

Chanson d'avril

Nicole Cabell
soprano

Craig Terry
piano



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Chanson d'avril – French chansons and mélodies

Nicole Cabell, soprano

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Georges Bizet: Adieux de l'hôtesse arabe • Ouvre ton cœur

• Pastorale • Chanson d'avril

Henri Duparc: L'invitation au voyage • Chanson triste

• Au pays où se fait la guerre

Franz Liszt: Enfant, si j'étais roi • Oh! quand je dors

• S'il est un charmant gazon • Comment, disaient-ils

Maurice Ravel: *Shéhérazade*

Asie • La flûte enchantée • L'indifférent

Cinq mélodies populaires grecques

Chanson de la mariée • Là-bas, vers l'église • Quel galant m'est comparable • Chanson des cueilleuses de lentisques • Tout gai!

Total time: 65:47



DE 3450



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P.O. Box 343, Sonoma, CA 95476-9998
(800) 364-0645 • (707) 996-3844
contactus@delosmusic.com
www.delosmusic.com



Chanson d'avril

French chansons and mélodies

Georges Bizet (1838-1875):

1. Adieux de l'hôtesse arabe (4:59)
2. Ouvre ton cœur (2:40)
3. Pastorale (3:41)
4. Chanson d'avril (2:57)

Henri Duparc (1848-1933):

5. L'invitation au voyage (4:26)
6. Chanson triste (3:09)
7. Au pays où se fait la guerre (5:20)

Franz Liszt (1811-1886):

8. Enfant, si j'étais roi (3:06)
9. Oh! quand je dors (5:03)
10. S'il est un charmant gazon (2:07)
11. Comment, disaient-ils (1:57)

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937):

***Shéhérazade* (17:51)**

12. Asie (10:30)
13. La flûte enchantée (3:38)
14. L'indifférent (3:43)

***Cinq mélodies populaires grecques* (8:03)**

15. Chanson de la mariée (1:31)
16. Là-bas, vers l'église (1:49)
17. Quel galant m'est comparable (0:57)
18. Chanson des cueilleuses de lentisques (2:57)
19. Tout gai! (0:49)

Total time: 65:47

Nicole Cabell, soprano
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The tradition of the *chanson* is as old as the history of France itself, dating back to the ancient *trouvères* (troubadors) of the dark ages through the Medieval era. These itinerant (and usually illiterate) poet-composers, with their songful tales of mythical heroes and rulers, were the primary keepers (and propagators) of secular oral history in their day. From there, over centuries, the *chanson* became a generic term that can be applied to any kind of song – a perception that persists to this day.

Thus, in the minds of many, the borderline between the *chanson* and its direct descendant, the *mélodie*, remains quite indistinct – such that the two terms are, even now, often applied interchangeably. The *Mélodie* – strictly speaking – is the term that's usually applied to the more artistically refined, or "classical," of the two forms, being the French equivalent of the German *Lied* – or what the English-speaking world calls the art song.

Not to be outdone by the rapidly emerging *Lied* of their Teutonic counterparts, French composers began producing *mélodies* around the mid-1800s, soon prov-

ing that they could easily match their German rivals in terms of sophistication and artistic merit. But, of course, they suffused their songs with distinctive and equally attractive Gallic flavors, as well as the quintessentially French qualities of elegance, polished refinement and often cheeky charm. In this album, we are treated to star soprano Nicole Cabell's ravishing voice and compelling interpretations as she explores a choice selection from the most attractive examples of the genre.

Our exploration begins with the music of Georges Bizet (1838-1875), who remains – of course – far better known for his supremely tuneful and engaging operas. But his 27 *mélodies* demonstrate much of the same melodic fecundity, harmonic wizardry and overall appeal that distinguish his finest stage works. Henri Duparc (1848-1933) was an obsessively self-critical genius who stopped composing at age 37 and destroyed all but around 40 of his works – of which his 17 exquisitely crafted art songs remain his chief claim to fame.

A significant later contributor to the form was Maurice Ravel (1875-1937), whose

contributions transformed the genre and helped bring it into the 20th century. The only maverick of this group was Franz Liszt (1811-1886), who was more of a “European universalist” whose pioneering advances foreshadowed several of the musical trends to come in the following century. His 80 poetic settings with piano encompass five different languages: German, French, Italian, Russian and English – yet his French settings heard here hardly seem out of place.

The album’s four Bizet songs begin with “**Adieux de l’hôtesse arabe**” (Arabian Hostess’ Farewell), recounting a young Arab girl’s farewell to her wayfaring lover, while flaunting her considerable charms to entice him to stay with her. Like Carmen, his most famous operatic heroine, the girl’s seductive wiles are expressed in the context of her native culture – or at least the then-stereotyped European notions of it. Listen for the veiled eroticism of the singer’s “come-hither” tones as they drift over the piano’s evocation of an exotic and languorous Arab dance.

