

Sheva
CONTEMPORARY

The Art of
Karen Radcliffe

FAURÉ
DEBUSSY
RAVEL
MESSIAEN
MUSSORGSKY

KAREN RADCLIFFE
soprano
MICHAEL BELL
piano



This disc is dedicated to the memory of Karen Radcliffe who, after a prolonged fight against cancer, died in May 2023.

"A distinctive and compelling artist with an exceptional range." [Jane Manning - SPM Magazine]

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Clair de Lune (Moonlight)

Après un Rêve (After a Dream)

Les Berceaux (The Cradles)

Mandoline (Mandolin)

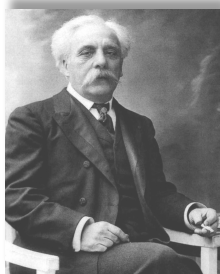
En Sourdine (Muted)

Although Fauré wrote more large-scale works than is generally well-known, the heart of his output lies in the chamber music, piano works and, above all, the "mélodies". His vocal lines are inextricably linked to the piano accompaniments, creating a wonderfully intimate texture.

Clair de Lune (to Paul Verlaine), is the first of Fauré's compositions written in the manner of a piano piece with vocal obbligato. The piano's "minuet" represents the masqueraders of Versailles court life, whilst the vocal line weaves the gentle lovers' dreams. **Après un Rêve** (Romain Bussine), with its sublime tune, is the most famous example of the overt lyricism of Fauré's earliest period of mélodies (1861-1878).

Les Berceaux (Sully Prudhomme), with its famous rocking triplet accompaniment, expresses both the intimate longing and heartache of the sailors' wives left behind on the shore as the vast horizons call the menfolk to far-off lands.

Mandoline and **En Sourdine** (both Paul Verlaine) are from Fauré's third and final *recueil*, and come from the celebrated *Cinq Melodies* "De Venise" (1891). As with *Clair de Lune*, the former portrays the courtly life of Versailles with its ideals of moonlit meetings and refined passions, but also reveals the humour and deeper emotions behind the "marble façade". *En Sourdine* evokes nocturnal serenity as the lovers languish in the half light, only to be disturbed by the nightingale's warning song - a stolen moment in the night...



Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Beau Soir (Beautiful Evening) 1880

Mandoline (Mandolin) 1882

Debussy's mélodies encapsulate the most delicate and passionate aspects of the genre. His choice of texts ranges from the lyrics of the salon to the greatest of French poetry, and perhaps under Mussorgsky's influence, by he set his own words is cycles such as *Proses Lyriques*. In all of these he displays complete musical mastery. *Beau soir* (Paul Bourget) is from Debussy's early output of songs. The piano's dreamy triplet-figure rises in each bar to momentary pauses, defining the poet's vision of an evening when the tranquil beauty of nature lulls the senses into relishing the charm of youth. Debussy's *Mandoline* (Paul Verlaine) is giddy and swirling with witty nuances making fun of the "amateur" serenaders.



Trois Chansons De Bilitis (1897-1898)

La Flûte de Pan (The Flute of Pan)

La Chevelure (The Tresses)

Le Tombeau des Naiades (The Tomb of the Naiads)

Mussorgsky's *The Nursery*, was well-known to Debussy who was looking to experiment further with non-metrical text in a style juxtaposing quasi-recitative and soaring melody. The extreme and intricate detail of his music creates, within the compositions, indelible moments when the poetry and music become "indisolvably one". As in his earlier orchestral work *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*, Debussy evokes within the *Trois Chansons de Bilitis* the graceful mysteries of antiquity through the atmospheric work of the symbolist poet Pierre Louÿs. These songs were the result of a collaboration with the poet, one of only two such works to come to completion. The first performance was given on 17th March 1900, an important year for Debussy, as his work finally began to gain recognition. The *Bilitis* songs have a form and content unlike any previously written.

Louÿs claimed his 143 poems were the work of an ancient Greek woman named Bilitis and found on the wall of a tomb in Cyprus. Debussy's selection explores the luxuriant sensuality of the antique world; the translucent purity of the piano writing lending the work a transcending, almost "Delphic spirituality".

La Flûte de Pan begins with a delicate, simple scale, identifying with the flute given to Bilitis by Pan. This dreamy evocation of first love ends as evening falls and she realises, as the frogs begin their twilight vigil, that her mother will never believe that it took so long to find her lost belt (*Ma mère ne croira jamais que je suis restée si longtemps à chercher ma ceinture perdue*). In *La Chevelure*, Bilitis tells, in innocent rapture, about a dream by her lover. The deeply sensuous nature of this song is perfectly counterbalanced in the piano, accentuating the innocent charm of young love (*et il me regarda d'un regard si tendre, que je baissai les yeux avec un frisson*).

The très *lent* piano opening of **Le Tombeau des Naïades** marks out the laboured footsteps of Bilitis as she walks through the freezing woodland. Metaphorically she seeks her past innocence and the lost ancient creatures of myth, only to find that they have died in the cold winter. The climax of the song, and cycle, is reached as Bilitis is told by the dissinterested lover to remain by the icy tomb (*Mais restons ici, où est leur tombeau*).

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Histoires Naturelles (1906)

Le Paon (The Peacock)

Le Grillon (The Cricket)

Le Cygne (The Swan)

Le Martin-pêcheur (The Kingfisher)

La Pintade (The Guinea-fowl)

Julien Renard's *Histoires Naturelles* consists of several short character studies of birds and animals, both of the farmyard and the wild. His approach to the subjects is unsentimental and often ironic, but without concealing his affection for them. Ravel boldly set five of these prose texts to music. When asked by Renard why he chose to use them Ravel replied, "My intention was not to add anything but to interpret them. I wished to express with music what you say with words."

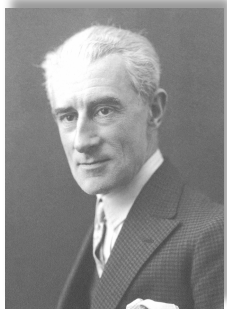
In **Le Paon** we see the peacock strutting around in his best clothes, as if it were his wedding day. As always, his bride fails to show, for she indeed does not exist, and the ceremony is again postponed until the next day. Rhythms of the Baroque French Overture accompany his royal progress.

