

CHANDOS

THE WORLD FEELS DUSTY

SONGS BY

Barber · Chausson
Copland · Debussy
Wallen

Dame
Sarah
Connolly
MEZZO-SOPRANO

Joseph
Middleton
PIANO





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Ernest Chausson

The World Feels Dusty

Ernest Chausson (1855 – 1899)

Poème de l'amour et de la mer, Op. 19

(1882 – 90, revised 1893)

24:01

(Poem of Love and the Sea)

in F major • in F-Dur • en fa majeur

for Medium Voice and Piano

À Henri Duparc

I La Fleur des eaux [10:08]

1 'L'air est plein d'une odeur exquise de lilas'. Calme – 4:22

2 'Et mon cœur s'est levé par ce matin d'été'. Simplement –
Un peu plus animé – Premier Mouvement – 2:21

3 'Quel son lamentable et sauvage'. Très lent –
Le double plus vite – Un peu animé – Calme 3:24

4 Interlude. Lent et triste – [] – Premier Mouvement 2:10

II La Mort de l'amour [11:43]

5 'Bientôt l'île bleue et joyeuse'. Vif et joyeux – 2:07

6 'Le vent roulait les feuilles mortes'. Lent et solennel –
Plus vite – 2:51

7 'Comme des fronts de morts nos fronts avaient pâli'.
Premier Mouvement. Lent et solennel – 2:29

8 'Le temps des lilas et le temps des roses'. Lent et triste –
Plus animé – Simplement – Au premier mouvement – Lent 4:14

Samuel Barber (1910 – 1981)

Three Songs, Op. 10 (1935 – 36) 8:02 for Voice and Piano

- | | | | |
|----|---|--|------|
| 9 | 1 | Rain has fallen. To Dario Cecchi. Moderato | 2:45 |
| 10 | 2 | Sleep now. To Susanna Cecchi. Andante tranquillo – Più mosso e agitato – Tempo I, tranquillo | 2:46 |
| 11 | 3 | I hear an army. Allegro con fuoco – More sustained – A tempo I | 2:30 |

Achille-Claude Debussy (1862 – 1918)

Trois Chansons de Bilitis (1897 – 98) 9:08 (Three Songs of Bilitis)

- | | | | |
|----|-----|--|------|
| 12 | I | La Flûte de Pan. Lent et sans rigueur de rythme – [] – A Tempo I – Plus lent – Pressez un peu – A Tempo | 2:49 |
| 13 | II | La Chevelure. Assez lent – Moins lent – En pressant – A Tempo I – Tempo I, plus lent – Très lent | 3:22 |
| 14 | III | Le Tombeau des Naiades. Très lent | 2:55 |

Aaron Copland (1900 – 1990)

Two Songs from 'Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson'
(1949 – 50) **4:00**
for Voice and Piano

- | | | | |
|----|----|---|------|
| 15 | 4 | The world feels dusty. To Alexei Haieff. Very slowly – [] –
Tempo I (very slowly) | 1:58 |
| 16 | 10 | I've heard an organ talk sometimes. To Alberto Ginastera.
Gently flowing | 2:02 |

Errollyn Wallen (b. 1958)

première recording

Night Thoughts (2023) **12:45**
Song Cycle

- | | | | |
|----|---|---|-----------------|
| 17 | 1 | Sleep. Still – Più mosso – Faster – Tempo I –
A tempo, with greater movement – Slow and dreamy | 3:26 |
| 18 | 2 | Bright Lights. Bright and brilliant –
With more movement, jazzy | 3:23 |
| 19 | 3 | There's a certain Slant of light. Semplice | 4:17 |
| 20 | 4 | Night Thoughts. Soulful | 1:37 |
| | | | TT 57:57 |