[Text: Victor Hugo]

Puisque rien ne t’arrête en
cet heureux pays,
Ni l’ombre du palmier, ni le jaune maïs
Ni le repos, ni l’abondance,
Ni de voir à ta voix battre le jeune sein
De nos soeurs dont, les soirs,
le tournoyant essaim
Couronne un coteau de sa danse;
Adieu, beau voyageur! Hélas! Adieu!
Oh! que n’es-tu de ceux
Qui donnent pour limite à
leurs pieds paresseux
Leur toit de branches ou de toiles!
Qui, rêveurs, sans en faire,
écoutent les récits,
Et souhaitent le soir, devant
leur porte assis,
De s’en aller dans les étoiles!
Hélas! Adieu! beau voyageur!

Si tu l’avais voulu, peut-être une de nous,
Ô jeune homme, eut aimé
te servir à genoux
Dans nos huttes toujours ouvertes
Elle eut fait, en berçant ton
sommeil de ses chants,
Pour chasser de ton front les
moucheron méchants,

Un éventail de feuilles vertes.
Si tu ne reviens pas, songe
un peu quelquefois
Aux filles du désert, soeurs
à la douce voix,
Qui dansent pieds nus sur la dune,
Ô beau jeune homme blanc,
bel oiseau passager,
Souviens-toi; car peut-
être, ô rapide étranger,
Ton souvenir resta à plus d'une!
Hélas! Adieu! bel étranger! Souviens-toi!

Since nothing can hold you
to this happy land,
Neither the shady palm,
nor the yellow corn,
Nor the repose, nor the abundance,
Nor to see how your voice
makes the hearts
Of our sisters beat, who in
a whirling swarm,
At evening crown a hillside
with their dancing.
Farewell, handsome voyager.
Alas, farewell.
Oh, if only you were one of those
Whose lazy feet are bound
By a roof of branches or tiles!
One of those dreamers, who, at evening sit

Outside the door, listening to stories
And wishing to go to the stars.
Alas! Farewell, handsome voyager!

If you had wished it, perhaps one of us,
Oh, young man, would have
liked to serve you
Kneeling in our open huts;
While rocking you to sleep
with her songs,
She would have made a
fan of green leaves
To drive from your brow the nasty gnats.
If you do not return, dream
from time to time
Of the desert girls, sisters
of the sweet voice,
Who dance with bare feet
on the sand dunes.
Oh handsome pale man,
beautiful passing bird,
Remember, oh swift stranger,
Your memory remains with
more than one of us.
Alas! Farewell, handsome
stranger! Remember!

Bizet reminds us of his fascination for
the Spanish musical idiom in “**Ouvre ton**

cœur” (Open your heart), which takes the form of the bolero: a popular Iberian dance form – though this example is faster than most. This sensual, yet buoyant song was adapted from *Vasco de Gama*, a now-forgotten early “ode-symphony” (written in Rome after the young composer won the Prix de Rome) in which a young man journeying far from home sings – in urgently imploring tones – of his homeland’s attractions – mainly the beautiful girl he sought to woo there.

[Text: Louis Delâtre, after Camões, rev. Bizet]

La marguerite a fermé sa corolle;
L'ombre a fermé les yeux du jour,
Belle, me tiendras-tu parole?
La marguerite a fermé sa corolle.
Ouvre ton cœur à mon amour,
Ouvre ton cœur.
Ô jeune ange, à ma flamme,
Qu'un rêve charme ton sommeil,
Ouvre ton cœur.
Je veux reprendre mon âme,
Ouvre ton cœur,
Ô jeune ange, à mon flamme!
Comme une fleur s'ouvre au soleil
Ouvre ton cœur, ouvre ton cœur,

Comme une fleur s'ouvre au soleil!
The daisy now hides its corolla,
Shadows have closed the eyes of day,
Oh, beautiful maiden, will you be true to
your word?
The daisy now hides its corolla,
Open your heart to my love,
Open your heart,
O sweet angel, to my desire,
So that a dream may charm your sleep,
Open your heart.
I want to reclaim my soul,
Open your heart,
O sweet angel, to my desire!
As a flower opens to the sun,
Open your heart, open your heart,
As a flower opens to the sun!

“**Pastorale**” is a tenderly languorous idyll – also Spanish-toned – depicting an episode of courtship between the archetypal “shepherd-and-shepherdess” characters that abound in the European pastoral genres of literature, music and art. Note the song’s pervasive hints of melancholy, despite the lighthearted interaction between the lovers: even the normally vivacious “tra-la-las” are uncharacteristically subdued, though still quite sensual.

[Text: Jean-François Regnard]

Un jour de printemps
Tout le long d'un verger
Colin va chantant,
Pour ses maux soulager:
«Ma bergère, tra la la la la,
Laisse-moi prendre un tendre baiser!»
La belle, à l'instant,
Répond à son berger: «Tu veux,
En chantant, un baiser dérober?
Non, Colin, tra la la la la,
Je vais te le donner!»

