

WIGMORE HALL

Tuesday 8 November 2022
7.30pm

Supported by The Woolbeding Charity

Karita Mattila soprano
Keval Shah piano

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)	La voix humaine (1958) <i>Interval</i>
Theo Mackeben (1897-1953)	Nur nicht aus Liebe weinen (1939)
Friedrich Hollaender (1896-1976)	Ich bin von Kopf bis Fuss auf Liebe eingestellt (1930)
George Gershwin (1898-1937)	The Man I Love (1924)
Burt Bacharach (b.1928)	What the World Needs Now Is Love (1962-5)

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In 1880, Mark Twain published a short story called *A Telephonic Conversation*, in which he remarked: 'a conversation by telephone – when you are simply sitting by and not taking part in that conversation – is one of the solemnest curiosities of this modern life.' It was written barely two years after the invention of the telephone and thus indicates how swiftly the phenomenon of 'telephonic conversations' had become part of everyday life. His story in fact evolves as a satirical observation on the flighty nature of female conversations in particular; and the cliché of a woman *waiting* by the telephone was so common as to form the entire material of a Dorothy Parker's short story *A Telephone Call* written in 1924.

The premise of Poulenc's *La voix humaine* (1958) belongs to both of these conventions: the curiosity of hearing just one half of a phone conversation, and the woman trapped in her apartment, desperately waiting for a man to ring her – further amplified in this case by an erratic network that keeps cutting her off. The scenario is, then, mundane. In Cocteau's original drama on which *La voix* is based, 'Elle' is described by the author as a '*femme médiocre*', an ordinary woman in an ordinary situation. Yet Poulenc elevates her into another sphere. Her utterances, while initially quasi-spoken and 'realistic' in their telephonic context, gain in song-like momentum throughout the work, including a five-minute 'aria', an outburst of 'Je devenais folle!' launching up to a high C, and a glorious 'Je t'aime' at full operatic throttle in the final bars.

The telephonic and technological qualities of the work are embedded in Elle's vocal style at the start (her repeated 'Allô', usually on a questioning raised minor third). The accompaniment is jittery and highly-caffeinated, representing Elle's anxiety as she paces her room, but also suggesting someone twiddling a radio dial, attempting to find a station to settle onto. In the first third of the piece Elle is often singing into silence, or alternating with fragments of music, and it is not clear whether the accompaniment represents her lover's voice at the other end of the line, or her troubled spirit. Increasingly, though, as her voice gains in 'operatic' style, the accompaniment becomes ever more present, bathing Elle's voice in sound. This is particularly so in a theme that often accompanies her reminiscences, first heard under the words 'Souviens-toi du dimanche de Versailles...' ('Do you remember that Sunday at Versailles...'), and later on when she remembers a hotel they used to visit together.

In the final section of the work, despite its unconventional structure otherwise, there is a series of perfect cadences onto A minor, the key of the conclusion. *La voix humaine* evolves from a position of fragmentary, technological isolation into the world of harmonic regularity and operatic tradition. It plays out a connection between an operatic diva and a

solitary, isolated 'woman on the telephone' and in fact makes this figure a single entity. If the opera can seem occasionally ludicrous at the same time as it is pitiful, it is because the absolutely stylised tones of the beautiful operatic voice are employed down the telephone wires expressing the most banal, 'mediocre' phrases.

The central 'aria' of *La voix humaine*, in which Elle relates her suicide attempt, is in a melancholy waltz-time, and Poulenc wondered whether it would sound 'too much like Piaf' – as in Edith Piaf, the Parisian queen of the torch-song. The aria is certainly an evocative foreshadowing of the second half of this programme, which features four glorious examples of torch songs, mostly in a similar waltz style. The two German numbers made their first appearances in films of the 1930s. 'Nur nicht aus Liebe weinen' by Mackeben is based on a Russian folk melody and is sung by Zarah Leander in the film *Es war eine rauschende Ballnacht* (1939), generally known in English as *The Life and Loves of Tchaikovsky*. Leander plays Katharina, an aristocratic woman who is in love with Tchaikovsky, and secretly finances his career. Hollaender's 'Ich bin von Kopf bis Fuss auf Liebe eingestellt' is also known as 'Falling in Love Again,' made famous by Marlene Dietrich's performance of it in Josef von Sternberg's 1930 film *Der blaue Engel* ('The Blue Angel'). Dietrich plays Lola-Lola, a cabaret singer who becomes the object of a schoolteacher's obsession. The knowing, erotic text (particularly in the German version) is slyly undercut by the wholesome-sounding, sweetly falling melody. It has been covered by an extraordinary wide range of artists, from The Beatles (in their pre-fame Hamburg years) to Christina Aguilera.

