

WIGMORE HALL

Friday 29 November 2024
1.00pm

Willkommen, Bienvenue, Welcome...

Claire Booth soprano
Jâms Coleman piano

Charles Ives (1874-1954)

Very Pleasant from *Memories* (1897)

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

Banalités (1940)

*Chanson d'Orkenise • Hôtel • Fagnes de
Wallonie • Voyage à Paris • Sanglots*

John Woolrich (b.1954)

Stendhal's Observation (2008)

Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951)

From *Brettli-Lieder* (1901)

Der genügsame Liebhaber • Galathea

Zoë Martlew (b.1968)

Hôtel Babylon (2024)

Supported by the Vaughan Williams Foundation, the
Hinrichsen Foundation, the Association of English Singers
and Speakers and Sara Naudi

*Proprietress • Chef • Beautician • Hierophant •
Cashier • Lover*

George Gershwin (1898-1937)

Somebody Loves Me (pub. 1924) *arranged by Earl Wild*

Embraceable You from *Girl Crazy* (1930) *arranged by Earl
Wild*

Kurt Weill (1900-1950)

Nannas Lied (1939)

Der Abschiedsbrief (1933)

Thomas Adès (b.1971)

Life Story Op. 8 (1993)

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

La dame de Monte Carlo (1961)



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In the 1951 musical *Cabaret*, the Emcee at the fictional Kit Kat Klub – memorably played by Joel Grey in the movie version – opens proceedings with the line, ‘Willkommen, bienvenue, welcome!’ As he tells his cosmopolitan Berlin audience, ‘We have no troubles here! Here life is beautiful...’ And it is the world of cabaret, or at least the spirit and feel of the idea of cabaret, that this programme explores. While direct connections may at times be loose, the irreverence, theatricality, spontaneity and experimental nature of cabaret – not to mention its sound world and sometimes seedy cast of outsiders – provide the inspiration for many of this afternoon’s songs.

Before any show begins, however, there is the anticipation of what is to come, and it is this feeling **Charles Ives** captures in the lightning-quick first number from his two-song collection *Memories*. Composed in 1897 while a student at Yale, the breathless excitement of waiting for ‘the curtain to arise with wonders for our eyes’ is conveyed in ‘Very Pleasant’ through vocal leaps, whistles and tongue-twisting wordplay. At the end, the singer shouts ‘Curtain!’, and today it is **Poulenc’s** five-song collection *Banalités* that is revealed. More a series of individual *mélodies* than a cycle, it was composed in autumn 1940, after the composer found some of Apollinaire’s *vers de mirilton* (‘doggerel’; crude or comic verse) and set two alongside other poems. Poulenc’s characteristic playfulness and lyricism is present, though ‘Chanson d’Orkenise’ and ‘Fagnes de Wallonie’ are notable for their sense of movement – the former with a pronounced nod to popular song. Of the doggerel settings, ‘Hôtel’ is a hazy sensual ode to smoking, memorably described by baritone Pierre Bernac as ‘the laziest song ever written’, while ‘Voyage à Paris’ is a vibrant dance-hall themed number that closed many a Poulenc and Bernac recital. All sit curiously next to the genuine poignancy of ‘Sanglots’ (‘Sobs’). Considered by some to be one of the most reflective songs in Poulenc’s output, biographer Roger Nichols highlights the significance of the line, ‘Et rien ne sera libre jusqu’à la fin des temps’ (‘And nothing will be free until the end of time’) being set and performed in Occupied Paris.

The topic of love then comes to the fore, first in **John Woolrich’s** standalone ‘Stendhal’s Observation’, a brief song based on a passage in the French writer Stendhal’s 1822 philosophical examination of love, *De l’amour*. The meandering vocal line and sparse accompaniment frame musings about music, love, and their place in a nation’s culture. Such intellectualising may be thought-provoking, but it is a far cry from the exuberance and wit of **Schoenberg’s** 1901 *Brettli-Lieder* (‘Cabaret songs’). Schoenberg had a keen interest in popular forms and briefly went on to be associated with Berlin’s newly emerging literary cabaret scene, centred around Ernst von Wolzogen’s *Überbrettli*. The two songs here – never performed during Schoenberg’s lifetime – show the composer revelling in the cabaret style: in ‘Der genügsame Liebhaber’ the piano writing shifts from sparkling to sumptuous as the vocalist in amorous mood sings of a voluptuous girlfriend and clingy cat.

