

Thursday, May 12, 2016, 8pm
First Congregational Church



Philippe Jaroussky, *countertenor*
Jérôme Ducros, *piano*

PROGRAM

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Gabriel FAURÉ (1845–1924) | Clair de lune |
| | Green |
| Reynaldo HAHN (1874–1947) | En sourdine |
| POLDOWSKI (1879–1932) | Colombine |
| Charles BORDES (1863–1909) | Ô triste, triste était mon âme |
| Claude DEBUSSY (1862–1918) | Prélude from <i>Suite bergamasque</i> |
| FAURÉ | Mandoline |

PROGRAM

- Déodat DE SÉVERAC (1872–1921) Prison (Le ciel est, par-dessus le toit)
- Ernest CHAUSSON (1855–1899) La chanson bien douce
- POLDOWSKI Mandoline
- L'Heure exquise (La lune blanche)
- Emmanuel CHABRIER (1841–1894) Idylle from *Pièces pittoresques*
- HAHN D'une prison (Le ciel est, par-dessus le toit)
- DEBUSSY *Fêtes galantes* I, FL. 86
(En sourdine – Fantoches – Clair de lune)
- Léo FERRÉ (1916–1993) Écoutez la chanson bien douce
- INTERMISSION
- Józef Zygmunt SZULC (1875–1956) Clair de lune
- André CAPLET (1878–1925) Green
- HAHN Chanson d'automne
- Camille SAINT-SAËNS (1935–1921) Le vent dans la plaine
(C'est l'extase langoureuse)
- FERRÉ Colloque sentimental
- DEBUSSY "Clair de lune" from *Suite bergamasque*
- FAURÉ C'est l'extase
- CHAUSSON Apaisement (La lune blanche)
- DEBUSSY Mandoline
- Arthur HONEGGER (1892–1955) Un grand sommeil noir
- DEBUSSY L'Isle joyeuse
- Fêtes galantes* II, FL. 114
(Les Ingénus – Le Faune – Colloque sentimental)
- Charles TRENET (1913–2001) Verlaine (Chanson d'automne)

Funded, in part, by the Koret Foundation, this performance is part of Cal Performances' 2015–2016 Koret Recital Series, which brings world-class artists to our community.

Additional support provided by Patron Sponsor Françoise Stone.

Cal Performances' 2015–2016 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

Why should a countertenor not have the necessary sensitivity and vocal technique to perform French *mélodies*? This repertoire has always been a secret passion of mine and following an earlier recording, *Opium*, I decided to put together a second and more ambitious program around the poetry of Paul Verlaine, the French poet most frequently set to music.

The choice of songs was huge and I wanted to concentrate primarily on the better-known poems and offer several settings of the same text—both the well-known settings by Fauré, Debussy, and Hahn and some hidden gems by the likes of Poldowski, Bordes, and Szulc. I very soon realized that including a few *chansons* would be an obvious way to show just how many composers Verlaine has inspired in a large variety of periods and that he is still a source of inspiration today.

I hope that this voyage through the world of Verlaine proves as attractive as it is surprising.

—Philippe Jaroussky

Verlaine, Music, and Poetry

Verlaine's poetry is doubly musical. We are drawn into reading *Romances sans paroles* or *Fêtes galantes* by the rhythm of the words and by the way in which Verlaine plays with sounds. It all flows naturally. Verlaine has little interest in sophisticated effects; if one were to look for an equivalent, he tends more towards the brilliant simplicity of Schubert. He is an everyday musician who sings directly to our ears and our hearts. But this poetic language also became—and this is his second musical quality—an inexhaustible source of inspiration for composers. For the period between the 1880s and the present day, the musicologist Ruth L. White has listed over 1,500 settings produced both by classical composers and by singers like Charles Trenet, Georges Brassens, and Léo Ferré. In this sense, and to an even greater extent than Hugo or Baudelaire, Apollinaire or Aragon, Verlaine is the true poet for musicians. So much so that we are led to wonder why one writer lends himself so perfectly to the crossover into music (as opposed, for example, to Rimbaud, who is rarely set to

music, perhaps because his poetry creates a visual rather than an aural world).

Verlaine was happy for his work to be used in this way. Whereas some poets regarded with disdain the efforts of composers to “add” something to their work—as if their words had any need of notes!—Verlaine always saw song as the natural extension of his poetry. From his early days he had friends who were musicians and he delighted in such ties. The famous “Music above all else,” which opens *Art poétique*, might then have a dual intent: to make a sound composition from the poem with its “uneven” rhythms and harmonies, which “dissolve in the air,” but also to use it as a starting point for that artistic fusion so beloved of the Parnassians and symbolists who regarded music as being of pre-eminent importance, particularly when Wagner (who is referenced in several poems by Verlaine) presented a model in his dream of a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a total work of art.

