

# WIGMORE HALL

Sunday 18 February 2024  
3.00pm

## Colloque Sentimental

Gemma Summerfield soprano  
Sebastian Wybrew piano

Joseph Canteloube (1879-1957)

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Joseph Canteloube

Traditional

Robert Franz (1815-1892)

Robert Owens (1925-2017)

Peter Warlock (1894-1930)

Hugo Wolf (1860-1903)

Reynaldo Hahn (1874-1947)

Sergey Rachmaninov (1873-1943)

Hale Smith (1925-2009)

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Alma Mahler (1879-1964)

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

L'Antouèno (1923)

Der Kuss Op. 128 (1822)

La pastoura als camps (1923)

Barbara Allen

Mein Schatz ist auf der Wanderschaft Op. 40 No. 1 (1867)

Faithful One from *Mortal Storm* Op. 29 (1969)

Take, O take those lips away (1918)

Eide, so die Liebe schwur from *Spanisches Liederbuch  
Weltliche Lieder* (1889-90)

Du milchjunger Knabe from *Alte Weisen* (1890)

Ihr seid die Allerschönste from *Italienisches Liederbuch* (1890-6)

Nocturne (1893)

Sleep Op. 38 No. 5 (1916)

Velvet Shoes from *The Valley Wind* (1955)

Wir wandelten Op. 96 No. 2 (1884)

Bei dir ist es traut (pub. 1910)

Befreit Op. 39 No. 4 (1898)

Colloque sentimental from *Fêtes galantes Book II* (1904)

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In their eclectic programme spanning four countries and over 150 years, Gemma Summerfield and Sebastian Wybrew juxtapose a wide range of songs in a series of 'colloques sentimentales': lovers' conversations that explore the 'psychological viewpoints of two people in a given situation'. Many of the songs are arranged in pairs. As Sebastian Wybrew writes, 'Some pairings are situational; in some there is real or imagined concord, while others highlight misunderstandings, or show contrasting personalities grappling with their emotional situation.'

Singer and pianist begin their 'lovers' conversation' with 'L'Antouèno', one of the folk melodies that **Joseph Canteloube** collected between the 1920s and 1950s on his holidays in his native Auvergne. Several of these *Chants d'Auvergne*, including the famous 'Baïlèro', evoke the wild, lonely beauty of the Auvergne landscape. But there is nothing idyllic about either the teasing 'L'Antouèno' (is the final reference to cuckold's horns playful or malicious?) or 'La pastoura als camps', where a wily shepherdess outwits a would-be Lothario. (The conversation between the lovers is implicit here.) As Canteloube heard them, these folksongs would typically have been accompanied by a *vielle à roue*, a type of hurdy-gurdy.

Like 'L'Antouèno', **Beethoven's** 'Der Kuss', with the keyboard in chuckling support, evokes a not-so-innocent pastoral dalliance. It mines a vein of faintly *risqué* comedy that was always popular in Beethoven's Vienna.

After the ballad of lovers united in death, 'Barbara Allen' (which may have begun life as a Restoration theatre song), we move to the once popular **Robert Franz**, whose prolific song output has inevitably suffered next to Schubert, Schumann and Brahms. Yet despite his self-imposed expressive limitations ('chasteness' was his watchword), Franz's songs beguile with their melodic piquancy and discreetly apt accompaniments. 'Mein Schatz ist auf der Wanderschaft' is a miniature quasi-folksong in which a girl longs for her lover to return from an unspecified journey. Franz's song of love against the odds (will the lover return from his wanderings?) is paired with a 20th-century American song of love that seems to survive drunken abuse: Californian composer **Robert Owens's** 'Faithful One', from his 1969 song cycle *Mortal Storm* to poems by Langston Hughes.

