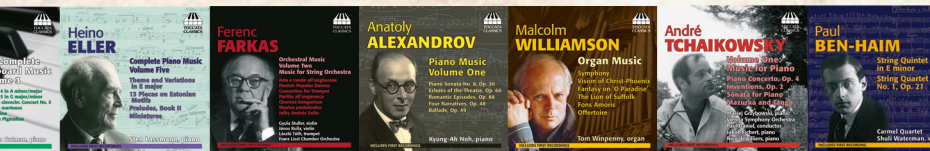


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Théodore GOUVY

Songs

to Texts by Pierre de Ronsard and other Renaissance Poets



MeeAe Nam, soprano
John Elwes, tenor
Joel Schoenhals, piano

FIRST RECORDINGS



THÉODORE GOUVY Songs to Texts by Renaissance Poets

- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 1 | <i>La Pléiade française</i> , Op. 48: No. 1, À Olive* | 2:42 |
| 2 | <i>Neuf Poésies de Ronsard</i> , Op. 41: No. 4, Voici le bois** | 3:30 |
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| 13 | <i>Huit Poésies de Ronsard</i> , Op. 44: No. 5, Vous méprisez nature* | 3:00 |
| 14 | <i>Neuf Poésies de Ronsard</i> , Op. 41: No. 5, Je compare à ta jeune beauté* | 2:25 |
| 15 | <i>Six Poésies de Ronsard</i> , Op. 42: No. 2, Le rossignol** | 3:53 |



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Recording producers: Paul Eachus, John Elwes and MeeAe Nam

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English translations: Tom Vosteen
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26 No. 11, Tel qu'un rocher

Text: Claude de Malleville

Tel qu'un rocher dans l'humide élément
De flots furieux est battu constamment,
Durant les vents la tempête et l'orage,
Tel est mon cœur, en son cruel servage,
Assailli de pensers et de tourment,
Assailli de pensers et de tourment.

Mais, quelque mal que je souffre en aimant,
Dans la rigueur d'un si dur traitement,
Je me résous et j'oppose un courage,
Tel qu'un rocher, tel qu'un rocher,
J'oppose un courage, tel qu'un rocher.

Rien ne saurait changer mon sentiment.
Et d'un amour si fort et si constant
Je devrais espérer quelqu'avantage;
Mais vous avez la rigueur en partage,
Et votre cœur est pour moi, dès longtemps,
Tel qu'un rocher, tel qu'un rocher,
Oui, votre cœur est tel qu'un rocher.

26 Like a rock

Like a rock in the moist element
By furious waters is battered constantly,
Enduring winds, tempest and storm,
Such is my heart, in its cruel servitude,
Assailed by thoughts and torment,
Assailed by thoughts and torment.

But, whatever pain I may suffer from loving,
In the rigour of such stern treatment,
I am firm and I put forth courage,
Like a rock, like a rock,
I put forth courage like a rock.

Nothing could alter my feeling.
And with a love so strong and so constant
I ought to hope for something better;
But you have harshness in you,
And your heart is for me, now for so long,
Like a rock, like a rock,
Yes, your heart is like a rock.

English translations by Tom Vosteen,
Professor of French at Eastern Michigan University

- 16 *Huit Poésies de Ronsard*, Op. 44: No. 4, L'attrait de tes beaux yeux** 2:46
- 17 *Sept Poésies de Ronsard*, Op. 47: No. 1, Page, suis-moi* 2:26
- 18 *Six Poésies de Ronsard*, Op. 42: No. 1, Je meurs, hélas!* 2:47
- 19 *Six Odes de Ronsard*, Op. 37: No. 1, Chère Vesper, lumière dorée* 3:26
- 20 *Neuf Poésies de Ronsard*, Op. 41:
No. 3, Amour, amour, que ma maîtresse est belle* 2:43
- 21 *Neuf Poésies de Ronsard*, Op. 41: No. 6, Amour me tue* 3:42
- 22 *Sept Poésies de Ronsard*, Op. 47: No. 5, Adieu* 3:32
- 23 *Six Poésies de Ronsard*, Op. 42: No. 6, Chanson** 2:23
- 24 *Sept Poésies de Ronsard*, Op. 47: No. 6, Le doux sommeil** 1:39
- 25 *La Pléiade française*, Op. 48: No. 6, Fuirai-je ainsi toujours* 3:45
- 26 *La Pléiade française*, Op. 48: No. 11, Tel qu'un rocher* 2:35

TT 74:34

MeeAe Nam, soprano 1-6, 11-17, 21-26
John Elwes, tenor 7-10, 18-20
Joel Schoenhals, piano

*FIRST RECORDINGS;

**FIRST RECORDINGS IN THE ORIGINAL KEY

THÉODORE GOUVY: A BIOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE

by Robin McNeil

Louis Théodore Gouvy was born on 3 July 1819, in Goffontaine (today it is Schafbrücke, in the district of Saarbrücken, in Germany). Pierre Gouvy, his grandfather, opened the first steel-mill of the four that the family eventually owned, built the workers' apartments and, expanding them to a considerable housing-complex, gave it the name Goffontaine. His son, Henri (Théodore's father), ran the steel-mill, as did his son Henri, Théodore's oldest brother. Théodore, the youngest of four brothers, was educated in schools in France: in Sarreguemines and in Metz. He quickly established a reputation for a love of music and languages. The area of the Lorraine where he spent his childhood had a huge impact on his life: not long before he was born, the border had moved, because the Second Treaty of Paris in 1815 had given to Germany the districts of Saarbrücken, Saint Jean, Saarlouis and Rehlingen, and his home was now considered to be in Germany. Thus his brothers were French, but he was technically German.

In spite of his love of the arts and languages, he was encouraged to become a lawyer to assist the running of the family steel-mills, and so, after proceeding from the lycée in Metz in 1835, he entered law school at the University of Paris at the age of sixteen. There, preoccupied with music, he failed his bar exams twice, the second time in 1839. He wrote a humorous letter to his mother explaining that fact,¹ and she then acquiesced to his musical ambitions, encouraging him to attend the Paris Conservatoire. But its director, Luigi Cherubini, refused to admit him: he considered Gouvy to be German even though his family was French.² Nothing daunted, Gouvy settled in Paris, where he paid some members of the Conservatoire staff surreptitiously. Thus he was able to receive instruction in piano from Henri Herz,³ Friedrich Kalkbrenner⁴ and Pierre-Joseph-Guillaume Zimmerman.⁵

¹ Quoted in Otto Klauwell, *Theodor Gouvy: Sein Leben und seine Werke*, Harmonie, Berlin, 1902, p. 18.

² Cherubini's narrow-mindedness is the more surprising when one considers that he was himself Italian.

³ Though born in Vienna, in 1803, Herz was admitted to the Paris Conservatoire at age thirteen (Reicha was his teacher of counterpoint and fugue) and was a professor of piano there from 1842 to 1874. He was one of the first virtuoso pianists to tour internationally (he crossed the USA three times) and also founded a piano factory. He died in 1888.

⁴ Kalkbrenner (1785–1849), French-born of German extraction, studied at the Paris Conservatoire (1799–1801), consulted Haydn in Vienna (1803–4), and moved to London (1814–24) before finally settling back in Paris. He, too, was involved in piano-manufacturing, as an associate of the firm Pleyel.

⁵ Zimmermann (or Zimmerman; 1785–1853) studied at the Conservatoire (Boieldieu was his piano-teacher) before going on to study with Cherubini; from 1811 he taught piano at the Conservatoire himself. Alkan, Bizet and Franck were among his students; so was Gounod, who also became his son-in-law.

