

# Natalie Dessay and Philippe Cassard

**Start time:** 7.30pm

**Approximate end time:** 9.30pm, including a 20-minute interval

Please note all timings are approximate and subject to change.

## Programme

**Fanny Mendelssohn** *Dämmerung senkte sich von oben*

*Vorwurf*

*Suleika*

**Clara Schumann** *Liebst du um Schönheit*

*Sie liebten sich beide*

*Warum willst du and're fragen*

*Er ist gekommen*

Romance for piano in A minor, Op 21

**Alma Mahler** *Bei dir ist es traut*

*Laue Sommernacht*

*In meines Vaters Garten*

**Ernest Chausson** *Chanson perpétuelle*

**Francis Poulenc** *La dame de Monte-Carlo*

**Claude Debussy** 'Mes longs cheveux' from *Pelléas et Mélisande*

**Jules Massenet** *Mélodie*, Op 10 No 5

'Pleurez mes yeux' from *Le Cid*

**Charles Gounod** 'Ah, je ris de me voir si belle' from *Faust*

**In *Women's Words*, beloved French duo soprano Natalie Dessay and pianist Philippe Cassard give women the spotlight, whether as composers or as heroines of their own stories.**

Tonight Natalie Dessay and Philippe Cassard celebrate the female perspective in art song and opera. The first half is devoted to three composers who were overshadowed by their eminent menfolk for far too long.

Despite her father's (and, regrettably, her brother Felix's) attempts to discourage her, as a woman, from pursuing music as a profession, Fanny Mendelssohn wrote more than 400 works. Her husband, the artist Wilhelm Hensel, was supportive, however, and Fanny continued composing, organising concerts and conducting her own choir until the day she died of a stroke, aged 42.

As precociously gifted children, she and Felix had known Johann Wolfgang von Goethe well; when she was about 14, her songs impressed him so much that he wrote a poem for her to set. She seems not to have obliged; but in *Dämmerung senkte sich von oben* ('Dusk has fallen from above') she treats his words with sensitivity, passion and harmonic daring.

After her death, the devastated Felix had several volumes of her songs published. For Op 10, he chose some of her most sophisticated creations, including *Vorwurf* ('Reproach'), which offers almost Bachian resonances. 'Suleika', with its unpredictable phrase-lengths and subtle twists of harmony, was included in a Christmas album that Fanny created in 1836. The poem is by Marianne von Willemer – long misattributed to Goethe, who based the character Mignon in his *West-Eastern Divan* on her.

A child prodigy pianist, Clara Wieck was celebrated throughout Europe by her mid-teens. In 1840 she married Robert Schumann; following his tragic death in a mental hospital in 1856, she raised their seven surviving children alone. In her later years she was a revered piano professor and remained a close friend of Johannes Brahms.

barbican

Soon after their marriage, the Schumanns jointly created in 1841 a collection of their settings of Friedrich Rückert's poems, including Clara's *Liebst du um Schönheit* ('If you love for beauty'), *Warum willst du and're fragen* ('Why enquire of others') and *Er ist gekommen in Sturm und Regen* ('He came in storm and rain'), which reveal her melodic gifts in full bloom. *Sie liebten sich beide* ('They loved one another') sets Heinrich Heine's bittersweet story of undeclared love. But her Romance in A minor, Op 21, for solo piano, from a group of three composed in 1853, occupies a world of anxiety and anguish that belies the modest title.

Alma Mahler-Werfel, too, was torn between her own creative gifts and a man – her first husband, Gustav Mahler – who preferred her to support his. Just 17 of her songs survive, capturing the fervid, hot-house atmosphere of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna and also hinting at influences from Wagner and Schumann.

Tonight's songs appear in a 1910 collection edited, at last, by Gustav, who had realised he was losing her affections.