Dame Sarah Connolly mezzo-soprano
Joseph Middleton piano

The World Feels Dusty

Chausson: Poème de l'amour et de la mer
Ernest Chausson (1855 – 1899) was born into an affluent family (his father had worked with Baron Haussmann on the huge urban renewal project of Paris in the mid-nineteenth century) and as a very young man he would regularly be seen in some of the city's leading salons where he met artists such as Henri Fantin-Latour and Odilon Redon, and the composer Vincent d'Indy. In spite of his creative inclinations, Chausson was under strong parental pressure to take up a 'respectable' profession, and by 1877 he seemed destined for a career in the law, becoming a barrister at the Court of Appeal in Paris. Two years later, he became an 'auditeur' in Massenet's composition classes at the Paris Conservatoire – and in 1880 entered the Prix de Rome, subsequently joining the long line of French composers who failed to win this prize. He continued studies with Massenet and, later, with César Franck who became an important mentor. The other crucial influence on his development was Wagner. In 1882 Chausson went to Bayreuth (with his friend d'Indy) to see the first production of *Parsifal*; he was back

there the following year with his new bride, Jeanne Escudier: they spent their honeymoon immersed in Wagner.

A man of enormous culture, Chausson filled his Paris home with fine paintings, and his friends included Monet, Degas, and Rodin as well as Fauré, Duparc, and Debussy (although that particular friendship later cooled owing to Chausson's growing disapproval of Debussy's philandering lifestyle). A fiercely self-critical composer, he was very highly regarded during his lifetime, but he died at the age of just forty-four, the result of a tragic cycling accident, leaving a small but treasurable output of instrumental works, an opera (*Le Roi Arthus*), and a number of songs.

Poème de l'amour et de la mer was over a decade in the making, composed between 1882 and 1890, and revised in 1893. It comprises two extended songs which frame an instrumental interlude. The poems are by Chausson's friend Maurice Bouchor and their subjects – love, death, and the sea – have clear parallels with Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*. Though the music is unmistakably French, the influence of Wagner is pervasive too – Chausson started the first song in the

year that saw his pilgrimage to Bayreuth for the première of *Parsifal*. But his themes have a very individual character and are treated to the kind of thematic transformation that was so beloved of his teacher Franck. In the first song Chausson reveals the sensitivity of his word setting as well as his richly harmonised piano writing, and its mood of melancholy nostalgia is sustained in the instrumental interlude that follows. After an exuberant, hope-filled start, 'La Mort de l'amour' turns darker, ending in despondency with 'Le temps des lilas', in which love 'has perished for evermore'.

This haunting work was dedicated to Henri Duparc. The first complete performance took place in Brussels on 21 February 1893 at a concert given by the enterprising society of artists and musicians known as *Les Vingt*, established by Octave Maus. He gave the responsibility for concert planning to d'Indy and Eugène Ysaÿe – both friends of Chausson's. Their imaginative programming ensured that Brussels was able to hear the best of new French music, sometimes before it was performed in Paris. Such was the case with the *Poème de l'amour et de la mer*. The singer at the première was the Belgian tenor Désiré Demest, the composer himself accompanying at the piano. Chausson also prepared an orchestral version which was heard for the first time, in Paris, on 8 April 1893,

performed by the soprano Éléonore Blanc and the orchestra of the Société nationale de Musique conducted by Gabriel Marie.

Debussy: Trois Chansons de Bilitis

Claude Debussy (1862 – 1918) composed the *Trois Chansons de Bilitis* in 1897 – 98, on the erotic poems which his friend Pierre Louÿs had claimed were translations of ancient Sapphic texts, but which were in fact Louÿs's own inventions. It is uncertain when Debussy and Louÿs first met, but it may well have been at the Librairie de l'Art indépendant, the aesthetic bookshop and publishing house established by Edmond Bailly. It is extremely likely that Debussy knew these poems were sophisticated spoofs and not what they purported to be, but his songs betray no sense that he was working with anything other than genuine Sapphic texts. Indeed, Edward Lockspeiser wrote of these settings that they were 'the most moving revelations of [Debussy's] hedonistic, pagan art', developing the evocative style of the *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* into something yet more strange and remote. Another admirer of these songs was the writer Romain Rolland who described them as among the most perfect examples he knew of French word-setting. All three of these poems were taken from the first part of Louÿs's collection,

