

Transept

... et la nuit comme le jour illumine

French songs by Duparc, Fauré, Franck,
Lili Boulanger, Poulenc, Bannister

Peter Bannister: bass-baritone and piano

Alegreya Sans
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Peter Bannister – bass-baritone, piano (Petrof).

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Transept Music Productions.

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... et la nuit comme le jour illumine

The present album of French songs is one which was to a certain extent developed 'in reverse', beginning with the **Four Psalms for low voice and piano** which I composed for the bass-baritone Bertrand Grunenwald and premièred with him at the Collège des Bernardins in Paris on October 24, 2012. It is preceded by *mélodies* starting from the mid-19th century which, with one or two exceptions, are also particularly well-suited to a voice with a relatively low 'centre of gravity'. As lower-voiced singers have discovered when trying to compose substantial programmes of French art-song without resorting to extreme transpositions, appropriate repertoire is less abundant than for higher voices, but where it exists, it is often of the highest artistic quality. It could indeed be said that many of the songs featured here attain to a degree of intensity relatively unusual for the French tradition (at least as it is often perceived), no less substantial than the questing, metaphysical depth present in much of the corpus of Austro-Germanic Lieder from Beethoven to Wolf or Mahler.

The album's title **et la nuit comme le jour illumine** ('and the night is as bright as the day') is taken from the final line of my setting of Psalm 138 (139), but it could equally well serve as a guiding concept for the whole recording in that the contrast between light and darkness features prominently in the songs of all the composers included here, on several levels: timbral, poetic and spiritual. This dichotomy is reflected in terms of vocal technique, too, as the bass-baritone is constantly confronted in this repertoire with the question of *chiaroscuro*, the shading obtained by subtly calibrating the mixture of the heavy ('chest') and light ('head') vocal mechanisms. The technical challenge for the singer here is to develop and deploy an extensive palette of vocal colours for the sake of phrasing and characterization, while at the same time maintaining an essential unity throughout the voice – a particular issue for 'hybrid' vocal categories (the 'baritenor' and arguably the mezzo-soprano being other examples).

Henri Duparc (1848-1933) is a striking example of this dialectic of darkness and light, both artistically and biographically. In terms of musico-poetic imagery, the three songs included here veer between the *chaude lumière* of the Dutch sunset evoked by Baudelaire's immortal poem *L'invitation au voyage*, the frightening and obsessive nocturnal vision of *La vague et la cloche* and the noonday colours of *Phidylé*. It is however impossible not to interpret Duparc's gripping and restless idiom – whose dramatic, often Wagnerian tone is exceptional for the French voice and piano repertoire, as the expression of an arduous inner struggle. Duparc's creative energy was undermined by hyper-sensitivity and pathological self-criticism (leading him to destroy most of his work, including his opera *La Roussalka*, on which he worked for many years and burned twice) and ultimately by physical blindness and paralysis. This was nonetheless accompanied by a lifelong search for spiritual light which would lead him to Lourdes in 1906 in the company of Paul Claudel and the poet Francis Jammes – whose words would be set a few years later by Lili Boulanger in her cycle *Clairières dans le Ciel*, of which two excerpts are included here. Duparc, who had long since ceasing composing but would live until 1933, found the inner resources following his 1906 pilgrimage to able to write that "God gives the great grace – great because of being terribly painful – of taking physical sight away so that the soul would see better."

In the case of **Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)**, the contrast of light and darkness above all plays out in terms of the poetry and vocal-pianistic colour, as expressed in the superbly atmospheric evocations of the diurnal cycle in the songs *Aurore*, *En sourdine* and *Nocturne*. In the latter, the "blue caskets" (*écrins bleus*) of starlit night are equated with rapt contemplation, which also characterizes the song of the same name by **César Franck (1822-1890)**. Fauré's palette also however encompasses a menacingly oppressive grey – as in the rain-soaked streets of Verlaine's *Spleen* or the brooding heaviness of *Automne* with its short-lived dusk (*rapides couchants*), desolate horizons (*horizons navrants*) and pallid dawns (*aurores pâlies*). Here we find the undercurrent of an apparently reasonless unease that runs persistently through much French nineteenth-century art and which makes Fauré a more complex and ambiguous figure than is sometimes assumed (in resonance with Verlaine, for whom even the song of the nightingale that ends *En sourdine* is tinged with penumbral despair...).

