



ORCHID CLASSICS



LIFE STORIES

Claire Booth, soprano
Jâms Coleman, piano

ORC100421

LIFE STORIES

Zoë Martlew (b.1968)

Hotel Babylon

1	Madame	6.46
2	Baby	3.53
3	Chef	6.44
4	Beautician	2.27
5	Hierophant	1.49
6	Cashier	2.39
7	Lover	3.15

George Gershwin (1898-1937)

8	The Man I Love	2.37
9	I Got Rhythm	1.19

Hanns Eisler (1898-1962)

from *Hollywooder Liederbuch*

10	An den kleinen Radioapparat	1.18
11	Über den Selbstmord	2.06
12	L'automne californien (Kalifornischer Herbst)	1.58
13	Der Kirschdieb	1.23

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

Banalités, FP 107

14	Chanson d'Orkenise	1.30
15	Hôtel	2.04
16	Fagnes de Wallonie	1.32
17	Voyage à Paris	1.04
18	Sanglots	4.00

George Gershwin (1898-1937),

arr. Earl Wild (1915-2010)

19	Somebody Loves Me	3.05
20	Embraceable You	3.29

Thomas Adès (b.1971)

21	Life Story, Op. 8b	10.06
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Total time

65.04

Claire Booth, *soprano*

Jâms Coleman, *piano*

A word from the musicians

That most famous interpreter of Kurt Weill's songs, Lotte Lenya, never referred to the composer's vocal music as 'Cabaret' but always as 'Art Songs', arguing that they resembled Schubert lieder more than anything else. That borderland between cabaret and classical continues to fascinate well into the 21st century, whether in terms of style or storyline, and there is something about the immediacy of story telling, so important for all song, lieder and mélodie, that is somehow liberated by the medium of cabaret.

To this end, I commissioned longtime friend and colleague Zoë Martlew to write a set of 'classical cabaret' songs (if such a thing exists), loosely based on Arnold Schoenberg's own 1901 *Brettl Lieder* - for his 150th birthday year. The resultant cycle draws inspiration from a range of musical styles, and seeks through its wide-ranging texts to explore our modern-day relationship (obsession?) with temptation and vice. Substantial as it is, Jāms and I have chosen to contextualise Zoë's remarkable work with a series of composers who, despite emerging from different times, continents and aesthetic traditions, together look to explore that similar interplay between the everyday and the profound, the banal and the existential, viewed through a lens of irony, fragmentation or social critique.

The emotional depths of Poulenc's *Banalités*, at times masqued by ironic nonchalance, find echoes in Eisler's politically bleak yet intimate portraits of life lived in exile, as with Adès' interpretation of Tennessee Williams' iteration of the ultimate kitchen sink drama: a one-night stand. Gershwin's song writing, while seemingly far from Eisler's politics or Poulenc's salon culture carries a bittersweet clarity that inhabits similar emotional terrain : loneliness, longing and the daily drama of love and loss. Together, these works offer a constellation of composers who, in very different contexts all use song, and the story telling it offers, as a mirror: of society, of the self and of a world both mundane and precarious.

Claire Booth



Zoë Martlew's *Hotel Babylon* is the happy result of a request for a set of cabaret-esque songs, loosely based on Arnold Schoenberg's own set - *Brettl Lieder* - in his 150th birthday year. Composed to her own texts, Zoë describes the work as a "Faustian mini-drama tangled up with the Seven deadlies", as each song draws the audience inexorably towards a reckoning with their soul. The Yorkshire **Madame** of the opening number invites us into a paradise of sin: intoxicating and irresistible. However no sooner have we established the lack of ground rules than we are confronted by various temptations; **Baby**, where a wheedling Lolita seeks to satisfy with silken kisses; a French **Chef** recreates the excesses of *La Grande Bouffe*, with guests unable (literally) to refuse; perfection might be possible by visiting the **Beautician**, but only before things take a darker turn; in **Hierophant** the audience strikes a deal with the occult, while the pianist accompanies with audible in- and exhalations; On the road to self-destruction there's just time to visit the **Cashier** who's inexhaustible supplies of 'filthy lucre' should satisfy the most insatiable greed. Passing through Viennese waltzes, Latin salsa, the world of Weill and Brecht, tango and expressionism, we are finally offered a chance of redemption in the baroque-inspired final song, **Lover** – its resolution in C major offering freedom, hope and new beginnings.

