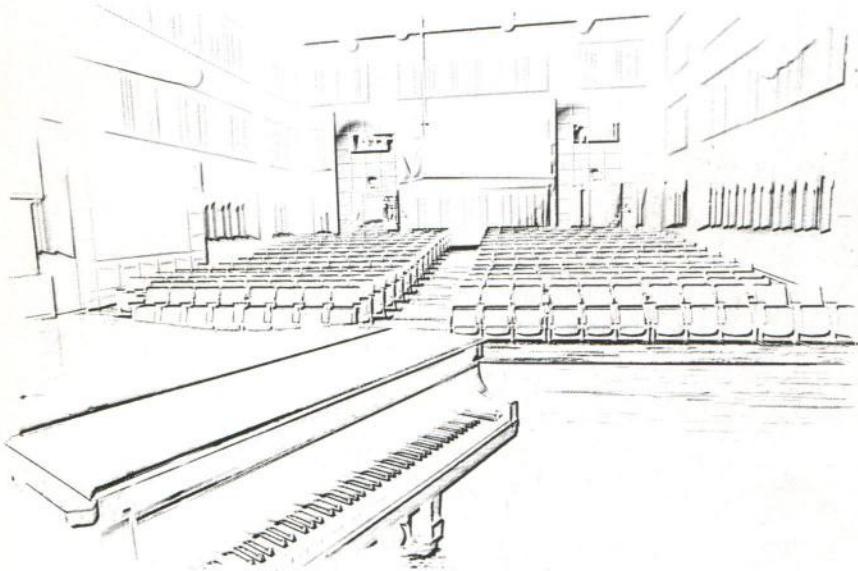


Glen Gould
Glenn Gould Studio



May 10 - May 14, 1999

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**Friday, May 14, 1999
8:00 p.m.**

The Aldeburgh Connection presents

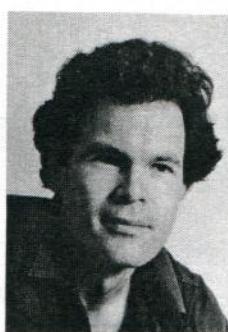
The Songs of Henri Duparc (1848-1933)

with

Catherine Robbin, mezzo-soprano

Gerald Finley, baritone

Stephen Ralls, piano



programme

Chanson triste (*Cazalis*)
Soupir (*Prudhomme*)
Sérénade (*Marc*)
Le galop (*Prudhomme*)
Romance de Mignon (*after Goethe*)

L'invitation au voyage (*Baudelaire*)
La vague et la cloche (*Coppée*)

Elégie (*Moore*)
Extase (*Lahor*)

Intermission

Le manoir de Rosemonde (*Bonnières*)
Sérénade florentine (*Lahor*)
Phidylé (*Leconte de Lisle*)

Testament (*Silvestre*)
Lamento (*Gautier*)
Au pays où se fait la guerre (*Gautier*)

La vie antérieure (*Baudelaire*)

Our sincere thanks to Mrs. Muriel Lessmann
for sponsoring Catherine Robbin,
and to Dr. and Mrs. Clive Mortimer
for sponsoring Gerald Finley in this recital.

We would like to thank:
The Ontario Arts Council
The City of Toronto through the Toronto Arts Council
Many individual donors and supporters

The Performers

Catherine Robbin, mezzo-soprano

Catherine Robbin is an artist of international renown, who is welcomed on the concert and recital stages of the world. At ease in a wide range of vocal music, her interests and career have encompassed a broad repertoire, from Brahms to Britten, Berlioz and Elgar with conductors such as John Nelson, Christopher Hogwood, Edo de Waart, Mario Bernardi and Simon Rattle. This season she travelled to Belgium for Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with the Beethoven Akademie. In Canada she sang *The Musicians* by Elgar for the Kitchener Waterloo Philharmonic Choir and then returned to Europe for Bach's *Weihnachts-Oratorium* with Christopher Hogwood conducting. Bruno Weil was her conductor for performances and a recording of Mozart's *Requiem* with Tafelmusik, and she sang this work again for the Academy of Ancient Music. This month she appears in Calgary in Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*, further into the future, she will sing *Messiah* and *Les Nuits d'été* in Vancouver and Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* in Edmonton.

