

Henri Duparc
Invitation

LAWQ
CLASSICS

ANN-BETH SOLVANG *mezzo-soprano*
EIRIK GRØTVEDT *tenor*
JOHN LIDAL *piano*

Duparc

The Complete Songs

Henri Duparc's output is slight: no more than seventeen songs survive, but on them rests his reputation as one of the greatest composers in the history of the *mélodie*. He composed them between the ages of 20 and 37, after which he lived for another 48 years without publishing—and hardly writing—another note. Unlike Fauré, three years his senior, who by the age of 20 had already produced a fair corpus of juvenile songs, Duparc's first *mélodies*, from 'Chanson triste' on, reveal his fully developed genius.

L'invitation au voyage, perhaps his best-known song, was composed during the Siege of Paris in 1870. It was later orchestrated by Duparc, but this version lacks the bright quality of the piano accompaniment, which exploits to perfection the sonorities of the instrument, especially in the vibrant oscillation of the open fifths and the way they contrast with the utter stillness of the refrain. There is something manic about Duparc's expression of this nostalgia, akin to Wolf's treatment of Mignon's vision of her homeland in 'Kennst du das Land'. Baudelaire's middle stanza, which describes a Dutch interior of gleaming furniture, rich ceilings, deep mirrors and scents of flowers and amber, was clearly too domestic for Duparc's visionary setting, and was therefore omitted.

Sérénade florentine was composed in 1880. It's a tiny song, half lullaby, half barcarolle. Duparc would have known Fauré's 'Sérénade toscane', and there's a lyrical immediacy and simplicity about this little song of 33 bars that reminds us of early Fauré.

The poet of **Testament** (1883) is Armand Silvestre, whose minor verse inspired some of the finest songs in the repertoire by Chausson, Massenet, Fauré and Lalo. As W.H. Auden put it in the Introduction to *The Poet's Tongue*, "We do not want to read 'great' poetry all the time, and a good anthology should contain poems for every mood." Silvestre's elegantly crafted verse clearly struck a chord with Duparc, just as Mayrhofer's did with Schubert. Duparc and Silvestre were friends, and the composer expressed disappointment at the critics' luke-warm reception of his work. The song is bound together by a drooping phrase in the accompaniment which tolls throughout like a bell. The quotation of the spear-motif from *Parsifal* (four ascending notes, first in the right hand, and then in the left) in the postlude, reminds us that 1883 was the year of Wagner's death—Duparc is clearly paying homage to the composer he revered.

As soon as he heard **Phidylé** (1883), Massenet declared that the French *Mélodie* now possessed a master-piece comparable to Schubert's 'Gretchen am Spinnrade'. Duparc uses only 4 of Leconte de Lisle's 10 verses—the first three and the last. The sultry calm of the opening bars reminds us unmistakably of the opening of Chausson's 'Le colibri' which had been composed a year earlier—small wonder that the song was dedicated to Chausson. After a page of nature description (soft grass beneath fresh poplars, banks of mossy springs, flowering meadows, dark copses) the poet/lover gazes on Phidylé: his pulse quickens, and flowing quavers speak of tenderness and erotic desire. 'Repose, ô Phidylé!' The music gradually gains momentum, undergoes remarkable modulations and reaches a passionate climax in the final verse, but not before another 'Repose, ô Phidylé', this time a third higher. The surging postlude allows the accompanist to sing wordlessly of those passions that the singer has voiced. **Extase** from 1878 was composed according to Pierre de Bréville in the style of *Tristan und Isolde*, as a retort to the anti-Wagner lobby in Paris. Duparc's miniature *Liebestod* is beautifully managed, and the limited range, which hovers between *pp* and *mp*,

seems to increase rather than diminish the intensity of the song. **La vague et la cloche** sets a poem by François Coppée. Sketched at the piano in 1871, it was almost immediately orchestrated by Duparc for a large Wagnerian orchestra, and given the secondary title 'mélodie dramatique'. Vincent D'Indy, to whom the song is dedicated, made a piano transcription of it in 1894. Marked *assez vite et tumultueux*, this is a huge song in E minor. With its touches of Liszt and Wagner (prelude of *Das Rheingold* and the storm from *Die Walküre*), it drew from Duparc the comment, made to Vincent D'Indy in 1892: "C'est déclamatoire, descriptif, sans personnalité et sans émotion." Indeed, the singer is instructed to sing *simplement et sans nuances*.