Over in the States, Gershwin's 'The Man I Love' is – though one of his most famous songs – a curious anomaly in his catalogue, in that it did not belong to a show. It was composed (to words by Gershwin's brother Ira) in 1924, originally as 'The Girl I Love'. Its yearning, wistful text, and melody which gradually falls down the scale with each line, rendered it out of step with the more upbeat numbers written for the musicals. It was recorded eventually as a standalone work, and is more commonly sung by female singers as 'The Man I Love'. The final torch-song is another waltz, but a considerably more optimistic one. Burt Bacharach's 'What the World Needs Now is Love', with lyrics by Hal David, was first recorded in 1965 by Jackie DeShannon. It was originally rejected by Dionne Warwick as sounding 'too country'; DeShannon, by contrast, recalled that she 'heard a little bit of a gospel feel in the chorus'. There is, indeed, a soul-lifting key-change before the final refrain that beautifully amplifies its plea for global love and peace.

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Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

La voix humaine (1958)

Jean Cocteau

<i>(On sonne)</i>	<i>(The telephone rings)</i>
Allô, allô, Mais non, Madame, nous sommes plusieurs sur la ligne, raccrochez. Vous êt' avec une abonnée! Mais, Madame, raccrochez vous-mêm'! Allô, Mad'moisel'! Mais non, ce n'est pas le docteur Schmit. Zéro huit, pas zéro sept. Allô! c'est ridicul'. On me demande; je ne sais pas.	Hello, hello, no, Madame, there are several of us on the line, hang up. I was already connected! But, Madame, you hang up! Hello, Mademoiselle! No, this is not Doctor Schmit. Zero eight, not zero seven. Hello! This is absurd. They keep ringing; I don't know.
<i>(On sonne)</i>	<i>(The telephone rings)</i>
Allô! Mais, Madam', Que voulez-vous que j'y fass'? Comment, ma faut'? pas de tout. Allô, Mad'moisel'! Dites à cette dame de se retirer.	Hello? But, Madame, what would you like me to do about it? What, my fault? Not at all. Hello, Mademoiselle! Tell this woman to get off the line.
<i>(Elle raccroche. On sonne)</i>	<i>(She hangs up. The telephone rings)</i>
Allô, c'est toi? Oui, très bien. C'était un vrai supplice de t'entendre à travers tout ce monde... Oui... oui... non... C'est une chance... Je rentre il y a dix minutes. Tu n'avais pas encore appelé? Ah! non, non. J'ai diné dehors, chez Marthe. Il doit être onze heur' un quart. Tu es chez toi? Alors regarde la pendule électrique. C'est que je pensais. Oui, oui, mon chéri. Hier soir? Hier soir je me suis couchée tout de suite et comme je ne pouvais pas m'endormir, j'ai pris un comprimé.	Hello, is that you? Yes, I'm fine. It was true torture to hear you across all those people... Yes...yes...no... It's pure luck... I just got back ten minutes ago. You didn't try to call before? Ah! No, no. I dined out, at Marthe's. It must be quarter past eleven. Are you at home? Then look at the electric clock. That's what I thought. Yes, yes, my darling. Last night? Last night I went straight to bed and since I couldn't fall asleep, I took a pill.

