

COMPOSITIONAL STYLE IN THE SONG CYCLES OF JULES MASSENET

by

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As a prolific song composer whose works span the development of the French song cycle, Massenet is worthy of close examination. To date, analyses of his songs have included a cursory glance by Frits Noske and a review of thematic relationships by Mario Champagne. These analyses leave many of Massenet's compositions untouched and exclude many musical features of merit. This thesis offers a thorough evaluation of Massenet's songs with the aim of tracing the development of his style as an outgrowth of German influence. I focus on three works from the beginning, middle, and end of Massenet's career--*Poème d'avril*, *Poème d'amour*, and *Expressions lyriques*--that show the progression of Massenet's style and establish his place as a bridge between the great *lieder* composers of the early nineteenth century and the great *mélodie* composers of the early twentieth century.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The songs composed by Jules Massenet provide a wealth of information on the development of French song during the nineteenth century. Despite an increase of scholarship focused on French song in recent years, analysis of Massenet's works is scarce at best. Massenet wrote over 260 songs dating from 1863 to his death in 1912. He was a prolific, yet precise composer who is valued both for his craft and his inspiration throughout his career (Macdonald, "Massenet's Craftsmanship" 100). Because Massenet produced an extensive yet valuable output of songs throughout his career, he offers a comprehensive example of the evolution of the *mélodie* in late nineteenth century France.

The overall goal for this study is to further our understanding of French song composition during the late nineteenth century. More specifically, the analyses given here contribute a more in-depth understanding of Massenet's style. Also, analysis of his works allows us to trace the growth of the *mélodie* from its ancestors, the French *romance* and the German *Lied*, into its own independent genre. I chose to focus on Massenet's song cycles, or *Poèmes*, because they allow for discussion on the relationships between his cycles and the *Lieder* cycles of Schubert and Schumann. Massenet was clearly influenced by German composition. In 1903, George Ferris mentioned Massenet's relationship with German *Lieder* thusly:

Like Saint-saëns and Bizet, he has a deep sympathy with the works of German music and has made a profound study of them, and this influence is seen everywhere in his methods and the art mechanism by which he produces his effects; but his talent shines clear through all and stamps its individuality on his work (G. Ferris 301).

This study strengthens and elaborates the link between the introduction of German *Lieder* to France and the beautiful *mélodies* of early twentieth century composers, such as Fauré and Debussy, through the examination of Massenet's songs.

Three larger works from Massenet's song repertoire are examined, taken from the beginning, middle, and end of his career: *Poème d'avril*, *Poème d'amour*, and *Expressions lyriques*, respectively. Each work has unique features that aid in showing the progression of Massenet's style. *Poème d'avril* is credited with being the first widely known French song cycle, and demonstrates the early, very German-influenced treatment of harmony, form, cyclicality, imitation, and accompaniment style, with declamation of text that only slightly resembles the *mélodies* of the next century. The musical features in *Poème d'amour*, composed more than a decade later, exemplify Massenet's maturation as a composer while still exhibiting German ideas of unification and musicality. *Poème d'amour* is more freely composed and balanced, showing Massenet's increased focus on text. Finally, *Expressions lyriques* is an experimental collection of songs that uses both spoken and sung verse to convey the meaning of each individual song. *Expressions lyriques* also exemplifies the later French style with more abstract, ambiguous harmonies and fluid melodies, as well as increased complexity and chromaticism.

### **The Relationship Between the Romance and the Lied**

To properly understand the transformation of the *romance* into the *mélodie* (that



Massenet's songs help to display), a brief history of the *romance* must be included.<sup>1</sup> The *romance* was an accompanied, strophic song that set French poetry that was set with simple, unaffected music with minimal embellishment. The *romance* was classified into different sub-genres based on the scenes presented in the poetry (Tunley 59).<sup>2</sup> The French hailed the *romance* as “that child of our soil,” and the treatment of harmony, form, and text are features that are used to define the “French” style as it differs from the analogous German *Lieder* from the same time period (qtd. Tunley 58). In Mario Champagne's dissertation, *The French Song Cycle (1840-1924); with special emphasis on the works of Gabriel Fauré*, he discusses the differences between “German” and “French” musical dialects, carefully stating that “these lists of labels and characteristics are a simplistic means of defining the differences between these two approaches to composition” (Champagne 5). Classifying styles into German and French types tend to generalize music to a useless degree; however, trying to describe the effects that German music had on the French *romance* help us to understand how the *romance* evolved into the *mélodie*. He continues to outline the differences between French and German dialects, and summarizes thusly:

The perceived differences between French and German musical dialects seem to reside in the nature of the approach to what music is or should be. Perhaps as a result of having a long-lived, stable civilization, the French prize elegance, nuance, the beautiful object, proportion, balance, a willingness to be patient and to assimilate subtlety. German musical culture has prized intellection (such as logic of a Bach fugue or of Schoenberg's dodecaphonic style), breaking the mould (such

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1 See Tunley, *Salons, Singers, and Songs*, Chapter 4, for lengthy discussion of the development of the *romance*.

2 Tunley states, “Those with their poetry evoking wild mountains were usually called tyrolliennes. Rustic scenes were pastorales, water scenes were barcarolles. These categories automatically set off stereotyped musical responses.”

as found in Beethoven), or sheer power (Wagner or Mahler come to mind) (Champagne pp. 5-6).

As the nineteenth century progressed, these two styles intermingled in the compositions of Massenet, due to the introduction of the German style to his French ears (Massenet, “Mes Souvenirs” 14).<sup>3</sup>

In the early 1830s, Adolphe Nourrit and Franz Liszt brought Schubert's *Lieder*, translated into French by unknown acquaintances of Nourrit's, to the salons and concert halls of Paris (Tunley 89). Within a few years, critics in Paris were either extremely enthusiastic about, or extremely fearful of, the effect it would have on French song composition (Tunley 97).<sup>4</sup> No matter which of these positions was taken, it was indisputable that the German *Lied* was changing the style of French song. The introduction of these German works spurred the evolution of the *romance* into what is now known as the *mélodie*, though the definition of *romance* and *mélodie* varied from source to source during the nineteenth century. The first use of the term *mélodie* is thought to be by the publisher of Berlioz's *Neuf mélodies*, which set French translations of Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies*. In this case, *mélodie* was not referring to a new style of French song, but rather a direct translation from the English title. The style of Berlioz's

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3 In his memoirs, Massenet recalls that, “During my enforced rustication I found, by sheer accident, some of Schumann's works which were then little known in France and still less in Piémont.” Massenet was in his early teens.

4 Tunley quotes Ernest Legouvé, who lauds the influx of Schubertian style: “The introduction into France of Schubert's melodies will kill the romance... We have had and still have some romanciers who lack neither grace nor charm... but all the compositions of these musicians is a sin in terms of form; their accompaniment is a series of non-arpeggiated chords, of little flat and insignificant drummings which do not combine at all with the melody; and their works are old after two or three years, because they have no artistry.”

*Neuf mélodies* is still rooted firmly in the romance tradition (Tunley 102).<sup>5</sup> Publishers, critics, and composers began to refer to their compositions as *mélodies*, or even *Lieder*, as the German style of harmony, accompaniment, and form was incorporated into French songs (Schwab 10). As the definition of *mélodie* evolved, so did the songs that the term described.

The influence of German *Lieder* extended to the genre of the song cycle. Popular both with Schubert and Schumann, the song cycle was a device used by these German composers to write a more in-depth, unified group of songs that extended the expression of a particular idea beyond the scope of a single song. Schubert wrote *Die schöne Mullerin* and *Die Winterreise*, which are classic examples of the early German cycle. *Les nuits d'été*, written by Berlioz in 1840, has features that are reminiscent of the song cycle genre, and Champagne devotes an entire chapter to argue for the cyclicity of that work.<sup>6</sup> Though it fulfills most of the qualifications of what a cycle is, it lacks the kind of “musical interconnections” that are found in the cycles of Schubert, Schumann, and as we will see, Massenet (Champagne 24). Schumann refined the song cycle into a composition recognized today as the ancestor of the genre in France: *Frauenliebe und –Leben* (Champagne 44). These works, when brought to Paris and to the attention of French composers, incited the composition of the first true French song cycles.

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5 Tunley states: “It may have been Berlioz's *Neuf mélodies* (1830) ... that gave rise to the use of the word 'mélodie' when describing songs more musically sophisticated than the simple romance. Yet, as is often the case when new musical terminology appears, its usage was haphazard.”

6 See Champagne, Chapter 3, for more information.

## German Song Cycles

To fully measure the extent to which Massenet's early compositions were modeled on the works of German composers, we must explore the cyclicity of *Poème d'avril* and *Poème d'amour* in addition to their harmonic, formal, and textual features. Also, to understand the impact of German *Lieder*, and specifically German song cycles, we must examine the research of German song cycles. Since Massenet's cycles are modeled after the cycles of Schumann, it is more advantageous to look at the body of work written on Schumann's cycles.

Arthur Komar provided a much-needed foundation for song cycle research with his essay, "The Music of *Dichterliebe*: The Whole and its Parts." Written by Schumann in 1840, *Dichterliebe* is a cycle that has puzzled song cycle scholars. Komar used Schenkerian analysis to relate the key areas of the songs and construct a large-scale *Ursatz* that encompasses the entire work. Though parts of his analysis seem slightly labored (at times, it seems Komar was trying to force the entirety of *Dichterliebe* into one *Ursatz* (Neumeyer 94)), the analysis provides a starting point for the song cycle scholars that followed other paths to analyze this music. His most useful discussion is at the beginning of his essay, when he lays out "seven possible conclusions" that measure the extent to which *Dichterliebe* could be unified (Komar 63).<sup>7</sup> Although scholars have since refined Komar's procedures in determining song unity, they are generally in agreement that his conclusions describe earlier song cycles of the nineteenth century (McCreless 9).<sup>8</sup>

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7 Komar provides these seven criteria in ascending order; the higher the number, the more coherent the cycle.

8 McCreless summarizes the seven criteria set forth by Komar in his article. He states: "Although Komar's list is intended only for *Dichterliebe*, and not for multi-movement works in general, it does, I

In a more recent approach to song cycle analysis, David Ferris regarded the fragmentation of Schumann's *Liederkreis* as the force that draws the listener from one song to the next, and questioned the validity of a definition of a song cycle that claims that each song must be performable as a single song without reliance on the other songs to be musically whole (D. Ferris 6).<sup>9</sup> Ferris' argument is that it is not just an overarching coherence that unifies Schumann's song cycles, but also a building of tension created by incompleteness that leads the listener into desiring more of the story. Ferris also mentions that the song cycle in German composition became a "public" genre, and "as composers became less interested in the cycle, performers became more so" (D. Ferris 8). As performers became more interested, the publication of these German songs was increased, which accounts for French composers' exposure to them. This might explain why French song in the nineteenth century is not as thoroughly studied: by the time French composers were exploring the song cycle genre, the composition of song cycles (and similarly intimate settings) in Germany had fallen out of favor, leaving room for larger, more expansive works.

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believe, constitute a perceptive step in the study of inter-song relations in the song cycle; anyone who knows the *Lied* literature from the first half of the century will be able immediately to summon examples of each of Komar's criteria in cycles from the period."

- 9 Ferris summarizes: "The cycle is not generically opposed to the collection but is a particular kind of collection in itself, a collection that is composed of pieces whose forms tend to be fragmentary and whose meaning tends to be obscure. The cycle does not create an overarching unity that provides such pieces with completion and clarity but is itself discontinuous and open-ended. The context that the cycle sets up is provocative; it implies structural connections and hints at larger meanings, but never makes them explicit or definitive." This concept refers to the works of Schumann.

## French Song Cycles

Despite the perceived lack of innovation of these early French song cycle composers (such as Massenet), scholars have often summarized their compositions as they led up to the works of Fauré and Debussy. For example, Frits Noske devotes a section of his book, *French Song from Berlioz to Duparc*, to the songs of Massenet. In this section, he points out that “a body of works that was so fashionable during the life of its author must necessarily lose its luster today” (210). Noske points out that Massenet did not suffer a lack of innovation, but rather reused the same stylistic techniques throughout his career (215). These are harsh words that underlie Noske's intent was to contrast Massenet and earlier composers with the “great composers,” Fauré and Debussy. Part of the goal of this study is to find similarities between Massenet and these later composers, which, as we will see, is achieved.

More recent scholarship has used contemporary publications from the time that these composers were writing to conceptualize how the composers and their music were perceived. An excellent example of this type of study is found in David Tunley's *Salons, Singers, and Songs*. This musicological and theoretical hybrid shows the development of the French song from 1830 to 1870. It includes very little on Massenet specifically, but the background information on the introduction of German Lieder to French audiences is invaluable.

## Massenet and the Song Cycle

My study owes much to the dissertation written by Mario Champagne, called *The French Song Cycle (1840-1924)*. Champagne's work provides a survey of French song

cycle composers, including Massenet, and it is from his work that I am building my argument. In summary, my argument is that Massenet's songs, particularly his cycles, reveal much about the development of the *mélodie*, considering that the role of lesser-known composers in French society was that of the “popular composer,” who published music that the public wanted to hear. In other words, popular composers are gauges of French taste at any given time. As time progressed, these French composers took the idea of the song cycle and made it their own, unequivocally French, genre. By the beginning of the twentieth century, poets and composers had adopted a much more free, fluid style of writing, which distanced French song composition even further from the German compositions in the nineteenth century.

Massenet is an ideal composer to study for the purpose of understanding the progression of the *mélodie* through the nineteenth century. An evaluation of his songs will also show the adaptation of the German *Lied* by French composers. From this adaptation emerged a genre of wholly musical, yet primarily text-driven works. This study expands Champagne's analysis to cover not only the coherence of larger works, but also features that illustrate Massenet's sensitivity to the poetry, experimentation with form, and use of harmonic ambiguity later in his career.

The analyses of *Poème d'avril* and *Poème d'amour* emphasize thematic relationships (both musical and textual) and features that are identified by German *Lieder*. The treatment of text is increasingly important as Massenet's style progresses, so each analysis will focus specifically on the setting of text as well. The final analysis of *Expressions lyriques* follows a similar format, though more emphasis is placed on textual analysis.

## CHAPTER II

### POÈME D'AVRIL

Massenet was the first of many French composers who emulated the genre of the song cycle, and his *Poème d'avril* has the honor of being the first true French song cycle, with an occasional nod to Berlioz's *Les nuits d'été* as an early predecessor (Champagne 24).<sup>10</sup> The advent of the song cycle in France is due to the exposure of French musicians, such as Massenet, to the song cycles of Schubert, and later Schumann. Massenet was the first to adapt the genre for the French public possibly because his early exposure to Schumann made him more receptive to the idea of emulating the song cycle. Perhaps he was simply motivated to produce French songs in the German style because of the popularity of these German song cycles (Champagne 17). Either way, in order to define Massenet's style, we must understand how and to what extent Massenet modeled his first cycle after German *Lieder*. By identifying what is “Germanic” about *Poème d'avril*, we can distinguish what is more “French,” or even “Massenet-like” about the songs.

In order to link his first cycle to its German ancestors, this chapter will explore the many characteristics shared by both *Poème d'avril* and the German cycles from which Massenet was inspired. The primary characteristic to be examined is structural organization. *Poème d'avril* has a unique introduction that provides three motives that are

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<sup>10</sup> Champagne devotes an entire chapter (Chapter 3) to the review of cyclic coherence in *Les nuits d'été*, citing that “lack of unambiguous musical interconnections” has prevented its inclusion into the continuum of French song cycles.



presented throughout the piece. These themes unite the eight songs of the cycle into one continuous work. The classification of *Poème d'avril* as a song cycle is also based on a fair amount of song cycle research done by scholars of German *Lieder*, and the few scholars who have ventured to apply this research to the French *mélodie* composers of the second half of the nineteenth century, such as Mario Champagne. In his dissertation, *The French Song Cycle*, he wrote about the unification of *Poème d'avril* extensively.<sup>11</sup> He detailed the locations of the three themes at the beginning of the cycle throughout the entire work, showing how the themes at the beginning are quoted in later songs as well as combined in the last song to unite the beginning with the end. Champagne considers this unification of the first and last songs to be a common feature of Massenet's cycles (Champagne 70).<sup>12</sup>

The analysis presented here deviates considerably from Champagne's requirement that a song cycle must be composed of complete songs, i.e. each song must be performable on its own (Champagne 8).<sup>13</sup> *Poème d'avril* is composed of both complete and fragmentary songs, which thus strengthens the argument that Massenet was influenced by Schumann in particular. It also provides more insight on Massenet's perspective on song cycles.

In addition to the influence of genre by German *Lieder* composers, Massenet emulated other musical features, such as imitation, phrase structure, and form

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11 Champagne, pp. 45-70, discusses the three motives of *Poème d'avril* in the first third of chapter 4.

12 More specifically, he links the device with Schumann's *Frauenliebe und Leben*.

13 Champagne uses Peake's "somewhat dated work" for a foundational definition of the song cycle, which has four main criteria. One of these criteria is that "each of the component songs of a cycle is complete in itself and can be performed out of context."