From Goethe onwards, writers, painters and musicians from north of the Alps have been lured by the Mediterranean south, a flamboyant, intoxicating world of light, sensual grace and intense, often violent emotions. **Hugo Wolf's** abiding fascination with the exotic Spain of his imagination culminated in the *Spanisches Liederbuch* of 1889-90, 44 settings of sacred and secular poems translated into German by Emanuel Geibel and Paul Heyse. Matching the poem, Wolf's music for 'Eide, so die Liebe schwur' exudes a swaggering playfulness, with the piano gently undercutting the vocal line. 'Du milchjunger Knabe', to a poem by the Swiss writer Gottfried Keller, is a teasingly delicate portrayal of first love, full of ambivalent harmonies. It is paired here with 'Ihr seid die Allerschönste', to a hyperbolic poem of a young man's

adoration (or, is it, as Sebastian Wybrew suggests, merely 'precocious narcissism'?) from Wolf's *Italienisches Liederbuch*, another songbook celebrating the heightened passions of an idealised south.

We cross the Rhine to *fin de siècle* Paris for **Reynaldo Hahn's** deliciously decadent 'Nocturne'. In Jean Lahor's erotic poem of sleep-as-death, cloaked in sultry post-Wagnerian chromaticism, the lovers' communion is vaguely sensed rather than articulated. As a young man Hahn charmed Parisian society with the perfumed langour of his songs, singing them to his own accompaniment in his agreeable *voix de compositeur*, cigarette dangling from the corner of his mouth. The mysteries of night and dreams are more intensely evoked in **Sergey Rachmaninov's** haunting 1916 song 'Sleep', with its veiled harmonies and delicate, filigree textures.

'Velvet Shoes' comes from the song cycle *The Valley Wind* composed between 1952 and 1955 by Cleveland-born African-American composer **Hale Smith**. Its rapt mood - two lovers walking harmoniously through a soft, silent landscape - echoes **Johannes Brahms's** 'Wir wandelten'. Setting a translation of a Hungarian poem, Brahms's song is a characteristic expression of love as filtered through a gauze of nostalgia. Canonic imitations delicately evoke the lovers walking hand in hand, against a gently chiming carillon in the treble.

**Alma Mahler's** gently hypnotic Rilke setting 'Bei dir ist es traut' and **Richard Strauss's** 'Befreit' are implied dialogues in which the speaker's apparent stoicism conceals an underlying unease. Before Alma Schindler married Gustav Mahler in March 1902 he made it clear that there was only room for one composer in the family, and it wasn't her. For a decade she stifled her creative instincts. Alma's compositions - mainly songs - either belong, like 'Bei dir ist es traut', to the years just before her first marriage, or to the years after Mahler's death in May 1911.

In 'Befreit' the poet Richard Dehmel reflects on his imminent separation from his wife. Strauss, though, seems to interpret the verses as a farewell to a dying spouse, and wrote a wonderfully tender, sensuous song - which Dehmel then pronounced too 'weak' and soft-grained for his verses!

After this final pairing, Gemma Summerfield and Sebastian Wybrew end this lovers' communion in a mood of disenchantment. **Claude Debussy** was always captivated by the dream world of the Harlequinade, and the *fêtes galantes* depicted in Watteau's painting and Paul Verlaine's verses. The song that inspired this whole recital, 'Colloque sentimental', comes from Debussy's second set of songs titled *Fêtes galantes*. It was composed in 1904, the year he began a love affair with Emma Bardac, his future second wife. We might expect an outpouring of erotic euphoria. Instead, the lovers' conversation has, in Debussy's words, a 'melancholy, distant colour', as two ghostly figures desolately recall an ecstasy that has long grown cold.

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## Joseph Canteloube (1879-1957)

### L'Antouèno (1923)

*Traditional*

Quond onorèn o lo fièiro, ié!  
Quond onorèn o lo fièiro, ô!  
Li onorèn tuoï dous,  
l'Antouèno!  
Li onorèn tuoï dous!  
When we go to the fair, hey!  
When we go to the fair, ho!  
We'll go as a pair,  
Antoine!  
We'll go as a pair.

Croumporèn uno baquette, ié!  
Croumporèn uno baquette, ô!  
La croumporèn touï dous,  
l'Antouèno!  
La croumporèn touï dous!  
We'll buy a cow, hey!  
We'll buy a cow, ho!  
We'll shop as a pair,  
Antoine!  
We'll shop as a pair.