La Pléiade française, Op. 48

[25] No. 6, Fuirai-je ainsi toujours

Text: Jean Antoine de Baïf

Fuirai-je ainsi toujours celle qui me veut suivre,
Pour suivre vainement l'ingrate qui me fuit ?
Dois-je sans cesse, hélas! suivre ce qui me nuit,
Ne daignant recevoir le bien que l'on me livre.

Ce nom que mille fois a célébré mon livre.
Il faut que je l'oublie et qu'il ne soit ni dit
Ni chanté dans mes vers, ni de ma main écrit,
Et qu'un autre en son lieu je fasse à jamais vivre.

Dehors ! Ingrat !

J'ai banni ton tourment, mon cœur,
Réjouis-toi, épanoui-toi d'aise,
Sois heureux de ne plus tant aimer vainement.
J'attends tout mon bonheur de nouvelle amitié.
Réjouis-toi, mon cœur.

Et toi, qui fus toujours si cruelle et mauvaise,
Adieu, adieu, adieu, plus d'amitié !
Tu ne connus jamais l'amour, ni la pitié,
Adieu !

[25] Shall I Always Flee?

Shall I always flee her who wishes to follow me,
To follow in vain the ungrateful one who flees me?
Must I ceaselessly, alas! follow that one that
harms me,
Deigning not to receive the goodness that one
offers me.

This name that a thousand times my book celebrates.
I must forget her and that it neither be nor spoken
Nor sung in my verses, nor written by my hand,
And that another in her place I might make live
forever.

Away! Ingrate!

I have banished all torment, my heart,
Rejoice, open up to pleasure,
Be happy to no longer love in vain.
I expect all my happiness from new friendship.
Rejoice, my heart.

And you, who was always cruel and vicious,
Farewell, farewell, farewell, friendship no more!
You never knew love nor pity,
Farewell!

Quand je sens parmi les prés
Diaprés
Les fleurs, dont la terre est pleine,
Je fais croire à mes sens
Que je sens
Ta douce haleine.

Ah! maîtresse, mon souci,
Viens ici,
Viens contempler la verdure !
Les fleurs de mon amitié
Ont pitié,
Mais toi, tu n'en as cure.

Aime moi, aime moi, ma Déesse !
Ne laissons passer en vain
Les ans de notre jeunesse.
Aime moi, aime moi, aime moi.

Sept Poésies de Ronsard, Op. 47

[24] No. 6, Le doux sommeil

Text: Pierre de Ronsard

Le doux sommeil qui toute chose appaise,
N'appaise point le mal qui m'a ravi,
En vous je meurs, en vous seule je vis,
Ne voyant rien, si non vous qui me plaise.

Vos yeux au cœur m'ont allumé la flamme,
Un feu toujours depuis m'a poursuivi,
Et dès le jour que pleurer je vous vis,
Je meurs pour vous, et à vous est mon âme.

When I smell among the meadows
The dappled meadows
The flowers that fill the earth,
I make my senses believe
That I sense
Your sweet breath.

Ah! mistress, for whom I care,
Come here,
Come contemplate the greenery!
The flowers of my friendship
Have pity,
But you, you do not care for them.

Love me, love me, my Goddess!
May we not let pass in vain
The years of our youth.
Love me, love me, love me.

[24] Sweet slumber

The sweet slumber that calms all things,
Calms not the pain that has afflicted me,
In you I die, in you alone I live,
Seeing nothing, but you who are pleasing to me.

Your eyes in my heart have lit the flame,
A fire has always since then pursued me,
And from that day when I saw you weep,
I die for you, and my soul is yours.

He studied harmony and theory with Antoine Elwart⁶ and violin with Karl Eckert.⁷ He became deeply involved in Parisian musical life and was close friends with all the major musicians there. In addition, he made several trips abroad to Germany, Austria, and, in 1844, to Italy, where he met Rossini in Bologna.⁸ He was already acquainted with Brahms, Liszt (with whom he often played cards), Mendelssohn and Spohr. It was in 1841 that Gouvy began the long and uninterrupted period of composition that lasted until his death.

The main characteristic of Gouvy's art is the union of French and German national elements, but it was not achieved by submitting one to the other; instead, Gouvy integrated the principal characteristics of each. His style was an amalgam of German forms which arose from the Classical period and a chromaticism in his harmonic structures which is reminiscent of composers like Gounod, even Chopin. In fact, he gives free reign to modulation and makes much use of chromaticism, which led many to refer to him as the 'French Mendelssohn'. The songs on this CD contain many examples of this approach, although in his symphonies and piano sonatas he combines this harmonic language with a rather strict adherence to German classical forms.

He aspired to be a symphonist, but he found the musical climate in Paris unsatisfying because of its emphasis on operetta and comic opera. In spite of the fact that Jules-Étienne Pacheloup⁹ was conducting his symphonies at the Paris Conservatoire, he moved to Leipzig where he met and befriended Franz Liszt. He explained his reasons to a friend in an unpublished letter:

Why I live here: 1) because my room is heated; 2) because I get something to listen to, while there is nothing to hear there [that is, in Paris]; 3) because here I mix with real artists including Ferdinand Hiller, Carl Reinecke, Ignaz Moscheles, Franz Liszt, Clara Schumann, Johannes Brahms and Joseph Joachim, and there, there is no one; 4) because here, I still find publishers.

⁶ Elwart (1808–77) – the name is of Polish origin – was a student of Fétis (counterpoint and fugue) and Le Sueur (composition) at the Paris Conservatoire, becoming Reicha's assistant there from 1832 to 1834, in which year he won the Prix de Rome. He was a professor of harmony at the Conservatoire from 1840 to 1871. His compositions include operas and masses but he was best known for his theoretical writings on music.

⁷ Karl Anton Florian Eckert (1820–79), a child prodigy, became a composer of operas and songs. For a time, he studied with Mendelssohn. He was perhaps, better known as an excellent conductor: Music Director of the opera houses in Vienna (1853–60), Stuttgart (1860–67), Baden-Baden (1867–69) and Berlin (1869–79).

⁸ Based in Paris from 1824, Rossini lived in Bologna from 1836 to 1848, returning to Paris for a very short time in 1843 for an operation to remove his gallstones. In 1848 he moved to Florence, returning to Paris in 1855.

⁹ Pacheloup (1819–87), himself a Parisian, was a graduate of the Conservatoire in piano but became one of the most important conductors in the city, giving the first Paris performances of Schumann and Wagner and reviving the music of major neglected figures of the past, among them Beethoven, Haydn and Mozart. The Orchestre Pacheloup which he founded in 1861 is the oldest in Paris and is still active today.

His works found performances in all the major cities of Europe, including Amsterdam, Berlin, Bern, Brussels, Cologne, Dresden, Leipzig, London, Munich and Vienna; they were even heard in New York.¹⁰ In addition, he found publishers for his symphonies and chamber works.

Gouvy enjoyed spending time in Berlin, where he was introduced by a composer-friend, Ferdinand Möhring,¹¹ to Carl Friedrich Rungenhagen. Rungenhagen (1778–1851) was a composer and conductor of the Sing-Akademie,¹² taught at the Akademie der Künste there, and was the composer of four operas, three oratorios, various chamber works and a large number of songs. It may have been Gouvy's attendance at Rungenhagen's Sing-Akademie rehearsals that have spurred his imagination, since he now began to write choral works. Alexander, Théodore's brother, ran one of the family steel-mills in Hombourg-Haut¹³ and invited him to spend his summers there. It was here that he wrote some of his best works, among them his Requiem, Op. 70 (1874), and the cantata *Frühlings Erwachen* ('The Awakening of Spring'), Op. 73 (1878), and *Égille*, Op. 86 (1886). Alexander's wife, Henriette, became Théodore's muse, encouraging him and supporting him as a composer, not only because she had sophisticated taste in music and the other arts, but because her time was not consumed with the steel-mills, as was the case with the rest of the family. Though he continued to write instrumental music, after 1850 Gouvy also began to compose songs, showing an especial fondness for the poems of Moritz Hartmann (1821–72)¹⁴ and the Renaissance poet Pierre de Ronsard (1524–85).