which is concerned with the relationship between the young Bilitis and the shepherd boy Lykas. The secret world and shifting moods of 'La Flûte de Pan' mark the initial sexual encounter of Bilitis and Lykas. This gives way to 'La Chevelure' – the passionate song in which their relationship is consummated – its music close to the world of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*. In the icy vision of desolation presented in 'Le Tombeau des Naiades', the relationship between Bilitis and Lykas seems to come to an end, mirrored by the poem's allusions to the worst winter for thirty years.

Barber: Three Songs, Op. 10

In 1935, Samuel Barber (1910 – 1981) won a scholarship to study at the American Academy in Rome. It was during his time there that he composed his Three Songs, Op. 10, setting poems from James Joyce's 1907 collection *Chamber Music*. Four years later, they were published as a set by Schirmer, in New York. Each of these songs describes a different love affair: in the first, 'Rain has fallen', the mood is tender and full of nostalgia, the piano initially evoking the sound of rainfall, before the song reaches an impassioned climax. 'Sleep now' is an uneasy lullaby – at first hesitant, then angry ('The voice of the winter / Is heard at the door'), until a more consoling – though still

troubled – close ('Sleep on in peace now, / O you unquiet heart'). The final song, 'I hear an army', is urgent and dramatic, its music depicting the 'thunder of horses', ending with a despairing appeal: 'My love, my love, my love, why have you left me alone?'. The first two songs were performed for the first time, at the Villa Aurelia, in Rome, on 22 April 1936, on which occasion Barber – an accomplished baritone – accompanied himself. 'I hear an army' received its première a year later, at the Curtis Institute, in Philadelphia, sung by Rose Bampton and with Barber at the piano.

Aaron Copland: Two Songs from 'Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson'

Aaron Copland (1900 – 1990) completed his *Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson* in 1950 and they were first performed, in New York, on 18 May 1950, sung by the mezzo-soprano Alice Howland with Copland at the piano. Copland initially had no plans to write a cycle, and noted that 'each song is meant to be complete in itself'. Though his interest in Dickinson was sparked by 'The Chariot' (another song in the set), according to his biographer Vivian Perlis, 'The world feels dusty' was the first of the set to be completed. It was dedicated to the composer Alexei Haieff. This is music of bewitching stillness, the piano chords seeming to cast a spell while the voice weaves

a melody of beautiful simplicity. 'I've heard an organ talk sometimes' was dedicated to Alberto Ginastera, its expressive melody unfolding over hymn-like chords.

Wallen: Night Thoughts

In the score of *Night Thoughts*, Errollyn Wallen (b. 1958) states that it was

commissioned by Leeds Lieder for Dame Sarah Connolly and Joseph Middleton with the generous support of Peter Hirschmann, Martin Staniforth and a Vaughan Williams Foundation Grant.

Dame Sarah and Joseph Middleton gave its world première, in Leeds, on 2 October 2023 and the first London performance followed a month later, on 3 November 2023 at the Wigmore Hall. According to a note at the end of the score, the songs were completed a few months earlier, in March 2023. There are four songs in all, in which Wallen sets two of her own poems alongside texts by Shakespeare and Emily Dickinson. However, the inspiration for the set came from a visit to the artist Howard Hodgkin – and in particular to his painting *Night Thoughts*. As Wallen wrote in *Country Life*,

I was fortunate to visit Howard Hodgkin's studio in 2015... *Night Thoughts* stood out because it was monochrome... this painting distils all his techniques and

preoccupations in gradations of white, grey and black. As a composer, sometimes your best work comes from a sense of constriction: tight boundaries can push you – you find emotional force.