*Bei dir ist es traut* ('I feel warm and close to you') matches Rainer Maria Rilke's sentiments with suitably intimate music. In *Laut Sommernacht* ('Mild summer night'), hope illuminates the darkness, though the final cadence is left unresolved. *In meines Vaters Garten* ('In my father's garden'), a poem by Otto Erich Hartleben, depicts three sisters dreaming that their beloveds must leave for war; Alma's atmosphere progresses from innocence to dread.

We turn now to music by French male composers in which female characters take power into their own hands – whether over their lives or that of others.

Ernest Chausson, a friend of Gabriel Fauré and Henri Duparc, inherited serious money and was fearful of being thought a compositional dilettante. He was just beginning to gain confidence and repute when he was killed in a bicycling accident in 1899, aged 44. In *Chanson perpétuelle* (1898), evoking an abandoned, Ophelia-like woman contemplating suicide by water, the Symbolist poetry of Charles Cros merges ideally with Chausson's melancholy music.

There's no romanticisation about the gambling-addict protagonist of Francis Poulenc's *La dame de Monte-Carlo*. The composer set this Jean Cocteau monologue for his duo partner, the soprano Denise Duval, to sing in 1961. It reminded him, he wrote, of a time in the mid-1920s when he lived in Monte Carlo, observing 'those old wrecks of women, light-fingered ladies of the gaming tables ...'

For most of Claude Debussy's enigmatic opera, based on Maeterlinck's play *Pelléas et Mélisande*, the eponymous pair cannot declare their love: she is married to his elder brother. In 'Mes longs cheveux', Mélisande leans from a castle window, letting down her hair to envelop Pelléas, standing below, in what is by far the opera's most sensual scene.

Chimène, heroine of Jules Massenet's opera *Le Cid* (1885), has a good reason to weep in 'Pleurez, mes yeux': her beloved, Rodrigue, has killed her father in a duel. Later, however, Rodrigue will ask her to decide his fate; she forgives and marries him.

Finally the 'Jewel Song' brings us full circle to Goethe, on whose *Faust* Charles Gounod's 1859 opera is based, if loosely. Faust has sold his soul to Mephistopheles in return for restored youth. Courting Marguerite, he sends her a casket of jewellery. Here she gazes, astonished, at her newfound glamour, culminating in a surge of joy.

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## Performers

**Natalie Dessay** soprano

**Philippe Cassard** piano

Produced by the Barbican

**Dämmerung senkte sich von oben**

Dämmerung senkte sich von oben,  
 Schon ist alle Nähe fern,  
 Doch zuerst emporgehoben  
 Holden Lichts der Abendstern.  
 Alles schwankt ins Ungewisse,  
 Nebel schleichen in die Höh',  
 Schwarzvertiefte Finsternisse  
 Widerspiegelnd ruht der See.

Nun am östlichen Bereiche  
 Ahn' ich Mondenglanz und Glut,  
 Schlanker Weiden Haargezweige  
 Scherzen auf der nächsten Flut.  
 Durch bewegter Schatten Spiele  
 Zittert Lunas Zauberschein,  
 Und durchs Auge schleicht die Kühle  
 Sänftigend ins Herz hinein.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832)

**Vorwurf**

Du klagst, dass bange Wehmut dich  
 beschleicht,  
 Weil sich der Wald entlaubt,  
 Und über deinem Haupt  
 Dahin der Wanderzug der Vögel streicht.  
 O klage nicht, bist selber wandelhaft,  
 Denkst du der Liebesglut?  
 Wie nun so traurig ruht in deiner Brust  
 Die müde Leidenschaft!

Nikolaus Lenau (1802–50)

**Suleika**

Ach, um deine feuchten Schwingen,  
 West, wie sehr ich dich beneide:  
 Denn du kannst ihm Kunde bringen  
 Was ich in der Trennung leide!

Die Bewegung deiner Flügel  
 Weckt im Busen stilles Sehnen;  
 Blumen, Augen, Wald und Hügel  
 Stehn bei deinem Hauch in Tränen.

Doch dein mildes sanftes Wehen  
 Kühlt die wunden Augenlider;  
 Ach, für Leid müsst' ich vergehen,  
 Hoff' ich nicht zu sehn ihn wieder.