In the music of **Lili Boulanger (1893-1918)**, who famously sight-sang Fauré's songs at a tender age, the struggle between shadows and light is remarkably intense for several reasons, the most obvious being her awareness of her own mortality and the fact that the greatest works of her short but very full life were written against the tragic backdrop of the First World War. With Lili, day and night stand in polar opposition, perhaps most clearly in her final orchestral diptych, *Soir triste* and *Matin de printemps*, or her vast setting of Psalm 130 (*De profundis*). In its magically orchestrated central section the mezzo-soprano soloist waits in hope for God from the depths of the abyss (*du fond de l'abîme*), "more than night-watchmen long for the morning" (*plus que les guetteurs de la nuit n'aspirent au matin*). The language of Lili Boulanger's songs is clearly indebted both to Fauré and Debussy, echoed at the start of *La nef légère / Le retour*¹, dedicated to the Belgian bass-baritone Hector Dufranne, well-known for his performances as Golaud in *Pelléas et Mélisande*. In the two 'daytime' songs excerpted here from *Clairières dans le Ciel*, *Nous nous aimerons tant* and *Vous m'avez regardé*, the writing has the ecstatic senerity of the blue sky above a liquid and resonant Debussyan piano accompaniment. With *Dans l'immense tristesse* (1916), however, we encounter night at its most oppressive. In this haunting—or maybe *haunted*—setting of a text by the blind and deaf poetess Bertha Galeron de Calonne (1859-1936), a young child sleeps by the tomb of his deceased mother in a moonlit cemetery, imagining that she is only hiding and will return. Lili's particular gift might be said to be her ability to evoke an extreme psychological state by sophisticated and innovative musical means (her tonal-modal harmonic idiom incorporates dense chromaticism and angular dissonance that at times approaches that of the early works of Béla Bartók), but narrated in her transparently emotional and compassionate melodic idiom that makes no pretence at detachment. As the composer and organist of Notre-Dame Cathedral Louis Vierne said after hearing a concert of Lili Boulanger's music in 1921, "one is moved in one's innermost being by the accents of ineffable tenderness, of passion foretold, of heart-rending sadness that emerge from this music."²

The *Hymne* and *Priez pour paix* of **Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)** were both written for the bass-baritone Conrad Doda (1905-1997), son of the famous German soprano Marya Freund, born in Breslau in present-day Poland. Active in French musical circles from 1932 onwards, he served in the US Army during World War II and moved to New York (where Poulenc's *Hymne* was written) before returning to spend the final years of his life in Paris. Although it has been said by some that Doda's voice was 'ordinary', his recordings with the likes of Lili Kraus and Noël Lee very much suggest otherwise in terms of his textual understanding, diction and nobility of

¹ Published posthumously by Ricordi (who signed a publishing contract with Lili Boulanger subsequent to her winning the *Prix de Rome*) as *Le Retour* in 1919, the song was originally entitled *La nef légère*. This initial text can be found in MS 19484 in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, written in ink in Lili's hand. The source is the opening sailors' chorus of the unfinished opera *Briséis ou Les amants de Corinthe* (*Briséis or the lovers of Corinth*) by Emmanuel Chabrier (1841-1894) on a libretto by Catulle Mendès and Mikhaël Ephraïm after Goethe. We can surmise that *La nef légère* is related to a chorus by Lili of the same name that is mentioned by her biographers as having been written in 1912, shortly after her first unsuccessful attempt at the *Prix de Rome*. No score of this chorus has however been found. How Lili came across this relatively obscure text is not known, except to say that even in its unfinished form, *Briséis* had acquired a certain international notoriety at the time, the first staged performance having been conducted by none other than Richard Strauss in Berlin in 1899. When exactly the words of *La nef légère* were replaced by those of the poet George Delaquys, a family friend, is uncertain. An examination of the manuscript nonetheless strongly suggests that Delaquys provided Lili with a new text (retaining the themes of Antiquity and the Mediterranean) written to measure after the composition of the first version. This can be inferred from the fact that *Le Retour* can be sung to the melodic line of *La Nef légère* with only very minor alterations. It has been thought that the possible problem of the rights of the authors of the libretto of *Briséis* may have been the reason for the textual substitution – a very plausible hypothesis given that, according to Jérôme Spycket (*À la recherche de Lili Boulanger* (Paris : Fayard, 2004), 128), Delaquys had already done just such a re-working of a copyrighted text for Nadia Boulanger in 1910.

² « On est remué jusqu'au fond des entrailles par les accents d'ineffable tendresse, de passion pressentie, de tristesse déchirante qui sortent de cette musique » (quoted in Spycket, *op. cit.*, 361). Given that the works on the programme included Lili's *Funérailles*, *Soir Triste* and *Psaume 129*, Vierne seems to be using the word 'passion' in a spiritual (i.e. the premonition of suffering) as well as in an emotional sense.

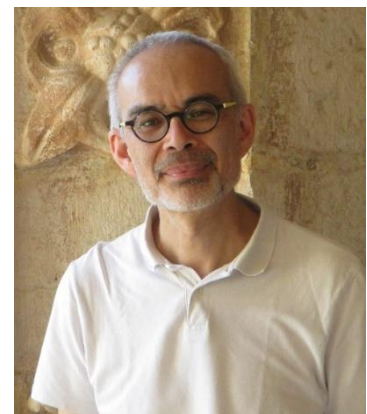
phrasing. In the *Hymne*, Poulenc sets Jean Racine's remarkable poetic translation of a text from the Roman Breviary, in which Racine fuses Christian and Classical Greek imagery in order to depict the physical and spiritual dispelling of night by day. In the celebrated and poignant *Priez pour paix* (sung here in the original C minor rather than the more usual F minor transposition), the darkness lies in the historical context rather than in the text as such. The song was written on September 29, 1938, the day before the signature of the infamous Munich agreement whose shameful sacrifice of the Czech Sudetenland to Hitler would ultimately be remembered by history as a futile act of appeasement. The song appears to have been premièred by Doda and Nadia Boulanger in Canterbury Cathedral on August 26-27, 1939. According to Conrad, neither performers nor audience had the heart for the performance given the circumstances: only a few days later, Hitler invaded Poland, starting World War II.