(Champagne 20).<sup>14</sup> Previous to the introduction of the cycles of Schubert and Schumann, French *romances* were primarily lyric melodies with spare, simple accompaniments. Tunley summarizes the romance thusly: “Stemming from the style of the late classical periods of two- and four-bar phrases, a regularity not always appropriate for a sweep of melody attempting to convey the intensity of a romantic text” (Tunley 72).<sup>15</sup> French composers who were writing in this early period of the French song cycle adopted the finely crafted form and use of accompaniment in German Lieder. This influence is found throughout Massenet's first cycle. To show the progression of French song cycles through the nineteenth century, we must examine what German influence there is, as well as French characteristics that inform Massenet's compositional style.

The other aspect of song that will be examined through the course of this study is that of poetic content, text setting, and the level of intimacy required by the poetry and music. The text setting seen throughout the cycle is subtle yet poignant, as we shall see.

To summarize, the goal of this chapter is to demonstrate what aspects of *Poème d'avril* are informed by the song cycles of Schubert and Schumann, and what aspects are purely Massenet's compositional style. A secondary goal is to set the foundation upon which we can build an idea of how Massenet's style changes throughout his career. The analysis adds an evaluation of Massenet's songs as fragments to Champagne's work on thematic relationships. An investigation into the key relationships of the cycle adds to the

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14 Champagne summarizes four main categories of influence that Schubert's music had on the development of the *mélodie*: choosing poetry with structural irregularities, lack of strophic structure, flexibility in the melodic line, and accompaniment as interpreter (hence imitation and other activity between accompaniment and voice), not merely in the background.

15 For an extensive description of the romance, see *Salons, Singers, and Songs*, particularly Chapters 5 and 6.

discussion of relationships, as well. Then, a detailed discussion of form and use of accompaniment serves as a comparison of *Poème d'avril* to the accepted definition of a song cycle. Finally, the analysis concludes with a study of the text setting.

### **Thematic Relationships**

#### Champagne and the Early French Song Cycle

Champagne's dissertation catalogues the themes found throughout *Poème d'avril*. His work is foundational to the understanding of the French song cycle, and rather than replicating his findings here, I will mention a few things of note and then discuss what I believe was left unsaid about the cyclicity of *Poème d'avril*.

Although Champagne noted where the themes were found in each song of *Poème d'avril*, he did not examine the relationship between the three themes, found in the first song of the cycle, "Prélude." The first theme, Theme A, shown in Example 2.1, is an arpeggiated  $ii^{o7}$  over a Bb that resolves to a  $V^7$ . These arpeggiated chords are found throughout the cycle. Themes A and C are related through this ascending arpeggiation, but in Theme C, Example 2.3, it is a tonic chord, not a dominant 7th chord, that is arpeggiated. Themes B (Example 2.2) and C are closely related; both are based on a descending scale from  $\hat{1}$  down to  $\hat{5}$ . Therefore, because these themes are related to each other, so are the songs in the cycle that use materials based on these themes.



The eighth and final song serves as a bookend to the rest of the cycle. Many song cycle scholars, including Champagne, maintain that a link between the first and the last songs of a cycle should be readily apparent in order to accept the group of songs as a cycle. One of the best examples of this in a Schumann cycle is in *Frauenliebe und -Leben*. The first song is a straightforward melody with homophonic accompaniment, shown in Example 2.4. At the end of the cycle, the material used in the first song comes back as a piano postlude, shown in Example 2.5. These are clear bookends to the entire cycle.

**Larghetto.**

Seit ich ihn ge - se - hen, glaub' ich  
blind zu sein; wo ich hin nur blik.ke, seh' ich ihn al-lein; wie im

**Example 2.4.** “Seit ich ihn gesehen,” mm. 1-7.

**Adagio.** *Tempo wie das erste Lied.*

**Example 2.5.** “Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan,” mm. 23-32.

*Poème d'avril* also has a link between the first and last songs, though the link between the first and last songs is somewhat subtle. The first four measures of “Je pars! Adieu, ma chère âme” contain material that can be traced to the three themes found at the beginning, seen in Example 2.6. The last four measures are the same as the first four measures, though two measures are reversed, so that mm. 1-2 and mm. 3-4 are in reverse order at the end. Aside from these four measures, the rest of the song is of a very different nature than the rest of the cycle. Presented in 12/8, the song feels as if it has two beats, not four. The figuration is a hurried alternation between the right and left hand, contrasting with the graceful arpeggios in the other songs. The song also remains in A minor for its duration, which is unlike the other songs in the cycle that modulate to at least one other key.

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Je pars! Adieu, ma chère âme". It is divided into two systems. The first system is marked "Lento e sostenuto." and features a Chant line and a Piano accompaniment. The Chant line begins with the lyrics "Je pars! Adieu, ma chère". The Piano part includes annotations for "Theme C (a capriccio)" and "Theme A". The second system is marked "Allegro molto agitato." and continues the Chant with the lyrics "à me, gar-de bien mon souve-nir!". The Piano part in this system includes annotations for "Theme B" and "Theme A". The score uses various dynamic markings such as *ff*, *pp*, *mf*, *p*, *fz*, and *riten.*, and includes performance instructions like "Ped." and asterisks.

**Example 2.6.** “Je pars! Adieu, ma chère âme,” mm. 1-5.

Champagne claims that “Sur la source,” the seventh song, is unrelated to any theme, with the exception of the grace notes at the end of the piece, stating that, ““Sur la source elle se pencha’ returns to a consistent figuration as found in other songs, but one that has no connection to the other songs” (67). However, the song begins with 32nd notes that are arranged in a falling fifths pattern, which is a relationship to the other songs. The 32nd notes are also in thirds, which are related to the thirds outlined in Theme B, as shown in Example 2.7, below.

**Pas trop animé.**

The image shows a musical score for a vocal and piano piece. The title is "Pas trop animé." The score is in 2/4 time. It consists of two systems. The first system shows the beginning of the piece, marked with a "1" above the first measure. The second system shows measures 3-5, with the lyrics "Sur la" appearing under the vocal line. Dynamics include *pp* (pianissimo) and *p* (piano).

**Example 2.7.** "Sur la source," mm. 1-5.

### Key Relationships

In Champagne's analysis, scarcely any mention of key relationships is made, due to the intended focus on thematic unity.<sup>16</sup> However, unity is achieved with Massenet's consistent use of chromatic mediant modulations throughout *Poème d'avril*. In the first movement, for example, the themes are presented in Eb major with the exception of the third stanza/theme, which is presented in Gb major. This relationship of a third is seen throughout the entire cycle, and Eb major and Gb major both play a particular role in the first half of the cycle. The second and third songs are also in Eb major, and the second

<sup>16</sup> In Berthold Hoeckner's "Paths through *Dichterliebe*," (*19th Century Music*, vol. 30 no. 1, pp. 65-80, 2006), he re-examines the relationships between keys in *Dichterliebe*. This is a good example of recent work that has been published involving key relationships.



song moves to Gb major in the second stanza. Later in the cycle, “Sur la source” moves from G major to E major, and then from G major to Eb major, which continues the pattern of chromatic mediant modulation. The fourth movement, presented in F# minor and F# major, could be heard in the enharmonic keys of Gb minor and Gb major. This is especially viable because the interlude modulates to Gb major, which relates back to the introduction of the cycle. The second half of *Poème d'avril* is predominantly in C major, which is another chromatically related key to Eb major, the introductory key. What is most peculiar about the last piece is that it is a very distantly related key, A minor, to the key of the introduction, Eb major. These key relationships are summarized in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1.** Keys found in *Poème d'avril*.

Number	Song	Key	Modulates to
1	Prélude	Eb major	Gb major
2	Sonnet matinal	Eb major	Gb major
3	Voici les grands lys	Eb major	Cb major
4	Riez-vous	F#/Gb minor	F#/Gb major
5	Vous aimerez demain	C major	E major
6	Que l'heure est donc brève	Bb minor	Eb minor
7	Sur la source	C major	E major; Eb major
8	Adieu	A minor	--

### Falling Fifths

Massenet uses falling fifths sequences in nearly every song in *Poème d'avril*. This could suggest the cyclic nature of the seasons, or falling in and out of love, which is a

common poetic theme found in song cycles. This will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter. These sequences propel the thematic material used in each song. For example, the second song contains a few "abortive starts," as Champagne refers to them, by presenting Theme B, reciting, and alternating (57). The chords at the beginning and end of Theme B, labeled in Example 2.8, are in a fifth relationship. When repeated a step down, the effect is that of falling fifths.

Chant. *Con moto.* *quasi recitato pp*  
Les E - toi - les ef fa rou -

Piano. *pp sosten. assai* *suivrez*

*a tempo* *pp* *poco rit.* *a tempo*  
ché - es Vien - nent de sen - vo - ler des cleux.

*a tempo* *pp* *suivrez* *pp*

*Eb: I* *IV*

*vii°* *iii*

**Example 2.8.** "Sonnet matinal," mm. 1-9.

The third song, "Voici que les grands lys," also contains a passage that suggests a falling fifths sequence in the B section of the piece, though it is essentially a vi - ii - V - I progression. Within the context of the entire cycle, however, the passage relates to the

other sequences present. In the context of *Poème d'avril*, our ears hear the passage below, in Example 2.9, as a sequence. The B section starts in m. 19, and it tonicizes Cb major briefly before standing on a dominant pedal in m. 22, as shown below. This tonicization also occurs in the introduction. The introduction of this piece is another example of how Massenet uses an introduction to preview the musical events that are to come, just as the first song in the cycle previews the music of the rest of the cycle.

The musical score for Example 2.9 consists of two systems of music. The first system (measures 16-18) features a vocal line starting with the lyrics "Ma mie en sè-veil -" and a piano accompaniment marked "a tempo" and "f e sostenuto". The piano part includes a "Ped." marking. The second system (measures 19-21) features a vocal line with lyrics "lant ma dit: le beau so - leil! le temps est donc ve -" and a piano accompaniment marked "a tempo" and "mf". The piano part includes a "cresc." marking. Below the piano part, the chord sequence is indicated as ii<sup>7</sup>, V<sup>7</sup>, and I.

**Example 2.9.** “Voici que les grands lys,” mm. 16-21.

### Accompaniment and Phrasing

Although German influence is apparent in the early cycles of Massenet, one must be careful in declaring one feature or another to be “German,” or “French,” or “Massenet-like.” In *Poème d'avril*, the clearest examples of German influence are found in the

interaction of the accompaniment and the vocal line, and the less “square” phrase structures.

### Accompaniment and Vocal Line

Until the dissemination of German Lieder in the 19th century, French song was highly melodic, but accompaniment was spare, homophonic, and generally far to the background of the singer. In *Poème d'avril*, the accompaniment acts as the introduction of the theme used in the song, suggests the mood with the tempo, meter, and overall character. Imitation is also used between the piano and voice in this cycle, which suggests German influence.

In “Voici que les grands lys,” it is clear that the accompaniment has taken a stronger role in the union between voice and piano. Melodies in the piano are used to bridge the vocal line and the accompaniment together throughout entire pieces, yet figurations that are in the style of Schumann are ever present. For example, the figuration used during the introduction of the song is derived from Theme C, and it consists of 32nd notes in arpeggios that alternate upwards and downwards. Another interesting aspect of the introduction of this piece is that it begins on a pedal tonic, which is a feature that has been cited as “German” in nature (Champagne 102).<sup>17</sup> Note also the retrogression in mm. 2-3, seen in Example 2.10. The melody in mm. 1-3 of “Voici que les grands lys” feeds directly into the vocal melody. The vocal and accompaniment melodies trade back and forth throughout the entire song.

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17 In his discussion of Widor, Champagne states that “Widor's use of 4-3 suspension figures, the use of pedals in 'Près d'un étang' and 'Le Soir et la Douleur,' and the thick textures are very “German” or 'learned' (academic?).”

**Andante sostenuto    Con moto.**

Chant.

Piano.

Eb: I    I<sup>+</sup>    IV    V<sup>7</sup>    IV    I

**Example 2.10.** “Voici que les grands lys,” mm. 1-3.

The interplay between the vocal line and the accompaniment in “Sur la source” is indicative of Massenet's education in counterpoint. The bass line has a melody that is in counterpoint with the vocal line. Another interesting feature in this song is the codetta, which contains a reprise of the harmonies found at the beginning of the song. Instead of maintaining the 32nd-note figuration, however, the harmonies are rolled chords, which again serve as a link between the song and the arpeggio at the beginning of the cycle.

### Phrasing

Noske cites Massenet as “having finally delivered the *mélodie* from the yoke of the square phrase” (Noske 211), which I assume to mean that Massenet's compositions had broken away from the label of '*romance*' by the end of his career. The use of phrases that aren't 'square' are found in *Poème d'avril*. Examples of uneven phrase lengths can be found throughout Massenet's songs. In “Sonnet matinal,” Theme B is used as the accompaniment throughout the song, generally in four bar phrases (the same length as the

introduction). An exception to this is found in m. 20, where a measure seems to be “missing” from the expected 4+4 opening phrase. Shown below in Example 2.11, a four-measure phrase is followed by a three-measure phrase, which intensifies the forward momentum of the song. This irregularity sets the song apart in phrase structure, as does the quasi recitative in the beginning and mm. 32-34, shown in Example 2.12.

10 *p* J'en sais deux qui se sont ca-

15 4 mesures 3 mesures  
ché - es, Mi - gnou - ne, dans vos ju - lis yeux;

20 *p* A l'ombre de vos eils so - yeux et sous vos paupière-res pen-

Example 2.11. “Sonnet matinal,” mm. 10-24.

*quasi recitato*

32

Vous fei-guez de dor-mir en - cor: E - veil-lez vous, mon doux tre -

*pp*

**Example 2.12.** “Sonnet matinal,” mm. 32-34.

Massenet occasionally preferred to write out ritardandos, which freed phrases from being square and predictable. A prime example of this is in “Voici que les grands lys.” In m. 25 (see Example 2.13), Massenet uses a triplet figure to represent the figuration “trailing off” and slowing down for the narrator's declaration of “double réveil!” (Double awakening!) These alterations also serve to conform the music to the text, and prevent phrases from being “square” by varying the length between perceived downbeats. Measures 34-36, shown in Example 2.14, provide a good example of this.

25

*mf* *ten.* *pp*

fleurs! Double ré-veil! Mais la tié-deur de l'air la rendant moins fa-

*pp*

**Example 2.13.** “Voici que les grands lys,” mm. 25-28.

34 *Piu lento.* *sf con anima* *ten.*  
 sur son front et sur ses che - veux! — *(appassionato)*  
*sf sosten. assai*

**Example 2.14.** “Voici que les grands lys,” mm. 34-36.

### Text Setting and Storyline

Champagne was most thorough in his examination of the sources of poetry used in *Poème d'avril*. Massenet used Armand Silvestre's poems to construct a storyline that was highly in vogue at the time of composition, as well as sharing similarities with German cycles. The general plot found in many cycles is that of found and lost love, and *Poème d'avril* is no exception. The narrator begins by telling of his new love, and his drive to write songs and recall his love. Champagne considers this an entreaty to his lover. I analyze the cycle as a story told to another in past tense, and the introduction is the beginning of the story, when he addresses the salon, or audience, and prepares them for what is to come: a love story to remember. Later in the introduction, he finds himself wrapped up immediately, and places himself within the story, talking to his Mignonne, and celebrating the dawn of his relationship.

What distinguishes Massenet's treatment of the poetry in *Poème d'avril* is the use of thematic material, text painting, and alternations between spoken and sung verse. As we progress through the cycle, we can see that Massenet took special care in setting the poetry of Silvestre.



The spoken text at the beginning of the cycle is a common feature of Massenet's songs. He experimented with spoken verse alternated with sung verse. This idea of presenting poetry, both spoken and sung within the same song, lasted until the end of his career, and we will look at the spoken verse in his later works at a later point in this study. It is interesting that Massenet chose to set the first poem in spoken voice. Perhaps the narrator, torn between remembering his past loves and beginning to build a new relationship, has not yet joined with the accompaniment.

The subjects presented in the first poem return throughout the cycle. Ideas such as remembrance, spring, dawn, blue eyes, and flowers (especially roses) return and unify the cycle textually as well as thematically. The ideas of dawn, flowers (lilies, this time), and the spring are presented again in “Voici que les grands lys.” “Vous aimerez demain” relates springtime to remembrance, while “Que l'heure est donc brève” reminds us that love lasts for but a moment. “Sur la source,” the seventh song, alludes to a brewing storm, but the narrator is confident that his lover's image and her kiss will last forever. The final song is the farewell that is implied by the earlier songs' mentioning of fleeting love.

The narrator, in “Prélude,” seems to address the audience at first:

Une rose frileuse, au coeur noyé de pluie,  
 Sur un rameau tremblant vient de s'épanouir,  
 Et je me sens repris de la douce folie  
 De faire des chansons et de me souvenir!

(A quivering rose, its heart drenched by the rain,  
 has just opened on a trembling branch.  
 And I feel seized once more by sweet madness,  
 to write songs and to remember!)

This seems to be a declaration of the narrator's intention to tell his story as the cycle

unfolds. However, the end of this declaration is spoken directly to his lover:

Ma Mignonne aux yeux bleus, mets ta robe et fuyons  
 Sous les bois remplis d'ombre et de mélancolie  
 Chercher le doux remède à la douce folie,  
 Le soleil m'a blessé de ses premiers rayons!