In **Le Grillon** we are afforded a glimpse into the minuscule world of the cricket's domestic life: the winding of his tiny watch and the turning of the key in the delicate lock. The song is a superb canvas of intricate and fragile textures. At last the microcosm pans out to embrace the poplars and the wider horizon.

Le Cygne begins in a traditional Romantic guise with a gently rippling piano accompaniment, but twice these poetic allusions are dryly interrupted with "matter of fact" statements which ultimately break the dream (*Mais qu'est-ce que je dis? Chaque fois qu'il plonge, il fouille du bec la vase nourrissant et ramene un ver. Il engraisse comme une oie.*).

Le Martin-Pêcheur is the most profound piece in the cycle; its emotional centre point. It is a magnificent study of stillness, taking the angler's breath away as he cherishes the few sublime seconds when the kingfisher perches on the end of his rod.

In **La Pintade** Ravel sets the guinea-fowl to an energetic Spanish-dance rhythm, depicting the aggression and arrogance with which this creature responds to whomsoever it meets. Here the piano recalls the composer's *Alborada del Gracioso* with its piquant harmonies, punchy rhythms, and volleys of repeated notes.



Olivier Messiaen (1875-1937)

Trois Mélodies (1930)

Pourquoi? (Why?)

Le Sourire (The Smile)

La Fiancée perdue (The Lost Fiancée)



Messiaen had a great passion for ethnomusicology and birdsong. His unique style was also forged from Greek metre and Hindu rhythms. These three *mélodies* were his first published set of songs, written when he was still a pupil at the Paris Conservatoire. Messiaen wrote the poems for the two outer songs, the central one being set to text by his mother, Cécile Sauvage. Although the songs are amongst the earliest of Messiaen's works, they already exhibit his profoundly spiritual musical language, and foreshadow his mature style.

Pourquoi? asks profound questions of nature, each phrase repeatedly peaking on a high F#. In *La Sourire* his mother reflects on parental love. *La Fiancée Perdue* simultaneously prays to Jesus for protection for his mother in death and his bride-to-be, Claire Delbos.

Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881)

The Nursery (1868-1872)

Series 1: Детская (The Nursery)

С няней (With Nanny)

В углу (In the Corner)

Жук (The Beetle)

С куклой (With the Doll)

На сон грядущий (At Bedtime)

Series 2: На Даче (At the Dacha)

Кот Матрос (The Cat "Sailor")

Поехал на палочке (Ride on a Hobbyhorse)



The deeply provocative Mussorgsky created in his short, undisciplined life some of the most haunting and memorable music. This would exert an enormous influence on many key figures in twentieth century composers, not least Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel. As a consequence of his completed works failing to achieve any popularity, including the now highly acclaimed opera *Boris Godunov* and the piano cycle *Pictures At An Exhibition*, he quickly fell into depression and severe alcoholism resulting in his death in 1881 at the age of just 41.

The Nursery composed between 1868 and 1872 is a group of seven *song-episodes*, five from a completed first set and two from its unfinished successor. The composer's own texts are uncannily perceptive of childhood. The joys, desires, horrors and fears of a child's existence express in parallel the wider context of life in Russia.

With Nanny finds a young boy pleading with his nanny to tell a tale of "the bogeyman" in the woods who eats up naughty children. However, becoming afraid, he asks her to change to tales about a limping tar who trips spawn a mushroom, and a princess whose sneeze cracks all the windows. The child's demands for ever more stories have incredible rhythmic urgency punctuated by no fewer than twenty-six changes of metre within the song's fifty-three bars, and a direct clarity of expression through its vivid word setting.

In The Corner is a duologue between nanny and Mishenka who is in trouble having destroyed the contents of nanny's work-basket and strewn her knitting all over the nursery. Banished to the corner, Mishenka pleads his innocence and blames the cat. His growing confidence is reflected in a more securely centred vocal line and harmonically stable piano accompaniment in the major key.

The Beetle portrays the breathless excitement of a child who finds a beetle on the tiny house which he has made from twigs. This is interrupted when the insect flies at the child, striking him on the temple. He has just one question as it then lies motionless on its back, no longer angry, no longer buzzing: "*What has happened to the beetle?*"

The monologue **With Dolly** finds a little girl gently rocking her doll to sleep, telling her of the threat of being carried off by the grey wolf or being eaten by the bogeyman. As the textures become fuller and warmer the girl then sings of fairies, and of fruit turning to cake and candy. Although the piano briefly recalls the *wolf and bogeyman* motif, the vocal line has the final say with "*sleep now, Dolly*".

A child's **Bedtime Prayer** ritual is set with rhythmic urgency as the names of relatives and friends are reeled off in quick succession. Eventually, forgetting what comes next, he turns to Nanny and with a gentle reproach she reminds him that he has missed out a blessing for himself.

In **The Cat, "Sailor"** continuous running piano quavers, with the voice doubling in heterophony, give a musical precision to this young girl's monologue as she tells her mother excitedly about the pet cat trying to capture a little bird. Looking for her sunshade, she spies the cat creeping towards the birdcage. She tries to clout the cat who is far too quick for her, and instead hits the cage. "*My fingers burn and tingle so! What a naughty cat mummy eh?*"

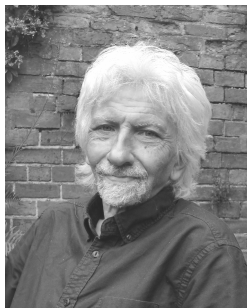
The Hobbyhorse is a masterly depiction of the vigorous, breathless detail of a young boy's reckless ride which inevitably concludes in disaster as he crashes and falls off. The mother's soothing words distract him from pain as they both notice a beautiful bird in the tree. The song then comes full circle as the galloping returns to summon his friend, Vassia, who must not be late that evening as he must go to bed early.