The following two tracks can be regarded as my own 're-imaginings' of Poulenc's settings, forming part of a larger project entitled *Lauda and Litany*, re-working spiritual/metaphysical classics of the voice and piano literature from Schubert to Mahler, Rachmaninov and Poulenc in dialogue with the originals. The album concludes with the *Four Psalms* mentioned at the outset, in which the piano plays a particularly important role. Among the musical influences that the listener may detect, the most explicit is that of Janáček, Psalm 138 (139) being subtitled as a homage to the Czech composer on account of its obsessive repeated small rhythmic motifs, while Psalm 120 (121) hints at Olivier Messiaen's *Première communion de la Vierge* from *Vingt regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus*. The piece was inspired by the sights and sounds of the tranquil evening landscape of the hills of southern Burgundy in France, as seen during my first visit to the Taizé Community at Easter 1986. The four Psalm-settings are dedicated to Anita Nelson, wife of the conductor John Nelson, who died on October 12, 2012, twelve days before the first performance.

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This album is self-accompanied – a practice which may seem unusual in a 'classical' musical context, but which is actually a staple professional requirement for pianists in opera houses the world over. Self-accompaniment is also long-attested within the art-song tradition, going back at least to Schubert himself. In France, perhaps its most noteworthy historical exponent was the multi-faceted Reynaldo Hahn (1874-1947), whose extant recordings in his inimitable style at the (porous) frontier between *mélodie* and popular song often display a mesmerizing degree of facility. Self-accompaniment does however come with its inherent limitations in terms of posture, acoustic projection and microphone placement; for this reason, taking a leaf from recording techniques regularly used in other musical genres, multi-tracking rather than simultaneous recording of voice and piano has been used in the present context.

British-born but resident in France since 1994, **Peter Bannister** began his musical training with Trinity Boy's Choir in London, studying piano with David de Warrenne and voice with Helen Roy. After obtaining a Master's in Musicology from King's College, Cambridge he completed his studies as a French government scholar in Paris with Geneviève Ibanez, Michel Béroff (piano) and Naji Hakim (composition). He has been the recipient of awards at international competitions in Chartres, Nuremberg (organ) and San Sebastian (composition) as well as the *Prix André Caplet* of the Académie des Beaux-Arts. In addition to working as a freelance keyboardist and choral singer during his time in Paris, he was active for several years in the field of opera as a pianist/vocal coach/assistant conductor (Opéra National de Paris, Théâtre du Châtelet, Festival d'Aix-en-Provence) with conductors including Sir Simon Rattle, Gennadi Rozhdestvensky, James Conlon and Jukka-Pekka Saraste. A meeting in 2000 with the American conductor John Nelson had a decisive impact on his



development, leading to his composition of the works *Nuages de Magellan* and *Pursued by Bronze Horsemen* for the Ensemble Orchestral de Paris, premiered by John Nelson at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in 2004 and 2006 respectively, as well as the oratorio *Et iterum venturus est* in memory of Olivier Messiaen, premiered in the closing concert of the Messiaen centenary cycle at the composer's church of La Trinité in Paris. From 2009 to 2013 Peter Bannister was Associate Artistic Director to John Nelson and Composer-in-Association for the Chicago-based sacred music organization SOLI DEO GLORIA Inc., where his responsibilities included overseeing a series of commissioned Psalm-settings from a roster of leading international composers including James MacMillan, Gavin Bryars and Aaron Jay Kernis.

Peter Bannister is the author of over sixty works of orchestral, vocal and instrumental music, a large portion of his catalogue being published by Universal Editions in Vienna. His music is influenced by a wide range of sources from Hildegard von Bingen or Baroque counterpoint to Olivier Messiaen, Polish aleatorism, minimalism or acoustic/electric jazz. Commissions and creations in Europe and the United States have led to collaborations with Musique Sacrée de Notre-Dame de Paris, Rencontres Musicales de La Prée, Saarländischer Rundfunk, the Polish Ministry of Culture, Vale of Glamorgan/Cheltenham Festivals, Niederrheinische Sinfoniker, Ars Nova Copenhagen, Trinity College Choir, Cambridge, Cor Cantiamo, Illinois, Bourges and Chartres Cathedrals...).

As a pianist and organist he has performed in recital or as a soloist with orchestra (Rachmaninov, Handel, Beethoven, Chopin...) in Europe and North America (BBC TV, France-Musiques, RAI, London Southbank Centre, Cambridge Festival, Vienna Stephansdom, Klangbogen Festival Wien, Heilbronner Meisterkonzerte, Pollini Auditorium Padova, Organum Istriae (Croatia), Lviv National Opera, Settembre Musicale di Trieste, Cathedrals of Erfurt, Konstanz, Salzburg and Ulm, organ festivals in Arezzo, La Verna, Chartres, Gdansk-Oliwa, Ravenna, Montreal (International Congress of Organists)). He has also been a continuo player with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe and the Orchestre de Chambre de Paris.

Peter Bannister is active as an interdisciplinary researcher, holding an M.Th in Systematic and Philosophical Theology from the University of Wales - his academic publications include chapters in *Messiaen the Theologian* (Ashgate, 2009), *Twentieth-Century Organ Music* (Routledge, 2010), *Contemporary Music and Spirituality* (Routledge, 2013), *Mystic Modern: the Music, Thought and Legacy of Charles Tournemire* (Church Music Association of America, 2014) and *James MacMillan Studies* (Cambridge University Press, 2019). He has given invited presentations at the Institut Catholique de Paris, the Universities of St Andrews, Boston and Gothenburg, Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Cardiff BBC Hoddinott Hall, Théâtre du Châtelet, Chorégies d'Orange...