Intended for multiple musicals, Gershwin's *The Man I Love* was repeatedly rejected before finding fame independently, largely due to recordings and performances by major singers and jazz musicians. A woman dreaming of a future lover she hasn't yet met; the song's lyrics and aching melody express longing, hope and a gentle melancholy, echoing the emotional immediacy and melodic grace of Poulenc's own art songs: a sentimental clarity without excess. Written in 1930 for the musical *Girl Crazy*, the central message of *I've Got Rhythm* is about celebrating the essentials: music, love and spirit and their ability to outweigh

material wealth. Its message of cheerful defiance in the face of hardship gave it lasting appeal in the Great Depression and beyond, and while Hanns Eisler's own Hollywood songs emerge from a very different artistic and political world, they in their turn exude a moral or intellectual defiance against the status quo. Gershwin's own performances of the work as a piano solo demonstrates that he did indeed have rhythm; the initial melody repeats with increasing bravura and unexpected reharmonizations, all demanding an extraordinary level of technical skill.

Hanns Eisler's **Hollywooder Liederbuch** vividly reflects the composer's political convictions and the personal turmoil he experienced during his exile in America in the later 1930's and 40's. A close collaborator with Bertold Brecht, Eisler's exile in the United States was marked by profound alienation. Addressing the radio in **An den kleinen Radioapparat** - a symbol of technological advancement and mass communication - in one single page of music, Eisler captures the paradox of the device as both his intimate friend and protector, and tool of ideological control. In **Über den Selbstmord**, the stark title - On Suicide - encapsulates the existential despair of those alienated by the Nazi regime. Eisler's dark, sparse harmonic language doesn't simply register this unbearable tragedy; but with its final, sudden, fortissimo chord, underscores the awful psychological torment: jabbing an accusatory finger at those culpable. **L'automne californien (Kalifornischer Herbst)** offers a locational contrast, similar to Poulenc's Parisian sojourn, capturing the bittersweet atmosphere of Eisler's new environment. California here, however is not idyllic sunshine, but a season, a turning point, a reminder that even in exile - in paradise perhaps - there is decay, transience and homesickness, accompanied by the sluggish monotony of sunny skies. **Der Kirschdieb** might seem at first hearing to be a nostalgic, light-hearted tale of merry japes redolent of a Schubert lied. However, the narrative of the cherry thief staring down the protagonist while continuing to fill his pockets prompts the listener to question what has been stolen: fruit or freedom.

Francis Poulenc's **Banalités**, composed in 1940 sets words from that pioneer of early 20th century modernism, Guillaume Apollinaire; a poet known for his innovative approach to language and imagery, revealing profundity beneath the everyday. Written during the upheaval of World War II, Poulenc's musical settings match this sense of duality: complexity yet simplicity, irony betraying sincerity. In **Chanson d'Orkenise**, we enter a stylised almost medieval scene - a traveller, a tradesman, a town, a hint of ritual - but behind its cheerful exterior lies a subtle sense of exclusion and indifference to love lost or found. **Hôtel**, one of Poulenc's most beloved miniatures, is a study in sensual inertia: the languor of smoking, laziness, hotel anonymity. The music breathes with quiet resignation, a gentle invitation to abandon the outside world; yet prefiguring both the sense of forced isolation found in Eisler's *Hollywooder Liederbuch* and the emotional disengagement of Adès' own hotel guests in *Life Story*. **Fagnes de Wallonie** shifts to a colder, windswept landscape evoking both geographical and emotional isolation. Despite the honeybees and jolly woodland, Poulenc's vocal line grows increasingly declamatory, biting with 'belles dents' and echoing the internal wilderness of the speaker. **Voyage à Paris** offers a brief contrast - a buoyant tribute to the capital, filled with exuberance and affection. However, the song's very brevity together with the vocal 'shrug of the shoulders' of the final phrase indicates a lack of permanent respite in the city of love. Beyond *amour*, **Sanglots** reflects far deeper emotions concerning spiritual longing, war, sacrifice and even artistic suffering. This final song, a farewell not only to the cycle, but perhaps also to love, innocence and life itself, seems, through Poulenc's luminous harmonies, to open a door to something sacred and eternal, suggesting a kind of peace beyond the sorrow of its title.