Last year saw her in performances of both the Pergolesi and Vivaldi *Stabat Mater* at the Mostly Mozart Festival in New York, and with the Philharmonia Baroque at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in the role of Dejanira in Handel's *Hercules*. In Canada, she appeared with the Vancouver and Montreal Symphonies, at the Weston Recital Hall in Toronto, and in London with the Philharmonia Orchestra in Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*, conducted by John Eliot Gardiner. She has appeared at the Washington Gallery of Art, with Boston Baroque, the Baltimore and Milwaukee Symphonies and at the Bethlehem and Carmel Bach Festivals. European credits include the

Schleswig-Holstein and Halle Handel Festivals, the Belgian National Orchestra, the Liverpool Philharmonic, Paris Châtelet and Théâtre Champs Elysée.

Ms. Robbin's numerous recordings have met with wide critical acclaim. A Marquis recital disc with Paul Nicholson, and Berlioz's *Roméo et Juliette* with Gardiner for Philips are recent releases. Catherine Robbin is a frequent guest with The Aldeburgh Connection.

Gerald Finley, baritone

Gerald Finley received his first musical training as a chorister in Ottawa; he further studied in England, where he now lives. He appears regularly on opera and concert stages across Europe and North America, where he has established a career of international calibre. He has been associated with Glyndebourne for many seasons, as Sid in *Albert Herring*, Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*, Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* and Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, a role he sang for the opening performances of their new opera house, the title role in *Owen Wingrave*, and Olivier in *Capriccio*. He has appeared in Mozart roles at the Royal Opera Covent Garden, at the Deutsche Oper in Berlin, in Los Angeles, Toronto and Vancouver, at the Opéra de Bastille, and the Met in New York City.

Other recent roles have included Demetrius in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the celebrated production at Aix-en-Provence, Belcore in *L'elisir d'amore*, the title role in Tobias Picker's *Fantastic Mr. Fox* in Los Angeles, Marcello in *La Bohème* for the Welsh National Opera, Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* for the Opéra de Bastille, Valentin in *Faust* for the Opéra de Paris, the title role of *Pilgrim's Progress* for the Royal Opera Covent Garden, and the Count in the Lyric Opera of Chicago's *Capriccio*. In January 1999, he sang the role of

Argante in *Rinaldo* in concert with the Academy of Ancient Music, conducted by Christopher Hogwood and starring Cecilia Bartoli, a production which toured to Paris, Amsterdam, Vienna and Birmingham. Future roles include Mozart's Figaro in Paris, Nick Shadow at Glyndebourne and both Papageno and Marcello at the Met. He will make his debut as Don Giovanni in concert performances with Antonio Pappano and the Israel Philharmonic in 2000.

Recent concert appearances include *Die Schöpfung* with Nikolaus Harnoncourt at the Vienna Festival, *Ein deutsches Requiem* with La Chapelle Royale, the Mozart *Requiem* with the TSO, and *Die Jahreszeiten* with the Boston Symphony. His recital appearances at Wigmore Hall include Schubert's early songs with his wife, mezzo-soprano Louise Winter, Beethoven songs, and Wolf's *Italienisches Liederbuch* and Mörike *Lieder*. He has a number of recordings to his credit, including *Die Schöpfung* with John Eliot Gardiner, Purcell's *King Arthur* with Trevor Pinnock, and Berlioz's *L'Enfance du Christ* for Hyperion. His recording of Vaughan Williams's *Songs of Travel*, with pianist Stephen Ralls (CBC Records) was a 1998 Juno award winner.