Eile denn zu meinem Lieben,  
 Spreche sanft zu seinem Herzen;  
 Doch vermeid' ihn zu betrüben  
 Und verbirg ihm meine Schmerzen.

Sag ihm, aber sag's bescheiden:  
 Seine Liebe sei mein Leben,  
 Freudiges Gefühl von beiden  
 Wird mir seine Nähe geben.

Marianne von Willemer (1784–1860)

**Dusk has descended from on high**

Dusk has descended from on high,  
 All closeness has become distance now,  
 But risen first has  
 The Evening Star in beautiful radiance.  
 Everything reels into uncertainty,  
 Mists creep upwards;  
 Reflecting deep black darkness  
 The lake is at its rest.

Only in the eastern region  
 Do I sense the moon's radiance and glow.  
 Hair-like branches of slender willows  
 Jest on the nearby water.  
 Amidst the play of moving shadows  
 Trembles Luna's magic light,  
 And through the eye creeps coolness  
 Soothingly into the heart.

**Reproach**

You lament that fretful melancholy creeps  
 upon you,  
 As the woods lose their leaves,  
 And as above your head  
 Passes the train of migrating birds.  
 Do not lament! you too are fickle;  
 Do you recall love's ardour?  
 How sadly now dwells  
 In your bosom passion exhausted!

**Suleika**

Ah, your moist wings,  
 I envy you, O west wind;  
 For you can bear him the message  
 Of how I suffer, parted from him!

The movement of your wings  
 Awakens in my bosom a quiet longing;  
 Flowers, eyes, woods and hills  
 Are damp with tears at your breath.

But your mild, gentle gusts  
 Cool the sore eyelids;  
 Ah, I should surely perish from grief,  
 Did I not hope to see him again.

Hurry then to my love,  
 Speak gently to his heart;  
 But do not sadden him  
 And hide my pain from him.

Tell him, but tell him modestly,  
 That his love is my life,  
 Joyful feeling of both  
 His closeness will give me.

Translations by Bettina Reinke-Welsh © Hyperion  
 Records

**Liebst du um Schönheit**

Liebst du um Schönheit,  
 O nicht mich liebe!  
 Liebe die Sonne,  
 Sie trägt ein gold'nes Haar!

Liebst du um Jugend,  
 O nicht mich liebe!  
 Liebe den Frühling,  
 Der jung ist jedes Jahr!

Liebst du um Schätze,  
 O nicht mich liebe!  
 Liebe die Meerfrau,  
 Sie hat viel Perlen klar!

Liebst du um Liebe,  
 O ja, mich liebe!  
 Liebe mich immer,  
 Dich lieb' ich immerdar!

Friedrich Rückert (1788–1866)

**Sie liebten sich beide**

Sie liebten sich beide, doch keiner  
 Wollt' es dem andern gestehn;  
 Sie sahen sich an so feindlich,  
 Und wollten vor Liebe vergehn.

Sie trennten sich endlich und sah'n sich  
 Nur noch zuweilen im Traum;  
 Sie waren längst gestorben  
 Und wussten es selber kaum.

Heinrich Heine (1797–1856)

**Warum willst du and're fragen**

Warum willst du and're fragen,  
 Die's nicht meinen treu mit dir?  
 Glaube nicht, als was dir sagen  
 Diese beiden Augen hier!

Glaube nicht den fremden Leuten,  
 Glaube nicht dem eignen Wahn;  
 Nicht mein Tun auch sollst du deuten,  
 Sondern sieh die Augen an!

Schweigt die Lippe deinen Fragen,  
 Oder zeugt sie gegen mich?  
 Was auch meine Lippen sagen,  
 Sieh mein Aug', ich liebe dich!

Friedrich Rückert

**Er ist gekommen**

Er ist gekommen  
 In Sturm und Regen,  
 Ihm schlug beklommen  
 mein Herz entgegen.  
 Wie konnt' ich ahnen,  
 Dass seine Bahnen  
 Sich einen sollten meinen Wegen?