Amorousness turns to unbridled passion in ‘Galathea’, with cascades of chromatic piano figurations and an urgent vocal line capturing the larger-than-life emotions of Frank Wedekind’s text.

The *Brettli-Lieder* provided the initial impetus for **Zoë Martlew’s** new song cycle *Hôtel Babylon*, commissioned by Claire Booth. Martlew herself is immersed in the contemporary cabaret scene, having toured her one-woman show *Revue Z* for many years. In *Hôtel Babylon*, she brings together her understanding of the performative nature of cabaret songs with her knowledge of its musical history. In what Martlew describes as a ‘Faustian mini-drama’ in which the audience is ‘inexorably drawn into Babylon’s hypnotic array of exotic mirrors,’ each song is named after the eccentric ‘character’ that performs it. We first meet a tango-loving Proprietress, who invites us into her world with a take on some familiar words: ‘Willkommen, welcome, bienvenue.’ From this point on, flamboyant musical gestures and exaggerated mannerisms bring a series of fantastical figures to life. Rich in pastiche and featuring an array of vocalisations, *Pierrot lunaire* and other expressionist works may be close cousins, but this is a resolutely 2024 theatrical tour de force for vocalist and pianist.

After an interlude of two technique-testing **Earl Wild** arrangements of classic **Gershwin** numbers – taken from Wild’s 1953 collection *7 Virtuoso Etudes after Gershwin* – tales of sex, addiction and women’s downfall dominate. **Kurt Weill’s** music has become synonymous with the sound of the Weimar Republic and the outcasts that stalked its streets and clubs. In ‘Nannas Lied’ (1939), Bertolt Brecht’s story of a teenage sex worker making sense of her experience on ‘the love market’ is set with great sensitivity in almost Schubertian fashion, though a bolder caustic tone characterises the jilted lover of ‘Der Abschiedsbrief’ (1933), a song written for Marlene Dietrich, who rejected it. The lovers in ‘Life Story’, Tennessee Williams’s examination of post-coital small-talk set by **Adès** in 1993, are very much together – for the moment. Presented as an extended song with the narrative drive of a mini operatic scene, the jazz-inflected and rhythmically complex setting can at times sound semi-improvised. It is, however, precisely notated, with the interplay between voice and piano, and the nuances of the vocal line – which look to late Billie Holiday – calibrated to enhance the back and forth between tenderness and cynicism. Such care also ensures the song’s dénouement, a deadpan line delivered both *pianississimo* (‘very very softly’) and *marcartissimo* (‘with very strong accentuation’), lands as necessary.

A final portrait of female melancholy, excess and anguish is found in Poulenc’s 1961 ‘La dame de Monte Carlo’. Here, as in the *Adès*, the ending is decisive: after losing everything, the aging gambling addict throws herself into the Mediterranean off the coast of Monte Carlo.

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Charles Ives (1874-1954)

Very Pleasant from *Memories* (1897)

Charles Ives

We're sitting in the opera house;
We're waiting for the curtain to arise
With wonders for our eyes;
We're feeling pretty gay,
And well we may,
'O, Jimmy, look!' I say,
'The band is tuning up
And soon will start to play.'
We whistle and we hum,
Beat time with the drum.
We're sitting in the opera house;

We're waiting for the curtain to arise
With wonders for our eyes,
A feeling of expectancy,
A certain kind of ecstasy,
Expectancy and ecstasy ... Sh's's's.

(Curtain!)

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

Banalités (1940)

Guillaume Apollinaire

Chanson d'Orkenise

Song of Orkenise

Par les portes
d'Orkenise

Veut entrer un
charretier.

Par les portes
d'Orkenise

Veut sortir un
va-nu-pieds.

Et les gardes
de la ville

Courant sus au va-nu-pieds:

' – Qu'emportes-tu de la
ville?'

' – J'y laisse mon cœur
entier.'

Et les gardes
de la ville

Courant sus au charretier:

' – Qu'apportes-tu dans la
ville?'