The first song, 'Sleep', sets words from Act II, Scene 2 of *Macbeth* (from a speech in which Macbeth addresses Lady Macbeth). Here the piano seems to enrobe the voice in music that is eerie and mysterious. There is a complete change of mood for Wallen's own poem 'Bright Lights'. Marked *Bright and brilliant*, this song recalls an early performance in Harlem by the teenage Ella Fitzgerald – and it also serves as a reminder that at the start of her career, Dame Sarah Connolly was also an accomplished jazz singer. 'There's a certain Slant of light' is a poem by Emily Dickinson, written in 1861, in which observing a 'slant' of winter sunlight provokes deeper reflections on belief and mortality. Wallen's thoughtful musical setting encompasses the strangeness and variety of Dickinson's language. The final song, 'Night Thoughts', is on another poem by Wallen herself, recalling her reactions on seeing Hodgkin's *Night Thoughts*.

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Born in County Durham, the mezzo-soprano **Dame Sarah Connolly** studied piano and

singing at the Royal College of Music, of which she is now a Fellow. Her many and varied operatic roles include Dido (*Dido and Aeneas*) at Teatro alla Scala, Milan and The Royal Opera, Covent Garden; the Composer (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), Claron (*Capriccio*), and Gertrude (Brett Dean's *Hamlet*) at The Metropolitan Opera, New York; Orfeo (*Orfeo ed Euridice*) and the title role in *The Rape of Lucretia* at Bayerische Staatsoper, Munich; the title role in *Giulio Cesare* and Phèdre (*Hippolyte et Aricie*) at Glyndebourne Festival Opera; Brangäne (*Tristan und Isolde*) at The Royal Opera, Glyndebourne Festival, Gran Teatre del Liceu, Barcelona, and Festspielhaus Baden-Baden; the title role in *Ariodante* and Sesto (*La clemenza di Tito*) at the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence; Phèdre at Opéra national de Paris; the title role in *Ariodante* for De Nationale Opera and Wiener Staatsoper; Fricka (*Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*) at The Royal Opera and Bayreuther Festspiele; and Ježibaba (*Rusalka*) at The Royal Opera. She has also made frequent appearances at Scottish Opera, Welsh National Opera, Opera North, and, particularly, English National Opera.

Regularly partnered by Eugene Asti, Julius Drake, Malcolm Martineau, and Joseph Middleton, Sarah Connolly has appeared in recital in London, New York, Boston, Paris,

Amsterdam, Rotterdam, San Francisco, Atlanta, and Stuttgart; at the BBC Proms, Incontri in Terra di Siena at La Foce, and Schubertiada de Vilabertran; and at the Aldeburgh, Cheltenham, Edinburgh, and Oxford Lieder festivals. In concert she has performed at the Aldeburgh, Edinburgh, Lucerne, Salzburg, and Tanglewood festivals, and she is a frequent guest at the BBC Proms where, in 2009, she was a memorable guest soloist at the Last Night. She has appeared regularly with many of the world's great orchestras under conductors such as Harry Bicket, Semyon Bychkov, Riccardo Chailly, Sir Andrew Davis, Sir Colin Davis, Sir Mark Elder, Bernard Haitink, Daniel Harding, Pablo Heras-Casado, Philippe Herreweghe, Vladimir Jurowski, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Sir Antonio Pappano, Sir Simon Rattle, and Esa-Pekka Salonen. She has recorded prolifically and twice been nominated for a Grammy Award. She was made a DBE in the 2017 Birthday Honours, having been made a CBE in the 2010 New Year Honours, and in 2012 received the Singer Award of the Royal Philharmonic Society in recognition of her outstanding services to music. Sarah Connolly was awarded the 2023 King's Medal for Music, an award given annually to an outstanding individual or group of musicians who has had a major influence on the musical life of the nation.