(My sweetheart with eyes of blue, dress yourself and let us flee  
 into the woods filled with shadow and melancholy,  
 to seek the sweet remedy for that sweet madness.  
 The sun has wounded me with its first rays!)

This introduction illustrates the transformation from the performer, who informs the audience that he is telling a story, into the narrator, who is speaking to his lover.

The second song has exquisite text setting. The introduction, with its falling-fifths sequence, is painting the text, “Les étoiles effarouchées /Viennent de s'envoler des cieux” (The frightened stars /have just fled from the heavens). The excerpted Theme B at the beginning of the song is not indicative of a false start, as Champagne states (67). On the contrary, it seems to be part of the gradual waking up of his lover, Mignonne, and the descent of the fifths is the drifting back to sleep, which incites the narrator to try and wake her again. Massenet uses recitative to tease his Mignonne as well, when he recites on a Bb in mm. 32-34: “Vous feignez de dormir encor /Eveillez-vous mon doux trésor!” (You feign sleep still /Awaken, my sweet treasure!). (See Example 2.12, above.) In the last non-figured area of the song, the narrator pleads with his lover to wake up and return the stars to the sky. This results in a playful exchange between the voice and the accompaniment, which plays the role of the lover. The plea from the narrator finally wakes his lover, resulting in the final cadence in mm. 55-57.

45  
sert est plein d'en - nui, Ah! Ouvrez les yeux, Et ren-dez

51  
lui les deux é - toi-les en-vo - lé - es. É-veillez vous. Mon doux tré-sor! É-veillez

57  
vous!

*sempre perdendosi* *ppp*

Example 2.15. “Sonnet matinal,” mm. 45-62.

The fourth song, “Riez-vous,” begins with a spoken poem that involves the narrator talking to his lover. The poem is light-hearted in nature, and requires spoken text because of its intimacy between the speaker and his partner. The narrator asks, “why are you laughing at me? Do not laugh” (Riez-vous? ne riez-vous pas!), though he clearly enjoys the exchange that is occurring. This poem goes hand in hand with the second song, when the narrator gently wakes his lover.

The strophic structure of “Vous aimerez demain” not only reflects the text, which is stanzaic, but also reflects the subject matter. This song is the only song in *Poème d'avril* that uses the same accompaniment for each stanza; not a single note is changed, and notes in the melody are changed only to allow more or less syllables. The reason for including such a strophic pattern is that the song is about love always returning, or “you will love tomorrow,” and thus the constant return of material is like the constant return of lovers, new or old.

“Que l'heure est donc brève” is the most unusual when placed in the context of the rest of the songs in *Poème d'avril*. The song is short, and uses spare block chords rather than any type of figuration. The chords themselves are weakened; Massenet favored inversions and fully diminished  $ii^{\circ}$  and  $vii^{\circ}$  chords. These features all support the text, which has a dream-like and fleeting quality. One subtlety that Massenet employs is the passing  $i^{6/4}$  chord that supports the word “passe.” Another such painting of text is at the end of the two strophes, when the narrator says “en aiment,” and the final cadence has a Picardy 3rd.

The image shows a musical score for the song "Que l'heure est donc brève" from the opera *Poème d'avril*. The score is in 6/8 time and features a vocal line (Chant) and a piano accompaniment (Piano). The tempo is marked "Pas vite." The lyrics are "Que l'heure est donc brève. qu'on passe en ai - mant!". The piano part is marked "p" and "sostenuto assai", with a "dim." marking at the end of the phrase.

**Example 2.16.** “Que l'heure est donc brève,” mm. 1-3.

Bbm: ii<sup>♭6/5</sup> i<sup>♭6/4</sup> ii<sup>♭♭4/3</sup> V<sup>7</sup> I

**Example 2.17.** “Que l'heure est donc brève,” mm. 11-14.

“Que l'heure est donc brève” offers support for Ferris' idea of fragmentation, although the text gives another reason for its incompleteness: the narrator asks, “How short is the hour, then, which one spends in loving?” (Que l'heure est donc brève, qu'on passe en aimeant?) Massenet answers this question with the music, and his response is a brief, incomplete, and yet hopeful fragment of a song.

“Sur la source,” the seventh song, is strophic like “Vous aimerez demain,” but each stanza modulates to a different key. First, the piece modulates to E major, which is consistent with “Vous aimerez demain.” Then, in the second stanza, the song modulates to Eb major in nearly the exact manner as it had modulated to E major. Both of these stanzas contain text that refers to the wind carrying away various objects. Finally, the third stanza does not modulate, and the piece finishes in C major. This is appropriate for the text, which in the last stanza states, “the wind may blow, but the kiss remains!” The stalwart kiss of his lover is reflected in the lack of modulation of the final stanza. The brief allusion to Theme A also occurs in the last stanza in the accompaniment, in mm. 37-

40. This quasi-recitative area is supported by an accompaniment with grace note arpeggios, and thus reminds the listener of the arpeggios in the beginning of the cycle.

*Più lento, quasi recitato*

34 Le vent peut ba-là-yer la pla-ge Mi-gnonne, que me fait l'o-

*suvvz*

*Tempo I.*

37 ra-ge, Tou bai-ser res-te tou-jours

*Tempo I.*

*piu p* *pp*

**Example 2.18.** “Sur la source,” mm. 34-39.

The last song is set apart emotionally and texturally from the rest of the cycle, in addition to its key and lack of modulation. The tone of the song is hurried and tormented, which supports the nature of the text. This final song is the farewell between the narrator and the lover. The reappearance of the themes does, however, give hope that there will be other lovers after the conclusion of the cycle. The song is also set apart by its use of suspensions, triplet against duple feel, and faster tempo. The sung verses have an almost

speech-like quality to them as a result of the fast tempo.

In summary, Massenet's first song cycle was heavily influenced by German song cycles, particularly by Schumann. Massenet's compositional style borrowed ideas such as thematic relationships, treatment of accompaniment and phrase structure, imitation, counterpoint, and subject matter of the poetry. However, his predilections toward chromatic mediant harmonies and the extent to which the themes in the cycle are related all create a rich foundation for him and other composers to build the French song cycle genre. The following chapter examines *Poème d'amour*, a later cycle that shows an increased interest in shaping the music around the poetry, as well as a more subtle approach to structural coherence.

CHAPTER III  
POÈME D'AMOUR

After the publication of *Poème d'avril*, Massenet composed a number of *Poèmes* that adapted the features found in German cycles. Massenet composed seven cycles, all referred to as *Poèmes*. During the period between *Poème d'avril* and *Poème d'amour*, the first large volume of collected songs was published in 1875, entitled *Volume I: 20 Mélodies* (Irvine 330).<sup>18</sup> Throughout his career, Massenet published eight of these volumes which contained twenty individual solo songs as well as selected songs from his cycles.<sup>19</sup>

I chose to analyze *Poème d'amour* not only because it was an excellent example of Massenet's style, but also because it contains one song in particular that has remained in the standard solo vocal repertoire to this day. "Ouvre tes yeux bleus" is a common sight on French recital programs, and is often published as a separate solo song. Massenet's compositional style in *Poème d'amour* is intertwined with that of early German Lieder composers, and this use of dialogue is another indication of German influence; the song is contains a call-and-answer style of dialogue that is rarely found in French song. As one reviewer states,

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<sup>18</sup> Volume I was published by Hartmann, an early patron of Massenet's.

<sup>19</sup> For a detailed list of works, consult Irvine, pp. 329-339, which lists each song and in what volume, if any, it was republished.



While dialogues in music for a solo singer were common in German *Lieder*, they were still relatively rare in French music and Schumann's influence is clear in the subtly humorous exaggerations in the accompaniment, swooning arpeggios as the young man sings to his beloved of the beauty of nature and the imitating of an eagerly beating heart as she responds that love is even more charming to contemplate. Despite this very discreet humor, the sentiments are passionately expressed, particularly in the climax as the girl exclaims that the sun itself is in her heart, where both voice and accompaniment crescendo to a triumphant fortissimo (Feeney).

*Poème d'amour* also contains a duet in the last movement, which is undoubtedly why it is not mentioned in Champagne's account of Massenet's song cycles (9).<sup>20</sup> However, the cycle provides insight to the development of Massenet's style, as it was written twelve years later than *Poème d'avril*. This chapter compares features of these two cycles in order to demonstrate the progression of Massenet's style toward a more fluid depiction of text and emotion, and a more integrated connection with German songwriting. In other words, though Massenet's later songs have features that suggest German origin, they are, by 1878, integrated into Massenet's own style.

This chapter will review thematic relationships (as a *Poème*, it has more qualities of the German song cycle, but only to some extent does *Poème d'amour* exhibit the kind of motivic use that was explored in *Poème d'avril*), the relationship between melody and accompaniment, the development of freer harmonies, and the use and setting of the text. *Poème d'amour* illustrates Massenet's increasing reliance on text to drive the music, rather than the other way around. Less emphasis is placed on coherent musical features (such as themes that are shared among multiple songs), though there are still features that

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20 When discussing his additional qualifications for including a cycle in his study, Champagne states, "First, the songs in question must be for one voice accompanied by the piano. Developments later in the century and especially in the early part of the twentieth century make this an important qualification."

allow this cycle to be considered one overarching narrative piece. The more emancipated harmonies and melodies are still organized by form and, surprisingly, by more square phrasing than its predecessor, *Poème d'avril*. However, breaches from the square phrases are made more apparent in juxtaposition to such rigid form. Throughout *Poème d'amour*, Massenet demonstrates a maturity and sensitivity to the poetry that was not as apparent in previous compositions.

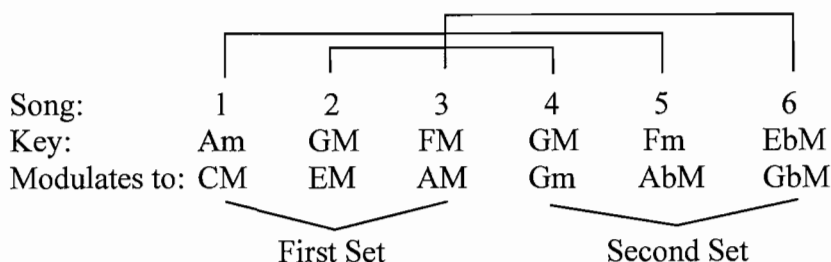
### **Thematic Relationships**

The thematic relationships in *Poème d'amour* are not nearly so straightforward as they were in *Poème d'avril*. However, there are a few relationships that bear mentioning, namely key areas, and a series of chords that replicate the keys present in the cycle. This creates a large-scale hidden repetition that unifies the work. Massenet demonstrates a more refined use of material within each song, such that each individual song contains relationships within itself that are more subtle and musically sensitive.

#### Key Relationships

The songs in *Poème d'amour* create a key scheme that contains a few noticeable patterns. The figure below shows the key of each song and the key to which it modulates. As you can see, the songs emphasize the generic keys of A, G, and F. Figure 3.1, below, indicates relationships that center around the third song, "Ouvre tes yeux bleus." The first and fifth songs both modulate to the relative major. The second and fourth songs are both in G major. A closer look reveals that the keys of the first three songs descend by a whole step, and those of the second three songs also descend by a whole step. This, along with

other features that will be mentioned later, creates a division between the third and the fourth songs, thus creating two mini-cycles. In addition, the third and sixth songs both modulate up a third to the chromatic mediant, and they are also the only duets in the cycle. The narrative also supports this idea, which will be explored later. This arrangement of keys suggests that Massenet mapped out the key areas beforehand, which suggests that they were an important consideration.



**Figure 3.1.** Key Relationships in *Poème d'amour*.

The second set of songs has a unique structure that links them together. The fifth and sixth songs both begin on an extended dominant pedal, and when taking into consideration the beginning and end of each song, one finds a falling fifths relationship, shown in Figure 3.2. This relationship between songs reflects Massenet's desire to make a “whole” cycle out of song “parts.”

Song 4	Song 5	Song 6
C --(D <sup>7</sup> )- G C <sup>7</sup>	----- FM Bb <sup>7</sup>	----- EbM

**Figure 3.2.** Falling Fifths in the Key Scheme of *Poème d'amour*.

One interesting similarity between *Poème d'avril* and *Poème d'amour* is that the first and last songs of each cycle are related by tritone. *Poème d'amour* begins in A minor and ends in Eb major, whereas *Poème d'avril* begins in Eb major and ends in A minor, which is the reverse order. Both cycles contain a final song that is somehow distantly related to the others in more ways than the key relationships. In *Poème d'avril*, the final song incorporates all three of the themes, but the body of the song has an extremely fast tempo, uses a figuration completely unlike the other songs, and in terms of the narrative, is the hasty, foul-natured farewell in a cycle of otherwise positive sentiments. In *Poème d'amour*, the final song is a duet where both voices are singing at the same time, which sets it apart from the other songs. The poetry also suggests a separation from the rest of the cycle because the duet occurs after the couple goes through a negative experience, and comes through the experience full of joy and hope for the future.

#### Parallel Chord Relationships

Often, the relationship between A, G, and F appears as a series of chords in parallel motion, particularly in parallel 6/3 progressions. This is a small-scale repetition of the key relationships between songs. This could be referred to as a “hidden repetition,” and gives credit to Massenet, who seems to be making connections between harmony and overall key relationships. In mm. 3-4 of the first song, “Je me suis plaint,” the initial A minor chord begins a series of parallel 6/3 chords, forming the progression of A minor, G major, F major, and back to G major (see Example 3.1). These four chords are the same as the keys of the first four songs.

**Mouv<sup>t</sup>. modéré... Avec un sentiment intime et simple.**

*p*

LUI

Je me suis plaint aux tourte-rel-les:

PIANO.

*p*

Am: i      VII    VI      VII  
A          G      F          G

5 Les tourte-rel-les ont gé-mi, Et la ca-res-se de leurs ai-les

**Example 3.1.** “Je me suis plaint,” mm. 1-8.

Massenet uses parallel 6/3 chords in the second song as well, shown in in Example 3.2. The first half of “La nuit, sans doute” is organized into phrases of two 4/4 bars and one 3/2 bar. The 3/2 measure contains parallel 6/3 chords that move up by step over a D pedal, while the first two 4/4 measures are descending scales over G and D pedals. The parallel 6/3 chords in Example 3.2 are G major, A minor, B minor, and F#<sup>o</sup>. When considering just the roots of the chords, the passage of chords in Example 3.2 is an inversion of the passage labeled in Example 3.1. Instead of descending two steps and ascending one step, the chords in Example 3.2 ascend two steps and descend one step.

**Calme, recueilli, mais sans lenteur.**

**LUI.**

*p*

La nuit, — sans doute, — é.tait trop bel - le,

**PIANO.**

*p*

Le ciel trop bleu; — J'us tort d'admi - rer a.vec el - le

G: I ii iii (V<sup>7</sup>)

**Example 3.2.** “La nuit, sans doute,” mm. 1-5.

The phrase in mm. 13-15, which contains repeated material that is transposed up a step each measure, is also harmonized with parallel 6/3 chords, and shown in Example 3.3. This passage also inverts the chords similar to the pattern in Example 3.2.

en animant peu à peu. *p*

Sur les gazons! ———— Oui, c'est ta fau - te, ô nuit se-rei - ne, -

en animant peu à peu. *p*

cre - - - - - scen - - -

*f*

Si son beau cou, Son front pâ - le. ses yeux de rei - ne M'ont rendu

*f*

do.

Example 3.3. “La nuit, sans doute,” mm. 12-17.

The final cadence of “La nuit, sans doute” is not a perfect authentic cadence, unlike the cadences in *Poème d'avril*. In m. 22, the parallel 6/3 chords are G major, A minor, B diminished, and F major, and they are played above a D pedal. G major, A minor, and F major are grouped together at the end of “La nuit, sans doute;” the F natural prepares the listener for the next song, “Ouvre tes yeux bleus,” which is in F major. The F natural is very prominent at the final cadence because the vocal line leaps to it by tritone in m. 23. The last note sung is a D, which is  $\hat{5}$  in G major.

22 *f* *retenez.*

La nuit, sans doute, était trop belle, le ciel trop bleu!...

*f* *retenez.* *p*

Detailed description: This musical score consists of two systems. The top system is a vocal line in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. It begins at measure 22 with the lyrics 'La nuit, sans doute, était trop belle, le ciel trop bleu!...'. The melody is marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic and includes a 'retenez.' (hold) instruction. The bottom system is a piano accompaniment in bass clef, also in F# major and common time. It features a series of chords and arpeggiated figures. The piano part is marked with *f* and *p* dynamics and also includes a 'retenez.' instruction. The piano part ends with a fermata over a final chord.

Example 3.4. “La nuit, sans doute,” mm. 22-25.

This pattern is also present in the fourth song, “Puisque je fus aimé.” Shown in Example 3.5, the chords in mm. 14-15 are not strictly parallel 6/3 chords, but the bass notes descend by step then ascend twice by step, which makes the passage both inverted and in retrograde to the original passage in Example 3.1.