Stephen Ralls, piano

Stephen Ralls began his musical career in England, following studies at Merton College, Oxford and at the Royal Academy of Music in London, where he won the major accompaniment and chamber music prizes. He was soon involved in frequent recitals throughout England and in regular broadcasts for the BBC. While working with English Opera Group he was selected as chief répétiteur for Britten's last opera, *Death in Venice*, and played the important solo piano part in the first performances and on the Decca recording. This association led to recital appearances

with Sir Peter Pears at the Aldeburgh Festival and on the BBC, and to Mr. Ralls's appointment to the staff of the Britten-Pears School in Aldeburgh. His reputation extended to Canada following his appointment in 1978 to the staff of the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto, where he is now Musical Director in the Opera Division. He has accompanied Canada's finest singers in numerous concerts, festivals and broadcasts. He has also been on the staff of the Canadian Opera Company, the Banff Centre and the National Arts Centre. His recordings include *Songs of Oskar Morawetz*, *The Lyrical Art of Mark Pedrotti*, *The Aldeburgh Connection: Schumann, Brahms and Greer*, *Benjamin Britten: The Canticles*, and the Juno award-winning *Songs of Travel*, with baritone Gerald Finley (CBC Records).

About The Aldeburgh Connection

Aldeburgh is the small town on the east coast of England where Benjamin Britten, Peter Pears and Eric Crozier founded the Festival of Music which flourishes to this day. Artistic Directors Stephen Ralls and Bruce Ubukata have visited and worked there for many summers, as have many of the singers appearing with The Aldeburgh Connection.

There is one concert remaining in this Series: Friday June 11, at 7:30 p.m., our *1st Annual Greta Kraus Schubertiad*. This concert will include a performance of *Die schöne Müllerin* by tenor Benjamin Butterfield, followed by intermission refreshments, and then more Schubert sung by soprano Monica Whicher and baritone Russell Braun. Tickets at \$33/\$27 may be purchased from the Glenn Gould Studio Box Office at (416) 205-5555.



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weekends & holidays

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The Songs of Henri Duparc

(1848-1933)

The case of Henri Duparc is one of the strangest in musical history. Being extremely self-critical by nature and destroying much that he wrote, he nevertheless had a collection of sixteen songs to his credit by the time he was 35, together with a few orchestral works and piano pieces. The songs, with a very few exceptions, stand comparison with the greatest in the whole history of French *mélodies*. Then, in 1884, he succumbed to what Martin Cooper called 'a neurasthenic condition, no doubt of physical origin but predominantly psychological in its manifestations.' He abandoned composition, never to resume, and lived for another 49 years in quiet retirement. Various attempted cures and visits to Lourdes achieved nothing; increasing blindness and paralysis clouded his latter days. "Après avoir causé un bon moment avec vous," he wrote in 1923 to one of his closest friends, "je rentre dans la nuit lumineuse où s'achève ma vie." — "After a good chat with you, I reenter the luminous night where my life is ending."

Duparc was a pupil of César Franck and, through that musical ancestry, belonged to an important group of composers which also included d'Indy, Chausson, Lalo and Lekeu. The world suspected them of being excessively Wagnerian; but, in fact, they derived that aspect of their style as much from Liszt (through Franck) as from the master of Wahnfried. Nevertheless, Duparc was an enthusiast for the music of Wagner, whom he met in 1869 at Liszt's house in Weimar. Subsequent visits to Munich enabled him to attend performances of *Die Walküre* and *Tristan*. In 1874, his song *Extase* was written 'after *Tristan*' as a deliberate provocation to anti-Wagnerian critics. But, despite 'German' features (stemming also from Schubert and Schumann), Duparc's songs always sound as purely French as do those of Berlioz or Fauré.

Like Berlioz, Duparc married an Irish wife — Ellie MacSwiney. The translation of Thomas Moore's "Oh! breathe not his name" (in memory of the Irish patriot, Robert Emmet) which Duparc set as *Elégie* was probably made by Mme Duparc. Apart from this song and *Romance de Mignon* (after Goethe), all of Duparc's *œuvre* sets poetry by his contemporaries. Tonight, we perform the songs in chronological order, except for *Au pays où se fait la guerre*, which is performed out of sequence. (Stylistically, it stands a little apart from the rest, being more of a dramatic aria than a song; it uses material from the opera, *Roussalka*, which Duparc tinkered with for over twenty five years and finally destroyed in 1900.)