The pianist **Joseph Middleton** specialises in the art of song accompaniment and chamber music and has been highly acclaimed in this field. Described in the magazine *Opera* as 'rightful heir to legendary accompanist Gerald Moore' and by *BBC Music* as 'one of the brightest stars in the world of song and Lieder', he has also been labelled 'the cream of the new generation' by *The Times*. He is Director of Leeds Song, a Bye Fellow of and Musician in Residence at Pembroke College, Cambridge, and a Fellow at his alma mater, the Royal Academy of Music, where he is a Professor. He was the first accompanist to receive the Young Artist of the Year Award of the Royal Philharmonic Society. He appears alongside the world's finest singers at major music centres such as the Wigmore Hall, Barbican, and Royal Festival Hall, London, Lincoln Center, New York, Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, Wiener Konzerthaus and Musikverein, Elbphilharmonie

Hamburg, Pierre Boulez Saal Berlin and Berliner Philharmonie, Kölner Philharmonie, Philharmonie Luxembourg, Musée d'Orsay, Paris, Festspielhaus Baden-Baden, and Oji Hall, Tokyo. He makes regular festival appearances at the BBC Proms, Heidelberger Frühling, and Schubertiade Schwarzenberg and Hohenems, as well as in Aix-en-Provence, Aldeburgh, Edinburgh, San Francisco, Seoul, and Vancouver. He has partnered Louise Alder, Sir Thomas Allen, Mary Bevan, Ian Bostridge, Allan Clayton, Dame Sarah Connolly, Marianne Crebassa, Iestyn Davies, Elsa Dreisig, Véronique Gens, Sir Simon Keenlyside, Angelika Kirchschrager, Dame Felicity Lott, Christopher Maltman, Ann Murray DBE, Huw Montague Randall, Mark Padmore, Miah Persson, Mauro Peter, Fatma Said, Carolyn Sampson, and Roderick Williams. Joseph Middleton frequently curates his own series on BBC Radio 3 and has amassed a critically acclaimed, fast-growing, and award-winning discography.



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Dame Sarah Connolly



© Marco Borggreve

Joseph Middleton

Poème de l'amour et de la mer

I. La Fleur des eaux

1

I
L'air est plein d'une odeur exquise de lilas,
Qui, fleurissant du haut des murs jusques
[en bas,
Embaument les cheveux des femmes.
La mer au grand soleil va toute s'embraser,
Et sur le sable fin qu'elles viennent baiser
Roulent d'éblouissantes lames.

Ô ciel qui de ses yeux dois porter la
[couleur,
Brise qui vas chanter dans les lilas en
[fleur
Pour en sortir tout embaumée,
Ruisseaux qui mouillerez sa robe, ô verts
[sentiers,
Vous qui tressaillerez sous ses chers
[petits pieds,
Faites-moi voir ma bien-aimée!

2

II
Et mon cœur s'est levé par ce matin d'été;
Car une belle enfant était sur le rivage,
Laissant errer sur moi des yeux pleins
[de clarté,
Et qui me souriait d'un air tendre et
[sauvage.

Poem of Love and the Sea

I. The Water Flower

I
The air is filled with an exquisite fragrance
[of lilacs
Which, blossoming from the top of the
[walls to the bottom,
Scent the hair of women.
The sun-drenched sea embraces
[everything,
And on the fine-grained sand which they
[come to kiss
Roll dazzling waves.

O heaven which must wear the colour of
[her eyes,
Breeze which will sing among the
[blossoming lilacs
And emerge filled with their scent,
Streams which will moisten her dress,
[O green paths,
You who will tremble under her dear little
[feet,
Let me see my beloved!

II
And my heart swelled on that summer
[morning;
For a beautiful child was on the shore,
Letting her luminous eyes wander over me,
And smiling at me with an air both tender
[and wild.

Toi que transfiguraient la Jeunesse et
[l'Amour,
Tu m'apparus alors comme l'âme des
[choses;
Mon cœur vola vers toi, tu le pris sans
[retour,
Et du ciel entr'ouvert pleuvaient sur nous
[des roses.