A passionate admirer of Gershwin, Wild recognised the musical sophistication hidden within what were often considered merely popular songs. His re-imaginings highlight a deep appreciation of the tradition of Romantic piano

transcriptions - following Liszt or Rachmaninov – and are rich in harmonic complexity, technical brilliance and emotional depth. In **Somebody Loves Me**, Wild captures the upbeat charm and rhythmic energy of the original, embellishing it with sparkling runs, syncopated passages and dynamic contrasts that demand considerable pianistic skill. **Embraceable You**, by contrast is rendered with lyrical sensitivity, featuring lush voicings, sweeping arpeggios and romantic expressiveness that bring out the song's heartfelt intimacy.

Thomas Adès' **Life Story** composed in 1997 and set to a text by Tennessee Williams, captures the writer's obsession with the autobiographical, reflecting on the fragility of human connections and the enduring impact of past sexual experiences. Williams' writing is intimate and fragmented, and Adès' musical setting reflects this disjointed yet deeply emotional world. The piano accompaniment moves fluidly between lush harmonies and tense, unsettled passages, while the vocal line is carefully shaped to follow the natural rhythms of Williams' language, emphasising the writer's candid and conversational tone with moments of hedonistic outpouring. Indeed, all the Life Stories contained within this recording resonate on a broader level as meditations on the banality of the human condition: our vulnerability, joy, folly and resilience - serving to illuminate both the beauty and pain of the everyday: the delicate complexity that is life itself.



Claire Booth

Soprano

Recipient of the 2025 Royal Philharmonic Society Singers' Award, Booth received a double 1st in Modern History from Oxford University before studying at GSMD and the National Opera Studio. While there, she came to international attention performing the world premiere of Birtwistle's *Io Passion* at the Bregenz and Aldeburgh Festivals, followed by her debut at Nationale Opera Amsterdam as Pakiti in Harvey's *Wagner Dream*. For the Royal Ballet and Opera she has sung the title role in Handel's *Berenice*, Irene (*Bajazet*) and solo performances of both Kurtág's *Kafka Fragments* and Haas' *Atthis*. Other notable roles include Rossini heroines Rosina and Elcia (*Mosè in Egitto*) and critically acclaimed performances of *La Voix Humaine* for WNO, earning her Best Actress at the Welsh Theatre Awards.

Booth's extensive collaboration with the late Oliver Knussen included her portrayal of Max in *Where the Wild Things Are* with the LA Philharmonic, performing under his baton with the Stockholm and Tokyo Philharmonics, BBCSO, London Sinfonietta and Boston Symphony Orchestra. Other selected concert performances include *Erwartung* with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchester, *Vier Letzte Lieder* with Boston Philharmonic, Tippett's *Child of Our Time* with CBSO at Elbphilharmonie, Anne Truelove in *Rakes Progress* with the CBSO, and Miranda in *Adès' Tempest* with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra Amsterdam. She has given close to 100 world premiere performances, by composers including Benjamin, Carter, Woolrich, Birtwistle, Martlew, and Anderson, and is increasingly involved at commissioning level, such as Helen Grime's recent *Folk* with BBCSSO.

She is a director of the BPA Composition and Performance Course, coaches modern operatic repertoire at RAM and RWCMD, and works with composers on the Opera Makers program at GSMD. Her recent award-winning Masters' dissertation on the continuing relevance of opera in English translation has led to strategic discussions with ENO as to the company's future direction. She takes up a Creative Fellowship post at Merton College, Oxford in 2026.

Jâms Coleman

Piano

From Anglesey, North Wales, Jâms Coleman is a pianist who enjoys performing as a soloist, chamber musician, and vocal accompanist. Awarded an ARAM from the Royal Academy in 2023, following studies at Cambridge University, he regularly performs at prestigious festivals and venues in the UK and internationally, with recent highlights including recitals at the Aldeburgh, Ortús Chamber Music, Cheltenham, Leeds, OISF and Petworth Festivals, BBC Proms, Cello Biennale (Amsterdam), LSO St Luke's, Prussia Cove, The Royal Concertgebouw (Amsterdam), and Wigmore Hall.

