

**Summary of Dissertation Recitals:
Notes on Three Performances**

by

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DEDICATION

To Mom and Dad who taught me how to love music

To Jane Heirich who taught me “how to be”

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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ABSTRACT

Two recitals and an opera role were performed in lieu of a written dissertation. The following program notes and character analysis represent a journey through artistry, vocal scholarship, and pertinent research as a doctoral student at the University of Michigan. The two dissertation recital performances and the operatic role of Elle in Poulenc's *La voix humaine* demonstrate proficiency in a range of languages and styles, an application of vocal skill and expertise both technically and interpretatively, and a depth of understanding of the repertoire as it pertains to both style and context. The first recital, "Songs of Love and Loss," included art songs of the late Romantic era including works by Jean Sibelius, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Henri Duparc, Stefano Donaudy and Richard Strauss. The second dissertation recital, "Tapas musicales: A 'Spanish' Song Recital," explored Spanish inspired music and art songs in Spanish dialects with music by Alberto Hemsí, Joseph Canteloube, Gioachino Rossini, Maurice Ravel, Manuel de Falla and Georges Bizet. An analysis of the psychology of the sole character of *La voix humaine* was explored in depth as demonstrated by the poignant setting and rich harmonic language of Francis Poulenc. Recital 1: "Songs of Love and Loss." September 25, 2020, 7:30 pm, Westside United Methodist Church, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Mahour Arbabian, piano. Recital 2: "Tapas musicales: A 'Spanish' Song Recital." February 20, 2021, 7:30 pm, Westside United Methodist Church, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Aleksandr Polyakov, piano. Recital 3: The sole role in the mono-opera *La voix humaine* by Francis Poulenc. March 7, 2021, The home of Dr. Louise Toppin, Ypsilanti, Michigan. Mahour Arbabian, piano.

RECITAL 1 PROGRAM

Songs of Love and Loss

JoAna Rusche, Mezzo-soprano
Mahour Arbabian, Piano

Friday, September 25, 2020
Westside Methodist Church
7:30 P.M.

From *5 Songs Op. 37*

1. Den första kyssen
4. Var det en dröm?
5. Flickan kom ifrån sin älsklings möte

Jean Sibelius
(1865 –1957)

Chanson Triste
Phidylé
Extase
Testament

Henri Duparc
(1848-1933)

Allerseelen
Die Nacht
Heimliche Aufforderung

Richard Strauss
(1864-1949)

Intermission

Sento nel core
O del mio amato ben
Quando ti rivedro

Stefano Donaudy
(1879-1925)

From *Op. 4*
1. Oh Stay My Love, Forsake Me Not
3. In the Silence of the Night
4. Oh, Never Sing to Me Again

Sergei Rachmaninoff
(1873-1943)

RECITAL 1 PROGRAM NOTES

“Songs of Love and Loss” Program Notes

By far, one of the most influential composers of the Romantic era was Richard Wagner (1813 – 1873). Although none of Wagner’s songs are featured as part of this performance, his music had a profound influence on each composer featured in this recital. While Wagner’s notorious, and rightful, reputation as an anti-Semite makes him a controversial figure at best, his musical contributions, for better or worse, cannot be ignored. The songs featured in this recital are united by their Wagnerian influence. Except for the songs by Stefano Donaudy – whose music was largely reactionary *against* the music of Wagner – the songs in this recital feature a broad harmonic palate, operatic vocal writing, and orchestrally conceived accompaniments. The majority of these songs were written either for voice and orchestra, or they were written as piano-vocal works that were later orchestrated. At the time at which they were written, some critics believed that orchestral accompaniments compromised the intimacy of the text. In 1909, the German music critic Rodolf Louis wrote, “An orchestral accompaniment represents a danger for a purely lyrical text....There arises all too easily a disturbing incongruity between the intimate content of the text and demands for intensity made today upon [orchestral] media.”¹ One may argue that perhaps the piano reductions used in this recital help to recreate this intimate connection between the text and the accompaniment. Finally, these songs are united by the themes of love and loss as they address aspects of romance and heartbreak in a unique and expressive manner.

Jean Sibelius is known as Finland’s leading nationalist composer. Sibelius was a symbol

¹ Quoted in Henry-Louis de la Grange, *Gustav Mahler: Vienna, the years of challenge*, 734.

of Scandinavian culture and “the first composer to bring the voice of the North to the rest of the world, fully articulated.”² He is best known for his orchestral work *Finlandia* (1899), one of his seven symphonies, which is often thought of as the Finnish national anthem. At this time, Finland was a part of the Russian empire and remained so until after the revolution of October 1917. In writing these songs, Sibelius strove to create a distinctive, Scandinavian artistic voice. During the 19th century, the literary language of Finland was Swedish, and also Sibelius’s family belonged to the Swedish-speaking minority, which is why these songs are written in Swedish. Sibelius’s op. 37, written in 1900-1902, is not a song cycle in a unified, structural sense but rather a collection of songs united by their themes of love and nature. The five songs were written for soprano and piano and were later orchestrated by Sibelius’s son-in-law, Jussi Jalas.

“Den första kyssen” (“The First Kiss”), with poetry by J. I. Runeberg, depicts a girl asking the evening star if the angels are jealous when two lovers share a first kiss. The star replies that heaven sees its own angelic bliss reflected back in that moment. There is then a dramatic, harmonic shift as the famous Tristan chord, Wagner’s leitmotiv for love and death heard in his opera *Tristan und Isolde*, is played, as the evening star speaks of death looking on in dismay.

“Var det en dröm?” (“Was it a dream?”) asks the haunting question, was love just a dream? The poetry of Josef Julius Wecksel is set in rapturous long lines, which is countered by the rich, undulating accompaniment. The vocal phrases give breadth and intensity of the text, while the swirling, rhythmic complexity of the accompaniment highlights the poet’s longing and fear. Contrastingly, the intimate B section shimmers with quick, sparkling tremolos in the upper register, before returning to the original material.

“Flickan kom ifrån sin älsklings mote” (“The Tryst”), a folk-like ballad, is also a setting of

² Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature*, (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 2005), 481.

the poetry of J. I. Runeberg. This is by far the most operatic song of op. 37. While the first two stanzas of this piece are strophic and rather simple, the third stanza is an outpouring of grief and rage. The syncopated, heartbeat-like chordal accompaniment explodes into a dramatic torrent of unbridled chordal accompaniment, as the girl tells of her lover's betrayal and asks it to be carved upon her grave.

5 sånger, op. 37

Den första kyssen (J. I. Runeberg)

På silvermolnets kant satt aftonstjärnan,
från lundens skymning frågte henne tärnan:
Säg, aftonstjärna, vad i himlen tänkes,
när första kyssen åt en älskling skänkes?
Och himlens blyga dotter hördes svara:
På jorden blickar ljuset änglaskara,
och ser sin egen sällhet speglad åter;
blott döden vänder ögat bort och gråter.

Var det en dröm? (Josef Julis Wecksel)

Var det en dröm, att ljuvt en gång
jag var ditt hjärtas vän?
Jag minns det som en tystnad sång,
då strängen darrar än.

Jag minns en törnros av dig skänkt,
en blick så blyg och öm;
jag minns en avskedstår, som blänkt.
Var allt, var allt en dröm?

En dröm lik sippans liv så kort
uti en vårgrön ängd,
vars fägring hastigt vissnar bort
för nya blommors mängd.

Men mången natt jag hör en röst
vid bittra tårars ström:
göm djupt dess minne i ditt bröst,
det var din bästa dröm!

The First Kiss

The evening star sat on the rim of silver mist.
From the shadowy grove the maiden asked her:
Tell me, evening star, what do they think in heaven
when you give the first kiss to your lover?
And heaven's shy daughter was heard to answer:
The angels of light look toward the earth
and see their own bliss reflected back;
only death turns his eyes away and weeps.

Was It a Dream?

Was it a dream that once, in a wonderful time,
I was your heart's true love?
I remember it as a song fallen silent,
of which the strains still echo.

I remember a rose you tossed,
a glance so shy and tender;
I remember a sparkling tear when we parted.
Was it all, all a dream?

A dream as brief as the life of a cowslip
in a green meadow in springtime,
whose beauty soon withers away
before a crowd of new flowers.

But many a night I hear a voice
through the flood of my bitter tears:
hide this memory deep in your heart,
it was your best dream!

Flickan kom från sin älsklings mote
(J. I. Runeberg)

Flickan kom [från]¹ sin älsklings möte,
kom med röda händer. Modern sade:
"Varav rodna dina händer, flicka?"
Flickan sade: "Jag har plockat rosor
och på törnen stungit mina händer."

Åter kom hon från sin älsklings möte,
kom med röda läppar. Modern sade:
"Varav rodna dina läppar, flicka?"
Flickan sade: "Jag har ätit hallon
och med saften målat mina läppar."

Åter kom hon från sin älsklings möte,
kom med bleka kinder. Modern sade:
"Varav blekna dina kinder, flicka?"
Flickan sade: "Red en grav, o moder!
Göm mig där och ställ ett kors däröver,
och på korset rista, som jag säger:

En gång kom hon hem med röda händer,
ty de rodnat mellan älskarns händer.
En gång kom hon hem med röda läppar,
ty de rodnat under älskarns läppar.
Senast kom hon hem med bleka kinder,
ty de bleknat genom älskarns otro."

Translations by David McCleery, from www.lieder.net

The Tryst

The girl came from meeting her lover,
came with her hands all red. Said her mother:
"What has made your hands so red, girl?"
Said the girl: "I was picking roses
and pricked my hands on the thorns."

Again she came from meeting her lover,
came with her lips all red. Said her mother:
"What has made your lips so red, girl?"
Said the girl: "I was eating raspberries
and stained my lips with the juice."

Again she came from meeting her lover,
came with her cheeks all pale. Said her mother:
"What has made your cheeks so pale, girl?"
Said the girl: "Oh mother, dig a grave for me,
Hide me there and set a cross above,
And on the cross write as I tell you:

Once she came home with her hands all red,
they had turned red between her lover's hands.
Once she came home with her lips all red,
they had turned red beneath her lover's lips.
The last time she came home, her cheeks pale,
they had turned pale at her lover's faithlessness."

Henri Duparc is perhaps the most Germanic of the French composers, as he was highly influenced by the music of Richard Wagner and Robert Schumann. Wagner's influence on Duparc's musical style is direct and apparent. Duparc often uses leitmotifs in his music, and he incorporates the Tristan chord. Duparc also uses dissonant, non-functional harmonies for color, as well as unpredictable, non-traditional harmonic progressions. His accompaniments are orchestrally conceived, as Duparc's orchestrated 8 of his 16 songs. The accompaniments are quite unlike those of his French contemporaries, such as Claude Debussy and Gabriel Fauré, in that they are generally virtuosic, dense, and bass-heavy. Duparc wished that his expressive

accompaniments would “envelop the voice like a garment, making one with it; that – in a word – is not pianistic, but orchestral, from the heart and the intelligence.”³ Duparc’s vocal writing is bold and even operatic. However, Duparc hated vocal exhibitionism and preferred a “violin-like voice, capable of fluent, flexible phrasing and a real intensity of tone.”⁴ Overall, his songs are dramatic and sensual, with intense climactic moments and direct emotion, often portraying a sense of intense longing. Sadly, Duparc stopped composing early in his life due to health complications, having only written 16 songs, yet he is considered one of the greatest composers of French song.

“Chanson Triste” (“Sad Song”) was Duparc’s first *mélodie* written in 1868, and later orchestrated by the composer in 1912. Its arpeggiated accompaniment is reminiscent of the music of Robert Schumann. The accompaniment is, in many ways, equally as important as the vocal line. Its countermelodies add melodic interest, and the cascading motion of the accompaniment unifies this through-composed piece and creates a sense of drive and intensity. While the spacious and flowing melodic line is ample and full of large, emotive leaps, the vocal phrases themselves are speech-like. Although there are unexpected harmonic colors in this piece, they never disturb the calmness and elegance of the song.

“Extase” (“Extasy”), written in 1874, is a prime example of Wagner’s influence on the music of Duparc. Pierre Bernac calls this *mélodie* a “Wagnerian nocturne” for the piano,⁵ as this piece was never orchestrated. In this piece, there are several unifying motifs as well as a recurrence of the Tristan chord. Many of the harmonies are Wagnerian as the diminished seventh chords resolve to dominant sevenths. The harmonies are shifting and chromatic, yet never jarring, avoiding anticipated cadences. The harmonic progressions are quite similar

³ Betty Bannerman, *The Singer as Interpreter, Claire Croiza’s Masterclasses*, 187-188.

⁴ Sydney Northcote, *The Songs of Henri Duparc*, (New York: Brewster Press, 2007), 256.

⁵ Pierre Bernac, *The Interpretation of French Song*, (London: Cassel, 1970), 54.

to those in Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*. Similarly, the extended prelude, interlude, and postlude hauntingly echo the melodic line. This creates a slowly evolving texture that brings richness and a sense of timelessness to the mere six lines of text. The combination of these Wagnerian elements creates a calm, hypnotic atmosphere.

“Phidylé” is a dynamic and passionate piece, and it is one of Duparc's longest *mélodies*. Written in 1872, it was orchestrated by the composer twenty years later. In the beginning of the song, the accompaniment is simple and chordal. However, the texture of the accompaniment changes quickly and frequently throughout the piece, becoming increasingly virtuosic. The constant unexpected and abrupt shifts in harmony and tempo give the song a sense of fluidity, motion and spontaneity. The chant-like vocal line reaches upward, creating a powerful climax, as the accompaniment becomes increasingly virtuosic and rhapsodic.

“Testment” (“Testament”) was written in 1883 and orchestrated by the composer in 1900. It is a turbulent piece portraying the anguish of sending a final letter to an estranged lover. The poetry and the music simultaneously portray a hurricane of emotions. The accompaniment is thick and fraught with harmonic instability and evaded cadences.

Chanson Triste
(Henri Cazalis)

Dans ton cœur 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 cœur 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;

Sad Song

In your heart moonlight sleeps,
Gentle summer moonlight;
And to escape the stress of life,
I will drown myself in your radiance.

I will forget past sorrows,
My love, when you cradle
My sad heart and my thoughts
In the loving peacefulness of your arms.
You will take my aching head,
Oh! sometimes upon your knee,
And you relate a ballad
That seems to speak of ourselves;

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

Extase

(Henri Cazalis)

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

Phydile

(Charles-Marie-René Leconte de Lisle)

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!

Testament

(Armand Silvestre)

Pour que le vent te les apporte
Sur l'aile noire d'un remord,

And in your eyes so full of sorrows,
From your eyes then I will drink
So deeply of kisses and of tenderness
That, perhaps, I shall be healed...

Ecstasy

On a pale lily my heart sleeps
A sleep sweet as death...
Exquisite death, death perfumed
By the breath of the beloved...
On your pale breast my heart sleeps
A sleep sweet as death...

Phydile

The grass is soft for sleeping beneath the
fresh poplars,
on the slopes by the mossy springs,
which in the flowering meadows arise in
a thousand rills,
to be lost under dark thickets.

Rest, O Phidylé! The midday sun on the
leaves is shining and invites you to sleep!
In the clover and thyme, alone, in full sunlight
the hovering honeybees are humming;

A warm fragrance haunts the winding paths,
a red poppy of the cornfield droops,
and the birds, skimming the hill on the wing,
seek the shade of the sweet briar.

But when the sun, sinking lower on its
resplendent orbit,
find its fire abated,
Let your loveliest smile and your most ardent kiss
Reward me for my waiting!

Testament

So that the wind may carry them to you
on the black wing of remorse,

J'écrirai sur la feuille morte
Les tortures de mon coeur 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 coeur mort!

I will write on a dead leaf
the torments of my dead heart!

All my sap is dried up
in the clear midday of your beauty,
And, like a withered leaf,
nothing living remains to me;

Your eyes have burned me to the soul,
like merciless suns!
Leaf that the abyss claims,
the south wind will bear me away too...

But first, so they are bourne to you
on the black wing of remorse,
I will write on a dead leaf
the torments of my dead heart!

Translations by Emily Ezust, from www.lieder.net

Richard Strauss was a prolific composer who wrote 200 lieder for voice and piano and 40 lieder for voice and orchestra. He is best known for his operas, which include *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Elektra*, and *Salome*. Strauss' songs feature text from over 60 poets including Shakespeare, Goethe, Heine, and folk texts from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. Although Strauss' father vehemently hated Wagner, Strauss was obsessed with Wagner's music. He once said, "At the age of seventeen I feverishly devoured the pages of the score of *Tristan* and my enthusiasm reached a pitch of intoxication...I became a *complete Wagnerian*."⁶ This enthusiasm was furthered by the fact that Strauss wrote most of his songs for his wife, Pauline de Ahna, who was a Wagnerian soprano. She sang Elisabeth in Wagner's *Tannhäuser* at the Bayreuth Festival in 1894 with Strauss conducting, and they were married a month later. Strauss' pieces are marked by a sense of grandeur, expansive harmonies and orchestral accompaniments. Strauss' songs also blur the "lines of tonality and form while maintaining the spirit of the

⁶ Michael Kennedy, *Richard Strauss: Man, Musician, Enigma*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 26.

form/genre.”⁷ The songs are beautifully lyrical with rich, textured accompaniments. While Strauss did not orchestrate these songs himself, the German conductor Robert Heger orchestrated “Heimliche Aufforderung” in 1929 and “Allerseelen” in 1932.