Verlaine's Musical Friendships

So far as Verlaine was concerned, music was less a rarefied encounter for the cognoscenti, as in the Wagnerian circles of Mallarmé or Ernest Chausson, and more an adventure shared by friends with a passion for light opera! At the age of 19, Verlaine counted among his friends several musicians whom he had met through the Marquise de Ricard. These included the violinist Ernest Boutier, to whom he later dedicated the first section of *Poèmes saturniens*; the composer Charles de Sivry, a major figure on the bohemian scene and at the Chat Noir (and whose sister, Mathilde, Verlaine was later to marry); and the young Emmanuel Chabrier, a musician from the Auvergne who worked in a clerical role at the Ministry of the Interior, while Verlaine made his living in a similar job at the Hôtel de Ville. Office workers by day, artists by night.

Verlaine recalled this group of friends some years later: “Painters, musicians, although the latter were few in number as theirs is an art form which keeps itself and its exponents too much apart, were our good friends. . . . Sivry was the inspiration (in the divine and rare sense of the word), the life and soul, refinement person-

ified, with the soul of a poet on the wings of a bluebird, while Chabrier was as happy as a lark and as tuneful as a nightingale. They saw themselves as our brothers and set our poems to music just as they were, without wrecking or ‘embellishing’ them—an enormous kindness which was acknowledged by boundless gratitude and warm good will on the part of listeners who knew nothing of harmony but appreciated beauty in all its forms!” Verlaine’s attraction to simplicity of musical line is significant and no doubt explains his taste for simple songs during the decade 1860–1870, when he and Chabrier produced two short sketches, one entitled “Vaucochard et fils premier” and the other “Fisch-Ton-Kan,” a nickname later used to refer to Napoléon III. “Fisch-Ton-Kan” contains early elements of *L’Étoile*, the *opéra-bouffe* composed by Chabrier in 1877, in which Verlaine was not involved but which did reprise the famous “Couplets du pal.” In the intervening years the two men drifted apart and Verlaine recalled these happy times in “À Emmanuel Chabrier,” a poem written in 1888:

Chabrier, we made good friends and I penned verses to which you later gave wings [...] My lovely and divinely sweet mother lent her piano to your improvising genius.

Verlaine is so closely associated in our minds with the tender and profound poetry of melancholy that this light-hearted streak, which prompted him to seek to compete with “Offreun-bock, Hervé, Léo Delibes, Lecocq and *tutti quanti*...” while at the same time writing the vivid *Poèmes saturniens*, comes as quite a surprise. Yet even the slightest knowledge of bohemian life in Paris indicates the extent to which the *avant-garde*, a bit of fun, the sublime, and the tragic could all intermingle. Verlaine once took the stage to sing a “comic sketch” by his friend Charles de Sivry and did so “in such a comic manner and with such burlesque touches, going from the deep bass of a cathedral cantor to the falsetto of a ventriloquist’s dummy, that it quite disconcerted and stunned the audience.” Some years later, while travelling

with Rimbaud, he also wrote: “I am putting the finishing touches to an 18th-century *opéra-bouffe* that I started two or three years ago with Sivry. Once the music is completed, it’s for the Alcazar in Brussels which first put on *Les Cent Vierges* and *Madame Angot*.”

No trace of these works remains, but Verlaine’s meeting with Gabriel Fauré again illustrates his fondness for light music. His disastrous later years were marked by alcoholism, debauchery, and stays in both prison and hospital. Yet, at the same time, he became a living legend in the eyes of writers and aesthetes from Robert de Montesquiou to Maurice Barrès to Anatole France. Settings of his poems increased in number. Sacem, the performing rights society, made a few payments to him but an acute shortage of money pushed him into becoming involved in other projects that bore little fruit—including the commission for a cantata, which was to be “symbolic, patriotic, or philosophical for a payment of 1,000 francs!!! to be set to music for the city of Paris.”

At the beginning of 1891, Winnaretta Singer de Scey-Montbéliard, the great patron of music (she was soon to become Princesse de Polignac), approached Verlaine with the idea of joining forces with Gabriel Fauré, a regular at her salon, in a musical and literary collaboration. Visiting Verlaine at Saint-Antoine hospital, Fauré wondered “how such a marvellously talented human being can find pleasure in this constant to-ing and fro-ing between the bar and the hospital!” By spring, nothing had been settled. As Fauré’s biographer Jean-Michel Nectoux writes, it was at this point that Verlaine proposed “an operatic adaptation of his play *Les Uns et les autres*, which didn’t go down too well with Fauré. Later he announced that he had found another subject, *Watteau Hospital*.” This light comedy was to unfold in a hospital ward where Pierrot, Colombine, and Harlequin would lie in bed discussing life and love. “I hope to have the good fortune to see you soon and give you the first extracts from this operetta,” Verlaine wrote to the princess, but Fauré chose to abandon the idea. However, that same year 1891 did see the birth of Fauré’s first major song cycle based on the poems of Verlaine, the five

Mélodies “de Venise,” and in 1919, Fauré was to bring Watteau and Verlaine back together in his ballet *Masques et bergamasques*.

Verlaine’s funeral at the church of Saint-Étienne-du-Mont on January 10, 1896, was conducted by the loyal Charles de Sivry. The young Reynaldo Hahn, whose *Chansons grises* were said to have moved Verlaine to tears, was among the mourners. Théodore Dubois and Gabriel Fauré were the organists.