Karen Radcliffe read Music and Classics at the University of Keele, holding the vocal scholarship there for three consecutive years, subsequently studying with Paul Farrington and Jane Manning for a Masters in Modern Music. She was awarded a Concordia Scholarship for opera studies and participated in numerous masterclasses with Adrienne Czerny of the Liszt Academy and Dr. Stuart Burrows. Karen made her London début at the Purcell Room alongside Jane Manning and the Endymion Ensemble in the “Performers’ Choice Series”.

For twenty years she has worked in recital partnership with Michael Bell performing throughout Europe to much acclaim in an extensive repertoire encompassing Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Grieg, Berg, Fauré, Debussy, Ravel, Poulenc, Messiaen, Dallapiccola and Shostakovich. Orchestral performances included Strauss *Vier Letzte Lieder*, Mahler Symphony no.4, Vaughan Williams *Sea Symphony*; in addition to sacred works by Haydn, Mozart, Respighi, Poulenc; and vocal chamber works such as Ravel’s *Chansons Madécasses* Schönberg’s *Pierrot Lunaire*, Britten’s *Phaedra*, and Berio’s *Folksongs*. Known for her advocacy of new music, she has given numerous premières including *A Share of Night to Bear* by Sorhab Uduman and the song cycle *September, Just Septembers* by Peter Seabourne.

Michael Bell is described by Gramophone as having a “*thoughtful brand of virtuosity*”. Having studied at the Royal Northern College of Music with Derryck Wyndham and Sulamita Aronovsky, he was awarded a Chopin Fellowship from the Polish Government, enabling him to move to the State Academy in Warsaw. Subsequent national and international prizes led to numerous live concert performances and broadcasts on radio and TV throughout Europe, Australia and Africa. More recent highlights have included concerts at London’s Southbank Centre, in Bulgaria with the Sofia Philharmonic, and return invitations to the Kharkiv Assemblies Festival in Ukraine.

His solo repertoire is diverse and extensive, with recordings of solo works by Granados, Haydn, Grieg, Janacek, Seabourne, and of 20th Century English trios. Partnering clarinettist Victoria Samek, his disc of the complete duo works by Richard Rodney Bennett received much critical acclaim, as did his recording of Seabourne’s *Steps Volume 3: Arabesques*. A versatile and exciting musician, he has over thirty concertos in his repertoire, and has performed the complete Beethoven cycle. He has given premières of works dedicated to him. His playing is characterised by a vast palette of pianistic colour, great attention to articulation, and always the communication of an intensely personal vision.



1. Clair de Lune (Paul Verlaine)

Votre âme est un paysage choisi
Que vont charmant masques et bergamasques
Jouant du luth et dansant et quasi
Tristes sous leurs déguisements fantasques.

Tout en chantant sur le mode mineur
L'amour vainqueur et la vie opportune,
Ils n'ont pas l'air de croire à leur bonheur
Et leur chanson se mêle au clair de lune,

Au calme clair de lune triste et beau,
Qui fait rêver les oiseaux dans les arbres
Et sangloter d'extase les jets d'eau,
Les grands jets d'eau sveltes parmi les marbres.

2. Après un Rêve (Romain Bussine)

Dans un sommeil que charmaït ton image
Je rêvais le bonheur, ardent mirage,
Tes yeux étaient plus doux, ta voix pure et sonore,
Tu rayonnais comme un ciel éclairé par l'aurore;

Tu m'appelais et je quittais la terre
Pour m'enfuir avec toi vers la lumière,
Les cieux pour nous entr'ouvraient leurs nues,
Splendeurs inconnues, leurs divines entrevues.

Hélas! hélas, triste réveil des songes,
Je t'appelle, ô nuit, rends-moi tes mensonges;
Reviens, reviens, radieuse,
Reviens, ô nuit mystérieuse!

3. Mandoline (Paul Verlaine)

Les donneurs de sérénades
Et les belles écouteuses
Échangent des propos fades
Sous les ramures chanteuses.

C'est Tircis et c'est Aminte,
Et c'est l'éternel Clitandre,
Et c'est Damis qui pour mainte
Cruelle fait maint vers tendre.

Leurs courtes vestes de soie,
Leurs longues robes à queues,
Leur élégance, leur joie
Et leurs molles ombres bleues,

Moonlight

Your soul is a chosen landscape
Charmed by masqueraders and revellers
Playing the lute and dancing and almost
Sad beneath their fanciful disguises!

While singing, in the minor key,
Of triumphant love and the fortunate life,
They do not seem to believe in their happiness,
And their song mingles with the moonlight,

The calm moonlight, sad and lovely,
Which sets the birds in the trees dreaming.
And makes the fountains sob with ecstasy,
The tall slender fountains among the marble statues!

After a Dream

In a slumber charmed by your image,
I dreamt of happiness, burning mirage.
Your eyes were softer, your voice pure and ringing,
You shone like a sky lit by the dawn:

You called me and I left the earth
To flee with you toward the light,
The skies opened their clouds for us,
Splendours unknown, divine glimmers glimpsed.

Alas! Alas! Sad awakening from dreams,
I call you, O night, give back to me your lies,
Return, return radiance,
Return, O mysterious night!

Mandolin

The singers of serenades
And their beautiful listeners
Exchange sweet nothings
Under the singing boughs.

It is Tircis and Amanta,
And the eternal Clitander,
And Damis who for many
A cruel heart fashions many tender verses.

Their short silk coats,
Their long trailing robes,
Their elegance, their joy,
And their soft blue shadows

Tourbillonnent dans l'extase
D'une lune rose et grise,
Et la mandoline jase
Parmi les frissons de brise.

4. Les Berceaux (Sully Prudhomme)

Le long du quai les grands vaisseaux,
Que la houle incline en silence,
Ne prennent pas garde aux berceaux
Que la main des femmes balance.

Mais viendra le jour des adieux,
Car il faut que les femmes pleurent,
Et que les hommes curieux
Tentent les horizons qui leurrent.

Et ce jour-là les grands vaisseaux,
Fuyant le port qui diminue,
Sentent leur masse retenue
Par l'âme des lointains berceaux.

5. En Sourdine (Paul Verlaine)

Calmes dans le demi-jour
Que les branches hautes font,
Pénétrons bien notre amour
De ce silence profond.