Gouvy spent the winters travelling back and forth between Leipzig and Berlin, but in the summer he always returned to the restful environment of Hombourg-Haut where he could write in peace, undistracted. He maintained relationships with all of the important composers and musicians of his time, among them Franz Liszt, Friedrich Kalkbrenner, Robert Schumann, Léon Kreutzer, Hector

¹⁰ Gouvy's First *Sérénade*, Op. 82, in G major, for flute, string quartet and double-bass (1888), was commissioned by the Philharmonic Club of New York; it and the other two *Sérénades* for these forces, No. 2 in F major, Op. 84 (1888), and No. 3 in D minor, op. posth. (1891), are recorded on Toccata Classics TOCC 0185.

¹¹ Möhring (1816–87) first trained as a builder in Berlin, at the insistence of his father, but soon gave it up and began studying music. His Symphony in B flat major was premiered in Leipzig by Mendelssohn in 1838. Active as a choral conductor and organist in Saarbrücken from 1840 to 1845, he then returned to Neuruppin in Saxony, near his place of birth, moving finally to Wiesbaden on retirement in 1876.

¹² It is the oldest mixed-voice choral formation in the world, having been founded in 1791. Rungenhagen's predecessors as director had been Carl Friedrich Fasch (1736–1800) and Carl Friedrich Zelter (1758–1832), a close friend of Goethe's.

¹³ Now in the Moselle in France, Hombourg-Haut was on German soil from the end of the Franco-Prussian War in 1871 until the end of the First World War. The Gouvy steel-mill there remained in the control of the family until 1935, when it was sold.

¹⁴ Hartmann (1821–72) was born in Bohemia into a Jewish family, although he soon abandoned his faith. He was active as a political radical, necessitating a good deal of movement across Europe, often to evade imprisonment. He ended his career on the staff of the *Neue Freie Presse* in Vienna.

Adieu, mon doux tourment, adieu, ma douce
flamme,
Adieu, par qui je vis, et par qui je respire.

Adieu, par qui je vis, et par qui je respire.
Adieu, ma belle, honnête et gentille maîtresse,
Adieu, les doux liens, où vous m'avez tenu,
Tantôt dans le tourment et tantôt dans l'ivresse:
Il est temps de partir, le jour en est venu;
Je vous conjure ici, par Amour, notre Dieu,
De conserver mon cœur, tenez, tenez, maîtresse,
Le voilà, gardez-le, votre main, puis adieu, adieu !

Six Poésies de Ronsard, Op. 42

23 No. 6, Chanson

Text: Pierre de Ronsard

Quand ce beau printemps je vois,
J'aperçois
Rajeunir la terre et l'onde,
Il me semble que le jour,
Et l'amour,
Naissent au monde.

Quand j'entends la douce voix
Par les bois
Du gai rossignol qui chante,
De toi je pense jouir,
Et ouïr
Ta voix qui m'enchante.

Farewell, beautiful divine eye that chills and
enflames me,
Farewell, my sweet torment, farewell, my sweet flame,
Farewell, for whom I live, and for whom I breathe.

Farewell, you by whom I live and breathe.
Farewell, my beautiful, honest and gentle mistress,
Farewell, sweet bonds by which you have held me,
At times in torment and at times in exaltation:
It is time to leave, the day has come;
I beg of you here, by Love, our God,
To protect my heart, come, come, mistress,
There it is, watch over it, it is in your hand, thus farewell!

23 Song

When this lovely spring
I do see,
I witness the rejuvenation of earth and water,
It seems to me that light,
And love,
Are born into the world.

When I hear the sweet voice
Throughout the woods
The joyful nightingale who sings,
I imagine taking pleasure with you,
And hearkening
To your voice that enchants me.

Neuf Poésies de Ronsard, Op. 41

[21] No. 6, Amour me tue

Text: Pierre de Ronsard

Amour me tue et pourtant je ne veux dire,
Quel bonheur je sens à mourir ;
Tant j'ai grand'peur qu'on veuille secourir,
Le doux tourment pour lequel je soupire.

Il est bien vrai que ma langueur désire
Que par le temps je puisse ma peine guérir,
Mais je n'irai jamais, jamais ma Dame requérir,
Tant me plait mon martyre.

Tais-toi, mon cœur, je vois venir le jour,
Où ma maîtresse, voyant mon amour,
Aura pitié du mal que son orgueil me donne.

À la douceur la rigueur fera lieu,
En imitant la nature de Dieu,
Qui nous éprouve et après nous pardonne.
Je vois venir ce jour, tais-toi, mon cœur.

Sept Poésies de Ronsard, Op. 47

[22] No. 5, Adieu

Text: Pierre de Ronsard

Comment, en vous quittant, adieu pourrais-je dire?
J'y songe à peine, hélas! que déjà je me pâme.
Adieu, ma chère vie, adieu, ma seconde âme,
Adieu, mon cher souci, pour qui seul je soupire,
Adieu, le bel objet de mon plaisant martyre,
Adieu, bel œil divin, qui me glace et m'enflamme,

[21] Love is killing me

Love is killing me and yet I shall not express,
What happiness I feel in dying;
Greatly do I fear that there may be succour
The sweet pain from which I sigh.

True it is that my languor desires
That with time I may heal my pain,
But I shall never, ever ask it of my Lady
Such a joy is my martyrdom.

Be still, my heart, I sense the coming of the day,
When my mistress, seeing my love,
Will have pity for the pain that her pride gives me.

To sweetness, rigour will turn,
Thus imitating the nature of God,
Which tests us and then pardons.
I see this day coming, be still, my heart.

[22] Farewell

How could I say farewell on taking leave from you?
The mere thought of it, alas! already causes me to swoon.
Farewell, my dear life, farewell, my second soul,
Farewell, my dear care, for whom alone I sigh,
Farewell, beautiful object of my sweet martyrdom,

Berlioz, Edouard Lalo, Charles Gounod, Edvard Grieg, Max Bruch, Camille Saint-Saëns and Théodore Dubois. That many of these relationships had narrowed into true friendship is corroborated by their correspondence, which is still unpublished. It is instructive that Gouvy's letters are always in French even though he was a gifted linguist and certainly spoke German. They clearly demonstrate that he always thought of himself as French in spite of the fact that he was forced by the Treaty of Paris to declare himself German – until 1856, when he regained his official French citizenship. He was awarded the highest honours: the Prix Chartier bestowed by the Académie des Beaux-Arts and membership of that body, the Légion d'Honneur, membership of the jury of the Société française de Compositeurs, and membership of the Akademie der Künste in Berlin.

In 1896, two years before his death, Gouvy was asked to assume the Directorship of the Paris Conservatoire, but ill health prevented him from accepting that position. He died in Leipzig on 21 April 1898. His body was returned to Hombourg-Haut, where he lies buried in the Collegiate Church of St Stephen.

Robin McNeil is a retired professor of piano and musicology. He was Chairman of the Piano Department at the University of South Dakota. He has performed throughout the United States and is currently planning six concerts of the music of Théodore Gouvy in the USA.

GOUVY'S SONGS

by MeeAe Nam and John Elwes

It is clear that, despite the impressive number of instrumental compositions (eight symphonies, a large body of chamber and piano music and much more), Théodore Gouvy felt a strong attraction to the voice, regarding it as the dominant strand in any texture in which it was featured: 'it is an immutable law that the human voice is the major element (when paired with other instruments) and instruments must be subordinate to it'.¹ Yet he composed very little vocal music before 1863, when he was commissioned to compose his first opera, *Le Cid*, but he then concentrated almost exclusively on composing songs: in 1865–67 he composed 78 of them, almost 80 per cent of his output of songs.