One spring day
Alongside an orchard
Colin goes singing
To soothe his troubles:
«My shepherdess, tra la la la,
Let me steal a tender kiss!”
The beautiful one at that instant
Responds to her shepherd:
“You would like, while
singing, to steal a kiss?
No, Colin, tra la la la la,
I will give it to you!”

“**Chanson d'avril**” (April song) – another
evocation of ardent wooing – is certainly

one of the loveliest of Bizet's vocal creations, offering a particularly fresh and ecstatic melody that evokes the blithe and happy spirit of springtime: the season of love. The vocal line suggests the fairy-tale wonder of emerging spring as it wanders up and down in spontaneous, almost improvisatory fashion, drifting over delicate and subtle rustling effects from the piano that speak of nature's rebirth.

[Text: Louis Bouilhet]

Lève-toi! Lève-toi! Le printemps vient
de naître!
Là-bas, sur les vallons, flotte un réseau
vermeil!
Tout frissonne au jardin, tout chante et
ta fenêtre,
Comme un regard joyeux, est pleine de
soleil!

Du côté des lilas aux touffes violettes, du
côté des lilas
Mouches et papillons bruissent à la fois;
Et le muguet sauvage, ébranlant ses
clochettes,
A réveillé l'amour, l'amour endormi dans
le bois!

Puisqu'avril a semé ses marguerites
blanches.
Laisse ta mante lourde et ton manchon
frileux,
Déjà l'oiseau t'appelle, et tes sœurs les
pervenches
Te souriront dans l'herbe en voyant tes
yeux bleus!

Viens, partons! au matin, la source est
plus limpide;
Lève-toi! viens, partons!
N'attendons pas du jour les brûlantes
chaleurs;
Je veux mouiller mes pieds dans la rosée
humide,
Et te parler d'amour sous les poiriers en
fleurs.

Wake up! Wake up! Spring is born!
There in the vale, the reeds float vermilion!
The whole garden trembles and sings,
And your window is full of sun;

Next to the lilacs grow tufts of violets.
The honeybees and butterflies chatter all
together.
And the wild lily, newly blossomed,
Has awakened love from woodland
slumber.

Since April has strewn her white daisies
about,
Put off your heavy cloak and muff.
Already the birds call you and the
periwinkles smile,
Envisioning your blue eyes in the grass.

Come, let us go, in the morning the
spring is clearest.
Wake up! Let's go! Before the day gets
too hot;
I want to moisten my feet with dew,
and speak to you under the flowering
pear trees.

We must be grateful that Duparc, the compulsive perfectionist, spared "**L'invitation au voyage**" (Invitation to a journey) when he ruthlessly destroyed all but two of the first five mélodies that he had composed in 1868 as a young man of 20. An unabashed love song, it relates a lover's invitation to his beloved to come away with him to live forever in an imaginary distant land that reflects her own charms – a place where "...all is order and beauty, luxuriousness, calm, and sensuous delight." The piano evokes a mood of mysterious wonder.

[Text: 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.

My child, my sister,
Dream of the sweetness
Of going away to live together!
To love at leisure,
To love and to die
In a country that resembles you!
The humid suns
Of these hazy skies
Have for my spirit the charm
So mysterious
Of your betraying eyes
Shining through their tears.

There, all is order and beauty,
Luxuriousness, calm, and sensuous
delight.

See on these canals
These sleeping ships
Whose nature is to roam;
It is to fulfill
Your least desire
That they come from the ends of the
earth.
The setting suns
Invest the fields,
The canals, the whole town,

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

There, all is order and beauty,
Luxuriousness, calm, and sensuous
delight.

“**Chanson triste**” (Sorrowful song) was Duparc’s very first song – though he later produced an orchestral arrangement of it. Our singer takes us into a subtly mysterious, yet carefree realm of idealized love, expressed in terms of summer moonlight shining from the beloved’s heart, and a ballad “that will seem to speak of ourselves.” The piano’s bed of undulating arpeggio-swells helps to lend it a dreamy sense of unbroken continuity as words and music intertwine in a seamless arch of intimately rapturous expression. Listen for Wagnerian echoes, both in the melodic shaping and chromatic harmonies, as well as touches of “oriental” exoticism. Truly delicious music!

[Text: 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 tristesse,
Dans tes yeux alors je boirai
Tant de baisers et de tendresses
Que, peut-être, je guérirai

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

I will forget past sorrows,
My love, when you cradle
My sad heart and my thoughts

In the loving peacefulness of your arms.

You will take my aching head
Oh! sometimes upon your knee,
And will relate a ballad
That seems to speak of ourselves.