Chanson triste sets a poem by Jean Lahor and dates from 1868, when Duparc was 20 years old. The vocal line is cruelly taxing and demands an impeccable *sostenuto* (Duparc also provided, uncustomarily, an alternative vocal line of reduced range). The rippling arpeggios of the accompaniment recall Fauré, and they intensify the melancholy of the song as they progress from the tonic E flat major, through G flat, A major, D major, D minor and back again to E flat. Written in the same key as Schubert's

‘Erlkönig’ (G minor), **Le galop** is marked *Allegro non troppo ma con fuoco*, and this is indeed Duparc’s most fiery song. After the second verse there’s a whole stanza of *energico* recitative, before a new idea in E major leads to a *fff* climax. The postlude dies away to a *ppp* close. A song of extremes. **Au pays où se fait la guerre**, composed at the time of the Franco–Prussian war, was written for mezzo–soprano with the title of ‘Absence’. Duparc later re–worked and orchestrated it before it was eventually published in the 1911 *Nouvelle édition complète* of the songs. Duparc also intended to include it in his opera *Roussalka* after Pushkin, of which it is the only surviving fragment. “Je l’ai détruit pour des raisons d’art” (“I destroyed it for artistic reasons”), Duparc confided to Jammes in 1921. **Sérénade** sets a poem by Gabriel Marc. The rising arpeggios—all in 6/8 time for all 4 strophes—recall many a romance from Gounod to early Fauré. The accompaniment can almost be played by the left hand alone. **La fuite** (1871), to a poem by Théophile Gautier, takes the form of a duet between Kadidja and Ahmed. The girl suggests to her lover that they should elope together, and when he proves faint–hearted, she assures him that her eyelashes will shade him from the sun and, if there’s no water along the route, they will drink the tears of her joy. There’s also a setting of this poem by Bizet.

Lamento (1883) was dedicated to Fauré. The Gautier poem comes from *La Comédie de la Mort* (1832), a collection as vital to the mélodie as Heine’s *Buch der Lieder* is to the Lied. The poem had already been set, complete, by Berlioz in *the Nuits d’été*; Duparc, however, cuts the poem and thereby diminishes it, despite the supple, elegant and sinuous melodic line with its step–