**If you love for beauty**

If you love for beauty,  
 O love not me!  
 Love the sun,  
 She has golden hair!

If you love for youth,  
 O love not me!  
 Love the spring  
 Who is young each year!

If you love for riches,  
 O love not me!  
 Love the mermaid  
 Who has many shining pearls!

If you love for love,  
 Oh yes, love me!  
 Love me always;  
 I shall love you forever!

**They loved one another**

They loved one another, but neither  
 Wished to tell the other;  
 They gave each other such hostile looks,  
 Yet nearly died of love.

In the end they parted and saw  
 Each other but rarely in dreams.  
 They died so long ago  
 And hardly knew it themselves.

**Why enquire of others**

Why enquire of others,  
 Who are not faithful to you?  
 Only believe what these two eyes  
 Here tell you!

Do not believe what others say;  
 Do not believe strange fancies;  
 Nor should you interpret my deeds,  
 But instead look at these eyes!

Are my lips silent to your questions  
 Or do they testify against me?  
 Whatever my lips might say;  
 Look at my eyes; I love you!

**He came**

He came  
 In storm and rain;  
 My anxious heart  
 Beat against his.  
 How could I have known  
 That his path  
 Should unite itself with mine?

Er ist gekommen  
In Sturm und Regen,  
Er hat genommen  
Mein Herz verwegen.  
Nahm er das meine?  
Nahm ich das seine?  
Die beiden kamen sich entgegen.

Er ist gekommen  
In Sturm und Regen,  
Nun ist gekommen  
Des Frühlings Segen.  
Der Freund zieht weiter,  
Ich seh' es heiter,  
Denn er bleibt mein auf allen Wegen.

Friedrich Rückert

### **Bei dir ist es traut**

Bei dir ist es traut:  
Zage Uhren schlagen  
wie aus weiten Tagen.  
Komm mir ein Liebes sagen –  
aber nur nicht laut.

Ein Tor geht irgendwo  
draussen im Blütentreiben.  
Der Abend horcht an den Scheiben.  
Lass uns leise bleiben:  
Keiner weiss uns so.

Rainer Maria Rilke (1875–1926)

### **Laue Sommernacht**

Laue Sommernacht: am Himmel  
Stand kein Stern, im weiten Walde  
Suchten wir uns tief im Dunkel,  
Und wir fanden uns.

Fanden uns im weiten Walde  
In der Nacht, der sternenlosen,  
Hielten staunend uns im Arme  
In der dunklen Nacht.

War nicht unser ganzes Leben  
So ein Tappen, so ein Suchen?  
Da: In seine Finsternisse  
Liebe, fiel Dein Licht.

Otto Julius Bierbaum (1865–1910)

### **In meines Vaters Garten**

In meines Vaters Garten –  
blühe mein Herz, blüh auf –  
in meines Vaters Garten  
stand ein schattender Apfelbaum –  
Süsser Traum –  
stand ein schattender Apfelbaum.

Drei blonde Königstöchter –  
blühe mein Herz, blüh auf –  
drei wunderschöne Mädchen  
schliefen unter dem Apfelbaum –  
Süsser Traum –  
schliefen unter dem Apfelbaum.

He came  
In storm and rain;  
Audaciously  
He took my heart.  
Did he take mine?  
Did I take his?  
Both drew near to each other.

He came  
In storm and rain.  
Now spring's blessing  
Has come.  
My friend journeys on,  
I watch with good cheer,  
For he shall be mine wherever he goes.

Translations © Richard Stokes, author of *The Book of Lieder*  
(Faber)

I feel warm and close with you  
I feel warm and close with you:  
clocks strike hesitantly,  
like they did in distant days.  
Say something loving to me –  
but not aloud.

A gate opens somewhere  
out in the burgeoning.  
Evening listens at the window-panes.  
Let us stay quiet,  
no-one knows us thus.