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

“Au pays où se fait la guerre” (To the country where war is being waged) treats the familiar ancient theme of the noble damsel waiting miserably in her castle tower for her beloved to return from war. The opening passages establish – in both voice and piano – the song’s prevalent feel of depressive tedium. But then the vocal line rises in ecstatic remembrance as our lady recounts the couple’s parting kiss, when “...he took my soul from my lips.” Later, we hear momentary excitement – announced by the suddenly turbulent piano – as she thinks she hears her lover climbing the stairs to her, only to find that it is her page. After a sharp pang of disappointment, the music again

reverts to its sense of endless vigil, ending the song as it began.

[Text: Théophile Gauthier]

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?
Voici le soleil qui se couche,

Et moi toute seule en ma tour,
J'attends encore son retour.

Les pigeons sur le toit roucoulent,
Roucoulent 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 lys 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.

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.

To the country where war is being waged
My handsome love has gone away,
It seems to my desolate heart
That no one but me is left on the earth.
On parting, with a kiss of farewell,
He took my soul from my lips . . .
Who keeps him so long, dear God?
Now the sun is setting,

And all alone in my tower,
I still await his return.

The doves on the roof coo,
Coo amorously,
With a sad and charming sound;
The waters under the big willows flow.
I feel near to tears,

My heart unfolds like a full-blown lily,
And I dare hope no longer,
Now the pale moon is shining.

And all alone in my tower,
I still await his return.

Someone is climbing the stairs with big
strides . . .
Could it be he, my sweet love?
It is not he, but only
My little page with my lamp
Winds of evening, fly, tell him
That he is my thought and my dream
All my joy and my anxiety.
Now the dawn is rising.

And all alone in my tower,
I still await his return.

Before getting into Franz Liszt's songs,
it should be noted that he actually com-
posed two versions of each of the four
Victor Hugo songs heard here. The initial
versions were written in the 1840s, when
the composer was still a touring pianist –
and their often busy and technically diffi-
cult accompaniments reflect young Liszt's
showy style. But by middle age, he realized

that an art song must be led by the singer, not the pianist – and accordingly made them more “singer-friendly” by refining and simplifying the piano parts – and it is the latter versions that are heard here. The revised Hugo songs were published in 1858-59, and some musicologists have concluded that they constitute a unified cycle – though it remains uncertain as to whether Liszt intended them as such.

In “**Enfant, si j’étais roi**” (My Child, if I were king), the singer catalogs the sacrifices he would make – if he were king, or even God – just to gain the title child’s attention and (in the second verse), its kiss. But it remains unclear as to whether it is actually a “child” being serenaded, or some sweet young girl. Note the dramatically stormy (and virtuosic) turn the piano part takes as these imaginary “sacrifices” take on a more cosmic scope.

Enfant, si j’étais roi,
Je donnerais l’empire,
Et mon char, et mon sceptre,
Et mon peuple à genoux,
Et ma couronne d’or,
Et mes bains de porphyre,

Et mes flottes à qui la mer ne peut
suffire,
Pour un regard de vous.

Si j’étais Dieu,
La terre et l’air avec les ondes,
Les anges, les démons courbés devant
ma loi,
Et le profond Chaos aux entrailles
fécondes,
L’éternité, l’espace et les cieux et les
mondes,
Pour un baiser de toi!

My child, if I were king,
I would surrender empires,
My scepter, my throne
And my subjects;
I’d give my crown of gold
And my palace;
My ships;
All to gain one look from you.

And if I were God,
I’d forfeit earth, air and ocean;
Angels and demons;
The dark chaos of night;
Eternity and space;
To win one kiss from you.

“Oh! quand je dors” (Oh! While I sleep)
– one of Liszt’s loveliest songs – unfolds
as a misty nocturne over a gently roll-
ing accompaniment, as the poet’s voice
imagines his beloved coming to him in a
dream – in which the touch of her breath
will make him smile. A momentary ep-
isode of musical darkness is heard as he
imagines “a dismal dream” – which she
then banishes as the voice rises in ecstat-
ic relief – and again in the final stanza,
ending the song on a sustained high note,
floating exquisitely as his soul awakens.

Oh! quand je dors, viens auprès de ma
couche,
Comme à Pétrarque apparaissait Laura,
Et qu’en passant ton haleine me touche...
Soudain ma bouche
S’entr’ouvrira!

Sur mon front morne où peut-être
s’achève
Un songe noir qui trop longtemps dura,
Que ton regard comme un astre se lève...
Et soudain mon rêve
Rayonnera!

Puis sur ma lèvre où voltige une flamme,
Éclair d’amour que Dieu même épura,

Pose un baiser, et d’ange deviens
femme...
Soudain mon âme
S’éveillera!

Oh, while I sleep, come to my bedside,
As Laura appeared to Petrarch,
And in passing let your breath touch
me....
All at once
I shall smile!

On my somber brow where perhaps
there is
Ending a dismal dream that has lasted
too long;
Let your face rise like a star....
All at once my dream
Will become radiant!