La baquette séro méouno, ié!  
La baquette séro méouno, ô!  
Lèi cornoï sèroun pèr bous,  
l'Antouèno!  
Lèi cornoï sèroun pèr bous!  
The cow will be mine, hey!  
The cow will be mine, ho!  
The will be for you,  
Antoine!  
The horns will be for you!

## Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

### Der Kuss Op. 128 (1822)

*Christian Felix Weisse*

Ich war bei Chloen ganz allein,  
Und küssen wollt ich sie:  
Jedoch sie sprach,  
Sie würde schrein,  
Es sei vergebne Müh.  
I was with Chloe all alone,  
and wished to kiss her:  
but she said  
she would scream,  
that it would be in vain.

Ich wagt es doch und küsste  
sie,  
Trotz ihrer Gegenwehr.  
Und schrie sie nicht?  
Jawohl, sie schrie,  
Doch lange hinterher.  
But I dared to and kissed  
her,  
despite her resistance.  
And did she scream?  
Oh yes, she screamed,  
but not until long after.

## Joseph Canteloube

### La pastoura als camps

(1923)

*Traditional*

Quon lo pastouro s'en bo os  
cams,  
Gardo sèi moutounadoï,  
Tidera la la la la loï!  
Gardo sèi moutounadoï!  
When the shepherdess  
went to the fields,  
to tend her little ewes,  
tra la la,  
to tend her little ewes,

Guèlo rèscount'r' un  
moussurèt;  
Lou moussu l'ogatsavo,  
Tidera la la la la loï!  
Lou moussu l'ogatsavo.  
A fine gentleman came  
by,  
and looked at her,  
tra la la,  
and looked at her.

### Antoine

'Ah! Daïssa mè bous ogatsa!  
Sès ton poulido filho!  
Tidera la la la la loï!  
Sès ton poulido filho!  
'Ah! Let me look at you!  
You are so pretty!  
Tra la la,  
you are so pretty!

'Estaco buostré cabalet,  
O lo cambo d'un' aôbré,  
Tidera la la la la loï!  
O lo cambo d'un' aôbré!  
'Then tie up your horse,  
tie your horse to this tree,  
tra la la,  
tie your horse to this tree!

È lo perdri, quon lo  
tènio,  
Guèlo s'en ès onado,  
Tidera la la la la loï!  
Guèlo s'en ès onado!  
But just when he thought  
the maid was his,  
she ran away,  
tra la la,  
she ran away!

## Traditional

### Barbara Allen

*Anonymous*

In Scarlet Town, where I was born,  
There was a fair maid dwellin',  
Made ev'ry youth cry 'Well-a-day!'  
Her name was Barb'ra Allen.

All in the merry month of May  
When green buds they were swellin',  
Young Jemmy Grove on his death-bed lay  
For love of Barb'ra Allen.

Then slowly, slowly she came up,  
And slowly she came nigh him,  
And all she said when there she came  
'Young man, I think you're dying!'

As she was walking o'er the fields  
She heard the dead-bell knellin',  
And ev'ry stroke the dead-bell gave  
Cried 'Woe to Barb'ra Allen!'

When he was dead and laid in grave  
Her heart was struck with sorrow.  
'O mother, mother, make my bed,  
For I shall die tomorrow.'

'Farewell,' she said, 'ye virgins all,  
And shun the fault I fell in;  
Henceforth take warning by the fall  
Of cruel Barb'ra Allen.'

*Please do not turn the page until the song and its accompaniment have ended.*

## Robert Franz (1815-1892)

### Mein Schatz ist auf der Wanderschaft Op. 40

No. 1 (1867)