13 *f* *p*

... ciel ne, Puisque je fus aimé! je

*f* *p*

C B C D

Detailed description: This musical score consists of two systems. The top system is a vocal line in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. It begins at measure 13 with the lyrics '... ciel ne, Puisque je fus aimé! je'. The melody is marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic and includes a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. The bottom system is a piano accompaniment in bass clef, also in F# major and common time. It features a series of chords and arpeggiated figures. The piano part is marked with *f* and *p* dynamics. Below the piano part, the chords are labeled C, B, C, and D. The piano part ends with a fermata over a final chord.

Example 3.5. “Puisqu’elle a pris ma vie,” mm. 13-15.



## Harmony

The harmonies exhibited in *Poème d'amour* reflect a more mature, refined composer with an ear bent towards what is popular among the consumers of his music. As the nineteenth century drew to a close, poets and composers alike were creating works that were less rigid and pre-defined by past compositions. Certain attributes of *Poème d'amour*, however, carried over from the previous cycles, which we can consider hallmarks of Massenet's personal style. These features are as follows: prevalent use of chromatic mediant modulations, retrogression, and implied or understated final cadences. Not all of his songs in all of his works exhibit these features, but enough do to suggest the features as “Massenet-like.”

### Pitch Centers

Like *Poème d'avril*, *Poème d'amour* contains songs that modulate to chromatic mediants, but some songs exhibit more fluid pitch centers. The first song, “Je me suis plaint,” has a very fluid pitch center, shifting from Am to C in nearly every other phrase, as shown in the table below. This fluidity is reminiscent of the opening song of *Dichterliebe*, and creates a sense of insecurity or unsettledness. The duality of keys in this song suggests mixed emotions within the narrator as he complains to things in nature and they comfort him in turn. The mixed emotions intensify toward the end of the song, when the narrator proclaims that while these things comforted him, what cured him was a woman: “Mais qui ma guéri? c'est la femme! /Quand je pleurais, elle a pleuré!” (But who cured me? The woman! /When I cried, she cried!)

**Table 3.1.** Key areas in “Je me suis plaint.”

A minor	C major
mm. 1-6	mm. 7-10
mm. 11-12	mm. 13-14
mm. 15-20*	mm. 21-25
mm. 26*	

\*Contains A major modulation

The pitch center in “La nuit, sans doute” changes rapidly in mm. 7-12, shown below in Example 3.6. Preceded by a  $vii^{6/5}/V$  in G major, the song tonicizes E major in m. 7 while maintaining an LIP (linear intervallic pattern). In m. 9, the parallel 6/3 chords are hinted at, but a flourish in the accompaniment disrupts the pattern. The following measures, mm. 10-11, are in A minor, and lead to the second half of the song in G major. This series of modulations shows that the pitch center is more fluid, which is a trend that appears in many of the songs in *Poème d'amour*. The music here is particularly apt for the text in this passage since the text is about the narrator being “rendered insane” by the night and the love for his partner.

6 *mf*  
L'œu - vre de Dieu. — C'était dans les nids de verdu - re

*mf*

G: vii<sup>o6/5</sup>/V E: V<sup>6/4</sup> - 4/3 I<sup>4-3</sup> ii<sup>7</sup> I

9  
Trop de chansons! L'étoi - le brillait — trop pu - re

*piu f*

I<sup>6/4</sup> ii<sup>6</sup> iii<sup>6</sup> V<sup>7</sup> Am: i<sup>6</sup> VII<sup>7</sup> vii<sup>o7</sup> i<sup>9/4-8/3</sup>

**Example 3.6.** “La nuit, sans doute,” mm. 6-11.

The first section of “Ouvre tes yeux bleus” also modulates up to a chromatic mediant, from F major to A major. This is achieved by continuing the bass line from C - Bb - A in mm. 8-9. The aural effect, however, is jarring because there is no real moment of pivoting. This chord progression also echoes the A - G - F pattern that is found throughout the cycle; the implied F chord passes through a G minor chord on the way to A major. The section in A major is also harmonized with an A pedal throughout, similar to the part in F major. The modulation back to F major is more subtle, and relies again on a descending bass line to lead from the A to a C, seen in Example 3.8, below.

Dé-jà la fau-ve-té fre-don-ne Un chant d'a-

-mour. L'au-rose é-panou-it la ro-se:

F G

A

**Example 3.7.** “Ouvre tes yeux bleus,” mm. 6-11.

The songs in *Poème d'amour* also contain retrogressing chord progressions. This is related in part to the use of parallel 6/3 chords, such as the passage above in “Je me suis plaint,” Example 3.1, and “La nuit sans doute,” Example 3.2. In “Ouvre tes yeux bleus,” the first phrase implies a cadential 6/4 progression with the bass line, but leads to a  $ii^6$  chord instead; the same song contains a retrogressive move from a  $V^7$  to a  $ii^{4/2}$  chord in mm. 17-18, shown below in Example 3.8.

16 Ré - veil - le - toi !

*f*

F: ii<sup>7</sup> V<sup>7</sup>

18 Ré - veil - le - toi !

ii<sup>4/2</sup> V<sup>6/5</sup> IV<sup>6</sup> V<sup>7</sup>

**Example 3.8.** “Ouvre tes yeux bleus,” mm. 16-20.

### Ambiguity

Massenet creates more ambiguous harmony by leaving out the leading tone.

Unlike the extended introduction of *Poème d'avril*, the introduction of the first song in *Poème d'amour*, “Je me suis plaint,” is a mere two measures over an A pedal. In the example shown above, the material from the first two measures is altered slightly in the next two measures, though the A pedal remains. The accompaniment has a simple block chord construction, which supports a more declamatory melody that is mostly comprised of eighth notes. The chords consist of alternating A minor and E chords. The E chords do

not have a third, so their role as dominant chords is ambiguous. The next two measures, mm. 5-6, contain the conclusion of the first phrase in A minor with a perfect authentic cadence. (See Example 3.1.)

As discussed above, Massenet also uses very spare accompaniment at the moment of the final cadence in each song. This is another way of breaking from the square, predictable phrases used in French *romance* and early German *Lieder*. A look at the final cadences of each song reveals Massenet's consistent use of spare accompaniments to imply  $V^7$  chords. In "Puisqu'elle a pris ma vie," in Example 3.9, the right hand melody leads to a single  $\hat{5}$  that supports the vocal line. The accompaniment continues to descend to  $\hat{4}$ , and resolves to a  $\hat{3}$  in the return of the figuration used throughout the B section of the song.

The image displays a musical score for Example 3.9, consisting of two systems of music. The first system (measures 31-38) features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "La fleur du sou-ve-nir!..." and ends with "Puisque je". The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings such as *f* and *expressif et sans retenir.*. Fingerings are indicated with numbers 1-5 above notes. The second system (measures 35-38) continues the vocal line with "fus ai-mé!..." and the piano accompaniment with *p* and *rall.* markings. The piano part concludes with a cadence. The score is written in G major and 3/4 time.

Example 3.9. "Puisqu'elle a pris ma vie," mm. 31-38.

The final cadence of "Pourquoi pleures-tu?.." is similar to that of "Puisqu'elle a pris ma vie." Shown in Example 3.10, in m. 41, the right hand figuration is accented and then lingers on  $\hat{4}$ , which is picked up by the vocal line. The vocal line then descends to an F unaccompanied, resulting in a perfect authentic cadence.

41 meurt sur la grève... Pleu- *p*

45 *poco rall.* 4 3 2 1<sup>er</sup> **Mouv<sup>t</sup>** - rer fait du bien! \_\_\_\_\_

*suivez.* *p*

V<sup>7</sup>/iv ii:<sup>4</sup>/2 I

**Example 3.10.** “Pourquoi pleures-tu?..,” mm. 41-48

The most striking form of ambiguity employed by Massenet is the extended use of pedal tones in *Poème d'amour*. Pedal tones are referred to as a German influence in French song, but Massenet uses them extensively. They create a soundscape of many suspensions and prolonged areas of tonic and dominant. Examples of pedal tones are found in nearly every song in this cycle. For example, Massenet uses a prolonged dominant pedal throughout the majority of “Pourquoi pleures-tu,” the fifth song of *Poème d'amour*. Set in F minor, the first 16 measures hover over a low, repeated C. When the song modulates to Ab major, the song remains over a dominant pedal, which is Eb in this



case. The dominant pedal finally resolves to a tonic in m. 43, three measures from the end. The last three measures evoke the famous Prelude in C Major from J. S. Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 1*; rather than resolving to an F major chord, the dominant pedal resolves to F<sup>7</sup>, which passes through a ii<sup>04/2</sup> chord, and finally rests on an F major chord in m. 45.

### **Melody and Accompaniment**

The relationship between melody and accompaniment in *Poème d'amour* is different from what we encountered in *Poème d'avril*. The accompaniment scarcely doubles the melody, unlike *Poème d'avril*, which gives the impression that Massenet was writing for a more musically advanced singer. This independence of melody and accompaniment also allowed for the expansion of the roles played by both of these parts. The melody became more fluid, more glued to the accents of the text, which amounted to a freer, more declamatory feel. In contrast, the accompaniment became more spare and, surprisingly, more regular throughout the pieces. In fact, *Poème d'amour* is much easier to analyze formally than *Poème d'avril*. The phrase lengths and repetitions are much easier to discern because the phrases are more “square” than in *Poème d'avril*. The phrasing reflects the consistent meter that the poetry used, but as the poetry was written towards the end of the century, the phrases are not always square. When the text deviates from a more normative pattern, the music also deviates from square phrases. Because these deviations are a more sharp contrast from the otherwise consistent, even phrases, listeners more easily perceive them.

As an example, “Ouvre tes yeux bleus,” is a rare type of duet in which the man

speaks to the woman, and the woman responds. There is no overlap of the two voices; it is strictly a call and response. This is uncommon among French song, although it happens more often in German *Lieder*, as discussed before. The two singers have their own accompaniment figurations. Throughout this section, the harmony is extended through the use of pedal tones. Each phrase begins in F major, and an F pedal lasts three out of the four measures, as in Example 3.11, below. In the fourth measure of each phrase, there is a suggested  $I^{6/4}$  chord, which is evaded with the inclusion of a  $ii^6$  chord. (As a side note, the accompaniment begins with a 16th-note ascending arpeggio that is repeated throughout the duration of the first half of the piece. The vocal line imitates the ascending figuration in its first entry in m. 2. This imitation is augmented such that the vocal line uses 8th notes instead of 16th notes.)

**Allegro.**  
(Avec assez d'animation).

LUI. 1. Ouvre tes yeux bleus, ma mi -

PIANO. *mf*

gnon - - ne: Voi-ci le jour.

(I<sup>6/4</sup>) ii<sup>6/4</sup> I

**Example 3.11.** “Ouvre tes yeux bleus,” mm. 1-5.

The last phrase in the first section, mm. 21-25, is the same as the first phrase in mm. 2-5, with the important exception of the second chord in m. 23, shown in Example 3.12. In this last phrase, the I<sup>6/4</sup> is normalized, and a true V<sup>7</sup> chord leads into the second part of the song.

21 *p* *en retenant.* - - - - -  
Ou - vre tes yeux bleus, ma mi - gnon - - - - - ne ;

*p* *en retenant.* - - - - -

23 *mf* ELLE.  
Voi - ci le jour!.. - - - - - A quoi bon contempler la  
**1<sup>er</sup> Mouv!** un peu moins animé, plus soutenu.

*mf*

V<sup>6/4</sup> ---- 7/5/3  
Ped.  
I

Detailed description: The image shows a musical score for the song "Ouvre tes yeux bleus". It consists of two systems. The first system (measures 21-25) features a vocal line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment in bass clef. The vocal line starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic and the instruction "en retenant." (holding back). The piano accompaniment consists of arpeggiated chords. The second system (measures 23-25) shows the vocal line continuing with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and the instruction "ELLE." (she). The piano accompaniment changes to repeated block chords, with a dynamic of *mf* and the instruction "1<sup>er</sup> Mouv! un peu moins animé, plus soutenu." (first movement, a bit less animated, more sustained). The score includes various musical notations such as clefs, notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

**Example 3.12.** “Ouvre tes yeux bleus,” mm. 21-25.

The second half of the song is the woman's response to the man. The accompaniment uses repeated block chords rather than arpeggios. The two sections are joined at the end, when the woman sings the same melody as the opening of the man's section over her own style of accompaniment in mm. 34-38, shown in Example 3.13. Her phrase ends an octave above, however, which indicates her ecstatic mood and jubilation.

34 *f*  
Et le grand so - leil qui nous bru - - - le

36 *rall.* **1º Tempo.**  
Est dans mon cœur!

*rall. ff* **1º Tempo.** *cresc.* *rall.*

Ped. \* Ped.

Example 3.13. “Ouvre tes yeux bleus,” mm. 34-38.

The fourth song, “Puisqu'elle a pris ma vie,” is more through-composed than others, and the accompaniment figuration changes with each phrase. In mm. 6-9, shown in Example 3.14, the accompaniment is repeated up by step and accelerates the motion of the phrase, similar to mm. 13-15 in “La nuit, sans doute.” The melody does not conform to this pattern, and instead weaves in and out of the accompaniment melody in a contrapuntal manner.

Puisque cha - que ma - tin d'ex - tase est embau - mé!..

**Example 3.14.** “Puisqu'elle a pris ma vie,” mm. 6-9.

Both in mm. 10-13 (Example 3.15) and in mm. 28-31, a  $\text{vii}^{\text{o}7}/\text{ii}$  harmony is extended through various inversions underneath an increasingly free melody. The melody in “Puisqu'elle a pris ma vie” conforms more to the text accenting than the songs in *Poème d'avril*. Here, the figuration is a series of 16th-note arpeggios, followed by dotted quarter notes.

Puis - que cha - que prin - temps fleu - rit la tige an -

*mf*

Ped.

G:  $\text{vii}^{\text{o}4/2}/\text{ii}$                        $\text{vii}^{\text{o}7}/\text{ii}$                        $\text{vii}^{\text{o}6/5}/\text{ii}$

**Example 3.15.** “Puisqu'elle a pris ma vie,” mm. 10-13.

After the V<sup>13</sup> cadence in m. 16, the middle section of “Puisqu'elle a pris ma vie” modulates to G minor, the parallel minor. The accompaniment shifts into a graceful triplet 16<sup>th</sup>-note pattern, underpinning a flowing melody. The section in Gm also emphasizes the VI chord, or Eb major chord, which hints at the final song in Eb major. As seen in Example 3.16, below, this section hovers over a G pedal, which by now is clearly a hallmark of *Poème d'amour*.

16  
fus ai - mé: Le  
*un peu animé*

G: V<sup>13</sup> I i

19  
vent peut empor - ter les feuil - les é-pui -

bVI ii<sup>o</sup>4/2

22  
- sé - es... Le ciel peut se voi - ler et le

V i

**Example 3.16.** “Puisqu'elle a pris ma vie,” mm. 16-24.

In “Pourquoi pleures-tu?..,” the phrase structure is readily apparent in the accompaniment, but the melody seems to be off-set and more freely composed. The



accompaniment in mm. 1-4 is repeated exactly over the first 16 measures, providing a stable undercurrent for the declamatory melody above. In m. 17, shown below in Example 3.17, the right hand of the accompaniment is the same as the right hand in m. 1, but it is re-contextualized as V7 in Ab major.

16 *più f*  
I'oi - seau qui pré - dit les destins mo -

*più f*  
Fm: V<sup>7</sup> Ab: V<sup>9</sup> I

**Example 3.17.** “Pourquoi pleures-tu?..,” m. 16-18.

### Text Setting

*Poème d'amour* uses poetry selected from the works of Paul Robiquet (1848-1928). Little is known about this poet. The only other composer to set him was Cécile Chaminade. As a poet writing in the late nineteenth century, his poetry breaks from the familiar meters and shallow emotional substance that were promoted in the *romance* genre. Massenet makes the most of these breaches in phrase structure, and amplifies the emotional spectrum displayed in the poetry.

In m. 22 of “Je me suis plaint,” seen below in Example 3.18, Massenet uses a 9/8 time signature. Massenet extends the words “a murmuré,” and delays the entrance of the next line by one beat, in essence creating a hesitation or pause before the narrator

continues his story. The next measure, m. 23, contains a similar pause between “Mais qui m'a guéri?..” and “c'est la femme!” (But who cured me? The woman!) The piece finishes in 9/8, extending the narrator's admission that, “Quand je pleurais, elle a pleuré!” (When I cried, she cried!)

21  
 Bien tristement a murmu\_ré: Mais qui m'a guéri?.. c'est la

24  
 Un peu retenu. *dim.*  
 fem - - me! Quand je pleurais, elle a pleuré!  
*expressif.* *dim.*  
*f* Un peu retenu. *rull.* *P*  
 Ped.

Example 3.18. “Je me suis plaint,” mm. 21-26.

In “La nuit, sans doute,” Massenet sets each line of poetry with two measures of common time and one measure of 3/2. This pattern lasts until m. 12, when the meter remains in common time. (See Examples 3.2 and 3.5, above) The melody also changes, and sounds much more urgent because of its repetition and transposition up by step in

mm. 13-15. (See Example 3.3, above.) Massenet shapes the melody around the text accents in the poetry, which are irregular. Though it is easier to identify Robiquet's poetry as strophic, there is still textual evidence of form being broken, which is supported musically by Massenet's composition. Below is a representation of the text accents in the poem, "La nuit, sans doute." The first line has four accents, while the corresponding third line only has three. The second line has two accents, on beats two and four, while the corresponding fourth line has two strong accents on beats one and four. The rest of the poem is similarly irregular.