Jâms has consolidated particular duo partnerships with cellist Laura van der Heijden and soprano Claire Booth. Described as 'intriguing and beguiling' by The Guardian and as 'gently alluring, enigmatic and romantic' by Gramophone, Jâms' and Laura's most recent album – 'Path to the Moon' - reached two million streams worldwide in the first week. Exploring the realm between the concert and theatre stage, Claire and Jâms' innovative programming and commissioning have led to a UK wide tour of 'Willkommen, Welcome, Bienvenue' including a rapturous homecoming reception at Wigmore Hall.

Other albums include Bridge and Britten with Maria Włoszczowska, Hélène Clément and Steffan Morris for Champs Hill Records, works by Bacewicz with the Karski Quartet for Evil Penguin, works by Pamela Harrison for Resonus Classics, Fanny Hensel lieder for First Hand Records (recorded in Mendelssohn Haus, Leipzig), and Loewe lieder with baritone Nicholas Mogg for Champs Hill Records. He takes over as Artistic Director of the Fishguard Festival of Music in Pembrokeshire in 2027.





HOTEL BABYLON

Words & Music by Zoë Martlew (b.1968)

MADAME

Who's there? Ohhh, it's you! You look just the type.
Why don't you please come in?
Oh, willkommen, welcome, bienvenue
Welcome to this paradise of sin.
The only condition of your admission
Is to out your inhibitions and come in.
Pleasure beyond measure is our sinecure, our treasure,
Our signature, our sine qua non.
Responsibility is iniquity here at Hotel Babylon.
Oh, willkommen, croeso, bienvenue,
Here you can gratify your every whim.
They say there are seven, but I know at least eleven
Of the deadliest that run medlies within.
Oozing, boozing, limitless consuming,
Anything you think of we have done.
Simply kick aside your duties to experience the beauties
Of desecrating cuties here at Hotel Babylon.
Ciao Bella, bonjour, bienvenue,
It's time to let your longings run wild.
If submission is your mission, we've got experts in
contrition
Who will grant your every wish in any style.
Forget the needs of others and the warnings of your
mothers,
Simply sink your soul in suppurating bliss.
At this establishment, we don't do blandishment,
Only selfish fun you cannot miss.
Konitshywa et bonjournay,
It's time to find your je ne sais quoi.
It might be that you lightly slap a fireman in a nightie
While you disco eating candy from your bra.
Deep tissue, Swedish, honeymoon or Amish,
Chocolate buttons sprinkled on your tum.

Whatever the flavour of your fantasies' endeavour
I can guarantee it's here at Babylon.
Creamy, dreamy, positively seamy, silky smooth or
rough.
However wild your fantasy, this place has got your
stuff.
So kick aside your marriage vows and any other
sacred cows,
Let self-indulgence be your little song,
Rip off your kegs and see clouds of ecstasy
In Hôtel Babylon.
What's that you say, the price? Ohhh.. don't worry
about that. You'll find out soon enough.

BABY

Come to Baby, enter my room, this luminous chamber
that pulses with light.
I have been waiting for thousands of years to touch your
sweet body and spin.
Close your eyes and breathe my perfume,
let me enfold you in silken bonds.
My legs wrap you closer, my eyes draw you into this soft,
red, spiralling, weaving velvet.

Come to Baby, surrender your will.
My silken kisses arouse your desire.
Come closer, into my web, you'll never want to leave.
Spooling silk on your skin.
Wait! You can't leave now! We've only just begun...
Don't leave me!