*Wilhelm Osterwald*

Mein Schatz ist auf der Wanderschaft So lange, Gott weiss, woher er nimmt die Kraft Zum Gange, 's wär' besser, wollt' er endlich nun Sein' allerletzte Reise thun Und kehren mir zum Glücke Zurück.	My sweetheart has been journeying far too long, God only knows from where he gets the strength to journey, it were better, if he were now finally to set out on his last journey and return and make me happy.
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Mein' Mutter hat den ganzen Tag Zu schelten, Zu Dank mach' ich ihr meine Sach' Nur selten. Ach Gott, ich thät' ja Alles gern, Wär' nur mein Schatz nicht gar so fern, Dass ich an ihn ohn' Kränken Könnt' denken.	My mother scolds me all day long, I only rarely work to please her. Ah God, I'd do everything willingly, if only my sweetheart were not so far away that I cannot think of him without hurt.
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Ihr sprecht wohl: „Ich such' dir aus Ein'n Andern -" Frau Mutter, da wird nie was draus: Vom Wandern Wird er zur rechten Stunde ruhn Und bald sein' letzte Reise thun Und kehren mir zum Glücke Zurück!	You will probably say: 'I'll find you another man.' Nothing, mother, will come of that: he will stop journeying at the right time and soon set out on his last journey and return to me and make me happy!
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## Robert Owens (1925-2017)

### Faithful One from Mortal Storm Op. 29 (1969)

*Langston Hughes*

Though I go drunken to her door,  
I'm ever so sure she'll let me in.  
Though I wander and stray and wound her sore,  
She'll open the latch when I come again.  
No matter what I do or say,  
She waits for me at the end of the day.

## Peter Warlock (1894-1930)

### Take, O take those lips away (1918)

*Anonymous*

Take, O take those lips away,  
That so sweetly were forsworn;  
And those eyes, the break of day,  
Lights that do mislead the morn:  
But my kisses bring again;  
Seals of love, but seal'd in vain, sealed in vain.

## Hugo Wolf (1860-1903)

### Eide, so die Liebe schwur from

*Spanisches*

*Liederbuch Weltliche*

*Lieder (1889-90)*

*Anon., translated by Paul  
Heyse*

Eide, so die Liebe schwur,  
Schwache Bürgen sind sie nur.

Sitzt die Liebe zu  
Gericht,  
Dann, Señor, vergesst nicht,

Dass sie nie nach Recht und  
Pflicht,  
Immer nur nach Gunst verfuhr.  
Eide, so die Liebe schwur,  
Schwache Bürgen sind sie nur.

Werdet dort Betrübte  
finden,  
Die mit Schwüren sich  
verbinden,  
Die verschwinden mit den  
Winden,  
Wie die Blumen auf der Flur.  
Eide, so die Liebe schwur,  
Schwache Bürgen sind sie nur.

Und als Schreiber an den  
Schranken  
Seht ihr nichtige Gedanken.  
Weil die leichten Händlein  
schwanken,  
Schreibt euch keiner nach  
der Schnur.  
Eide, so die Liebe schwur,  
Schwache Bürgen sind sie nur.

### Oaths which love has sworn

Oaths that love has sworn  
are but feeble sureties.

When Love sits in  
judgement,  
then, Señor, do not  
forget,

then she proceeds not by  
right or duty,  
but always by favour.  
Oaths that love has sworn  
are but feeble sureties.

There you will find the  
distressed,  
binding themselves with  
vows,  
which vanish with the  
wind  
like flowers on the meadow.  
Oaths that love has sworn  
are but feeble sureties.

And as clerks of the  
court  
you'll find empty thoughts.  
Because their feeble  
hands tremble,  
they will not record you  
accurately.  
Oaths that love has sworn  
are but feeble sureties.