The first group of songs was published in 1869 as *Cinq mélodies*, Op. 2. Duparc later withdrew *Romance*, *Sérénade* and *Le Galop*, and attempted to destroy all existing copies of them. Then, with *L'Invitation au voyage*, we find ourselves suddenly face to face with the first of a series of masterpieces, a setting of one of Baudelaire's grandest poems. It was destined to find a poignant, regretful counterpart in Duparc's final song, *La Vie antérieure*. His half-century of silence may strike us as all the more tragic when we read a remark he made to his son towards the end, paralysed and almost blind: "Dieu veut que je vive plus intérieurement; il m'a privé de la vue, mais, depuis, ce que j'entends est tellement beau!" — "God desires that I live more inwardly; he has deprived me of sight, but, since then, what I hear is so beautiful!"

Please reserve your applause until the point indicated by the symbol ◆

Cinq Mélodies, Op. 2

**Chanson triste (Jean Lahor,
pseudonym of Henri Cazalis)
(1868, rev. 1902)**

Dans ton coeur dort un clair de lune,
Un doux clair de lune d'été,
Et pour fuir la vie importune,
Je me noierai dans ta
clarté.

J'oublierai les douleurs passées,
Mon amour, quand tu berceras
Mon triste coeur et mes pensées
Dans le calme aimant de tes bras!

Tu prendras ma tête malade,
Oh! quelquefois sur tes genoux,
Et lui diras une ballade
Qui semblera parler de nous,

Et dans tes yeux pleins de tristesses,
Dans tes yeux alors je boirai
Tant de baisers et de tendresses
Que peut-être je guérirai . . .

Sorrowful song

In your heart the moonlight
sleeps —
soft summer moonlight;
and to escape this importunate life
I shall drown myself in your
radiance.

I shall forget past sorrows,
my love, when you cradle
my sad heart and my thoughts
in the loving calm of your arms!

You will take my sick head,
Oh! sometimes upon your knees,
and you will recite a ballad
which will seem to speak of us,

and in your eyes full of sadness,
in your eyes I shall then drink
so many kisses and tender caresses
that perhaps I shall be cured. . .

Soupir (*Sully Prudhomme*) (1869)

Ne jamais la voir ni l'entendre,
Ne jamais tout haut la nommer,
Mais, fidèle, toujours l'attendre,
Toujours l'aimer.

Ouvrir les bras, et, las d'attendre,
Sur la néant les refermer,
Mais encore, toujours les lui tendre,
Toujours l'aimer.

Ah! ne pouvoir que les lui
tendre,
Et dans les pleurs se consumer,
Mais ces pleurs toujours les répandre,
Toujours l'aimer . . .

Ne jamais la voir ni l'entendre,
Ne jamais tout haut la nommer,
Mais d'un amour toujours plus tendre,
Toujours l'aimer, toujours!

Sigh

Never to see nor hear her,
never to say her name aloud,
but, faithful, always to wait for her,
always to love her.

To open my arms and, tired of waiting,
to close them again upon emptiness;
but yet to hold them open for her,
always to love her.

Ah! to be able only to hold them
out to her,
and to be lost in weeping;
but these tears — always to shed them,
always to love her . . .

Never to see nor hear her,
never to say her name aloud,
but, with a love ever more tender,
always to love her . . . always!

Sérénade (*Gabriel Marc*) (1869)

Si j'étais, ô mon amoureuse,
La brise au souffle parfumé,
Pour frôler ta bouche rieuse,
Je viendrais craintif et
charmé.

Si j'étais l'abeille qui vole,
Ou le papillon séducteur,
Tu ne me verrais pas, frivole,
Te quitter pour une autre fleur.

Si j'étais la rose charmante
Que ta main place sur ton coeur,
Si près de toi toute tremblante
Je me fanerais de bonheur.