Poetry of Sound

Songs for voice and piano based on poems by Verlaine appeared in increasing numbers over a period of around 10 years. The earliest example, other than the operettas Verlaine worked on with Chabrier, is a setting of “La lune blanche” (from *La Bonne Chanson*) for soprano and tenor, written by Jules Massenet in 1871. The poem was to become a favourite with composers. But these songs really started to become all the rage in the 1880s when Debussy, Charles Bordes, and Gabriel Fauré first tried their hand at writing them, indicating the extraordinary harmony between the sensibilities of the poet and the new generation of composers. It is noteworthy that the majority of these adaptations are from Verlaine’s early collections: *Poèmes saturniens* (1866), *Fêtes galantes* (1869), *La Bonne Chanson* (1870), and *Romances sans paroles* (1874), although there are also some from the later works *Sagesse* (1880) and *Jadis et Naguère* (1884).

In a study published in 1949 in the journal *Contrepoints*, the poet René Chalupt tries to explain the attraction of Verlaine’s verse: “The original thing about Verlaine was that he brought a new kind of music to his poems. Before him, any musical aspect of early French verse, then classical verse, then romantic verse, was based on symmetrical rhythms, on conso-



nance and perfect harmony. Verlaine introduced dissonance, something to which he himself referred in one of his poems as ‘harmoniously dissonant harmony’ and as ‘a harmony of discord,’ as well as irregular and changeable rhythm. There was a clear affinity that drew composers like Fauré or Debussy towards him because the same freedom, the same variety, the same subtlety of rhythm are to be found in Verlaine’s poetry as are to be found in their music.”

This freedom was to provide the aesthetic link between the language of the writer and modern French music. But the taste that composers had for Verlaine stemmed also perhaps from the constant presence of sound references in his poetry, such as his choice of titles for

“Mandoline” (“Mandolin”) and “En sourdine” (“Muted”) and the decision to name one complete collection *La Bonne Chanson* (*The Good Song*). *Fêtes galantes* was initially subtitled “Suite pour clavecin” (“Suite for harpsichord”), anticipating Debussy’s taste for Couperin and Rameau. Musical instruments also feature as characters in his poetry, in which we hear fifes, flutes, and drums. Nature has its own polyphony in “La lune blanche” (“From each branch a voice takes flight beneath the leafy boughs”). Musical notes appear, for example “do, mi, sol, mi, fa” in “Colombine.” But it is mainly the sound of voices, living or absent—“The lilt of dear voices now dead”—and even whispering that we hear in these verses, as reflected in “Colloque sentimental”:

Thus they walked on through the waving cornfields, and only the night heard their words.

René Chalupt wrote: “Verlaine converts almost everything into sounds and makes these sounds work together in gentle harmony. With him, the sensation is auditory rather than visual or related to touch, smell, or any other sense.” For the same reason, composers who set Verlaine to music were able to develop their work in different directions—matching the rhythm of the poem, working to translate the poetic feel, but also trying to recreate the sound world suggested by the text.

Composers and Verlaine

The 19-year-old Debussy was the first to really reflect the genius of Verlaine musically in several early songs from *Fêtes galantes*: “Clair de lune,” “Pantomime,” “Fantoches,” “Mandoline,” and “En sourdine,” the manuscripts for which are dated 1880–1881. The young Debussy’s keen taste for literature may have been colored by childhood memories, for at the age of eight he studied the piano with a student of Chopin, Madame Mauté, the mother of Charles de Sivry and Verlaine’s mother-in-law, and he may have caught a glimpse of the poet during his lessons. After these sketches of 1881–1882, Debussy returned to Verlaine in some of his most beauti-

ful collections: *Ariettes oubliées* (1888), which includes both volumes—this time “official versions”—of *Fêtes galantes*, reprising “En sourdine,” “Fantoches,” and “Clair de lune” and including “Les Ingénus,” “Le Faune,” and “Colloque sentimental.”

In 1886, soon after Debussy produced his early sketches, his contemporary Charles Bordes became one of the first significant composers to publish a collection of songs based on the poems of Verlaine, including “Ô triste, triste était mon âme” (from *Ariettes oubliées*). Bordes died young; he is best known today as the joint founder of the Schola Cantorum, which was to train generations of composers in the style of César Franck and in early music. Of course it was Gabriel Fauré who, after Debussy, was to compose the most beautiful collection of Verlaine songs, beginning in 1887 with the famous “Clair de lune,” Op. 46, No. 2, and carrying on in 1891 with the *Cinq Mélodies “de Venise,”* Op. 58, begun during a stay on the Grand Canal as a guest of Winnaretta Singer. The songs were taken from *Fêtes galantes* and *Romances sans paroles*. Fauré later set nine poems from *La Bonne Chanson*, initially for voice and piano (1892) and later for voice and string quartet (1898). The French director and writer François Porcile sees this cycle as “the most sensitive, the most accurate, the most moving rendering of Verlaine.”