Non, un seul, à neuf heures. J'avais un peu mal à la tête, mais je me suis secouée. Marthe est venue. Elle a déjeuné avec moi. J'ai fait des courses. Je suis rentrée à la maison. J'ai... Quoi? Très forte... J'ai beaucoup, beaucoup de courage... Après? Après je me suis habillée, Marthe est venue me prendre. Je rentre de chez elle. Elle a été parfaite. Elle a cet air, mais ell' ne l'est pas. Tu avais raison, comme toujours. Ma robe rose... Mon chapeau noir. Oui, j'ai encore mon chapeau sur la tête. Et toi, tu rentres? Tu es resté à la maison? Quel procès? Ah, oui. Allô! chéri... Si on coupe, redemande-moi tout de suite. Allô! Non, je suis là. Le sac? Tes lettres et les miennes. Tu peux le fair' prendre quand tu veux. Un peu dur... Je comprends. Oh! mon chéri, ne t'excuse pas, C'est très naturel et c'est moi qui suis stupide. Tu es gentil... Tu es gentil. Moi non plus, je ne me croyais pas si forte. Quelle comédie? Allô! Qui? Que je te joue la comédie, moi! Tu me connais, je suis incapable de prendre sur moi. Pas du tout... Pas du tout. Très calme. Tu l'entendrais. Je dis: tu l'entendrais. Je n'ai pas la voix d'une personne qui cache quelque chose. Non. J'ai décidé d'avoir du courage et j'en aurai. J'ai ce que je mérite.	No, just one, at nine o'clock. I had a bit of a headache, but I shook it off. Marthe came over. She had lunch with me. I went shopping. I came home. I... What? Very brave... I have such, such courage... Afterwards? Afterwards I got dressed, Marthe came to fetch me. I've just come from her place. She was just perfect. She seems that way, but she's not at all. You were right, like always. My pink robe... My black hat. Yes, I still have my hat on. And you, did you just get back? Did you stay home? What trial? Oh, yes. Hello? Darling... If we get cut off, call me back at once. Hello? No, I'm here. The bag? Your letters and mine. You can come and take it whenever you want. A little hard... I understand. Oh! my darling, don't apologise, it's entirely natural and I'm the one being stupid. You're kind... You are kind. Nor me, I didn't think I had the strength. What act? Hello? Who? That I could put on an act with you! You know me, I'm incapable of maintaining a front. Not at all... Not at all. Very calm. You can hear it. I said: you can hear it. I don't have the voice of someone who's hiding something. No. I decided to have the courage and so I will have it. I have what I deserve.
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J'ai voulu être folle et avoir un bonheur fou.	I wanted to be wild and have a mad, wonderful time.	Allons, bon! maintenant c'est moi qui ne t'entends plus.	Brilliant! Now it's I who can no longer hear you.
Chéri, écoute... allô! chéri.	Darling, listen... Hello? Darling.	Si, mais très loin, très loin.	Yes, but very far away, very far away.
Laisse... Allô! laisse-moi parler.	Let... Hello? Let me speak.	Toi, tu m'entends.	You can hear me.
Ne t'accuse pas. Tout est ma faute.	Don't take the blame. It's all my fault.	C'est chacun son tour.	We're taking turns.
Si, si.	It is, it is.	Non, très bien.	No, that's fine.
Souviens-toi du dimanche de Versailles et du pneumatique. Ah! Alors!	Do you remember that Sunday at Versailles, with the message? Ah! Well then!	J'entends même mieux que tout à l'heure,	I can hear you even better than before,
C'est moi qui ai voulu venir,	It was I who wanted to come,	Mais ton appareil résonne.	but your phone has an echo.
C'est moi qui t'ai fermé la bouche,	it was I who told you to be quiet,	On dirait que ce n'est pas ton appareil.	It's like it's not your phone at all.
C'est moi qui t'ai dit que tout m'était égal.	it was I who told you that none of it mattered to me.	Je te vois, tu sais.	I can see you, you know.
Non, non, là tu es injuste.	No, no, there you're being unfair.	Quel foulard? Le foulard rouge.	Which scarf? The red scarf.
J'ai... J'ai téléphoné la première, un mardi,	I... I called first, a Tuesday,	Tu as tes manches retroussées.	You have your sleeves rolled up.
J'en suis sûre. Un mardi vingt-sept.	I'm sure. Tuesday the 27th.	Ta main gauche? le récepteur.	Your left hand? The receiver.
Tu penses bien que je connais ces dates par cœur...	You must know that I have all these dates by heart...	Ta main droite? ton stylographe.	Your right hand? Your pen.
Ta mère? Pourquoi?	Your mother? Why?	Tu dessines sur le buvard, des profils, des cœurs, des étoiles.	You're drawing on the blotting paper - faces, hearts, stars.
Ce n'est vraiment pas la peine.	It's not really worth it.	Ah! Tu ris! J'ai des yeux à la place des oreilles.	Ah! You're laughing! I have eyes where my ears should be.
Je ne sais pas encore. Oui, peut-être.	I don't know any more. Yes, perhaps.	Oh! non, mon chéri, surtout ne me regarde pas.	Oh! No, my darling, above all don't look at me.
Oh! non, sûrement pas tout de suite, et toi?	Oh! No, definitely not right away, and you?	Peur? Non, je n'aurai pas peur...c'est pire.	Afraid? No, I wouldn't be afraid...it's worse than that.
Demain? Je ne savais pas que c'était si rapide.	Tomorrow? I didn't know it would be so soon.	Enfin je n'ai plus l'habitude de dormir seule.	The fact is I'm no longer used to sleeping alone.
Alors, attends, c'est très simple:	All right, listen, it's very simple:	Oui, oui, oui, je te promets, Je te promets, tu es gentil.	Yes, yes, yes, I promise, I promise, you're kind.
Demain matin le sac sera chez le concierge.	tomorrow morning the bag will be with the concierge.	Je ne sais pas. J'évite de me regarder.	I don't know. I'm avoiding looking at myself.
Joseph n'aura qu'à passer le prendre.	Joseph won't have to do anything but come by and take it.	Je n'ose plus allumer dans le cabinet de toilette.	I no longer dare put the light on in the dressing room.
Oh! moi, tu sais, il est possible que je reste,	Oh! As for me, you know, I might stay here,	Hier, je me suis trouvé nez à nez avec une vieille dame...	Yesterday, I found myself face to face with an old woman...
Comme il est possible que j'aie passé quelques jours à la campagne, chez Marthe.	or I might go and spend several days in the country, with Marthe.	Non, non! une vieille dame avec des cheveux blancs et une foule de petites rides.	No, no! An old woman with white hair and a host of little wrinkles.
Oui, mon chéri, mais oui, mon chéri.	Yes, my darling - yes, my darling.	Tu es bien bon! mais, mon chéri,	You're very sweet! But, my darling,
Allô! et comme ça?	Hello? How about now?	Une figure admirable, c'est pire que tout,	an admirable face, that's worse than anything,
Pourtant je parle très fort.	But I'm speaking very loudly.	C'est pour les artistes.	that's something an artist would say.
Et là, tu m'entends?	And now, can you hear me?	J'aimais mieux quand tu disais:	I liked it better when you said:
Je dis: et là, tu m'entends?	I said: and now, can you hear me?	Regardez-moi cette vilaine petite gueule!	look at this ugly little mug!
C'est drôle parce que moi je t'entends comme si tu étais dans la chambre.	It's funny because I can hear you as if you were in the room.	Oui, cher Monsieur! Je plaisantais.	Yes, dear Monsieur! I'm joking.
Allô! allô! 4	Hello? Hello?	Tu es bête...	You're being silly...