' – Mon cœur pour me
marier.'

Through the gates of
Orkenise

a waggoner wants to
enter.

Through the gates of
Orkenise

a vagabond wants to
leave.

And the sentries
guarding the town

rush up to the vagabond:

'What are you taking from
the town?'

'I'm leaving my whole
heart behind.'

And the sentries
guarding the town

rush up to the waggoner:

'What are you carrying
into the town?'

'My heart in order to
marry.'

Que de cœurs dans
Orkenise!

Les gardes riaient,
riaient,

Va-nu-pieds la route est
grise,

L'amour grise, ô
charretier.

Les beaux gardes
de la ville,

Tricotaient superbement;

Puis, les portes de
la ville,

Se fermèrent lentement.

So many hearts in
Orkenise!

The sentries laughed and
laughed:

vagabond, the road's not
merry,

love makes you merry, O
waggoner!

The handsome sentries
guarding the town

knitted vaingloriously;

the gates of the town
then

slowly closed.

Hôtel

Hotel

Ma chambre a la forme d'une
cage

Le soleil passe son bras par
la fenêtre

Mais moi qui veux fumer
pour faire des mirages

J'allume au feu du jour ma
cigarette

Je ne veux pas travailler je
veux fumer

My room is shaped like a
cage

the sun slips its arm
through the window

but I who want to smoke
to make mirages

I light my cigarette on
daylight's fire

I do not want to work I
want to smoke

Fagnes de Wallonie

Walloon moss-hags

Tant de tristesses plénières
Prirent mon cœur

aux fagnes
désolées

Quand las j'ai reposé dans
les sapinières

Le poids des kilomètres
pendant que râlait

Le vent d'ouest

J'avais quitté le joli bois

Les écureuils y sont restés

Ma pipe essayait de faire des
nuages au ciel

Qui restait pur
obstinément

So much utter sadness
seized my heart in the
desolate upland moss-
hags

when weary I set down in
the fir plantation

the weight of kilometres
to the roar

of the west wind

I had left the pretty wood

the squirrels stayed there

my pipe tried to make
clouds in the sky

which stubbornly stayed
clear

Song continues overleaf. Please turn the page as quietly as possible.

Je n'ai confié aucun secret
sinon une chanson
énigmatique
Aux tourbières humides
to the dank peat-bogs

Les bruyères fleurant
le miel
Attiraient les abeilles
Et mes pieds endoloris
Foulaient les myrtilles et
les airelles
Tendrement mariée
Nord
Nord
La vie s'y tord
En arbres forts
Et tors
La vie y mord
La mort
À belles dents
Quand bruit le vent
The honey-fragrant
heather
attracted the bees
and my sore feet
crushed bilberries and
whortleberries
tenderly united
north
north
life is gnarled there
in strong trees
and twisted
life there bites
death
voraciously
when the wind howls

Voyage à Paris

Trip to Paris

Ah! la charmante chose
Quitter un pays morose
Pour Paris
Paris joli
Qu'un jour
Dut créer l'Amour
Ah! la charmante chose
Quitter un pays morose
Pour Paris
Oh! how delightful
to leave a dismal place
for Paris
charming Paris
that one day
love must have made
oh! how delightful
to leave a dismal place
for Paris

Sanglots

Sobs

Notre amour est réglé par les
calmes étoiles
Or nous savons qu'en nous
beaucoup d'hommes
respirent
Qui vinrent de très loin
et sont un sous nos
fronts
C'est la chanson des
rêveurs
Qui s'étaient arraché le cœur
Et le portaient dans la main
droite
Souviens-t'en cher orgueil de
tous ces souvenirs
Des marins qui chantaient
comme des conquérants
Des gouffres de Thulé des
tendres cieux d'Ophir
Our love is governed by
the calm stars
now we know that in us
many men have their
being
who came from afar and
are one beneath our
brows
it is the song of the
dreamers
who tore out their hearts
and carried them in their
right hands
remember dear pride all
these memories
The sailors who sang like
conquerors
the chasms of Thule the
gentle Ophir skies