The third composer to set Verlaine exquisitely to music was Reynaldo Hahn, a student of Massenet who first made a name for himself in 1893 with *Chansons grises*. From an early age he was the darling of the Paris salon world, particularly when he sang and accompanied himself at the piano. Hahn was a regular at soirées organised by Alphonse Daudet, met Mallarmé, performed several of his songs for Verlaine, and exchanged a number of letters with him (one of them now in the possession of the singer François Le Roux). The repeated setting of the same texts by different composers gives us, apart from anything else, an exciting opportunity to compare their styles. In “Chanson d’automne” (1891), “D’une prison” (1892), and “En sourdine” (1914), Hahn often comes across as the one with the

greatest talent for bringing out the music of the language with apparent ease.

Verlaine's poetry was arranged by other late 19th-century composers, including the Wagnerian Ernest Chausson, who was close to symbolist circles. He set "La lune blanche" in 1885 (as "Apaisement"), followed by "Écoutez la chanson bien douce" from *Sagesse* in 1898. Déodat de Séverac wrote a new arrangement of "Le ciel est, par-dessus le toit" in 1897 (as "Prison"), and there is even a 1913 setting by an aging Camille Saint-Saëns of the first of *Ariettes oubliées* ("C'est l'extase langoureuse") which, rather curiously, he renamed "Le vent dans la plaine"—in an echo of the poem's epigraph, which Verlaine took from a play by Favart (the Opéra-Comique again): "Le vent dans la plaine, suspend son haleine...."

Poetry, Melody, and Song

Ravel described Verlaine as "an exquisite singer" and the taste for his poetry among composers continued into the 20th century (including settings by Stravinsky and Stockhausen). André Caplet, like his mentor Debussy, wrote a setting of "Green" in 1902, during a stay at the Villa Medici. Arthur Honegger revisited "Un grand sommeil noir" from *Sagesse* in 1943. Interestingly, there is also input from two composers of Polish origin. Józef Zygmunt Szulc arrived in Paris as the 20th century dawned and went on to become a master of French light opera, producing successes such as *Flossie* and *Sidonie Panache* but also *Dix mélodies sur des poèmes de Verlaine* (1907), of which "Clair de lune" was recorded by the great Nellie Melba. Régine Wieniawski, known as Poldowski, was the daughter of the composer and violinist

Wieniawski and set a number of Verlaine's poems, including "Mandoline" (1913), "La lune blanche" (1913), and "Colombine."

Verlaine's musical artistry extended into another area in a way that raises interesting points about the particular nature of French music and its links with poetry. There is no main stress in the language here. It is quite monochrome but rich in nuance and inflexion and perhaps lends itself less easily to highbrow musical styles than to the informal tone of song, with its verses and choruses, its way of expressing things by humming. There are parallels with medieval and Renaissance composers. In the Baroque era, court music and the operas of Lully sought to capture the kind of simplicity to which Debussy aspired in a different way in the almost Gregorian austerity of *Pelléas et Mélisande*. Verlaine, of all the poets, is probably the one who achieves this delicate balance most intuitively. It is for this reason that popular song writers were to regard him as a brother, beginning with Charles Trenet, who set "Chanson d'automne" to music in 1941 as "Verlaine" (replacing the words "wound my heart" with "soothe my heart," which better suited the optimism of *Le Fou chantant!*). In 1964 Léo Ferré produced an entire album of songs to poems by Verlaine and Rimbaud, including "Écoutez la chanson bien douce," set wonderfully to music. Ferré was to return to Verlaine in 1986 with a new version of "Colloque sentimental." Verlaine remains the most consummate embodiment of the meeting between French music and poetry across the most diverse range of genres.

—Benoît Duteurtre, 2015
Translation: Elaine Guy
Erato/Warner Classics

Note: Each of the songs on tonight's program is set to a poem by Paul Verlaine. Many of these poems will be heard multiple times, in settings by different composers. The pages that follow provide texts for each of the Verlaine poems. A list of the musical settings to be performed, and their composers, appears at the upper right, in [blue](#).

Poems by Paul Verlaine (1844–1896)

Clair de lune
From *Fêtes galantes* (1869)

Settings by:

Gabriel FAURÉ
Clair de lune
(Deux mélodies, Op. 46, No. 2)

Claude DEBUSSY
Clair de lune
(*Fêtes galantes* I, No. 3)

Józef Zygmunt SZULC
Clair de lune
(Dix mélodies, Op. 83, No. 1)

Votre âme est un paysage choisi
Que vont charmant masques et bergamasques
Jouant du luth et dansant et quasi
Tristes sous leurs déguisements fantasques.

Your soul is a choice landscape where
charming maskers and bergamaskers pass to
and fro, playing the lute and dancing and
almost sad in their fantastic disguises.

Tout en chantant sur le mode mineur
L'amour vainqueur et la vie opportune
Ils n'ont pas l'air de croire à leur bonheur
Et leur chanson se mêle au clair de lune,

They sing the while in the minor mode
of conquering love and the easy life,
they do not seem to believe in their happiness
and their song mingles with the moonlight,

Au calme clair de lune triste et beau,
Qui fait rêver les oiseaux dans les arbres
Et sangloter d'extase les jets d'eau,
Les grands jets d'eau sveltes parmi les marbres.