CHEF

Ah! Entrez! You are in perfect time for your reservation.
Let me introduce myself. Monsieur le Chef Patron at
your service!
S'il vous plaît! Now, pop off your things, slip on this
beautiful robe

And come and recline over here.
Because here at Brasserie Babylon, we like our guests
to relax.
Our culinary concept is simple, pure excellence is our
creed.
In this famous temple de gourmets, we delight in your
cravings to feed.
We celebrate the rarest ingredients that are gathered
from all around the planet.
it is our culinary expedient to pleasure the finest of
palates.
Before we present our famous tasting menu,
There is one teensy little rule that you will obey,
A tiny formality, a soupçon to pay.
Whatever the banquet laid out on the floor,
The rule de la maison is that you will always want more.
So close your eyes, amuse your bouche,
Feel this escargot wiggle down your throat,
With coral reef fricassée lightly sprinkled with
Chardonnay
And a ravissant ceviche de stoat.
For hors d'oeuvres our Chef serves semolina-dipped
piglet tails,
Little nightingales brûléed in ale
With marmite-covered badger ears in a chilled jus of
spider tears
And a side of rich frogspawn from Wales.
More Food!
Try this pithivier of peacock tongues in a lake of
brine
With armadillo Sachertorte marinated in wine
Fowls force fed with Frosties, poached dormouse in
honey
With patina of udders stirred and whipped until
runny.
Wild plankton emulsion with minced panda roast
Siberian tiger soup, chocolate sea slug on toast.

More Food!
Spiced dolphin ice cream - Eat More!
Marmoset custard - Stuff it down!
Leech panacotta - You must make room!
Throw up! Vomit to eat and eat to vomit -
Because you still crave more!
And now for the pièce de resistance.... Entrée...the
PIE!
So meaty! So fluffy! So yummy! So scrummy!
C'est délicieuse, non? So savoury! Mmmmm, I see
you love it! Yum, yum!
But I wonder... whatever happened to your sweet
little doggy...Lulu!

BEAUTICIAN

Jesús, María, Dios! Whatever happened to you?! You
gonna have a total makeover right now! You want to look
young and sexy, right? OK! Let's do it!
I hose you down with freezing jets of high pressure
acqua,
Our mountain spa technology a deep-cleansing feature,
Dermaplane abrasion to exfoliate the cellular
With bristle scrub and polish to remove
Nasty dead cells and abrasions, lumpy microporous
lesions
To rejuvenate unsightly parts of you!
Hollywood, Brazilian, lip, chin, under arms and in
between
The little cracks that only we can see,
Depilate and silicate with power-peel exfoliate
For lipo-laminated quality.
Podiatry, chiropody, colonic enhancement
Pumping caca from your system for aesthetic
advancement.
Fillers and injections, needle draining for corrections,
Burning pimple-y protrusions 'til they're out.

Anti-wrinkle, anti-sagging, scar repair for anti-bagging
Now we pump your lips for party-ready pout.
Stubborn fat removal is our speciality
Our Babylon house surgeon can move flab from A to
Zee.
Just lie back and get thinner while you're fully awake,
This Renuvion procedure only sometime make
mistake.
Injection corrections with helium gas
Liposuction to give you Kardashian ass.
To enhance your look it's time to pluck and tattoo
those eyebrows
Constant surprise is much chic-er than frowning,
Next, a little spray tan, make you beach-body ready
This permanent orange so glowing and sexy. Chica,
chica, chica, chica, cha cha cha!
Hair extensions, colour setting, lip gloss, tint and
dye,
Contouring your features, change the colour of your
eyes,
Dolce and Gabbana corset, Louis Vuitton clutch,
Versace satin romper suits with massive Rolex
watch.
Come do a selfie with Mama 'cause baby you done!
Now, get outta here, vamoose!

HIEROPHANT

Welcome, little one, I greet thy soul.
Place this cloak around thy form and enter my circle,
this five-pointed star, its horns pointing North.
See these glittering hoardes;
priceless treasures,
cities of gold!
Infinite power, total dominion!
All this can be thine if thou tak'st my
simple

little
vow.
Dost thou acquiesce?
Then let it begin!
What is thy wish?
Master...?