La NUIT, sans DOUte, éTAIT trop BELLe,	The night, without a doubt, was too beautiful,
Le CIEL trop BLEU;	The heavens too blue;
J'eus TORT d'admIRER avec ELle	I was wrong to admire with her
L'OEUVre de DIEU.	The work of God.
C'éTAIT dans les NIDS de verDURE	It was in the nests of green
TROP de chanSONS!	Too many songs!
L'éTOILE brillAIT trop PUre	The brightness of the star was too pure
SUR les gaZONS!	On the grass!
OUI, c'est TA faute, ô NUIT seREIne,	Yes, it's your fault, o serene night,
Si SON beau COU,	If her beautiful neck,
Son front PÂle, ses YEUX de REIne	Her pale forehead, her queenly eyes
M'ont RENdu FOU.	Rendered me insane.

Aside from formal breaches in poetry, another way that poets broke from tradition was by evoking images and ideas that were more scandalous, daring, or exotic. Examples of these themes are prevalent in *Poème d'amour*. Compared to the themes present in *Poème d'avril*, which were similar to themes found in the *Lieder* of Schumann and Schubert, Robiquet's poetry in *Poème d'amour* is quite risqué. In "Ouvre tes yeux bleus," for example, the man tells the woman to open her eyes to the new day and come outside

with him. The woman has a different idea, stating that the summer, the birds, and the sun are all in her heart. This is intended as a euphemism for staying in bed, and though not risqué by current standards, allusions to anything other than a “polite” proclamation of love was rare in the *romance*.<sup>21</sup>

After analyzing *Poème d'amour*, it becomes clear that Massenet's style was progressing towards the *mélodie* in all aspects. While the use of overt thematic relationships declined, key relationships, as well as other common motives, maintained the coherence of the work. The treatment of the accompaniment was increasingly more sensitive to the phrasing of the text, and the voice was more independent of the accompaniment. The text itself was more freely composed, and contained subject matter that was more complex, and occasionally scandalous. In the next chapter, these ideas are taken further in *Expressions lyriques*.

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21 See quote on p. 36.

CHAPTER IV  
EXPRESSIONS LYRIQUES

Massenet wrote *Expressions lyriques* at the end of his career, and it was published posthumously in 1913. In this collection, he uses both speech and song to convey the poetry. He had experimented with this technique before, in *Poème d'avril*, as well as in some of his operatic works. Demar Irvine points out in his biography:

*Le Portrait de Manon*, in one act, opened at the Opéra-Comique on 8 May 1894. ... *A bluette*, an ingratiating trifle, Georges Boyer's libretto permitted Massenet to express delicate sentiments and, above all, to recall with a tinge of melancholy the themes of *Manon*. Occasionally the singers lapse momentarily into speech, suggesting a light touch of melodrama rather than the *opéra comique* tradition of sustained dialogue (Irvine 193).

Indeed, the poetry employed by Massenet in *Expressions lyriques* shares this touch of melodrama, and the idea of building on existing operatic works is demonstrated in the fifth song of the collection, “La dernière lettre de Werther à Charlotte,” among others.

*Expressions lyriques* is not a cycle in terms of overarching narrative, thematic relationships, or key schemes. However, Massenet selected particular keys to represent moods suggested by each poem. Each song uses a different poet, with few exceptions. The table below, Table 4.1, lists each song, the poet, the primary keys, and a brief synopsis. As you can see in the table, no firm relationships exist among the key areas. Thematic relationships are non-existent, or occur by happenstance. The themes in each song are engineered to suit the texts, and since the texts are so varied, each song has a

different character.<sup>22</sup>

**Table 4.1.** Songs in *Expressions lyriques*: the poets, keys, and brief synopsis.

	Song Name	Poet	Key	Brief Synopsis
1	Dialogue	M. Varenne	C minor	Dialogue between lovers; the relationship has faded
2	Les nuages	M. R. de Louvencourt	A minor	Clouds are a metaphor for fleeting Youth
3	En voyage	Th. Maurer	A major	A dialogue between a stranger and a traveler
4	Battements d'ailes	J. Dortzal	D major	Two lovers enjoy the summer evening
5	La dernière lettre de Werther à Charlotte	R. de Gontaut-Biron	G major	Werther write his suicide note to Charlotte
6	Comme autrefois	J. Dortzal	C minor	Lament about a previous relationship
7	Nocturne	J. Dortzal	D major	The speaker professes love at night
8	Mélancolie	--	C minor	The speaker is at the whim of his dark emotions
9	Rose de Mai	S. Poirson	G major	Glorifies the rose, which signifies love and remembrance
10	Feux-follets d'amour...	M. Grain	G major	Will-o'-the-wisps as metaphor for the madness of love

What is significant about the work is that Massenet uses the relationship between sung and spoken verses for different effects within each song. As Noske writes in his chapter on Massenet in *French Song From Berlioz to Duparc*,

<sup>22</sup> Full texts and translations can be found in Appendix C, p. 1021.

The texts are chosen with care, not according to their poetic value but for their structural qualities, which offer the composer opportunities for contrasting the two means of expression. Thus a single person may suggest a dialogue by singing the questions and declaiming the answers (215).

Creating a dialogue between two speakers is not the only role that this song vs. speech dichotomy plays in *Expressions lyriques*. Spoken poetry also serves as an inner monologue for the speaker, as well as serving as an extremely soft or quiet moment.

The other significance of this work, and why it belongs in this study, is that it demonstrates the traits of French song in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By exploring *Expressions lyriques*, one can see Massenet's concepts of harmony and treatment of text have changed, from a more German conception of form and accompaniment to a newly formed French style. This style includes using poetry with more emotional depth, viewing text as the utmost importance, and thus using accompaniment as a background and second interpreter of the text (the first being the vocalist). Though he did not embrace these features to the extent of his younger contemporaries at the time (a few of the songs in this work are strophic, considered archaic by newer composers in the beginning of the twentieth century), Massenet composed *Expressions lyriques* in light of these musical advancements.

To demonstrate these features in *Expressions lyriques*, the following analysis will consist of a review of the harmonic features that differ from his previous compositions in terms of color, balance, and nuance. I will begin by investigating the relationships between the chosen keys and the moods and subject matter that they depict, followed by a discussion of the harmonic features present in the songs. Finally, Massenet's text setting will be examined.

### Emotional Meaning of Selected Keys

While I have stated that the key relationships between the songs in *Expressions lyriques* are not purposeful, it stands to reason that the limited number of keys used in *Expressions lyriques* is indicative of some other reasoning of Massenet's to choose the keys that he did. The keys in *Expressions lyriques* are limited to C minor, G major, D major, A minor, and A major. These keys arrange themselves nicely into a pattern of fifths, and even occur in a falling fifths progression in songs 3-6. However, what is more important to notice is that each key is used to depict a certain mood or emotion that is recommended by the text selected for each song. C minor is used for three songs that are full of melancholy, the death of a relationship, death, etc. A minor is used for a song that focuses on passing clouds as a metaphor for youth. The third song, "En voyage," is a light-hearted dialogue presented in A major. Songs in G major, of which there are three, deal with the powerful emotions of love and faithfulness. Finally, the two songs in D major depict two lovers communicating at nighttime.

A more detailed analysis of the three songs in C minor is presented below. In addition to the common key and the melancholy subject matter, Db is a significant sonority in each of these songs, whether as a Neapolitan chord or a modulation. The first song, "Dialogue," begins in C minor as discussed above. The song briefly tonicizes Db major before a cadence in C minor. (See Example 4.1, below.) This modulation is achieved by an enharmonic modulation; the V<sup>7</sup> chord in Db major is treated as a Gr<sup>+6</sup> chord in C minor. This sort of modulation is often found in the songs of Schubert.



25 *Più lento.* Mon bien ai.mé, les bai.sers meu.rent.  
 vont se po.ser... *Più lento.* Mon bien ai.mé, les bai.sers meu.rent.  
 suivre *pp* *dim.*  
 Db: vi  $V^7$   
 Cm: Gr<sup>+6</sup>  $V^7$   $8^4 B^b$

**Example 4.1.** “Dialogue,” mm. 25-28.

In “Dialogue,” the descending bass and low sonorities represent the downcast mood of the poetry, which is the end of a relationship between two lovers. One lover, the singer, tries to preserve the relationship with kisses, flowers, etc., while the other lover, the speaker, claims that each of these things are dying. The lover who desires the end of the relationship is rightly depicted by spoken verse because the words he/she speaks are gloomy, quiet, and morose.

The next song composed in C minor is “Comme autrefois,” which is a song about remembering lost love. “Comme autrefois” also manifests a melancholy tone, complete with repeated, dirge-like low Cs in the bass and descending melodic lines. This song in C minor also visits Db major; the second strophe modulates to Db minor in mm. 7-10 (see Example 4.2, below). At the end of the song, the descending melody is augmented, which creates a sense of trailing off, similar to the coat referred to in the poetry. The coat

represents the relationship in the past, indicated in the first stanza.<sup>23</sup>

mes mé-lan-co-li-es. Puis j'ai re-

mes mé-lan-co-li-es. Puis j'ai re-

.mis la fleur Qui trem-blait sur mon cœur.

Cm: i  $\overline{\text{V}^7/\text{bII}}$   
 | Dbm: V<sup>7</sup> i bVI

**Example 4.2.** “Comme autrefois,” mm. 7-10.

The last song presented in C minor is “Mélancolie,” and it is in a similar tone to the previous songs in Cm. “Mélancolie” does not modulate or tonicize Db, but the use of the N<sup>6</sup> chord (i.e., a Db major chord) is prevalent throughout the song, such as in m. 7, seen below in Example 4.3.

<sup>23</sup> See Appendix C, p. 106.

69

pau.vre rien... Le temps est gris... Qu'im . por . tel.. rall.

pau.vre rien... Le temps est gris... Qu'im . por . tel.. rall.

Cm: v N<sup>6</sup> V<sup>7</sup> \*

a Tempo. *pp sans voix*

Va, mon cœur; sui - vant ce qui t'em.

a Tempo.

Example 4.3. "Mélancolie," mm. 6-12.

### Harmony

Before the discussion of text, I would like to focus on the harmony found in the songs of *Expressions lyriques* in hopes of drawing connections between Massenet's previous cycles and this work. The songs in *Expressions lyriques* resemble the French *mélodie* more than the *romance* for many reasons. In general, the *mélodie* uses extended harmonic areas to create a background of color and emotional effect, whereas the

*romance* uses more straightforward harmonies. The German *Lied* was influential even here in Massenet's later works, as one can see imitation, pedal tones, and functional harmony. In this section, aspects of the songs that carry over from earlier *Poèmes* are examined, as well as features that point towards the newer style of the *mélodie*.

### Color and Extended Harmonies

In each of these songs, one can find examples of extended harmonies that are commonplace in later *mélodies*, particularly in Debussy. The collection opens with “Dialogue,” which features a pedal C at the beginning. See Example 4.4, which shows mm. 1-8. The entire piece is based on this pedal and the descent from C to G in the bass line, resulting in a static harmonic backdrop over which the text is free to come forward. The descending bass line is re-contextualized throughout the song; the first instance is in mm. 4-5, where the phrase ends on a half cadence. The second occurrence is in mm. 13-14, presented in major, and here the half cadence is tonicized by an added F#. Compare Example 4.4 to Example 4.5, mm. 13-14.

VOIX

Andantino con moto. *p*

Andantino con moto. *p*

Pourquoi donc ne dis-tu plus rien? Je te trouve ce

PIANO

5 *rall.* *a Tempo.* Cm: i *rall.* v<sup>6</sup>

soir pâ - li - e: Bou - der dé - ja, ce n'est pas bien... *rall.*

*ii*<sup>♭4/3</sup> V

Example 4.4. "Dialogue," mm. 1-8.

13

C'est de l'amour qu'elles é - ma - nent: Dans tes beaux yeux pourquoi ces pleurs?

PIANO

*p*

Example 4.5. "Dialogue," mm. 13-16.

The second song, "Les nuages," features an ostinato bass. The bass line and the accompaniment melody are much more chromatic, and the chromaticism obscures the A minor key area, particularly in m. 3 (Example 4.6), where the chromatic lines move in

contrary motion. The continuous chromatic motion prolongs the A minor key area by landing on an A minor chord on each downbeat.

1 *Lent - soutenu - expressif.*

VOIX

PIANO *pp*

4

*pp*

Les voyez-vous passer sous le ciel monotone, Tous ces nuages blancs aux reflets bleus et gris?

**Example 4.6.** “Les nuages,” mm. 1-6.

After a brief recitative, the accompaniment shifts into a passage of animated triplets. The harmony is very obscure here as well due to chromatic embellishments and suspensions, as seen in Example 4.7. This obscurity relates to the use of color tones found in younger composers in the early twentieth century, which emphasizes abstract sound rather than functional harmony to convey the meaning of the text.

15. *Un peu plus animé.*  
*sostenuto cantabile.*  
 Un peu plus animé. Quand fuyant sous le vent des dé-sil-lu-si-

18. *più f*  
 ons, Ton ai-le, se bri-sant à l'é-

**Example 4.7.** “Les nuages,” mm. 15-20.

The fourth song, “Battement d’ailes,” has an extended introduction, seen in Example 4.8. In this eight-measure introduction, Massenet demonstrates contrasting motivic ideas (the 32nd-note chromatic flourishes that possibly represent the beating wings referenced in the song title) with sustained harmonies. The harmonies are simply I and V chords which are embellished with suspensions and chromatic alterations, such as in m. 7. The piano introduction is reminiscent of piano introductions and preludes found in Massenet’s earlier works, as well as German song cycles. Here, the prelude accompanies the silence of the two lovers in the text. The poetry describes the scenery surrounding the two lovers as they gaze into each other’s eyes, silently appreciating the love that they share.

The musical score for "Battement d'ailes" (mm. 1-8) is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 1-2) is marked "Assez lent." and "PIANO". The second system (measures 3-4) continues the piano introduction. The third system (measures 5-8) shows a shift in texture, with the right hand playing a melody and the left hand playing a bass line. The dynamics are marked "pp léger" in the first system and "sf" and "pp" in the third system.

**Example 4.8.** "Battement d'ailes," mm. 1-8.

The ideas presented in the introduction pervade the entire first half of the song. In the second half, the texture of the accompaniment shifts into something that is reminiscent of Brahms' slower *Lieder*. The texture consists of the right and left hand in the bass range, and both hands repeat the same chords for a prolonged period of time, offset from each other by an eighth beat. The harmonies in mm. 22-25, shown below in Example 4.9, prolong D major, with added tones B, G, and E in mm. 24-25. This creates a soft, sustained sound-scape as a backdrop for the text.



22 **Plus lent.** *p*  
Ah! laissez-nous ber-cer

**Plus lent.** *pff*

24 *piu f*  
par le di-vin ha.sard... Quel bonheur de s'ai.mer au cœur mê.me des

**Example 4.9.** “Battement d’ailes,” mm. 22-25.

The final example of extended harmonies is found in “Comme autrefois,” the sixth song, which is similar to the fifth song of *Poème d’amour*, “Pourquoi pleures-tu?...” in the accompaniment; both pieces are built over a pedal that enters after an 8th-note rest, and both pedals happen to be C. However, in “Comme autrefois,” the pedal is the tonic, whereas the C pedal serves as a dominant pedal in “Pourquoi pleures-tu?...” The harmony shifts back and forth from C minor to Ab major, or bVI in the key of C minor, as seen in Example 4.10, below. The accompaniment melody is what drives the tension in this song, and is responsible for the modulations that occur in the piece. The vocal melody is very repetitious, suggesting the mood of the narrator with the descent of pitches.

The image shows a musical score for the first four measures of a piece. It is written for voice and piano. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked 'Lent.' and the dynamics are 'p' (piano) and 'expressif'. The vocal line starts with the lyrics 'J'ai re - vé . . . tu, ce soir, Mon lar - ge man - teau noir,'. The piano accompaniment features a single line of chords in the right hand and single notes in the left hand. The first system shows measures 1 and 2, and the second system shows measures 3 and 4.

**Example 4.10.** “Comme autrefois,” mm. 1-4.

### Cadences

The final cadences found in Massenet's songs in *Expressions lyriques* are similar to cadences found in his other works. A few of the songs contain Massenet's “spare cadence,” which is a reduction of the accompaniment to a single line (usually  $\hat{5}$ ,  $\hat{4}$ ,  $\hat{3}$ ) while the melody finishes the cadence. One variation of this cadence is found in “Les nuages,” where the single notes in the accompaniment are embellished with the pitches at lower octaves, as seen in Example 4.11. Another unusual aspect of this cadence is that the vocal line is spoken, not sung, therefore leaving the cadence incomplete. Given the text at this moment, when the narrator addresses the clouds after singing about the metaphor of Youth as represented by the clouds, one can understand the quiet isolation that the spoken

words and the spare cadence evoke.<sup>24</sup> The chords leading up to the cadence are unconventional, as well.

41

Voilà pourquoi souvent, images en dentelle, Mes yeux en vous  
suivant s'attristent malgré moi.