With the calm moonlight, sad and lovely,
that makes the birds dream in the trees
and the fountains sob with ecstasy,
those tall, svelte fountains among the marbles.

Green

From *Romances sans paroles* (1874)

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

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

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

Settings by:

Gabriel FAURÉ

Green

(Cinq mélodies "de Venise," Op. 58, No. 3)

André CAPLET

Green

Here are fruit, flowers, leaves and branches,
and here is my heart, which beats only for
you.
Do not tear it with your two white hands,
and may this humble present be sweet in your
lovely eyes.

I come covered in dew,
which the morning wind freezes on my forehead.
Let my fatigue, as I rest at your feet,
dream of dear moments that will refresh me.

On your young breast let me lay my head
still ringing with your last kisses;
let it calm itself after the pleasant tempest,
and let me sleep a little now that you are resting.

please turn page quietly

En sourdine
From *Fêtes galantes* (1869)

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

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

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

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

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

Settings by:

Reynaldo HAHN
En sourdine
(*Les Chansons grises*, No. 4)

Claude DEBUSSY
En sourdine
(*Fêtes galantes* I, No. 1)

Calm in the half-light cast
by the lofty branches,
let us permeate our love
with this deep silence.

Let us mingle our souls, our hearts,
our senses in ecstasy
among the vague murmurings
of the pines and arbutus trees.

Half close your eyes,
fold your arms on your bosom,
and let your sleeping heart
empty itself forever of all thought.

Let us be wooed
by the lulling and gentle
breeze that crinkles the russet grass
at your feet.

And when evening descends solemnly
from the oaks,
the nightingale will sing,
the voice of our despair.

Colombine

From *Fêtes galantes* (1869)

Léandre le sot,
 Pierrot qui d'un saut
 De puce
 Franchit le buisson,
 Cassandre sous son
 Capuce,

Arlequin aussi,
 Cet aigrefin si
 Fantasque
 Aux costumes fous,
 Ses yeux luisants sous
 Son masque,

– Do, mi, sol, mi, fa, –
 Tout ce monde va,
 Rit, chante
 Et danse devant
 Une belle enfant
 Méchante

Dont les yeux pervers
 Comme les yeux verts
 Des chattes
 Gardent ses appas
 Et disent: «À bas
 Les pattes!»

– Eux ils vont toujours!
 Fatidique cours
 Des astres,
 Oh! dis-moi vers quels
 Mornes ou cruels
 Désastres

L'implacable enfant,
 Preste et relevant
 Ses jupes,
 La rose au chapeau,
 Conduit son troupeau
 De dupes?

Setting by:

POLDOWSKI

Colombine

Leander the fool,
 Pierrot hopping too
 like a flea
 and leaping the wood,
 Cassander with hood
 Monkishly

and then Harlequin,
 that scoundrel of sin
 fantastic,
 mad-costumed so,
 his eyes a-glow,
 can't mask it,

– Do, mi, so, mi, fa, –
 all from wide and far,
 go laughing
 sing for her, dancing
 that arch little thing
 enchanting

whose eyes perverse
 green or something worse
 like a cat,
 cry, in her charms' cause,
 "Ah, mind where your paws
 are at!"

– Ever and on they go!
 Fateful stars that flow
 the faster,
 oh, say, towards what
 cruel or dismal lot,
 what disaster

this implacable flirt,
 nimbly lifting her skirt,
 her troops,
 a rose in her hair,
 leads onward there,
 her dupes?

please turn page quietly

Ô triste, triste était mon âme
From *Romances sans paroles* (1874)

Ô triste, triste était mon âme
À cause, à cause d'une femme.

Je ne me suis pas consolé
Bien que mon coeur s'en soit allé,

Bien que mon coeur, bien que mon âme
Eussent fui loin de cette femme.

Je ne me suis pas consolé,
Bien que mon coeur s'en soit allé.

[Et mon coeur, mon coeur trop sensible
Dit à mon âme: Est-il possible,

Est-il possible, – le fût-il, –
Ce fier exil, ce triste exil?

Mon âme dit à mon coeur: Sais-je
Moi-même que nous veut ce piège

D'être présents bien qu'exilés,
Encore que loin en allés?]

Setting by:

Charles BORDES
Ô triste, triste était mon âme

Oh, sad, sad was my heart,
because, because of a woman.

I found no consolation
though my heart had gone away,

though my heart, though my soul
had fled far from this woman.

I found no consolation
though my heart had gone away.

[And my heart, my too sensitive heart
said to my soul: Is it possible,

is it possible, – was it, –
this proud exile, this sad exile?

My soul said to my heart: Do I myself
know what this trap wants from us, this trap

of being present even when exiled,
even though gone far away?]

Mandoline

From *Fêtes galantes* (1869)

Les donneurs de sérénades
Et les belles écouteuses
Échangent des propos fades
Sous les ramures chanteuses.

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

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

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

Settings by:

Gabriel FAURÉ

Mandoline

(*Cinq mélodies "de Venise,"* Op. 58, No. 1)

POLDOWSKI

Mandoline

Claude DEBUSSY

Mandoline

The serenaders
and the lovely listeners
exchange banal chatter
beneath the singing branches.