“Allerseelen” (“All Soul’s Day”) is from Strauss’ first published group of songs, *Acht Gedichte aus Letzte Blätter*, op.10, published when he was only twenty-one years old. The text is taken from a book of poetry, *Letzte Blätter*, written by Austrian poet Hermann von Gilm. Strauss was attracted to the heavy sentiment and the form of Gilm’s poetry. This particular song takes place on All Soul’s Day, November 2nd, also known as All Saint’s Day. The through-composed form of the song and text is punctuated by the repetition of “wie einst in Mai” (“as once in May”), which takes on new musical qualities with each reiteration. It is unclear as to whether the presence of the beloved is a dream or reality. One might argue that the beloved is imagined and is portrayed by the accompaniment, especially in the long interlude and postlude. The shifting harmonies mirror the unsettled emotions of the lover, as the lush, widely spaced harmonies create a poignant sense of distance. Strauss wrote this piece on October 31, 1885, at the age 21, dedicating them to the pianist Dora Wilham. She had performed Strauss’ Cello Sonata two years before with her husband Hanus Wilham in 1883. However, the two of them later divorced as her husband was suspicious of his wife having an affair with Strauss. Regardless of whether or not they had an affair, Richard Strauss and Dora Wilham remained friends their entire lives.

“Die Nacht,” originally written in 1885 for tenor and piano, portrays the unstoppable progression of nightfall. This modified strophic song features four variations of the same melodic material, each with a different tonal center. There is a disconcerting lack of rhythmic meter, as the repeated eighth-note pattern mimics the ticking of a clock. The thin texture of the

⁷ Lorraine Gorrell, *The Nineteenth-Century German Lied*, (Pompton Plains: Amadeus Press, 2005), 322.

accompaniment gains momentum, becoming more chordal as night takes over. It is as if the voice is trying unsuccessfully to maintain a sense of normalcy in the midst of drastic change. The voice breaks with emotion on “stehle” (“steal”) as the poet relates his fear that the night will steal his love from him as well. Alan Jefferson wrote: “Strauss manages to convey the manner in which the all-embracing power of night is stealing so mercilessly over everything: first by the powerful (though gentle) rhythmic beat; and then by the minor seconds (two adjacent black and white notes put down together) which create the effect of merging two objects into one until they resolve into something else, musically as well as visually.”⁸

Strauss wrote “Heimliche Aufforderung” in 1894 as a wedding present for his wife, Pauline de Ahna. The rolling arpeggiated accompaniment is truly Wagnerian and is not unlike the famous “Ride of the Valkyries” from Wagner’s *Die Walkure*, an opera which Strauss would have undoubtedly known and loved. The song was orchestrated in 1929 by the German conductor Robert Heger. The song speaks of two lovers meeting secretly in a garden.

Allerseelen

(Hermann von Gilm)

Stell auf den Tisch die duftenden Reseden,
Die letzten roten Aestern trag herbei,
Und laß uns wieder von der Liebe reden,
Wie einst im Mai.

Gib mir die Hand, daß ich sie heimlich drücke
Und wenn man's sieht, mir ist es einerlei,
Gib mir nur einen deiner süßen Blicke,
Wie einst im Mai.

Es blüht und duftet heut auf jedem Grabe,
Ein Tag im Jahr ist ja den Toten frei,
Komm an mein Herz, daß ich dich wieder habe,
Wie einst im Mai.

Translations by Emily Ezust, from www.lieder.net

All Soul's Day

Set on the table the fragrant mignonettes,
Bring in the last red asters,
and let us speak again of love,
as once in May.

Give me your hand to press in secret,
and if people see, I do not care.
Give me but one of your sweet looks,
as once in May.

Each grave today has flowers, is fragrant,
For one day of the year the dead are free,
Come close to my heart, and so be mine again,
as once in May.

⁸ Alan Jefferson, *The Lieder of Richard Strauss*, (London: Cassel and Company, 1971), 57.

Die Nacht

(Hermann von Gilm)

Aus dem Walde tritt die Nacht,
Aus den Bäumen schleicht sie leise,
Schaut sich um in weitem Kreise,
Nun gib Acht!

Alle Lichter dieser Welt,
Alle Blumen, alle Farben
Löscht sie aus und stiehlt die Garben
Weg vom Feld.

Alles nimmt sie, was nur hold,
Nimmt das Silber weg des Stroms
Nimmt vom Kupferdach des Doms
Weg das Gold.

Ausgeplündert steht der Strauch:
Rücke näher, Seel' an Seele,
O die Nacht, mir bangt, sie stehle
Dich mir auch.

Translations by Lawrence Snyder and Rebecca Plack, from www.lieder.net

Heimliche Aufforderung

(John Henry Mackay)

Auf, hebe die funkelnde Schale empor zum Mund,
Und trinke beim Freudenmahle dein Herz gesund.
Und wenn du sie hebst, so winke mir heimlich zu,
Dann lächle ich und dann trinke ich still wie du...

Und still gleich mir betrachte um uns das Heer
Der trunknen Zecher -- verachte sie nicht zu sehr.
Nein, hebe die blinkende Schale, gefüllt mit Wein,
Und laß beim lärmenden Mahle sie glücklich sein.

Doch hast du das Mahl genossen, den Durst gestillt,
Dann verlasse der lauten Genossen festfreudiges Bild,
Und wandle hinaus in den Garten zum Rosenstrauch,
Dort will ich dich dann erwarten nach altem Brauch,
Und will an die Brust dir sinken, eh du's gehofft,
Und deine Küsse trinken, wie ehemals oft,
Und flechten in deine Haare der Rose Pracht.
O komm, du wunderbare, ersehnte Nacht!

Translations by Lawrence Snyder and Rebecca Plack, from www.lieder.net

The Night

Night steps from the wood,
Slips softly from the trees,
Gazes about her in a wide arc,
Now beware!

All this world's lights,
All flowers, all colors
She extinguishes, and steals the sheaves
From the field.

All that is fair she takes,
The silver from the stream,
From the cathedral's copper roof
The gold.

Plundered stands the bush:
Draw closer, soul to soul;
Oh, the night, I fear, will steal
You too from me.

The Secret Invitation

Raise to your lips the sparkling cup
Drink, at this feast, your heart to health.
And raising it, sign to me in secret,
I'll then smile, and quiet as you, will drink.

And quiet as I, about us regard the host
Of drunken talkers -- scorn them not too much.
No, raise the twinkling wine-filled cup,
Let them be happy at their noisy feast.

But having eaten, satisfied your thirst,
Quit the loud company's gay festive scene,
And to the garden wander, to the rosebush --
There I'll wait, as long our custom has been.
And, ere you know, I'll sink upon your breast,
Drinking your kisses, as many times before,
And in your hair I'll twine the roses' splendor.
Wonderful and longed-for night, O come!

Stefano Donaudy's compositional style can be viewed as a reaction *against* Wagner's operatic style. Donaudy wrote in a purposefully antiquated style, with the hopes of reviving interest in the *bel canto* style that was made popular in the early 1800s by opera composers such as Gaetano Donizetti, Gioachino Rossini and Vincenzo Bellini. Donaudy is best known for his collection of thirty-six songs which he titled *Arie di stile antico*, which he published in two volumes in 1918 and in 1922. He also wrote six operas, but few were successful and none are performed today. Donaudy drew upon more antiquated song types including "*arie arietta, ballatella, canzone, canzonetta, frottola, madrigal, maggiolata, and villanella*"⁹ His *cantabile* melodies and *bel canto* writing style are clearly evident. The texts for the songs were written by Donaudy's brother Alberto Donaudy, with the exception of "Sento nel core" which is by an anonymous poet.

The three songs are unified by the themes of love and loss. "Sento nel core" is a short, through-composed piece, which is similar to the compositional style of Bellini. While the piece begins in a mournful, minor key, the piece ends surprisingly in a major key as the poet realizes the reason for his suffering is love. "O del mio amato ben" is a furtive love song which Donaudy labeled as an *aria*. The two stanzas are written in a strophic form and feature a slightly denser texture and more passionate tone than "Sento nel core." The piano introduction serves as a ritornello and features the broad lyrical phrases that are also heard in the vocal line. "Quando ti rivedro" is perhaps the most modern of the *Arie di stile antico* as it features a broader harmonic palate, incorporating unexpected harmonies. The meter of this through-composed song alternates between 3/4 and 4/4, and multiple syllables are assigned to only one note as the text declamation becomes more emotional and speech-like.

⁹ Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature*, (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 2005), 439.

Sento nel core

(Anonymous)

Sento nel core certo dolore,
che la mia pace turbando va.
Splende una face che l'alma accende,
se non è amore, amor sarà.

Translation by Gretchen Armacost, from www.lieder.net

O del mio amato ben

Alberto Donaudy

O del mio amato ben perduto incanto!
Lungi è dagli occhi miei
chi m'era gloria e vanto!
Or per le mute stanze
sempre lo cerco e chiamo
con pieno il cor di speranze?
Ma cerco invan, chiamo invan!
E il pianger m'è sì caro,
che di pianto sol nutro il cor.

Mi sembra, senza lui,, triste ogni loco.
Notte mi sembra il giorno;
mi sembra gelo il foco.
Se pur talvolta spero
di darmi ad altra cura,
sol mi tormenta un pensiero:
Ma, senza lui, che farò?
Mi par così la vita vana cosa
senza il mio ben.

Translation by Donna Bareket, from www.lieder.net

Quando ti rivedro

(Alberto Donaudy)

Quando ti rivedrò,
infida amante che mi fosti sì cara?
Tante lagrime ho piante
or che altrui ci separa,
che temo sia fuggita ogni gioia
per sempre di mia vita.
Eppur più mi dispero,
più ritorno a sperare.
Più t'odio nel pensiero

I Feel in My Heart

I feel in my heart a certain sorrow
Which goes on disturbing my peace;
There shines a torch which inflames my soul:
If it is not love, it will be love soon.

Oh, My Dearly Beloved

Oh, lost enchantment of my dearly beloved!
Far from my eyes is he
who was, to me, glory and pride!
Now through the empty rooms
I always seek him and call him
with a heart full of hopes?
But I seek in vain, I call in vain!
And the weeping is so dear to me,
that with weeping alone I nourish my heart.

It seems to me, without him, sad everywhere.
The day seems like night to me;
the fire seems cold to me.
If, however, I sometimes hope
to give myself to another cure,
one thought alone torments me:
But without him, what shall I do?
To me, life seems a vain thing
without my beloved.

When Will You Return

When shall I see you again,
Unfaithful lover, who were so dear to me?
So many tears I have wept
Now that another separates us,
That I fear that may be fled
Every joy forever from my life.
And yet the more I despair,
The more I return to hoping.
The more I hate you in my mind,

e più ancora l'anima mia ti torna ad amar.
Quando ti rivedrò,
infida amante che mi fosti cara così?

The more my soul turns again to loving you.
When shall I see you again,
Unfaithful lover, who were so dear to me

Translation by Gretchen Armacost, from www.lieder.net

Sergei Rachmaninoff was a Russian-American composer. He studied at conservatories in both St. Petersburg and Moscow. After the failure of his First Symphony in 1897, he rose to prominence after his famous Second Piano Concerto in 1901. He wrote many of his songs around this time, as his seven sets of songs were published between 1890 and 1916. However, he stopped writing songs completely after moving to America in 1917 during the October Revolution. He wrote, “Having lost my native land, I lost myself. An exile who is deprived of his musical roots, traditions and native soil, has no other consolation but an inviolable silence of undisturbed reminisces.”¹⁰ These songs feature the same lyrical style and expressive, virtuosic piano accompaniments that are heard in his famous concerto. Rachmaninoff has often been compared to Robert Schumann as both wrote expressive and rich accompaniments which were equal in nature to the complexity and expressivity of the voice. They both use preludes, interludes and postludes. They also set Romantic poetry that features themes of love and nature. Each of these elements can be seen in this collection of songs, where “Rachmaninoff’s gifts for lyrical melody and imaginative support from the piano are everywhere apparent.”¹¹ Written in 1893, Op. 4 is a collection of six passionate love songs written for voice and orchestra. It is Rachmaninoff’s first set of published songs, written when he was only twenty years old.

The first song, “I beg you do not leave” “shows Rachmaninoff’s affinity for the popular ‘Gypsy’ style of the day.”¹² The song opens with a sparse recitative before launching into

¹⁰ Quoted in *The Singer’s Rachmaninoff*, Natalia Challis, ed., 45.

¹¹ Richard D. Sylvester, *Rachmaninoff’s Complete Songs: A Companion with Texts and Translations*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 30.

¹² Ibid.

agitated triplets. The text is a poem, written by the Symbolist poet Dmitri Merezhkovsky (1865 – 1941), that Rachmaninoff found in a literary magazine called *Russian Thought* (*Russkaia mysl'*) in 1890. Rachmaninoff wrote this piece as he was deeply grieving the death of the Russian composer Pyotr Tchaikovsky in 1893. Rachmaninoff wrote, “As it says in one of my romances, I was in torment the whole time and sick in my soul.”¹³

“In the silence of the secret night,” is similar in many ways to Tchaikovsky’s “None but the lonely heart.” The poet is simultaneously enchanted and tortured by the memory of his lost love. As in Tchaikovsky’s song, the accompaniment opens with sighing, falling intervals that are echoed by the opening vocal line. The poem, written by Afanasy Fet (1820 – 1892), was praised for the way it expressed “in concentrated, clear, definite, and at the same time subtle language one of the most complex and elusive feelings of the heart.”¹⁴ Despite the sadness expressed in this piece, it is in a major key and ends with a sparkling coda as the fantasy drifts away again.

“Sing not to me, beautiful maiden,” is a setting of a famous poem by Aleksándr Sergéyevich Púshkin (1799 – 1837) that has been set by more than forty composers. However, many agree that Rachmaninoff’s setting “outdoes them all.”¹⁵ To evoke the music of Georgia, Rachmaninoff incorporates “‘sweeping’ melismas,’ ‘syncopated undulation’ together with a ‘drone bass’ and ‘a chromatic accompanying line that in this case steadily descends along with the sequences of undulating melismas.’”¹⁶ The maiden’s song is portrayed in the extended prelude, interlude, and postlude of this song. The vocal line alternates between an operatic vocal style and recitative. The piece ends with a haunting pianissimo setting of the first stanza.

¹³ Richard D. Sylvester, *Rachmaninoff's Complete Songs: A Companion with Texts and Translations*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 31.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁵ Richard D. Sylvester, *Rachmaninoff's Complete Songs: A Companion with Texts and Translations*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 30.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 39.

О, нет, молю, не уходи!
(Dmitri Merezhkovsky)

О, нет, молю, не уходи!
Вся боль ничто перед разлукой,
Я слишком счастлив Этой мукой,
Сильней прижми меня к груди,

Скажи люблю. Пришёл я вновь,
Больной, измученный и бледный.
Смотри, какой я слабый, бедный,
Как мне нужна твоя любовь...

Мучений новых впереди
Я жду как ласку, как поцелуя,
И об одном молю, тоскуя:
О, будь со мной, не уходи!

О, долго буду я, в молчаньи ночи тайной
(Afanasy Fet)

О, долго буду я, в молчаньи ночи тайной
Коварный лепет твой, улыбку, взор, взор
случайный,
Перстам послушную волос, волос твоих
густую прядь
Из мыслей изгонять, и снова призывать;
Шептать и поправлять былые выраженья
Речей моих с тобой, исполненных
смущенья,
И в опьяненьи, наперекор уму,
Заветным именем будить ночную тьму,
Заветным именем будить ночную тьму.
О, долго буду я, в молчаньи ночи тайной,
Заветным именем будить ночную тьму.

Не пой, красавица, при мне
(Aleksánder Sergéyevich Púshkin)

Не пой, красавица, при мне
Ты песен Грузии печальной;
Напоминают мне [оне]¹
Другую жизнь и берег дальний.
Увы, напоминают мне
Твои жестокие напевы

I beg you do not leave!

Oh no, I beg you, don't leave!
This pain is slight compared to separation,
I'm too happy in this state of torment,
Press me hard against your breast,

Say "I love you." I've come to you again,
Sick, tormented, and pale.
See how weak and pitiful I am,
How much I need your love...

New torments lie ahead,
I greet them like caresses, like kisses,
And beg for one thing only in my agony,
Oh, stay with me, don't leave!