*pp*

*rapide et léger.*

*dim.*

*pp*

*pp*

5 6 1

**Example 4.11.** “Les nuages,” mm. 41-43.

The third song, “En voyage,” provides a lovely example of Massenet's spare cadence in mm. 33-36 (Example 4.12, below). The accompaniment descends from  $\hat{5}$  to  $\hat{4}$  to  $\hat{3}$ , as the melody comes to rest on the tonic in m. 35. However, Massenet adds a twist that suits the text well by resolving to a  $bVI$  deceptive cadence before arriving on the tonic in m. 36. The text at the end is referring to adventure (“On peut tenter l'aventure” (One must try the adventure))), and this deceptive cadence is quite adventurous.

<sup>24</sup> The text here is:

Voilà pourquoi souvent, images en dentelle,  
Mes yeux en vous suivant s'attristent malgré moi.  
(That is why often, images of lace,  
My eyes following you become sad in spite of me.)

33 *p* sans retenir. *dim.*  
 - On peut tenter l'aven.tu . re, quand le bonheur est au bout!  
 5 4 *dim.* *pp* sans retenir. *dim.*

**Example 4.12.** “En voyage,” mm. 33-36.

One more cadence to point out is at the end of the fifth song, “La dernière lettre de Werther à Charlotte.” In Example 4.13, three chords bring the song to a close, and I would like to bring attention to the parallel fifths exhibited in the bass line. This mistreatment of functional harmony and the increasing amount of mixture and chromaticism is what causes these songs to be regarded more as *mélodies* instead of *romances*.

*pp* *f*  
 A . dieu... A . dieu!  
 47 *p* *pp* *f*  
 Charlot . te... A . dieu... A . dieu!  
*f* *p* *pp*

**Example 4.13.** “La dernière lettre de Werther à Charlotte,” mm. 47-49.

### **Text Painting in the Melody and Accompaniment**

The transformation from the early *Poème d'avril*, with thematic relationships and harmonic features that suggest a more music-centric approach, to *Expressions lyriques* is expressed through the analysis of the treatment of text throughout the collection.

It is clear in the analysis of *Expressions lyriques* that Massenet's focus is on the text by the way that the meaning of the poetry dominates what occurs in the melody and the accompaniment of each song. The first section of this analysis focuses on the dynamic between spoken and sung text, and the second section deals with musical word painting in the melody and accompaniment.

#### Experimentation with Spoken and Sung Verse

The setting of text in alternatively sung and spoken text is a poignant example of text painting. Massenet uses these two different sound qualities to create many different effects. The most straightforward of these effects is creating a dialogue between two characters. He also uses spoken verse to supply inner monologue, or to emphasize the *sotto voce* required by a particular line of text. Below are specific examples of how Massenet used spoken verse to contrast with sung verse, clarifying meaning and adding subtlety to the songs of *Expressions lyriques*.

The primary reason that Massenet uses speech and song is to divide the text into two different characters. The first song of *Expressions lyriques* is entitled "Dialogue," which implies that a dialogue takes place in the song. The two participants in the dialogue are separated into a singing role and a speaking role. Below is a reproduction of the full

text of this poem, with the spoken portions italicized. The singer cites examples of his or her attempt to maintain a relationship between the two characters, such as bringing flowers or kissing. The speaking character, on the other hand, responds after each stanza with a rebuttal. An alternative interpretation is that the dialogue is conducted between the singer and his or her inner monologue; i.e. the singer is saying things out loud, while the spoken portions are the inner thoughts, full of doubt about the relationship. Either way, the spoken text clearly differentiates the two roles in the text. Dialogues of this sort are found in the third song, “En voyage,” and the last song, “Feux-follets d'amour,” as well. In the case of the last song, the sung portions describe what the virgin in the text is doing and saying, while the spoken portions describe the will-o'-the-wisps.

## Dialogue

Pourquoi donc ne dis-tu plus rien?  
 Je te trouve ce soir pâlie:  
 Boudier déjà, ce n'est pas bien...  
*Mon aimé, les serments s'oublent.*

Alors prends ce bouquet de fleurs,  
 C'est de l'amour qu'elles émanent:  
 Dans tes beaux yeux pourquoi ces pleurs?  
*Mon bien aimé, les fleurs se fanent.*

Donne-moi ta bouche à baiser,  
 On dit que les lèvres effleurent  
 Mais les miennes vont se poser...  
*Mon bien aimé, les baisers meurent.*

## Dialogue

Why do you not say anything?  
 I find that you look pale tonight:  
 Sulking already, this is not good ...  
*My loved, oaths are forgotten.*

So take this bouquet of flowers,  
 It is from love that they come:  
 Why are there tears in your beautiful eyes?  
*My beloved, the flowers are fading.*

Give me your mouth to kiss,  
 It is said that lips brush  
 But mine will stay...  
*My beloved, kisses are dying.*

Another way that Massenet uses the spoken vs. sung dichotomy is to delineate between observation and metaphor, such as in the second song, “Les nuages.” In the poem, the narrator observes the clouds passing by with spoken text, and uses clouds as a metaphor for fleeting youth. Thus, spoken and sung text separates reality from

imagination, or fact from metaphor. After the sung portion reaches a climax, the narrator returns to speech to “explain” to the clouds the reason that his “eyes become sad in spite of” him. (See Example 4.11, above.)

Massenet also uses spoken text to act as the description of a scene, while the sung text implies action, or actual speech from one character in the poem to the other. For example, in “Battements d'ailes,” the first two stanzas are spoken, and the the third and final stanza is sung. The first two stanzas describe the night, trees, and lake that set the scene for the two lovers in the poem. The last stanza begins with, “Ah! let the divine coincidence soothe the two of us...” (Ah! Laissons-nous bercer le divin hasard...), which, through the use of contrasting speech and singing, implies that one of the characters is speaking it aloud to the other. Another example of this division between environment and action is in the sixth song, “Comme autrefois.” Each stanza begins with two lines that describe what the character is doing, followed by two lines of memories that pertain to the action in the first two lines. For example, below is the first stanza of “Comme autrefois.” As before, the spoken portions are italicized. In the first two lines, the narrator is describing what he was wearing, while the second two lines describe what the coat stands for, or reminds the narrator of.

<p>J'ai revêtu, ce soir,          Mon large manteau noir,  <i>Celui que je mettais au temps de nos folies,</i>  <i>Quand tes yeux s'emplissaient de mes</i>  <i>mélancolies.</i></p>	<p>I wore, this evening,          My large black coat,  <i>The one I wore in the time of our follies,</i>  <i>When your eyes filled up with my</i>  <i>melancholy.</i></p>
--	--

### Melody and Accompaniment

*Expressions lyriques* contains a multitude of instances where the music is sculpted exactly to the meaning of the text. Massenet used text painting in all three of the works analyzed in this study, but *Expressions lyriques* stands out as a work that emphasizes text over musical conventions. This section deals with specific examples where the meaning of the text is conveyed clearly through the shaping of the melody or the coloration of the accompaniment.

The first song brings to attention the roles of major and minor modes throughout *Expressions lyriques*. In an earlier conversation about key areas being linked to particular moods, I noted that C minor was a particularly morose, depressed mood, contrasted with, for example, D major, which depicted songs that were lighter, and focused on themes of love and happiness. The idea of using major keys for happy moods and minor keys for sad moods is slightly generic; however, one can find examples of this shifting of modes for the purpose of depicting moods on a smaller scale. In the first song, the overall key is in C minor, but the second stanza modulates to the parallel major, C major. The second stanza refers to flowers that were brought by the “singer” in the relationship, and the singer mentions that the flowers were brought from love. Compared to the other two stanzas, this stanza is much more positive, and thus Massenet set it in C major. Of course, the last line of the stanza, when the other lover speaks, is presented once again in C minor, when it is clear that the roses aren't helping (in fact, they're fading).

The second song is full of moments where the accompaniment and melody paint the text in a way that enhances our understanding of the poetry. Some of these moments



are more heavy-handed than others. For example, the second stanza describes the clouds, which are the subject of the poem, as “panic-stricken.” This is portrayed in the accompaniment as low triplet figures that build tension and a sense of foreboding for the listener, shown in Example 4.14, below.

7

Sans trêve ils sont chassés    Qui les pousse toujours    Ils sont tout effolés et semblent en détresse,  
par l'âpre vent d'automne,    et les met en débris;   

Un peu agité.

*pp*

**Example 4.14.** “Les nuages,” mm. 7-9.

“Les nuages” includes a passage of recitative that strongly resembles a recitative passage found in *Poème d'avril*. Both of these recitative passages are accompanied by rolled chords, as well as having two phrases where the second phrase is a whole step higher than the first. Refer back to Example 2.16, and to Example 4.15 below, for a comparison between the recitatives in “Sur la source” and “Les nuages.”

24 *rall.* *dol.* **Plus animé.** *déclamatoire.*  
 vol d'al - cy - ons. On te rappelle en vain, tu

*rall.* **Plus animé.**  
*dol.* *cres.* *f*

27 *più f*  
 pars i - ne.xo - ra - ble, On t'es.père, on t'attend,

*più f* *f*

**Example 4.15.** “Les nuages,” mm. 24-29.

The third song, “En voyage,” is a clear dialogue between two characters, one who is traveling, and the other who is objecting to the timing of the voyage, the car that the traveler is using, etc. This opposition is depicted in the time signatures of the accompaniment; the right hand is in 12/8, while the left hand is in 4/4. The constant driving eighth notes in the left hand, and the triplet eighth notes in the right hand, are reminiscent of the traveling that the character is about to go, as well. The accompaniment has a cyclic pattern to it, and the figuration is such that each measure implies a key of its own by tonicizing a chord and then touching on the chord that is a fifth above, as seen in Example 4.16.

1 *Modéré.*

VOIX

*Modéré.*

PIANO

*p sost.*

2 Red.

AM: I (V)

**Example 4.16.** “En voyage,” mm. 1-2.

“Battements d’ailes,” the fourth song, ends with a particularly touching sentiment, suggesting that the two lovers throw handfuls of lovers on life. This suggests that the lovers are carefree, and loving with abandon. This sentiment is depicted in the text by repeating the phrase, “des roses!” at different pitch levels at the end of the song. Thus the voice, like the roses, are scattered on life, and on the ear of the listener, as shown in Example 4.17.

30 *Chaleureux. più f.*

*rall.*

des ro - ses!.. des ro . . . ses!..

*Chaleureux.*

*cres.*

*f*

*rall.*

*ff*

**Example 4.17.** “Battements des ailes,” mm. 30-32.

The most operatic of Massenet's songs in this collection is “La dernière lettre de Werther à Charlotte.” The song is through-composed, and Massenet sets the text dramatically to suit the dramatic nature of the text, which is the scene in which Werther writes his suicide letter to Charlotte. There are both micro and macro instances of text painting that occur in this song. The first, a small example of Massenet's sensitivity to the text, is in m. 7, when Werther first speaks, “Il faut nous séparer” (We must part). The accompaniment is in 12/8, while the melody is in 4/4, and Massenet highlights that on the word “séparer,” when the dotted rhythm contrasts with the triplet rhythm in the accompaniment (see Example 4.18).

The image shows a musical score for the song "La dernière lettre de Werther à Charlotte." It consists of two staves: a vocal line on top and a piano accompaniment on the bottom. The vocal line starts at measure 7, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The lyrics "Il faut nous sé - parer..." are written below the notes. The piano accompaniment is in 12/8 time, while the vocal melody is in 4/4 time. A box highlights the word "séparer" in the vocal line, where a dotted rhythm is used. In the piano accompaniment, a triplet rhythm is used in the right hand, contrasting with the dotted rhythm in the vocal line. The piano accompaniment is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a *dim.* (diminuendo) marking.

**Example 4.18.** “La dernière lettre de Werther à Charlotte,” mm. 7-9.

The next example of text painting is a more subtle depiction of the text. When Werther proclaims that, “Je vous fais mes adieux de la petite chambre /D'où je ne sortirai plus que dans mon linceul” (I make my farewells to you from the small room /From which I will only get out in my shroud), the accompaniment slows from a tumultuous passage in 2/4 time to a more dirge-like 12/8 time. The song also modulates at that point

to B minor, after a passage that oscillated from VI<sup>6/4</sup> to V in A minor. The cadence in B minor in m. 30 (see Example 4.19) is a return to stability that was lacking in the previous section.

The image shows a musical score for Example 4.19, consisting of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in treble clef with a 2/4 time signature. It begins with the lyrics "les dé . pose à vos ge . noux . Je vous fais mes a .". The piano accompaniment is in bass clef with a 2/4 time signature. The score includes performance markings such as "rall.", "Plus lent.", "dim.", and "pp". The key signature is B minor (two flats). The score is divided into two systems, with the first system covering measures 29 and 30, and the second system covering measures 31 and 32. The lyrics are placed below the vocal line, and the piano part is written below the vocal line. The score is annotated with "rall." and "Plus lent." above the vocal line, and "dim." and "pp" above the piano line. The lyrics are "les dé . pose à vos ge . noux . Je vous fais mes a .". The piano part is written in bass clef with a 2/4 time signature. The score is divided into two systems, with the first system covering measures 29 and 30, and the second system covering measures 31 and 32. The lyrics are placed below the vocal line, and the piano part is written below the vocal line. The score is annotated with "rall." and "Plus lent." above the vocal line, and "dim." and "pp" above the piano line. The lyrics are "les dé . pose à vos ge . noux . Je vous fais mes a .".

Bm: N<sup>6</sup> V<sup>4-3</sup> i

**Example 4.19.** “La dernière lettre de Werther à Charlotte,” mm. 29-30.

Perhaps Massenet's most heavy-handed example of text painting is found in mm. 39-40 of “La dernière lettre de Werther à Charlotte.” The text there is, “Noël!.. j'entends au loin des airs gais sur des flûtes...” (Christmas! I hear in the distance merry tunes played on flutes...). In Example 4.20, the accompaniment breaks from the figuration in the previous measures to emulate joyful, staccato flutes. The effect is somewhat startling and out of place.

39

Même mouv<sup>t</sup> *f* No. él!.. *dim.* j'en.tends au loin des airs gais sur des

Même mouv<sup>t</sup> *f* No. él!.. *dim.* j'entends au loin des airs gais sur des

*ppp* *dim.*

Detailed description: This musical score consists of three staves. The top two staves are vocal lines for a male voice, with lyrics in French. The bottom staff is the piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked 'Même mouv<sup>t</sup>' (Same movement) and the dynamics range from *f* (forte) to *ppp* (pianissimo) and *dim.* (diminuendo). The piano part features a melody in octaves, with a *ppp* dynamic marking and a *dim.* marking. The lyrics are: 'No. él!.. j'en.tends au loin des airs gais sur des'.

Example 4.20. “La dernière lettre de Werther à Charlotte,” mm. 39-40.

Massenet makes excellent use of texture to suggest mood in the eighth song, “Mélancolie.” The beginning of the song consists of a melody in octaves in the accompaniment, seen in Example 4.21. This creates a sense of vacuous emptiness, which describes the melancholy tone of the poem.

1

VOIX *Andante espressivo. (sans lenteur)* *p* Sur les flots de la vi . e,

Sur les flots de la vi . e,

PIANO *Andante espressivo. (sans lenteur)* *f* *p*

Detailed description: This musical score consists of three staves. The top two staves are vocal lines for a voice, with lyrics in French. The bottom staff is the piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked 'Andante espressivo. (sans lenteur)' and the dynamics range from *f* (forte) to *p* (piano). The piano part features a melody in octaves, with a *f* dynamic marking and a *p* marking. The lyrics are: 'Sur les flots de la vi . e,'.

Example 4.21. “Mélancolie,” mm. 1-3.

Massenet also uses motives to describe certain words, such as in “Rose de Mai.” The four chords in the introduction are repeated every time the speaker says the words, “ô rose de Mai.” However, the chords do not accompany the words when they are sung until they are sung at the final cadence.

To conclude, Massenet's last collection of songs, *Expressions lyriques*, demonstrates the shift from music to text as the primary force of expression. This shift occurred alongside the development of poetry that broke free from consistent syllabic structure, and employed more metaphor and symbolism. Thus, Massenet's songs broke further from consistent phrase structure, and through the use of spoken and sung text, he added depth to poetry that was already for more complex than the poetry seen in the previous two cycles on this study, *Poème d'avril* and *Poème d'amour*. This advancement in the poetry was reflected in the harmony and melodies, as well; increased use of color and non-functional harmony is found throughout *Expressions lyriques*. Clearly, Massenet's style in the early twentieth century is influenced not solely by German composition, but also by the young composers who wrote at that time, as well as the younger poets who brought change to the art song in France.

## CHAPTER V

## CONCLUSION

The songs of Jules Massenet are a body of works that have long needed attention. In this study, I have discussed musical features of Massenet's songs that help clarify the progression of the French song genre through the late nineteenth century. I began by showing how Massenet's style was influenced by the German *Lieder* that appeared in Paris earlier in his career, particularly through the genre of the song cycle. Because of this influence, Massenet was the first French composer to write an original French song cycle. Other examples of German influence include a general "learned" form of composition, where focus is on the musical aspects of a song, rather than the text. These musical features, such as imitation between voice and accompaniment, pedal tones, clear phrase structure and cadential formulae, and thematic relationships, are found throughout both *Poème d'avril* and *Poème d'amour*. Through these two cycles, I highlighted features that are also characteristic of Massenet's own personal style, and in the analysis of *Expressions lyriques*, I showed that his style filtered through the more modern *mélodie*.