It is Tircis and Aminte
and the eternal Clitandre
and Damis, who for many
a cruel lady composed many a tender verse.

Their short silk doublets,
their long gowns with trains,
their elegance, their joy
and their soft blue shadows

Whirl in the ecstasy
of a pink and grey moon,
and the mandolin babbles
amid the quivering breeze.

please turn page quietly

Le ciel est, par-dessus le toit
From *Sagesse* (1880)

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

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?

Settings by:

Déodat de SÉVERAC
Prison

Reynaldo HAHN
D'une prison
Vingt mélodies I, No. 16

The sky above the roof,
so blue, so calm!
A tree, above the roof,
waves its crown.

The bell, in the sky I watch,
gently rings.
A bird, on the tree I watch,
plaintively sings.

My God, my God, life is there
simple and serene.
That peaceful murmur there
comes from the town.

– O you, O you, what have you done,
weeping without end,
say, O say, what have you done
with all your youth?

Écoutez la chanson bien douce
From *Sagesse* (1880)

Écoutez la chanson bien douce
Qui ne pleure que pour vous plaire.
Elle est discrète, elle est légère:
Un frisson d'eau sur de la mousse!

La voix vous fut connue (et chère?),
Mais à présent elle est voilée
Comme une veuve désolée,
Pourtant comme elle encore fière,

Et dans les longs plis de son voile
Qui palpite aux brises d'automne,
Cache et montre au coeur qui s'étonne
La vérité comme une étoile.

Elle dit, la voix reconnue,
Que la bonté c'est notre vie,
Que de la haine et de l'envie
Rien ne reste, la mort venue.

Elle parle aussi de la gloire
D'être simple sans plus attendre,
Et de noces d'or et du tendre
Bonheur d'une paix sans victoire.

Accueillez la voix qui persiste
Dans son naïf épithalame.
Allez, rien n'est meilleur à l'âme
Que de faire une âme moins triste!

Elle est en peine et de passage,
L'âme qui souffre sans colère,
Et comme sa morale est claire!
Écoutez la chanson bien douce.

Settings by:

Ernest CHAUSSON
La chanson bien douce

Léo FERRÉ
Écoutez la chanson bien douce

Hear the sweetest song pass
that weeps for your sole delight.
It is discreet and so light:
a water-drop trembling on glass!

A voice known to you (and dear?)
but at present misted and veiled
like a widow desolate, assailed,
yet like her still proud, it appears,

and in the long folds of a veil
stirred by the autumn breeze,
hidden, to startled heart reveals
the truth like the star so pale.

It says, that voice you know,
that our life is goodness at last,
that hatred and envy pass,
nothing's left, death lays all low.

It speaks to us also of glory
of humility, of asking no more,
and the marriage of golden ore
to sweet joy of peace without victory.

Welcome the voice that persists
in its naive epithalamium,
nothing more for the soul, now, come,
than to render soul-sadness less.

It is hard-pressed, and passing by,
the suffering soul without anger,
and the moral is all too clear!
Listen to the song that is wise.

please turn page quietly

La lune blanche
From *La Bonne Chanson* (1870)

La lune blanche
Luit dans les bois;
De chaque branche
Part une voix
Sous la ramée...

Ô bien-aimée.

L'étang reflète,
Profond miroir,
La silhouette
Du saule noir
Où le vent pleure...

Rêvons, c'est l'heure.

Un vaste et tendre
Apaînement
Semble descendre
Du firmament
Que l'astre irise...

C'est l'heure exquise.

Settings by:

POLDOWSKI
L'Heure exquise

Ernest CHAUSSON
Apaînement

The white moon
gleams in the woods.
From each branch
a voice takes flight
beneath the leafy boughs...

Oh my beloved.

The pond reflects
like a deep mirror
the silhouette
of the black willow
where the wind weeps...

Let us dream, this is the hour.

A vast and tender
appeasement
seems to fall
from the firmament
iridescent with stars...

This is the exquisite hour.

Fantoches

From *Fêtes galantes* (1869)

Scaramouche et Pulcinella
Qu'un mauvais dessein rassembla
Gesticulent, noirs sur la lune.
Cependant l'excellent docteur

Bolonais cueille avec lenteur
Des simples parmi l'herbe brune.
Lors sa fille, piquant minois,
Sous la charmille, en tapinois,

Se glisse demi-nue, en quête
De son beau pirate espagnol,
Dont un langoureux rossignol
Clame la détresse à tue-tête.

Setting by:

Claude DEBUSSY

Fantoches

(*Fêtes galantes* I, No. 2)

Scaramuccio and Pulcinella,
drawn together by some evil design,
gesticulate, black under the moon.
Meanwhile, the excellent doctor

from Bologna is slowly picking
medicinal herbs from the brown grass.
And his saucy-faced daughter
secretly slips into her bower,

half undressed, looking
for her handsome Spanish pirate
whose distress a loving nightingale
is proclaiming at the top of his voice.

please turn page quietly

Chanson d'automne

From *Poèmes saturniens* (1866)

Les sanglots longs
Des violons
De l'automne
Blessent mon coeur
D'une langueur
Monotone.