In the Silence of the Night

Oh, long will I, in the silence of the mysterious night,
Your sly chatter, smile, glance,
casual glance,
Hair pliant to my fingers, your thick shock
of hair,
Banish from my thoughts and summon back again;
Whisper and improve past words I spoke to you,
so full of shy confusion,
And in rapture,
against all reason,
With your cherished name, awake night's darkness,
Awake night's darkness with your cherished name.
Oh, long will I, in the silence of the mysterious night,
Awake night's darkness with your cherished name.

Do Not Sing for Me, Fair Beauty

Do not sing for me, fair beauty,
Your songs of sad Georgia:
They remind me
Of another life and distant shore.
Alas, they bring back memories,
Your cruel memories

И степь, и ночь, и при луне
Черты далекой, бедной девы!
Я [призрак]² милый, роковой,
Тебя увидев, забываю;
Но ты поёшь, и предо мной
Его я вновь воображаю.

Не пой, красавица, при мне
Ты песен Грузии печальной;
Напоминают мне [оне]¹
Другую жизнь и берег дальний.

Of the steppe at night, and, in the moonlight,
The features of a poor maiden far away!
Seeing you, I forget
That dear, fateful vision;
But when you sing, again
I imagine it before me.

Do not sing for me, fair beauty,
Your songs of sad Georgia:
They remind me
Of another life and distant shore.

Translations by Anton Besspalov and Rianne Stam, from www.lieder.net

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RECITAL 2 PROGRAM

Tapas musicales: A “Spanish” Song Recital

JoAna Rusche, Mezzo-soprano
Aleksandr Polyakov, Piano

Saturday, February 20, 2021
Westside Methodist Church
7:30 P.M.

From *Coplas Sefardies op. 22*
Una matica de ruida, No. 2
De las altas mares, No. 1
Cien donzellas van a la misa, No. 5

Alberto Hemi
(1898 – 1975)

From *Chants d’Auvergne*
Bailèro
Pastouelle
La Delaïssádo
Lo Fiolaire
Brezairola
Malurous qu’o uno fenno

Joseph Canteloube
(1879 – 1957)

Intermission

Canzonetta Spanguola

Gioachino Rossini
(1792 – 1868)

Vocalise-étude en forme de Habanera

Maurice Ravel
(1875 – 1937)

From *Trois Chansons*
Seguidilla

Manuel de Falla
(1876 – 1946)

From *Carmen*
Habanera
Seguidilla
Les tringles des sistres tintaient

Georges Bizet
(1838 – 1875)

RECITAL 2 PROGRAM NOTES

Tapas musicales: A “Spanish” Song Recital

While each of the songs in this recital has musical, linguistic or cultural ties to the country of Spain, it is difficult to categorize any of these songs or arias as authentically “Spanish.” These songs, written by Spanish, French, Italian and Turkish composers, exemplify the musical and cultural traditions of Spain. Nevertheless, because of the other linguistic and stylistic characteristics of these works, they lie on the fringes of traditional Spanish music. The goal of this recital is to give a broader representation of Spanish culture by presenting a diverse program of folk songs, art songs and arias, which all simply ask the question, “What is Spanish music?”

Like any country, the cultural and musical heritage of Spain is extensive and diverse. The music of Spain draws from a number of musical traditions, as each region of Spain has its own unique cultural identity. However, many of the musical characteristics one would most readily recognize, at least as a Western listener, as “Spanish” have their roots in the folk music of Andalusia in southern Spain, specifically the *cante jondo*, translated as “deep song.” This particular type of song is generally accompanied by the guitar. Dance rhythms, such as the Andalusian *flamenco*, are the driving force behind the songs. While the vocal line is often chant-like, it is embellished with vocal ornaments such as appoggiaturas, acciaccaturas, bent notes or slides as well as extensive melismas and trills. Far from being extraneous, this ornamentation is “a result of lyrical expansiveness induced by the emotive force of the words.”¹ There is also a “repeated insistence, amounting almost to an obsession, on a single note.”² The music is punctuated by shouts of “Olé!” and “Ay!” As *cante jondo* “are derived from the influence of the Arabian, Indian, and Oriental

¹ Gilbert Chase, *The Music of Spain*, (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1959), 224.

² Ibid.

chants,”³ these songs begin with a slow introduction, usually “a melismatic exclamation on the syllable ‘ay’”⁴ before the text is sung. Harmonic features of *cante jondo* include modal harmonies, a lowered second scale degree, microtones and non-Western tuning systems.

However, what many books on Spanish music fail to recognize is that the city of Andalusia is populated largely by gypsies, referred to today as the Roma people.⁵ The Roma people are believed to have traveled from North India throughout Europe, settling in Spain in the 8th century. Therefore, perhaps the group of people who had the most influence on Spanish music is its most hated minority, the Romani. Romani music also influenced and was influenced by Jewish klezmer music in Spain. Both the Jews and the Roma people were repeatedly persecuted and exiled from Spain. However, as in many cultures, the loudest voices are the ones that are repeatedly silenced, and the cultures that leave the greatest impression on a country are those that are oppressed. As the Spanish Nobel Prize winning diplomat Salvador de Madriaga noted, “The Peninsula acts as a sounding board for Oriental races who usually give their richest sounds in it: the Arab, the Jews, and the Gypsy. It was in Spain that Arab civilization rose to its highest brilliancy; Spanish Jews were the greatest luminaries of Hebrew civilization since Biblical times; and as for the Gypsy, the superiority of the Spanish type over any other is not to be proved by books, but by the observation of the living specimens that may be found in Andalusia.”⁶

Alberto Hemsí, born in Turkey to Italian parents of Jewish heritage, was a composer and a musicologist. He dedicated his career to studying and preserving the musical and cultural heritage of Sephardic Jews by writing ten books of Sephardic songs between 1932-1973.⁷ “For Hemsí...the Sephardic

³ Martha Elliot, *Singing in Style: A Guide to Vocal Performance Practices*, (New Haven: Yale University Press), 266-267.

⁴ Gilbert Chase, *The Music of Spain*, (New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 1959), 299.

⁵ “Roma/Gypsies.” Minority Rights Group, February 6, 2021.

<https://minorityrights.org/minorities/gypsies/#:~:text=Of%20the%20estimated%20725%2C000%2D750,Catalonia%2C%20Valencia%2C%20and%20Madrid.>

⁶ Ninotchka Bennahum, *Carmen, a Gypsy Geography*, (Middleton: Wesleyan University Press, 2013), 93.

⁷ Jacqueline Cockburn, Richard Stokes, Graham Johnson, *The Spanish Song Companion*, (Oxford: Scarecrow Press, 2006), 186.

musical heritage was his own heritage, as he had been born into the Sephardic-Italian tradition.”⁸ These *Coplas Sefardies*, or Sephardic Coplas, derive their name from the poetry on which these songs were based. Coplas are a form of Spanish poetry that consists of four lines with eight syllablesto a line. In order to preserve the oral history of Sephardic poetry and song and make them accessible to the general public, Hemsí usually set only small segments from the long Ladino poems he chose. He also arranged these songs for piano and voice. This is most peculiar as the piano is rarely an instrument that is heard in traditional Jewish music. However, Hemsí intended for these songs to be widely performed in recital halls, and he paired the strophic folk songs with virtuosic piano accompaniments.

These songs are written in the Ladino language, which originated from Old Spanish. It was originally spoken in the 15th century by Jewish populations in eastern Spain. Today, the language is spoken by Sephardic Jews. Sephardic Jews trace their lineage back to Spain, as the term Sephardic comes from the word “Sefarad,” which refers to the Iberian Peninsula. In March of 1492, the same year King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella sent Christopher Columbus on his historic journey across the Atlantic Ocean, the king and queen also passed the Alhambra Decree, also known as the Edict for the Expulsion of the Jews. According to this edict, all Jews living in Spain were forced either to convert to Christianity or be exiled or be executed. Even though the Jews had lived in Spain for centuries, they were still seen as “aliens to the land.”⁹ It was believed that the main obstacle in establishing Catholicism as the dominant religion of Spain was “the continuing influence of Jews who resisted conversion.”¹⁰ While it was not clearly documented how many Jews were forced to leave Spain, it is estimated that between 50,000 to 250,000 Jews were exiled. The majority of these Jews relocated to Portugal where, only a few years later, they were forced to make the same choice again of conversion or exile.¹¹ They then relocated again to

⁸ Liner Notes, *Coplas Sefardies*, Volume 2

⁹ Antonio Feros, *Speaking of Spain: The Evolution of Race and Nation in the Hispanic World*, (Cambridge, MA:Harvard University Press, 2017). 81.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 82.

North Africa, Southern Europe and the Middle East, where they were allowed to continue to practice their religion freely.

Interestingly, many of these folk songs are written from a female perspective and would have traditionally been sung by Jewish women.¹² However, in many traditional Jewish circles, it is considered dishonorable, even licentious, for a woman to sing in public. If a woman were to be found singing in public, it would have been assumed that she was either of a poor reputation or that her family was too poor to properly provide for her. And so, these songs were sung by women in private to other women while performing chores, preparing for a wedding or celebrating the birth of a new baby.¹³ Because these songs were shared and learned through an oral tradition, they dramatically evolved over time with new melodies and stanzas of text.

“Una matica de ruida” is perhaps the most familiar of Hemsí’s *Coplas Sefardíes*. The poem is a dialogue between a mother and her young daughter. A young man has fallen in love with the daughter and has brought her rue flowers, which were highly prized in Ladino culture. However, the mother discourages this romance, saying that an arranged marriage, even if it is an unhappy one, is more honorable than courtship. While it has not been documented as to when this poem was written, it does highlight how different generations viewed courtship and marriage in Jewish culture. In the mid-19th century, as literacy became increasingly more common, there was a dramatic shift worldwide as people began to wish to marry for love.¹⁴ In traditional Jewish circles, women had very little say as to whom they would marry, since marriages were arranged by a matchmaker and finalized by the girl’s family. While the girl in the poem sees this courtship as romantic, her more conservative mother sees it as promiscuous and dishonorable.

The first song, “De las altas mares,” tells the story of a young countess from Spain who is

¹² Dr. Devi Mays (Assistant Professor of Jewish Studies, University of Michigan at Ann Arbor) in discussion with the author, February 4, 2021.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Dr. Devi Mays (Assistant Professor of Jewish Studies, University of Michigan at Ann Arbor) in discussion with the author, February 4, 2021.

captured by North African Muslims and brought to their king and queen. During the 14th century, piracy between Spain and North Africa was highly common. People from North Africa would be captured for ransom or brought to Spain as slaves. Or, as in the case of this poem, the opposite could be true, as Spanish captives were also brought to North Africa.

In the poem, when the young king sees the beautiful captive, he falls in love with her, making the queen jealous. The queen then forces the young captive to wash clothing in the river, hoping that the sun would darken the girl's fair skin and make her unattractive. However, one day, a gentleman passes by the girl, and she boldly asks him to take her with him. As they ride away together, the girl recognizes the fields of olive trees saying that they belong to her brother, the count. The gentleman takes the girl to his family home where she is embraced by the man's mother as her new daughter-in-law.

The final song, "Cien donzellas van a la misa" is quite possibly a Spanish poem adopted by the Sephardic Jews, because it depicts a Catholic woman going to mass. Musically speaking, it also seems to be the most Spanish stylistically as it features an extensive use of trills and grace note figures, virtuosic harmonic minor melismas and passionate exclamations of "Ay!" The poem describes a beautiful Catholic woman, praising her beauty and clothing in a manner reminiscent of the Song of Songs. Each stanza ends with the phrase "mas hay del amor," which means "my love grows even more." This phrase is first spoken by the man who is in love with her. However, in later stanzas, it is spoken by the woman herself. As the woman enters the church, the church musician and the clergyman stop the service and fall to their knees before her, overwhelmed by her beauty. However, she says that she has come to the church for the man she has waited seven years to marry. Perhaps this man is someone who has been forced by his family to join the clergy, and he is watching her from a distance. Or has the woman entered the church hoping the religious leaders might force her fiancée to keep his promise? It might also be possible that her beloved is Jewish, as Jews and Catholics were forbidden to marry. Nothing is particularly clear except for the emotional agony of unrequited love.

Una matica de ruda,
(Traditional)

“Una matica de ruda,
Una matica de flor.
Hija mía, mi querida,
Dime a mi quen te la dió?”

“Una matica de ruda
Una matica de flor
Me la dió una mancevico
Que de mi se enamoró.”

De las altas mares traen una cautiva
(Traditional)

De las altas mares
Traen una cautiva.
Cuvierta en el oro
Y en la perla fina.
Y en la su frente
Una piedra zafira
Mas arelumbra de noche
Que el sol de a medio día.
El rey era mancevo
Se enamoraría.
La reina era muchacha
Y se encelaría.

Cien donzellas van a la misa
(Traditional)

Cien donzellas van a la misa
Para hazer la oración;
Entre medias está mi dama
Telas de mi coraçón.
¡Mas ay del amor!

Sayo llevo sovre sayo
Y un jubón de clavedón
Camisa viste de Holanda
Sirma y perla al caveçón
¡Mas ay del amor!

A branch of green rue

“A fringed rue,
A blossoming rue,
My daughter dearest, tell me,
Who has given that to you?”

“A fringed rue,
A blossoming rue,
A young man gave it to me,
Who fell in love with me.”

From the high seas they bring a captive

From the high sea
A captive is brought.
She wears gold
And expensive pearls.
On her forehead
Is a sapphire
That shines in the night
Brighter than the sunlight at noon
The king was still young,
And he might fall in love.
Young is the queen,
She burns with jealousy.

One hundred damsels on the way to Mass

One hundred maidens go to the mass
To pray;
Among them is my Lady;
The threads of my heart.
My love grows even more!

She wears a shawl
And her jacket is made of lace,
Her blouse is made of fabric from the Netherlands,
Embroidered with golden threads.
My love grows even more!

Su caveça una toronja
Sus cavellos briles son
La su frente reluziente
Arelumbra más que el sol.
¡Mas ay del amor!

Her head is like a grapefruit,
Her hair is bright
Her forehead it shines,
So that the sunlight looks dark.
My love grows even more!

Translations by Dr. Avner Perez and Assaf Levitin, from the CD *Alberto Hemsí: Coplas Sefardíes, Vol. 2, Complete Piano Songs*

Chants d’Auvergne, written by **Joseph Canteloube**, is a collection of thirty art songs published in five volumes between the years of 1923 and 1954. The songs were written for soprano voice and orchestra or piano. The songs are settings of folksongs from Auvergne, the region in southern France where Canteloube was born. Unlike Alberto Hemsí, Canteloube saw himself as more of a composer than an ethnomusicologist. Like many nationalistic composers of his day, he believed that folk song was the highest form of artistic expression. He wrote, “I have never sought to undertake some sort of simplistic musicology, I just want my work to be meaningful, to be that of a musician who wants to celebrate and share with others the music he loves.”¹⁷ Nevertheless, it has been said that “the *Chants d’Auvergne* will tell us more about Auvergne and its inhabitants than many thick volumes or long studies.”¹⁸ *Chants d’Auvergne* is comprised of four main types of songs: “‘shepherd’ calling songs sung across the valley, *bourrees* (dances), *berceuses* (lullabies), and story songs, which include work songs, songs of lost love, and whimsical comic songs.”¹⁹

In order to properly document the melodies of these folk tunes, Canteloube writes, “I lived in the depths of the countryside, in a place where the peasants still loved to sing. I began to travel around the farms and villages to listen to their songs, asking old men and women, the herdsmen and shepherds in the pastures, ures, the labourers and harvesters in the fields to sing to me.”²⁰ Because these melodies have

¹⁷ Elizabeth Brodovitch, and Lori McCann. “Singing in Dialect: Phonetic Transcription of the Chants d’Auvergne.” General Information. *Journal of Singing* 76, no. 2 (2019): 185.

¹⁸ Madeline Grey. “The Chants d’Auvergne and the Place of Folksong in Our Culture,” *Musical America* 74, (February 1954): 4-5.

¹⁹ Elizabeth Brodovitch, and Lori McCann. “Singing in Dialect: Phonetic Transcription of the Chants d’Auvergne.” General Information. *Journal of Singing* 76, no. 2 (2019): 185.