Des malades maudits de
ceux qui fuient leur ombre
Et du retour joyeux des
heureux émigrants
De ce cœur il coulait du sang
Et le rêveur allait
pensant
A sa blessure délicate
Tu ne briseras pas la chaîne
de ces causes
Et douloureuse et nous
disait
Qui sont les effets d'autres
causes
Mon pauvre cœur mon cœur
brisé
Pareil au cœur de tous les
hommes
Voici voici nos mains que la
vie fit esclaves
Est mort d'amour ou c'est
tout comme
Est mort d'amour et
le voici ...
Ainsi vont toutes
choses
Arrachez donc le vôtre aussi
Et rien ne sera libre jusqu'à la
fin des temps
Laissons tout aux
morts
Et cachons nos sanglots
the accursed sick those
who flee their shadows
and the joyous return of
happy emigrants
this heart ran with blood
and the dreamer kept
thinking
of his delicate wound
you shall not break the
chain of these causes
of his painful wound and
said to us
which are the effects of
other causes
my poor heart my broken
heart
like the hearts of all
men
here here are our hands
that life enslaved
has died of love or so it
seems
has died of love and here
it is ...
such is the fate of all
things
so tear out yours too
nothing will be free till the
end of time
let us leave all to the dead
and conceal our sobs

John Woolrich (b.1954)

Stendhal's Observation (2008)

Stendhal

In long rooms, dark and cool, Italian women pass
their lives reclining languidly on low divans.
They hear talk of love or music for six hours a day.
In the evenings, hidden in their boxes at the theatre
for four hours, they hear talk of music or love.
So, besides the climate, the very pattern of life in
Italy and Spain is conducive to love and to music
as it is discouraging to them in England.
I neither approve nor disapprove; I just observe.

Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951)

From *Brettli-Lieder* (1901)

Der genügsame Liebhaber (1901)

Hugo Salus

Meine Freundin hat eine
schwarze Katze,
Mit weichem knisterndem
Sammetfell,
Und ich, ich hab' eine
blitzblanke Glatze,
Blitzblank und glatt und
silberhell.

Meine Freundin gehört
zu den üppigen
Frauen,
Sie liegt auf dem Divan das
ganze Jahr,
Beschäftigt das Fell ihrer
Katze zu krauen,
Mein Gott, ihr behagt halt
das sammtweiche Haar.

Und komm' ich am Abend
die Freundin besuchen,
So liegt die Mieze im
Schosse bei ihr,
Und nascht mit ihr von dem
Honigkuchen,
Und schauert wenn ich leise
ihr Haar berühr'.

Und will ich mal zärtlich tun
mit dem Schatze,
Und dass sie mir auch einmal
'Eitschi' macht,
Dann stülp' ich die Katze auf
meine Glatze,
Dann streichelt die Freundin
die Katze und lacht.

Galathea (1901)

Frank Wedekind

Ach, wie brenn' ich vor
Verlangen,
Galathea, schönes Kind,
Dir zu küssen deine Wangen,
Weil sie so entzückend
sind.

Wonne die mir widerfahre,
Galathea, schönes Kind,
Dir zu küssen deine Haare,

The contented suitor

My girlfriend has a black
cat
with soft, rustling, velvet
fur,
and I, I have a shining
bald pate,
shining and smooth and
silvery.

My girlfriend's one of
those voluptuous
women,
she lies on the sofa all
year round,
busily stroking her cat's
fur,
my God, how she loves
that soft, velvet fur.

And when in the evening I
visit my girlfriend,
her pussy-cat's always on
her lap,
nibbling with her the
gingerbread,
and trembling whenever I
stroke its fur.

And if I become amorous
with my love,
so that she might call me
'honey-bun',
I lift the cat onto my bald
pate –
and my girlfriend strokes
the cat and laughs.

Galathea

Ah, how I'm burning with
desire,
Galathea, lovely child,
just to kiss your cheeks,
because they're so
enchanting.

The rapture that I feel,
Galathea, lovely child,
just to kiss your tresses,

Weil sie so verlockend
sind.

Nimmer wehr' mir bis ich
ende,
Galathea, schönes Kind,
Dir zu küssen deine Hände,
Weil sie so verlockend
sind.