Then on my lips, where a flame flutters,
A flash of love purified by God himself,
Place a kiss, and be transformed from
angel into woman....
All at once my soul
Will awaken!

As we listen to **“S’il est un charmant
gazon”** (If there is a fair meadow), we

explore the common Romantic-era metaphor of love, as nurtured in the bosom of nature as well as within oneself. The Poet first rhapsodizes about making a pathway for his beloved in an imaginary flower-strewn meadow – then shifts to a “dream of love” that he hopes to make the home of her heart. The piano’s unobtrusive support radiates a sense of warm contentment.

S’il est un charmant gazon,
Que le ciel arrose,
Où brille en toute saison
Quelque fleur éclore:
Où l’on cueille à pleine main
Lys, chèvrefeuille et jasmin,
J’en veux faire le chemin
Où ton pied se pose.

S’il est un rêve d’amour,
Parfumé de rose,
Où l’on trouve chaque jour
Quelque douce chose,
Un rêve que Dieu bénit,
Où l’âme à l’âme s’unit,
Oh! J’en veux faire le nid
Où ton cœur se pose!

If there is a fair meadow,
Wet with pearly dew,
Where flowers
Never fade,
Where we may pick rose,
Jasmine, fleur-de-lys,
There would I make you a path
Where your feet tread.

If there is a dream of love,
Rose-perfumed,
Where, daily, one finds
Some sweet thing,
A dream blessed by God,
Where soul joins to soul,
Oh! I want it to be the nest
Where you lay your heart!

Comment, disaient-ils (How then, murmured he) is a musical study in sudden contrasts and mood-swings, corresponding to the different natures of men and women. Agitated outpourings from the piano support distressed queries from the man as to how he should deal with various problems – questions that the woman answers with single words, in her serene and alluring siren-song.

“Comment,” disaient-ils,
“Avec nos nacelles, fuir les alguazils?”
“Ramez, ramez!” disaient-elles.

“Comment,” disaient-ils,
“Oublier querelles,
Misères et périls?”
“Dormez, dormez!” disaient-elles.

“Comment,” disaient-ils,
“Enchanter les
Belles sans philtres subtils?»
“Aimez, aimez!”, disaient-elles.

“How then”, murmured he,
“Can we with our sails, flee the
alquazils?”
“Row,” murmured she.

“How then”, murmured he,
“Can we forget our quarrels,
Miseries and perils?”
“Sleep,” answered she.

“How then,” whispered he,
“Can we enchant the
Beautiful ones without subtle potions?”
“Love,” murmured she.

In 1903, Ravel composed *Shéhérazade*, a three-song cycle (in versions for both piano and orchestra) that sets verses selected from his friend Tristan Klingsor’s 100-poem collection of the same name. The “oriental” exoticism of poetry and music alike is no surprise, as they reflect the cultural spirit of the Arabic folk-stories that make up the collection known to us as the *One Thousand and One Nights*.

The language of “**Asie**” (Asia) seems at first to suggest an exotic, middle-Eastern travelogue. But the distinctly melancholic, ennui-ridden feel heard in much of the music seems to imply an idle, poetic daydream on the part of a sad and lonely soul who is trapped in the tedium of everyday existence. The dreamer longs for a “grass-is-greener” kind of escape from a humdrum life – but the closest he can come to that is an imaginary journey via legendary tales and the travel accounts of others. Note Ravel’s masterly musical characterizations of the different regions, as well as of their classic characters and cultural trappings.

Asie, Asie, Asie,
Vieux pays merveilleux des contes de
nourrice,
Où dort la fantaisie comme une
impératrice,
En sa forêt tout emplie de mystère.

Asie,
Je voudrais m'en aller avec la goëlette
Qui se berce ce soir dans le port,
Mystérieuse et solitaire,
Et qui déploie enfin ses voiles violettes,
Comme un immense oiseau de nuit dans
le ciel d'or.

Je voudrais m'en aller vers des îles de
fleurs,
En écoutant chanter la mer perverse,
Sur en vieux rythme ensorceleur.

Je voudrais voir Damas et les villes de
Perse,
Avec des minarets légers dans l'air.
Je voudrais voir de beaux turbans de
soie,
Sur des visages noirs aux dents claires.

Je voudrais voir des yeux sombres
d'amour,
Et des prunelles brillantes de joie,

En des peaux jaunes comme des oranges.
Je voudrais voir des vêtements de velours
Et des habits à longues franges.

Je voudrais voir des calumets, entre des
bouches
Tout entourées de barbe blanche.
Je voudrais voir d'âpres marchands aux
regards louches,
Et des cadis, et des vizirs
Qui du seul mouvement de leur doigt
qui se penche,
Accordent vie ou mort, au gré de leur
désir.

Je voudrais voir la Perse, et l'Inde, et puis
la Chine,
Les mandarins ventrus sous les
ombrelles,
Et les princesses aux mains fines,
Et les lettrés qui se querellent
Sur la poésie et sur la beauté.