Mais en vain je cherche à te plaire,
J'ai beau gémir et soupirer.
Je suis homme, et que puis-je faire . . . ?
T'aimer . . . Te le dire . . . Et pleurer!

Serenade

If I were, o my beloved,
the breeze with its fragrant breath,
to caress your laughing mouth,
I would come with shyness and
delight.

Were I the winged bee,
or the alluring butterfly,
you would not find me capricious,
leaving you for another flower.

Were I the charming rose
that your hand lays on your heart,
so close to you, tremulously,
I would perish with happiness.

But in vain I seek to please you;
vainly I moan and sigh.
I am human, and what can I do . . . ?
Love you . . . tell you so . . . and weep!

Le Galop (Prudhomme) (1869)

Agite, bon cheval, ta crinière fuyante,
Que l'air autour de nous se rem-
plisse de voix,
Que j'entende craquer sous ta corne
bruyante
Le gravier des ruisseaux et les
débris des bois.

Aux vapeurs de tes flancs mêle ta
chaude haleine,
Aux éclairs de tes pieds, ton écume
et ton sang.
Cours, comme on voit un aigle, en
effleurant la plaine,
Fouetter l'herbe d'un vol sonore et
frémissant.

Allons! Les jeunes gens, à la nage,
à la nage,
Crie à ses cavaliers le vieux chef
de tribu,
Et les fils du désert respirent
le pillage,
Et les chevaux sont fous du grand
air qu'ils ont bu.

Nage ainsi dans l'espace, ô mon
cheval rapide.
Abreuve-moi d'air pur, baigne-moi
dans le vent,
L'étrier bat ton ventre, et j'ai lâché
la bride.
Mon corps te touche à peine, il vole
en te suivant.

Brise tout, le buisson, la barrière ou
la branche.
Torrents, fossés, talus, franchis tout
d'un seul bond.
Cours, cours, je rêve et sur toi, les
yeux clos, je me penche,
Emporte, emporte-moi dans
l'inconnu profond!

The Gallop

Toss, good horse, your flying mane,
let the air around us be filled with
sound;
let me hear crunching under your
clamorous hoof,
the stones of the brooks and the
bramble of the woods.

With the steam of your flanks
mingle your hot breath;
with the flashing of your hooves
your foam and your blood.
Race like the eagle as it skims over
the plain;
thrash the ground with your
sonorous, quivering flight.

Let us away! Young men, away,
away —
the ancient chief of the tribe calls to
his horsemen;
and the sons of the desert are
thirsting for plunder,
the horses mad with the open air
they have drunk.

Swim thus in space, o my speedy
horse.
Steep me in pure air; bathe me in
the wind.
The stirrup beats your flank, and I
have loosened the bridle.
My body, scarcely touching you,
flies in your wake.

Break through everything — the
bush, the gate or the branch;
streams, ditches, slopes — clear all
at a single bound.
Race, I dream, and with closed eyes
I bend over you,
Bear me, bear me away into the
great unknown!

Romance de Mignon

(Victor Wilder, after Goethe's *Kennst du das Land?*) (1869)

Le connais-tu, ce radieux pays
Où brille dans les branches d'or des
fruits?
Un doux zéphir embaume l'air
Et le laurier s'unite au myrte
vert.

Le connais-tu, le connais-tu? Là-bas,
Mon bien-aimé, courons porter nos pas.

Le connais-tu, ce merveilleux
séjour
Où tout me parle encor de notre
amour?
Où chaque objet me dit avec douleur:
Qui t'a ravi ta joie et ton
bonheur?

Le connais-tu, le connais-tu? Là-bas,
Mon bien-aimé, courons porter nos pas.

Song of Mignon

Do you know that radiant land
where golden fruit shines among
the branches?

A gentle breeze scents the air
and the laurel grows by the green
myrtle.

Do you know it? Yonder,
my beloved, hasten, thither let us go.

Do you know that marvellous
dwelling
where all still speaks to me of our
love?

Where each thing asks with sadness:
Who has robbed you of your joy
and happiness?

Do you know it? Yonder,
my beloved, hasten, thither let us go.