Ach, du ahnst nicht, wie ich
glühe,
Galathea, schönes Kind,
Dir zu küssen deine Knie,
Weil sie so verlockend
sind.

Und was tät ich nicht, du
Süsse,
Galathea, schönes Kind,
Dir zu küssen deine Füße,
Weil sie so verlockend
sind.

Aber deinen Mund
enthülle,
Mädchen, meinen Küssen
nie,
Denn in seiner Reize
Fülle,
Küsst ihn nur die
Phantasie.

Zoë Martlew (b.1968)

Hôtel Babylon (2024)

Zoë Martlew

Proprietress

Who's there? Ohhh, it's you! You look *just* the type.
Why don't you please come in?

Oh, willkommen, welcome, bienvenue
Welcome to this paradise of sin.
The only condition of your admission
Is to out your inhibitions and come in.
Pleasure beyond measure is our sinecure, our
treasure,
Our signature, our *sine qua non*.
Responsibility is iniquity here at Hôtel Babylon.

Song continues overleaf. Please turn the page as quietly as possible.

because they're so
enticing.

Never resist me, till I've
finished,
Galathea, lovely child,
kissing your hands,
because they're so
enticing.

Ah, you do not sense how
I burn,
Galathea, lovely child,
to kiss your knees,
because they're so
enticing.

And what wouldn't I do,
my sweet,
Galathea, lovely child,
to kiss your feet,
because they're so
enticing.

But never expose your
lips,
sweet girl, to my
kisses,
for the fullness of their
charms
can only be kissed in
fantasy.

Oh, willkommen, croeso, bienvenue,
Here you can gratify your every whim.
They say there are seven, but I know at least eleven
Of the deadlies that run medlies within.
Oozing, boozing, limitless consuming,
Anything you think of we have done.
Simply kick aside your duties to experience the
beauties
Of desecrating cuties here at Hôtel Babylon.

Ciao Bella, bonjour, bienvenue,
It's time to let your longings run wild.
If submission is your mission, we've got experts in
contrition
Who will grant your every wish in any style.
Forget the needs of others and the warnings of your
mothers,
Simply sink your soul in suppurating bliss.
At this establishment, we don't do blandishment,
Only selfish fun you cannot miss.

Konitchywa et bonjourday,
It's time to find your *je ne sais quoi*.
It might be that you lightly slap a fireman in a nightie
While you disco eating candy from your bra.
Deep tissue, Swedish, honeymoon or Amish,
Chocolate buttons sprinkled on your tum.
Whatever the flavour of your fantasies' endeavour
I can guarantee it's here at Babylon.

Creamy, dreamy, positively seamy, silky smooth or
rough.
However wild your fantasy, this place has got your
stuff.
So kick aside your marriage vows and any other
sacred cows,
Let self-indulgence be your little song,
Rip off your kegs and see clouds of ecstasy
In Hôtel Babylon.

What's that you say, the price? Ohhh.. don't worry
about that. You'll find out soon enough.

Chef

Ah! Entrez! You are in perfect time for your
reservation.
Let me introduce myself. Monsieur le Chef Patron at
your service!
S'il vous plaît! Now, pop off your things, slip on this
beautiful robe
And come and recline over here.
Because here at Brasserie Babylon, we like our
guests to relax.

Our culinary concept is simple, pure excellence is
our creed.
In this famous temple de gourmets, we delight in
your cravings to feed.

We celebrate the rarest ingredients that are
gathered from all around the planet.
it is our culinary expedient to pleasure the finest of
palates.

Before we present our famous tasting menu,
There is one teensy little rule that you will obey,
A tiny formality, a soupçon to pay.
Whatever the banquet laid out on the floor,
The rule de la maison is that you will always want
more.

So close your eyes, amuse your bouche,
Feel this escargot wiggle down your throat,
With coral reef fricassée lightly sprinkled with
Chardonnay
And a ravissant ceviche de stoat.

For hours d'oeuvres our Chef serves semolina-
dipped piglet tails,
Little nightingales brûléed in ale
With marmite-covered badger ears in a chilled jus of
spider tears
And a side of rich frogspawn from Wales.

More Food!