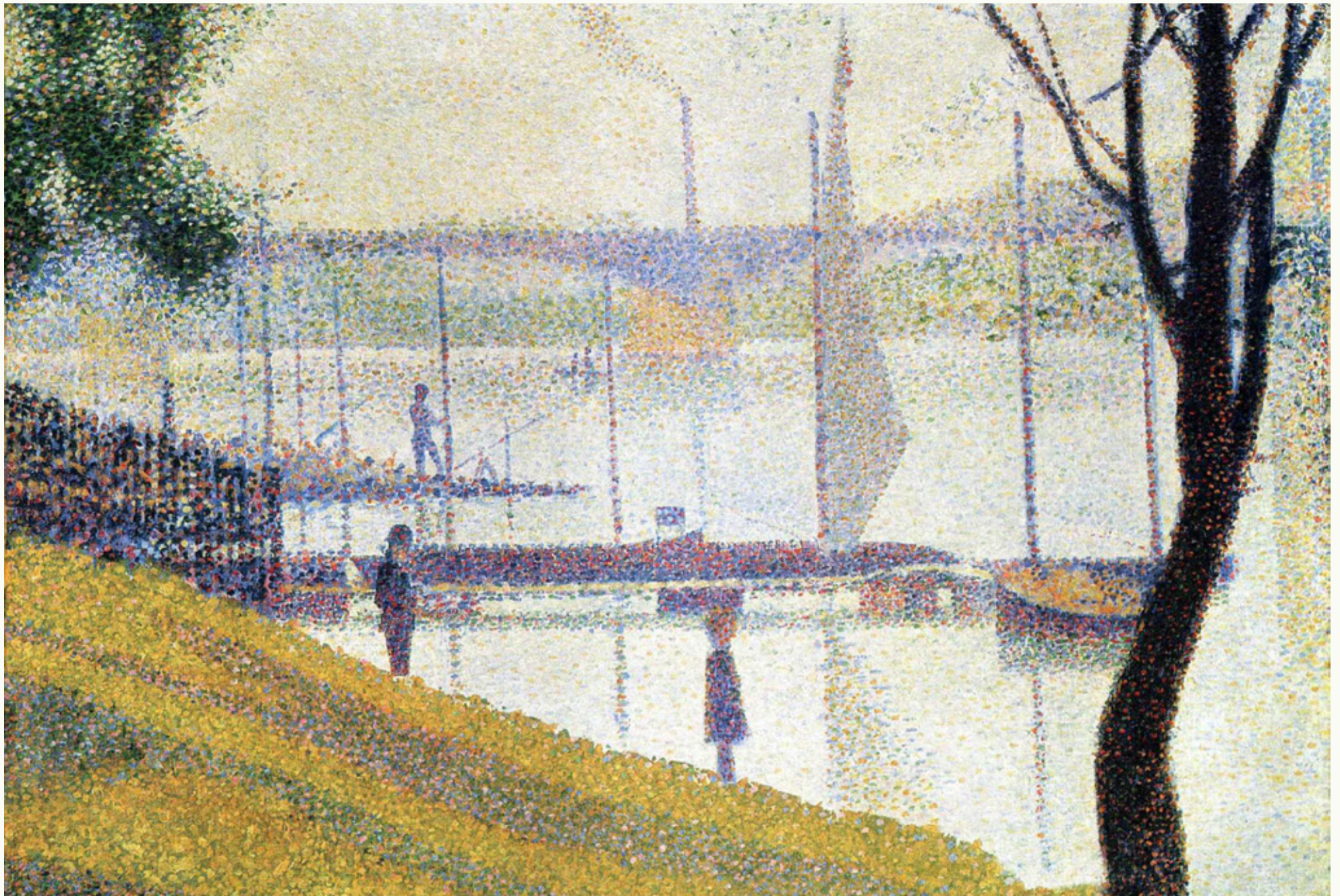
wise movement. **Elégie** dates from 1874, and sets the same poem that Berlioz had tackled in 1829. Thomas Moore’s poem is dedicated “to the shade of the unfortunate Robert Emmet”, the Irish nationalist who was executed by the British in 1803 for his part in an uprising. Whereas Berlioz wrote a song of vehement outburst, into which he poured all his frustration and pain over the Harriet Smithson romance, Duparc’s setting is one of throbbing grief. The oppressive and Tristanesque chromaticism is reminiscent of Wagner. An ostinato motif of a falling minor second dominates the song, which is arguably more effective than Berlioz’s blustering. There are two melancholy stanzas, the first of quavers, and the second (marked *un peu plus animé, mais très peu*) of semiquavers. Melancholy the song might be, but it ends on a major third of hope. **Le manoir de Rosemonde** (1879) is a good example of Duparc’s mature declamatory style. The song is dominated by the rhythmic opening and that ascending bass figure which ushers in the voice. *Durchkomponiert* in the manner of Schubert’s ‘Erlkönig’, it recalls the composer’s own ‘La vague et la cloche’ and *Lénore*. In *More than Singing*, Lotte Lehmann wrote that “something akin to madness rages through this song”, and gives a compelling description of her interpretation of the final page: “With the *forte* chord [after ‘monde’], it is as if you see before you the commanding figure of death . . . your end, your surrender, and the realization in dying that everything has been senseless and futile. You never reached your goal. You must die without ever again seeing Rosamonde.” The briefest of postludes suggests that Duparc was familiar with ‘Ich hab im Traum geweinet’ from Schumann’s *Dichterliebe*.

Romance de Mignon (1869) sets a free translation by Victor Wilder of the first two verses from Goethe’s well–known poem, ‘Kennst du das Land’, from *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. It’s an attractive and melodic song but by 1894, when Duparc published his *Recueil de Mélodies*, he had already heard Hugo Wolf’s masterful setting, and decided to omit his version from the collection, along with ‘Le galop’ and ‘Sérénade’. Duparc describes the background to **Soupir** (1868) in a letter to Jean Cras: “J’ai attendu trois ans mon mariage [...]. C’est pendant ce temps d’épreuve que j’ai écrit la petite mélodie que vous connaissez, *Soupir*” (“I waited three years to be married [. . .] It was during this testing time that I wrote the little mélodie that you know as ‘Soupir’”). The critic A. Michel interprets the song as an expression of a sort of mother fixation, but the extreme chromaticism of the accompaniment seems rather to convey the anguish of an unrequited lover. Whatever—the song has much in common with ‘Chanson triste’: the same appoggiatura motif, the same intensification of chromatic harmony in stanzas two and three, and the same expression of a hope that might never be fulfilled.