Heureusement que tu es maladroit et que tu m'aimes.	Thank goodness you are gauche and you love me.	Tu es bon d'avoir téléphoné, très bon.	It's good of you to call, ever so good.
Si tu ne m'aimais pas et si tu étais adroit,	If you didn't love me and you were clever,	Non, je suis là. Quoi?	No, I'm here. What?
Le téléphone deviendrait une arme effrayante.	the telephone would become a fearful weapon.	Pardonne, c'est absurde.	Excuse me, that's absurd.
Une arme qui ne laisse pas de traces, qui ne fait pas de bruit.	A weapon that leaves no marks, that makes no sound.	Rien, rien, je n'ai rien.	Nothing, nothing, there's nothing the matter with me.
Moi, méchante? Allô! allô, chéri...où es-tu?	I, unkind? Hello? Hello, darling...where are you?	Je te jur' que je n'ai rien.	I swear to you there's nothing.
Allô, allô, Mad'moisell',	Hello, hello, Mademoiselle,	C'est pareil. Rien du tout.	Exactly. Nothing at all.
Allô, Mad'moiselle, on coupe.	hello, Mademoiselle, we were cut off.	Tu te trompes.	You're wrong.
<i>(Elle raccroche. Silence. On sonne.)</i>	<i>(She hangs up. Silence. The telephone rings.)</i>	Seulement, tu comprends, on parle, on parle...	It's just, you understand, all this talking and talking...
Allô, c'est toi? Mais non, Mad'moiselle.	Hello, is that you? No, Mademoiselle.	Ecoute, mon amour.	Listen, my love.
On m'a coupé... Je ne sais pas...	Someone cut me off... I don't know...	Je ne t'ai jamais menti.	I have never lied to you.
C'est à dire... si, attendez...	I mean... yes, hold on...	Oui, je sais, je sais, je te crois,	Yes, I know, I know, I believe you,
Auteuil zero quat'virgul'sept.	Auteuil district, zero four-dash-seven.	J'en suis convaincue...	I'm convinced...
Allô! Pas libre? Allô, Mad'moisell',	Hello? Engaged? Hello, Mademoiselle,	Non, ce n'est pas ça,	No, it's not that,
Il me redemand'. Bien.	he must be calling me back. Fine.	C'est parce que je viens de te mentir, là, au téléphone,	it's because I just lied to you, here, on the telephone,
<i>(Elle raccroche. On sonne.)</i>	<i>(She hangs up. The telephone rings.)</i>	Depuis un quart d'heure, je te mens.	for a quarter of an hour, I've been lying to you.
Allô! Auteuil zéro quat'virgul'sept?	Hello? Auteuil zero four-dash-seven?	Je sais bien que je n'ai plus aucune chance à attendre,	I know I no longer have any luck to hope for,
Allô! C'est vous, Joseph?...	Hello? Is that you, Joseph?...	Mais mentir ne porte pas la chance et puis je n'aime pas te mentir,	but lying doesn't bring luck and also I don't like lying to you,
C'est Madame.	It's Madame.	Je ne peux pas, je ne veux pas te mentir,	I can't, I don't want to lie to you,
On nous avait coupés avec Monsieur.	I was cut off on the call with Monsieur.	Même pour ton bien.	even for your own good.
Pas là? Oui, oui, il ne rentre pas ce soir...	Not there? Right, right, he won't be home tonight...	Oh! rien de grave, mon chéri.	Oh! Nothing serious, my darling.
C'est vrai, je suis stupide!	It's true, I'm an idiot!	Seulement je mentais en te décrivant ma robe et ne disant que j'avais dîné chez Marthe...	I only lied in describing my dress and telling you that I went to dinner at Marthe's...
Monsieur me téléphonait d'un restaurant,	Monsieur called me from a restaurant,	Je n'ai pas dîné,	I didn't go to dinner,
On a coupé et je redemande son numéro...	we got cut off and I called his number...	Je n'ai pas ma robe rose.	I don't have my pink dress on.
Excusez-moi, Joseph.	Forgive me, Joseph.	J'ai un manteau sur ma chemise,	I have a coat over my nightdress,
Merci, merci. Bonsoir, Joseph.	Thank you, thank you. Goodnight, Joseph.	Parce qu'à force d'attendre ton téléphone, à force de regarder l'appareil,	because what with waiting for you to call, what with watching this machine,
<i>(Elle raccroche. On sonne.)</i>	<i>(She hangs up. The telephone rings.)</i>	De m'asseoir, de me lever, De marcher de long en large, Je devenais folle!	sitting down, getting up, pacing up and down, I lost my mind!
Allô! ah! chéri! c'est toi? On avait coupé.	Hello? Ah! Darling, is that you? We were cut off.	Alors j'ai mis un manteau et j'allais sortir, prendre un taxi,	So I put a coat on and I was planning to leave, take a taxi,
Non, non. J'attendais. On sonnait,	No, no. I waited. The telephone rang,	Me fair' mener sous tes fenêtres, pour attendre...	make my way beneath your window, to wait...
Je décrochais et il n'y avait personne.	I picked it up and nobody was there.	Eh bien! attendre,	Well! To wait -
Sans doute... Bien sûr...	Absolutely... Of course...	Attendre je ne sais quoi.	I don't know what for.
Tu as sommeil?	Are you sleepy?	Tu as raison. Si, je t'écoute...	You're right. Yes, I hear you...
		Je serai sage,	I'll be good,
		Je répondrai à tout, je te jure.	I'll answer everything, I swear.
		Ici... Je n'ai rien mangé.	Here... I haven't eaten anything.
		Je ne pouvais pas.	I couldn't.

