux yeux de flamme
Épandent sur mon front leur lumineux regard.*

*J'entre dans un exil sombre et silencieux.
Que deux mots échappés à ta bouche de flamme
Rompent ce noir silence et remplissent mon âme
De l'éternel écho d'un chant harmonieux.*

*Puisque je disparaîs dans l'espace profond,
Pour embaumer la nuit où va rêver mon âme,
Donne-moi ce bonheur d'emporter plein de flamme,
Le parfum de ta lèvre imprimée à mon front.*

17 Oh! ne finis jamais (Poème d'amour, no. 6)

Paul Pierre Robiquet (1848 – 1928)

*Oh! ne finis jamais, nuit clémente et divine;
Soleil, ne brille pas au front de la colline...
Et laisse-nous aimer encore;
Laisse-nous écouter dans l'ombre et le mystère,
Les voix, les tendres voix qui n'ont rien de la terre;
Ne trouble pas nos rêves d'or!*

*Ce qu'il faut à nos coeurs, ô nuit, ce sont tes voiles,
C'est l'exquise pâleur qui tombe des étoiles
Sur les amoureux à genoux;
C'est un mot commencé qui jamais ne s'achève;
C'est l'amour éternel, mystérieux, sans trêve...
Pour la terre immense et pour nous!*

Departure

Since time has rung for my departure,
To light up the night where my soul is sinking
May your beautiful flame eyes, for one last time,
Bestow on my forehead their luminous gaze.

I am entering a dark and silent exile.
May two words from your flame mouth
Break this black silence and fill my soul
With the eternal echo of a harmonious song.

Since I am disappearing into deep space,
To perfume the night where my soul will dream
Give me the happiness to take with me, full of flame,
The fragrance of your lips pressed on my forehead.

Oh! never end (Poem of Love, no. 6)

Oh! never end, merciful and divine night;
Sun, do not shine over the hilltop...
And let us continue to love;
Let us hear in the darkness and mystery,
The voices, the tender voices that are not of this earth;
Do not disturb our golden dreams!

What our hearts need, o night, are your veils,
That exquisite paleness that falls from the stars
Onto kneeling lovers;
That word begun but never completed;
That love – eternal, mysterious, relentless...
For the immense earth and for us!

18 **Le Temps et L'Amour**

Léon Landau, under the pseudonym Ludana

L'AMOUR

*J'ai vingt ans et j'ai perdu toute espérance!
Aimer est un leurre, croire est une chimère!
Souffrir et pleurer par trop de déceance?
Non, car je n'ai même pas pour moi la Prière!*

LE TEMPS

*Tu as vingt ans, Enfant, et tu désespères?
Tu es beau ainsi que le peut souhaiter une femme.
Tout en toi doit être joie et lumières.
Rien n'est perdu, je vois clair en ton âme.*

L'AMOUR

*Pourquoi ma voix hélas! reste-t'elle muette?
Pourquoi mon coeur, d'angoisse est-il donc torturé?
Pourquoi se cache-t'elle comme l'humble violette,
Celle qui ne m'a jamais aimé, et que j'appelle!*

LE TEMPS

*Que tout ce qui vit, que tout ce qui t'admire,
Par grâce t'en assure, te le dise en ce jour,
Pour que sur tes lèvres vienne s'attacher le sourire:
<Confiance en toi, rien ne résiste à l'Amour!>*

LE TEMPS ET L'AMOUR

*Chagrins, deuils et tristesses, évanouissez-vous.
Aux charmes de la Jeunesse qui triomphe toujours,
Tout renaît, et ceux-là sont vraiment des fous,
Qui doutent de la victoire du Temps et l'Amour!*

Time and Love

LOVE

I'm twenty years old and I've lost all hope!
To love is an illusion, to believe is a fantasy!
Should I suffer and cry for too much disappointment?
No, for I don't even have the luxury of prayer!

TIME

You're twenty years old, Child, and are despairing?
You're as handsome as any woman could wish.
You should be filled with joy and light.
Nothing is lost, I see clearly into your soul.

LOVE

Why, alas, does my voice remain dumb?
Why is my heart tortured with anguish?
Why is she hiding like the humble violet,
She who has never loved me, though I call her!