La vie antérieure, Duparc’s final song, was composed in 1884. “Mieux vaut n’avoir fait qu’une chose comme celle–là, plutôt qu’une œuvre nombreuse et imparfaite” (“Better to have created but one work like that than a large and imperfect œuvre”), said Massenet, referring to this masterpiece. It seems extraordinary that after this great song such flaming genius should compose no more for almost half a century, but that was Duparc’s fate. He suffered from a debilitating hyper–aesthesia, exacerbated no doubt by his excessive sensibility. He was neither insane nor crippled, but lived

with his family, reading and discussing music and paint–ing, until blindness and paralysis finally prevented him from leading a normal life.

—Richard Stokes



1. Chanson triste
(Jean Lahor)

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;

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

2. Sérénade florentine
(Jean Lahor)

Étoile, dont la beauté luit
Comme un diamant dans la nuit,
Regarde vers ma bien-aimée,
Dont la paupière s'est fermée,
Et fais descendre sur ses yeux
La bénédiction des cieux.

Elle s'endort: par la fenêtre
En sa chambre heureuse pénètre;
Sur sa blancheur, comme un baiser,
Viens jusqu'à l'aube te poser,
Et que sa pensée alors rêve
D'un astre d'amour qui se lève.

1. Song of sadness

Moonlight slumbers in your heart,
A gentle summer moonlight,
And to escape the cares of life
I shall drown myself in your light.

I shall forget past sorrows,
My sweet, when you cradle
My sad heart and my thoughts
In the calm and loving allure of your arms.

You will rest my poor head,
Ah! sometimes on your lap,
And recite to it a ballad
That will seem to speak of us;

And from your eyes full of sorrow,
From your eyes I shall then drink
So many kisses and so much love
That perhaps I shall be healed.

2. Florentine serenade

O star whose beauty shines
Like a diamond in the night,
Look down on my beloved
Whose eyelids now are closed,
And let the blessing of heaven
Descend upon her eyes.

She falls asleep: through the window
Enter her happy room;
Alight on her whiteness like a kiss
And linger there till dawn,
And let her thoughts then dream
Of a star of love ascending.

3. Testament
(Armand Silvestre)

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

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

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

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

3. Testament

That the wind might bear them to you
On the black wing of remorse,
I shall inscribe on the dead leaf
The torments of my dead heart!

All my strength has drained away
In the bright noon of your beauty,
And, like the withered leaf,
Nothing living is left for me.

Your eyes have scorched me to the soul
Like suns devoid of mercy!
The chasm will claim the leaf,
The South wind sweep me away . . .

But first, that it might bear them to you
On the black wing of remorse,
I shall inscribe on the dead leaf,
The torments of my dead heart!

4. Phidylé
(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!

5. Extase
(Jean Lahor)

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

4. Phidylé

The grass is soft for sleep beneath the cool poplars
On the banks of the mossy springs,
That flow in flowering meadows from a thousand sources,
And vanish beneath dark thickets.

Rest, O Phidylé! Noon on the leaves
Is gleaming, inviting you to sleep.
By the clover and thyme, alone, in the bright sunlight,
The fickle bees are humming.

A warm fragrance floats about the winding paths,
The red flowers of the cornfield droop,
And the birds, skimming the hillside with their wings,
Seek the shade of the eglantine.

But when the sun, low on its dazzling curve,
Sees its brilliance wane,
Let your loveliest smile and finest kiss
Reward me for my waiting.

5. Rapture

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

6. La vague et la cloche
(François Coppée)

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

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

Puis, tout changea . . . la mer et sa noire mêlée
Sombrèrent . . . sous mes pieds s'effondra le plancher
De la barque . . . Et j'étais seul dans un vieux clocher,
Chevauchant avec rage une cloche ébranlée.

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

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

6. The wave and the bell

Once, laid low by a potent draught,
I dreamed that amid waves and the roar
Of the sea I drifted without beacon at night,
A bleak oarsman, with no hope of reaching land . . .

The ocean spat its foam on my brow,
And the wind froze me through with horror.
The waves crashed down like walls about me,
With that slow rhythm a silence severs . . .

Then everything changed . . . The sea and its black tumult
Subsided . . . Beneath my feet the floor of the boat
Gave way . . . And I was alone in an old bell-tower,
Furiously riding a swaying bell.

I doggedly clasped the clamorous thing,
Convulsed, and closing my eyes with the effort.
The booming made the old stones tremble,
So much did I quicken the heavy swing.

Why did you not say, o dream, where God leads us?
Why did you not say if they will ever end,
The fruitless toil and the endless strife
Of which human life, alas, is made?