CASHIER

I am your friendly cashier, here to help you win.
Anything to do with finance, with me you'll be quids in.
If it's stuff you're after, your wish is my command.
It's time to have a little spending spree.
Material acquisition is the name of the game,
Facilitated on the books by me.
You're gonna want more money, wonga and cash.
Lovely money, spondoolies n' stash.
Right now you've got a semi, two up and two down,
I agree it's time to upgrade, how about a five-bed in town?
Time to scrap the Ford Fiesta for a vintage Jag,
A couple of Lamborghinis, why not be a bit of a slag?
Castle in Scotland, a chateau or two in France
Villas in Rome and Monaco, a Central Park penthouse,
A Caribbean island getaway, hell, buy the whole thing
Off-shore's best for business, if you know what I mean.
Guvnor, you're gonna need more money, moolah and dough,
Filthy lucre, to have and to hold...

Nightly banquets for a thousand supermodels, royal stars
Served on dinner sets of solid gold by naked, nubile slaves.
Each guest is given shares in oil and rainforest trees
Who cares they don't know who are are - you bought the Presidency!
Now you've bought up Reuters, CBS, Sky, Fox and

BBC
Snap Book, Face Chat, Wikitok, it's time to up security.
Anti-aircraft missiles, scuds, Kalashnikovs, grenades,
Tanks and nukes, stealth weaponry, a lethal parade!
Rocket launchers, you're never safe! Slash and burn Earth!
Conquer Space!
What's that you say? What do you mean you want to stop?
Don't give it all up now.. you're just about to buy Mars!

LOVER

Ashes of dreams,
Spiralling dreams of countless lives.
A light is growing with sweet music,
Music of my soul.
I am you, you are me.
Through Babylon's shining gates
Lies a glorious garden of love.
I am Love. I am free.

From DER HOLLYWOODER LIEDERBUCH

Hanns Eisler (1898-1962)
English Translation by Claire Booth

AN DEN KLEINEN RADIOAPPARAT

Du kleiner Kasten, den ich flüchtend trug
Daß meine Lampen mir auch nicht zerbrächen
Besorgt vom Haus zum Schiff, vom Schiff zum Zug
Daß meine Feinde weiter zu mir sprächen
An meinem Lager und zu meiner Pein
Der letzten nachts, der ersten in der Früh
Von ihren Siegen und von meiner Müh:
Versprich mir, nicht auf einmal stumm zu sein!

Text by Bertold Brecht (1898-1956)

TO A LITTLE RADIO

You little box, which I carried in flight
So that my lamps would not break,
Carefully from house to ship, from ship to train,
So that my enemies would keep speaking to me.
At my bedside and addressing my worries,
Last thing at night, first thing in the morning,
Of their victories and of my labour:
Promise me, never fall silent all at once!

ÜBER DEN SELBSTMORD

In diesem Lande und in dieser Zeit
Dürfte es trübe Abende nicht geben,
Auch hohe Brücken über die Flüsse.
Selbst die Stunden zwischen Nacht und Morgen
Und die ganze Winterzeit dazu, das ist gefährlich!
Denn angesichts des Elends
Werfen die Menschen in einem Augenblick
Ihr unerträgliches Leben fort.

Text by Bertold Brecht (1898-1956)

L' AUTOMNE CALIFORNIEN (Kalifornischer Herbst)

Die Leiter blieb noch unterm Feigenbaume stehen,

Doch er ist gelb und schon längst leergegessen
Von Schnäbeln und von Mündern, wem's zuerst
geglückt.
Wird ihn der nächste Sommer grün und reich beladen
sehen,
Und kommt der Friede unterdessen,
Mag es ein anderer sein, der hier die Feigen pflückt.
Wir wären dann in kältere Breiten heimgegangen:
Da wächst kein Feigenbaum,
Aber der Wein.
Fällt dort der Schnee,
Werden wir umso frischer sein
Und gern im wieder befreiten Winter wohnen.

Text by Berthold Viertel (1885-1953)

ABOUT SUICIDE

In this land and in this time
There should be no gloomy evenings,
Nor high bridges over rivers.
Even the hours between nighttime and morning
And the entirety of wintertime as well — that is
dangerous!
For in the face of misery,
People will, in a single moment,
Cast away their unbearable lives.

CALIFORNIAN AUTUMN

The ladder still leans against the fig tree,
But the tree has turned yellow, its fruit long since
eaten
By beaks and mouths which got there first.
If next summer sees it green and heavily laden with
fruit,
And if peace has come in the meantime,
Someone else might pick the figs.
We shall by then have returned home to a colder
climate:
No fig tree grows there,
But we make wine.
If snow should fall there,
We shall be all the merrier,
Happy to live in our liberated winter.