J'ai été très malade.	I've been very sick.
Hier soir, j'ai voulu prendre un comprimé pour dormir;	Last night, I wanted to take a sleeping pill;
Je me suis dit que si j'en prenais plus,	I told myself that if I took more,
Je dormirais mieux et que si je les prenais tous,	I would sleep better, and if I took them all,
Je dormirais sans rêve, sans réveil,	I would sleep without dreaming, without waking,
Je serais morte.	I'd be dead.
J'en ai avalé douze dans de l'eau chaude.	I swallowed twelve in some warm water.
Comme une masse.	All at once.
Et j'ai eu un rêve.	And I had a dream.
J'ai rêvé ce qui est.	I dreamed things as they are.
Je me suis réveillée toute contente parce que c'était un rêve,	I woke up so happy because it was a dream,
Et quand j'ai su que c'était vrai,	and when I knew that it was true,
Que j'étais seule,	that I was alone,
Que je n'avais pas la tête sur ton cou,	that my head wasn't against your neck,
J'ai senti que je ne pouvais pas vivre.	I felt that I couldn't live any more.
Légère, légère et froide	Light, light and cold
Et je ne sentais plus mon cœur battre	and I no longer felt my heart beat
Et la mort était longue à venir	and death took so long to come
Et com' j'avais une angoisse épouvantable,	and since I was so dreadfully afraid,
Au bout d'une heure j'ai téléphoné à Marthe.	after an hour I called Marthe.
Je n'avais pas le courage de mourir seule.	I wasn't brave enough to die alone.
Chéri... Chéri...	Darling... Darling...
Il était quatre heures du matin.	It was four in the morning.
Elle est arrivée avec le docteur qui habite son immeuble.	She came with the doctor who lives in her building.
J'avais plus de quarant'.	My temperature was over 40.
Le docteur a fait une ordonnance et Marthe est restée jusqu'à ce soir.	The doctor wrote a prescription and Marthe stayed up until this evening.
Je l'ai suppliée de partir	I begged her to leave
Parce que tu m'avais dit que tu téléphonerais	because you told me you would call
Et j'avais peur qu'on m'empêche de te parler.	and I was afraid someone would stop me from talking to you.
Très, très bien. Ne t'inquiète pas.	Very, very well. Don't worry.
Allô! Je croyais qu'on avait coupé.	Hello? I thought we'd been cut off.
Tu es bon, mon chéri.	You are good, my darling.