7. L'invitation au voyage
(Charles Baudelaire)

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

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

Vois sur ces canaux
Dormir ces vaisseaux
Dont l'humeur est vagabonde;
C'est pour assouvir
Ton moindre désir
Qu'ils viennent du bout du monde.
Les soleils couchants
Revêtent les champs,
Les canaux, la ville entière,

D'hyacinthe et d'or;
Le monde s'endort
Dans une chaude lumière.

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

7. Invitation to journey

My child, my sister,
Think how sweet
To journey there and live together!
To love as we please,
To love and die
In the land that is like you!
The watery suns
Of those hazy skies
Hold for my spirit
The same mysterious charms
As your treacherous eyes
Shining through their tears.

There—nothing but order and beauty dwell,
Abundance, calm and sensuous delight.

See on those canals
Those vessels sleeping,
Vessels with a restless soul;
To satisfy
Your slightest desire
They come from the ends of the earth.
The setting suns
Clothe the fields,
Canals and all the town

With hyacinth and gold;
The world falls asleep
In a warm light.

There—nothing but order and beauty dwell,
Abundance, calm and sensuous delight.



8. Le galop
(Sully Prudhomme)

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

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

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

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

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

8. The gallop

Flourish, good horse, your flying mane,
That the air about us be filled with voices!
That beneath your clattering hooves I hear
The gravel of streams and the woods' broken boughs!

Mingle your hot breath with the steam of your flanks,
Your foam and your blood with the sparks from your hooves!
Run, like an eagle we see skimming the plain,
Lashing the grass with its quivering loud wings!

'Come, young men, swim your horses across!'
Cries the old tribal chief to his horsemen;
And the sons of the desert are eager for plunder,
And the horses are crazed with the air they have drunk!

Swim thus in space, o my swift mount,
Quench my thirst with pure air, bathe me in wind;
The stirrup strikes your belly, I've slackened the rein,
My body scarcely touches you, it flies in your wake.

Break down everything, bush, gate or branch;
Cross torrent, ditch, embankment with a single bound;
Race on, I dream, bending over you with closed eyes . . .
Transport me, transport me to the deep unknown!

9. Au pays où se fait la guerre
(Théophile Gautier)

I

Au pays où se fait la guerre
Mon bel ami s'en est allé;
Il semble à mon cœur désolé
Qu'il ne reste que moi sur terre!
En partant, au baiser d'adieu,
Il m'a pris mon âme à ma bouche.
Qui le tient si longtemps, mon Dieu!
Voilà le soleil qui se couche,
Et moi, toute seule en ma tour,
J'attends encore son retour.

II

Les pigeons, sur le toit roucoulent,
Roucoule amoureusement
Avec un son triste et charmant;
Les eaux sous les grands saules coulent.
Je me sens tout près de pleurer;
Mon cœur comme un lis plein s'épanche,
Et je n'ose plus espérer.
Voici briller la lune blanche,
Et moi, toute seule en ma tour,
J'attends encore son retour.

III

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

9. To the land where there is war

I

To the land where there is war
My handsome lover has gone;
It seems to my desolate heart
That I alone am left on earth!
When we parted with a farewell kiss,
He took my soul from my lips.
Who detains him so long, my God?
See, the sun is setting,
And I, all alone in my tower,
Still await his return.

II

The pigeons on the roof are cooing,
Cooing lovingly
With a sad, enchanting sound;
Waters flow beneath tall willows.
I am near to weeping;
My heart overflows like a full-blown lily
And I dare no longer hope.
See, the white moon is shining,
And I, all alone in my tower,
Still await his return.

III

Someone is bounding up the stairs:
Could it be he, my sweet lover?
It is not he, but only
My little page with my lamp.
Take wing, evening breezes, and tell him
That he is my thought and my dream,
And all my joy and my sorrow.
See, the dawn is breaking,
And I, all alone in my tower,
Still await his return.

10. Sérénade
(Gabriel Marc)

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

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

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

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

10. Serenade

If, my beloved, I were
The scented breeze,
I would come, timid and rapt,
To brush your laughing lips.

If I were a bee in flight,
Or a beguiling butterfly,
You would not see me skittishly
Leave you for another flower.

If I were the charming rose
Your hand placed on your heart,
I would, quivering so close to you,
Wither with happiness.

But I seek in vain to please you,
In vain I moan and sigh.
I am a man, and what can I do?
Love you ...Confess my love...And weep!