¹ René Auclair, 'Mélodies et Lieder dans l'œuvre de Théodore Gouvy', in Herbert Schneider and the Institut Théodore Gouvy (eds.), *Théodore Gouvy 1819–1898: Bericht über den internationalen Kongress/Actes du colloque international Saarbrücken/Hombourg-Haut*, Musikwissenschaftliche Publikationen, Vol. 29, Olms Verlag, Hildesheim, 2008, p. 313.

Gouvy's choice of poetry for his songs is interesting. He did set the poems of some of his contemporaries to music but his overriding preference was for the love-poetry of the Renaissance poet Pierre de Ronsard (1524–85). Writing to the German composer Ferdinand Hiller (1811–65) from his home in Goffontaine in 1866, he states:

Since leaving Paris, I have lived alone but not in idleness. I have set 33 poems of Ronsard to music [he eventually set 40]. France possesses one lyric poet for composers, but nobody knows him for he has been dead for 300 years. I can, therefore, say that I have discovered Ronsard, a little like Alexandre Dumas when he discovered the Mediterranean.²

Gouvy was not exaggerating the extent of Ronsard's neglect. The counter-tenor Alain Zaepffel, who is also director of and a professor at the Conservatoire National Supérieur d'Art Dramatique de Paris, has written on Ronsard's relationship to music:

The first edition of his volume of love-poems *Les Amours* was published in 1552 and contained settings of his poems in compositions by Certon, Janequin, Muret and Goudimel. From 1552–1600 more than 200 of his poems were set to music by at least 30 composers.³ They adhered very much to Ronsard's thinking that 'poetry without instruments or graced by one or more voices is never pleasant'. After a lapse of several hundred years, the poems of Pierre de Ronsard were once again set to music in the 19th century, notably by Wagner, Bizet, Gounod⁴ and most importantly by Théodore Gouvy.⁵

Gouvy's songs were not well known in his life time, nor are they today. Why so? As mentioned, Gouvy was of a French family but born in Prussia. Two cultures were paramount in his upbringing and they feature very strongly in his songs, although he identified himself very much with his French nationality. Of his 105 songs, 58 were published with French and German texts, translated by his friend Moritz Hartmann; 40 of these were settings of Ronsard, Gouvy's preferred poet. Although he set these poems in French, for some reason he opted to have them translated into German (perhaps looking to the large market for domestic performance), although other poems of the same period he published uniquely in French. These songs therefore have both a French and German character, which might well have caused some confusion in those thinking about singing them: are they French *mélodies* or German *Lieder*? Gouvy

² *Ibid.*, p. 322.

³ Cf. Frank Dobbins, 'Introduction' to Guillaume Boni, *Sonets de Pierre de Ronsard*, Salabert, Paris, 1987, p. 18.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁵ E-mail from Alain Zaepffel to MeeAe Nam dated 15 March 2014.

Je ne veux, larron, ôter la bourse
À quelqu'amant, ou comme un méchant
Voleur dévaliser un marchand ;
Je veux aller outre la rivière
Voir ma mie: mais sans lumière
Je ne puis mon voyage achever.
Sors donc de l'eau pour te lever,
Et de ta belle nuitale flamme
Éclaire au feu d'amour qui m'enflamme.

Neuf Poésies de Ronsard, Op. 41

[20] No. 3, *Amour, amour, que ma maîtresse est belle*
Text: Pierre de Ronsard

Amour, amour, que ma maîtresse est belle !
Soit que j'admire ses yeux, mes seigneurs,
Ou de son front la grâce et les honneurs,
Ou le vermeil de sa lèvre jumelle,
Amour, amour, que ma maîtresse est belle !

Amour, amour, que ma Dame est cruelle !
Soit qu'un dédain redouble mes douleurs,
Soit qu'un dépit fasse naître mes pleurs,
Soit qu'un refus mes plaies renouvelle,
Amour, amour, que ma Dame est cruelle !
Ainsi de sa douce beauté
Le miel nourrit mon pauvre cœur,

Ainsi sa cruauté d'un fiel amer
D'un fiel amer aigrit toute ma vie.
O maîtresse si belle !
O Dame trop cruelle !

I wish not, oh scoundrel,
To take away the purse from some lover,
Nor as an evil thief, rob from a merchant;
I wish to go beyond the river
To see my love: but without your light
I cannot bring my journey to a close.
Come forth therefore from the water to arise
And from your lovely nocturnal flame
Shed light on the fire of love that enflames me.

[20] Love, love, how beautiful is my mistress

Love, love, how beautiful is my mistress!
Whether I admire her eyes, my masters,
Or her brow's grace and nobility,
Or the vermillion of her two lips,
Love, love, how beautiful is my mistress!

Love, love, how cruel is my Lady!
Whether disdain redoubles my pain,
Whether spite gives birth to my tears,
Whether rejection worsens my wounds,
Love, love, how cruel is my Lady!
Thus through her sweet beauty
Honey nourishes my poor heart,

Thus her cruelty with a bitter gall
With bitter gall embitters the whole of my life.
Oh mistress so beautiful!
Oh Lady too cruel!

Six Poésies de Ronsard, Op. 42

[18] No. 1, Je meurs, hélas !

Text: Pierre de Ronsard

Je meurs, hélas ! en la voyant si belle,
Le front si pur, et la bouche et les yeux,
Ces yeux, foyer d'amour, d'amour victorieux,
Qui m'ont blessé d'une flèche mortelle.

Absent au loin, ma peine est bien cruelle.
Quand je la vois, il me semble qu'aux cieus
Je suis ravi soudain, assis parmi les Dieux.
Mais mon malheur m'éloigne toujours d'elle.

Ah! que ne suis-je en ce monde un grand roi !
Elle serait ma reine auprès de moi !
Mais, je ne suis rien, il faut que je m'absente,
De sa beauté, dont je n'ose approcher,
Que d'un seul regard, changer je ne sente
Mes tristes yeux en fleuve et mon cœur en rocher.

Six Odes de Ronsard, Op. 37

[19] No. 1, Chère Vesper, lumière dorée

Text: Pierre de Ronsard

Chère Vesper, lumière dorée
De la belle Vénus Cythérée,
Vesper, dont la belle clarté luit
Autant sur les astres de la nuit,
Que reluit par dessus toi la lune ;
Ô claire image de la nuit brune,
En lieu du beau croissant tout ce soir,
Donne lumière, et te laisse choir
Bien tard dans la marine source, Bien tard !

[18] I Die, Alas!

I die, alas, seeing her so beautiful,
The brow so pure, and the mouth and eyes,
Those eyes, the harbour of love, of victorious love,
That have wounded me with a mortal arrow.

Absent and distant, my grief is so cruel.
When I saw her, it seems to me that to the heavens
I am carried instantly away to be seated among the Gods.
But my sorrow transports me ever farther from her.

Ah! Were I in this world a great king!
She would be my queen at my side!
But I am nothing, I must absent myself,
From her beauty, not daring to approach it,
With one glance would only change, I feel
My sad eyes into a river and my heart into stone.

[19] Dear Vesper, golden light

Dear Vesper, golden light
Of the beautiful Venus of Cythera,
Vesper whose beautiful light shines
As well upon the stars of the night,
As the moon glows above you;
Oh, clear image of the twilight
In the place of the beautiful crescent all this evening
Give your light and let yourself fall
Quite late into your source, the sea, much later.

was an admirer of Schumann and Mendelssohn and his piano accompaniments are very much in the style of these two composers. Were the songs considered too Germanic for French tastes given the political friction that existed between these two countries during the nineteenth century?

It is worth pointing out that Gouvy, like many other composers before him (Schumann, for example), took some liberties with the poems that he set, particularly those of Ronsard, at times leaving out verses and altering words and updating Ronsard's sixteenth-century French, though not systematically so.