TIME

May everything that lives, everything that admires you,
By grace assure you and tell you today,
So that a smile may form on your lips:
"Have faith – nothing resists Love!"

TIME AND LOVE

Sorrows, mourning and sadness – disappear!
Everything is reborn to the ever triumphant charms
of Youth, and they are truly insane
Who doubt the victory of Time and Love!

19 **Dans le sentier, parmi les roses**

Berthe-Corinne Le Barillier,
under the pseudonym Jean Bertheroy (1868-1927)

*Dans le sentier, parmi les roses,
Ils s'en sont allés tous les deux.
L'air était tiède, les cieux roses...
Qu'ils sont heureux les amoureux!*

*L'air était tiède, les cieux roses
À travers le soir vaporeux.
Il lui disait tout bas des choses...
Qu'ils sont heureux les amoureux!*

*Il lui disait tout bas des choses
En la baisant sur les cheveux...
Dans le sentier, parmi les roses...
Qu'ils sont heureux les amoureux!*

On the path, amongst the roses

On the path, amongst the roses,
The two of them went walking.
The air was warm, the skies pink...
How happy lovers are!

The air was warm, the skies pink
Across the humid evening.
He whispered things to her...
How happy lovers are!

He whispered things to her
While kissing her hair...
On the path, amongst the roses...
How happy lovers are!

20 Amoureuse

Louis Morel-Retz,
under the pseudonym Stop (1825-1899)

*Tu voudrais lire dans mon âme
Et tu prétends, mon bien aimé,
Que parfois le cœur d'une femme
Est un livre à jamais fermé;
Ingrat! Finis ce badinage.
Le livre ouvert à tes désirs
Te montre, écrits sur chaque page,
Et ma tendresse et mes soupirs.
Lis sans crainte, et s'il reste encore
Quelque passage obscur pour toi,
Enfant curieux que j'adore,
Épèle-moi!*

*M'en veux-tu de porter envie
À tes pensers de chaque jour,
À tout ce qui remplit ta vie
Et te dérobe à mon amour?
Ah! tiens! Je voudrais être belle
À faire oublier l'univers
Et t'enchaîner, mon doux rebelle,
Dans ces bras qui te sont ouverts!
Être la coupe bienheureuse
Où nul n'ait jamais bu que toi,
Et dire à ta lèvre amoureuse:
Épaise-moi!*

In love

You would read within my soul
And you claim, my beloved,
That at times a woman's heart
Is a book forever closed;
Ungrateful man! Stop this talk.
The book, open to your desires,
Shows you, written on every page,
Both my affection and my sighs.
Read without fear, and if any passage
Remains obscure to you,
Curious child whom I adore,
Spell it out to me!

Can you blame me for envying
Your everyday thoughts
And everything which fills your life
And takes you away from my love?
Come on! I wish I were so beautiful
As to make you forget the universe
And capture you, my sweet rebel,
In these arms which are open to you!
I wish I were the fortunate cup
From which none but you had ever drunk,
And could say to your loving lips:
Consume me!

21 Les yeux clos

G. Buchillot

*Quand tes yeux clos ne verront plus
Les lieux charmeurs où nous aimâmes,
J'aurai des sanglots plein mon âme,
Quand tes yeux clos ne verront plus.*

*Sous le poids lourd des destinées,
Courbant un front qui se souvient,
Ton souvenir restera mien,
Dans le tourbillon des années.*

*Quand tes yeux clos ne verront plus
Les fleurs qui souvraient pour te plaire,
J'en couvrirai ta tombe chère,
Quand tes yeux clos ne verront plus!*

22 Les extases

Annie Dessirier

*Des chants, des fleurs et du soleil,
Des baisers aux lèvres, des roses!
De l'azur... l'océan vermeil,
De l'amour... sur toutes les choses!...*

*Des rayons d'or par tout le ciel,
Des murmures de douce brise!...
Des parfums au souffle irréal...
La volupté qui passe et grise!*

Closed eyes

When your closed eyes can no longer see
The seductive places where we loved,
My soul will be filled with tears
When your closed eyes can no longer see.

Under the heavy weight of destiny
Bowing my head which continues to remember,
Your memory will remain mine
Throughout the vicissitudes of the years.