3 III

Quel son lamentable et sauvage
Va sonner l'heure de l'adieu!
La mer roule sur le rivage,
Moqueuse, et se souciant peu
Que ce soit l'heure de l'adieu.

Des oiseaux passent, l'aile ouverte,
Sur l'abîme presque joyeux;
Au grand soleil la mer est verte,
Et je saigne, silencieux,
En regardant briller les cieux.

Je saigne en regardant ma vie
Qui va s'éloigner sur les flots;
Mon âme unique m'est ravie
Et la sombre clameur des flots
Couvre le bruit de mes sanglots.

Qui sait si cette mer cruelle
La ramènera vers mon cœur?
Mes regards sont fixés sur elle;

You who were transfigured by Youth and
[Love,
You appeared to me then as the very soul
[of things;
My heart flew to you, you took it without
[returning it,
And from the opening heavens roses
[rained down on us.

III

What lamentable and wild sound
Will ring the hour of farewell!
The sea rolls on the shore,
Mockingly, and caring little
That it is the hour of farewell.

Birds pass, wings outstretched,
Over the almost joyful abyss;
In the bright sun the sea is green,
And I bleed, silently,
Watching the heavens gleam.

I bleed as I observe my life
Which drifts away on the waves;
My very soul has been taken from me
And the dark clamour of the waves
Overpowers the sound of my sobs.

Who knows whether this cruel sea
Will return her to my heart?
My sight is fixed on her;

La mer chante, et le vent moqueur
Raille l'angoisse de mon cœur.

II. La Mort d'amour

5 IV

Bientôt l'île bleue et joyeuse
Parmi les rocs m'apparaîtra;
L'île sur l'eau silencieuse
Comme un nénuphar flottera.

À travers la mer d'améthyste
Doucement glisse le bateau,
Et je serai joyeux et triste
De tant me souvenir bientôt!

6 V

Le vent roulait les feuilles mortes; mes
[pensées
Roulaient comme des feuilles mortes,
[dans la nuit.
Jamais si doucement au ciel noir n'avaient
[lui
Les mille roses d'or d'où tombent les
[rosées!

Une danse effrayante, et les feuilles
[froissées,
Et qui rendaient un son métallique,
[waltzed,
[valsaient,
Semblaient gémir sous les étoiles, et
[spoke
[disaient
L'inexprimable horreur des amours
[trépassés.

The sea sings, and the spiteful wind
Mocks the anguish in my heart.

II. The Death of Love

IV

Soon the blue and joyful island
Among the rocks will appear to me;
On the silent waters the island
Will float like a water lily.

Across the amethyst-coloured sea
Gently glides the boat,
And I shall be joyful and sad
To remember so much – soon!

V

The wind sent the dead leaves tumbling;
[my thoughts
Tumbled like dead leaves, in the night.
Never has the black sky been filled so
[softly with
The thousand golden roses from which fall
[the dew drops!

A frightful dance, and the crumpled leaves,
Which produced a metallic sound, and
[waltzed,
Seemed to moan under the stars, and
[spoke
Of the inexpressible horror of perished
[loves.

Et toi, que fais-tu? pas de fleurs écloses,
Point de gai soleil ni d'ombrages frais;
Le temps des lilas et le temps des roses
Avec notre amour est mort à jamais.

from *Poèmes de l'amour et de la mer* (1875)
Maurice Bouchor (1855 – 1929)

And you, what do you do? no blossoming
[flowers,
No smiling sun nor cooling shades;
The time of lilacs and the time of roses,
Like our love, has perished for evermore.

Translation: Chandos Records Ltd

Three Songs

9 1. Rain has fallen

Rain has fallen all the day.
O come among the laden trees:
The leaves lie thick upon the way
Of mem'ries.

Staying a little by the way
Of mem'ries shall we depart.
Come, my beloved, where I may
Speak to your heart.