L'Invitation au voyage
(Charles Baudelaire) (1870)

Mon enfant, ma soeur,
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.

Invitation to a journey

My child, my sister,
think of the sweetness
of going to live there together.
To love at leisure;
to love and to die
in the land which resembles you.
The watery suns
of those hazy skies
have, for me, the charms,
so mysterious,
of your treacherous eyes
shining through their tears.

There, all is naught but order
and beauty,
comfort, peace and pleasure.

See, on those waterways,
how the ships slumber,
though wanderers by nature;
it is to satisfy
your smallest desire
that they come from the ends
of the earth.

The setting suns
clothe the fields,
the waters, all the town,
in hyacinth and gold;
the world falls asleep
in a warm light.

There, all is naught but order
and beauty,
comfort, peace and pleasure.

La Vague et la cloche
(François Coppée) (1871)

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 criarde
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?

The wave and the bell

Once, overwhelmed by a potent
draught,
I dreamed that amid the waves and
the sound
of the sea, I was sailing without
lamp in the night,
a gloomy oarsman, bereft of hope
of reaching land ...

The ocean splashed its foam upon
my brow,
and the wind froze me with horror
to my heart;
The waves crashed down like
high walls
with that slow rhythm which a
silence interrupts ...

Then all changed; the sea and its
black turbulence
died down ... under my feet the
boat bottom
foundered ... and I was alone in an
old belfry,
angry, astride a swinging
bell.

I gripped the clangorous thing
doggedly,
convulsive, screwing up my eyes
with the effort;
the pealing made the old stones
tremble;
my urging endlessly increased the
heavyswinging.

Why did you not say, o dream,
where God leads us?
Why did you not say if they would
never finish —
the useless toil and eternal strife
of which, alas, human life
is made?

Elégie (*trans. Ellie MacSwiney?*)
(1874)

Oh! ne murmurez pas son nom!
Qu'il dorme dans l'ombre,
Où froide et sans honneur repose sa
dépouille.
Muettes, tristes, glacées, tombent
nos larmes,
Comme la rosée de la nuit, qui sur
sa tête humecte le gazon;

Mais la rosée de la nuit, bien qu'elle
pleure en silence,
Fera briller la verdure sur
sa couche
Et nos larmes, en secret
répandues,
Conserveront sa mémoire fraîche et
verte dans nos coeurs.

Extase (*Jean Lahor*) (1874)

Sur un lys pâle mon coeur dort
D'un sommeil doux comme la mort . . .
Mort exquise, mort parfumée
Du souffle de la bien-aimée . . .

Sur ton sein pâle mon coeur
dort
D'un sommeil doux comme
la mort . . .

Oh! breathe not his name
(On the death of Robert Emmet)
(*Thomas Moore*)

Oh! breathe not his name, let it
sleep in the shade,
Where, cold and unhonour'd his
relics are laid:
Sad, silent, and dark be the tears
that we shed,
As the night-dew that falls on the
grass o'er his head.

But the night-dew that falls, though
in silence it weeps,
Shall brighten with verdure the
grave where he sleeps;
And the tear that we shed, though
in secret it rolls,
Shall long keep his memory green
in our souls.

Ecstasy

Upon a pale lily my heart sleeps
in a drowsiness as soft as death . . .
an exquisite death, a death perfumed
by the breath of my beloved . . .

Upon your pale breast my heart
sleeps
in a drowsiness as soft as
death . . .



Intermission

Le Manoir de Rosemonde
(*Robert de Bonnières*) (1879?)

De sa dent soudaine et vorace,
Comme un chien l'amour m'a
mordu . . .
En suivant mon sang répandu,
Va, tu pourras suivre ma trace . . .
Prends un cheval de bonne race,
Pars, et suis mon chemin ardu,
Fondrière ou sentier perdu,
Si la course ne te harasse!

En passant par où j'ai passé,
Tu verras que seul et blessé
J'ai parcouru ce triste monde,
Et qu'ainsi je m'en fus mourir
Bien loin, bien loin, sans découvrir
Le bleu manoir de Rosemonde.

