

4-22-2004

# A recital of selected repertoire for the soprano voice

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

A RECITAL OF SELECTED REPERTOIRE

FOR

THE SOPRANO VOICE

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF MUSIC

by

Emily Brennan

2004

To: Dean R. Bruce Dunlap  
College of Arts and Sciences

This thesis, written by Emily Brennan, and entitled A Recital of Selected Repertoire for the Soprano Voice, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this thesis and recommend that it be approved.

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John Augenblick

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Deborah Conquest

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Robert Dundas, Major Professor

Date of Defense: April 22, 2004

The thesis of Emily Brennan is approved.

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Dean R. Bruce Dunlap  
College of Arts and Sciences

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Dean Douglas Wartzok  
University Graduate School

Florida International University, 2004

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

A RECITAL OF SELECTED REPERTOIRE FOR THE SOPRANO VOICE

by

Emily Brennan

Florida International University, 2004

Miami, Florida

Professor Robert B. Dundas, Major Professor

Vado, ma dove?

W.A. Mozart (1756-1791)

Auf dem Strom

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

*Canciones clásicas españolas*

Fernando Obradors (1897-1945)

Del cabello más sutil

La mi sola, Laureola

Al amor

INTERMISSION

*Quatre Poèmes Hindous*

Maurice Delage (1879-1961)

I. Madras

II. Lahore

III. Bénarès

IV. Jeypur

Wild Swans

Ricky Ian Gordon (b. 1956)

The Red Dress

Once I Was

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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was a composer of opera, instrumental music, vocal music, and sacred music, and a leading composer of the classical era. He was also a child prodigy. This extraordinary talent was expressed at age four by learning to play minuets flawlessly in a half hour and again by composing at age five.

Mozart wrote 56 secular concert arias, most of them voiced for soprano. These arias represent a highly important aspect of Mozart's work but are not widely known. Most of these arias were composed at the height of his fame and are considered to be of the same caliber as his more popular music.<sup>1</sup> The concert aria is a difficult genre because the singer must convey an entire drama in a short span of time. It is often considered to be theatre in miniature.

*Vado, ma dove?* was intended to be sung as a concert aria, but was originally performed as an insertion aria in another composer's opera. It was not unusual at that time for a singer to replace an aria that did not show off their vocal prowess with that of another composer. Insertion arias were written for specific women to show off their vocal capabilities. The opera in question was *Il Barbero di buon cuore* by Vincente Martin Soler. It was written for the French soprano, Louise Villeneuve, who sang the role of Dorabella in premiere of Mozart's opera *Così fan tutte*. Scholars believe that Mme. Villeneuve was a woman of great charm and style, with perfect coloratura.<sup>2</sup>

The text, written by Lorenzo Da Ponte, does not include a recitative section, which is unusual for Mozart's concert arias. Martin's arias are more sentimental in

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<sup>1</sup> H.C. Robbins Landon and Donald Mitchell, ed. *The Mozart Companion*. New York: WW Norton & Company, Inc. , 1956.

<sup>2</sup> G. Schirmer, ed. *Twenty-One Concert Arias for Soprano*. Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 1952.

nature than buffo. The character, Madame Lucilla, is stunned by the course her love is taking. She pleads to God for a direction and certainty.

The first part of the aria is pleasant and conventional with its lilting melody. Part two was originally thought to be simplistic because of its *Tempo di Minuetto*, however it is full of grace and refinement.<sup>3</sup> The minuet tempo is thought to be of the finest, lyric, singing character. Part three begins in the dominant and incorporates the undulating triplet pattern of Part one's accompaniment in the vocal line. The accompaniment includes an agitation shown through the use syncopated rhythms that may reflect the character's state of uncertainty. The short syncopated rhythms are used as a dramatic device to portray an indecisive and emotionally wounded character.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> H.C. Robbins Landon and Donald Mitchell, ed. *The Mozart Companion*. New York: WW Norton & Company, Inc. , 1956.

<sup>4</sup> Alfred Einstein. *Mozart: His Character His Work*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1945.

## II

Schubert is known as the “Father of the Lied,” composing over 600 pieces in this genre. He composed in a very craftsman-like manner and was the first German composer to dedicate a significant amount of time to the Lied. His large output explores the potential of the lied more than any other composer. His compositions elevated the Lied to a major musical form and proved its worthiness as a distinct musical form. During his lifetime, he received criticism for not writing a true German song because his compositions lacked the folk-like material typical of the time.<sup>5</sup>

His style included an amazing gift for creating beautiful melodies that were, at times, established in as little as two measures. He used text painting in a creative way to make a complete picture. The piano played an active and expressive role in all of his compositions. He considered the piano to be a partner in the performance, enhancing the sung text, not merely serving as an accompaniment.