Gouvy was himself a pianist, and – as Joel Schoenhals, the pianist on this recording, points out – his piano-writing is at one moment reminiscent of the Classical textures of Schubert, at another of the dreamy and poetic side of Schumann and at yet another virtuosic as if in the hands of Mendelssohn. But the references don't end there: just as his life straddled Germany and France, so did his approach to piano-writing, which is simultaneously Germanic and French, featuring sculpted gestures and phrases combined with colouristic writing, more freedom and softer edges. And yet although one can hear influences of other composers and styles in the wide variety of these songs, when they are listened to and studied as a whole, the influences fade and the language becomes characteristically Gouvy. The challenge and richness in performing this music come in deciding which characteristics to bring forth in each particular song.

Gouvy puts much weight on the piano, equal at times to that of the voice. His accompaniments provide a vivid outline of the poetic atmosphere and give the necessary support to the singer in establishing the ambiance and characteristics of each song. The beautifully crafted 'À Hélène' [7], with its delicate, lilting dotted-rhythm introduction in the right hand, suggests the light skipping of the young girl. The vocal line enters *pianissimo* but *legato*, emphasising Hélène's softness, serenity and sweetness. Elsewhere, a simple use of repetitive arpeggiated piano figures is enough to describe the charms of romantic sentiments, as in 'À Olive' [1], and the sorrow yet determined passion in 'Tel qu'un rocher' [26]. The piano accompaniments are always sensitive, lyrical and dramatic, and the vocal lines evolve from these elements.

Gouvy is fond of distinctive rhythmic motives. For example, a motive of three repeated notes comes as a surprise in conveying the deep pain of love during the endless night in 'Père du doux repos' [12]. A short arpeggiated motive gives imagery to the nightingale's sigh in 'Le Rossignol' [15].

As a melodist, Gouvy is also aware of, and keen on the effects of, intervals in treating texts: for instance, a sixth suggests sweetness, desire and longing, and an augmented fourth (known throughout music history as *diabolus in musica* because of its dissonance, its difficulty in resolution and its awkwardness in singing) points to distress and the conflict of feverish love. Most Gouvy songs abound with major and minor sixths to bring poignant effects to particular words, such as 'Amour' in 'Amour me tue' [21] and 'Doux' in 'Doux, rossignol, c'est toi!' [6]. This predilection for the sixth is amply highlighted

in such songs as ‘Que dites-vous’ [4], where it is employed fourteen times. The augmented fourth, taboo in former centuries, became prominent during the more liberating period of Romanticism, but it could still intensify an ‘evil’ emotion or thought, as in ‘d’un *fiel amer* aigrit toute ma vie’ (‘with *bitter gall* has soured all my life’) ‘Amour, amour, que ma maîtresse est belle’ [20] and “Malheureux qui se *fie en toi!*” (‘Unhappy he who *trusts* you!) in ‘Quand je pense à ce jour’ [8].

Of the 26 songs on this disc eleven have been recorded before, but transposed to suit the voices of the singers in question; the other fifteen are first recordings, as far as we have been able to discern. This is, then, the first time that any of these songs have been recorded at the pitch intended by the composer.

MeeAe Cecilia Nam, soprano, has appeared as guest artist with the Colorado Symphony, Boulder Philharmonic, Neuss Chamber Orchestra and Colorado Summer Music Festival, Denver Philharmonic, Baroque Chamber Orchestra of Colorado, the American Liszt Society, Boulder Bach Festival, Vianden International Music Festival and the Franziskanerkirche Summer Music Series during the Salzburg Music Festival, among many other ensembles, groups and festivals throughout the world. She has established a reputation in a wide variety of music including early music, chamber music, oratorio and stage works, and as a recitalist. She has premiered music written for her, collaborating with such composers as Joseph Dorfman (in his one-act opera *Shulamith* for soprano and percussion), David Mullikin (*Voice of River Han*) and David Kirtley (*Haiku Songs of Karigane*). The *Colorado Rocky Mountain News* wrote of her performances of György Kurtág’s *Kafka-Fragmente* for soprano and violin that ‘Nam soared through it brilliantly, but brought that necessary degree of dramatic involvement as well’. Other contemporary pieces she has performed include Tan Dun’s *Silkroad* for soprano and percussion and James Moberly’s *Words of Love*.

In addition to her international performance schedule, MeeAe Nam has developed a well-deserved reputation as an important scholar of rare French song-literature. She has given lecture recitals of Gouvy’s songs at various universities including the Hans Eisler Musikhochschule in Berlin, Eastern Michigan University, Kent State University, the University of Colorado and the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

MeeAe holds degrees from University of Colorado at Boulder and Sookmyung University, Seoul, and she is now Professor of Voice at Eastern Michigan University. Her students have been, and are, active in national and international competitions and music festivals.



Railler mon mal, rire de ma douleur,
Par un dédain redoubler mon malheur,
Hâir qui t’aime, et vivre de sa plainte,
Rompre ta foi, manquer à ton devoir.

Ainsi tu fais, méchante, peux tu voir
Mon coeur saigner sous ta cruelle étreinte !

Sept Poésies de Ronsard, Op. 47

[17] No. 1, Page, suis-moi

Text: Pierre de Ronsard

Page, suis-moi par l’herbe plus épaisse,
Fauche l’émail de la verte saison,
Puis à plein poing va joncher la maison
Des fleurs que Mai prodigue en sa jeunesse.

Page, tends-moi ma lyre enchanteresse,
Je veux charmer, si je puis le poison,
Dont un bel œil enchante ma raison,
Par la vertu d’une ceillade maîtresse.

Donne moi l’encre et les plumes aussi;
Traçons des vers témoins de mon amer souci.
Je veux graver la peine que j’endure
En un papier plus dur que diamant,
Afin qu’un jour notre race future
Juge du mal, que je souffre,
Juge du mal, que je souffre en aimant,
Hélas! En aimant.

Mocking my pain, laughing at my sorrow,
Through disdain doubling my misfortune,
Hating one who loves you, and drawing life from
his complaint,
Breaking your faith, failing in your duty.

Thus you behave, oh malicious one, you can see
My heart bleeding in your cruel embrace!

[17] Page, follow me

Page, follow me through the thickest grass,
Scythe through the sheen of the green season,
Then with hands full, strew the house
With the flowers that May in its youth lavishes.

Page, bring me my lyre of enchantment,
I wish to charm, if I may, the poison,
With which a fair eye enchants my reason,
With the skill of a feminine glance.

Give me the ink and also the plumes;
Let us set down verses to witness my bitter care.
I wish to engrave the grief I endure
Onto paper harder than diamond,
So that one day our progeny may
Judge as evil, that I suffer,
Judge as evil, that I suffer by loving,
Alas! By loving.

Et s'il vous est possible,
Ah, s'il vous est possible,
Émouvez son courage à me faire merci,
Puis vous en revenez.

Non! non! ne venez point,
Que feriez-vous chez moi,
Sans aucun réconfort?
Vous languiriez d'émou;
Non, non, ne venez point,
Un prisonnier ne peut un autre secourir.

Je n'ai pas, rossignol, sur votre bien envie,
Seulement je me hais et me plains de vie.
Je languis en prison, et je n'y peux mourir,
Oui, je me hais et me plains de ma vie!
Je languis et pourtant ne peux mourir.
Je languis et pourtant ne peux mourir.

Huit Poésies de Ronsard, Op. 44

16 No. 4, L'attrait de tes beaux yeux

Text: Pierre de Ronsard

A te servir l'attrait de tes beaux yeux
Force mon âme, et quand je veux te dire
Quelle est ma mort, ah! tu n'en fais que rire,
Et de mon mal tu as le cœur joyeux.