Mêlons nos âmes, nos cœurs
Et nos sens extasiés,
Parmi les vagues langueurs
Des pins et des arbusiers.

Ferme tes yeux à demi,
Croise tes bras sur ton sein,
Et de ton cœur endormi
Chasse à jamais tout dessein.

Laissons-nous persuader
Au souffle berceur et doux
Qui vient, à tes pieds, rider
Les ondes des gazons roux.

Et quand, solennel, le soir
Des chênes noirs tombera
Voix de notre désespoir,
Le rossignol chantera.

*Swirl about in the ecstasy
Of a moon pink and grey
And the mandolin chatters
On the quivering breeze.*

The Cradles

*Along the quays the large ships,
Silently tilted by the surge
Do not give heed to the cradles
Which the women's hands rock.*

*But the day of farewells will come
For it must be that the women weep
And the inquisitive men
Venture the horizons that lure them.*

*And on that day the great vessels,
Fleeing the ports, which fade from view,
Feel their bulk held back
By the soul of the distant cradles.*

Muted

*Calm in the half-light
Made by the high branches,
Let us immerse totally our love
In this profound silence.*

*Let us blend our souls, our hearts
And our ecstatic senses
Among the faint langours
Of the pines and the bushes.*

*Half-close your eyes,
Cross your arms on your breast,
And from your sleeping heart
Drive away forever all plans.*

*Let us surrender ourselves
To the soft and rocking breeze,
Which comes, to your feet, to ripple
The waves of russet lawns.*

*And when, solemnly the evening
Falls from the black oaks,
The voice of our despair,
The nightingale, will sing.*

6. Beau Soir (Paul Bourget)

Lorsque au soleil couchant les rivières sont roses,
Et qu'un tiède frisson court sur les champs de blé,
Un conseil d'être heureux semble sortir des choses
Et monter vers le cœur troublé;

Un conseil de goûter le charme d'être au monde
Pendant qu'on est jeune et que le soir est beaud,
Car nous nous en allons, comme s'en va cette onde:
Elle à la mer, nous au tombeau!

7. Mandoline (Paul Verlaine)

as 3. above

Chansons de Bilitis (Pierre Louÿs)

8. La Flûte de Pan

Pour le jour des Hyacinthies,
Il m'a donné une syrinx faite
De roseaux bien taillés,
Unis avec la blanche cire
Qui est douce à mes lèvres comme le miel.

Il m'apprend à jouer, assise sur ses genoux;
Mais je suis un peu tremblante.
Il en joue après moi, si doucement
Que je l'entends à peine.

Nous n'avons rien à nous dire,
Tant nous sommes près l'un de l'autre;
Mais nos chansons veulent se répondre,
Et tour à tour nos bouches
S'unissent sur la flûte.

Il est tard;
Voici le chant des grenouilles vertes
Qui commence avec la nuit.
Ma mère ne croira jamais
Que je suis restée si longtemps
À chercher ma ceinture perdue.

9. La Chevelure

Il m'a dit: «Cette nuit, j'ai rêvé.
J'avais ta chevelure autour de mon cou.
J'avais tes cheveux comme un collier noir
Autour de ma nuque et sur ma poitrine.

Beautiful Evening

*When in the sunset the rivers turn pink,
And a slight shiver runs through the wheat fields,
An exhortation to be happy seems to come from all things
And rise up towards the troubled heart;*

*A plea to savour the charm of being alive
While we are young and the evening is fair,
For we pass on, as a wave passes on:
The wave to the sea, and we to the grave.*

Mandolin

as 3. above.

The Flute of Pan

*For the feast of Hyacinthus
He gave me, the syrinx, pipes made
From well-trimmed reeds,
Joined with the white wax
That is sweet to my lips like honey.*

*He teaches me to play, as I sit on his knees;
But I tremble a little.
He plays it after me, so softly
That I can barely hear it.*

*We have nothing to say,
We are so close to one another;
But our songs want to reply to each other,
And each in turn our mouths
Are joined on the pipes.*

*It is late;
Here comes the song of the green frogs,
Which begins at dusk.
My mother will never believe
That I stayed out so long
Searching for my lost sash.*

The Hair

*He told me: Last night I had a dream.
Your hair was around my neck.
It was like a black necklace
Round my nape and on my chest.*

«Je les caressais, et c'étaient les miens;
Et nous étions liés pour toujours ainsi,
Par la même chevelure, la bouche sur la bouche,
Ainsi que deux lauriers n'ont souvent qu'une racine.

«Et peu à peu, il m'a semblé,
Tant nos membres étaient confondus,
Que je devenais toi-même
Ou que tu entrais en moi comme mon songe.»

Quand il eut achevé,
il mit doucement ses mains sur mes épaules,
Et il me regarda d'un regard si tendre,
Que je baissai les yeux avec un frisson.

10. Le Tombeau des Naïades

Le long du bois couvert de givre, je marchais;
Mes cheveux devant ma bouche
Se fleurissaient de petits glaçons,
Et mes sandales étaient lourdes
De neige fangeuse et tassée.

Il me dit: «Que cherches-tu?»

«Je suis la trace du satyre -
Ses petits pas fourchus alternent
Comme des trous dans un manteau blanc.»
Il me dit: «Les satyres sont morts.

«Les satyres et les nymphes aussi.
Depuis trente ans il n'a pas fait un hiver aussi terrible.
La trace que tu vois est celle d'un bouc.
Mais restons ici, où est leur tombeau.»

Et avec le fer de sa houe il cassa la glace
De la source où jadis riaient les naïades.
Il prenait de grands morceaux froids,
et les soulevant vers le ciel pâle,
il regardait au travers.

*"I was stroking your hair, and it was my own;
Thus the same tresses joined us forever,
With our mouths touching,
Just as two laurels have only one root.*

*"And gradually I sensed,
Since our limbs were so entwined,
That I was becoming you
And you were entering me like my dream.*

*When he'd finished,
He gently put his hands on my shoulders,
And gazed at me so tenderly
That I lowered my eyes, quivering.*

The Tomb of the Water-Nymphs

*Along the frost-covered wood I walked;
The hair in front of my mouth
Blossomed in tiny icicles,
And my sandals were weighed down
With muddy, caked snow.*

He asked: "For what are you looking?"