²⁰ Quoted in Hélène Pierrakos, Liner notes for Canteloube: Chants d’Auvergne (selections), Volume 2/ Chants de France /Tryptyque, Lille National Orchestra, Serge Baudo. NAXOS 8.570338, 2007.

been passed down by oral tradition for hundreds of years, they are perfectly suited for the voice. To these simple, strophic folk songs, Canteloube added elaborate orchestral accompaniments with lush harmonies. His orchestral aesthetic has been described as a combination of “the impression of Debussy and the sweeping lyrical and rustic frescoes of d'Indy,”²¹ who was his tutor, as well as film music of that era. The use of extensive solos by woodwind instruments, such as the oboe and the clarinet, further add to the pastoral quality of the songs. “While the voice provides the tone and melodic contours, the orchestra is responsible for adding all the expressive substance, accompanying and harmonizing the voice, of course, but above all giving a dreamlike response to the words and providing a lyrical commentary on these folk-songs.”²²

The music of *Chants D'Auvergne* has few ties to the music of Spain, yet the language in which these songs are written is an almost forgotten part of Spain's history. These songs are written in the Occitan language, which shares its linguistic roots with the Catalan language of Spain. Although the language has all but disappeared today, Occitan was spoken throughout much of southern France as well as the Aran Valley (*Val d'Aran*) in northern Spain and the Occitan Valleys (*Valadas Occitanas*) in Italy. As a result, Occitan shares many similarities with the Spanish, French and Italian languages. For example, those reading these poems may recognize certain Occitan words as being strikingly similar to Spanish such as the word for “wait for me” (*espèromè/espérame*), “come,” (*beni /ven*), and “here” (*oqui /aquí*). Other Occitan words look similar to French such as the word for “flower” (*flour/fleur*), “sheep,” (*moutou/mouton*), and “the child” (*l'èfon/l'enfant*). And, other Occitan words look similar to Italian such as the word for “ungrateful” (*ingrato/ingrato*), “shepherd,” (*pastourel/pasturello*), and “the man” (*l'omé / l'uomo*). The poetry that Canteloube set is in the Auvergne dialect of Occitan.

The first song in this set, “Bailèro,” is by far the most famous of the collection. “Bailèro” comes

²¹ Quoted in Hélène Pierrakos, Liner notes for Canteloube: Chants d'Auvergne (selections), Volume 2/ Chants de France /Tryptyque, Lille National Orchestra, Serge Baudo. NAXOS 8.570338, 2007.

²² Ibid.

from the Occitan word *bayle*, which Canteloube defines in his book *Anthologie des chants populaires français* as a dialogue between herdsmen. The shepherds and shepherdesses call to one another from high mountains and across long distances, much like the Swedish tradition of herding calls. Sometimes the shepherds would exchange stories or jokes, or, as in this case, an amorous dialogue.²³ It is said that Canteloube hid behind a rock to write down this very melody, which was being exchanged by a shepherd and a shepherdess. Here, the shepherd and the shepherdess are separated by a rushing river, which is depicted in the orchestra by arpeggiated sextuplets played by the orchestral piano. The pervasive arpeggiation paired with the chant-like melody and unexpected harmonic shifts creates a hypnotic atmosphere. The strophic nature of this song creates a sense of timelessness. In the poem, the shepherdess is successful in wooing her beloved shepherd, and he promises to come to her side of the river.

In “Pastourelle,” it is the shepherd who then calls the shepherdess to him. Given that the song is in the key of A minor, it is difficult to interpret the poetry and the character’s intentions. The shepherdess bemoans the fact that she cannot cross the river because she does not have a boat, bridge, or boyfriend to help her. The shepherd replies that she would have all three of these things if only she were pretty. The piece ends with a Picardy third in A major – the “final harmonic destination”²⁴ of this second volume of songs – suggesting a happy ending for the lovers. This strophic song is united by a four-note descending motif of “A-G-F-E,” a melodic idea that is seen through the first series of songs of *Chants d’Auvergne*.

Canteloube categorized the song “Lo Delaïssádo” as one of the *amour déçu*, which means “a disappointed or betrayed love.”²⁵ The falling musical motive from the previous song shifts to “Ab-G-F-Eb,” depicting the tears of the abandoned shepherdess. Her loneliness is also depicted by widely spaced harmonies in the accompaniment, which has its own melody and does not mirror the vocal line like it does

²³ Christina Lani Romich. *Joseph Canteloube’s “Chants d’Auvergne”: A Performance Guide for the Soprano Voice*. (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2011), 35.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 56.

²⁵ Elizabeth Mary Pauly. *The solo vocal music of Joseph Canteloube (1879-1957)*, (Minneapolis: S.N./Elizabeth Mary Pauly, 1995), 22.

in other songs in the collection. Also, unlike other songs, this song is in a modified strophic form. Each verse begins with the same hopeful line but ends differently each time in despair. The interludes portray her agony as she waits in vain for her shepherd to meet her. In the third verse, the music shifts poignantly to a high register, and a shimmering figure in the orchestral piano line depicts the evening star, which is her only company.

In “Lo foilare,” a shepherdess at her spinning wheel becomes distracted thinking of her beloved shepherd. The winding music, depicting the rhythm of her spinning wheel, becomes increasingly faster in the double basses and is taken over by the orchestral piano. In a manner similar to Schubert’s famous “Gretchen am Spinnrade,” the meandering scalar figure in the orchestral piano spins wildly but then slows to a halt at the end of each verse, only to begin again at the beginning of the next verse. As in many of these songs, there is a repeated refrain of nonsense syllables, which adds to the playful nature of the song. The woman tells of how, as a girl, in return for watching a shepherd’s sheep, the shepherd would ask her for a kiss. She coyly relates that, since she was not ungrateful, she gave him two kisses.

“Brezairola” is a lullaby and is structurally and musically quite different from the other songs. The exhausted young mother sings to her baby who refuses to fall asleep. Her frustration is depicted in the structural arc of the ABA form. In the B section, the orchestra carries the mother’s melody as if she is too tired to continue singing it herself. While A section is in the key of B-flat major, the B section is in the unexpected key of E-flat major. The mother’s repeated exclamations of “oh” form the harmonic bridge in this surprising modulation. However, she regains her strength as the A section returns and the child finally falls asleep.

The final song, “Malurous qu’o uno fenno,” is a boisterous, dance-like song written in a triple meter. Here, the wise old woman states that while men are unhappy when they are single and unhappy when they are married, women are happy either way. She declares, happy is the woman who has the man

she needs, but happier still is she who does not have a husband. Like many other songs in this collection, the repeated refrain of “tra-la-la” gives an improvisatory and colloquial feel to the piece. The oboe solo in the middle of the piece highlights the lighthearted, capricious nature of the folk song.

Bailero

(Traditional)

Pastré, dè dèlai l'aïo,
 a gaïré dé boun tèn,
 dio lou baïlèro lèrô, lèrô, lèrô, lèrô, baïlèrô, lô!
 È n'aï pa gaïré, è dio, tu,
 baïlèro lèrô.
 Lèrô, lèrô, lèrô, lèrô, baïlèrô, lô!

Pastré, lou prat faï flour,
 li cal gorda toun troupèl,
 dio lou baïlèro lèrô, lèrô, lèrô, lèrô, baïlèrô, lô!
 L'erb' es pu fin' ol prat d'oïçi,
 baïlèro lèrô.
 Lèrô, lèrô, lèrô, lèrô, baïlèrô, lô!

Pastré, couçi forai,
 èn obal io lou bèl rïou,
 dio lou baïlèro lèrô, lèrô, lèrô, lèrô, baïlèrô, lô!
 Espèromè, té baô çirca,
 baïlèro lèrô.
 Lèrô, lèrô, lèrô, lèrô, baïlèrô, lô!

Pastouelle

(Traditional)

"È passo dè dessai!
 È passo dellai l'aïo!
 Bendras olprès de ièu,
 Què d'ofaïré parlorèn,
 È lou restan del jïour
 N'en parlorén d'amour!"

"Né pouodi pas passa!
 Couci bouos qué iéu passi?
 N'aï pas de pount d'arcados
 È n'aï pas dè batéu,
 Ni máï dè pastourel
 Qué mè siasco fidèl!"

Bailero

SHE: Shepherd, from across the river
 you're hardly having a good time
 say the baïlèro lèrô, lèrô, lèrô, lèrô, baïlèrô, lô!
HE: Eh, I'm not having a good time, you should say
 baïlèro lèrô.
 Lèrô, lèrô, lèrô, lèrô, baïlèrô, lô!

SHE: Shepherd, the pasture is in flower,
 there you ought to tend your flock,
 say the baïlèro lèrô, lèrô, lèrô, lèrô, baïlèrô, lô!
HE: The grass is more fine in the pasture here,
 baïlèro lèrô.
 Lèrô, lèrô, lèrô, lèrô, baïlèrô, lô!

SHE: Shepherd, how will I manage
 over there, there's the pretty stream
 say the baïlèro lèrô, lèrô, lèrô, lèrô, baïlèrô, lô!
HE: Wait for me, I'm coming to fetch you,
 baïlèro lèrô.
 Lèrô, lèrô, lèrô, lèrô, baïlèrô, lô!

Pastoral

HE: Oh come over to me
 on my side of the river
 Come talk of ewes and rams
 and your pretty woolly lambs
 And when we've chatted enough
 then our talk will be of love

SHE: But what way can I use
 for crossing over the river?
 I have no boat to row
 nor a bridge by which to go
 Nor yet a little boy blue
 to love me ever true

"Aurias léu un batéu
Sè tu èros poulido!
Aurias un pount d'arcados,
Aurias un pastourel
Qué té serio fidèl
È máí d'jusqu'al toubel!

La Delaïssádo

(Traditional)

Uno pastourèlo èsper olaï al capt del bouès
lou galan doguélo, mè né bèn pas!

« Ay ! souï délaïssado!
Qué n'ái pas vist lou mio galant ;
crésio qué m'aïmábo, è ton l'aïmé iéu! »

Luziguèt l'estèlo, aquèlo qué marco la nuèt,
è lo pauro pastourelletto
démourèt à ploura...

Lo fiolairé

(Traditional)

Ton qu'èrè pitchounèlo,
Gordavè loui moutous.
Ti lirou lirou... la la diri tou tou la lara!

Obio 'no counouilhèto
è n'ai près u postrou.
Ti lirou lirou... la la diri tou tou la lara!

Per fa l'obiroudèto
Mè domound' un poutou.
Ti lirou lirou... la la diri tou tou la lara!

È ièu soui pas ingrato,
Èn lièt d'un n'in fau dous!
Ti lirou lirou... la la diri tou tou la lara!

Brezairola

(Traditional)

Soun, soun, bèni, bèni, bèni;
Soun, soun, bèni, bèni doun!
Soun, soun, bèni, bèni, bèni;

HE: You soon would have a boat
if you were really pretty
a fine bridge to cross
and a handsome shepherd too
A boy who would be true
your whole life-time through

The Abandoned Girl

A shepherdess waits over there at the head of the woods
[but] her gallant beloved does not come!

“Ah! I’ve been abandoned!
I do not see my gallant;
I thought that he loved me, and I [surely] love him!”

A luminous star marks the night,
and the poor little shepherdess
is left in tears...

The Spinner

When I was a little girl,
I tended the sheep.
Ti lirou lirou... la la diri tou tou la lara!

I had a spindle
and I called a shepherd to me.
Ti lirou lirou... la la diri tou tou la lara!

For looking after my flock
He demanded a kiss [each time].
Ti lirou lirou... la la diri tou tou la lara!

And I, not one to be ungrateful,
Instead of one, I gave him two!
Ti lirou lirou... la la diri tou tou la lara!

Lullaby

Sleep, sleep, come, come, come ;
Sleep, sleep, come, come on now!
Sleep, sleep, come, come, come;

Soun, soun, bèni, d'èn docon!

Lou soun, soun bouol pas béni, pècairé!
Lou soun, soun bouol pas béni,
Lou néni s'en bouol pas durmi! Oh!

Soun, soun, bèni, bèni, bèni;
Soun, soun, bèni, bèni doun,
Lou soun, soun bouol pas bèni.
L'èfontou bouol pas durmi!

Soun, soun, bèni, bèni, bèni;
Soun, soun, bèni, o l'èfon! Oh!

Soun, soun, bèni, bèni, bèni;
Soun, soun, bèni, bèni doun!

Atso lo qu'es por oqui, pècairé!
Atso lo qu'ès por oqui,
lou néni s'en boulio durmi...Ah!

Malurous qu'o uno fenno
(Traditional)

Malurous qu'o uno fenno,
Malurous qué n'o cat!
Qué n'o cat n'en bou uno,
Qué n'o uno n'en bou pas!
Tradèra, ladèri dèrèro
ladèra, ladèri dèra.

Urouzo lo fenno
Qu'o l'omé qué li cau!
Urouz' inquèro maito
O quèlo qué n'o cat!
Tradèra, ladèri dèrèro
ladèra, ladèri dèra.

Sleep, sleep, come, from where you dwell!

The sleep, sleep won't come, my dear!
The sleep, sleep won't come,
The babe won't fall asleep! Oh!

Sleep, sleep, come, come, come;
Sleep, sleep, come, come on now,
The sleep, sleep won't come.
The child won't fall asleep!

Sleep, sleep, come, come, come;
Sleep, sleep, come, for the child! Oh!

Sleep, sleep, come, come, come;
Sleep, sleep, come, come on now!

It is now here, my dear!
It is now here,
the babe is falling asleep...Ah!

Unhappy is he who has a wife

Unhappy is he who has a wife,
Unhappy who doesn't!
He who doesn't wants one,
He who has one doesn't!
Tradèra, ladèri dèrèro
ladèra, ladèri dèra.

Fortunate is the wife
Whose man is the one she wants!
More fortunate is she
Who doesn't have one!
Tradèra, ladèri dèrèro
ladèra, ladèri dèra.

Translations by Luciano Berio, taken from www.lieder.net

This unusual set of songs contains a Spanish song written by an Italian composer, a Spanish-style vocalise written by a French composer, and a Spanish song written in French by a Spanish composer in a Franco-Spanish style. The only song in this recital program that is in Castilian Spanish was written by the Italian operatic composer, **Gioacchino Rossini**. For seven years (1815-1821), Rossini was commissioned

by Teatro di San Carlo in Naples to write operas that would feature the famous Spanish soprano Isabela Colbran in all of the leading female roles. These operas are some of Rossini's greatest works, which include *Arminda*, *Ermione*, *La donna del lago*, and many others. After some time, Rossini and Colbran developed a romantic attachment. Rossini wrote his "Canzonetta Spagnuola" for Isabela Colbran in 1821, and the text was presumably written by Colbran herself. Some say that when Rossini and Colbran announced their upcoming marriage, they dedicated the song to a young painter, Felice Cottau, who had been in love with her.²⁶ Rossini and Colbran moved to Bologna and were married in 1822. The poem depicts a painter who is tormented by his Muse and wishes to paint her, but she requests that he paint a more spiritual subject. Like most of Rossini's vocal compositions, this piece is a vocal showcase as the ornamentation becomes increasingly florid and virtuosic. Although this song is reflective of Rossini's Italianate operatic writing style, it features numerous Spanish elements including trills, *acciaccaturas*, flamenco rhythms, and multiple repetitions of the word "ay." While Rossini wrote a number of songs in a Spanish style, this is one of the very few songs Rossini wrote in the Spanish language.

Perhaps more than any other French composer, **Maurice Ravel** was enraptured with Spanish music. Ravel was born only a few miles from the Spanish border in Ciboure, France. Both of his parents lived in Spain for some time, and his mother would sing Spanish lullabies to him as a child.²⁷ Many of his earliest compositions were inspired by the music of Spain including his *Habanera* for two pianos (1895), *Rapsodie Espagnole* (1907), as well as his first and only opera, *L'Heure espagnole* (1911). Like many composers of his day, Ravel used exotic sounding music to establish his unique compositional style. By evoking an exotic sound world, Ravel divorced himself from French musical traditions and any metric that would be used by French critics to compare his music to that of another French composer. By composing "exotic" music, Ravel makes himself "exotic" or at least "other," while also giving himself

²⁶ "Espana alla Rossini." Rossini America. Accessed February 12, 2021. <http://www.rossiniamerica.org/espana-alla-rossini/>.

²⁷ Gilbert Chase, *The Music of Spain*, (New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 1959), 300.

access to a new world of harmonic and timbral possibilities. The French writer André Suarès wrote of Ravel that while he was “Parisian to his fingertips, he is even so the most Spanish of artists....I recognize Spain in every part of Ravel – in what he is and in what he does....And his art, still more decidedly, is of the French tongue touched with a Spanish accent.”²⁸

The only song written by a Spanish-born composer on this recital, “Seguidilla,” by **Manuel De Falla**, is in French, not Spanish. These songs were written and performed by De Falla in 1910 while he was living in Paris from 1907-1914. At the time, there was a huge demand in Paris for Spanish music, as Bizet’s *Carmen* of 1875 had become a sensation. While De Falla was in Paris, he was befriended by French composers Ravel, Debussy, and Fauré as well as other Spanish composers who were also living in Paris such as Enrique Granados, Joaquín Turina and Isaac Albéniz. De Falla was a part of an artistic society that called themselves “*Les Apaches*,” or “The Hooligans.” The group was united by a variety of common interests including Russian music, Javanese gamelan music, Symbolist poetry, and most of all, the music of Claude Debussy. During De Falla’s time in Paris, he became good friends with Debussy, who advised De Falla in many of his compositions. De Falla dedicated this piece to Claude Debussy’s second wife, Emma Bardac, whom Debussy had married the year before.