Je voudrais m'attarder au palais
enchanté,
Et comme un voyageur étranger
Contempler à loisir des paysages peints
Sur des étoffes en des cadres de sapin,
Avec un personnage au milieu d'un
verger.

Je voudrais voir des assassins souriant
Du bourreau qui coupe un cou
d'innocent,
Avec son grand sabre courbé d'Orient.
Je voudrais voir des pauvres et des
reines,
Je voudrais voir des roses et du sang,
Je voudrais voir mourir d'amour ou bien
de haine.

Et puis m'en revenir plus tard
Narrer mon aventure aux curieux de rêves,
En élevant comme Sindbad ma vieille
tasse arabe
De temps en temps jusqu'à mes lèvres,
Pour interrompre le conte avec art...

Asia, Asia, Asia,
Ancient, marvelous country of fairy
tales,
Where fantasy sleeps like an empress
In her forest full of mystery.

Asia,
I would like to go with the schooner
Which is rocking this evening in the port
Mysterious and solitary,
And which finally spreads its violet sails
Like a huge bird of night in the golden
sky.

I would like to go away to the islands of
flowers,
While listening to the song of the
wayward sea,
With its old, bewitching rhythm.

I would like to see Damascus and the
cities of Persia,
With airy minarets in the sky.
I would like to see beautiful silken turbans
Above black faces with shining teeth.

I would like to see eyes dark with love
And pupils sparkling with joy,
In skins yellow as oranges.
I would like to see garments of velvet
And robes with long fringes.

I would like to see calumets, held
between lips
Fringed with white beards.
I would like to see avaricious
Merchants with shifty glances,
And cadis, and viziers
Who, with a single movement of their
bending finger,
Decree life or death, just as they wish.

I would like to see Persia, and India, and
then China,

The portly mandarins beneath their
sunshades,
And the princesses with their delicate
hands,
And the scholars who dispute
Over poetry and beauty;

I would like to linger in the enchanted
palace,
And like a foreign traveler
Gaze at leisure upon countrysides painted
On fabrics in pinewood frames,
With a figure in the midst of an orchard.

I would like to see assassins smiling
At the executioner who cuts off an
innocent head
With his grand curved oriental saber.
I would like to see beggars and queens,
I would like to see roses and blood,
I would like to see dying in the name of
love- or hate.

And then returning later,
To narrate my adventure to those
interested in dreams,
While raising like Sinbad my old
Arabian cup
From time to time to my lips,
To interrupt the tale with artistry...

“La flûte enchantée” simply depicts a
lover’s romantic longing in the face of
separation from his beloved within the
same master’s household, according to
their different duties as servants. But the
lover hears music – by turns happy and
sad – from the beloved’s flute outside
his window: music that bonds them and
confirms their love, with each note seem-
ing to fly from her flute to his cheek “...
like a mysterious kiss.”

L'ombre est douce et mon maître dort
Coiffé d'un bonnet conique de soie,
Et son long nez jaune en sa barbe blanche.
Mais moi, je suis éveillée encore
Et j'écoute au dehors
Une chanson de flûte où s'épanche
Tour à tour la tristesse ou la joie.
Un air tour à tour langoureux ou frivole
Que mon amoureux chéri joue.
Et quand je m'approche de la croisée,
Il me semble que chaque note s'envole
De la flûte vers ma joue,
Comme un mystérieux baiser.

The shade is soft and my master is sleeping
With his conical silken cap on his head,
And his long yellow nose in his white
beard,

But I, I am still awake
And I hear outside
The melody of a flute pouring forth
Sadness and joy in turn.
An air now languorous, now gay,
That my darling lover plays,
And when I draw near the casement,
It seems as though each note flies
From the flute toward my cheek
Like a mysterious kiss.

It has been widely speculated that “**L’indifférent**” goes much deeper than the narrator’s languorous – and clearly homoerotic – vision. The sensual, yet somewhat bleak music describes a beautiful youth as he passes by, while conveying a sense of stoic loneliness and unfulfilled longing ... a palpable feeling of helpless inability to realize the desired physical or emotional yearnings. After all, Ravel – believed by many music historians to have been a repressed homosexual (though it has never been proven) – is reported to have once remarked to the effect that the secret key to his own psyche lay hidden in this piece.

Tes yeux sont doux comme ceux d’une fille,
Jeune étranger, et la courbe fine

De ton beau visage de duvet ombragé,
Est plus séduisante encore de ligne.
Ta lèvre chante sur le pas de ma porte
Une langue inconnue et charmante,
Comme une musique fausse.
Entre! Et que mon vin te réconforte...
Mais non, tu passes,
Et de mon seuil je te vois t’éloigner,
Me faisant un dernier geste avec grâce,
Et la hanche légèrement ployée
Par ta démarche féminine et lasse...