Sind die Bürgen gegenwärtig, Allesamt des Spruchs gewärtig, Machen sie das Urteil fertig; – Vom Vollziehen keine Spur! Eide, so die Liebe schwur, Schwache Bürgen sind sie nur.	When the evidence is given and all await a verdict, they will prepare the judgement; - but never execute it! Oaths that love has sworn are but feeble sureties.
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<b>Du milchjunger Knabe from <i>Alte Weisen</i> (1890) Gottfried Keller</b>	<b>You beardless boy from <i>Old Saws</i></b>
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Du milchjunger Knabe, Wie siehst du mich an? Was haben deine Augen Für eine Frage getan!	You beardless boy, why do you look at me so? What kind of question have your eyes been asking!
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Alle Ratsherrn in der Stadt Und alle Weisen der Welt Bleiben stumm auf die Frage,  Die deine Augen gestellt!	All the town councillors and all the world's wise men are dumbfounded by the question your eyes have asked!
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Ein leeres Schneckhäusel, Schau, liegt dort im Gras; Da halte dein Ohr dran, Drin brümmelt dir was!	Look, there's an empty snail-shell, lying there in the grass; just put it to your ear, and you'll hear something whispering!
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<b>Ihr seid die Allerschönste from <i>Italienisches Liederbuch</i> (1890-6) Paul Heyse after Tommaseo, Tigri, Marcoaldi and Dalmedico</b>	<b>You are the fairest</b>
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Ihr seid die Allerschönste weit und breit, Viel schöner als im Mai der Blumenflor. Orvietos Dom steigt so voll Herrlichkeit, Viterbos grösster Brunnen nicht empor. So hoher Reiz und Zauber ist dein eigen, Der Dom von Siena muss sich vor dir neigen. Ach, du bist so an Reiz und Anmut reich, Der Dom von Siena selbst ist dir nicht gleich.	You are the fairest far and wide, fairer by far than flowers in May. Not Orvieto Cathedral or Viterbo's grandest fountain rises with such majesty. Your charms and magic are such that Siena Cathedral must bow before you. Ah, you are so rich in charm and grace, even Siena Cathedral cannot compare.
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## Reynaldo Hahn (1874-1947)

### Nocturne (1893)

*Jean Lahor*

Au souffle de la bien aimée ... D'un sommeil doux comme la mort ... Mort exquisite, mort parfumée	By the breath of the beloved ... A sleep as sweet as death ... Exquisite death, death perfumed
Sur ton sein pâle mon cœur dort Sur ton sein pâle mon cœur dort ...	On your pale breast my heart is sleeping On your pale breast my heart is sleeping ...

### Sergey Rachmaninov (1873-1943)

#### Sleep Op. 38 No. 5 (1916)

*Fyodor Sologub*

V mire net nichego Dozhdelenneye sna, Chary yest u nego, U nego tishina. U nego na ustakh Ni pechal i ni smekh, I v bezdonnykh ochakh Mnogo tainykh utekh. U nego shiroki, Shiroki dva kryla, I legki, tak legki, Kak polnochnaya mgla. Ne ponyat, kak nesyot, I kuda i na chyom On krylom ne vzmakhnet I ne dvinet plechom.	Nothing in the world is more wished for than sleep, he has powers to charm, he has stillness. On his lips there is neither sorrow nor laughter, and in his fathomless eyes are many secret pleasures. He has wide, two wide wings, and they're light, as light as midnight darkness. How you're borne is unknown, and whence, and on what, he won't flap his wing, and he won't move his shoulder.
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## Hale Smith (1925-2009)

### Velvet Shoes from *The Valley Wind* (1955)

*Elinor Wylie*

Let us walk in the white snow  
In a soundless space;  
With footsteps quiet and slow,  
At a tranquil pace,  
Under veils of white lace.

I shall go shod in silk,  
And you in wool,  
White as white cow's milk,  
More beautiful  
Than the breast of a gull.

We shall walk through the still town  
In a windless peace;  
We shall step upon white down,  
Upon silver fleece,  
Upon softer than these.

We shall walk in velvet shoes:  
Wherever we go  
Silence will fall like dews  
On white below.  
We shall walk in the snow.

## Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

### Wir wandelten Op. 96 No. 2 (1884)

*Georg Friedrich Daumer,  
after Sándor Petőfi*

Wir wandelten, wir zwei zusammen, Ich war so still und du so stille; Ich gäbe viel, um zu erfahren, Was du gedacht in jenem Fall. Was ich gedacht – unausgesprochen Verbleibe das! Nur Eines sag' ich: So schön war Alles, was ich dachte, So himmlisch heiter war es all!	We were walking, we two together; I so silent and you so silent; I would give much to know what you were thinking then. What I was thinking – let it remain unspoken! One thing only I shall say: all my thoughts were so beautiful, so heavenly and serene!
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In meinem Haupte die  
Gedanken  
Sie läuteten, wie goldne  
Glöckchen;  
So wunderschüss, so  
wunderlieblich  
Ist in der Welt kein anderer  
Hall.

