

Translations:

LE TEMPS DES LILAS (Ernest Chausson)

text by Maurice Bouchor (1855-1929), title unknown, from *Les Poèmes de l'amour et de la mer*, in *La mort de l'amour*, no. 38, published 1876

The time of lilacs and the time of roses
Will no longer come again to this spring;
The time of lilacs and the time of roses
Has passed, the time of carnations also.

The wind has changed, the skies are morose,
And we will no longer run to pick
The lilacs in bloom and the beautiful roses;
The spring is sad and cannot bloom.

Oh! Joyful and gentle spring of the year,
That came last year to bathe us in sunlight,
Our flower of love is so wilted,
Alas! that your kiss cannot awaken it!

And you, what are you doing? No budding flowers,
No bright sun at all nor cool shade,
The time of lilacs and the time of roses,
Along with our love, is dead forever.

CHANSON PÉRPETUELLE (Ernest Chausson)

text by Charles Cros (1842-1888), "Nocturne", from *Le Coffret de Santal*, in *Chansons Perpétuelles*, no. 2, published 1879

Trembling trees, starry sky
My beloved has gone away
Bearing with him my desolate heart.

Winds, let your plaintive noises
Let your songs, charming nightingales,
Tell him that I die.

The first night he came here,
My soul was at his mercy;
I no longer cared about my pride.

My glances were full of promise.
He took me into his trembling arms
And kissed me near the hair.

I felt a great quivering.
And then, I don't know how
He became my lover.

I said to him: "You will love me
As long as you are able."
I never slept as well as in his arms.

But he, feeling his heart fade,
Left the other day
Without me, for a foreign land.

Since I no longer have my friend,
I will die in this pool, among
The flowers under the sleeping current.

Arriving on the shoreline,
I will speak his name to the wind,
In a dream that I await him there.

And like in a gilded shroud
With hair tousled at the wind's whim,
I will let myself go.

The happy hours of the past
will glimmer on my face,
And the green reeds will entrap me.

And my breast, shuddering under the caress
of their entwinement,
will believe it submits to the embrace of the one who left.

3 POEMS OF STÉPHANE MALLARMÉ (Maurice Ravel) text by Stéphane Mallarmé (1842–1898)

I. Sigh

My soul rises towards your brow o calm sister, where there lies dreaming
An autumn strewn with russet freckles,
And towards the restless sky of your angelic eye,
As in a melancholy garden,
A white fountain faithfully sighs towards the Azure!
Towards the compassionate azure of pale and pure October,
Which mirrors its infinite languor in the great pools
And, on the stagnant water where the tawny agony
Of the leaves stirs in the wind and digs a cold furrow,
Lets the yellow sun drag itself out in a long ray.

II. Futile Petition

Princess! in envying the fate of a Hebe,
Who appears on this cup at the kiss of your lips,
I use up my ardor, but my modest station is only that of abbé
And I won't even appear nude on the Sévres porcelain.

Since I am not your bewhiskered lapdog,
Nor lozenge, nor rouge, nor affected games,
And since I know that you look on me with indifferent eyes
Blonde whose divine hairdressers are goldsmiths!

Appoint me ... you whose many raspberried laughs
Are gathered into flocks of docile lambs,
Nibbling at all vows and bleating deliriously,

Appoint me ... in order that Love, with a fan as his wings,
May paint me fingering a flute and lulling this sheepfold,
Princess, appoint me shepherd of your smiles.

III. Rising up from its bulge and stem

Rising up from its bulge and stem
of fragile glassware
- with no flowers to crown its vigil -
the vase's neglected neck stops short.

I do believe the mouths
of my mother and her lover
never drank from the same love-cup
(I, sylph of this cold ceiling).

The vase untouched by any drink
except eternal widowhood
is dying yet never consents

- oh naïve funereal kiss! -
to breathe out anything that might herald
a rose in the darkness.

Composers about their compositions:

Philip Lasser, Vocalise

"I wrote my Vocalise in April 1999, inspired by the mournful eponymous work by Rachmaninov. Just as in his work, my Vocalise is not simply about a melody alone but rather the interplay between the melody and the counterpoint hidden beneath it in the harmonies of the piano. These lines which live in the sonorities of the piano, serve to light up different areas of the violin melody much like spotlights are used to illuminate a sculpture; one does not consciously acknowledge their existence, one notices only the beauty of the art work.

My Vocalise like Rachmaninov's is intensely expressive but reflects the French esthetic of subtlety and emotional reserve. In the middle section of the work, one can most clearly hear my partiality for Ravelian sonority and elegance.

Originally for Violin and Piano, the Vocalise became the second movement - Vocalise for orchestra - of my Circle of Dreams, a Symphony in three movements, commissioned and premiered in May 2000 by Maestro Gerard Schwarz and The New York Chamber Symphony. Since then it has received performances throughout the world and has been transcribed for many different instrumental combinations as reflected by tonight's incarnation."

Jules Matton, Le Voyage d'une Ombre

"Before my friend Rémy Yulzari asked me to write this piece, the idea of composing a Bass Concerto never occurred to me. Indeed, one could wonder why writing a Bass Concerto when so many other instruments, starting with the cello, cover a much wider range at a much higher volume. Aside for my friendship with Rémy, the answer is very simple: the low range of the instrument has an incomparable gravity; its highest range projects a strained sound ideal for eliciting certain emotions; and it must quite literally struggle to project over the rest of the players, which from the start puts it in a moving state of vulnerability. Although this piece is a typical concerto in the sense that the soloist struggles against the orchestra, it is unlike most concertos as the soloist emerges gradually from it and quite often gets swallowed by it. It suggests the journey of a long process, processing through frustration, violence, reconciliation and eventually madness."