This piece demonstrates De Falla’s mastery for the French compositional style, while still maintaining his authentic, Spanish, artistic voice. Like the other two songs that are part of *Trois melodies* (1910), the poem for this song was taken from a collection of poems entitled *España* (1845), written by the famous French poet Pierre-Jules-Théophile Gautier (1811 - 1872) after his trip to Spain in 1840. This text praises the beauty of the cigarette-smoking *manola*, or peasant girl from Madrid, possibly a gypsy, who bears a striking resemblance to Bizet’s *Carmen*. The virtuosic guitar-like accompaniment is in the lively triple meter of the *seguidilla* dance rhythm. The melody, “a folk melody but Falla’s own

²⁸ Quoted in Gilbert Chase, *The Music of Spain*, (New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 1959), 300.

creation,”²⁹ is punctuated by brilliant high notes and shouts of “Alza!” (Aha!) and “Ola!” (“Olé!”).

Undoubtedly, De Falla’s time in Paris was pivotal in his artistic development. De Falla’s music did not become “‘Frenchified’ in Paris through the adaption of impressionistic methods. Rather did he acquire there a technique that was eminently suited to express the musical idioms of his native land.”³⁰

Canzonetta Spanguola
(Isabela Colbran)

En medio a mis colores, ay,
pintando estaba un día, ay,
cuando la musa mía, ay,
me vino a tormentar, ay.

Ay, con dolor pues dejo
empresa tan feliz
cual es de bellae Nice
las prendas celebrar, ay.

Quiso que yo pintase, ay,
objeto sobrehumano, ay,
pero lo quiso en vano, ay,
lo tuvo que dejar, ay.

Ay, con dolor pues dejo
empresa tan feliz
cual es de bellae Nice
las prendas celebrar, ay.

Conoce la hermosura, ay,
un corazón vagado, ay,
mas su destin malvado, ay,
Ie impide de cantar, ay.

Little Spanish Song

Among my colors, ah
I was painting one day
When my muse
Came to torment me.

Ah, with pain I then leave
A task so happy
Which is of beautiful Nike
The clothes to celebrate.

She wanted me to paint her,
Object superhuman,
But she wanted it in vain
She had to leave.

Ah, with pain I then leave
A task so happy
Which is of beautiful Nike
The clothes to celebrate.

She knows beauty,
A wandering heart,
But her wicked destiny
Prevents her from singing.

Translations by Garrett Medlock, taken from www.lieder.net

²⁹ Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature*, (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 2005), 505.

³⁰ Gilbert Chase, *The Music of Spain*, (New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 1959), 185.

Seguidilla

(Pierre Jules Théophile Gautier)

Un jupon serré sur les hanches,
Un peigne énorme à son chignon,
Jambe nerveuse et pied mignon,
Œil de feu, teint pâle et dents blanches:
Alza! Olà! Voilà
La véritable Manola.

Gestes hardis, libre parole,
Sel et piment à pleine main,
Oubli parfait du lendemain,
Amour fantasque et grâce folle:
Alza! Olà! Voilà
La véritable Manola.

Chanter, danser aux castagnettes,
Et, dans les courses de taureaux,
Juger les coups des toreros,
Tout en fumant des cigarettes:
Alza! Olà! Voilà
La véritable Manola.

Seguidilla

A snug petticoat on her hips,
An enormous comb in her coiffure,
Quivering leg and dainty foot,
Fiery eye, pale complexion and sparkling teeth:
Aha! Olé! Behold
The true carefree Spanish woman.

Gesturing boldly, speaking freely,
A handful of salt and pepper,
Perfect forgetfulness the next day,
Whimsical love and elaborate grace:
Aha! Olé! Behold
The true carefree Spanish woman.

Sing, dance to the castanets,
And, in the running of the bulls,
Judge the skill of the toreadors,
All while smoking cigarettes:
Aha! Olé! Behold
The true carefree Spanish woman.

Translations by Michael P. Rosewall, taken from www.lieder.net

While many songs in this recital are quite obscure, **Georges Bizet**'s opera, *Carmen*, is arguably the most popular and most widely performed opera of all time. The opera was first performed at the Opéra-Comique in Paris on March 3, 1875. The libretto, written by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy, is based on a novella, also named *Carmen*, by Prosper Mérimée. Mérimée's novella was written over a period of fifteen years and published as a serial in *La Revue des Deux Mondes* in 1845.³¹ The premiere of the opera was a complete failure as conservative French audiences deemed the opera too vulgar to be performed. The opera was even withdrawn from performance until 1883. As Bennahum writes, "It is no accident that *Carmen* is born in a time of the frenzied regulation of the middle- and upper-class women's lives and bodies. Her resonance as a libertine spirit inside this conservative, bourgeois milieu made her all the more seductive a character, and all the more annoying to the French audience whose rejection of the

³¹ Ninotchka Bennahum, *Carmen, a Gypsy Geography*, (Wesleyan University Press, 2013), xvi.

opera became historic.”³² Sadly, Bizet died at the young age of thirty-seven after the show’s thirty-third performance, believing his opera to be a failure. However, this opera incited a musical and cultural revolution in Paris, and over the next few decades, became immensely successful.

Despite the opera’s failure, it is evident that Bizet and his librettists did attempt to make their opera more appealing than the novella to the sensitive Parisian bourgeois. First, Bizet added the character of the naïve and devoted Micaëla, Don José’s betrothed. Micaëla acts as a foil character to the vivacious and free Carmen. Micaëla’s Act III aria, “Je dis que rien ne m'épouvante,” a prayer for God’s protection, is the most beautiful aria of the opera, and received great applause even at the disastrous premiere. Bizet also greatly changed the character of Don José. In the opera, Don José is an honorable soldier and loyal fiancée who is seduced and driven to madness by Carmen, the temptress. We are made to overlook his insanity as it is done in the name of love. However, in the book, Don José is first introduced to the reader as a bandit, a thief and a murderer. Likewise, in the book, Carmen is a married woman. When Don José learns of this, he murders Carmen’s husband and forces her to marry him. In both the novella and the opera, Carmen leaves Don José for a bullfighter, and Don José, driven wild with jealousy, kills her. She is silenced, and many may say, she deserved her death. Still, her only crime was “the desire to be free.”³³

Bizet’s operatic compositional style is far more influenced by the operas of Giuseppe Verdi and Richard Wagner than by anything resembling Spanish music. While Mérimée had spent time in Spain, Bizet himself was quite parochial and had never ventured outside of Paris, except for Rome, where he lived for two years. *Carmen* shares many similarities with the operas of Verdi, such as its rich orchestral setting and its subject matter. Verdi wrote many operas with gypsies as the main characters, such as his famous *Il trovatore* (1853). Also, while one may not feel sympathy towards Carmen in the way that one is made to sympathize with the courtesan Violetta in Verdi’s *La Traviata* (1852), we are not necessarily

³² Ninotchka Bennahum, *Carmen, a Gypsy Geography*, (Wesleyan University Press, 2013), xvi.

³³ *Ibid.*, xiii.

made to see the enchanting Carmen as a villain either. Bizet was also highly influenced by the operas of Richard Wagner, as Bizet uses the Wagnerian compositional technique of repeated themes or *leitmotifs* in this opera. The ominous “fate” theme is a unifying feature of this opera. This opera is believed to be something of a bridge between trending operatic styles of *opera comique* and the verismo operas that became popular shortly afterwards.

Carmen is set in the gypsy barrio of Seville, Triana, and Bizet worked to incorporate recognizable Spanish and gypsy musical and rhythmic themes into the score. The famous “Habanera” is based on a Spanish art song, “El arreglito” (“The Little Arrangement”) written by Sebastián Yradier in 1863. Bizet originally thought that this song was a simple Spanish folksong. However, when he learned that it was a composition by Yradier, he did credit Yradier for the composition. Even so, Bizet was made to rewrite the “Habanera” over a dozen times before Célestine Galli-Marié, the first woman to play Carmen, would sing the aria. The *habanera* is a dance native to Cuba as it was “imported from the Spanish Caribbean.”³⁴ In the 15th century, Seville was the largest slave port in Spain, and the “African and Caribbean rhythmic influence on the evolution of Gypsy flamenco and the Spanish court influence on dances circulating throughout the Afro-Caribbean were significant.”³⁵ Unlike the *habanera*, the *seguidilla* is a dance that is native to Spain. The *seguidilla* is a “descendent from Moorish *Fandango* and *Zambra*....By the 18th century, it had been transformed into the *Seguidillas Sevillanas* in Seville.”³⁶ The music of the *seguidilla* is in a major key and is in a quick triple meter, beginning on an offbeat. This dance is also performed by two people, which is important to note as Carmen’s second aria becomes a duet with Don José in the opera.

Today, the term “gypsy” is seen largely as a pejorative term. Historians today refer to this nomadic group of people as Romani or as the Roma people. The term “gypsy” comes from the word

³⁴ Ninotchka Bennahum, *Carmen, a Gypsy Geography*, (Wesleyan University Press, 2013), xi.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

Egyptian, as they were mistakenly believed to have originated from Egypt, and not Northern India. While they are stereotypically portrayed as thieves, pagans and murderers, they are a people with a rich and vibrant history, whose cultural contributions have added richly to the traditions and music of Spain.

Habanera

(Henri Meihac and Ludovic Helévy)

Quand je vous aimerai?
Ma foi, je ne sais pas,
Peut-être jamais, peut-être demain.
Mais pas aujourd'hui, c'est certain.

L'amour est un oiseau rebelle
Que nul ne peut apprivoiser,
Et c'est bien in vain qu'on l'appelle
S'il lui convient de refuser.

Rien n'y fait, menace ou prière.
L'un parle bien, l'autre se tait.
Et c'est l'autre que je préfère.
Il n'a rien dit mais il me plaît.

L'amour! L'amour! L'amour! L'amour!
L'amour est enfant de Bohême,
Il n'a jamais jamais connu de loi.
Si tou ne m'aimes pas, je t'aime.
Si je t'aime, prends garde à toi!

L'oiseau que tu croyais surprendre
Battit d'aile et s'envola.
L'amour est loin, tu peux l'attendre.

Tu ne l'attends pas, il est là.
Tout atour de toi, il t'évite,
Il vient, s'en va, puis il revient.
Tu crois le tenir, il t'évite.
Tu crois l'éviter, il te tient.

Habanera

When will I love you?
Good lord, I don't know,
Maybe never, maybe tomorrow.
But not today, that's certain.

Love is a rebellious bird
that nobody can tame,
and you call him quite in vain
if it suits him not to come.

Nothing helps, neither threat nor prayer. One man
talks well, the other's mum; it's the other one that I
prefer.
He's silent but I like his looks.

Love! Love! Love! Love!
Love is a gypsy's child,
it has never, ever, known a law;
love me not, then I love you;
if I love you, you'd best beware!

The bird you thought you had caught beat its wings
and flew away ...
love stays away, you wait and wait; when least
expected, there it is!

All around you, swift, so swift,
it comes, it goes and then returns ...
you think you hold it fast, it flees
you think you're free, it holds you fast.

Seguidilla

(Henri Meihac and Ludovic Helévy)

Pres des remparts de Seville,
Chez mon ami, Lillas Pastia
J'irai danser la Seguedille
Et boire du Manzanilla.
J'irai chez mon ami Lillas Pastia.

Oui, mais toute seule on s'ennuie,
Et les vrais plaisirs sont a deux;
Donc, pour me tenir compagnie,
J'emmenerais mon amoureux!

Mon amoureux, il est au diable
,Je l'ai mis a la porte hier!
Mon pauvre coeur tres consolable,
Mon coeur est libre comme l'air!
J'ai les galants a la douzaine,
Mais ils ne sont pas a mon gre.
Voici la fin de la semaine;
Qui veut m'aimer? Je l'aimerai!
Qui veut mon ame? Elle est a prendre.
Vous arrivez au bon moment!
J'ai guere le temps d'attendre,
Car avec mon nouvel amant,

Pres des remparts de Seville,
Chez mon ami, Lillas Pastia!

Les tringles des sistres tintaient

(Henri Meihac and Ludovic Helévy)

Les tringles des sistres tintaient
Avec un éclat métallique.
Et sur cette étrange musique
Les zingarellas se levaient.

Tambours de basque allaient leur train.
Et les guitares forcenées
Grincaient sous des mains obstinées,
Même chanson, même refrain.

Tra la la la la la la, Tra la la la la, Tra la la la la.

Les anneaux de cuivre et d'argent
Reluisaient sur les peaux bistrées;

Seguidilla

Near the walls of Seville,
At my friend place, Lillas Pastia
I will dance the Seguedille
And drink Manzanilla.
I will go to the home of my friend Lillas Pastia.

Yes, all alone one can get bored,
And real pleasures are for two;
So, to keep me company,
I'll take my lover!

My love, he is the devil,
I did away with him yesterday!
My poor heart is very consolable
My heart is free as a bird!
I have a dozen suitors,
But they are not to my liking.
This is the end of the week
Who will love me? I will love him!
Who wants my soul? It is for you to take.
You arrive at the right time!
I have little time to wait,
Because with my new lover,

Near the walls of Seville,
I will go to my friend, Lillas Pastia!

The rods of the sistrams

The rods' sistrams tinkled
With a metallic luster.
And on this strange music
The zingarellas were rising.

Basque drums went their train.
And the crazy guitars
Squeaked under stubborn hands,
Same song, same chorus.

Tra la la la la la la, Tra la la la la, Tra la la la la.

The rings of copper and silver
Shine on the dark skin;

D'orange ou de rouge zébrées
Les étoffes flottaient au vent:

La danse au chant se mariait
D'abord indécise et timide.
Plus vive ensuite et plus rapide,
Cela montait, montait, montait!

Tra la la la la la la la, Tra la la la la, Tra la la la la.

Les bohémiens à tour de bras,
De leurs instruments faisaient rage, Et cet
éblouissant tapage, Ensorcelait les zingaras!
Sous le rythme de la chanson,

Ardentes, folles, enfiévrées,
Elles se laissaient, enivrées,
Emporter par le tourbillon!

Tra la la la la la la la, Tra la la la la, Tra la la la la.

Orange or red zebra
The stuffs floated in the wind:

The singing dance was getting married
At first indecisive and timid.
More lively then and faster,
It went up, up, up!

Tra la la la la la la la, Tra la la la la, Tra la la la la.

Bohemians with a twist,
Their instruments were raging,
And this dazzling fuss, Bewitched the zingaras!
Under the rhythm of the song,

Ardent, crazy, feverish,
They indulged, intoxicated,
Take it by the whirlpool!

Tra la la la la la la la, Tra la la la, Tra la la la la.

Translations taken from www.aria-database.com/

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OPERA ROLE: Poulenc's *La voix humaine*

Character Analysis: The Bad Connection

Anyone who has experienced a painful breakup will resonate with Poulenc's *La voix humaine*. This opera was first performed in Paris at the Théâtre National de l'Opéra-Comique on February 6, 1959. This melodrama, or *tragédie lyrique*, was written in one act for orchestra and soprano. The libretto is taken directly from the play *La voix humaine* written in 1928 by Jean Cocteau, who was also the director of the opera's premiere. This opera is one of the first of its kind in that it is a mono-opera. Only one character, an unnamed woman referred to as "Elle" (meaning "she" in French), is onstage. The audience is eavesdropping on her final telephone conversation with her estranged lover, an unnamed man referred to as "Monsieur" (meaning "sir" in French). This analysis will examine and explore the text and musical devices utilized by Francis Poulenc in his setting of Jean Cocteau's play *La voix humaine*. In this opera, Poulenc weaves together a dramatic and musical framework through which we watch the emotional unraveling of Elle.

This opera is largely autobiographical and is the collaborative creation of the composer, the librettist, and the soprano. After the success of Poulenc's second opera, *Dialogues des Carmélites* in 1957, Poulenc was asked by the director of Ricordi Publishers in Paris, Hervé Dugardin, to set Cocteau's play with Maria Callas in the role of Elle.¹ Instead, Poulenc wrote the role for his friend, soprano Denise Duval, who had sung the leading roles in both *Dialogues des Carmélites* as well as his first opera, *Les mamelles de Tirésias* (1947). Not only was Duval

¹ Benjamin Ivry, *Francis Poulenc*, (London: Phaidon Press, 1996), 200.

familiar with Poulenc's compositional style, but Poulenc was familiar with "the details of the soprano's stormy love life, and this helped to cultivate a sense of specificity in the opera."² Like Duval, Poulenc was also known for numerous love affairs and bouts of anxiety:

“Like Madame, Poulenc had struggled with abuse of sleeping pills, long bouts of depression and anxiety, and thoughts of suicide. The composer's insecurity was allayed when he met a much younger lover, Louis Gautier, in 1957, nearly 30 years his junior. Still, when Poulenc was apart from his lover, he endured feelings of solitude and anguish, sentiments which propelled the hysterical atmosphere of *La Voix humaine*. Duval recalled watching Poulenc compose the score ‘page by page, bar by bar, with his flesh, but also with my wounded heart, for we were both at that time going through an emotional crisis; we wept together, and *La Voix humaine* was like a chronicle of our torment.”³

Poulenc had known of Cocteau's play for decades, as both had been associated with Les Six, a group of six French composers, which included Poulenc. However, Poulenc waited thirty years to compose this opera, knowing he would need a great deal of life experience to bring the play to life.⁴

Because of the ambiguity of the backstory, there are many ways in which an actress can portray the role of Elle. From Cocteau's play and Poulenc's libretto, we learn that she is a young, elegant woman whose five-year relationship Monsieur has just ended. Still, Elle is not a helpless victim. “She is an intense woman in the throes of a passionate situation, but unlike most opera heroines, she is not unrealistically dramatic; she is believable and relatable.”⁵ As American soprano Emily Hindrichs notes, “‘Elle is...a flesh-and blood young woman...tender and

² Ibid.