Though I have discussed two works that had not yet been thoroughly analyzed before (*Poème d'amour* and *Expressions lyriques*), many of Massenet's 260 songs have not been touched by scholars. Granted, many of his songs were written for mass publication, and some are more worthy of study than others, it would serve French song



research to study Massenet's repertoire in a large-scale survey. Countless other late nineteenth century French songwriters have also been neglected, due to mass output and simply by being omitted. Some of these composers, such as Aubert, Chaminade, and Chausson, have songs and even song cycles that have yet to be discovered by a discerning scholar.

Another route for further study is to examine in closer detail the later works of Massenet as they relate directly to the works of later composers. I have focused on what influenced Massenet, but Massenet's influence on other composers has not fallen under the scope of this study. Also, the repertoire selected here only included works for piano and voice. Particularly in the works of later composers, songs and song cycles were accompanied by orchestra, string quartet, or other ensembles. It would be interesting to see how the works of songwriters, such as Massenet, have influenced more modern composers.

## APPENDIX A

## POÈME D'AVRIL TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

## 1. Prélude

Une rose frileuse, au coeur noyé de  
pluie,  
Sur un rameau tremblant vient de s'épanouir,  
Et je me sens repris de la douce  
folie  
De faire des chansons et de me souvenir!

Les amours trépassés qui dormaient dans  
mon âme,  
Doux Lazare sur qui j'ai tant versé de pleurs,  
Soulèvent, en riant, leur suaire de fleurs,  
Et demandent le nom de ma nouvelle dame.

Ma Mignonne aux yeux bleus, mets ta robe  
et fuyons,  
Sous les bois remplis d'ombre et de  
mélancolie,  
Chercher le doux remède à la douce  
folie.  
Le soleil m'a blessé de ses premiers rayons!

## 2. Sonnet matinal

Les étoiles effarouchées  
Viennent de s'envoler des cieux:  
J'en sais deux qui se sont  
cachées,  
Mignonne, dans vos jolis yeux,

## 1. Prelude

A quivering rose, its heart drenched by the  
rain,  
has just opened on a trembling branch,  
and I feel seized once more by sweet  
madness  
to write songs and remember!

The dead loves that lay sleeping in my soul,  
gentle Lazarus, over whom I've shed many  
tears,  
lift up, laughing, their shroud of flowers  
and ask the name of my new lady.

My sweetheart with eyes of blue, dress  
yourself and let us flee  
into the woods filled with shadow and  
melancholy,  
to seek the sweet remedy for that sweet  
madness.  
The sun has wounded me with its first rays!

## 2. Sonnet for Morning

The frightened stars  
have just fled from the heavens.  
I know two of which have hidden  
themselves,  
Mignonne, in your pretty eyes,

A l'ombre de vos cils soyeux  
 Et sous vos paupières penchées:  
 Attendez!  
 Mes baisers joyeux les auront bientôt  
 dénichées!  
 Vous feignez de dormir encor:  
 Eveillez-vous, mon doux trésor!  
 L'aube pleure sous les feuillées,  
 Le ciel désert est plein d'ennui.  
 Ah! Ouvrez les yeux,  
 Et rendra lui les deux étoiles envolées!

In the shadow of your silken lashes  
 and beneath your lowered eyelids;  
 Wait!  
 My happy kisses will soon have brought  
 them out of hiding!  
 You feign sleep still;  
 awaken, my sweet treasure!  
 Dawn is weeping beneath the leaves,  
 the deserted sky is very troubled;  
 Ah!, open your eyes,  
 and return to it the two vanished stars!

### 3. Voici que les grans lys

### 3. See the Tall Lilies

Voici que les grans lys ont vêtu leur  
 blancheur,  
 Sur les gazons tremblants l'aube étend sa  
 fraîcheur;  
 C'est le printemps! c'est le matin! double  
 jeunesse!

See the tall lilies have dressed themselves in  
 whiteness,  
 how dawn spreads its freshness over the  
 trembling grass;  
 It is spring! It is morning! Double youth!

Ma mie en s'éveillant m'a dit: le beau  
 soleil!  
 Le temps est donc venu que tout charme  
 renaisse;  
 Partout des chants! partout des fleurs!  
 double reveil!

My love said to me upon awakening: the  
 beautiful sun!  
 The time has come then for all things  
 charming to be reborn;  
 Songs everywhere! Flowers everywhere!  
 Double awakening!

Mais le tièdeur de l'air la rendant moins  
 farouche,  
 Je me penchai vers elle, et je posai ma  
 bouche  
 Sur son front et sur ses cheveux! double  
 trésor!

The balmy air rendering her less  
 wild,  
 I leant over her and I placed my  
 lips  
 on her brow and on her hair! Double  
 treasure!

### 4. Riez-vous? Ne riez-vous pas?

### 4. Are you laughing?

Riez-vous? Ne riez-vous pas?  
 Quand vous l'avez dit tout à l'heure,  
 Ce mot—vous l'avez dit si bas! —  
 Je n'ai pas compris, mais je pleure.  
 Riez-vous? Ne riez-vous pas?

Do you laugh? Do not laugh!  
 When you said it just now,  
 that word—you said it so softly—  
 I did not understand, but I weep.  
 Do you laugh? Do not laugh!

Pitié! votre bouche m'effleure,  
Ce bruit! vous l'avez fait si bas —  
Si c'est un baiser, que je meure!  
Riez-vous? Ne riez-vous pas?

Have pity! Your lips undo me;  
that sound—you uttered it so softly—  
if it is a kiss; would I were dead!  
Do you laugh? Do not laugh!

Sur mon cou je sens votre bras ...  
Vous m'avez baisé tout à l'heure!  
Je n'ose y croire, mais je pleure.  
Riez-vous? Ne riez-vous pas?

On my neck, I felt your arm—  
You did kiss me just now!  
I do not dare to believe it, but I weep.  
Do you laugh? Do not laugh!

#### 5. Vous aimerez demain

#### 5. You Will Love Tomorrow

Le doux printemps a bu, dans le creux de sa  
main,  
Le premier pleur qu'au bois laissa tomber  
l'aurore;  
Vous aimerez demain, vous qui n'aimiez  
encore;  
Et vous qui n'aimiez plus, vous aimerez  
demain!

Gentle Springtime has sipped, from her  
cupped hand,  
the first tear that dawn dropped on the  
woods.  
You will love tomorrow, you who have not  
been in love;  
and you who love no longer, you will love  
tomorrow!

Le printemps a cueilli dans l'air des fils de  
soie  
Pour lier sa chaussure et courir par les bois;  
Vous aimerez demain pour la première fois,  
Vous qui ne saviez pas cette immortelle  
joie.

Spring has plucked from the air silken  
threads,  
to lace her shoes and run through the woods;  
You will love tomorrow for the first time,  
you who have not known this immortal joy.

Le printemps a jeté des fleurs sur le chemin  
Que mignonne remplit de son rire sonore.  
Vous aimerez demain, vous qui n'aimiez  
encore;  
Et vous qui n'aimiez plus, vous aimerez  
demain!

Spring has strewn flowers over the path  
That Mignonne filled with her ringing laugh;  
You will love tomorrow, you who have not  
been in love;  
and you who love no longer, you will love  
tomorrow!

#### 6. Que l'heure est donc brève,

#### 6. How brief the hour

Que l'heure est donc brève, qu'on passe en  
aimant!  
C'est moins qu'un moment, un peu plus  
qu'un rêve.

How short then is the hour, which one  
spends in loving!  
It's less than a moment, little more than a  
dream.

Le temps nous enlève notre enchantement. Time takes from us our enchantment.  
Que l'heure est donc brève, qu'on passe en How short then is the hour, which one  
aimant! spends in loving!

Sous le flot dormant soupirait la Beneath the sleeping waters the sands were  
grève; heard to sigh;  
M'aimais-tu vraiment? Did you really love me?  
Fût-ce seulement un peu plus qu'un It might have been but little more than a  
rève? dream.  
Que l'heure est donc brève, qu'on passe en How short then is the hour, which one  
aimant! spends in loving!

### 7. Sur la source

### 7. The Spring

Sur la source elle se pencha;  
La source doubla son image,  
Et ce fut un charmant mirage,  
Qu'un peu de vent effaroucha.

She leaned over the spring;  
the spring mirrored her image.  
And it was a charming mirage,  
that the wind carried far away.

Sous les grands bois elle chanta;  
L'oiseau doubla son chant sauvage,  
Et ce fut un charmant ramage,  
Que le vent lointain emporta.

She sang beneath the tall trees;  
the bird repeated her wild song,  
and it was a charming trill  
that the wind carried far away.

Quand j'effleurai son doux visage,  
Sa bouche ma bouche doubla.  
Le vent peut balayer la plage;  
Mignonne, que me fait  
l'orage?  
Ton baiser reste toujours là!

When I caressed her sweet face,  
her lips copied my lips.  
The wind may sweep the beach,  
Mignonne, but whatever the storm may do  
to me,  
Your kiss stays for ever!

### 8. Adieu (Complainte)

### 8. Farewell (Lament)

Nous nous sommes aimés trois jours;  
Trois jours elle me fut fidèle.  
Trois jours! - la constance éternelle  
Et les éternelles amours!  
Je pars! adieu, ma chère âme,  
Garde bien mon souvenir!  
Quoi! Si tôt partir, madame;  
Ne devez-vous revenir?  
Si, je reviendrai peut-être;

We were lovers for three days.  
For three days she was faithful.  
Three days! —that's eternal constancy,  
eternal love!  
I go! Farewell, dear soul,  
remember me well!  
What! To leave so soon, Madame,  
will you not come back?  
Yes, I shall return perhaps;

Si bien sûr, je reviendrai;  
 Va m'attendre à la fenêtre,  
 De plus loin te reverrai.

yes, of course I shall return;  
 go and wait for me at the window  
 and I shall be able to see you from further  
 away.

J'attendis à la fenêtre  
 Le retour tant espéré,  
 Mais, ni bien sûr, ni peut-être,  
 Ni jamais la reverrai!  
 Bien fol qui croit quand une dame  
 Lui jure de revenir.  
 Je meurs! Adieu, ma chère âme,  
 J'ai gardé ton souvenir!

I awaited, at the window,  
 her much longed-for return,  
 but neither of course, nor perhaps,  
 nor ever did I see her again!  
 He is truly mad who believes a lady  
 when she vows to return to him.  
 I die! Farewell, my dear soul,  
 I have remembered you well!

Translations by:

Annabelle de Cröy  
 David Tunley

## APPENDIX B

## POÈME D'AMOUR TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

## 1. Je me suis plaint

Je me suis plaint aux tourterelles;  
 Les touretelles ont gémi,  
 Et la caresse de leurs ailes  
 M'a consolé comme un ami.

J'ai conté ma douleur au chêne;  
 Le chêne, au coeur dur, fut touché.  
 Les cyprès ont compris ma peine,  
 Et vers moi leur front s'est penché.

Le zephyr, effleurant mon âme,  
 Bien tristement a murmuré:  
 Mais qui ma guéri? c'est la femme!  
 Quand je pleurais, elle a pleuré!

## 2. La nuit, sans doute

La nuit, sans doute, était trop belle,  
 Le ciel trop bleu;  
 J'eus tort d'admirer avec elle  
 L'oeuvre de Dieu.

C'était dans les nids de verdure  
 Trop de chansons!  
 L'étoile brillait trop pure  
 Sur les gazons!

Oui, c'est ta faute, ô nuit sereine,  
 Si son beau cou,  
 Son front pâle, ses yeux de reine  
 M'ont rendu fou.

## 1. I complained

I complained to the turtledoves;  
 The turtledoves moaned,  
 And the caress of their wings  
 Comforted me like a friend.

I told my sadness to the oak tree;  
 The oak tree, with hard heart, was touched.  
 The cypresses understood my sadness,  
 And leaned their fronts toward me.

The zephyr, brushing my soul,  
 Very sadly murmured:  
 But who cured me? The woman!  
 When I cried, she cried!

## 2. The night, without a doubt

The night, without doubt, was too beautiful,  
 The heavens too blue;  
 I was wrong to admire with her  
 The work of God.

It was in the nests of green  
 Too many songs!  
 The brightness of the star was too pure  
 On the grass!

Yes, it's your fault, o serene night,  
 If her beautiful neck,  
 Her pale forehead, her queenly eyes  
 Rendered me insane.

## 3. Ouvre tes yeux bleus

[Lui:]  
 Ouvre tes yeux bleus, ma mignonne:  
 Voici le jour.  
 Déjà la fauvette fredonne  
 Un chant d'amour.

L'aurore épanouit la rose:  
 Viens avec moi  
 Cueillir la marguerite éclore,  
 Réveille-toi!

[Elle:]  
 À quoi bon contempler la terre  
 Et sa beauté?  
 L'amour est un plus doux mystère  
 Qu'un jour d'été;

C'est en moi que l'oiseau module  
 Un chant vainqueur,  
 Et le grand soleil qui nous brûle  
 Est dans mon coeur!

## 4. Puisqu'elle a pris ma vie

Puisqu'elle a pris ma vie et que j'ai pris la  
 sienne;  
 Puisque chaque matin d'extase est  
 embaumé!  
 Puisque chaque printemps fleurit la tige  
 ancienne,  
 Puisque je fus aimé! je fus aimé;

Le vent peut emporter les feuilles épuisées...  
 Le ciel peut se voiler et le bois peut  
 jaunir...  
 Mais rien n'arrachera, de nos mains  
 enlacées,  
 La fleur du souvenir!..  
 Puisque je fus aimé!..

## 3. Open your blue eyes

[Him:]  
 Open your blue eyes, my sweet,  
 It is the morning.  
 The warbler is already humming  
 A song of love.

The dawn brings the rose in bloom:  
 Come with me  
 Pick the blossoming daisy,  
 Wake up!

[Her:]  
 Why contemplating the earth  
 And its beauty?  
 Love is a sweeter mystery  
 Than a summer day;

It's in me that the bird warbles  
 A victorious song,  
 And the great sun that is burning us  
 Is in my heart!

## 4. Because she took my life

Because she took my life and I took  
 hers,  
 Because each morning of ecstasy is  
 embalmed!  
 Because each spring the ancient stem  
 flowers,  
 Because I was loved! I was loved;

The wind can move the exhausted leaves...  
 The sky can break and the wood can  
 yellow...  
 But nothing will ever tear away from from  
 our laced hands,  
 The flower of remembrance!..  
 Because I was loved!..



## 5. Pourquoi pleures-tu?

Pourquoi pleures-tu?  
 Sur ton coeur quelle ombre  
 A passé soudain?..  
 Le nid s'est donc tu;  
 Le ciel est donc sombre  
 Sur notre chemin?..

L'oiseau qui prédit les destins moroses,  
 D'un vol inégal  
 A donc effleuré tes paupières closes?..  
 Pleurer fait du mal!

Mais non... pour pleurer, c'est assez d'un  
 rêve,  
 D'un soupir, d'un rien;  
 C'est assez du flot qui meurt sur la grève...  
 Pleurer fait du bien!

## 5. Why do you cry?

Why do you cry?  
 On your heart which shadow  
 suddenly passed?  
 The nest has thus become silent;  
 The sky is thus dark  
 On our path?..

The bird that predicts the morose fates,  
 In an uneven flight  
 Has thus brushed your closed eyelids?..  
 Crying is pain!

Oh no... to cry, a dream is  
 enough  
 Or a sigh, or the slightest thing;  
 The wave that dies on the beach is enough...  
 Crying is good!

## 6. Oh! ne finis jamais

Oh! ne finis jamais, nuit clémente et divine;  
 Soleil, ne brille pas au front de la colline...  
 Et laisse-nous aimer encor;

Laisse-nous écouter dans l'ombre et le  
 mystère,  
 Les voix, les tendres voix qui n'ont rien de la  
 terre;  
 Ne trouble pas nos rêves d'or!

Ce qu'il faut à nos coeurs, ô nuit, ce sont tes  
 voiles  
 C'est l'exquise pâleur qui tombe  
 des étoiles  
 Sur les amoureux à genoux;

C'est un mot commencé... qui jamais ne  
 s'achève;  
 C'est l'amour éternel, mystérieux, sans  
 trêve...  
 Pour la terre immense et pour nous!..

## 6. Oh! Never end

Oh! Never end, mild and divine night;  
 Sun, do not shine on the front of the hill...  
 And let us continue loving;

Let us allow us ourselves to listen in shadow  
 and mystery,  
 The voices, the tender voices that are not  
 earthly;  
 Do not trouble our dreams of gold!

What we need in our hearts, o night, are  
 your sails  
 We need the exquisite pallor which comes  
 down from the stars  
 On the lovers to their knees

It is a word begun... that never  
 ends;  
 It is the eternal love, mysterious, without  
 truce...  
 For the vast earth and for us!..

## APPENDIX C

## EXPRESSIONS LYRIQUES TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Note: Lyrics in italics are spoken in *Expressions lyriques*.