11. La fuite
(Théophile Gautier)

Kadidja

Au firmament sans étoile,
La lune éteint ses rayons;
La nuit nous prête son voile;
Fuyons! fuyons!

Ahmed

Ne crains-tu pas la colère
De tes frères insolents,
Le désespoir de ton père,
De ton père aux sourcils blancs?

Kadidja

Que m'importent mépris, blâme,
Dangers, malédictions!
C'est en toi que vit mon âme.
Fuyons! fuyons!

Ahmed

Le cœur me manque; je tremble,
Et, dans mon sein traversé,
De leur kandjar il me semble
Sentir le contact glacé!

Kadidja

Née au désert, ma cavale
Sur les blés, dans les sillons,
Volerait, des vents rivale.
Fuyons! fuyons!

Ahmed

Au désert infranchissable,
Sans parasol, pour jeter
Un peu d'ombre sur la sable,
Sans tente pour m'abriter...

Kadidja

Mes cils te feront de l'ombre,
Et, la nuit, nous dormirons
Sous mes cheveux, tente sombre,
Fuyons! fuyons!

11. Escape

Kadidja

In the starless sky
The moon extinguishes its rays;
Night lends us her veil;
Let us flee! Let us flee!

Ahmed

Do you not fear the anger
Of your insolent brothers,
The despair of your father,
Your white-haired father?

Kadidja

What do I care for scorn, rebuke,
Dangers, imprecations!
My soul lives in you.
Let us flee! Let us flee!

Ahmed

My heart fails me; I tremble,
And in my pierced heart
I seem to feel the icy
Touch of their khanjars!

Kadidja

My desert-born mare
Would fly across the wheat,
Along the furrows, vying with the winds.
Let us flee! Let us flee!

Ahmed

To the impassable desert,
With no parasol to cast
A little shade on the sand,
With no tent to shelter me...

Kadidja

My eyelashes shall shade you,
And at night we shall sleep
Beneath the dark tent of my hair.
Let us flee! Let us flee!

Ahmed

Si le mirage illusoire
Nous cachait le vrai chemin,
Sans vivres, sans eau pour boire,
Tous deux nous mourrions demain.

Kadidja

Sous le bonheur mon cœur ploie;
Si l'eau manque aux stations,
Bois les larmes de ma joie.
Fuyons! fuyons!

12. Lamento
(Théophile Gautier)

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

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

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

Ahmed

If a mirage
Were to hide the true path,
Without food and without drink,
We would both die tomorrow.

Kadidja

My heart gives way with happiness;
If there's no water along the route,
Drink the tears of my joy.
Let us flee! Let us flee!

12. Lament

Do you know the white tomb,
Where the shadow of a yew
Waves plaintively?
On that yew a pale dove,
Sad and solitary at sundown
Sings its song;

As if the awakened soul
Weeps beneath the sod, together
With the song,
And at the sorrow of being forgotten
Coos its complaint
Most tranquilly.

Ah! nevermore shall I approach that tomb,
When evening descends
In its sombre cloak,
To listen to the pale dove
From the top of the yew
Sing its plaintive song!

13. Élégie
(Thomas Moore, trans. Mme Duparc)

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

mais la rosée de la nuit, bien qu'elle pleure en silence,
fera briller la verdure sur sa couche;
et nos larmes, en secret répandues,
conserveront sa mémoire fraîche et verte dans nos cœurs.

14. Le manoir de Rosemonde
(Robert de Bonnières)

De sa dent soudaine et vorace,
Comme un chien l'amour m'a mordu;
En suivant mon sang répandu,
Va, tu pourras suivre ma trace.

Prends un cheval de bonne race,
Pars et suis mon chemin ardu,
Fondrière ou sentier perdu,
Si la course ne te harasse!

En passant par où j'ai passé,
Tu verras que, seul et blesse,
J'ai parcouru ce triste monde,

Et qu'ainsi je m'en fus mourir
Bien loin, bien loin, sans découvrir
Le bleu manoir de Rosemonde.

13. Elegy

Oh! breathe not his name, let it sleep in the shade,
Where cold and unhonoured his relics are laid:
Silent, sad and frozen be the tears that we shed,
As the night-dew that moistens the grass o'er his head..

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

14. The manor of Rosamonde

With sudden and voracious tooth,
Love like a dog has bitten me;
By following the blood I've shed –
Come, you'll be able to follow my trail.