³ Sydney Buckland and Myriam Chimènes, *Francis Poulenc: Music, Art and Literature*, (Singapore: Ashgate, 1999), 401.

⁴ Henri Hell and Edward Lockspeiser (trans) *Francis Poulenc*, (New York: Grove Press, 1939), 278.

⁵ Stefanie Nicole Anduri. “Character Interpretation in Poulenc's *La Voix Humaine*: A Performer's Guide.” Dissertation/Thesis, (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2016), 93.

manipulative, vulnerable and proud.”⁶

Given Elle’s use of colloquial language, we can assume that Elle is a middle-class woman, whereas Monsieur is a wealthy lawyer. Particularly in the play, Elle is a socialite who enjoys fine clothing and jewelry. Still, it is up to each actress to decide how to interpret Elle’s manipulative, abused, abusive, heartbroken, flirtatious and hopeful nature. As American soprano Camille Zamora notes,

“At the start of the work, and with every new ring of the phone, Elle has hope; I think this must be conveyed. Sure, she is exhausted and has moments of hysterical desperation and terror, but also has wit, spirit, and humor. She can’t be played (as is sometimes a “default setting” with this work) as a purely hysterical, victimized creature. Elle is sexy, vibrant, proud, and very much alive, and we have to bring out those strands in the work when Poulenc/Cocteau offer it to us.”⁷

Regardless of each actress’s interpretation, it is crucial that Elle is a well-rounded, believable and sympathetic character.

The Elle in Cocteau’s play is very different from Elle in Poulenc’s opera, because Poulenc omitted several large sections of the play. While Cocteau’s Elle is calmer and more superficial, Poulenc’s depiction of Elle is completely heartbroken while still relatable. This is because Poulenc purposely removed any mention of Elle’s previous knowledge of Monsieur’s affair with another woman. In Cocteau’s play, Elle has known about Monsieur’s engagement and upcoming marriage for weeks. She decided to remain in a relationship with Monsieur leading up to the day of his wedding with full knowledge that their relationship would soon end. She spends much of the phone call trying to assuage Monsieur’s feelings of guilt and assuring him that she

⁶ Unpublished Interview: Hindrichs, Emily. Interviewed by Stefanie Anduri. E-mail interview. March 13, 2015.

⁷ Unpublished Interview: Camille Zamora. Interviewed by Stefanie Anduri. E-mail interview. March 28, 2015.

will be fine without him. She says,

“it was good to have known, to expect the hardship...I still need time to get used to this...Our love was up against too many things. We had to resist, to deny ourselves five years of happiness or accept the risks. I never thought that our life together would work out. I wouldn't give back one second of our joy for anything...Hello!...Not for anything and I regret...I regret nothing – nothing – nothing...”⁸

Because of this prior knowledge, Elle, in the play, is Monsieur's mistress and not the other woman. Further, when Elle describes her suicide attempt the night before, she is embarrassed and even makes light of it, brushing it off as if it were nothing. Depending on the actress's timing and delivery, her account of her suicide attempt can sound unbelievable and even comical. The breakup was inevitable, and so this final phone call, while sad, is not particularly tragic.

Because Poulenc intentionally removed any mention of Elle's previous knowledge of Monsieur's engagement, Elle has been blindsided by his betrayal and is working through the five stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Her dreams of a life with Monsieur have been shattered, and her life is in complete disarray. In the beginning of the opera, she is in denial. She tells lie after lie, claiming that she spent the previous night going shopping and having dinner with her friend Martha. She lies again saying that she only took one sleeping pill the night before because she had a headache and could not sleep. She flirts with Monsieur, reminiscing about their romantic rendezvous in Versailles, acting as if nothing has happened. The audience does not even know that their relationship has ended until Elle mentions that she will return Monsieur's letters to her and her letters to him the next day.

However, when Monsieur makes no effort to comfort Elle, Elle soon becomes angry.

⁸ Jean Cocteau, *Théâtre*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1949), 181.

When their phone call is disconnected, she calls Monsieur's home, only to find that he is not there. This breach of trust can only be further heightened by the extreme betrayal she has just experienced. When Monsieur calls again, she indignantly describes her attempted suicide in grave detail, in a chilling, Verdi-like waltz, hoping to make Monsieur experience the pain she feels. She says that because she did not have the strength to die alone, she called her friend Martha, not him. Her story is interrupted, however, as Elle hears Jazz music on the other end of the line. At this point, she knows that Monsieur is either at a party, or worse, at his fiancée's house, sending her into a rage again. She feels as though he has hardly been listening to her, and he no longer cares.

Elle then enters the bargaining phase of her grief, using every possible manipulative measure to force Monsieur to disclose his actual location. She says that she would love him even more if he lied to her to spare her feelings. She assumes that since she has confessed her previous lies earlier in the call that Monsieur would do the same. However, he does not, and he angrily hangs up the phone, only to call again a few moments later.

Elle begins to lose hope and falls into a stage of depression. She tells Monsieur how lonely she is, and how she misses him so badly that she sleeps with her phone in her bed. She tells him that he is her only breathable air and that she has nothing in her life other than him. She even says that her dog misses him so badly that he does not eat, and he has become violent. In this section of the opera, especially, many of Elle's vocal lines are unaccompanied, further depicting her loneliness and isolation.

There are many ways in which directors have chosen to end this opera. According to the stage directions, Elle confesses her love to Monsieur one last time as the receiver falls to the ground. Many directors have had Elle commit suicide at the end of the opera by shooting herself

with a revolver or strangling herself with the telephone cord. For this production, I have chosen for Elle to accept her new status in life. She casts Monsieur's coat aside and decidedly hangs up the phone, a testament to her strength and courage. As Camille Zamora notes,

“In the opera's final moments, all Elle is concerned with is putting into her voice, into her VOIX, all of the love that is in her heart. She has only this one moment, and only this one expression, through which to convey all of the love in her heart to someone she will never speak to again. She will never again be touched or touch in the same way she was with him. She will never love or be loved with this level of passion or soul-understanding again. So whether or not she literally expires, she is in fact saying goodbye to love in this moment, to feelings she knows will never be replicated. Her final expression, her final “I love you,” is complete and true and perfectly expressed. In that sense – as her last and best expression, honestly conveyed and truly heard unlike so much that has been said previously – it is a triumph. The effort of it collapses her, like a candle that is blown out.”⁹

While Cocteau and Poulenc provide few staging directions, the staging I have chosen for this self-directed production embody the progression of Elle's stages of grief. This is accomplished largely through her use of Monsieur's coat. At the beginning of the opera, Elle puts on Monsieur's coat, which he has supposedly left at her apartment, as she rushes out to go to Monsieur's house. Elle's identity at the beginning of the opera is intrinsically linked to that of Monsieur. She sees herself only as a part of him and has no life outside of her life with him. After Elle describes her suicide attempt, she lies down on the chaise and covers herself in his coat, clutching onto it like a security blanket. Despite the trauma of this breakup, the idea of being with Monsieur is still a comfort to Elle. Even the smell of his jacket calms her anxiety. When she later describes how lonely her dog is without him, she holds the sleeve of his jacket as

⁹ Unpublished Interview: Camille Zamora. Interviewed by Stefanie Anduri. E-mail interview. March 28, 2015.

if she were holding Monsieur's hand. Later, when Monsieur is offended by a rude neighbor eavesdropping on the party line, Elle comforts him. She takes his coat in her lap as if it were him and gently caresses the coat, assuring him that he is not rude like other men. Even though this is an affectionate gesture, Elle is becoming more independent as Monsieur is no longer a source of comfort, but, instead, someone that *she* must comfort. At the end of opera, as Elle tells Monsieur that she loves him for the last time, she clutches the coat like a dead body. As she weeps over the coat, holding it to her heart, Monsieur abruptly hangs up the phone. In a rage, Elle throws the coat away from her and hangs up the phone, signifying the end of this relationship. The coat, as a symbol of their relationship, is no longer a source of identity or comfort. The coat is a burden which must be discarded.

Another important directing decision I made was Elle's increasing frustration at Monsieur's inability to say that he loves her. Each time after Elle expresses her love for Monsieur, there is a long, painful silence in the orchestra. Elle's exclamation of "my love, my dearest love" is followed by a fermata marked *très long*.¹⁰ When she tells him she loves him, it is followed by another fermata marked *long*.¹¹ Finally, at the end of the opera, after Elle has told Monsieur "I love you" four times, there is suddenly complete silence in the orchestra.¹² This disappointment and frustration is what fuels Elle's decision to permanently end the relationship.

As this opera is written in a conversational, recitative-like style with few lyrical or aria-like sections, the orchestral accompaniment creates and maintains the musical, dramatic and structural coherency of this opera. Poulenc uses common compositional techniques to create harmonic and dramatic tension while also establishing his unique and modern harmonic language. While this piece is tonal, the harmonic instability reflects Elle's emotional instability.

¹⁰ Poulenc, *La voix humaine*, 65.

¹¹ Poulenc, *La voix humaine*, 69.

¹² Poulenc, *La voix humaine*, 71.

Chromaticism and tritones are incorporated heavily in every section of this opera. Poulenc uses jarring, unexpected harmonic, textural, and tempo shifts, where “the juxtaposition of the calm pattered sections of recitative against the intensely dramatic, emotionally charged sections creates a marked dichotomy of calm and frantic.”¹³ Poulenc uses unresolved seventh and ninth chords as the most pervasive harmonic feature of this piece. Poulenc masterfully creates an overall atmosphere of high anxiety with little respite or resolution. Through these compositional techniques, the audience is made to feel as Elle does: anxious, disoriented and longing for resolution.

Dramatically, the orchestration allows the audience to become a part of Elle’s sound-world. The ringing of the telephone is played by a xylophone, and the Jazz music Monsieur is enjoying is incorporated into the accompaniment. While the audience does not know exactly what the characters are saying on the other end of the telephone line, one can more easily determine their tone of voice and even what they are saying by orchestral accompaniment.¹⁴ Further, the moments in which there is no orchestral accompaniment further adds to the conversational nature of the opera as nearly a fourth of the opera is unaccompanied.¹⁵ While Elle can easily lie about her true feelings, the audience is made to know what Elle is experiencing and feeling based on the orchestral accompaniment.

The most important way in which dramatic, musical and structural unity is achieved in this work is through its repetition of thematic material. Not only do these themes form the basic framework for the piece, but they also expose Elle’s true feelings and true motives. These themes represent Elle’s “emotional state or an object, person, or idea that relates to the couple’s

¹³ Stefanie Nicole Anduri. “Character Interpretation in Poulenc’s *La Voix Humaine*: A Performer’s Guide.” Dissertation/Thesis, (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2016), 96.

¹⁴ Michal Grover-Friedlander and Linda Phyllis Austern (ed) (2002). “The Call of the Human Voice in Poulenc’s *La Voix Humaine*.” *Music, Sensation, and Sensuality*. (New York: Routledge), 202.

¹⁵ Keith W. Daniel, *Francis Poulenc: His Artistic Development and Musical Style*, (Ann Arbor, US: UMI Research Press. 1982), 307.

relationship”¹⁶ in a manner similar to a Wagnerian leitmotiv. As Camille Zamora notes,

“I identified and labeled the different motives with character motivations – stalling, flirting, trying to distract, seduce, recalling, fabricating, etc. The fact that Poulenc repeated some of these motives, to me, indicated that Elle was trying to direct the conversation a certain way, and employing a multitude of techniques to do so. This, in itself, indicated something about her character – she hadn’t given up hope, despite all her talk about understanding and accepting the situation. She was making every last play for her lover, and she wasn’t afraid to play dirty.”¹⁷

While a full thematic analysis of this opera is beyond the scope of these program notes, this idea can be illustrated by examining the most frequently repeated theme in the opera. This theme occurs at any point in which Elle is trying to regain her composure or take control of the conversation by flirting with Monsieur. In her dissertation, “Character Interpretation in Poulenc’s *La voix humaine*: A Performer’s Guide,” Stephanie Anduri identifies eleven frequently repeated motives, and she refers to this particular motive as the “Deep Breath motive.” Anduri describes it as “a rhythmic motive, always in 4/4 time, where the first chord is a half note, and the second two chords are each quarter notes.”¹⁸ Given the prevalence of this theme, it is evident that Elle has not moved on and will stop at nothing to remain in a relationship with Monsieur.

¹⁶ Stefanie Nicole Anduri. “Character Interpretation in Poulenc’s *La Voix Humaine*: A Performer’s Guide.” (Dissertation/Thesis, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2016), 19.

¹⁷ Unpublished Interview: Emily Hindrichs. Interviewed by Stefanie Anduri. E-mail interview. March 13, 2015.

¹⁸ Stefanie Nicole Anduri. “Character Interpretation in Poulenc’s *La Voix Humaine*: A Performer’s Guide.” (Dissertation/Thesis, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2016), 27.

Figure 1. Musical Example 1 ^{19 20}

Très expressif

ê - tre. Oh! non, sû - rement pas tout de sui - te, et

pp très chanté

très enveloppé de pédale

toi? —

The next iteration of this theme is heard when Monsieur asks Elle what she will do after he leaves town. Elle indifferently tells him that she will either remain in town or go to the countryside with Martha. However, the presence of this theme betrays Elle's true feelings and her desire to remain with Monsieur.

¹⁹ Poulenc, *La voix humaine*, 16.

²⁰ Translation: *Oh, no! Definitely not right away. And you?*

Figure 2. Musical Example 2^{21 22}

31 *Très calme (très tendre et doux)*

Oh! moi, tu sais, il est possible que je reste, comme il est possible

- sible que j'aille passer quelques jours à la campagne, chez

Mar - the. Oui, mon chéri — mais oui, mon chéri —

²¹ Poulenc, *La voix humaine*, 17.

²² Translation: Oh! Me, you know, it is possible that I will stay in the city, or I may decide to spend some time in the county with Marth. Yes, my dear. Yes, my dear.

A distorted variation of this theme occurs when the phone line is disconnected. Monsieur has hung up on Elle after she threatened to strangle herself with the telephone cord if he did not love her. For the first time, the opera takes a sinister turn, which is reflected by the ominous sounding music.

Figure 3. Musical Example 3^{23 24}

Figure 3 shows a musical score for a scene. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with the word "Bien." and includes the instruction "(elle racroche) très expressif". The piano accompaniment includes the instruction "p" and "Xylo.". The score is marked with a box containing the number "46" and the tempo marking "Très calme". The score also includes the instruction "(on sonne)".

The longest iteration of this theme occurs after Elle describes her suicide attempt. Elle makes a desperate attempt to seduce Monsieur by saying that his voice on the phone sounds like it did when she would lie in his arms in bed.

Figure 4. Musical Example 4^{25 26}

Figure 4 shows a musical score for a scene. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line includes the lyrics "Tu sais, quelque fois quand nous étions cou -". The piano accompaniment includes the instruction "ppp". The score is marked with a box containing the number "68" and the tempo marking "Très calme et voluptueux". The score also includes the instruction "p câline".

²³ Poulenc, *La voix humaine*. 27.

²⁴ Translation: *Fine*.

²⁵ Poulenc, *La voix humaine*, 42-43.

²⁶ Translation: *You know, sometimes when we were in bed and I had my head in that small space against your chest, I heard your voice exactly the same as tonight through the phone.*

.chés et que j'a_vais ma tête à sa pe - ti - te pla - ce contre ta poi -

- tri - ne, j'en - ten - dais ta voix, ex - ac - tement la mê - me que ce

pp

soir dans l'appa - reil. —

long Presto

69

ppp *ff*

Elle tries to seduce Monsieur again by telling him that she sleeps with her phone in her bed. She explains that she does so simply because he is speaking to her.

Figure 5. Musical example 5 ^{27 28}

The musical score for Figure 5 consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked "Très calme et détendu". The vocal line begins with a "long" fermata, followed by the lyrics "Parce que tu me par - les." The piano accompaniment is marked "pp" and features a complex harmonic structure with many sharps and naturals. The score is divided into two systems, with a box containing the number "77" at the start of the second system.