### **Mild summer night**

Mild summer night: in the sky  
Not a star, in the deep forest  
We sought each other in the dark  
And found one another.

Found one another in the deep wood  
In the night, the starless night,  
And amazed, we embraced  
In the dark night.

Our entire life – was it not  
Such a tentative quest?  
There: into its darkness,  
O Love, fell your light.

### **In my father's garden**

In my father's garden –  
blossom, O my heart, blossom –  
In my father's garden  
grew a shady apple tree –  
Sweet dream –  
grew a shady apple tree.

Three blond princesses –  
blossom, O my heart, blossom –  
three wonderfully beautiful girls  
slept beneath the apple tree –  
Sweet dream –  
slept beneath the apple tree.

Die allerjüngste Feine –  
blühe mein Herz, blüh auf –  
die allerjüngste Feine  
blinzelte und erwachte kaum –  
Süsser Traum –  
blinzelte und erwachte kaum.

Die zweite fuhr sich übers Haar –  
blühe mein Herz, blüh auf –  
sah den roten Morgentraum –  
Süsser Traum –

Sie sprach: Hört ihr die Trommel nicht –  
blühe mein Herz, blüh auf –  
Süsser Traum –  
hell durch den dämmernden Traum?

Mein Liebster zieht in den Kampf –  
blühe mein Herz, blüh auf –  
mein Liebster zieht in den Kampf hinaus,  
küsst mir als Sieger des Kleides Saum –  
Süsser Traum –  
küsst mir des Kleides Saum!

Die dritte sprach und sprach so leis –  
blühe mein Herz, blüh auf –  
die dritte sprach und sprach so leis:  
Ich küsse dem Liebsten des Kleides Saum –  
Süsser Traum –  
ich küsse dem Liebsten des Kleides Saum. –

In meines Vaters Garten –  
blühe mein Herz, blüh auf –  
in meines Vaters Garten  
steht ein sonniger Apfelbaum –  
Süsser Traum –  
steht ein sonniger Apfelbaum!

Otto Erich Hartleben (1864–1905)

### **Chanson perpétuelle**

Bois frissonnants, ciel étoilé,  
Mon bien-aimé s'en est allé  
Emportant mon coeur désolé.

Vents, que vos plaintives rumeurs,  
Que vos chants, rossignols charmeurs,  
Aillent lui dire que je meurs.

Le premier soir qu'il vint ici  
Mon âme fut à sa merci,  
De fierté je n'eus plus souci.

Mes regards étaient pleins d'aveux,  
Il me prit dans ses bras nerveux  
Et me baisa près des cheveux.

J'en eus un grand frémissement.  
Et puis je ne sais plus comment  
Il est devenu mon amant.

Je lui disais: 'Tu m'aimeras  
Aussi longtemps que tu pourras!  
Je ne dormais bien qu'en ses bras.

The youngest of the three beauties –  
blossom, O my heart, blossom –  
the youngest of the three beauties  
blinked and hardly awoke –  
Sweet dream –  
blinked and hardly awoke.

The second ran her hand through her hair –  
blossom, O my heart, blossom –  
Saw the red morning dream –  
Sweet dream –

She said: 'Don't you hear the drums?  
blossom, O my heart, blossom –  
Sweet dream –  
Brightly through the dawn?

My beloved is going to war  
blossom, O my heart, blossom –  
My beloved is going to war,  
Kisses as victor the hem of my dress  
Sweet dream –  
Kisses the hem of my dress.

The third spoke, and spoke so quietly –  
blossom, O my heart, blossom –  
The third spoke and spoke so quietly:  
I kiss the hem of my beloved's coat –  
Sweet dream –  
I kiss the hem of my beloved's coat.

In my father's garden –  
blossom, O my heart, blossom –  
In my father's garden  
stands a sunny apple tree –  
Sweet dream –  
stands a sunny apple tree.

Translations © Richard Stokes, author of *The Book of Lieder*  
(Faber)

Quivering woods, starlit sky,  
My beloved has gone away,  
Carrying off my desolate heart!