Try this pithivier of peacock tongues in a lake of
brine
With armadillo Sachertorte marinated in wine
Fowls force fed with Frosties, poached dormouse in
honey
With patina of udders stirred and whipped until
runny.

Wild plankton emulsion with minced panda roast
Siberian tiger soup, chocolate sea slug on toast.

More Food!

Spiced dolphin ice cream - Eat More!
Marmoset custard - Stuff it in!
Leech panacotta - You must make room!
Throw up! Vomit to eat and eat to vomit -
Because you still crave more!

And now for the pièce de resistance.... Entrée...the
PIE!

So meaty! So fluffy! So yummy! So scrummy!
C'est délicieuse, non? So savoury! Mmmmm, I see
you love it! Yum, yum!
But I wonder... whatever happened to your sweet
little doggy...Lulu!

Beautician

Jesús, Maria, Dios! Whatever happened to you?! You
gonna have a total makeover right now! You want
to look young and sexy, right? OK! Let's do it!

I hose you down with freezing jets of high pressure
acqua,
Our mountain spa technology a deep-cleansing
feature,
Dermaplane abrasion to exfoliate the cellular
With bristle scrub and polish to remove
Nasty dead cells and abrasions, lumpy microporous
lesions
To rejuvenate unsightly parts of you!

Hollywood, Brazilian, lip, chin, under arms and in
between
The little cracks that only we can see,
Depilate and silicate with power-peel exfoliate
For lipo-laminated quality.
Podiatry, chiropody, colonic enhancement
Pumping caca from your system for aesthetic
advancement.

Fillers and injections, needle draining for corrections,
Burning pimple-y protrusions 'til they're out.
Anti-wrinkle, anti-sagging, scar repair for anti-
bagging
Now we pump your lips for party-ready pout.

Stubborn fat removal is our speciality
Our Babylon house surgeon can move flab from A to
Zee.
Just lie back and get thinner while you're fully awake,
This Renuvion procedure only sometime make
mistake.
Injection corrections with helium gas
Liposuction to give you Kardashian ass.

To enhance your look it's time to pluck and tattoo
those eyebrows
Constant surprise is much chic-er than frowning,
Next, a little spray tan, make you beach-body ready
This permanent orange so glowing and sexy. Chica,
chica, chica, chica, cha cha cha!

Hair extensions, colour setting, lip gloss, tint and
dye,
Contouring your features, change the colour of your
eyes,
Dolce and Gabbana corset, Louis Vuitton clutch,
Versace satin romper suits with massive Rolex
watch.

Come do a selfie with Mama 'cause baby you done!
Now, get outta here, vamoose!

Hierophant

Welcome, little one, I greet thy soul.
Place this cloak around thy form and enter my circle,
This five-pointed star, its horns pointed North.
See these glittering hoardes; priceless treasures,

Cities of gold! Infinite power, total dominion!

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

Cashier

I am your friendly cashier, here to help you win.
Anything to do with finance, with me you'll be quids
in.
If it's stuff you're after, your wish is my command.
It's time to have a little spending spree.
Material acquisition is the name of the game,
Facilitated on the books by me.

You're gonna want more money, wonga and cash.
Lovely money, spondoolies n' stash.

Right now you've got a semi, two up and two down,
I agree it's time to upgrade, how about a five-bed in
town!
Time to scrap the Ford Fiesta for a vintage Jag,
A couple of Lamborghinis, why not be a bit of a slag!
Castle in Scotland, a chateau or two in France
Villas in Rome and Monaco, a Central Park
penthouse,
A Caribbean island getaway, hell, buy the whole
thing
Off-shore's best for business, if you know what I
mean.

Guvnor, you're gonna need more money, moolah
and dough,
Filthy lucre, to have and to hold...

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

Now you've bought up Reuters, CBS, Sky, Fox and
BBC

Snap Book, Face Chat, Wikitok, it's time to up
security.

Anti-aircraft missiles, scuds, Kalashnikovs, grenades,
Tanks and nukes, stealth weaponry, a lethal parade!
Rocket launchers, you're never safe! Slash and burn
Earth!

Conquer Space!

Song continues overleaf. Please turn the page as quietly as possible.

What's that you say? What do you mean you want to stop?