## 1. Dialogue

Pourquoi donc ne dis-tu plus rien?  
Je te trouve ce soir pâlie:  
Bouder déjà, ce n'est pas bien...  
*Mon aimé, les serments s'oublent.*

Alors prends ce bouquet de fleurs,  
C'est de l'amour qu'elles émanent:  
Dans tes beaux yeux pourquoi ces pleurs?  
*Mon bien aimé, les fleurs se fanent.*

Donne-moi ta bouche à baiser,  
On dit que les lèvres effleurent  
Mais les miennes vont se poser...  
*Mon bien aimé, les baisers meurent.*

## 2. Les nuages

*Les voyez-vous passer sous le ciel  
monotone,  
Tous ces nuages blancs aux reflets bleus et  
gris?  
Sans trêve ils sont chassés par l'âpre vent  
d'automne,  
Qui les pousse toujours et les met en  
débris;*

*Ils sont tout affolés et semblent en  
détresse,  
Dès que je les admire, ils fondent aussitôt,*

## 1. Dialogue

Why do you not say anything?  
I find that you look pale tonight:  
Sulking already, this is not good ...  
*My loved, oaths are forgotten.*

So take this bouquet of flowers,  
It is from love that they come:  
Why are there tears in your beautiful eyes?  
*My beloved, the flowers are fading.*

Give me your mouth to kiss,  
It is said that lips brush  
But mine will stay...  
*My beloved, kisses are dying.*

## 2. Clouds

*Do you see them pass under the monotonous  
sky,  
All these white clouds with blue and gray  
shades?  
Unremittingly they are driven by the bitter  
winds of autumn,  
That always push them away and crush them  
into pieces;*

*They are all panic-stricken and appear in  
distress,  
As soon as I admire them, they melt away,*

*Et dans mon coeur, soudain, je sens une tristesse:  
Je veux les regarder, mais ils meurent trop tôt!*

En les voyant courir, Jeunesse, à toi je songe,  
Quand fuyant sous le vent des désillusions,  
Ton aile, se brisant à l'écueil du mensonge,  
S'éparpille en morceaux comme un vol d'alcyons.

On te rappelle en vain, tu pars inexorable,  
On t'espère, on t'attend, on te pleure toujours,  
Et tu laisses en nous un vide intolérable,  
Car tu pris, en partant, nos espoirs, nos amours

Et tu nous arrachas d'une main trop cruelle  
Tant de coeurs allumés aux rayons de ta Foi!  
*Voilà pourquoi souvent, images en dentelle,  
Mes yeux en vous suivant s'attristent malgré moi.*

### 3. En voyage

*Où donc allez-vous, Madame,  
Sans postillon ni piqueur?  
Je m'en vais porter mon âme  
Où s'en est allé mon coeur.*

*Pourquoi la voiture est-elle  
Sans or, satin ni velours?  
A quoi bon? C'est, telle quelle,  
La voiture des grands jours.*

*Elle a pris un ton morose,  
Sous les injures de l'air.  
Le matin la fait d'or rose,  
Et la lune d'argent clair.*

*And in my heart, suddenly, I feel sadness:  
I want to watch them, but they die too soon!*

When I see them run, Youth, I think of you,  
When fleeing in the wind of disillusionment,  
Your wings, breaking on the reef of lies,  
Scatter in pieces like a flight of alcyons.

Calling you back in vain, you go inexorably,  
Hoping, waiting, always crying for you,  
And you leave inside us an intolerable void  
Because you took away, as you left, our hopes, our loves

And you ripped from us us with a hand too cruel  
So many hearts illumined from the light of your Faith!  
*That is why often, images of lace,  
My eyes that follow you become sad in spite of me.*

### 3. Traveling

*Where are you going, Madam,  
Without postillion or foreman?  
I am on my way to carry my soul  
Where my heart has gone.*

*Why is the car  
Without gold, satin or velvet?  
Why are these needed? It is as such,  
The car of grand days.*

*It took a gloomy tone,  
Under the damage of air.  
The morning makes it rose gold,  
And the moon makes it light silver.*

*Ce carrosse, qui le traîne?  
Il ne roule pas tout seul!  
L'espérance, ma marraine,  
Avec l'Amour mon filleul.*

*The carriage, who drags it?  
It does not run alone!  
Hope, my godmother,  
With Love, my godson.*

*Mais rien qu'a voir comme il penche,  
Il va courir de guingois.  
Sans déplacer une branche  
Il traversera le bois.*

*But just by seeing how it tilts,  
It will run askew.  
Without moving a limb  
It will cross the wood.*

*Quand vous mettrez-vous en route  
Pour ce voyage enchanté?  
Avant de partir, j'écoute  
Si l'alouette a chanté.*

*When will you start  
On this enchanted trip?  
Before leaving, I listen  
If the lark has sung.*

*Pourquoi nous quitter, petite,  
Par ce printemps embaumé?  
Au mois d'avril on va vite,  
On va loin au mois de mai!*

*Why leave us, little one,  
Before this sweet-smelling spring?  
The month of April we will get soon,  
It goes a long way in the month of May!*

*Dans cette pauvre voiture  
Vous aurez chaud au mois d'août.  
On peut tenter l'aventure,  
quand le bonheur est au bout!*

*In this poor car  
You'll overheat in August.  
One can try the adventure,  
when happiness is at the end!*

#### 4. Battements d'ailes

#### 4. Beating of wings

*Les soirs d'été si doux, voilés de crêpes bleus,  
Où le coeur vient mourir dans un battement d'ailes,  
Font les arbres légers comme de blonds cheveux  
Sur lesquels, en rêvant, flotteraient des dentelles.*

*Such soft summer nights, veiled in blue crêpes  
Where the heart comes to die in a beating of wings,  
Make trees as light as blond hair  
On which, while dreaming, laces would be floating.*

*Le lac a revêtu ses tons de camaïeux  
Et reflète en son eau, du ciel, unique étoile...  
Regardons-nous, veux-tu, tout au fond de nos yeux,  
Afin que notre amour hisse sa blanche voile.*

*The lake took on its monochrome tones  
And reflects on its water, from the sky, one star ...  
Let us look, if you want, deep inside each other's eyes,  
So our love brings her white sail.*

<p>Ah! laissons-nous bercer par le divin hasard... Quel bonheur de s'aimer au coeur même des choses, De jeter sur la vie un doux et long regard, De jeter sur la vie, à pleines mains, des roses!..</p>	<p>Ah! let the divine coincidence soothe the two of us... What good fortune to love each other in the heart of things To take a soft and long look at life, To throw handfuls of roses on life!..</p>
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5. La dernière lettre de Werther à Charlotte 5. The last letter from Werther to Charlotte

<p>Il fait nous séparer... <i>Au bord de cet abîme,</i> <i>L'heure a sonné pour nous de l'éternel</i> <i>adieu;</i> <i>Et j'irai, s'il est vrai que l'amour est un</i> <i>crime,</i> <i>En demander pardon à Dieu.</i></p>	<p>We must part ... <i>At the edge of the abyss,</i> <i>It is time for us to say our eternal</i> <i>farewell;</i> <i>And I will go, if it is true that love is a</i> <i>crime,</i> <i>Ask forgiveness from God.</i></p>
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<p>C'est fini! pour toujours! J'entreprends un voyage, Dont, pour vous retrouver, je ne reviendrai pas; Mais, en mon coeur brisé j'emporte votre image, Afin d'enchanter mon trépas!</p>	<p>Finished! forever! I'm starting on a journey, From which to find you I will never return; But in my broken heart I carry your image, To make my death delightful!</p>
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<p>Jusqu'au moment suprême, enivré par vos charmes, Mon coeur n'aura battu dans l'ombre que pour vous, Et mon dernier baiser, et mes dernières larmes, Je les dépose à vos genoux.</p>	<p>Until the supreme moment, drunk by your charms, My heart will have beaten in the dark only for you, And my last kiss, and my last tears, I place them at your feet.</p>
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<p>Je vous fais mes adieux de la petite chambre D'où je ne sortirai plus que dans mon linceul; Et, pour me consoler en ce jour de Décembre, Personne! je suis seul, seul!</p>	<p>I make my farewells to you from the small room From which I will only get out in my shroud; And, to console me on this day of December, Nobody! I am alone, alone!</p>
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*D'ailleurs, il se fait tard; d'ici quelques minutes,  
À partir pour là bas je vais me préparer...  
Noël!.. j'entends au loin des airs gais sur des flûtes...*

*Moreover, it is late; within a few minutes,  
To go over there I will prepare myself...  
Christmas! .. I hear in the distance merry tunes played on flutes...*

Charlotte!..  
Je t'aime!..  
Adieu!  
Il faut nous séparer!

Charlotte!..  
I love you!..  
Farewell!  
We must part!

#### 6. Comme autrefois

#### 6. As before

*J'ai revêtu, ce soir,  
Mon large manteau noir,  
Celui que je mettais au temps de nos folies,  
Quand tes yeux s'emplissaient de mes mélancolies.*

*I wore, this evening,  
My large black coat,  
The one I wore in the time of our follies,  
When your eyes filled up with my melancholy.*

*Puis j'ai remis la fleur  
Qui tremblait sur mon coeur  
Jadis, géranium ou branche de verveine?  
O parfum qui contient une si douce peine...*

*Then I handed the flower  
That was trembling on my heart  
Once, geranium or a branch of verbena?  
O perfume that contains such a sweet sadness...*

*Car j'ai pleuré d'amour,  
Tout bas, jusqu'au jour.  
N'as-tu pas vu parmi des lambeaux de dentelles,  
Mes bras suppliants s'ouvrir comme des ailes?  
Et mon grand manteau noir  
Flotter au vent du soir?*

*Because love made me cry,  
Very quietly, until the morning.  
Have you not seen among scraps of lace,  
My begging arms opening up as wings?  
And my big black coat  
Floating in the evening wind?*

#### 7. Nocturne

#### 7. Nocturne

*Il est minuit.  
La bonne odeur de bois fait frissonner les roses;  
L'étoile luit;  
Mon coeur a chaud ce soir; sais-je pour quelles causes?*

*It is midnight.  
The good smell of wood is makes the roses tremble;  
The star is shining;  
My heart is hot tonight, do I know what causes it?*

*Tu peux venir;  
Je ne te dirai rien... je laisserai la  
chambre  
Se souvenir...  
Déjà roulent sur nous de longs effluves  
d'ambre.*

*Trouves-tu pas  
Que l'ombre agit sur nous comme un  
puissant dictame?  
On était las...  
Soudain la nuit vous berce et vous emporte  
l'âme!*

*Mais tu souris  
Mystérieusement, sans trop comprendre,  
Et t'attendris  
Car tu sais bien que tes baisers vont me  
repandre...*

*Je t'aime tant!  
Donne tes yeux, sois grave, et donne-moi tes  
lèvres,  
Pour qu'en partant  
Je puisse encor crier ton nom parmi mes  
fièvres!*

## 8. Mélancolie

*Sur les flots de la vie,  
Suivant ce qui me tient,  
Suivant ce qui me lie  
Je m'en vais, pauvre rien...  
Le temps est gris...  
Qu'importe!..*

*Va, mon coeur;  
Suivant ce qui t'emporte,  
Chante ou pleure les jours!  
Mon coeur, va toujours,  
Suivant ce qui t'emporte.*

*You can come;  
I will not say anything to you ... I will leave  
the room  
Remembering...  
Long amber fragrances are already rolling  
on us.*

*Do you not think  
That the darkness acts upon us as a powerful  
balm?  
We were tired ...  
Suddenly the night rocks you and takes your  
soul!*

*But you smile  
Mysteriously, without understanding much,  
And you become softer  
Because you know that your kisses will get  
me back...*

*I love you so much!  
Give me your eyes, be serious and give me  
your lips,  
So when leaving  
I can still scream your name through my  
fevers!*

## 8. Melancholy

*On the waves of life,  
Following what holds me,  
Following what binds me  
I am going, worth nothing...  
The weather is gray ...  
No matter!..*

*Go, my heart;  
Follow what takes you away,  
Sing or cry all day!  
My heart, always go,  
Follow what takes you away.*

*Va toujours...  
Si la mer est bien douce  
Mon coeur en reposant  
Chante le vent qui pousse  
Ma barque de passant...  
Le temps est gris...  
Qu'importe!*

Va, mon coeur, va toujours;  
Suivant ce qui t'emporte...  
Chante, ou pleure les jours...  
Mon coeur, va toujours  
Suivant ce qui t'emporte...

### 9. Rose de Mai

Ce n'est pas ta beauté qui m'attire...  
d'autres fleurs la reçurent en partage;  
mais tu possèdes, ô belle, la royauté des  
roses,  
tu es la rose de Mai!

*Ce parfum discret qui violente mon  
âme,  
fait des senteurs fraîches de l'immortel  
Printemps,  
tu le gardes jalousement au fond de ton  
calice  
et ne révèles qu'à tes élus,  
O rose de Mai!*

Sur un sein blanc aimé où tu  
fleuris un jour,  
pudique union du lys et de la rose,  
mes lèvres goûtèrent cette blancheur et ta  
pourpre...  
tu devins immortelle! O rose de Mai!

*Ta senteur de mystère a pénétré mon âme  
qu'elle inonde tout entière! Quand je te  
respire,  
d'une brève minute d'amour tu fais l'heure  
infinie...*

*Always go...  
If the sea is nice and soft  
My heart, while resting  
Sings the wind that pushes  
My passing boat ...  
The weather is gray ...  
No matter!..*

Go, my heart, always go;  
Follow what takes you away ...  
Sing or cry all day...  
My heart, always go  
Follow what takes you away...

### 9. Rose of May

It is not your beauty that attracts me...  
other flowers had their fair share of it;  
but you have, oh beautiful, the royalty of  
roses,  
you are the rose of May!

*This discreet fragrance that assaults my  
soul,  
makes fresh smells from the immortal  
Spring,  
you jealously keep it deep inside your  
calyx  
and only reveal it to your chosen ones,  
O rose of May!*

On a white breast I loved, where you  
flowered one day  
chaste union of the lily and the rose,  
my lips tasted this white and your  
purple ...  
you became immortal! O rose of May!

*Your smell of mystery entered my soul  
that it inundates completely! When I  
breathe you in,  
you transform a brief minute of love into an  
endless hour..*



*cruellement éternelle, mais divine, tu es le  
"Souvenir,"  
O glorieuse rose de Mai!*

*cruelly eternal, but divine, you are the  
"Remembrance,"  
O glorious rose of May!*

10. Feux-follets d'amour...

10. Will-o'-the-wisps of love...

*"Messoieurs!.. dans cette nuit d'étoiles  
Je sens le printemps voltiger!..  
Où fuyez-vous?..  
Un vent léger  
Caresse mollement vos voiles...  
Un vent léger... un vent jaloux...  
Où fuyez-vous?"*

*"My sisters!.. in this night of stars  
I feel the flutter of spring!...  
Where are you fleeing?..  
A light wind  
Softly caresses your sails...  
A light wind... a jealous wind...  
Where are you fleeing?"*

*Ainsi, devant la vierge blanche,  
Ses soeurs passent...  
L'une se penche:  
"Sens!..  
De parfums, le soir, est lourd!  
Viens avec nous!  
Viens à l'amour!"*

*This way, by the white virgin,  
Her sisters pass...  
One leans:  
"Smell!..  
The evening is heavy with perfume!  
Come with us!  
Come to love!"*

*Elle hésite!..  
Et sur les prairies,  
Près des sources, dans les forêts,  
Des nymphes sur les gazons frais  
En souples théories, glissent...  
"Sur les gazons...les gazons roux,  
Où glissez-vous?"*

*She hesitates!..  
And on the grasslands,  
Close to the sources, in the forests,  
Nymphs on fresh grass  
In smooth processions, glide...  
"On the grass...the red grass,  
Where do you glide?"*

*"Viens!"  
Et la vaporeuse bande  
Serpente, serpente, ondule sur la lande,  
L'enlace, l'enlace:  
"Viens! Viens! Viens!  
Le temps est court!  
Fuis avec nous!  
Fuis vers l'amour!"*

*"Come!"  
And the vaporous group  
Meanders, meanders, ripples on the moor,  
Enlaces her, enlaces her:  
"Come! Come! Come!  
Time is short!  
Run away with us!  
Run away towards love!"*

*Las!  
D'aimer... la vierge succombe!  
Depuis, par les soirs désolés,  
Du sein des eaux, les feuxfollets*

*Weary!  
Of loving... the virgin succumbs!  
Since then, during desolate evenings,  
From within the water, the will-o'-the-wisps*

Viennent l'arracher à sa tombe:  
 “Feux-follets!  
 Où m'emportez-vous!”

*Danse avec nous!*

Et renouant leurs farandoles,  
 Tourbillonnant en rondes folles,  
 Ils dansent, ils tournent jusqu'au jour, ah!  
 Les pâles feux-follets d'amour!

Come pull her out of her tomb:  
 “Will-o'-the-wisps!  
 Where are you taking me!”

*Dance with us!*

And renewing their farandoles,  
 Whirling in crazy rounds,  
 They dance, they turn until the morning, ah!  
 The pale will-o'-the-wisps of love!

*Poème d'amour and Expressions lyriques translations by:*

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