Mon pauvre chéri à qui j'ai fait du mal.	My poor darling whom I've hurt.
Oui, parle, parle, dis n'importe quoi.	Yes, talk, talk, say anything at all.
Je souffrais à me rouler par terre	I've suffered hysterically
Et il suffit que tu parles pour que je me sente bien,	and it only takes you speaking for me to feel fine,
Que je ferme les yeux.	for me to close my eyes.
Tu sais, quelquefois quand nous étions couchés et que j'avais ma tête à sa petite place contre ta poitrine,	You know, sometimes when we were in bed and I had my head in its little place against your chest,
J'entendais ta voix, exactement la même que ce soir dans l'appareil.	I heard your voice, exactly the same as tonight over the phone.
Allô! J'entends de la musique.	Hello? I can hear music.
Je dis: J'entends de la musique.	I said: I can hear music.
Eh bien, tu devrais cogner au mur	Well, you must bang on the wall
Et empêcher ces voisins de jouer du gramophone à des heures pareil'.	and stop those neighbours from playing the gramophone at this hour.
C'est inutile. Du reste le docteur de Marthe reviendra demain.	There's no need. Besides, this doctor of Marthe's will come back tomorrow.
Ne t'inquiète pas. Mais oui. Elle te donnera des nouvelles.	Don't worry. Yes, of course. She'll tell you any news.
Quoi? Oh! si, mille fois mieux.	What? Oh! Yes, a thousand times better.
Si tu n'avais pas appelé, Je serais morte.	If you hadn't called, I would have died.
Pardonne-moi. Je sais que cette scène est intolérable	Forgive me. I know that this production is intolerable
Et que tu as bien de la patience,	and you have so much patience,
Mais comprends-moi, je souffre,	but understand me, I'm in pain,
Je souffre. Ce fil, c'est le dernier	I'm in pain. This line is the last thread
Qui me rattache encore à nous.	that still connects me to us.
Avant-hier soir? J'ai dormi.	The night before last? I slept.
Je m'étais couchée avec le téléphone...	I lay down with the telephone...
Non, non. Dans mon lit. Oui. Je sais.	No, no. In my bed. Yes. I know.
Je suis très ridicule, mais j'avais le téléphone dans mon lit et malgré tout,	I'm entirely ridiculous, but I had the telephone in my bed and in spite of everything,
On est relié par le téléphone.	we were linked by the telephone.

Parce que tu me parles.	Because you're speaking to me.
Voilà cinq ans que je vis de toi,	For five years I lived through you,
Que tu es mon seul air respirable,	you were the only air I could breathe,
Que je passe mon temps à t'attendre,	I spent my time waiting for you,
A te croire' mort si tu es en retard,	believing you dead if you were late,
A mourir de te croire' mort,	dying from believing you dead,
A revivre quand tu entres	coming back to life when you came in
Et quand tu es là, enfin,	and when you were finally there,
A mourir de peur que tu partes.	dying for fear of you leaving.
Maintenant, j'ai de l'air parce que tu me parles.	Now, I can breathe because you're speaking to me.
Allô! Allô! Madam', retirez-vous.	Hello? Hello? Madame, put the phone down.
Vous êt' avec des abonnés.	You're on an occupied line.
Allô! mais non, Madam',	Hello? No, Madame,
Mais, Madame, nous ne cherchons pas à être intéressants.	Madame, we are not trying to be entertaining.
Si vous nous trouvez ridicules,	If you find us absurd,
Pourquoi perdez-vous votre temps au lieu de raccrocher?	why are you wasting your time instead of hanging up?
Oh! Ne te fâche pas... Enfin!	Oh! Don't get angry... Finally!
Non, non. Elle a raccroché	No, no. She hung up
Après avoir dit cette chose ignoble.	after saying that despicable thing.
Tu as l'air frappé. Si, tu es frappé,	You seem upset. Yes, you're upset,
Je connais ta voix.	I know your voice.
Mais, mon chéri, cette femme doit être très mal	But, my darling, this woman must be a bad person
Et elle ne te connaît pas.	and she doesn't know you.
Ell' croit que tu es comme les autres hommes.	She thinks that you are like other men.
Mais non, mon chéri,	But no, my darling,
Ce n'est pas du tout pareil.	it's not the same at all.
Pour les gens, on s'aime ou on se déteste.	People think one loves someone or hates someone.
Les ruptures sont des ruptures.	Breaking up is breaking up.
Ils regardant vite.	They're quick to start looking.
Tu ne leur feras jamais comprendre...	You will never be able to make them understand...
Tu ne leur feras jamais comprendre certaines choses.	You will never be able to make them understand some things.