The thoughts in my  
mind  
chimed like golden  
bells:  
so wondrously sweet and  
lovely  
is no other sound on  
earth.

## Alma Mahler (1879-1964)

### Bei dir ist es traut (pub. 1910) *Rainer Maria Rilke*

Bei dir ist es traut,  
Zage Uhren schlagen  
Wie aus weiten Tagen.  
Komm mir ein Liebes  
sagen –  
Aber nur nicht laut!

Ein Tor geht irgendwo  
Draussen im Blütentreiben,  
Der Abend horcht an den  
Scheiben.  
Lass uns leise bleiben:  
Keiner weiss uns so.

### I feel at home with you

I feel at home with you,  
faintly the hours strike  
like in the old days.  
Come say something  
loving to me –  
but not too loud!

A gate moves somewhere  
outside in the sea of flowers,  
evening listens at the  
window.  
Let us stay quiet:  
so no-one knows about us.

## Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

### Befreit Op. 39 No. 4 (1898)

*Richard Dehmel*

Du wirst nicht weinen. Leise, leise Wirst du lächeln; und wie zur Reise Geb ich dir Blick und Kuss zurück. Unsre lieben vier Wände! Du hast sie bereitet, Ich habe sie die zur Welt geweitet – O Glück! Dann wirst du heiss meine Hände fassen Und wirst mir deine Seele lassen, Lässt unsern Kindern mich zurück. Du schenktest mir dein ganzes Leben, Ich will es ihnen wiedergeben – O Glück!	You will not weep. Gently, gently you will smile; and as before a journey I shall return your gaze and kiss. Our dear four walls! You prepared them, I have widened them into a world for you – O happiness! Then ardently you will seize my hands and you will leave me your soul, leave me to care for our children. You gave your whole life to me, I shall give it back to them – O happiness!
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Es wird sehr bald sein, wir wissen's Beide, Wir haben einander befreit vom Leide, So gab ich dich der Welt zurück. Dann wirst du mir nur noch im Traum erscheinen Und mich segnen und mit mir weinen – O Glück!	It will be very soon, we both know it, we have released each other from suffering, so I returned you to the world. Then you'll appear to me only in dreams, and you will bless me and weep with me – O happiness!
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## Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

<b>Colloque sentimental</b> from <i>Fêtes galantes</i> <i>Book II</i> (1904) Paul Verlaine	<b>Lovers' dialogue</b>
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Dans le vieux parc solitaire et glacé, Deux formes ont tout à l'heure passé.	In the ancient park, deserted and frozen, two shapes have just passed by.
Leurs yeux sont morts et leurs lèvres sont molles, Et l'on entend à peine leurs paroles.	Their eyes are dead and their lips are lifeless, and their words can hardly be heard.
Dans le vieux parc solitaire et glacé Deux spectres ont évoqué le passé.	In the ancient park, deserted and frozen two spectres were recalling the past.
– Te souvient-il de notre extase ancienne? – Pourquoi voulez-vous donc qu'il m'en souvienne?	– Do you remember our past rapture? – Why would you have me remember?
– Ton cœur bat-il toujours à mon seul nom? Toujours vois-tu mon âme en rêve? – Non.	– Does your heart still surge at my very name? Do you still see my soul when you dream? – No.
– Ah! Les beaux jours de bonheur indicible Où nous joignons nos bouches! – C'est possible.	– Ah, the beautiful days of inexpressible bliss when our lips met! – It may have been so.
– Qu'il était bleu, le ciel, et grand, l'espoir! – L'espoir a fui, vaincu, vers le ciel noir.	– How blue the sky, how hopes ran high! – Hope has fled, vanquished, to the black sky.
Tels ils marchaient dans les avoines folles Et la nuit seule entendit leurs paroles.	So they walked on through the wild grasses and the night alone heard their words.

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