Rosemonde's manor

With its sudden, voracious fangs,
love, like a dog, has bitten
me . . .
Following my spilled blood,
go, you will be able to retrace my path . . .
Take a horse of good breed,
set out, and follow my arduous road,
marsh, or lost pathway,
if the journey does not exhaust you!

Passing where I have passed,
you will see that, alone and wounded,
I have traversed this sorry world,
and that I thus went off to die
far, far away, without discovering
the blue domain of Rosemonde.

Sérénade florentine
(*Lahor*) (1881?)

Étoile dont la beauté luit
Comme un diamant dans la nuit,
Regarde vers ma bien-aimée
Dont la paupière s'est fermée,
Et fais descendre sur ses yeux
La bénédiction des cieux.
Elle s'endort . . . par la fenêtre
En sa chambre heureuse pénétre;
Sur sa blancheur, comme un baiser,
Viens jusqu'à l'aube te poser,
Et que sa pensée alors rêve
D'un astre d'amour qui se lève!

Florentine Serenade

Star, whose beauty sparkles
like a diamond in the night,
look towards my beloved
whose eyelids have closed,
and send down upon those eyes
the blessing of the heavens.
She sleeps . . . Through the window
come into her happy room.
Upon her purity, like a kiss,
rest until the dawn,
and may her dreams then be
of a rising star of love.

Phidylé (*Leconte de Lisle*) (1882)

L'herbe est molle au sommeil sous
les frais peupliers,
Aux pentes des sources moussues,
Qui dans les près 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 the 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!

Phidylé

The grass is soft for slumbering
under the cool poplars
on the slopes of the mossy springs
which, in the flowering meadows,
rise in the thousands,
and are lost beneath the dark thickets.

Rest, oh Phidylé! The midday sun
shines through the leaves
and invites you to slumber.
Alone amid the clover and the
thyme, in full sunshine,
the humming bees hover.

A warm fragrance pervades the
winding paths;
the poppies in the corn droop their heads
and the birds, skimming the hillside
with their wings,
seek the shade of the wild rose bushes.

But, when the sun, low on his
shining curve,
sees his brilliance dimmed,
let your loveliest smile and most
ardent kiss
reward my waiting!



Testament

(*Armand Silvestre*) (1883?)

Pour que le vent te les apporte
Sur l'aile noire d'un remord,
J'écrirai sur la feuille morte
Les tortures de mon cœur mort!

Toute ma sève s'est tarie
Aux clairs midis de ta beauté,
Et, comme à la feuille flétrie,
Rien de vivant ne m'est resté;

Tes yeux m'ont brûlé jusqu'à l'âme,
Comme des soleils sans merci!
Feuille que le gouffre réclame,
L'autan va m'emporter aussi . . .

Mais avant, pour qu'il te les porte
Sur l'aile noire d'un remord,
J'écrirai sur la feuille morte
Les tortures de mon cœur mort!

Testament

So that the wind may carry them to you
on the black wing of remorse,
I shall write upon the dead leaf
the torments of my dead heart!

All my sap has dried up
in the bright noons of your beauty,
and, like the withered leaf,
nothing living remains in me;

Your eyes have scorched me to the soul
like pitiless suns!
A leaf claimed by the abyss,
the storm will carry me away too . . .

But first, so that it may carry them to you
on the black wing of remorse,
I shall write upon the dead leaf
the torments of my dead heart!

Lamento

(*Théophile Gautier*) (1883?)

Connaissez-vous la blanche tombe,
Où flotte avec un son plaintif
L'ombre d'un if?
Sur l'if une pâle colombe,
Triste et seule au soleil couchant,
Chante son chant.

On dirait que l'âme éveillée
Pleure sous terre à l'unisson
De la chanson,
Et du malheur d'être oubliée
Se plaint dans un roucoulement,
Bien doucement.

Ah! jamais plus près de la tombe,
Je n'irai, quand descend le soir
Au manteau noir,
Écouter la pâle colombe
Chanter sur la branche de l'if
Son chant plaintif!