Le mieux est de faire comme moi et de s'en moquer complètement.	It's best to do as I do and not give a damn about them at all.
Oh! Rien.	Oh! Nothing.
Je crois que nous parlons comme d'habitude	I thought we were talking like always
Et puis tout a coup la vérité me revient.	and then suddenly the truth came back to me.
Dans le temps, on se voyait.	In the past, we'd see each other.
On pouvait perdre la tête,	We could lose our head,
Oublier ses promesses, risquer l'impossible,	forget our promises, risk the impossible,
Convaincre ceux qu'on adorait en les embrassant, en s'accrochant à eux.	convince each other of our adoration by kissing and clinging to one another.
Un regard pouvait changer tout.	A look could change everything.
Mais avec cet appareil, Ce qui est fini est fini.	But with this machine, what's done is done.
Sois tranquille.	Be calm.
On ne se suicide pas deux fois.	One doesn't attempt suicide twice.
Je ne saurais pas acheter un revolver...	I wouldn't know how to buy a revolver...
Tu ne me vois pas achetant un revolver.	You can't see me buying a revolver.
Où trouverais-je la force de combiner un mensonge, mon pauvre adoré?	Where would I find the strength to come up with a lie, my poor love?
Aucune... J'aurais dû avoir du courage.	I have none... I should have had the courage.
Il y a des circonstances où le mensonge est utile.	There are circumstances when a lie is useful.
Toi, si tu mentais pour rendre la séparation moins pénible...	You, if you lied to make this separation less painful...
Je ne dis pas que tu mentes.	I'm not saying that you're lying.
Je dis: si tu mentais et que je le sache.	I said: if you lied, and if I knew it.
Si, par exemple, tu n'étais pas chez toi,	If, for example, you weren't at home,
Et que tu me dises...	and you told me...
Non, non, mon chéri! Ecoute...je te crois.	No, no, my darling! Listen...I believe you.
Si, tu prends une voix méchante.	Yes, you did take an unkind tone of voice.
Je disais simplement que si tu me trompais par bonté d'âme	I was only saying that if you tricked me out of the goodness of your heart
Et que je m'en aperçoive,	and I realised it,
Je n'en aurais que plus de tendresse pour toi.	I'd only feel more tenderness for you.
Allô! allô!	Hello? Hello?
Mon Dieu, fait' qu'il redemande.	Oh, god, let him call me back.

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Mon Dieu, fait' -	Oh, god, let -
<i>(On sonne.)</i>	<i>(The telephone rings.)</i>
On avait coupé. J'étais en train de te dire que si tu me mentais par bonté Et que je m'en aperçoive, Je n'en aurais que plus de tendresse pour toi. Bien sûr... Tu es fou! Mon amour, mon cher amour.	We were cut off. I was telling you that if you lied out of kindness and I realised it, I'd only feel more tenderness for you. Of course... You're mad! My love, my dear love.
<i>(Elle enroule le fil autour de son cou.)</i>	<i>(She winds the cord around her neck.)</i>
Je sais bien qu'il le faut, mais c'est atroce. Jamais je n'aurai ce courage. Oui. On a l'illusion d'être l'un contre l'autre Et brusquement on met des caves, Des égouts, toute une ville entre soi. J'ai le fil autour de mon cou. J'ai ta voix autour de mon cou. Ta voix autour de mon cou.	I know we must, but it's dreadful. I'll never have the courage. Yes. It feels as though we're side by side and suddenly someone puts cellars, sewers, an entire town between us. I have the cord around my neck. I have your voice around my neck. Your voice around my neck.
Il faudrait que le bureau nous coupe par hasard. Oh! Mon chéri! Comment peux-tu imaginer que je pense une chose si laide? Je sais bien que cette opération est encore plus cruelle à faire de ton côté que du mien... Non...non...A Marseill' ? Ecoute, chéri, puisque vous serez à Marseill' après-demain soir, Je voudrais... enfin j'aimerais... J'aimerais que tu ne descendes pas à l'hôtel Où nous descendons d'habitude. Tu n'es pas fâché? Parce que les choses que je n' imagine pas n'existent pas, Ou bien elles existent dans une espèce de lieu très vague	An accident from the switchboard would cut us both off. Oh! My darling! How can you imagine that I'd think something so ugly? I know perfectly well this business is much harder for you than for me... No...no... To Marseilles? Listen, darling, since you'll be in Marseilles the night after tomorrow, I want...well, I'd like... I'd like it if you don't go to the hotel where we always used to go. You're not cross? Because things I don't imagine don't exist, or at least they exist in a sort of hazy place