His recordings include the albums *The Forgotten Clarinet* (2014) and *New Picture* (2024) with the American clarinetist David Gould; the present release is the first in a solo series scheduled on the Transept label.

Since 2016, Peter Bannister has been living in Cluny, Burgundy, where his activities include teaching voice and playing the organ for the Taizé Ecumenical Community.

Henri Duparc (1848-1933)

1. L'invitation au voyage

Mon enfant, ma sœur,
Songe à la douceur
D'aller là-bas vivre ensemble!
Aimer à loisir,
Aimer et mourir
Au pays qui te ressemble!
Les soleils mouillés
De ces ciels brouillés
Pour mon esprit ont les charmes
Si mystérieux
De tes traîtres yeux,
Brillant à travers leurs larmes.

Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté,
Luxe, calme et volupté!

Vois sur ces canaux
Dormir ces vaisseaux
Dont l'humeur est vagabonde;
C'est pour assouvir
Ton moindre désir
Qu'ils viennent du bout du monde.
-Les soleils couchants
Revêtent les champs,
Les canaux, la ville entière,
D'hyacinthe et d'or;
Le monde s'endort
Dans une chaude lumière.

Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté,
Luxe, calme et volupté!

Charles Baudelaire

2. La vague et la cloche

Une fois, terrassé par un puissant breuvage,
J'ai rêvé que parmi les vagues et le bruit
De la mer, je voguais sans fanal dans la nuit,
Morne rameur, n'ayant plus l'espoir du rivage...

L'Océan me crachait ses baves sur le front,
Et le vent me glaçait d'horreur jusqu'aux entrailles,
Les vagues s'écroulaient ainsi que des murailles
Avec ce rythme lent qu'un silence interrompt...

Puis tout changea... la mer et sa noire mêlée

Sombrèrent ... sous mes pieds s'effondra le plancher
De la barque... Et j'étais seul dans un vieux clocher,
Chevauchant avec rage une cloche ébranlée.

J'étreignais la crierie opiniâtrement,
Convulsif et fermant dans l'effort mes paupières.
Le grondement faisait trembler les vieilles pierres,
Tant j'activais sans fin le lourd balancement.

Pourquoi n'as-tu pas dit, ô rêve, où Dieu nous mène?
Pourquoi n'as-tu pas dit s'ils ne finiraient pas,
L'inutile travail et l'éternel fracas
Dont est faite la vie, hélas! la vie humaine!

François Coppée

1. Invitation to a journey

My child, my sister,
Think of the sweetness of
Going there to live together!
To love as we please,
To love and die
In the land that resembles you!
The wet suns
Of those blurred skies
Hold for my spirit
The mysterious charms
Of your treacherous eyes
Shining through their tears.

There, there is naught but order and beauty,
Abundance, calm, and voluptuous pleasure.

See on those canals
Those vessels asleep,
Vessels with a wandering spirit;
To satisfy
Your slightest desire
They come from the ends of the earth.
The setting suns
Clothe the fields,
The canals and the whole town
In hyacinth and gold;
The world falls asleep
In a warm light.

There - nothing but order and beauty dwell,
Abundance, calm, and voluptuous pleasure.

Charles Baudelaire

2. The wave and the bell

Once, struck down by a potent brew,
I dreamed that, amidst the waves and the noise
Of the sea, I was drifting at night without a beacon,
A bleak rower with no more hope of reaching land...

The ocean was spitting its foam on my brow,
And the wind froze me with horror to my depths;
The waves crashed down like walls about me,
With a slow rhythm interrupted by a silence...

Then everything changed... The sea and its dark tumult

Subsided... Under my feet the floor of the boat
Gave way... And I was alone in an old bell-tower,
Furiously riding a swinging bell.

I stubbornly clasped the clanging metal,
Convulsed and closing my eyes with the effort.
The booming made the old stones tremble,
As I endlessly set the heavy swing in motion.

Why did you not say, O dream, where God is taking us?
Why did you not say whether they will ever end -
The useless toil and the eternal noise
Of which human life, alas, is made?

François Coppée

3. Phidylé

L'herbe est molle au sommeil sous les frais peupliers,
Aux pentes des sources moussues,
Qui, dans les prés en fleur germant par mille issues,
Se perdent sous les noirs halliers.

Repose, ô Phidylé! Midi sur les feuillages
Rayonne, et t'invite au sommeil.
Par le trèfle et le thym, seules, en plein soleil,
Chantent les abeilles volages.

Un chaud parfum circule au détour des sentiers,
La rouge fleur des blés s'incline,
Et les oiseaux, rasant de l'aile la colline,
Cherchent l'ombre des églantiers.

Mais, quand l'Astre, incliné sur sa courbe éclatante,
Verra ses ardeurs s'apaiser,
Que ton plus beau sourire et ton meilleur baiser
Me récompensent de l'attente!

Leconte de Lisle

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

4. Aurore Op. 39 n° 1

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

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

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

Armand Silvestre

5. Spleen Op. 51 n° 3

Il pleure dans mon cœur
Comme il pleut sur la ville.
Quelle est cette langueur
Qui pénètre mon cœur?