No. 32, *Chamber Music* (1907)
James Joyce (1882 – 1941)

10 2. Sleep now

Sleep now, O sleep now,
O you unquiet heart!
A voice crying 'Sleep now'
Is heard in my heart.

The voice of the winter
Is heard at the door.

O sleep, for the winter
Is crying 'Sleep no more'.

My kiss will give peace now
And quiet to your heart –
Sleep on in peace now,
O you unquiet heart!

No. 34, *Chamber Music* (1907)
James Joyce

3. I hear an army

I hear an army charging upon the land,
And the thunder of horses plunging,
[foam about their knees:
Arrogant, in black armour, behind them
[stand,
Disdaining the reins, with flutt'ring
[whips, the charioteers.

They cry unto the night their battle-name:
I moan in sleep when I hear afar their
[whirling laughter.
They cleave the gloom of dreams, a
[blinding flame,
Clanging, clanging upon the heart as
[upon an anvil.

They come shaking in triumph their long,
[green hair:
They come out of the sea and run
[shouting by the shore.

My heart, have you no wisdom thus to
[despair?
My love, my love, my love, why have
[you left me alone?
No. 36, *Chamber Music* (1907)
James Joyce

Trois Chansons de Bilitis

12 I. 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

Three Songs of Bilitis

I. The Flute of Pan

For Hyacinthus Day he gave me a syrinx
made of carefully cut reeds, bonded with
white wax which tastes sweet to my lips
like honey.

He teaches me to play, as I sit on his lap;
but I am a little fearful. He plays it after me,
so gently that I scarcely hear him.

We have nothing to say to each other,
so close are we one to the other; but our
songs try to answer each other, and in turn
our mouths join on the flute.

It is late, hear the song of the green frogs
which begins with the night. My mother will

mère ne croira jamais que je suis restée si
longtemps à chercher ma ceinture perdue.

(1894)
from *Les Chansons de Bilitis* (1897)
Pierre Louÿs (Pierre-Félix Louis) (1870 – 1925)

never believe that I stayed out so long to
look for my lost sash.

Translation © Richard Stokes,
author of *A French Song Companion* (Oxford, 2000)

13 II. 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.

"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 entraais 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.

from *Les Chansons de Bilitis* (1897)
Pierre Louÿs (Pierre-Félix Louis)

II. The Tresses of Hair

He said to me: 'Last night I dreamed. I had
your tresses around my neck. I had your
hair like a black necklace all round my nape
and over my breast.

'I caressed them; and they were mine; and
we were united thus for ever by the same
tresses, mouth on mouth, just as two
laurels often share one root.

'And gradually, it seemed to me, so
our limbs were intertwined, that I was
becoming you, or as though you were
entering into me like my dream.'

When he had finished, he gently placed his
hands on my shoulders, and he gazed at
me with a look so tender that I lowered my
eyes with a shiver.

Translation © Richard Stokes,
author of *A French Song Companion* (Oxford, 2000)

14

III. 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.

from *Les Chansons de Bilitis* (1897)
Pierre Louÿs (Pierre-Félix Louis)

III. The Tomb of the Naiads

All through the frost-covered wood, I
walked; the hair in front of my mouth
blossomed with little icicles, and my
sandals were heavy with snow, muddy
and packed.

He said to me: 'What are you seeking?' – 'I
follow the track of the satyr. His little forked
steps alternate like little holes in a white
coat.' He said to me: 'The satyrs are dead.

'The satyrs, and the nymphs, too. For
thirty years there has not been a winter so
terrible. The track that you see is that of a
billy goat. But let us stay here, the site of
their tomb.'

And with the iron of his hoe, he cracked
the ice of the spring where naiads once
laughed. He took large frozen pieces, and,
raising them towards the pale sky, he
looked through them.

Translation: Chandos Records Ltd

**Two Songs from 'Twelve Poems of
Emily Dickinson'**

15 4. The world feels dusty

The world feels dusty,
When we stop to die...
We want the dew then
Honors taste dry...