Your eyes are gentle like those of a girl,
Young stranger, and the delicate curve
Of your handsome face, shaded with
down,
Is still more attractive in its contour.
On my doorstep your lips chant
An unknown, charming tongue,
Like false music.
Enter! And let my wine refresh you...
But no—you pass by,
And I see you departing from my
threshold,
Gracefully waving farewell to me,
Your hips lightly swaying
With your languid, feminine gait...

– *Shéhérazade* texts translated by
Winifred Radford, © 1970

Composed from 1904 to 1906, Ravel's *Cinq mélodies populaires grecques* (Five Greek Folksongs) are widely favored by singers and pianists alike. Setting French texts translated from the original Greek folk-verses by Michel Dimitri Calvocoressi, these five beautifully crafted little gems are quite compact, yet supremely effective. Despite our usual categorization of Ravel as an impressionist, these highly expressive, often Mediterranean-flavored songs demonstrate a distinct clarity of musical line and economy of overall sonic texture that often belie the impressionist label, even as they effectively "paint" musical pictures and moods. Ravel later orchestrated two of them. Their often repetitive, folk-flavored tunes often make them seem more like chansons than mélodies.

In the lively and upbeat "**Chanson de la mariée**" (Song of the bride), a man awakens his fiancé (his "dear little partridge"), and bids her to rise and savor the beauties of the morning with him – finally suggesting that they be married. The rather simple and repetitive melody (covering only a minor sixth) retains a folk-like

character, over a subtly bustling, yet harmonically spare accompaniment.

Réveille-toi, perdrix mignonne,
Ouvre au matin tes ailes.

Trois grains de beauté
Mon coeur en est brûlé!

Vois le ruban d'or que je t'apporte,
Pour le nouer autour de tes cheveux.

Si tu veux, ma belle, viens nous marier!
Dans nos deux familles tous sont alliés!

Wake up, dear little partridge.
Open your wings to the morning.

Three beauty spots
Set my heart aflame!

See the golden ribbon I bring you
To tie around your hair.

If you wish, my beauty, come let us be
married!
In our two families everyone is related!

Contrast comes with a much more subdued number: “**Là-bas, vers l’église**” (Yonder near the Church). Outwardly, this serenely somber piece seems to breathe mournful melancholy – but repeated hearings with attention to the text suggest that Ravel instead sought to express the solemnity of sacred ritual and a sense of quiet pride in the deep religious faith that binds the “world’s best people” of the narrator’s community together. This time, the simple melody is supported by equally simple underpinnings from the piano that often sounds as if it’s imitating some local instrument.

Là-bas, vers l’église,
Vers l’église, Ayio Sidéro,
L’église, ô Vierge Sainte,
L’église, Ayio Constanndino,
Se sont réunis,
Rassemblés en nombre infini,
Du monde, ô Vierge Sainte,
Du monde tous les plus braves!

Yonder, near the church,
Near the church Ayio Sidero,
The church, O Blessed Virgin,
The church Ayio Constanndino,
Are gathered together,

Assembled in infinite numbers,
The world’s, O Blessed Virgin,
All the world’s best people!

The macho swagger of “**Quel galant m’est comparable**” (What dandy can be compared with me) comes across like some strutting bird’s mating dance. But even as the young showoff calls attention to his masculine virtues (and accessories) in front of his beloved, his tender side prevails in the end, as he declares his love to her. Note the piano’s arrogant figurations and how they trail off at the end.

Quel galant m’est comparable
D’entre ceux qu’on voit passer?
Dis, dame Vassiliki?
Vois, pendus à ma ceinture
Pistolets et sabre aigu . . .
Et c’est toi que j’aime!

What dandy can be compared with me,
Among those who are seen passing by?
Tell me, lady Vassiliki?
Look, hanging on my belt
Pistols and a sharp sword . . .
And it is you whom I love.

The distinctly dreamy “**Chanson des cueilleuses de lentisques**” (Song of the girls collecting mastic) presents a gentle, serenely feminine approach to love, longing and the praise of male beauty. Spare chords from the piano support the singer’s lyrical, modally inflected line.

Ô joie de mon âme, joie de mon coeur,
Trésor qui m’est si cher;
Joie de l’âme et du cœur,
Toi que j’aime ardemment,
Tu es plus beau qu’un ange.
Ô lorsque tu parais, ange si doux,
Devant nos yeux,
Comme un bel ange blond,
Sous le clair soleil,
Hélas! tous nos pauvres cœurs soupirent!

O joy of my soul, joy of my heart,
Treasure so precious to me;
Joy of the soul, and of the heart,
You whom I love ardently,
You are more beautiful than an angel.
O when you appear, angel so sweet,
Before our eyes,
Like a lovely, blond angel
Under the bright sun,
Alas! All our poor hearts sigh!