When your closed eyes can no longer see
The flowers which only opened to please you,
I will use them to cover your beloved grave,
When your closed eyes can no longer see!

Ecstasies

Songs, flowers and sun,
Kisses on the lips, roses!
The azure sky... The ruby sea,
Love... over everything!

Golden rays throughout the sky,
The murmurs of the gentle breeze!...
Fragrances that waft without substance...
Sensual pleasure which intoxicates as it passes!

*De l'intensité... les plaisirs;
Des sourires... folles ivresses!
Des émois... de troublants désirs,
De longs frôles... et des caresses!*

*Des chants, des fleurs et du soleil,
Des baisers aux lèvres, des roses!
De l'amour... sur toutes les choses!
De l'amour! De l'amour!*

23 Éternité

Mary Girard (1837-?)

*L'éternité! je l'ai comprise;
Le jour où dans mon âme éprise,
L'amour pur, rayonnant flambeau,
Vers vous, a fait jaillir sa flamme
Comme on voit s'élever une âme
Des cendres mortes d'un tombeau!*

*L'éternité! je l'ai vécue
Brûlante, éternelle, invaincue
En un de ces instants si courts
Qui nous laissent l'âme ravie,
Et s'ils n'étaient plus qu'une vie
Devraient en suspendre le cours!...*

*L'éternité! je la possède!
Elle me suit et me précède
Comme la nuit succède au jour.
Elle est troublante, elle est heureuse;
Et, pourtant elle est douloureuse,
Car l'éternité c'est l'amour!*

Intensity... pleasure;
Smiles... mad euphoria!
Feelings... troubling desires,
Long moments barely touching... and caresses!

Songs, flowers and sun,
Kisses on the lips, roses!
The azure sky... The ruby sea,
Love! Love!

Eternity

Eternity! I understood it
The day when, head over heels,
Pure love, a shining torch,
Projected its flame towards you
Just as one sees a soul fly away
From the dead ashes of a grave!

Eternity! I lived it
Burning, eternal, undefeated
In one of those fleeting moments
Which leave our soul in rapture,
And were they no more than a lifetime
Should halt its course!...

Eternity! I possess it!
It follows and precedes me
Like night succeeds day.
It is unsettling, it is happy,
And yet it is painful,
For eternity is love!

24 Mentieuse chérie!

Léon Landau, under the pseudonym Ludana

*Mentieuse chérie, lorsque tu m'as dit: Je t'aime,
Tu m'as menti, toujours et quand même,
Tu m'as menti, ô la plus adorable enjôleuse,
Tu m'as menti, amie chère et menteuse!
Tu mentiras, pour la joie de ma torture,
Tu mentiras, pour raviver ma blessure!
Tu mentiras! Tu mentiras!*

*Mentieuse chérie, lorsque tu m'as dit: Je t'aime,
Tu m'as menti, toujours et quand même,
Tu m'as menti, ô la plus adorable enjôleuse,
Tu m'as menti, amie chère et menteuse!
Qu'importe encore ta méchanceté vaine,
Qu'importe tout cela, menteuse: Je t'aime!
Tu m'as menti! Tu m'as menti!*

*Mentieuse chérie, lorsque tu m'as dit: Je t'aime,
Tu m'as menti, toujours et quand même,
Tu m'as menti, ô la plus adorable enjôleuse,
Tu m'as menti, amie chère et menteuse!
Qu'importe tout cela: Je t'aime!*

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Darling deceive!

Darling deceive, when you said to me, "I love you",
You lied to me, now and for all time,
You lied to me, you most adorable sweet-talker,
You lied to me, my darling, lying friend!
You will lie, for the pleasure of torturing me,
You will lie, to reopen my wound!
You will lie! You will lie!

Darling deceive, when you said to me, "I love you",
You lied to me, now and for all time,
You lied to me, you most adorable sweet-talker,
You lied to me, my darling, lying friend!
What does your vain malice matter anymore?
What does any of it matter anymore, deceive: I love you!
You lied to me! You lied to me!

Darling deceive, when you said to me, "I love you",
You lied to me, now and for all time,
You lied to me, you most adorable sweet-talker,
You lied to me, my darling, lying friend!
What does any of it matter anymore? I love you!

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