*"I am tracking the satyr -
His little cloven hoof prints alternate
Like holes in a white mantle."
He said: "The satyrs are dead.*

*"The satyrs and he nymphs as well.
For thirty years there had not been such a terrible winter.
The trail you see is of a he-goat.
But let us wait here, where their tomb is."*

*And with the blade of his hoe he broke the ice
Of the spring where once the water-nymphs laughed.
He took up great cold slabs of ice,
And, lifting them towards the pale sky,
He peered through them.*

Histoires Naturelles (Jules Renard)

11. Le Paon

Il va sûrement se marier aujourd'hui.

Ce devait être pour hier. En habit de gala, il était prêt. Il n'attendait que sa fiancée. Elle n'est pas venue. Elle ne peut tarder.

Glorieux, il se promène avec une allure de prince indien et porte sur lui les riches présents d'usage. L'amour avive l'éclat de ses couleurs et son aigrette tremble comme une lyre.

La finacée n'arrive pas.

Il monte au haut du toit et regarde du côté du soleil. Il jette son cri diabolique:

Léon! Léon!

C'est ainsi qu'il appelle sa fiancée. Il ne voit rien venir et personne ne répond. Les volailles habituées ne lèvent même point la tête. Elles sont lasses de l'admirer. Il redescend dans la cour, si sûr d'être beau qu'il est incapable de rancune.

Son mariage sera pour demain.

Et, ne sachant que faire du reste de la journée, il se dirige vers le perron. Il gravit les marches, comme des marches de temple, d'un pas officiel.

Il relève sa robe à queue toute lourde des yeux qui n'ont pu se détacher d'elle.

Il répète encore une fois la cérémonie.

12. Le Grillon

C'est l'heure où, las d'errer, l'insecte nègre revient de promenade et répare avec soin le désordre de son domaine. D'abord il ratisse ses étroites allées de sable.

Il fait du bran de scie qu'il écarte au seuil de sa retraite.

Il lime la racine de cette grande herbe propre à le harceler.

Il se repose. Puis, il remonte sa minuscule montre.

A-t-il fini? Est-elle cassée? Il se repose encore un peu.

Il rentre chez lui et ferme sa porte.

Longtemps il tourne sa celf dans la serrure délicate.

Et il écoute: Point d'alarme dehors.

Mais il ne se trouve pas en sûreté.

Et comme par une chaînette dont la poulie grince, il descend jusqua'au fond de la terre.

The Peacock

He will surely get married today.

It was to have been yesterday. He was all dressed up ready. He was only waiting for his bride. She didn't come. She can't be long.

Now glorious he struts about with the heir of an indian prince and carries the customary rich presents. Love heightens the brightness of his colours and his aigrette trembles like a lyre.

His bride does not arrive.

He climbs to the top of the roof and looks towards the sun. He throws his diabolical cry:

Léon! Léon!

That is what he calls his bride he sees nothing coming and no one answers. The chickens, used to it, don't even raise their heads. They are tired of admiring him. He redescends to the yard, so sure of his beauty that he is incapable of resentment.

His marriage will be for tomorrow.

And, not knowing what to do for the rest of the day, he heads for the steps. He ascends them, as though they were the steps of a temple, with a formal gait.

He lifts his train, heavy with eyes that have been unable to detach themselves.

One more time he repeats the ceremony.

The Cricket

It is the hour when, tired of wandering, the black insect returns from his walk and carefully repairs the disorder of his domain. First he rakes his narrow drives of sand.

He makes sawdust which he scatters onto the threshold of his retreat.

He files down the root of that tall blade of grass that might annoy him.

He rests. Then he winds up his tiny watch.

Has he finished? Is it broken? He rests again a little.

He goes back into his house and closes the door.

For a long while he turns the key in the delicate lock.

And he listens. No noise outside.

But he is still not safe.

And, as if by a tiny chain, whose pulley creaks, he lowers himself to the heart of the earth.

On n'entend plus rien.

Dans la campagne muette, les peupliers se dressent comme des doigts en l'air et désignent la lune.

13. Le Cygne

Il glisse sur le bassin, comme un traîneau blanc, de nuage en nuage. Car il n'a faim que des nuages floconneux qu'il voit naître, bouger, et se perdre dans l'eau. C'est l'un d'eux qu'il désire. Il le vise du bec, et il plonge tout à coup son col vêtu de neige.

Puis, tel un bras de femme sort d'une manche, il le retire.

Il n'a rien.

Il regarde: les nuages effarouchés ont disparu.

Il ne reste qu'un instant désabusé, car les nuages tardent peu à revenir, et, là-bas, où meurent les ondulations de l'eau, en voici un qui se reforme.

Doucement, sur son léger coussin de plumes, le cygne rame et s'approche...

Il s'épuise à pêcher de vains reflets, et peut-être qu'il mourra, victime de cette illusion, avant d'attraper un seul morceau de nuage.

Mais qu'est-ce que je dis?

Chaque fois qu'il plonge, il fouille du bec la vase nourrissante et ramène en ver.

Il engraisse comme une oie.

14. Le Martin-Pêcheur

Ça n'a pas mordu, ce soir, mais je rapporte une rare émotion. Comme je tenais ma perche de ligne tendue, un martin pêcheur est venu s'y poser.

Nous n'avons pas d'oiseau plus éclatant.

Il semblait une grosse fleur bleue au bout d'une longue tige.

La perche pliait sous le poids. Je ne respirais plus, tout fier d'être pris pour un arbre par un martin-pêcheur.

Et je suis sûr qu'il ne s'est pas envolé de peur, mais qu'il a cru qu'il ne faisait que passer d'une branche à une autre.

15. La Pintade

C'est la bossue de ma cour. Elle ne rêve que plaies à cause de sa bosse.

Les poules ne lui disent rien: brusquement, elle se précipite et les harcèle.

Nothing more is heard.

In the silent countryside, the poplars rise straight up, like fingers in the air, and point to the moon.