DER KIRSCHDIEB

An einem frühen Morgen, lange vor Morgengraun
Wurde ich geweckt durch ein Pfeifen und ging zum
Fenster.
Auf meinem Kirschbaum – Dämmerung füllte den
Garten –
Saß ein junger Mann mit geflickter Hose
Und pflückte lustig meine Kirschen. Mich sehend
Nickte er mir zu, mit beiden Händen
Holt er die Kirschen aus den Zweigen in seine Taschen.
Noch eine ganze Zeitlang, als ich wieder in meiner
Bettstatt lag
Hört ich ihn sein lust'ges kleines Lied pfeifen.

Text by Bertold Brecht (1898-1956)

BANALITÉS

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)
Text by Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918)
English Translation by Claire Booth

CHANSON D'ORKENISE

Par les portes d'Orkenise
Veut entrer un charretier.
Par les portes d'Orkenise
Veut sortir un va-nu-pieds.

Et les gardes de la ville
Courant sus au va-nu-pieds:
'Qu' emportes-tu de la ville?'
'J'y laisse mon coeur entier.

Et les gardes de la ville
Courant sus au charretier:
'Qu' apportes-tu dans la ville?'
'Mon coeur pour me marier!'

Que de coeurs, dans Orkenise!
Les gardes riaient, riaient.

THE CHERRY THEIF

One early morning, long before dawn,
I was woken by a whistling and went to the
window.
On my cherry tree – dusk filled the garden –
Sat a young man with patched trousers
And cheerfully picked my cherries.
Seeing me, he nodded,
And with both hands gathered cherries from the
branches into his pockets.
For a while longer, as I lay back in my bed,
I heard him whistling his cheerful little song.

SONG OF ORKENISE

Through the gates of Orkenise
A carter wants to enter.
Through the gates of Orkenise
A vagabond wants to leave.

And the sentries guarding the town
Rush up to the vagabond:
'What are you taking from the town?'
'I'm leaving my whole heart.

And the sentries guarding the town
Rush up to the carter:
'What are you carrying into the town?'
'My heart in order to marry.

So many hearts in Orkenise!
The sentries laughed and laughed:

Va-nu-pieds la route est grise,
L'amour grise, ô charretier.

Les beaux gardes de la ville
Tricotaient superbement;
Puis les portes de la ville
Se fermèrent lentement.

HÔTEL

Ma chambre a la forme d'une cage
Le soleil passe son bras par la fenêtre
Mais moi qui veux fumer pour faire des mirages
J'allume au feu du jour ma cigarette
Je ne veux pas travailler je veux fumer

FAGNES DE WALLONIE

Tant de tristesses plénières
Priront mon coeur aux fagnes désolées
Quand las j'ai reposé dans les sapinières
Le poids des kilomètres pendant que râlait
Le vent d'ouest

J'avais quitté le joli bois
Les écureuils y sont restés
Ma pipe essayait de faire des nuages
Au ciel
Qui restait pur obstinément

Je n'ai confié aucun secret
Sinon une chanson énigmatique
Aux tourbières humides

Les bruyères fleurant le miel
Attiraient les abeilles
Et mes pieds endoloris
Foulaient les myrtilles et les airelles

Vagabond, the road ahead is tough,
Love is equally tough, dear carter!

The handsome sentries guarding the town
Knitted vaingloriously;
Then the gates of the town
Slowly closed.

HOTEL

My room has the form of a cage
The sun slips its arm through the window
But I who want to smoke in order to make mirages
I light my cigarette on sunlight's fire
I don't want to work I want to smoke

WALLOON MOSS-HAGS

So much deep sadness
Seized my heart in the desolate fens
When I wearily sat down amongst the firs
Offloading the weight of kilometres
While the West wind growled.

I had left the pretty wood
The squirrels stayed
My pipe tried to make clouds of smoke
In the sky
Which stubbornly stayed clear.

I murmured no secret except that enigmatic song
Which I confided to the peat bogs.