Lament

Do you know the white tomb
where, with plaintive sound,
waves the shadow of a yew?
Upon the yew a pale dove,
sad and alone in the setting sun,
sings its song.

One feels as if the awakened soul
weeps beneath the ground
in unison with the song,
and with unhappiness at being forgotten
laments, with a cooing sound,
very softly.

Ah! never again
shall I go near the tomb,
when the black-mantled evening falls,
to listen to the pale dove sing,
on the yew tree's branch,
its plaintive song!

Au pays où se fait la guerre
(Gautier) (1870?)

Au pays où se fait la guerre
Mon bel ami s'en est allé.
Il semble à mon cœur désolé
Qu'il ne reste que moi sur terre.
En partant au baiser d'adieu,
Il m'a pris mon âme à ma bouche . . .
Qui le tient si longtemps, mon
Dieu?

Voilà le soleil qui se couche,
Et moi toute seule en ma tour
J'attends encore son retour.

Les pigeons sur le toit roucoulent,
Roucoulent amoureusement,
Avec un son triste et charmant;
Les eaux sous les grands saules
coulent . . .

Je me sens tout près de pleurer,
Mon cœur comme un lys plein
s'épanche,
Et je n'ose plus espérer,
Voici briller la lune blanche,
Et moi toute seule en ma tour
J'attends encore son retour . . .

Quelqu'un monte à grands pas
la rampe . . .
Serait-ce lui, mon doux amant?
Ce n'est pas lui, mais seulement
Mon petit page avec ma lampe . . .
Vents du soir, volez, dites-lui
Qu'il est ma pensée et mon rêve,
Toute ma joie et mon ennui.
Voici que l'aurore se lève,
Et moi toute seule en ma tour
J'attends encore son retour.

To the country where they are at
war

To the country where they are at war
my dear love has gone.
It seems to my desolate heart
that noone is left on earth but myself.
As he kissed me goodbye
he took my soul from my lips . . .
Who keeps him away so long, dear
God?

Now the sun is setting,
and I, all alone in my tower,
still await his return.

The doves on the roof are cooing,
cooing amorously,
with a sad and charming sound;
the water flows under the tall
willows . . .

I feel near to tears
my heart pours forth like a full-
blown lily
and I dare hope no longer.
Now the pale moon is shining,
and I, all alone in my tower,
still await his return . . .

Someone climbs the stair with big
strides . . .
could it be he, my sweetheart?
No, it is not he, but only
my page with the lamp . . .
Winds of evening, fly, tell him
he is all my thought and my dream,
all my joy and my anxiety.
Now Dawn is breaking,
and I, all alone in my tower,
still await his return.

La vie antérieure
(Baudelaire) (1884)

J'ai longtemps habité sous de vastes portiques
Que les soleils marins teignaient de mille feux,
Et que leurs grands piliers, droits et majestueux,
Rendaient pareils, le soir, aux grottes basaltiques.

Les houles, en roulant les images des cieux,
Mêlaient d'une façon solennelle et mystique
Les tout puissants accords de leur riche musique
Aux couleurs du couchant reflété par mes yeux . . .

C'est là, c'est là que j'ai vécu dans les voluptés calmes
Au milieu de l'azur, des vagues, des splendeurs,
Et des esclaves nus tout imprégnés d'odeurs
Qui me rafraîchissaient le front avec des palmes,
Et dont l'unique soin était d'approfondir
Le secret douloureux qui me faisait languir.

The former life

Long did I live beneath vast porticos
which marine suns coloured with a thousand flames,
whose great pillars, upright and majestic
they made like basalt grottos at eventide.

The rolling sea-swallows, reflecting the skies,
mingled in a solemn and mystic way
the mighty harmonies of their rich music
with the colours of the sunset reflected by my eyes . . .

It was there I lived in calm serene pleasure
amid the blue, the waves, the splendours,
and the naked perfumed slaves
who cooled my brow with waving palms,
And whose only care was to deepen
the sad secret that made me languish.



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