As Elle begins to realize that Monsieur is losing interest and the conversation is quickly coming to a close, the theme repeats again. Elle hopes that by confessing her love for him once more, it will inspire him to do the same. However, her confession is followed by a long fermata, and it is clear that he does not feel the same. He remains painfully silent.

Figure 6. Musical Example 6 ^{29 30}

The musical score for Figure 6 consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked "Bien lent". The vocal line begins with a "ff" dynamic and a "très long" fermata, followed by the lyrics "Mon a - mour Mon cher a - mour." The piano accompaniment is marked "ff" and "molto" and features a complex harmonic structure with many sharps and naturals. The score is divided into two systems, with a "très long" fermata at the end of the second system.

²⁷ Poulenc, *La voix humaine*, 48.

²⁸ Translation: *Because you speak to me.*

²⁹ Poulenc, *La voix humaine*, 65.

³⁰ Translation: *My love. My dear love.*

Most poignantly, this seductive theme is heard for the last time at the end of the opera as Elle confesses her love for Monsieur for the last time and tells him to hang up.

Figure 7. Musical Example 7^{31 32}

The musical score consists of three systems, each with a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The first system begins at measure 108, marked *mf* with the instruction *(marquer le B)*. The vocal line contains the lyrics "mon beau chéri. Je suis for - te." The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The second system is marked *très violente* and includes a triplet of eighth notes. The vocal line has the lyrics "Dépêche-toi. Vas - y. Cou - pel Cou - pe". The piano accompaniment continues with a similar rhythmic pattern. The third system is marked *ff* and includes the instruction *comme un cri*. The vocal line has the lyrics "vi - - tel Je t'ai - -". The piano accompaniment concludes with a final chord.

³¹ Poulenc, *La voix humaine*, 65.

³² Translate: *I am strong. Hang up. Go ahead. Hang up! Hang up quickly!*

The redundancy of the motivic material mirrors the main conflict of the opera: Elle's inability to say goodbye. Elle's obsession with this dead relationship and her vain attempts to rekindle it are echoed by the repetitive themes of the orchestral accompaniment. Elle is clearly talking in circles to a man who is no longer interested, and she is holding on to something that is no longer there. Her memories of their life together are now only memories, and her dreams of their life together are now only dreams. Perhaps their relationship has always been that way. As the opera marches towards a painful close, new musical material is introduced, which may be interpreted as a hopeful sign of new beginnings for this brave woman.

While Elle in Cocteau's play differs from Elle in Poulenc's opera, Poulenc's masterpiece brings the character and the drama to life in way that mere words simply cannot. "The musical underpinnings of Poulenc's work deepen the authenticity of the character by adding subtext that is difficult to portray in the spoken play."³³ As soprano Camille Zamora notes,

"With all due respect to Cocteau, the work does not take flight for me as an unsung play as much as it does in its operatic incarnation. To me, where the play can start to feel maudlin, Poulenc's opera – through his recurring melodic motives and the freshness of his musical ideas overall – brings a multi-faceted quality to Elle that is not as clear in the play. It is through Poulenc's melodies and harmonic structure, as much as through any of the words conveyed, that we learn who Elle is, and why her love is so intense and so true."³⁴

³³ Stefanie Nicole Anduri. "Character Interpretation in Poulenc's *La Voix Humaine*: A Performer's Guide." Dissertation/Thesis, (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2016), p. 96.

³⁴ Camille Zamora. Interviewed by Stefanie Anduri. E-mail interview. March 28, 2015.

Allô, allô...Mais non, Madame,
nous sommes plusieurs sur la ligne,
raccrochez... Vous êt' avec une abonnée...

Mais, Madame, raccrochez vous-mêm'...

Allô, Mad'moisel'!... Mais non,
ce n'est pas le docteur Schmit...
Zéro huit, pas zéro sept...Allô!...
c'est ridicul'...

On me demande; je ne sais pas...
Allô!...Mais Madam',
que voulez-vous que j'y fass'?...
Comment, ma faut'?...pas du tout...

Allô, Mad'moisel'!...
Dites à cette dame de se retirer.
Allô, c'est toi?...Oui...très bien...
C'était un vrai supplice de
t'entendre à travers tout ce monde...
oui...oui...non...
c'est une chance...

Je rentre il y a dix minutes...
Tu n'avais pas encore appelé?...

Ah!...non, non...J'ai dîné dehors...
chez Marthe.

Il doit être onze heur' un quart...

Tu es chez toi?...

Alors regarde la pendula électrique...

C'est ce que je pensais...

Oui, oui, mon chéri...Hier soir?

Hier soir je me suis couchée tout de suite
et comme je ne pouvais pas m'endormir,
j'ai pris un comprimé...

Non... un seul... à neuf heures...

J'avais un peu mal à la tête,

mais je me suis secouée.

Marthe est venue.

Elle a déjeuné avec moi.

J'ai fait des courses. Je suis rentrée à la maison.

J'ai...Quoi?...Très forte...

J'ai beaucoup, beaucoup de courage...⁹⁹

Hello, hello...But no Madame,
there are several of us on the line,
please hang up...You are with a
subscriber...

But Madame, you hang up...

Hello, Miss! But no,
this is not Doctor Schmit...

Zero eight, not zero seven...Hello!...
This is ridiculous...

One wonders why; I do not know...

Hello!...But Madame,
what do you want me to do?...

How is it my fault?...Not at all...

Hello, Miss!...

Tell this lady to hang up.

Hello, is it you?...Yes...Very good...

It was torture not being able
to hear you over all those people...

Yes...Yes...No...

There is a chance...

I returned ten minutes ago...

Perhaps you called while I was
out?...

Ah!...No, no...I dined out...

At Martha's house.

It must be a quarter past eleven...

Are you at home?...

Then look at the electric clock...

That is what I thought...

Yes, yes, my dear...Last night?

Last night I went to bed early
and since I could not go to sleep,
I took a pill...

No...Only one...At nine o'clock...

I had a little bit of a headache,
but then it went away,

Martha came.

She had lunch with me.

I went shopping. I returned home.

I went...What?...Very strong...

I have lots and lots of courage...

Après? Après je me suis habillée,

Marthe est venue me prendre...
Je rentre de chez elle.
Elle a été parfait...
Elle a cet air,
mais ell' ne l'est pas.
Tu avais raison, comme toujours...
Ma robe rose... Mon chapeau noir...
Oui, j'ai encore mon chapeau sur la tête...
Et toi, tu rentres?...
Tu es resté à la maison?...
Quel procès?... Ah, oui...
Allô! chéri... Si on coupe,
redemande-moi tout de suite...
Allô! Non... je suis là...
Le sac?... Tes lettres et les miennes.
Tu peux le fair' prendre quand tu veux...
Un peu dur... Je comprends...
Oh! mon chéri, ne t'excuse pas,

c'est très naturel
et c'est moi qui suis stupide...
Tu es gentil... Tu es gentil...
Moi non plus, je ne me croyais pas si forte...

Quelle comédie?... Allô!... Qui?...
Que je te joue la comédie, moi!...

Tu me connais,
je suis incapable de prendre sur moi...

Pas du tout... Pas du tout...
Très calme... Tu l'entendrais...
Je dis: Tu l'entendrais.
Je n'ai pas la voix d'une personne
qui cache quelque chose...
Non. J'ai décidé d'avoir du courage
et j'en aurai...
J'ai ce que je mérite.
J'ai voulu être folle
et avoir un bonheur fou...
Chéri... écoute... allô!...
chéri... Laisse... allô!...
laisse-moi parler.
Ne t'accuse pas.

After? Afterwards I got dressed for
the evening,
Martha came to take me...
I returned from her home.
She was perfect...
She has this air to her,
but she's really not.
You were right, as always...
My pink dress... My black hat...
Yes, I still have my hat on...
And you, are you back?...
You stayed at home?...
What trial?... Ah, yes...
Hello! Dear... If we are cut off,
call me back immediately...
Hello!... No... I'm still here...
The bag?... Your letters and mine.
You can send for it when you like...
A little hard... I understand...
Oh! My dear, you don't need to
apologize,
it is very natural
and it is I who am stupid...
You are kind... You are kind...
Neither did I, I did not believe I am
strong...
Putting on an act?... Hello!... Who?...
You think I am putting on an act,
me!...
You know me well,
I am not the type who would ever
pretend...
Not at all... Not at all...
Very calm... You would hear it...
I said: You would hear it...
I do not have the voice of someone
who has something to hide...
No. I have decided to have courage
and I will...
I got what I deserved.
I wanted to be foolish
and have a crazy happiness...
Dear... Listen... Hello!...
Dear... Let me... Hello!...
Let me speak.
Do not blame yourself.

Tout est ma faute. Si, si...
Souviens-toi du dimanche de Versailles

et du pneumatique...Ah!...Alors!...
C'est moi qui ai voulu venir,
c'est moi qui t'ai fermé la bouch',
c'est moi qui t'ai dit que tout m'était égal...

Non...non...là tu es injuste...
J'ai...J'ai téléphone la première...
un mardi... j'en suis sûre.
Un mardi vingt-sept...
Tu penses bien que je connais ces
dates par coeur...
ta mère? Pourquoi?...
Ce n'est vraiment pas la peine...
Je ne sais pas encore...
Oui...peut-être...
Oh! non, sûrement pas tout de suite, et toi?...

Demain?...Je ne savais pas que c'était si rapide...

Alors, attends...c'est très simple...
demain matin le sac sera chez le concierge.

Joseph n'aura qu'à passer le prendre...
Oh! moi, tu sais, il est possible que je reste,
comme il est possible que j'aie passer
quelques jours à la campagne,

chez Marthe...Oui, mon chéri...
mais oui, mon chéri...
Allô!...et comme ça?...
Pourtant je parle très forte...
Et là, tu m'entends?...
Je dis: et là, tu m'entends?...
C'est drôle parce que moi je t'entends
comme si tu étais dans la chambre...
Allô!...allô!...Allons, bon!
maintenant c'est moi qui ne t'entends plus...

Si, mais très loin, très loin...
Toi, tu m'entends.
C'est chacun son tour...
Non, très bien...
J'entends même mieux que tout à l'heure,

It was all my fault. Yes, yes...
Do you remember that Sunday in
Versailles
and I sent the wire...Ah!...Then!...
It was I who wanted to come,
it was I who would not let you speak,
it is I who told you that I did not
mind...

No...No...Now you are unfair...
I have...I called you first...
A Tuesday...I'm quite sure.
A Tuesday the twenty-seventh...
You think I know these
dates by heart...
Your mother? But why?...
It's really not worth it...
I honestly do not know...
Yes...Perhaps...
Oh! No, surely not right away, and
you?...

Tomorrow?...I did not know it was
so soon...

Well then, wait...It is very simple...
Tomorrow morning the bag will be
with the concierge.

Joseph will only have to pick it up...
Oh! Me, you know, it is possible that
I will stay awhile in the city
or I may decide to spend some time
in the country

with Martha...Yes, my dear...
But of course, my darling...
Hello!... What is wrong?...
I am speaking loud...
And now, do you hear me?...
I said: and now do you hear me?...
It's funny because I hear you
as if you were here in this room...
Hello!...Hello!...Well, good!
Now it is I who cannot hear you
anymore...

Yes, but far, far away...
Now can you hear me.
It is each of us in turn...
No, very good...
I can hear even better than earlier,

mais ton appareil résonne.
 On dirait que ce n'est pas ton appareil...
 Je te vois, tu sais... Quel foulard?...
 Le foulard rouge...
 Tu as tes manches retroussées...
 ta main gauche?...le récepteur.
 Ta main droite?
 Ton stylographe.
 Tu dessines sur le buvard, des profils,
 des coeurs, des étoiles. Ah! Tu ris!

 J'ai des yeux à la place des oreilles...
 Oh! non, mon chéri, sur tout ne me regarde pas...

 Peur?...Non, je n'aurais pas peur...
 c'est pire...
 Enfin je n'ai plus l'habitude de dormir seule...

 Oui...oui, oui...je te promets...
 je te promets...
 tu es gentil...Je ne sais pas.
 J'évite de me regarder.
 Je n'ose plus allumer dans le cabinet de toilette.

 Hier, je me suis trouvé
 nez à nez avec une vieille dame...
 Non, non!
 une vieille dame avec des cheveux blancs
 et une foule de petites rides...
 Tu es bien bon! mais, mon chéri,
 une figure admirable, c'est pire que tout,
 c'est pour les artistes...
 J'aimais mieux quand tu disais:
 Regardez-moi cette vilaine petite gueule!...
 Oui, cher Monsieur!...Je plaisantais...
 Tu es bête...
 Heureusement que tu es maladroit
 et que tu m'aimes.
 Si tu ne m'aimais pas et si tu étais adroit,

 le téléphone deviendrait une arme effrayante.

 Une arme qui ne laisse pas de traces,

 qui ne fait pas de bruit...
 Moi, méchante?...

but there is an echo in your device.
 It doesn't sound like your device...
 I see you, you know...What scarf?...
 The red scarf...
 You have your sleeves rolled up...
 In your left hand?...The receiver.
 And your right hand?
 Your fountain pen.
 You draw on the blotter, profiles,
 hearts, and stars. Ah! You're
 laughing!
 I have eyes in the place of ears...
 Oh! No, my dear, above all don't
 look at me...
 Afraid?...No, I wouldn't be afraid...
 It's worse...
 I am no longer in the habit of
 sleeping alone...
 Yes...Yes, yes...I promise you...
 I promise you...
 You are kind...I don't know.
 I avoid looking at myself.
 I no longer dare to turn on the light
 in the bathroom.
 Yesterday, I found myself
 face-to-face with an old lady...
 No, no!
 An old lady with white hair
 and a host of small wrinkles...
 You are very good! But my darling,
 an admirable face, it is worst of all,
 that is for artists...
 I liked it better when you said:
 Look at this little ugly mouth!...
 Yes, dear Sir!...I was joking...
 You are silly...
 Fortunately you are awkward
 and you love me.
 If you did not love me and you were
 clever,
 the telephone would become a
 frightening weapon.
 A weapon that does not leave any
 traces,
 that does not make noise...
 Me, mean?...

Allô!...allô, chéri...
où es-tu?...
Allô, allô, Mad'moisell',
allô, Mad'moiselle, on coupe.
Allô, c'est toi?...Mais non, Mad'moiselle.
On m'a coupée...
Je ne sais pas...c'est à dire...
si, attendez...
Auteuil zéro quat' virgul' sept...
Allô!...Pas libre?...Allô, Mad'moisell',
il me redemand'...Bien...
Allô! Auteuil zéro quat' virgul' sept?
Allô!...C'est vous, Joseph?...
C'est Madame...
On nous avait coupés avec Monsieur...
Pas là?...Oui...oui...
il ne rentre pas ce soir...
c'est vrai, je suis stupide!
Monsieur me téléphonait
d'un restaurant, on a coupé
et je redemande son numéro...
Excusez-moi, Joseph...
Allô! ah! chéri! c'est toi?...
On avait coupé...
Non, non. J'attendais. On sonnait,
je décrochais et il n'y avait personne...

Sans doute...Bien sûr...
Tu as sommeil?...
Tu es bon d'avoir téléphoné...
très bon...
Non, je suis là...Quoi?...
Pardonne...c'est absurde...
Rien, rien...je n'ai rien...
Je te jur' que je n'ai rien...
C'est pareil...
Rien du tout. Tu te trompes...
Seulement, tu comprends,
on parle, on parle...
Ecoute, mon amour.
Je ne t'ai jamais menti...
Oui, je sais, je sais, je te crois,
j'en suis convaincue...
non, ce n'est pas ça...

Hello!...Hello, dear...
Where are you?...
Hello, hello Miss,
hello, Miss, hang up.
Hello, is it you?...But no, Miss.
Someone cut me off...
I do not know...That is to say...
Yes, wait...
Auteuil zero four, seven...
Hello!...Not free?...Hello, Miss,
he's trying to call me back...Good...
Hello! Auteuil zero four point seven?
Hello! Is that you Joseph?...
It's Madame...
Monsieur and I were cut off...
Not there?...Yes...Yes...
He's not returning tonight...
That's right, I am stupid!
Monsieur called me
from a restaurant, we were cut off
and I called his number...
Excuse me, Joseph...
Hello! Ah! Darling! Is it you?...
We were cut off...
No, no. I waited. Someone rang.
I hung up and there was no one
there...
No doubt...Of course...
Are you sleepy?...
You are good to have called...
Very good...
No, I am here...What?...
Forgive me...That is absurd...
Nothing, nothing...I have nothing...
I swear I have nothing...
It's the same...
Nothing at all. You are mistaken...
Only, you understand,
we speak, we speak...
Listen, my love.
I never lied to you...
Yes, I know, I know, I believe you,
I am convinced of it...
No, that's not it...

c'est parce que je viens de te mentir...
là...au téléphone,
depuis un quart d'heur',
je te mens.
Je sais bien que je n'ai plus
aucune chance à attendre,
mais mentir ne porte pas la chance et puis

je n'aime pas te mentir, je ne peux pas,
je ne veux pas te mentir,
même pour ton bien...
Oh! rien de grave, mon chéri...
Seulement je mentais en te décrivant ma robe

et en te disant que j'avais dîné chez Marthe...