Winds, let your plaintive sounds,  
Bewitching nightingales, let your songs  
Tell him I am dying!

The first evening he came here,  
My soul was at his mercy.  
I cared no more for pride.

My eyes were full of love,  
He took me in his strong arms  
And kissed me on my brow.

I was seized by a great trembling;  
And then, I no longer know how,  
He became my lover.

I said to him: "Love me  
As long as you can!"  
Only in his arms could I sleep soundly.

Mais lui, sentant son coeur éteint,  
S'en est allé l'autre matin  
Sans moi dans un pays lointain.

Puisque je n'ai plus mon ami,  
Je mourrai dans l'étang parmi  
Les fleurs sous le flat endormi.

Sur le bord arrivée, au vent  
Je dirai son nom en rêvant  
Que là je l'attendis souvent,

Et comme en un linceul doré,  
Dans mes cheveux défaits, au gré  
Du vent je m'abandonnerai.

Les bonheurs passés verseront  
Leur douce lueur sur mon front  
Et les joncs verts m'enlaceront.

Et mon sein croira, frémissant  
Sous l'enlacement caressant,  
Subir l'étreinte de l'absent.

Charles Cros (1842–88)

### **La dame de Monte-Carlo**

Quand on est morte entre les mortes,  
qu'on se traîne chez les vivants  
lorsque tout vous flanque à la porte  
et la ferme d'un coup de vent,  
ne plus être jeune et aimée ...  
derrière une porte fermée,  
il reste de se fiche à l'eau  
ou d'acheter un rigolo.  
Oui, messieurs, voilà ce qui reste  
pour les lâches et les salauds.  
Mais si la frousse de ce geste  
s'attache à vous comme un grelot,  
si l'on craint de s'ouvrir les veines,  
on peut toujours risquer la veine  
d'un voyage à Monte-Carlo.

Monte-Carlo! Monte-Carlo!  
J'ai fini ma journée.  
Je veux dormir au fond de l'eau  
de la Méditerranée.  
Monte-Carlo! Monte-Carlo!

Après avoir vendu à votre âme  
et mis en gage des bijoux  
que jamais plus on ne réclame,  
la roulette est un beau joujou.  
C'est joli de dire: 'je joue'.  
Cela vous met le feu aux joues  
et cela vous allume l'oeil.  
Sous les jolis voiles de deuil  
on porte un joli nom de veuve.  
Un titre donne de l'orgueil!  
Et folie, et prête, et toute neuve,  
on prend sa carte au casino.  
Voyez mes plumes et mes voiles,  
contemplez les strass de l'étoile  
qui mène à Monte-Carlo.

But he, feeling his heart grown cold.  
Went away one morning  
Without me, to a distant land.

Since I no longer have my lover,  
I shall die in the pond among  
The flowers beneath the still water.

Halting on the edge, to the winds  
I'll speak his name, dreaming  
That there I often awaited him.

And as if in a golden shroud,  
With my flowing hair about me, to the will  
Of the water I'll abandon myself.

Past joys will shed  
Their gentle light on my brow,  
And the green rushes will entwine me.

And my breast shall believe, trembling  
Beneath its enfolding arms,  
It feels the absent one's embrace.

Translation © Richard Stokes, author of *A French Song Companion* (OUP)

When you're dead among the dead,  
when you're withering in the land of the living,  
when everything kicks you out  
and the wind slams the door shut,  
when you're no longer young and loved ...  
when behind a closed door  
there's nothing left but to drown  
or buy a pistol –  
Yes, gentlemen, that's what's left  
for cowards and bastards.  
But if the thought of suicide  
makes you tremble like a leaf,  
if you balk at slashing your veins,  
you can always take the gamble  
of a trip to Monte Carlo.

Monte Carlo! Monte Carlo!  
I've done with life.  
I want to sleep on the bed  
of the Med.  
Monte Carlo! Monte Carlo!