Ô bruit doux de la pluie,
Par terre et sur les toits!
Pour un cœur qui s'ennuie,
Ô le chant de la pluie!

Il pleure sans raison
Dans mon cœur qui s'écœure.
Quoi! nulle trahison?
Mon deuil est sans raison.

C'est bien la pire peine,
De ne savoir pourquoi,
Sans amour et sans haine,
Mon cœur a tant de peine.

Paul Verlaine

3. Phidylé

The grass is soft for sleeping under the cool poplars
On the banks of the mossy springs
Which flow in flowering meadows from a thousand
directions, disappearing beneath dark thickets.

Rest, O Phidylé! Noonday shines on the foliage
And calls you to sleep.
Amongst the clover and thyme, alone, in broad sunlight,
The fickle bees are singing.

A warm fragrance circles around the winding paths,
The red flowers of the cornfields bow down
And the birds, skimming the hillside with their wings,
Seek the shade of the eglantine.

But when the sun, low on its dazzling curve,
Sees its ardour wane,
May your loveliest smile and best kiss
Reward me to for the wait!

Leconte de Lisle

4. Dawn Op. 39 n° 1

Stars fly away from the gardens of night –
Golden bees drawn by invisible honey,
And dawn, stretching its pure fabric in the distance,
Weaves silver threads into the sky's blue cloak.

From the garden of my dream-intoxicated heart,
My desires fly away, pursuing the morning
Like a delicate swarm, called to the copper horizon
By a poignant, never-ending and distant song.

They fly to your feet, stars banished from the sky,
Exiled from the golden heavens where your beauty
flourishes,
And, seeking unknown paths leading to you,
They mingle their dying radiance with the dawning day.
Armand Silvestre

5. Spleen Op. 51 n° 3

There are tears in my heart
As rain falls on the town;
What is this torpor
Entering into my heart?

O, the soft sound of rain
On the ground and on the roofs!
For a bored heart -
O, the song of the rain!

Tears fall without reason
In my disheartened heart.
What! No treason? ...
My grief is without reason.

It is indeed the worst pain of all,
Not knowing why,
Without love and without hate,
My heart has so much pain.

Paul Verlaine

6. Automne Op. 18 n° 3

Automne au ciel brumeux, aux horizons navrants,
Aux rapides couchants, aux aurores pâlies,
Je regarde couler, comme l'eau du torrent,
Tes jours faits de mélancolie.

Sur l'aile des regrets mes esprits emportés,
– Comme s'il se pouvait que notre âge renaissè! –
Parcourent, en rêvant, les coteaux enchantés
Où jadis sourit ma jeunesse.

Je sens, au clair soleil du souvenir vainqueur
Refleurir en bouquet les roses déliées
Et monter à mes yeux des larmes, qu'en mon cœur,
Mes vingt ans avaient oubliées!

Armand Silvestre

7. En sourdine Op. 58 n° 2

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 arbusiers.

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 rous.

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

Paul Verlaine

8. Nocturne Op. 43 n° 2

La nuit, sur le grand mystère,
Entrouvre 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!

Auguste Villiers de l'Isle Adam

6. Autumn Op. 18 n° 3

Autumn, with its misty skies and desolate horizons,
Its rapid sunsets and pale dawns,
I watch your days of melancholy flow by
Like a torrent.

My mind, borne away on the wings of regret,
– as if our time could return! –
Roams dreamily through the enchanted hills,
Where my youth once smiled.

In the bright sunlight of triumphant memory
I feel bouquets of untied roses flowering anew
And tears rising to my eyes, which at twenty
Had been forgotten in my heart!

Armand Silvestre

7. Muted Op. 58 n° 2

Calm in the twilight
Cast by the high branches,
Let us steep our love
In this deep silence.

Let us mingle our souls, our hearts
And our enraptured senses
With the hazy languor
Of the arbutus trees and pines.

Close your eyes halfway,
Fold your arms on your breast
And banish forever all intent
From your sleepy heart.

Let us succumb
To the sweetly rocking breeze
That comes to ruffle
The waves of russet grass at your feet.

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

Paul Verlaine

8. Nocturne Op. 43 n° 2

Night half-opens its blue caskets
Onto the great mystery:
As many flowers on earth
as there are stars in the heavens!

We see its sleeping shadows
Being lit up, at every moment,
As much by the charming flowers
As the charming stars.

As for me, my night with its sombre veil
Has no charm and brightness,
Except for one flower and one star:
My love and your beauty!

Auguste Villiers de l'Isle Adam

César Franck (1822-1890)**9. Nocturne FWV 85**

O fraîche nuit, nuit transparente,
Mystère sans obscurité,
La vie est noire et dévorante
O fraîche nuit, nuit transparente,
Donne-moi ta placidité.

O belle nuit, nuit étoilée,
Vers moi tes regards sont baissés,
Éclaire mon âme troublée,
O belle nuit, nuit étoilée,
Mets ton sourire en mes pensées.

O sainte nuit, nuit taciturne,
Pleine de paix et de douceur,
Mon cœur bouillonne comme une urne,
O sainte nuit, nuit taciturne,
Fais le silence dans mon cœur.