Take a horse of fine breeding,
Set out and follow my arduous course
By quagmire or by hidden path,
If the chase does not weary you!

Passing by where I have passed,
You will see that, solitary and wounded,
I have traversed this sorry world,

And that thus I went off to die
Far, far away, without ever finding
The blue manor of Rosamonde.

**15. Romance de Mignon
(Victor Wilder, after Goethe)**

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

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

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

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

**16. Soupir
(Sully Prudhomme)**

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

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

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

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

15. Mignon's romance

Do you know it, that radiant land,
Where fruit gleams among golden branches
A gentle breeze scents the air,
Laurel and green myrtle intertwine.

Do you know it? Do you know it? There,
My beloved, let us make our way...

Do you know it, that wondrous abode,
Where everything still speaks of our love,
And every object asks me with sorrow:
Who has stolen your delight and joy?

Do you know it? Do you know it? There,
My beloved, let us make our way...

16. Sigh

Never to see or hear her,
Never to utter her name aloud,
But faithful, always to wait for her,
Always to love her.

To open my arms and, weary of waiting,
To close them again on a void,
Yet always to hold them out again,
Always to love her.

Ah, able only to hold them out
And to waste away in tears,
Yet always to shed those tears,
Always to love her.

Never to see or hear her,
Never to utter her name aloud,
But with a love always more tender,
Always to love her.

**17. La vie antérieure
(Charles Baudelaire)**

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

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

C'est là que j'ai vécu dans les voluptés calmes,
Au milieu de l'azur, des vagues, des splendeurs
Et des esclaves nus, tout imprégnés d'odeurs,

Qui me rafraîchissaient le front avec des palmes,
Et dont l'unique soin était d'approfondir
Le secret douloureux qui me faisait languir.

17. A previous life

For long I lived beneath vast colonnades
Tinged with a thousand fires by ocean suns,
Whose giant pillars, straight and majestic,
Made them look, at evening, like basalt caves.

The sea-swells, mingling the mirrored skies,
Solemnly and mystically interwove
The mighty chords of their mellow music
With the colours of sunset reflected in my eyes.

It is there I lived in sensuous repose,
With blue sky about me and brightness and waves
And naked slaves all drenched in perfume

Who fanned my brow with fronds of palm,
And whose only care was to fathom
The secret grief which made me languish.

Translations by Richard Stokes
© from A French Song Companion (OUP, 2000)

Translations by Richard Stokes
© from A French Song Companion (OUP, 2000)





Ann-Beth Solvang *Mezzo-Soprano*

The Norwegian mezzo-soprano Ann-Beth Solvang studied at the Rogaland Conservatory of Music in Stavanger and at the Academy of Opera in Oslo. She was awarded the Shell Award in 2007. Following two years in the opera studio at the Hamburg State Opera, she joined the company as a principal artist in 2008, performing a wide range of mezzo-soprano roles. In the 2011/12 season she began her freelance career, appearing regularly at leading European opera houses and festivals, including the Innsbruck Festival of Early Music, Théâtre du Châtelet, Opéra Bastille, Theater an der Wien, the Bavarian State Opera and the Norwegian Opera & Ballet. Several of these productions have been released on CD and DVD.

From 2018 to 2024, Solvang was a member of the ensemble at the Oldenburg State Theatre, where she performed central roles across a broad operatic repertoire. In 2022 she was awarded the Erna-Schlüter Prize. Since joining the soloist ensemble of the Badische Staatstheater Karlsruhe in 2024, her repertoire has expanded to include soprano roles such as Marschallin, Lidoine, Sieglinde and Santuzza. In 2025, she sang the title role in the German premiere of Lemoyne's *Phèdre*, receiving critical acclaim. An active concert singer, her repertoire includes works by Elgar, Mahler, Richard Strauss, Berlioz and Wagner. Ann-Beth Solvang was awarded the prestigious Wilhelmsen Award in 2026.



Eirik Grøtvedt *Tenor*

The Norwegian tenor Eirik Grøtvedt studied at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo. In 2019 he joined the Young Artist Programme at the Norwegian Opera & Ballet, where he subsequently became a member of the soloist ensemble.

Grøtvedt has established himself as a versatile operatic singer, with a repertoire spanning Mozart, Italian bel canto, French opera and contemporary works. He has appeared in leading roles such as Tamino, Don Ottavio and Ferrando, alongside more characterful parts and contributions to several contemporary opera premieres. His concert work includes major sacred and symphonic repertoire by composers such as Bach, Handel, Haydn and Beethoven.