Having sold your soul,  
and pawned your jewellery  
once and for all,  
roulette is a pretty plaything.  
It's fun to say: 'I gamble'.  
It makes your cheeks flush  
and lights up your eyes.  
Beneath your fine widow's veil,  
you've a fine widow's name.  
Such a title gives you pride!  
Crazy, prepared, and wholly restored,  
you take out your card at the casino.  
Just look at my feathers and my veils,  
behold the bejewelled star,  
leading to Monte Carlo.

La chance est femme. Elle est jalouse  
de ces veuves solennels.  
Sans doute ell' m'a cru l'épouse  
d'un véritable colonel.  
J'ai gagné, gagné sur le douze.  
Et puis les robes se decousent,  
la fourrure perd des cheveux.  
On a beau répéter: "Je veux",  
dès que la chance vous déteste,  
dès que votre coeur est nerveux,  
vous ne pouvez plus faire un geste,  
pousser un sou sur le tableau  
sans que la chance qui s'écarte  
change les chiffres et les cartes  
des tables de Monte-Carlo.

Les voyous, le buses, les gales!  
Ils m'ont mise dehors ... dehors ...  
et ils m'accusent d'être sale,  
de porter malheur dans leurs salles,  
dans leurs sales salles en stuc.  
Moi qui aurais donné mon truc  
à l'oeil, au prince, à la princesse,  
au Duc de Westminster, au Duc,  
parfaitement. Faut que ça cesse,  
qu'ils me criaient, votre boulot!  
Votre boulot? ...

Ma découverte.  
J'en priverai les tables vertes.  
C'est bien fait pour Monte-Carlo, Monte-Carlo.  
Et maintenant, moi qui vous parle,  
je n'avouerai pas les kilos que j'ai perdus,  
que j'ai perdus  
à Monte-Carle, Monte-Carle, ou  
Monte-Carlo.  
Je suis une ombre de moi-même ...  
les martingales, les systèmes  
et les croupiers qui ont le droit  
de taper de loin sur vos doigts  
quand on peut faucher une mise.  
Et la pension où l'on doit  
et toujours la même chemise  
que l'angoisse trempe dans l'eau.  
Ils peuvent courir. Pas si bête.  
Cette nuit je pique une tête  
dans la mer de Monte-Carlo, Monte-Carlo.

Jean Cocteau (1889–1963)

### **Mes longs cheveux**

#### **Mélisande**

Mes longs cheveux descendent  
jusqu'au seuil de la tour;  
Mes cheveux vous attendent  
tout le long de la tour,  
Et tout le long du jour,  
Et tout le long du jour.  
Saint Daniel et Saint Michel,  
Saint Michel et Saint Raphaël,  
Je suis née un dimanche,  
Un dimanche à midi ...

Maurice Maeterlinck (1862–1949)

Luck is a woman. She's jealous  
of these solemn widows.  
She no doubt took me for the wife  
of a real colonel.  
I won, won on the twelve.  
Dresses then become unstitched,  
fur loses its hair.  
No matter how often you say: 'I want',  
once fortune hates you,  
once you're highly strung,  
you can no longer make a move,  
push a coin on the board,  
without luck beating a retreat  
and changing numbers and cards  
on the tables at Monte Carlo.

The scoundrels! The fools! The scabs!  
They threw me out ... threw me out ...  
They accuse me of being dirty,  
of bringing misfortune to their saloons,  
to their dirty stucco saloons –  
I, who would have told them my trick  
for free, to the Prince, the Princess,  
the Duke of Westminster,  
this must stop,  
this has to stop, they screamed at me,  
this business of yours! This business? ...

My discovery –  
I'll deprive the green tables of it.  
Serves Monte Carlo right. Monte Carlo.  
And now, I who am talking to you,  
I shan't admit how many kilos I've lost

at Monte Carle, Monte Carle, or  
Monte Carlo.  
I am a shadow of myself ...  
The martingales, the systems  
and the croupiers who have the right  
to rap your knuckles,  
when you're about to pinch the stake.  
And the money you owe at your digs,  
and always the same wet night-shirt  
drenched with anguish.  
Let them pursue me. I'm not that stupid.  
Tonight I'll hurl myself head first  
into the sea at Monte Carlo, Monte Carlo.