Smelling of honey, the heather

Attracted the bees
And my aching feet
Crushed bilberries and whortleberries

Tendrement mariée
Nord
Nord
La vie s'y tord
En arbres forts
Et tors
La vie y mord
La mort
À belles dents
Quand bruit le vent

VOYAGE À PARIS

Ah! la charmante chose
Quitter un pays morose
Pour Paris
Paris joli
Qu'un jour
Du créer l'Amour

SANGLOTS

Notre amour est réglé par les calmes étoiles
Or nous savons qu'en nous beaucoup d'hommes
respirent
Qui vinrent de très loin et sont un sous nos fronts
C'est la chanson des rêveurs
Qui s'étaient arraché le coeur
Et le portaient dans la main droite
Souviens-t'en cher orgueil de tous ces souvenirs
Des marins qui chantaient comme des conquérants
Des gouffres de Thulé des tendres cieux d'Ophir
Des malades maudits de ceux qui fuient leur ombre
Et du retour joyeux des heureux émigrants
De ce coeur il coulait du sang
Et le rêveur allait pensant

Tenderly united
North
North
There life twists
In strong and gnarled trees
Life there bites
Bitter death
with greedy teeth
When the wind howls.

TRIP TO PARIS

Oh! how delightful it is
To leave a dismal place
And go to Paris!
Charming Paris
Which one day Love had to create!

SOBS

Our love is ruled by calm stars
Now we know that within us many men
breathe
Who came from afar and are one behind our brows
This is the song of the dreamers
Who tore out their hearts
And carried them in their right hands
Remember dear pride all these memories
The sailors who sang like conquerors
The chasms of Thule the tender Ophir skies
The accursed sick, those who flee their own shadows
And the joyous return of happy emigrants
Blood was flowing from that heart
And the dreamer went on thinking

A sa blessure délicate
Tu ne briseras pas la chaîne de ces causes
Et douloureuse et nous disait
Qui sont les effets d'autres causes
Mon pauvre coeur mon coeur brisé
Pareil au coeur de tous les hommes
Voici voici nos mains que la vie fit esclaves

Est mort d'amour ou c'est tout comme
Est mort d'amour et le voici Ainsi vont toutes choses,
Arrachez donc le vôtre aussi
Et rien ne sera libre jusqu'à la fin des temps
Laissons tout aux morts
Et cachons nos sanglots

Of his delicate wound...
You will not break the chain of those causes..
... and painful; and he said to us:
...Which are the effects of other causes
My poor heart, my broken heart
Like the hearts of all men
Look, here are our hands that life enslaved
Has died of love or so it seems
Has died of love and here it is
Such is the fate of all things
So tear your hearts out too!
And nothing will be free until the end of time.
Let us leave everything to the dead
And hide our sobbing.

LIFE STORY

Thomas Adès (b.1971)

Text by Tennessee Williams (1911-1983)

After you've been to bed together for the first time,
without the advantage or disadvantage of any prior
acquaintance,
the other party very often says to you,
Tell me about yourself, I want to know all about you,
what's your story? And you think maybe they really and
truly do
sincerely want to know your life story, and so you light
up
a cigarette and begin to tell it to them, the two of you
lying together in completely relaxed positions
like a pair of rag dolls a bored child dropped on a bed.
You tell them your story, or as much of your story
as time or a fair degree of prudence allows, and they
say,
Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh,
each time a little more faintly, until the oh

is just an audible breath, and then of course
there's some interruption. Slow room service comes
up
with a bowl of melting ice cubes, or one of you rises
to pee
and gaze at himself with the mild astonishment in
the bathroom mirror.
And then, the first thing you know, before you've had
time
to pick up where you left off with your enthralling life
story,
they're telling you their life story, exactly as they'd
intended to all along,
and you're saying, Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh,
each time a little more faintly, the vowel at last
becoming
no more than an audible sigh,
as the elevator, halfway down the corridor and a turn
to the left,
draws one last, long, deep breath of exhaustion
and stops breathing forever. Then?
Well, one of you falls asleep
and the other one does likewise with a lighted
cigarette in his mouth,
and that's how people burn to death in hotel rooms.



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