Et qui fait moins de mal...tu comprends?	that hurts less...do you understand?
Merci... merci. Tu es bon. Je t'aime.	Thank you...thank you. You're good to me. I love you.
<i>(Elle se lève et se dirige vers le lit avec l'appareil à la main.)</i>	<i>(She gets up and heads towards the bed with the phone in her hand.)</i>
Alors, voilà. J'allais dire machinalement: à tout de suite. J'en doute. Oh! c'est mieux. Beaucoup mieux.	Well, there we are. I was going to say without thinking: see you soon. I doubt it. Oh! It's better this way, much better.
<i>(Elle se couche sur le lit et serre l'appareil dans ses bras.)</i>	<i>(She lies down on the bed and holds the machine in her arms.)</i>
Mon chéri... mon beau chéri. Je suis forte. Dépêche-toi. Vas-y. Coupe! Coupe vite! Je t'aime, je t'aime, je t'aime, Je t'aime... t'aime.	My darling...my beloved. I'm braced. Hurry. Do it. Hang up! Hang up quickly! I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you...love you.
<i>(Le récepteur tombe par terre.)</i>	<i>(The receiver falls to the ground.)</i>

Interval

Due to copyright reasons we are unable to reproduce the original texts for the below four songs.

Theo Mackeben (1897-1953)

Nur nicht aus Liebe weinen (1939)
Hans Fritz Beckmann

Es ist ja ganz gleich, wen wir lieben,
Und wer uns das Herz einmal bricht. ...

We believe, we hope, we think that a miracle will one day occur, but whenever we surrender ourselves, it's the same old story.

Do not weep because of love, there's more than one man here on earth. There are so many in this world,

Do not weep because of love

It simply doesn't matter who we love and who will one day break our heart, we are at the mercy of Fate and must in the end renounce.

I love all the men I fancy!

And that's why today I'll belong to you,
you must swear that you'll love me and be true,
and even if I feel you are lying,
I too shall lie and be yours.

We came from the south and the north
without knowing the other's silent heart –
and so I became yours
and cannot tell you why.

For when I gave myself to you,
I was thinking of another.
So the lying started
on that very first night.

Do not weep because of love,
there's more than one man here on earth.
there are so many in this world,
I love all the men I fancy!

And that's why today I'll belong to you,
you must swear that you'll love me and be true,
and even if I feel you are lying,
I too shall lie and be yours.

Friedrich Hollaender (1896-1976)

**Ich bin von Kopf bis
Fuss auf Liebe
eingestellt (1930)**

Friedrich Hollaender

Ein rätselhafter Schimmer,
Ein je ne sais pas quoi ...

**I am from head to
toe focussed on love**

A mysterious gleam,
a je ne sais pas quoi,
always shines in the eyes
of a beautiful woman.
But when my eyes
stare deep into the eyes
of someone opposite me,
what do they say?:

I am from head to foot
focussed on love,
for that is my world –
nothing else.
That is, I cannot help it,
my nature:
All I can do is love –
nothing else.

Men buzz around me
like moths round a light,
and if they burn to death,
I can do nothing about it.
I am from head to foot
focussed on love,
for that is my world –
nothing else.

All who quiver
in my ardent embrace
wish to perish,
are never sated.
You will pardon me,
you must understand:
love entices me again and again,
I find it so beautiful.

I am from head to foot
focussed on love . . .

George Gershwin (1898-1937)

The Man I Love (1924)

Ira Gershwin

Someday he'll come along
The man I love...

Burt Bacharach (b.1928)

What the World Needs Now Is Love (1962-5)

Hal David

What the world needs now is love, sweet love,
It's the only thing that there's just too little of. ...

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