In recent seasons, he has undertaken notable engagements both in Norway and internationally. Highlights include performances with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, participation on a recording of *Der Fliegende Holländer* released by DECCA, and his debut with the London Philharmonic Orchestra in Alban Berg's *Wozzeck* in 2026. At the Norwegian Opera & Ballet, he continues to appear in major productions, including Verdi's *Requiem* and Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. Grøtvedt also maintains a strong commitment to the song repertoire. His achievements have been recognised with the Norwegian Soloist Prize in 2023 and the Equinor Award in 2025.



John Lidal *Piano*

John Lidal is a prominent Scandinavian pianist, recognised for his versatility and extensive experience as an accompanist and chamber musician. A highly sought-after collaborator, he has worked with artists of international stature throughout Europe and the United States, and regularly coaches leading singers performing at major opera houses and festivals.

Lidal completed his studies at the Trondheim Conservatory of Music, and subsequently graduated with honours from the Guildhall School of Music & Drama in London, the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo and the Manhattan School of Music in New York. In 1999 he was awarded first prize in two international piano competitions in London.

From 2001 to 2011, Lidal served on the faculty of the Manhattan School of Music. He is currently engaged as pianist and coach at the Norwegian Opera & Ballet in Oslo, alongside an active freelance career. He is also frequently invited to give masterclasses at leading institutions, including the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris, the Staatsoper Unter den Linden Opera Studio in Berlin, and the Manhattan School of Music.

John Lidal was awarded the prestigious Wilhelmsen Award in 2018. He is the founder and Artistic Director of the LidalNorth International Opera Workshops, and maintains private coaching studios in Berlin, London, New York, Oslo and Paris.



Musicians

ANN-BETH SOLVANG
 MEZZO-SOPRANO
 (TRACKS: 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15 AND 17)

EIRIK GRØTVEDT
 TENOR
 (TRACKS: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14 AND 16)

JOHN LIDAL
 PIANO
 (ALL TRACKS)

Credits

RECORDED IN RAINBOW STUDIO,
 OSLO, 11—13 AUGUST 2025
 PRODUCER: VEGARD LANDAAS
 BALANCE ENGINEER: THOMAS WOLDEN
 EDITING: VEGARD LANDAAS
 MASTERING: THOMAS WOLDEN
 BOOKLET NOTES: RICHARD STOKES
 TEXT TRANSLATIONS: RICHARD STOKES
 BOOKLET EDITOR: ALISON BULLOCK AARSTEN
 COVER DESIGN: ANETTE L'ORANGE / BLUNDERBUSS
 PAINTINGS BY GEORGE SEURAT CC LICENSE: *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte* 1884,
Bridge of Courbevoie 1887, *Paysage, L'Île de la Grande-Jatte & Baigneurs à Asnières (detail)*, 1884
 ARTIST PHOTO (SOLVANG): STEPHAN WALZL
 ARTIST PHOTO (GRØTVEDT): CALM VIDAL PHOTOGRAPHY
 ARTIST PHOTO (LIDAL): PÉTER MADAI

THIS RECORDING HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE WITH
 SUPPORT FROM: THE NORWEGIAN SOCIETY OF SOLOISTS,
 AND TOM WILHELMSEN'S FOUNDATION.

ADDITIONAL THANKS TO: SVEIN TORE ANDERSON;
 ANNE GJEVANG; ELI KRISTIN HANSSVEEN; HEGE HØISÆTER;
 KAREN LIDAL; LUDIVINE PETIT; GAÏT SIRGUEY; RICHARD STOKES;
 THE MUSIC LIBRARY OF THE NORWEGIAN OPERA & BALLET.

LAWO
 CLASSICS

LWC1482
 © 2026 LAWØ | © 2026 LAWØ Classics
www.lawo.no



Henri Duparc (1848–1933)
Complete Songs

1. Chanson triste 03:00
2. Sérénade florentine 02:31
3. Testament 03:25
4. Phidylé 05:08
5. Extase 03:30
6. La vague et la cloche 05:02
7. L'invitation au voyage 04:12
8. Le galop 03:10
9. Au pays où se fait la guerre 04:54
10. Sérénade 02:40
11. La fuite 03:19
12. Lamento 03:07
13. Élégie 02:52
14. Le manoir de Rosemonde 02:29
15. Romance de Mignon 04:08
16. Soupir 03:39
17. La vie antérieure 04:22