Translation © Richard Stokes

#### **Mélisande**

My long hair falls  
to the foot of the tower;  
my hair awaits you  
the length of the tower  
and all through the day,  
and all day long.  
Saint Daniel and Saint Michael,  
Saint Michael and Saint Raphael,  
I was born on a Sunday,  
A Sunday at noon ...

Translation © Erato/Warner Classics



## **Pleurez mes yeux**

### **Chimène**

De cet affreux combat je sors l'âme brisée!  
Mais enfin je suis libre et je pourrai du moins  
Soupirer sans contrainte et souffrir sans  
témoins.

Pleurez! pleurez mes yeux! Tombez triste rosée  
Qu'un rayon de soleil ne doit jamais tarir!  
S'il me reste un espoir, c'est de bientôt mourir!  
Pleurez mes yeux, pleurez toutes vox  
larmes! Pleurez mes yeux!  
Mais qui donc a voulu l'éternité des pleurs?  
O chers ensevelis, trouvez-vous tant de charmes  
À léguer aux vivants d'implacables douleurs?  
Hélas! Je me souviens, il me disait:  
Avec ton doux sourire  
Tu ne saurais jamais conduire  
Qu'aux chemins glorieux ou qu'aux sentiers bénis!  
Ah! Mon père! Hélas!  
Pleurez! pleurez mes yeux! Tombez triste rosée, etc.

Louis Gallet (1835–98), Édouard Blau (1836–1906)  
and Adolphe d'Ennery (1811–99)

## **Ah, je ris de me voir si belle**

### **Marguerite**

Ah! je ris de me voir  
si belle en ce miroir!  
Est-ce toi, Marguerite?  
Réponds-moi, réponds vite!  
Non! non! ce n'est plus toi!  
Ce n'est plus ton visage!  
C'est la fille d'un roi,  
qu'on salue au passage!  
Ah! s'il était ici!  
S'il me voyait ainsi!  
Comme une demoiselle  
il me trouverait belle!  
Achevons la métamorphose!  
Il me tarde encor d'essayer  
le bracelet et ce collier.  
Dieu! c'est comme une main qui  
sur moi se pose!

Ah! je ris de me voir  
si belle en ce miroir, etc.

Jules Barbier (1825–1901) and Michel Carré (1821–  
72), after Goethe's *Faust*

### **Chimène**

I go to this terrible battle with a broken soul!  
But finally I'm free and I can at least  
sigh unconstrained and suffer without being  
seen.

I weep! I cry my eyes out! Sad dew falls.  
A sunbeam should never be quenched!  
My hope is about to die!  
I weep! I cry my eyes out! I weep!  
But does anyone want to cry forever?  
O dear buried father, is your bequest to me  
that I must live in constant pain?  
Alas, I remember what he told me  
with his sweet smile:  
You never know how to lead  
as glorious or as blessed a life along such  
paths!  
Ah, my father! Alas, I weep!  
I weep! I cry my eyes out! Sad dew falls, etc.

Translation © Delos

### **Marguerite**

Oh, I can't help laughing with pleasure  
at seeing myself so pretty in the glass!  
Can it be you, Marguerite?  
Answer me, answer me quickly!  
No, no, it's no longer you!  
It's your face no longer!  
It's a king's daughter,  
to whom all bow as she passes!  
Oh, if only he were here!  
If he could see me like this!  
Pretty as a lady  
he would find me then!  
Let's complete the transformation!  
Now I'm dying to try  
the bracelet and the necklace!  
Heavens! It's like a hand being laid on  
my arm!

Oh, I can't help laughing with pleasure  
at seeing myself so pretty in the glass, etc.

Translation by Peggie Cochrane © Decca

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