The Swan

He glides on the pond, like a white sleigh, from cloud to cloud. For he has hunger only for the fleecy clouds that he sees forming, moving and being lost in the water. It is one of them that he desires. He aims at it with his beak, and suddenly immerses his snowy neck.

Then, like a woman's arm emerging from a sleeve, he withdraws it. He has caught nothing.

He looks: The startled clouds have disappeared.

He remains disillusioned for only a moment, for the clouds return before very long, and, over there, where the ripples on the water are dying away, one cloud is already forming.

Softly, on his light feather cushion, the swan rows and approaches...

He exhausts himself angling for empty reflections, and perhaps he will die, a victim to that illusion, before catching a single piece of cloud.

But what am I saying?

Every time he dives, he burrows in the nourishing silt with his beak and brings out a worm.

He's fattening up like a goose.

The Kingfisher

Not a bite this evening, but I recall a rare emotional.

Whilst holding my fishing rod out, a kingfisher came and perched it.

We have no bird more dazzling. It resembled a broad blue flower at the end of a long stem.

The rod bent beneath his weight. I held my breath, very proud of being mistaken for tree by a kingfisher.

And I'm sure that it did not fly away for fear, but that he believed that he was merely passing from one branch to another.

The Guinea Fowl

She is the hunchback of my farmyard. She only thinks fighting because of her hump.

The hens say nothing to her. She suddenly leaps forward and harasses them.

Puis elle baisse sa tête, penche le corps, et, de toute la vitesse de ses pattes maigres, elle court frapper, de son bec dur, juste au centre de la roue d'une dinde.

Cette poseuse l'agaçait.
Ainsi, la tête bleuie, ses barbillons à vif, cocardière, elle rage du matin au soir.

Elle se bat sans motif, peut-être parce qu'elle s'imagine toujours qu'on se moque de sa taille, de son crâne chauve et de sa queue basse.

Et elle ne cesse de jeter un cri discordant qui perce l'air comme une pointe.

Parfois elle quitte la cour et disparaît. Elle laisse aux volailles pacifiques un moment de répit.

Mais elle revient plus turbulente et plus crierde. Et, frénétique, elle se vautre par terre.

Qu'a-t-elle donc?

La sournoise fait une farce.

Elle est allée pondre son œuf à la campagne.

Je peux le chercher si ça m'amuse.

Elle se roule dans la poussière, comme une bossue.

Then she lowers her head, bends her body; and, with all the speed her skinny legs can raise, dashes over to peck with her hard beak right at the centre of a turkey hen's outspread tail. This poseur riled her.

So, her head blued, her barbs raw, flag waving, she rages from morn to evening.

She fights without a cause, perhaps because she always imagines that people make fun of her height, her bald head and her low tail.

And she incessantly utters a grating cry that pierces the air like a knife point.

Sometimes she leaves the yard and vanishes. She allows the peace-loving fowl a moment of respite.

But she returns more unruly and garish. And, in a frenzy, she wallows in the earth.

What is wrong with her?

The sly thing is playing a trick.

She went out into the countryside to lay an egg.

I can go look for it if the mood takes me.

And she rolls in the dust, like a hunchback.

Trois Mélodies

16 Pourquoi? (Olivier Messiaen)

This text is copyright but can easily be found online.

17. Le Sourire (Cécile Sauvage)

Certain mot murmuré

Par vous est un baiser

Intime et prolongé

Comme un baiser sur l'âme.

Ma bouche veut sourire

Et mon sourire tremble.

Why?

The Smile

Certain whispered word

By you is a kiss

Intimate and prolonged

Like a kiss on the soul.

My mouth wants to smile

And my smile quivers.

18. La Fiancée Perdue (Olivier Messiaen)

As above

The Lost Fiancée

The Nursery

19. С няней

Расскажи мне, нянюшка, расскажи мне, милая,

Про того про буку страшного:

Как тот бука по лесам бродил,

Как тот бука в лес детей носил

И как грыз он их белые косточки,

И как дети те кричали, плакали!

Нянюшка! Ведь зато их, детей-то, бука съел,

Что обидели няню старую,

Папу с мамой не послушала.

Ведь зато он съел их, нянюшка?

Или вот что: Расскажи мне лучше про царя с царицей,

Что за морем жили в терему богатом.

Ещё царь всё на ногу хромал,

Как споткнётся, так гриб вырастет,

У царицы то всё насморк был,

Как чихнёт, стекла в дребезги!

Знаешь, нянюшка:

Ты про буку то уж не рассказывай! Бог с ним, с букой!

Расскажи мне, няня, ты, смешную-то!

20. В углу

Ах ты проказник!

Клубок размотал, прутки растерял,

Ах ты! все петли спустил!

Чулоч весь забрызгал чернилами!

В угол! В угол! Пошёл в угол! Проказник!

Я ничего не сделал, нянюшка,

Я чулочек не трогал, нянюшка!

Клубочек размотал котёночек,

И пруточки разбросал котёночек,

А Мишенька был паинька,

Мишенька был умница.

А няня злая, старая,

у няни носик то запачканный.

Миша чистенький, причёсанный,

А у няни чепчик на боку.

Няня Мишеньку обидела,

напрасно в угол поставила

Миша больше не будет любить свою нянюшку, вот что!

To Nanny

Tell me, Nanny, tell me Nanny,

About that terrible wolf:

How that wolf wandered through the forests,

How that wolf carried children into the forest

And how he gnawed at their white bones,

And how those children screamed and cried!

Nanny! On the other hand, the wolf ate them, the children,

Because they offended the old nanny,

And their parents, too.

Is that why he ate them, Nanny?

Or this: Tell me better about the tsar and tsarina

That lived beyond the sea in a rich palace.

The king was always limping

And where he stumbled a mushroom would grow,

The queen had a runny nose,

And when she sneezed the glass would shatter!

You know, Nanny:

Don't talk about the wolf! God be with him.

Tell me the other story, Nanny, the funny one instead!

In the Corner

Oh, you naughty boy!

You've tangled my wool, and muddled my needles.

Really! All my stitches are dropped!

My stockings are all spattered with ink!

Into the corner! Off into the corner with you! You naughty boy!

I didn't do anything, Nanny dear,

I never touched your stockings, Nanny dear!