O grande nuit, nuit solennelle,
En qui tout est délicieux,
Prends mon être entier sous ton aile,
O grande nuit, nuit solennelle,
Verse le sommeil en mes yeux.

Louis de Fourcaud

Lili Boulanger (1893-1918)**10. La nef légère**

La nef légère a pris l'essor
Vers le golfe aux îles perlières.
Avec des trainements et des lenteurs de lierres
On voit luire sur l'eau, s'éteindre et luire encor
Les longs cheveux d'écume et d'or
Des Néréides familières.

La nef légère a pris l'essor
Vers le golfe aux îles perlières.

Hermès se mire dans la mer
En avant de notre carène.
Pour aller acheter dans Tyr ou dans Cyrène
Les beaux lins que rougit le coquillage amer,
Nous saurons braver d'un cœur fier
Les tempêtes et la sirène.

Hermès se mire dans la mer
En avant de notre carène.

La nef légère a pris l'essor
Vers le golfe aux îles perlières.

Catulle Mendès / Mikhaël Ephraïm

11. Nous nous aimerons tant

Nous nous aimerons tant que nous taïrons nos mots,
en nous tendant la main, quand nous nous reverrons.
Vous serez ombragée par d'anciens rameaux
sur le banc que je sais où nous nous assoierons.
Donc nous nous assoierons sur ce banc tous deux seuls

...

D'un long moment, ô mon amie, vous n'oserez ...
Que vous me serez douce et que je tremblerai ...

Francis Jammes

9. Nocturne FWV 85

O cool night, transparent night,
Mystery without darkness,
Life is dark and devouring;
O cool night, transparent night,
Give me your serenity.

O beautiful night, starry night,
You gazed is lowered towards me;
Enlighten my troubled soul;
O beautiful night, starry night,
Place your smile within my thoughts.

O holy night, taciturn night,
Full of peace and sweetness,
My heart is brimming over like an urn,
O holy night, taciturn night,
Silence my heart.

O great night, solemn night,
In which all is full of delight,
Take my whole being under your wing,
O great night, solemn night,
Pour sleep into my eyes.

Louis de Fourcaud

10. The light vessel

The light vessel has taken flight
Towards the gulf with its isles of pearls.
On the water, dragging slowly like ivy,
Glowing, fading and glowing once more,
Can be seen the long hair of foam and gold
Of the familiar Nereids.

The light vessel has taken flight
Towards the gulf with its isles of pearls.

Hermes is mirrored in the sea
At the front of our hull.
To go to Tyre or Cyrenaica
To buy fine linen, dyed red by bitter shells,
With a proud heart we would brave
Storms and the siren.

Hermes is mirrored in the sea
At the front of our hull.

The light vessel has taken flight
Towards the gulf with its isles of pearls.

Catulle Mendès / Mikhaël Ephraïm

11. We will love each other so much

We will love each other so much that we will have no
words, holding hands when we see one another again.
You will be in the shade of ancient branches
On the bench where I know that we will set.
And so we will sit on the bench, just the two of us

...

For a long while, my friend, you will not dare...
How gentle you will be with me and how I will tremble...

Francis Jammes

12. Vous m'avez regardé avec toute votre âme

Vous m'avez regardé avec toute votre âme.
 Vous m'avez regardé longtemps comme un ciel bleu.
 J'ai mis votre regard à l'ombre de mes yeux ...
 Que ce regard était passionné et calme ...

Francis Jammes

13. Dans l'immense tristesse

Dans l'immense tristesse et dans le lourd silence,
 Un pas se fait entendre, une forme s'avance,
 Et vers une humble tombe elle vient se pencher -
 O femme, en ce lieu saint, que viens-tu donc chercher?

Pourquoi viens-tu troubler la paix du cimetière?
 As-tu donc un trésor caché sous quelque pierre,
 Ou viens-tu mendier, à l'ombre des tombeaux,
 Pauvre vivante, aux morts, un peu de leur repos?

Non, rien de tout cela jusqu'ici ne l'amène,
 (La lune en cet instant éclairait cette scène,)
 Et ce que cette femme, (hélas! le coeur se fend,)
 Ce que cette femme vient chercher, c'est un frêle et
 gracieux enfant,

Qui dort sur cette tombe, et qui, dans sa chimère,
 Depuis qu'il a vu là disparaître sa mère,
 Doux être! s'imaginer en son naïf espoir
 Qu'elle n'est que cachée et qu'il va la revoir.

Et l'on dirait, le soir, en vision secrète,
 Lorsque le blond enfant sent s'alourdir sa tête,
 Et que sa petite âme est lasse de gémir,
 Que sa mère revient chanter pour l'endormir.

Bertha Galeron de Calone

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

14. Hymne FP 144

Sombre nuit, aveugles ténèbres,
 Fuyez: le jour s'approche et l'Olympe blanchit;
 Et vous, démons, rentrez dans vos prisons funèbres;
 De votre empire affreux un Dieu nous affranchit.

Le soleil perce l'ombre obscure;
 Et les traits éclatants qu'il lance dans les airs,
 Rompant le voile épais qui couvrait la nature,
 Redonnent la couleur et l'âme à l'univers.

O Christ, notre unique lumière,
 Nous ne reconnaissons que tes saintes clartés.
 Notre esprit t'est soumis; entends notre prière,
 Et sous ton divin joug range nos volontés.