Tout suffocant
Et blême, quand
Sonne l'heure,
Je me souviens
Des jours anciens
Et je pleure;

Et je m'en vais
Au vent mauvais
Qui m'empporte
Deçà, delà,
Pareil à la
Feuille morte.

Setting by:

Reynaldo HAHN
Chanson d'automne
(*Les Chansons grises*, No. 1)

Charles TRENET
Verlaine

Long sobs
of the autumn
violins
wound my heart
with a monotonous
languor.

Stifled
and pale, when
the hour chimes,
I remember
days long past
and I weep.

And I drift along
in the evil wind
carrying me off
this way, then that,
as if I were
a dead leaf.

C'est l'extase langoureuse
From *Romances sans paroles* (1874)

Settings by:

Camille SAINT-SAËNS
Le vent dans la plaine

Gabriel FAURÉ
C'est l'extase
(*Cinq mélodies "de Venise,"* Op. 58, No. 5)

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

It is languorous ecstasy,
it is the fatigue of love,
it is woods shivering
in the wind's embrace;
it is, over towards the grey branches,
the chorus of tiny voices.

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

Oh, the frail, fresh murmur!
It babbles and whispers,
it resembles the soft cry
that the waving grass exhales...
It is like the muffled sound of grinding pebbles
under the rolling waters.

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

This soul, which is lamenting
in a dormant moan,
it is ours, is it not?
It is mine, tell me, and yours,
whence emanates the humble anthem
on this warm evening, so quietly.

please turn page quietly

Colloque sentimental
From *Fêtes galantes* (1869)

Dans le vieux parc solitaire et glacé,
Deux formes ont tout à l'heure passé.

Leurs yeux sont morts et leurs lèvres sont molles,
Et l'on entend à peine leurs paroles.

Dans le vieux parc solitaire et glacé,
Deux spectres ont évoqué le passé.

– Te souvient-il de notre extase ancienne?
– Pourquoi voulez-vous donc qu'il m'en
souviennne?

– Ton coeur bat-il toujours à mon seul nom?

Toujours vois-tu mon âme en rêve? – Non.

– Ah! les beaux jours de bonheur indicible
Où nous joignons nos bouches!
– C'est possible.

– Qu'il était bleu, le ciel, et grand, l'espoir!
– L'espoir a fui, vaincu, vers le ciel noir.

Tels ils marchaient dans les avoines folles,
Et la nuit seule entendit leurs paroles.

Settings by:

Léo FERRÉ
Colloque sentimental

Claude DEBUSSY
Colloque sentimental
(*Fêtes galantes* II, No. 3)

In the old solitary and frozen park
two forms recently passed by.

Their eyes are dead and their lips are slack,
and one can barely hear their words.

In the old solitary and frozen park
two spectres recalled the past.

– Do you remember our ecstasy of long ago?
– Why would you want me to remember it?

– Does your heart still beat at the sound of
my name?
Do you still dream of me? – No.

– Ah, those lovely days of unutterable happiness,
when our mouths joined in kisses!
– Possibly.

– The sky was so blue, our hope was so great!
– Hope has fled, vanquished, toward the dark sky.

Thus they walked on through the waving
cornfields,
and only the night heard their words.

Un grand sommeil noir
From *Sagesse* (1880)

Setting by:

Arthur HONNEGER
Un grand sommeil noir

Un grand sommeil noir
Tombe sur ma vie:
Dormez, tout espoir,
Dormez, toute envie!

A long black sleep
descends upon my life:
sleep, all hope,
sleep, all desire!

Je ne vois plus rien,
Je perds la mémoire
Du mal et du bien...
Ô la triste histoire!

I can no longer see anything,
I am losing my remembrance
of good and evil...
Oh, the sad story!

Je suis un berceau
Qu'une main balance
Au creux d'un caveau:
Silence, silence!

I am a cradle
rocked by a hand
in the depth of a vault.
Silence, silence!

please turn page quietly

Les Ingénus

From *Fêtes galantes* (1869)

Les hauts talons luttaienent avec les longues jupes,
 En sorte que, selon le terrain et le vent,
 Parfois luisaient des bas de jambes, trop souvent
 Interceptés!—et nous aimions ce jeu de dupes.

Parfois aussi le dard d'un insecte jaloux
 Inquiétait le col des belles sous les branches,

Et c'était des éclairs soudains de nuques blanches,
 Et ce régal comblait nos jeunes yeux de fous.

Le soir tombait, un soir équivoque d'automne:
 Les belles, se pendant rêveuses à nos bras,
 Dirent alors des mots si spécieux, tout bas,
 Que notre âme, depuis ce temps, tremble et
 s'étonne.

Le Faune

From *Fêtes galantes* (1869)

Un vieux faune de terre cuite
 Rit au centre des boulingrins,
 Présageant sans doute une suite
 Mauvaise à ces instants sereins

Qui m'ont conduit et t'ont conduite,
 – Mélancoliques pèlerins, –
 Jusqu'à cette heure dont la fuite
 Tournoie au son des tambourins.