Puisqu'en t'aimant je ne puis avoir mieux,
Permetts au moins qu'en mourant je soupire.
N'est-ce pas assez de voir mon martyre,
Sans te moquer de mon mal soucieux.

And if for you it is possible,
Ah, if for you it is possible,
Move her heart to be merciful to me,
Then come back.

No! no! do not at all come back,
What would you do in my abode,
Without any comfort?
You would languish in turmoil;
No, no, do not at all come back,
One prisoner cannot succour another.

I have no designs, nightingale, upon your well-being
I only hate myself and complain of my life.
I languish in prison, and yet I wish not to die,
Yes, I hate myself and complain of my life!
I languish and yet cannot die.
I languish and yet cannot die.

16 The draw of your beautiful eyes

To serve you, the draw of your beautiful eyes
Forces my soul, and when I wish to say to you
What is my death, ah! you only laugh,
And my pain gives joy to your heart.

Since by loving you I can have no better,
Allow at least, that in dying I might sigh.
Is it not enough to witness my martyrdom,
Without you mocking my troubled pain.

John Elwes began his musical career at Westminster Cathedral in London where he was Head Chorister. His vocal education was furthered by the eminent harpsichordist George Malcolm, the then Director of Music.

Under the name of John Hahessy (his father was from Carrick-on-Suir, Co. Waterford, Ireland) he had considerable success as a boy soprano – from BBC broadcasts and recordings with Decca to concerts with such conductors as Benjamin Britten, who dedicated his *Corpus Christi Carol* to him.

John's extensive repertoire ranges from Monteverdi, Rameau, Bach and Handel to Mozart, Schubert, Schumann, Mahler and Britten. He has a busy concert and operatic life and has participated in more than a hundred recordings, among them Bach's B Minor Mass and *St Matthew Passion* (Harmonia Mundi), Handel's *Messiah* (BIS), Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* (Dorian, nominated for a Grammy), Schubert's song-cycles *Die schöne Müllerin* (Dorian), *Winterreise* and *Schwanengesang* (Kojima), Mozart's early opera *Idomeneo* (Kojima) and Monteverdi's 1610 *Vespers* (DM). John has also recorded a selection of Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies* (Kojima).

Apart from the European countries, John is a frequent visitor to Japan and the USA and since 1990 has had many successful tours of these countries performing all the repertoire mentioned above.



Joel Schoenhals is Professor of Piano at Eastern Michigan University and Guest Professor of Piano at Nanchang University in Nanchang, Jiangxi, People's Republic of China.

His recordings include Bartók's *For Children*, Liszt's transcriptions of Schubert Lieder, *Moments musicaux* by Schubert and Rachmaninov ("There is no more sensitive and poetic recording of the Schubert", wrote a reviewer in *American Record Guide*), Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* and *Petrouchka* in the two-piano versions, clarinet trios by Mozart, Schumann and Bruch, the Schubert and Schumann *Fantasies*, and piano music by Chinese composers, all but the last on the Fleur de Son label.

He has performed throughout North and South America, Asia, and Europe. He is currently performing the cycle of Beethoven's 32 piano sonatas in eight concerts between 2012 and 2016.

He holds degrees from Vanderbilt University and the Eastman School of Music.



La Pléiade française, Op. 48

[1] No. 1, À Olive

Text: Joachim du Bellay

Rendez à l'or cette couleur
 Qui dore vos blonds cheveux,
 Rendez mille autres choses:
 À l'Orient tant de perles encloses,
 Et au soleil ces beaux yeux que j'adore.

Rendez ces mains au bel ivoire encore.
 Ce front au marbre, ces lèvres aux roses,
 Ces doux soupirs aux fleurettes déclosetées,
 Et ce beau teint à la vermillon aurore.
 Ce beau teint à l'aurore.

Rendez aussi à l'Amour tous ses traits,
 Et à Vénus sa grâce et ses attraits.
 Rendez encor' ce doux nom à son arbre,
 Et aux rochers rendez ce cœur de marbre,
 Rendez, rendez ce cœur de marbre.

Neuf Poésies de Ronsard, Op. 41

[2] No. 4, Voici le bois

Text: Pierre de Ronsard

Voici le bois que ma sainte Angelette
 Sur le printemps réjouit de son chant.
 Voici les fleurs où son pied va marchant,
 Quand à soi-même elle pense seulette.

[1] To Olive

Give back to gold that colour
 Which gilds the blondness of your hair,
 Give back a thousand other things:
 To the Orient so many captive pearls,
 And to the sun these beautiful eyes that I adore.

Give back these hands to beautiful ivory again.
 This brow to marble, these lips to roses,
 These sweet sighs to the little blooming flowers,
 And this beautiful complexion to the vermillion dawn.
 This beautiful complexion to the dawn.

Give back as well to Love all its traits,
 And to Venus her grace and her charms.
 Give back still this sweet name to its tree.
 And to the rocks give back this heart of marble,
 Give back, give back, this heart of marble.

[2] Here is the wood

Here is the wood where my darling Angelette
 In springtime rejoices with her song.
 Here are the flowers that her foot walks upon
 While in solitude she contemplates.

Neuf Poésies de Ronsard, Op. 41

[14] No. 5, Je compare à ta jeune beauté

Text: Pierre de Ronsard

Je compare à ta jeune beauté,
 Qui fleurit toujours nouvelle,
 Ce mois d'avril qui ses fleurs renouvelle
 En sa plus gaie et verte nouveauté.

Loin de toi fuira la cruauté,
 Comme fuit la saison plus cruelle,
 Il est tout beau comme toi toute belle.

Il peint les bords, les forêts et les plaines,
 Tu peins mes vers d'un bel émail de fleurs,
 Du laboureur il arrose les peines,
 D'un vain espoir tu berces mes douleurs.

Du ciel sur les prés avril ouvre les fontaines,
 Tu fais de mes yeux couler des torrents de pleurs.

Six Poésies de Ronsard, Op. 42

[15] No. 2, Le rossignol

Text: Pierre de Ronsard

O ma belle maîtresse, à tout le moins prenez
 De moi, votre esclave, ce rossignol en cage.
 Il est mon prisonnier, et je vis en servage,
 Sous vous qui sans merci en prison me tenez.

Allez, rossignol, en sa chambre,
 Beau rossignol, allez,
 Sonnez mon deuil à son oreille avec votre ramage.

[14] I compare to your young beauty

I compare to your young beauty,
 Which blooms always in newness,
 This month of April whose flowers it renews
 In its loveliest and greenest bloom.

Far ahead of you shall cruelty flee,
 As flees the cruellest season,
 He is so handsome, as you are so beautiful.

He paints the riverbanks, forests and plains,
 You paint my verses with a beautiful floral sheen,
 The ploughman's efforts he washes away,
 With an aimless hope you sooth my sorrows.

From the sky upon the grass April opens fountains,
 You bring forth from my eyes torrents of tears.

[15] The Nightingale

O my beautiful mistress, at least take
 From me, your slave, this caged nightingale.
 It is my prisoner, and I live in servitude,
 Under you who, mercilessly, hold me in prison.

Go then, nightingale, to her chamber,
 Beautiful nightingale, go,
 Ring my knell in her ear with your song.

O nuit, bien lentement ta course se prolonge,
Et me fait plus sentir la peine que j'endure;
Viens, sommeil, l'assoupir et la rendre moins dure,
Viens abuser mon mal de quelque doux mensonge,
Viens!

Huit Poésies de Ronsard, Op. 44

13 No. 5, Vous méprisez nature

Text: Pierre de Ronsard

Vous méprisez nature : Êtes-vous si cruelle
De ne vouloir aimer? Voyez les passereaux,
Qui démènent l'amour, voyez les colombeaux,
Regardez le ramier, voyez la tourterelle,
Voyez les colombeaux,
Voyez, voyez, de ça de là, d'une frétilante aile
Voleter par les bois les amoureux oiseaux,
Voyez la jeune vigne embrasser les ormeaux,
Et toute chose rire, en la saison nouvelle,
Voyez!