Souvent notre âme criminelle
 Sur sa fausse vertu téméraire s'endort;
 Hâte-toi d'éclairer, ô lumière éternelle,
 Des malheureux assis dans l'ombre de la mort.

Gloire à Toi, Trinité profonde,
 Père, Fils, Esprit Saint: qu'on t'adore toujours,
 Tant que l'astre des temps éclairera le monde
 Et quand les siècles même auront fini leur cours.

Jean Racine (Bréviaire Romain)

12. You looked at me with your whole soul

You looked at me with your whole soul.
 You looked at me for a long time, as at a blue sky.
 I placed your gaze in the shadow of my eyes...
 How passionate and calm was that gaze...

Francis Jammes

13. In the immense sadness

In the immense sadness and heavy silence
 Footsteps are heard, a form approaches
 And leans over a humble tomb –
 O woman, what are you seeking in this holy place?

Why have you come to trouble the peace of the
 cemetery?
 Have you a treasure hidden beneath some stone,
 Or have you come, O poor living woman,
 To beg the dead for a little rest in the shadow of their
 tombs?

No – none of all this has led you here,
 (The moon lights up the scene at this point)
 And what this woman (alas, the heart breaks),
 What this woman has come to seek is a frail and graceful
 child,

Who sleeps on this tomb and who, in his imagination,
 After seeing his mother disappear there - sweet
 creature! - supposes with naïve hope
 That she is only hidden and that he will see her again.

And one might think that in the evening, in a secret
 Vision, when the fair child feels his head grow heavy
 And when his little soul is tired of groaning,
 His mother comes back to sing him to sleep.

Bertha Galeron de Calone

14. Hymn FP 144

Flee, sombre night, blind darkness,
 Day is approaching and Olympus brightens;
 And you, demons, go back to your funereal prisons:
 A god liberates us from your dreadful thrall.

The sun pierces the dark shadows;
 And the blazing rays that it fires into the air,
 Breaking through the thick veil covering nature,
 Give colour and spirit back to the world.

Oh Christ, our sole light,
 We acknowledge thy holy clarity alone.
 Our spirit is subject to thee; hear our prayer,
 And place our wills under Thy divine yoke.

Often our wicked soul
 Recklessly falls asleep on its false virtue;
 Hasten to illumine, O eternal light, the
 Unhappy ones seated in the shadow of death.

Glory to Thee, O profound Trinity,
 Father, Son, Holy Spirit: may you forever be adored,
 As long as the star of time illuminates the world,
 And even when the ages have run their course.

*Jean Racine (translated into French from the Roman
 Breviary)*

15. Priez pour paix FP 95

Priez pour paix, douce Vierge Marie,
 Reine des cieux, et du monde maîtresse,
 Faites prier, par votre courtoisie,
 Saints et saintes, et prenez votre adresse
 Vers votre Fils, requérant sa haultesse
 Qu'il lui plaise son peuple regarder,
 Que de son sang a voulu racheter,
 En déboutant guerre qui tout dévoie;
 De prières ne vous veuillez lasser:
 Priez pour paix, le vrai trésor de joie.

Charles d'Orléans

Peter Bannister (1966 -)

16. Hymne après Francis Poulenc

Texte : voir 14

17. Priez pour paix après Francis Poulenc

Texte : voir 15

Quatre Psaumes pour voix grave et piano**18. Psaume 26 (27)**

Le Seigneur est ma lumière et mon salut,
 de qui aurais-je crainte?
 Le Seigneur est le rempart de ma vie,
 devant qui tremblerais-je?
 Qu'une armée vienne camper contre moi,
 mon coeur est sans crainte;
 qu'une guerre éclate contre moi,
 j'ai là ma confiance.
 Je demande une grâce au Seigneur,
 dans le Seigneur je la cherche;
 c'est d'habiter la maison du Seigneur
 tous les jours de ma vie,
 pour contempler la douceur du Seigneur
 et prendre soin de son temple.
 Car il me donne en sa hutte un abri
 au jour de malheur,
 il me cache au secret de sa tente,
 il m'élève sur le roc.

19. Psaume 41 (42)

Comme languit une biche
 après l'eau vive,
 ainsi languit mon âme
 vers toi, mon Dieu.
 Mon âme a soif de Dieu,
 du Dieu de vie;
 quand pourrai-je aller voir
 la face de Dieu?
 Je n'ai de pain que mes larmes,
 la nuit, le jour,
 moi qui tout le jour entends dire:
 où est-il, ton Dieu?
 Qu'as-tu, mon âme, à défailir,
 à gémir sur moi?
 Espère en Dieu : je le louerai encore,
 mon Sauveur et mon Dieu.

15. Pray for peace FP 95

Pray for peace, sweet Virgin Mary,
 Queen of heaven and Lady of this world,
 Through your courtesy, make all the saints
 pray, and address Your Son,
 beseeching his royal Highness
 To deign to look upon his people,
 Whom he wished to redeem with his blood,
 Banishing war, which ruins everything;
 Do not tire of praying, we beg of you:
 Pray for peace, the true treasure of joy!