The kitten tangled your wool,

It was the kitten who muddled your needles;

Mishenka was a good boy,

Mishenka was a clever boy.

But Nanny is angry and old,

Nanny has a dirty nose.

Misha is nice and clean, hair combed,

But Nanny's cap is crooked.

Nanny has offended Misha,

And put him in the corner unjustly:

Misha won't love his Nanny any more, so there!

21. Жук

Няня, нянюшка!
что случилось, няня душенька!
Я играл там на песочке,
за беседкой, где берёзки,
Строил домик из лучинок кленовых,
Тех, что мне мама, сама мама нащепала.
Домик уж совсем построил,
Домик с крышкой, настоящей домик, вдруг!
Но самой крышке жук сидит,
Огромный, чёрный, толстый такой,
усами шевелит страшно так,
И прямо на меня всё смотрит!
Испугался я! А жук гудит, злится,
Крылья растопырил, схватить меня хочет! . . .
И налетел, в височек меня ударил!
Я притаился, нянюшка,
присел, боюсь пошевелинуться!
Только глазок один чуть-чуть открыл,
И что-же, послушай, нянюшка:
Жук лежит, сложивши лапки,
кверху носиком, на спинке,
И уж не злится, и усам не шевелит,
И не гудит уж, только крыльышки дрожат.
Что-ж, он умер, иль притворился?
Что-ж это, что-же, скажи мне, няня,
С жуком-то стало? Меня ударил, а сам свалился!
Что-ж это с ним стало, с жуком-то!

22. С куклой

Тяпа, бай, бай, Тяпа, спи, усни,
Угомон тебя возьми! Тяпа! Спать надо!
Тяпа, спи, усни, Тяпу бука съест,
серый волк возьмёт, в тёмный лес снесёт.
Тяпа, спи, усни!
Что во сне увидишь, мне про то расскажешь:
Про остров чудный, где ни жнут ни сеют,
Где цветут и зреют груши наливные,
День и ночь поют птички золотые!
Бай, бай, баю бай, бай, бай, Тяпа!

The Beetle

Nanny, Nanny!
What happened, Nanny darling!
I played there on the sand,
Behind the gazebo, where the birches were,
I built a house out of maple slivers,
Those that my mother, my mother, picked up.
The house has already been built,
A house with a roof, a real house, all of a sudden!
There was a beetle sitting on the roof itself,
Huge, black, plump,
Moving its moustache so terribly,
And staring right at me!
I got scared! And the beetle was buzzing, angry.
Spreading its wings, it wanted to grab me!..
And he flew at me, and hit me in the temple!
I hid, Nanny;
Sat down, afraid to move!
I peeped through one eyelid,
And now, listen, Nanny:
The beetle was lying with its legs folded,
Nose up, on its back,
No longer angry, or moving its moustache,
And it didn't buzz, only the wings trembled.
Well, was he dead, or was he just pretending?
What was it, what, tell me, Nanny,
What happened to the beetle? He hit me and fell down!
What happened to him, that beetle?

With the Doll

Tyapa, bye, bye, Tyapa, sleep, sleep,
Calmness take you! Tyapa! Need to sleep!
Tyapa, sleep, sleep, Or the bogey-man will come, Tyapa,
Or the grey wolf will take you, carry you into the dark forest.
Tyapa, sleep, sleep!
Tell me what you see in your dreams:
About a wonderful island, where they neither reap nor sow,
Where luscious pears bloom and ripen,
And golden birds sing day and night!
Bye, bye, bye, bye, bye, Tyapa!

23. На сон грядущий

"Господи помилуй папу и маму
и спаси их, Господи!
Господи помилуй брата Васиеньку
и брата Мишеньку!
Господи помилуй бабушку старенькую,
Пошли ты ей доброе здоровье,
Бабушке добренькой,
бабушке старенькой, Господи!
И спаси, Боже наш, тётю Катю,
тётю Наташу, тётю Машу, тётю Парашу,
Тётей Любу, Варю, и Сашу,
и Олю, и Таню, и Надю,
Дядей Петю и Колю, дядей Володу
и Гришу, и Сашу, и всех их,
Господи, спаси и помилуй,
и Филю, и Ваню, и Митю, и Петю
и Дашу, Пашу, Соноу, Дуношку. . .
Няня! а, няня! Как дальше, няня?"

"Вишь ты, проказница какая!
Уж сколько раз учила:
Господи помилуй и меня грешную!"
"Господи помилуй и меня грешную!
Так, нянюшка?"

24. Кот Матрос

Ай, ай, ай, ай, мама, милая мама!
Побежала я за зонтиком,
мама, очень ведь жарко, шарила в комод
и в столе искала: нет, как нарочно!
Я второпях к окну подбежала,
может быть зонтик там позабыла. . .
Вдруг вижу, на окне-то, кот наш Матрос,
забравшись на клетку, скребёт!
Снегирь дрожит, забился в угол, пищит.
Зло меня взяло!
"Э, брат, до птичек ты лаком!
Нет, стой, попался. Вишь-ты, кот!"
Как ни в чём не бывало стою я, смотрю в сторонку,
Только глазом одним подмечаю:
странно что-то!

A Bedtime Prayer

"God have mercy on Daddy and Mummy
And save them, Lord!
Lord have mercy on brother Vasenka
And brother Mishenka!
Lord have mercy on an old grandmother,
Send her good health,
Good grandmother,
Old grandmother, Lord!
And save, O God, aunt Katya,
Aunt Natasha, Aunt Masha, Aunt Parasha,
Aunt Lyuba, Varya, and Sasha,
And Olya, and Tanya, and Nadia,
Uncle Petya and Kolya, Uncle Volodya
And Grisha, and Sasha, and all of them,
Lord, save and have mercy
And Filka, and Vanya, and Mitya, and Petya,
And Dasha, Pasha, Sonya, Dunyushka. . .
Nanny! Ah, nanny! What's next, babysitter?"

"Really, what a prankster!
How many times have I told you:
Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner!"
"Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner!
Is that right, Nursey?"