Ici la bergerette, en tournant son fuseau,
Fredonne ses amours, et là le pastoureaux
Répond à sa chanson ; ici toute chose aime,
Tout parle de l'amour, tout s'en veut enflammer.
Mais, hélas! votre cœur froid d'une glace extrême
Demeure opiniâtre et ne veut pas aimer.

Oh night, so slowly your journey lengthens,
And makes me all the more feel the pain I endure,
Come, slumber, make it drowsy and less harsh,
Come trick my suffering with some sweet lie,
Come!

13 You scorn Nature

You scorn nature: Are you so cruel
To refuse to love? See the sparrows,
Who flutter about in love, see the doves,
See the ringdove, see the turtledove,
See the doves,
See, see, here, there, with quivering wings
The amorous birds flitting in the woods,
See the young vine embracing the elms,
And every thing laughing in the new season,
See it!

Here the shepherdess, turning her spindle,
Hums of her loves, and there the shepherd
Answers her song; here all things love,
All speak of love, all desire to be enflamed.
But, alas! your heart, cold as the coldest ice,
Remains stubborn and does not desire to love.

Voici le pré, la rive molette,
Qui reverdit de sa main la touchant,
Quand pas à pas en son sein va cachant
Le bel émail de l'herbe nouvelette.

Ici chanter, là pleurer je la vis,
Ici s'asseoir et là danser,
Ici sourire, et là je fus ravi
Des discours de mon amie:
Sur le métier d'un si vague penser,
Amour ourdit les trames de ma vie.

La Pléiade française, Op. 48

3 No. 2, Nymphes, mêlez vos plus vermeilles roses

Text: Joachim du Bellay

Nymphes, mêlez vos plus vermeilles roses
Parmi la blancheur des lys renaissants.
Cueillez les plus belles choses
Entre vos fleurs écloses,
Formez des bouquets odorans,
Glanez en vos prés verdissants,
Venez, le printemps a banni les jours moroses,
Venez, le printemps a banni les jours moroses.

Et toi, l'honneur du terrestre séjour,
Astre divin, soleil, flambeau du jour,
Peins en mille fleurs, en mille autres encore
Le rêve de mon cœur, et qu'on y puisse lire
Ce nom que j'adore et n'ose pas dire,
Ce nom que j'adore et n'ose pas dire.

Here is the meadow, the meandering riverbank,
Which green again from the touch of her hand,
As step by step, in her bosom, she hides
The beautiful glow of new grown grass.

Here singing, there weeping, I saw her
Here sitting, and there dancing,
Here smiling, and there I was enraptured
With the chatter of my beloved:
On the loom of vaguest thought,
Love weaves the fabric of my life.

3 Nymphs, mix your reddest roses

Nymphs, mix your reddest roses
Throughout the whiteness of the reborn lilies.
Gather up the most beautiful things
Among your blooming flowers,
Compose sweet-smelling bouquets,
Glean them from your greening meadows,
Come, springtime has banished morose days,
Come, springtime has banished morose days.

And you, the honour of earthly sojourn,
Divine star, sun, torch of daylight,
Paint in a thousand flowers, and a thousand still more
My heart's dream, and that one might read there
This name that I adore and dare not speak,
This name that I adore and dare not speak.

- 4] No. 7, Que dites-vous, que faites-vous,
mignonne

Text: Pierre de Ronsard

Que dites-vous, que faites-vous, mignonne ?
Que songez-vous ? Ne pensez-vous à moi ?
Avez-vous point souci de mon émoi,
Et du tourment que votre orgueil me donne ?

De votre amour mon âme rayonne,
En vous j'espère, comme en vous je crois,
Je vous entends absente, absente je vous vois,
Et mon penser d'autre amour ne résonne.

J'ai vos beautés, vos grâces et vos yeux
Gravés en moi, et j'erre en mille lieux,
Où je vous vis danser, parler et rire.
Je vous tiens mienne, et pourtant ne suis mien,
En vous seule, en vous mon âme respire,
Mes yeux, mon cœur, et mon malheur et mon
seul bien.

- 5] No.3, Je ne saurais aimer autre que vous

Text: Pierre de Ronsard

Je ne saurais aimer autre que vous,
Non, dame, non, non, je ne le saurais faire.
Autre que vous ne saurait me complaire,
Et fût Vénus descendue entre nous.

- 4] What are you saying, what are you doing,
my sweetheart?

What are you saying, what are you doing, my
sweetheart?
What are you dreaming of? Are you not thinking
of me?
Have you no care for my heartache,
And for the torment that your pride gives me?

With your love my soul shines,
In you I hope, as in you I believe,
I hear you absent, absent you I see,
And my thought of another love does not resound.

I have your beauties, your grace and your eyes,
Engraved in me and I wander in a
thousand places,
Where I saw you dance, speak and laugh,
I hold you as mine and yet am not my own self,
In you alone, in you my soul breathes,
My eyes, my heart, and my sorrow and my only goodness.

- 5] I would not know how to love another than you

I would not know how to love another than you,
No, my lady, no, no, I would not know how to
do that.
Another than you would not know how to please me,

- 11] No. 2, Prends cette rose

Text: Pierre de Ronsard

Prends cette rose, aimable comme toi,
Qui sers de rose aux roses, aux roses les plus belles,
Qui sers de fleur aux fleurs les plus nouvelles,
Dont la senteur me ravit, me ravit tout de moi.

Prends cette rose et ensemble reçois
Dedans ton sein mon cœur,
Mon cœur qui n'a point d'ailes ;
Il est constant, et cent plaies cruelles,
N'ont empêché qu'il ne gardât sa foi.

La rose et moi différons d'une chose :
Un soleil voit naître et mourir la rose,
Et mille soleils ont vu naître mon amour.

Ah! Je voudrais que telle amour éclore
Dans ce cœur qui jamais, non jamais ne repose,
Comme une pauvre fleur ne m'eût duré qu'un jour !

- 12] No. 5, Père du doux repos

Text: Pontus de Thiard

Père du doux repos, sommeil, descends des cieux,
Maintenant que la nuit jette son ombre obscure,
Et de son voile épais a couvert la nature.
Viens, sommeil désiré, viens te plonger en mes yeux.

- 11] Take this rose

Take this rose, lovely as you,
Who is among roses the most beautiful,
Who is among flowers the freshest,
Whose scent ravishes me, enraptures me completely.

Take this rose and with it receive
In your breast my heart,
My heart which has no wings;
It is steadfast, and a hundred cruel wounds,
Have not stopped it from keeping its faith.

The rose and I differ in one way:
One sun witnesses the birth and death of the rose,
But a thousand suns witnessed the birth of my love.

Ah! I would like such a love to blossom
In this heart that never finds rest,
Like a poor flower that for me might have lasted
only one day!

- 12] Father of sweet repose

Father of sweet repose, slumber, come down from
heaven,
Now that night unfurls its dark shadow,
And with its thick veil has covered nature.
Come, desired slumber, come fall into my eyes.

Ma belle, levez-vous, vous êtes paresseuse !
Jà la gaie alouette au ciel a fredonné
Et jà le rossignol doucement soupiré
Sa complainte amoureuse.
Allons, debout! Levez-vous !

Huit Poésies de Ronsard, Op. 44

10 No. 1, À Marguerite

Text: Pierre de Ronsard

En mon âme n'est écrite
La rose ni autre fleur,
C'est toi, belle Marguerite,
Dont je porte la couleur,
C'est toi, belle Marguerite,
Qui possèdes mon cœur.