The merry little tune of “**Tout gai!**” (All gay!) ends the cycle – and the album – with a brief and exuberant celebration of the happy side of life. Still, the dancelike rhythms and the singer’s carefree “tra-la-la’s” are slightly restrained by the accompaniment – which, though quite lively, remains fairly subdued, getting no louder than the piano dynamic.

Tout gai! gai, Ha, tout gai!
Belle jambe, tireli, qui danse;
Belle jambe, la vaisselle danse,
Tra la la la la . . .

All gay! gay, ha, all gay!
Beautiful legs, tra la, dancing;
Beautiful legs, the dishes are dancing
too,
Tra la la la la . . .

- Lindsay Koob



Nicole Cabell, the 2005 Winner of the BBC Singer of the World Competition in Cardiff is one of the most sought-after lyric sopranos of today. Her repertoire spans four centuries of music from Bach and Mozart to today's composers and she has appeared in the opera houses of New York, Chicago, San Francisco, London, Berlin, Barcelona, Cologne, Buenos Aires in leading roles.

Ms. Cabell has appeared on the stages of the Metropolitan Opera (*Carmen*, *La Bohème*, *The Magic Flute*, *l'Elisir d'Amore*), Lyric Opera of Chicago (*Die Zauberflöte*, *Carmen*, *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *La Bohème*, *Les Pêcheur de Perles*), San Francisco Opera (*I Capuleti e i Montecchi*), Royal Opera House, Covent Garden (*Les Pêcheurs de Perles*, *La Bohème*, *La Juive*), Deutsche Oper Berlin (*Don Giovanni*, *Carmen*, *Idomeneo*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *Romeo et Juliette*), Liceo in Barcelona (*L'Elisir d'Amore*), Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires (*La Bohème*), New National Theatre in Tokyo (*Don Giovanni*, *L'Elisir d'Amore*), to name a few.

In concert, Nicole Cabell has sung a variety of concert pieces from the Mozart Requiem to Barber's Knoxville, Summer of 1915 with orchestras in the USA such as the New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, Boston Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra and abroad with the Orchestre National de France, the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestre de Lyon, Bavarian Radio Orchestra, Accademia di Santa Cecilia with conductors such as Sir Andrew Davis, James Conlon, Antonio Pappano, Charles Dutoit, Donald Runnicles and Andre Previn, etc...

A noted recitalist, Nicole Cabell has sung in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Atlanta, London, Toronto. Her recordings include a solo album on Decca, "Soprano", a collection of songs by Ricky Ian Gordon on texts by Langston Hughes, "Silver Rain", Clara in "Porgy and Bess", Musetta in "La Bohème" (the soundtrack of which was also used for the Richard Dornhelm film in which Ms. Cabell starred) and the title-role in Donizetti's "Imelda de' Lambertazzi".

A native of Tullahoma, Tennessee, pianist **Craig Terry** has launched an international career performing with some of the world's leading singers and instrumentalists. Currently Mr. Terry is in his ninth season as Assistant Conductor at Lyric Opera of Chicago, and has recently been named Music Director of the Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center at Lyric Opera of Chicago. Previously, he served as Assistant Conductor at the Metropolitan Opera after joining its Lindemann Young Artist Development Program. Mr. Terry has performed with such esteemed vocalists as Sir Thomas Allen, Stephanie Blythe, Christine Brewer, Nicole Cabell, Sasha Cooke, Eric Cutler, Joseph Kaiser, Kate Lindsey, Danielle De Niese, Susanna Phillips, Patricia Racette, Catherine Wyn-Rogers, Hugh Russell, Garrett Sorenson, and Amber Wagner. He has collaborated as a chamber musician with members of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, the Lyric Opera of Chicago Orchestra, the Gewandhaus Orchester, the Berlin Philharmonic, the Vienna Philharmonic, and the Pro Arte String Quartet. Mr. Terry's 2013-2014 performance schedule includes recitals with Stephanie Blythe, Christine



Brewer, Nicole Cabell, Joyce DiDonato, Denyce Graves, Kate Lindsey, Ana Maria Martinez, Patricia Racette, Hugh Russell, and Heidi Stober as well as chamber music concerts with members of the Lyric Opera of Chicago Orchestra.

Ms. Cabell wishes to extend special thanks to Constantine Orbelian, John Primavera and the entire production team (listed below) for their valuable contributions to this album.

Recorded January 2 – 6, 2013 at Allegro Recordings, Burbank, CA

Executive Producer: Carol Rosenberger

Producer: Matthew Snyder

Co-producer: Michael Benchetrit

Recording engineer/mastering: Matthew Snyder

Photos of Nicole Cabell: Deneb Catalan

Art design/layout: Lonnie Kunkel

Program notes and booklet editing: Lindsay Koob

Text translations used by permission of CAMI Vocal; translations for the three *Shéhérazade* song texts by Winifred Radford

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(707) 996-3844 • Fax (707) 320-0600 • (800) 364-0645

contactus@delosmusic.com

www.delosmusic.com

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