Flags vex a dying face
But the least fan
Stirred by a friend's hand
Cools like the rain.

Mine be the ministry
When thy thirst comes...
Dews of thyself to fetch
And holy balms.

Further Poems of Emily Dickinson (1929)
Emily Dickinson (1830 – 1886)

16 10. I've heard an organ talk sometimes

I've heard an organ talk sometimes
In a cathedral aisle,
And understood no word it said,
Yet held my breath, the while

And risen up and gone away,
A more Bernardine girl,
And know not what was done to me
In that old hallowed aisle.

Unpublished Poems of Emily Dickinson (1935)
Emily Dickinson

Night Thoughts

17 1. Sleep

Sleep that soothes away all our worries.
Innocent sleep. Sleep that puts each day
to rest. Ah. Oh. Sleep that relieves the
weary labourer and heals hurt minds.

Macbeth, Act II, Scene 2,
William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616)

18 2. Bright Lights

The lights shine down on me –
All the people in the front row,
All the people at the back go wild, for me.

I wanted to be a ballerina
like all the frilly girls in the picture book:
flying, flying out of the toil of these
[streets –

But I do better when I'm singing –
I'm just a shy girl in New York.
Only when I'm singing do I chase the
[blues away.

Ooh.
My name is Ella
here for a day
I meant to dance for you but ended up
[singing –

No more dancing;
my dreams have danced away –

ba ba boo ay –
Oh baby in the groove.
How high, how high the moon?

Errollyn Wallen (b. 1958)

19 3. There's a certain Slant of light

There's a certain Slant of light,
Winter Afternoons –
That oppresses, like the Heft
Of Cathedral Tunes –

Heav'nly Hurt, it gives us –
We can find no scar,
[...]
Where the Meanings, are – Ah. Ah. Ah.

None may teach it – Any –
'Tis the Seal Despair –
An imperial affliction
Sent us of the Air – Ah.

When it comes, the Landscape listens –
Shadows – hold their breath –
When it goes, 'tis like the Distance
On the look of Death –

'Winter' (1861)

No. 31, Section 3 'Nature',

Poems by Emily Dickinson, Series 1 (1890)

Emily Dickinson

20

4. Night Thoughts

A swirl of black and white –
A single stroke distils a life of colour –
Let me breathe again your colour –
Ah –

Universe of black and white –
A single line, a single life.
Paint in this heart tonight.

Errollyn Wallen

Alexander James



Dame Sarah Connolly during
the recording sessions



Alexander James

Joseph Middleton during
the recording sessions

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Chandos 24-bit / 96 kHz recording

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Steinway Model D (592 087) concert grand piano courtesy of Potton Hall
Piano technician: Iain Kilpatrick, Cambridge Pianoforte

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Errollyn Wallen

THE WORLD FEELS DUSTY – Connolly/Middleton

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THE WORLD FEELS DUSTY

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- 1–8 **POÈME DE L'AMOUR ET DE LA MER, Op. 19**
(1882–90, REVISED 1893) 24:01
(Poem of Love and the Sea)
for Medium Voice and Piano

SAMUEL BARBER (1910–1981)

- 9–11 **THREE SONGS, Op. 10** (1935–36) 8:02
for Voice and Piano

ACHILLE-CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862–1918)

- 12–14 **TROIS CHANSONS DE BILITIS** (1897–98) 9:08
(Three Songs of Bilitis)

AARON COPLAND (1900–1990)

- 15–16 **TWO SONGS FROM 'TWELVE POEMS OF EMILY DICKINSON'**
(1949–50) 4:00
for Voice and Piano

ERROLLYN WALLEN (B. 1958)

- première recording*
17–20 **NIGHT THOUGHTS** (2023) 12:45
Song Cycle

TT 57:57

Dame Sarah Connolly mezzo-soprano
Joseph Middleton piano

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THE WORLD FEELS DUSTY – Connolly/Middleton

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