N'est-tu celle, dont les yeux
Ont surpris
Par un regard gracieux
Mes esprits?
Ta soeur, fille d'élite,
N'est cause de ma douleur,
C'est toi, belle Marguerite,
Qui causes ma pâleur,

C'est toi, belle Marguerite,
Qui possèdes mon cœur,
C'est toi, c'est toi, c'est toi.

My beauty, arise, you are lazy!
Already the gay lark has sung in the sky
And already the nightingale softly has sighed
Its amorous lament;
Come now, get up, arise!

10 To Marguerite

In my soul is not inscribed
The rose nor another flower,
It is you, beautiful Marguerite,
Whose colour I wear,
It is you, beautiful Marguerite,
Who possesses my heart.

Are you not she whose eyes
Have surprised
Through a gracious glance
My wits ?
Your sister, elite daughter,
Is not the cause of my pain,
It is you, beautiful Marguerite,
That causes my pale complexion,

It is you, beautiful Marguerite,
Who possesses my heart
It is you, it is you, it is you.

Vos yeux, vos yeux me sont si gracieux et si doux,
Que d'un seul regard ils peuvent me défaire,
Et d'un autre tout soudain, soudain me refaire,
Ah! Je voudrais mourir pour vous!

Et quand je serais deux siècles en vie,
Autre que vous, ma mignonne, ma mie,
Ne me ferait amoureux devenir.
Ah! lisez en mon âme et finissez sa peine,
Elle est de vos beautés, de votre amour si pleine,
Qu'un autre amour n'y saurait plus tenir.

La Pléiade française, Op. 48

6 No. 3, Doux rossignol, c'est toi !

Text: Amadis Jamin

Doux rossignol, c'est toi, c'est toi,
Combien, combien de fois
T'ai-je pas écouté ?
Sous l'ombreuse ramée
Je reconnais encore ta plainte accoutumée
Et les tendres accents de ta fidèle voix.
Doux rossignol, c'est encor' toi !

Mais tel que l'an passé, hélas! Tu ne me vois:
Une beauté cruelle au mépris obstinée,
A fui, me laissant à ma triste destinée;
Et je redis son nom à l'écho de ces bois.

Doux rossignol, c'est toi, c'est toi !
Combien, combien de fois vais-je encore t'écouter

Even should Venus descend among us.

Your eyes, your eyes to me are so gracious and soft,
That with one glance from them I am undone,
And from another, suddenly, suddenly be made whole,
Ah! I would wish to die for you!

And were I to remain alive for two hundred years,
Another than you, my sweet, my dear,
Would not make me become amorous.
Ah! read into my soul and put an end to its woe,
It is with your beauties, with your love so full,
That another love would not know how to fulfill it.

6 Sweet nightingale, 'tis you!

Sweet nightingale, 'tis you, 'tis you,
How many, how many times
have I not listened to you?
Under the shady bower
I recognise again your well-known warble
And the tender accents of your faithful voice.
Sweet nightingale, still it is you.

But, just as last year, alas! You see me not:
A cruel beauty with obstinate scorn,
Fled, leaving me to my sad destiny;
And I repeat her name to the echo of these woods.

Sweet nightingale, 'tis you! 'tis you!
How many times shall I listen to you again

Sous l'ombreuse ramée !
Je comprends maintenant ta plainte accoutumée,
Et les tendres accents de ta fidèle voix.
Doux rossignol, c'est encor' toi !

Six Poésies de Ronsard, Op. 42

[7] No. 5, À Hélène

Text: Pierre de Ronsard

L'an se rajeunissait en sa verte jeunesse,
Quand je mépris de vous, mon Hélène cruelle.
Seize ans étaient la fleur de votre âge nouvelle,
Et votre teint sentait encore son enfance.

Vous aviez d'un enfant encor' la contenance,
La parole et les pas, votre bouche était belle,
Votre front et vos mains, dignes d'une immortelle,
Votre œil qui me fait mourir, quand j'y pense.

Amour, qui ce jour là si grandes beautés vit,
Sur un marbre en mon cœur d'un trait les écrivit.
Et si pour ce jour'hui vos beautés si parfaites
Ne sont comme autrefois, je n'en suis moins ravi;
Ah! je n'ai pas égard à cela que vous êtes,
Mais au doux souvenir des beautés que je vis.

Neuf Poésies de Ronsard, Op. 41

[8] No. 8, Quand je pense à ce jour

Text: Pierre de Ronsard

Quand je pense à ce jour, où je la vis si belle,
Si brillante d'honneur, de vertu et d'amour,

Under the shady bower!
I understand now your well-known warble
And the tender accents of your faithful voice.
Sweet nightingale, it is you again!

[7] To Hélène

The year was rejuvenating in its green youthfulness,
When I fell in love with you, my Hélène so cruel.
Sixteen years were the flower of your young age.
And your complexion still showed forth its childhood.

You had still a child's countenance,
Speech, gait, your mouth was beautiful,
Your brow and your hands, worthy of an immortal,
Your eyes that make me die as I think of them.

Love, which on that day saw such great beauties,
On marble in my heart instantly inscribed them.
And if today your beauties, so perfect,
Are not as in the past, I am no less enraptured by them;
Ah! I have no image of what you now are,
But only the sweet memory of the beauties that I saw.

[8] When I think of that day

When I think of that day, when I saw her so beautiful,
So brilliant with honour, virtue and love,

Le regret comme un fer me déchire toujours,
Hélas ! Ma plaie est éternelle.

Alors que j'espérais enfin un regard d'elle,
Un sort jaloux soudain a trompé mon espoir,
La mort me la ravit, je ne dois plus la voir,
Moi qui voyais finir ma peine si cruelle.
O Monde faux et mensonger,
Qui trompe des humains l'espoir et le courage !
Malheureux qui se fie en l'amour et toi !
Tous deux, comme la mer, vous n'avez point de foi !
La mer toujours parjure, amour toujours volage,
Toujours, oui toujours !
Malheureux qui se fie en toi !

Neuf Poésies de Ronsard, Op. 41

[9] No. 1, Aubade

Text: Pierre de Ronsard

Marie, levez-vous, vous êtes paresseuse !
Jà la gaie alouette au ciel a fredonné
Et jà le rossignol doucement soupiré
Sa complainte amoureuse;
Allons, levez-vous, vous êtes paresseuse.

Debout! Allons voir l'herbelette perleuse,
Et votre beau rosier de boutons couronné,
Vos œillets mignons, auxquels aviez donné
De l'eau hier d'une main si soigneuse.
Hier, ma mignonne, vous jurâtes vos yeux
D'être plutôt que moi ce matin éveillée,
Mais le dormir de l'aube aux filles gracieux
Vous tient d'un doux sommeil les yeux encor' sillés.

Remorse like a blade still tears at me,
Alas! My wound is eternal.

Just as I was hoping finally for a glance from her,
A jealous fate suddenly confounded my hopes,
Death swept her away from me, I can no longer see her,
I, who saw my cruel woe coming to an end.
Oh World so false and misleading,
Who leads human hope and courage astray!
Unhappy he who trusts in love and in you!
You both, like the sea, inspire no trust!
The sea, always a lying witness, love ever fickle,
Always, yes always!
Unhappy he who trusts in you!

[9] Dawn Serenade

Marie, arise, you are lazy!
Already the gay lark has sung in the sky
And already the nightingale softly has sighed
Its amorous lament;
Come now, arise you are lazy!

Get up! Let us go to gaze upon the pearly grass
And your beautiful rose bush crowned with buds,
Your sweet carnations which you watered
Yesterday with a caring hand.
Yesterday, my sweet, you swore with your eyes
To be awake earlier than me this morning,
But the dawn's sleep of gracious maidens
Holds you in a sweet slumber, eyes closed tightly.