Charles d'Orléans

Translations 1-15 PB

16. Hymn, after Francis Poulenc

Text as 14

17. Pray for peace, after Francis Poulenc

Text as 15

Four Psalms for low voice and piano**18. Psalm 26 (27)**

The Lord is my light and my salvation;
 whom shall I fear?
 The Lord is the stronghold of my life;
 of whom shall I be afraid?
 Though an army encamp against me,
 my heart shall not fear;
 though war rise up against me,
 yet I will be confident.
 One thing I asked of the Lord,
 that will I seek after:
 to live in the house of the Lord
 all the days of my life,
 to behold the sweetness of the Lord,
 and to take care of his temple.
 For he will hide me in his shelter
 in the day of trouble;
 he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;
 he will set me high on a rock.

19. Psalm 41 (42)

As a deer longs for
 flowing streams,
 so my soul longs
 for you, O God.
 My soul thirsts for God,
 for the living God.
 When shall I come and behold
 the face of God?
 My tears have been my food
 day and night,
 while people say to me continually,
 "Where is your God?"
 Why are you cast down, O my soul,
 and why are you disquieted within me?
 Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
 my help and my God.

20. Psaume 138 (139)

Seigneur, tu me sondes et me connais,
 que je me lève où m'assoie, tu le sais,
 tu perces de loin mes pensées.
 Que je marche ou me couche, tu le sens,
 mes voies te sont toutes familières.
 La parole n'est pas encore sur ma langue,
 et voici, tu la sais tout entière.
 Derrière et devant tu m'enserres,
 tu as mis sur moi ta main.
 Prodige de savoir qui me dépasse,
 hauteur où je ne puis atteindre.
 Où irai-je loin de ton esprit,
 où fuirai-je loin de ta face?
 Si j'escalade les cieus, tu es là,
 qu'aux enfers je me couche, te voici.
 Je prends les ailes de l'aurore,
 je me loge au plus loin de la mer;
 même là, ta main me conduit,
 là, ta droite me saisit.
 Je dirai : "Que me couvre la ténèbre,
 que la lumière sur moi se fasse nuit",
 mais la ténèbre n'est point ténèbre devant toi
 et la nuit comme le jour illumine.

21. Psaume 120 (121)

Je lève les yeux vers les monts :
 d'où viendra mon secours?
 Le secours me vient du Seigneur
 qui a fait terre et ciel.
 Qu'il ne laisse broncher ton pied,
 qu'il ne dorme, ton gardien.
 Non, il ne dort ni ne sommeille,
 le gardien d'Israël.
 Le Seigneur est ton gardien, ton ombrage,
 le Seigneur, à ta droite.
 De jour, le soleil ne te frappe,
 ni la lune en la nuit.
 Le Seigneur te garde de tout mal,
 il garde ton âme.
 Il te garde au départ, au retour,
 dès lors et à jamais.

22. Le Retour

Ulysse part la voile au vent,
 Vers Ithaque aux ondes chéries,
 Avec des bercements la vague roule et plie.
 Au large de son cœur la mer aux vastes eaux
 Où son oeil suit les blancs oiseaux
 Egrène au loin des pierreries.

Ulysse part la voile au vent,
 Vers Ithaque aux ondes chéries!

Penché oeil grave et cœur battant
 Sur le bec d'or de sa galère
 Il se rit, quand le flot est noir, de sa colère
 Car là-bas son cher fils pieux et fier attend
 Après les combats éclatants,
 La victoire aux bras de son père.
 Il songe, oeil grave et cœur battant
 Sur le bec d'or de sa galère.

Ulysse part la voile au vent,
 Vers Ithaque aux ondes chéries.

Georges Delaquys

20. Psalm 138 (139)

O Lord, you have searched me and known me.
 You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
 you discern my thoughts from far away.
 You search out my path and my lying down,
 and are acquainted with all my ways.
 Even before a word is on my tongue,
 O Lord, you know it completely.
 You hem me in, behind and before,
 and lay your hand upon me.
 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
 it is so high that I cannot attain it.
 Where can I go from your spirit?
 Or where can I flee from your presence?
 If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
 if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.
 If I take the wings of the morning
 and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
 even there your hand shall lead me,
 and your right hand shall hold me fast.
 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,
 and the light around me become night,"
 even the darkness is not dark to you;
 and the night is as bright as the day.

21. Psalm 120 (121)

I lift up my eyes to the hills—
 from where will my help come?
 My help comes from the Lord,
 who made heaven and earth.
 He will not let your foot be moved;
 he who keeps you will not slumber.
 He who keeps Israel
 will neither slumber nor sleep.
 The Lord is your keeper;
 the Lord is your shade at your right hand.
 The sun shall not strike you by day,
 nor the moon by night.
 The Lord will keep you from all evil;
 he will keep your life.
 The Lord will keep your going out and your
 coming in from this time on and for evermore.

22. The Return

Sails to the wind, Ulysses sets out
 For Ithaca on his beloved waves,
 Rolling and swaying as they rock.
 Before the open sea of his heart, the vast ocean,
 Where his eye follows the white birds,
 Scatters precious stones in the distance.

Sails to the wind, Ulysses leaves
 For Ithaca on his beloved waves.

With serious gaze and beating heart,
 He leans over the golden prow of his galley.
 When black waves threaten, he laughs at their anger,
 For there his dear, devout and proud son awaits,
 After stunning victories,
 Triumph in his father's arms.
 With serious gaze and beating heart,
 He dreams by the golden prow of his galley.

Sails to the wind, Ulysses sets out
 For Ithaca on his beloved waves.

Georges Delaquys