The Cat "Sailor"

Oh, oh, oh, oh, Mother, dear Mother!
I ran for a parasol,
Mama, it's very hot. I fumbled in the chest of drawers
And looked in the table: no luck, it did it on purpose!
I rushed to the window,
Maybe I left my parasol there. . .
Then suddenly I saw, on the window, our cat, "Sailor",
Climbing onto the birdcage, scratching!
The bullfinch was trembling, huddled in a corner, chirping.
I was so angry!
"Hey, pussy, you would eat birds, would you?
No, stop, I'll sort you out, cat!"
Pretending not to have noticed him, I stood, looking to the side,
Peeping with just one eye I noticed
Something very strange!

Кот спокойно в глаза мне смотрит,
А сам уж лапу в клетку заносит:
Только что думал схватить снегиря,
а я его хлоп!
Мама, какая твёрдая клетка!
Пальцам так больно, мама!
Мама! вот в самых кончиках, вот тут,
Так ноет, ноет так...
Нет! каков кот-то, мама, а?

25. Поехал на палочке

"Гей! Гоп, гоп! Гей, поди! Гей! Гей!
Та, ..., та, гей! Та, ..., та, поди!
Тпру! . . . стой! Вася, а Вася!
Слушай, приходи играть сегодня!
Только не поздно!
Ну ты, гоп! Гоп! Прощай, Вася!
Я в Юкки поехал...
Только к вечеру непременно буду,
Мы ведь рано, очень рано спать ложимся...
Приходи, смотри!
Та, ... та, гей! Та, ..., та, поди!
Гоп! Гей, поди! Гей, гей поди! Гей, гей! Раздавлю!
Ой, больно! Ой, ногу! Ой, больно! Ой, ногу. . . ."
"Милый мой, мой мальчик, что за горе?
Ну, полно плакать!
Пройдёт, мой друг!
Постой-ка, встань на ножки прямо:
Вот так, дитя! Посмотри, какая прелесть!
Видишь?
В кустах налево! Ах, что за птичка дивная!
Что за пёрышки!
Видишь? ... Ну что? Прошло?"
"Прошло! Я в Юкки съездил, мама!
Теперь домой торопиться надо ...
Гоп! Гоп! Гости будут... Гоп!
Торопиться надо!..."

*The cat calmly looked into my eyes,
And he put his paw into the cage:
Just as he nade to grab the bird,
I slapped him!
Mama, what a hard cage!
My fingers hurt so much, Mummy!
Mummy! Right at the very tips, right here,
They are smarting, smarting so...
Oh! What a nasty cat, Mama, isn't he?*

The Hobbyhorse

*"Hey! Hup, hup! Gee up! Go! Go!
Ta, ..., Gee up! Ta, ..., Gee up!
Whoa! . . . stop! Vasya, Vasya!
Listen, come play today!
Just don't be late!
You there, hup! Hup! Farewell, Vasya!
I'm off to Yukki...
I will certainly return by evening,
We go to bed early, very early...
Come see!
Ta, ... ta, whee! Ta, ..., go, go!
Hup! Let's go! Hey, hey go! Hey, hey! I will crash!
Oh, it hurts! Oh my leg! Oh, it hurts! Oh, my leg. . . ."*
*"My dear, my boy, what's the matter?
Well, don't cry!
It will pass, my friend!
Wait a minute, stand straight on your feet:
That's it, my child! Look, how lovely!
See?
In the bushes to the left! Ah, what a wonderful bird!
What feathers!
See it? ... Well? Is it better now?
It's gone! I went to Yukki, Mummy!
Now I need to hurry home...
Hup! Hup! The guests will be coming... Hup!
Hurry up!..."*

Fauré
En sourdine

PAUL VERLAINE
(Original key E flat major)

Op. 58, No. 2

Andante moderato (♩ = 63) *dolce*

Cal - mes

PIANO *p*

dan - s le de - mi - jour Que les bran - ches hau - tes

cresc.
espressivo

font, Pé - né - trons bien notre a - mour.

Sound recording/editing - Peter Seabourne

[Fauré, Debussy, Ravel and Messiaen are archive recordings made in 2004, re-edited and re-mastered;

Mussorgsky is from a live recital at Keele University Chapel in 2012]

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GABRIEL FAURÉ

| | | |
|---|---------------|------|
| 1 | Clair de Lune | 3:16 |
| 2 | Après un Rêve | 3:15 |
| 3 | Les Berceaux | 1:40 |
| 4 | Mandoline | 2:33 |
| 5 | En Sourdine | 3:16 |

CLAUDE DEBUSSY

| | | |
|---|-----------|------|
| 6 | Beau Soir | 2:24 |
| 7 | Mandoline | 1:16 |

Trois Chansons De Bilitis

| | | |
|----|------------------------|------|
| 8 | La Flûte de Pan | 2:50 |
| 9 | La Chevelure | 3:32 |
| 10 | Le Tombeau des Naïades | 2:49 |

MAURICE RAVEL

Histoires Naturelles

| | | |
|----|-------------------|------|
| 11 | Le Paon | 4:27 |
| 12 | Le Grillon | 3:05 |
| 13 | Le Cygne | 3:32 |
| 14 | Le Martin-pêcheur | 3:09 |
| 15 | La Pintade | 3:04 |

OLIVIER MESSIAEN

Trois Mélodies

| | | |
|----|-------------------|------|
| 16 | Pourquoi? | 2:23 |
| 17 | Le Sourire | 1:59 |
| 18 | La Fiancée Perdue | 1:40 |

MODEST MUSSORGSKY

Detskaya (The Nursery)

| | | |
|----|--|------|
| 19 | S nyaney (To Nanny) | 2:46 |
| 20 | V uglu (In the Corner) | 1:46 |
| 21 | Zhuk (The Beetle) | 2:14 |
| 22 | S kukloy (With the Doll) | 2:11 |
| 23 | Na son gryadushchiy (At Bedtime) | 2:49 |
| 24 | Kot Matros (The Cat "Sailor") | 1:56 |
| 25 | Poyekhhal na palochke (The Hobbyhorse) | 3:29 |

Total playing time 66:50

KAREN RADCLIFFE soprano

MICHAEL BELL piano