Setting by:

Claude DEBUSSY

Les Ingénus

(*Fêtes galantes* II, No. 1)

High heels fought against long skirts
 so that, depending on the terrain and the wind,
 an ankle could sometimes be glimpsed, too often
 intercepted! And we liked this fool's game.

Sometimes too, a jealous insect's sting
 bothered the pretty girls' necks beneath the
 branches.

And there were sudden flashes of white napes
 on which our young, wild eyes regaled
 themselves.

Evening fell: an equivocal autumn evening.
 The pretty girls, dreamily hanging on our arms,
 whispered to us such beguiling words
 that our souls, ever since, have trembled in
 surprise.

Setting by:

Claude DEBUSSY

Le Faune

(*Fêtes galantes* II, No. 2)

An old terracotta faun
 laughs in the middle of the grass
 promising, no doubt, a bad end
 to this present serenity

which has led me and led you,
 two melancholy pilgrims,
 to this moment passing
 in a clash of tambourines.

Philippe Jaroussky (*countertenor*), at just 38 years old, has established himself as one of the major singers in the world, winning newcomer-of-the-year and artist-of-the-year awards at the French Victoires de la Musique as well as Echo Klassik awards in 2008 and 2009 (with L'Arpeggiata). His vast repertoire ranges from Monteverdi, Sances, and Rossi to Bach, Handel, and Vivaldi. Lately, Jaroussky has also explored the very different repertoire of French *mélodies* accompanied by the pianist Jérôme Ducros. Increasingly interested in contemporary music, Jaroussky has performed a song cycle composed by Marc-André Dalbavie from the sonnets of Louise Labbé. He also joined in the creation of Kaija Saariaho's opera *Only the Sound Remains* at the Dutch National Opera & Ballet in Amsterdam this past March.

Jaroussky has collaborated with some of the best Baroque ensembles in the world, including Freiburger Barockorchester, Il Pomo d'Oro, Accademia Bizantina, Les Arts Florissants, Le Concert d'Astrée, L'Arpeggiata, Concerto Köln, Ensemble Matheus, Les Musiciens du Louvre Grenoble, Orfeo 55, Le Cercle de l'Harmonie, Europa Galante, Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, I Barocchisti, Apollo's Fire, Anima Eterna, and the Venice Baroque Orchestra.

He has performed to great acclaim in the most prestigious festivals and concert halls around the world and has been an exclusive artist with Erato-Warner Classics for many years. His album of Vivaldi arias, *Heroes*, recorded with Ensemble Matheus, received a Disque d'Or award, a Choc du Monde de la Musique, and a *Grammophone* award, and his album *Tribute to Carestini* (with Le Concert d'Astrée and Emmanuelle Haim) was named Album of the Year at the Victoires de la Musique (2008) and the Midem Classical Awards (2009).

Jaroussky's albums *Opium* and *Green*, collections of French *mélodies*, have also enjoyed similar success.

In 2002 he founded Ensemble Artaserse, which currently performs throughout Europe, and with which he has recorded *Pieta*, focused on sacred music of Vivaldi, as well as *Virtuosi Cantatas*.

Jaroussky made his stage debut in the United States in 2011 in the title role of Agostino Steffani's *Niobe, regina di Tebe* in Boston. In 2012, he performed with Cecilia Bartoli at the Salzburg Festival in a production of Handel's *Giulio Cesare* and as a result of this collaboration was invited by Bartoli to record Steffani duets on her album *Mission*.

After a nine-month sabbatical, Jaroussky returned to the stage in September 2013 with the Venice Baroque Orchestra and Andrea Marcon, performing at more than 50 concerts worldwide (including appearances here in Berkeley with Cal Performances and in Paris, Moscow, Berlin, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Madrid, Barcelona, New York, Chicago, Beijing, Shanghai, Taipei, Tokyo, and Hong Kong).

Jérôme Ducros (*piano*) was born in France and studied at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris. Since then, he has enjoyed a brilliant career, performing at prestigious venues in cities including Paris, Tokyo, London, Geneva, Rome, Berlin, Amsterdam, and New York. As a soloist, he has appeared with ensembles such as Philharmonie de Chambre de Paris, Orchestre National de Lyon, Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne, Orchestre National de Lille, Ensemble Orchestral de Paris, and the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of conductors including Emmanuel Krivine, Marc Minkowski, Christopher Hogwood, and Sergiu Comissiona.

A highly respected chamber musician, he has appeared in a duo with Jérôme Pernoo since 1995. Ducros has also toured with soprano Dawn Upshaw to London, New York, Salzburg, and Paris (recording for Erato). In 2007, he began his collaboration with Philippe Jaroussky. Recent recordings include works for piano and orchestra by Fauré under the baton of Moshe Atzmon (Quartz), a recital with Renaud Capuçon (Virgin Classics), a Beethoven program with Jérôme Pernoo, and the French *mélodies* heard on this evening's program. Jérôme Ducros is also a composer. His trio for two cellos has been performed a number of times throughout Europe and is published by Editions Billaudot.