Don't give it all up now.. you're just about to buy MARS!

Lover

Ashes of dreams,
Spiralling dreams of countless lives.
A light is growing with sweet music,
Music of my soul.

I am you, you are me.
Through Babylon's shining gates
Lies a glorious garden of love.

I am Love. I am free.

George Gershwin (1898-1937)

Somebody Loves Me (pub. 1924)
arranged by Earl Wild

Embraceable You from *Girl Crazy* (1930)
arranged by Earl Wild

Kurt Weill (1900-1950)

Nannas Lied (1939)
Bertolt Brecht

Meine Herren, mit siebzehn
Jahren
Kam ich auf den
Liebesmarkt, ...

Nanna's Song

Gentlemen, I was only
seventeen
when I landed on the love
market ...

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Der Abschiedsbrief
(1933)
Erich Kästner

Zwei Stunden sitz' ich
schon im Café
Bauer
Wenn Du nicht willst, dann
sag mir's in's Gesicht ...

The farewell letter

I've already been sitting in
the Café Bauer for two
hours -
if you don't want to, then
say it to my face ...

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Thomas Adès (b.1971)

Life Story Op. 8 (1993)

Tennessee Williams

After you've been to bed together for the first time,
without the advantage or disadvantage of any prior
acquaintance ...

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Francis Poulenc

La dame de Monte Carlo (1961)
Jean Cocteau

Quand on est morte entre les
mortes, ...

The lady from Monte Carlo

When you're dead
amongst the dead,
when you're withering in
the land of the living,
when everything kicks
you out
and the wind slams the
door shut,
when you're no longer
young and loved ...
When behind a closed
door,
there's nothing left but to
drown
or buy a pistol –
Yes, gentlemen, that's
what's left
for cowards and bastards.
But if the thought of
suicide
makes you tremble like a
leaf,
if you balk at slashing
your veins,
you can always take the
gamble
of a trip to Monte Carlo,

Monte Carlo! Monte
Carlo!
I've done with life.
I want to sleep on the bed
of the Med.

Having sold your soul
and pawned your
jewellery
once and for all,
roulette is a pretty
plaything.
It's fun to say: 'I gamble'.
It makes your cheeks
flush

and lights up your eyes.
Beneath your fine
widow's veil
you've a fine widow's
name.
Such a title gives you
pride!
Crazy, prepared, and
wholly restored,
you take out your card at
the casino.
Just look at my feathers
and my veils.
behold the bejewelled
star
leading to Monte Carlo.

Luck is a woman.
She's jealous
of these solemn widows.
She no doubt took me for
the wife
of a real colonel.

I won, won on the twelve.
Dresses then become
unstitched,
fur loses its hair.
Say as one may: 'I want',
once fortune hates you,
once you're highly strung,
you can no longer make a
move,
push a coin on the board,
without luck beating a
retreat
and changing numbers
and cards
on the tables at Monte
Carlo.

The scoundrels! The
fools! The scabs!
They threw me out ...
threw me out ...
They accuse me of being
dirty,
of bringing misfortune to
their saloons,
to their dirty stucco
saloons –
I, who would have told my
trick
for free, to the Prince, the
Princess,
the Duke of Westminster,
yes, Sir, the Duke himself.
This must stop,
they screamed at me, this
business of yours!
This business? ...

My discovery –
I'll deprive the green
tables of it.
Serves Monte Carlo right.
Monte Carlo.
And now, I who am
talking to you,
I shan't admit how many
kilos I've lost,
I've lost at Monte Carlo,
Monte Carlo, or Monte
Carlo.
I am a shadow of myself ...
The martingales, the
systems
and the croupiers who
have the right
to rap your knuckles,
when you're about to
pinch the stake.
And the money you owe
at your digs,
and always the same wet
night-shirt
drenched with anguish.
Let them pursue me. I'm
not that stupid.
Tonight I'll hurl myself
head first
into the sea at Monte
Carlo,
Monte Carlo ...

Due to copyright reasons, we are unable to reproduce the French text of this song

Translation of Banalités by Richard Stokes from A French Song Companion (Johnson/Stokes) published by OUP. Schoenberg and 'La dame de Monte Carlo' by Richard Stokes.