Je n'ai pas dîné,
je n'ai pas ma robe rose.
J'ai un manteau sur ma chemise,
parce qu'à force d'attendre
ton téléphone,
à force de regarder l'appareil,
de m'asseoir, de me lever,
de marcher de long en large,
je devenais folle!
Alors j'ai mis un manteau
Et j'allais sortir, prendre un taxi,
me fair' mener sous tes fenêtres,
pour attendre...eh bien! attendre,
attendre je ne sais quoi...
Tu as raison...
Si...je t'écoute...
Je serai sage...
je répondrai à tout, je te jure...
Ici...je n'ai rien mangé...
Je ne pouvais pas...J'ai été très malade...
Hier soir, j'ai voulu prendre un comprimé
pour dormir; je me suis dit que si j'en prenais plus,
je dormirais mieux
et que si je les prenais tous,
je dormirais sans rêve,
sans réveil,
je serais morte...
J'en ai avalé douze...
dans de l'eau chaude... Comme une masse.
Et j'ai eu un rêve.

It is because I just lied to you...
There...Through the phone
just fifteen minutes ago,
I am lying to you.
I know I have no chance
for my luck to return.
But to lie does not make one lucky
and then
I do not like to lie to you, I cannot,
I do not want to lie to you,
even for your own good...
Oh! Nothing serious, my darling...
Only I just lied earlier describing to
you my dress
and telling you I had dinner with
Martha...
I have not eaten,
I do not have on my pink dress.
I have a coat on over my nightgown,
because I have been waiting
for your call,
watching the phone
sitting, standing,
walking up and down,
I was going crazy!
Then I put on a coat
and I was going out, to take a taxi,
to wander underneath your windows,
to wait...Ah yes! To wait,
awaiting I do not know what...
You are right...
Yes...I'm listening to you...
I'll be good...
I will answer everything, I swear...
Here...I did not eat anything...
I could not...I was very sick...
Last night, I wanted to take a tablet
to sleep; I told myself if I took more
I would sleep better
and that if I took them all,
I would sleep without dreaming,
without waking,
I would be dead...
I swallowed twelve...
In hot water...All in a mass.
And I had a dream.

J'ai rêvé ce qui est.
Je me suis réveillée toute contente
parce que c'était un rêve,
et quand j'ai su que c'était vrai,
que j'étais seule, que je n'avais pas
la tête sur ton cou...
J'ai senti que je ne pouvais pas vivre...
Légère, légère et froide et je ne sentais
plus mon coeur battre et la mort était longue
à venir et com' j'avais une angoisse épouvantable,
au bout d'une heure j'ai téléphoné à Marthe.
Je n'avais pas le courag'
de mourir seule...
Chéri...Chéri...
Il était quatre heur' du matin.
Elle est arrivée avec le docteur
qui habite son immeuble.
J'avais plus de quarant'.
Le docteur a fait une ordonnance
et Marthe est restée
jusqu'à ce soir.
Je l'ai suppliée de partir
parce que tu m'avais dit que tu téléphonerais
et j'avais peur qu'on
m'empêche de te parler...
Très, très bien...
Ne t'inquiète pas...Allô!...
Je croyais qu'on avait coupé...
Tu es bon, mon chéri...
Mon pauvre chéri à qui j'ai fait du mal...
Oui, parle, parle, dis n'importe quoi...
Je souffrais à me rouler par terre
et il suffit que tu parles pour
que je me sente bien,
que je ferme les yeux.
Tu sais, quelquefois
quand nous étions couchés
et que j'avais ma tête à sa petite place
contre ta poitrine,
j'entendais ta voix,
exactement la même que
ce soir dans l'appareil...
Allô! J'entends de la musiq'...
Je dis: J'entends de la musique...
Eh bien, tu devrais cogner au mur
et empêcher ces voisins de jouer

I dreamed what is.
I woke up happy
because it was a dream,
and when I realized that it was true,
that I was alone, that I did not have
my head on your shoulder...
I felt that I could not go on living...
Light, light and cold and I no longer
felt my heart beat and death was
long coming, I had a terrible anguish,
after an hour I called Martha.
I did not have the courage
to die alone...
Darling...Darling...
It was four o'clock in the morning.
She arrived with the doctor
who lives in her building.
I had more than forty.
The doctor wrote a prescription
and Martha stayed
until this evening.
I begged her to leave
because you said that you would call
and I was afraid she would prevent
me from talking to you...
Very, very well...
Do not worry...Hello!...
I thought we were cut off...
You are good, my dear...
My poor darling whom I've hurt...
Yes, speak, speak, say anything...
I have suffered enough
yet you only have to speak to me
and I feel good,
I close my eyes.
You know, sometimes
when we were in bed
and I had my head in that small place
against your chest,
I heard your voice,
exactly the same
as tonight through the phone...
Hello! I hear music...
I said: I hear music...
Well, you should bang the wall
and stop your neighbors playing

du gramophone
à des heures pareil'...
C'est inutile.
Du reste le docteur de Marthe reviendra demain...

Ne t'inquiète pas... Mais oui...
Elle te donnera des nouvelles...
Quoi?... Oh! si, mille fois mieux.

Si tu n'avais pas appelé,
Je serais morte...
Pardonne-moi.
Je sais que cette scène est intolérable
et que tu as bien de la patience,
mais comprends-moi, je souffre, je souffre.
Ce fil, c'est le dernier
qui me rattache encore à nous...
Avant-hier soir? J'ai dormi.
Je m'étais couchée avec le téléphone...
Non, non. Dans mon lit... Oui.
Je sais. Je suis très ridicule,
mais j'avais le téléphone dans mon lit
et malgré tout, on est relié par le téléphone...

Parce que tu me parles.
Voilà cinq ans que je vis de toi,

que tu es mon seul air respirable,
que je passe mon temps à t'attendre,
à te croire mort si tu es en retard,

à mourir de te croire mort,
à revivre quand tu entres
et quand tu es là,
enfin, à mourir de peur que tu partes.

Maintenant j'ai de l'air parce que tu me parles...

C'est entendu, mon amour: j'ai dormi.
J'ai dormi parce que c'était la première fois.
Le premier soir on dort.
Ce qu'on ne supporte pas c'est
la seconde nuit,
hier, et la troisième, demain
et des jours et des jours
à faire quoi, mon Dieu?...

their gramophone
at these late hours...
It is useless.
Besides, Martha's doctor is coming
back tomorrow...
Do not worry... But yes...
She will give you news...
What?... Oh! Yes, a thousand times
better.

If you had not called,
I would be dead...
Forgive me.
I know this scene is intolerable
and that you have great patience,
but understand me, I suffer, I suffer.
This wire, this is the last thing
that still binds me to us...
The night before last? I slept.
I went to sleep with the telephone...
No, no. In my bed... Yes.
I know. I am very ridiculous,
but I had the telephone in my bed
and in spite of everything, we are
connected by the telephone...
Because you speak to me.

It's five years now that I lived for
you,
you are my only breathable air,
I spend my time waiting for you,
thinking you were dead if you were
late,
to die believing you are dead,
to revive when you enter
and when you are there,
at last, to die for fear that you will
leave.

Now I have breath because you
speak to me...
It is understood, my love: I slept.
I slept because it was the first time.
The first night you sleep.
What is really hard to bear is
the second night,
last night, and the third, tonight
and then days and days
to do what, my God?...

Et...et en admettant que je dorme,
après le sommeil il y a les rêves
et le réveil et manger et se lever
et se lever et sortir
et aller où?...
Mais, mon pauvre chéri,
je n'ai jamais eu rien d'autre à faire que toi...

Marthe a sa vie organisée...
Seule... Voilà deux jours qu'il ne
quitte pas l'antichambre...
J'ai voulu l'appeler, le caresser.
Il refuse qu'on le touche.
Un peu plus, il me mordrait...
Oui, moi! Je te jure qu'il m'effraie.
Il ne mange plus.
Il ne bouge plus.
Et quand il me regarde,
il me donne la chair de poule...
Comment veux-tu que je sache?
Il croit peut-être que je t'ai fait du mal...
Pauvre bête!...
Je n'ai aucune raison de lui en vouloir.
Je ne le comprends que trop bien.
Il t'aime. Il ne te voit plus rentrer.

Il croit que c'est ma faute...
Oui, mon chéri. C'est entendu;
mais c'est un chien.
Malgré son intelligence,
il ne peut pas le deviner...
Mais, je ne sais pas, mon chéri!
Comment veux-tu que je sache?
On n'est plus soi-même.
Songe que j'ai déchiré tout le
Paquet de mes photographies
d'un seul coup, sans m'en apercevoir.
Même pour un homme ce serait
un tour de force...
Allô! Allô! Madam',
retirez-vous.
Vous êt' avec des abonnés.
Allô! Mais non, Madam'...
Mais, Madame, nous ne cherchons

And...And while admitting that I
sleep,
after sleep there are dreams
and waking up and eating and getting
up
and getting up and going out
and to go where?...
But, my poor darling,
I've never had anything else in my
life besides you...
Martha has an organized life...
Alone...For two days he has not
left the hallway...
I tried to call him, to pet him.
He refuses to let me touch him.
Even more, he would bite me...
Yes, me! I swear, he scares me.
He won't eat anything.
He does not move.
And when he looks at me,
it gives me goosebumps...
How do you expect me to know?
Maybe he thinks I hurt you...
Poor animal!...
I have no reason to blame him.
I understand too well.
He loves you. He doesn't see you
come back anymore.
He thinks it is my fault...
Yes, my darling. It is understood;
but he is a dog.
Despite his intelligence,
he cannot guess
But I do not know my darling!
How do you expect me to know?
I am not myself.
Remember, I tore up the whole
package of my photographs
in one go, without realizing.
Even for a man it would have been
a feat...
Hello! Hello, Madame,
will you hang up.
You are with subscribers.
Hello! But no, Madame...
But Madame, we are not trying

pas à être intéressants.
Si vous nous trouvez ridicules,
pourquoi perdez-vous votre temps
au lieu de raccrocher?...
Oh!...Ne te fâche pas...Enfin!...
Non, non. Elle a raccroché
après avoir dit cette chose ignoble...
Tu as l'air frappé...
Si, tu es frappé...
je connais ta voix...Mais, mon chéri,
cette femme doit être très mal
et elle ne te connaît pas.
Elle croit que tu es comme les autres hommes...

Mais non, mon chéri,
ce n'est pas du tout pareil...
Pour les gens, on s'aime ou on se déteste.
Les ruptures sont des ruptures.
Ils regardent vite.
Tu ne leur feras jamais comprendre...

Tu ne leur feras jamais
comprendre certaines choses...
Le mieux est de faire comme moi
et de s'en moquer...
complètement...Oh!...Rien.
Je crois que nous parlons comme d'habitude
et puis tout à coup la vérité me revient...

Dans le temps, on se voyait.
On pouvait perdre la tête,
oublier ses promesses,
risquer l'impossible,
convaincre ceux
qu'on adorait en les embrassant,
en s'accrochant à eux.
Un regard pouvait changer tout.
Mais avec cet appareil,
ce qui est fini est fini...
Sois tranquille.
On ne se suicide pas deux fois...
Je ne saurais pas acheter un revolver...
Tu ne me vois pas achetant un revolver...
Où trouverais-je la force de combiner un mensonge,
mon pauvre adoré?...

to be interesting.
If you find us ridiculous,
why are you wasting your time
instead of hanging up?...
Oh!...Do not get upset...Finally!...
No, no. She hung up
after saying that vile thing...
You seem upset...
Yes, you are upset...
I know your voice...But my darling,
that woman must be very bad
and she does not know you.
She thinks that you are like other
men...
But no, my darling,
it is not the same at all...
People think it is either love or hate.
Once it is over it is over.
They know everything.
You will never make them
understand...
You will never make them
understand certain things...
It is best to do like me
and just not care...
Completely...Oh!...Nothing.
I believe we are talking as usual
and then suddenly the truth returns to
me...
Before, we used to see each other.
We could lose our heads,
forget our promises,
risk the impossible,
convince them
that we loved,
by embracing them.
A look could change everything.
But with this device between us,
what is done is done...
It is quiet.
One doesn't commit suicide twice...
I wouldn't know how to buy a gun...
You do not see me buying a gun...
Where would I find the strength to
think up a lie,
my poor love?...

Aucune...J'aurais dû avoir du courage.
Il y a des circonstances où le mensonge est utile.

Toi, si tu me mentais pour rendre
la séparation moins pénible...
Je ne dis pas que tu mentes.
Je dis: si tu mentais et que je le sache.
Si, par exemple, tu n'étais pas chez toi,

et que tu me dises...
Non, non, mon chéri! Ecoute...
Je te crois...
Si, tu prends une voix méchante.
Je disais simplement que si tu me
trompais par bonté d'âme
et que je m'en aperçoive,
je n'en aurais que plus de tendresse pour toi....
Allô!...allô!...
Mon Dieu, fait' qu'il redemande.
Mon Dieu, fait' qu'il redemande.
Mon Dieu, fait' qu'il redemande.
Mon Dieu, fait' qu'il redemande.
Mon Dieu, fait'...
On avait coupé.
J'étais en train de te dire que si tu me
mentais par bonté et que je m'en aperçoive,

Je n'en aurais que plus de tendresse pour toi...
Bien sûr...Tu es fou!
Mon amour...Mon cher amour....
Je sais bien qu'il le faut,
mais c'est atroce...
Jamais je n'aurai ce courage...
Oui. On a l'illusion d'être l'un contre l'autre

et brusquement on met des caves, des égouts,

toute une ville entre soi...
J'ai le fil autour de mon cou...
J'ai ta voix autour de mon cou.
Ta voix autour de mon cou...
Il faudrait que le bureau nous coupe par hasard...

Oh! mon chéri!
Comment peux-tu imaginer
que je pense une chose si laide?

No...I should have had the courage.
There are circumstances where lying
is useful.

You, if you lied to me to make
the separation less painful...
I am not saying you lie.
I said: if I knew you lied,
If, for example, you were not at
home,
and you said to me...

No, no, my dear! Listen...
I believe you...
Yes, you take a nasty voice.
I was simply saying that if you told
a lie out of kindness
and I knew that you did,
I would only love you more for it...
Hello!...Hello!...

Dear God, make him call back.
Dear God, make him call back.
Dear God, make him call back.
Dear God, make him call back,
Dear God, make him...
We were cut off.
I was saying to you that if you lied to
me out of kindness and that I
noticed,
I would only love you more for it...
Of course...You are crazy!
My love...My dearest love...
I know it is necessary,
but it is awful...
I shall never have the courage...
Yes. I have the illusion we are beside
each other

and abruptly there are cellars and
sewers,
a whole city between us...
I have the cord around my neck...
I have your voice around my neck...
Your voice around my neck...
It would require them to cut us off by
mistake...

Oh! My darling!
How can you imagine
that I think an ugly thing like that?

Je sais bien que cette opération est encore plus cruelle à faire de ton côté que du mien... non...non...A Marseill'?...

Ecoute, chéri,
puisque vous serez à Marseill'
après-demain soir,
je voudrais...enfin j'aimerais...
j'aimerais que tu ne descendes pas à l'hôtel

où nous descendons d'habitude.
Tu n'es pas fâché?...
Parce que les choses
que je n'imagine pas n'existent pas,
ou bien elles existent dans une espèce
de lieu très vague et qui fait moins de mal...

tu comprends?...
Merci...merci.
Tu es bon. Je t'aime...
Alors, voilà...
J'allais dire machinalement:
à tout de suite...
J'en doute... Oh!...
c'est mieux. Beaucoup mieux...
Mon chéri...mon beau chéri...

Jes suis forte.
Dépêche-toi. Vas-y. Coupe!
Coupe vite! Je t'aime,
je t'aime, je t'aime,
je t'aime, t'aime.

I know this situation is even more difficult for you than for me... No...No... In Marseilles?

Listen, darling,
since you will be in Marseilles the day after tomorrow,
May I ask...I would like...
I wish you would not stay at the hotel

where we usually stayed.
You are not angry?...
Because the things
that I cannot imagine do not exist,
or well they exist in a type of very vague place and that does less harm...

Do you understand?...
Thanks...Thank you.
You are kind. I love you...
So here...
I was about to say out of habit:
See you soon...
I doubt it...Oh!...
Much better. A lot better...
My darling...My handsome darling...

I am strong.
Hurry up. Go ahead. Hang up!
Hang up quickly! I love you,
I love you, I love you,
I love you, love you.

Translation taken from Whitney Myers, "*La Voix Humaine: A Technology Time Warp.*" Dissertation/Thesis, (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2016), p. 98-109.

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