Schubert borrowed from the traditions of Haydn, Mozart, and later Beethoven while developing his own strategies to create a unique and highly expressive musical form. One common characteristic is the extension of the polarized tonic-dominant classical harmonic dialogue to a full range of flat-side relationships such as the subdominant, submediant, but especially the flat mediant.<sup>6</sup> The three-key exposition attenuates the pull of dominant. His musical language includes a blurred and intensified

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<sup>5</sup> Stanley Sadie, ed. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Second Edition*. "Schubert, Franz." P. 655-690. New York: MacMillan Publishers Limited, 2001.

<sup>6</sup> Stanley Sadie, ed. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Second Edition*. "Schubert, Franz." P. 655-690. New York: MacMillan Publishers Limited, 2001.



use of major/minor modal system. He frequently converted a major mode theme to the minor creating a systematic language of ambiguity.

Nature plays an important role in his songs, serving as a central theme in his compositions. He raised the theme of nature to an almost religious level by attributing feeling and grandeur to it. Elements of nature are personified and serve as additional characters in the music. Schubert's music and text are both extremely expressive and reflect very potent human emotion. Many of his compositions are thought of as intimate diaries of the human soul.

The poetry of *Auf dem Strom* describes the feelings of a man as he leaves his beloved forever. She stands watching him from the shore as he disappears in the distance, floating on a boat down the river.

The theme for the second verse of the poem bears a striking resemblance to Beethoven's 'Eroica' Symphony. The melodic contour and the harmonic corroboration show this similarity. The poetry, by Ludwig Rellstab, may have come from Beethoven's estate, which adds more poignancy to the homage to be found in this setting. This piece may also be a metaphorical depiction of death because of the allusion to Beethoven's Funeral March in the second verse.<sup>7</sup>

In this masterpiece, the horn is used in two ways. It points up the emotional mood of the singer/narrator with the long, sad, yearning introduction. The piano describes the flowing river in a constant triplet rhythm. The horn also serves as a continuation of the unhappy lover by playing phrases that echo the voice part rhythmically or melodically.

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<sup>7</sup> Brian Newbould. *Schubert. The Music and the Man*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997.

During pauses in the vocal line, it carries the melody forward in a sympathetic way, encouraging the singer to continue sharing his grief.

The form is a modified rondo with two alternating melodies, one in major and one in minor. These melodies correspond to the different moods of the poem. After the second repeat of the second melody, the first melody is sung for the last time. The coda then begins with a canon between the voice and horn. In the progression leading to the end, the voice and horn take on the same emotional personality. The horn plays in octaves with or in the same rhythm as the voice. They become one as they look forward to the time when he may see his beloved again. The tonality changes from major to minor on the text “und so trägt...” and the accompaniment changes from triplet to repeated chords.<sup>8</sup>

*Auf dem Strom* was written especially for a high profile public concert on March 26, 1828, at the Austrian Musikverein in Vienna to commemorate the first anniversary of Beethoven’s death. For this reason, the two references to the death of Beethoven may have been intentional, although Schubert did not advertise this. The concert was a great success, filled to capacity, earning Schubert 800 florins.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Christopher H. Gibbs, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

<sup>9</sup> Brian Newbould. *Schubert. The Music and the Man*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997.

### III

Fernando Obradors was a Catalanian pianist and composer from Barcelona. He studied piano with his mother and was self-taught in harmony, counterpoint, and composition. He looked to the past to find inspiration for his compositions. During the early 19<sup>th</sup> century he searched Spain's musical heritage and spent twenty years collecting and arranging Spanish folk song and melodies by antique Spanish composers.

Capitalizing on his concept of what constitutes a true Spanish song contributed to his success. He employed a neo-classic style when arranging these classic Spanish songs, turning them into tuneful, charming, exciting, and immediately ethnic pieces.<sup>10</sup> The vocal line and piano accompaniment are reasonably challenging, but sound more difficult than they actually are. He is best known for a four-volume collection called *Canciones clásicas españolas*, which was published by Unión Musical Española (1921-1941).

The Spanish art song is a hybrid form, half folk and half art music. Most Spanish composers rely on traditional material such as folk song. The exotic materials in these compositions reflect the influences of guitar, traditional dance, flamenco vocalism, and local color. Spanish style does not include drama sung throughout or any lengthy uninterrupted music, except in its religious music.

Spain has long been dedicated to preserving its folk music. As a result, there is an abundance of music in the genre. Spanish folk music is closely associated with daily tasks and recreation and the strong cycle of annual festivities. In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, it was still possible to collect large and previously unstudied traditional songs in Madrid.

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<sup>10</sup> Jacqueline Cockburn and Richard Stokes, ed. *The Spanish Song Companion*. London: Victor Gollancz, 1992.

Spanish folk music displays regional diversity primarily because of geographical factors. The Iberian Peninsula is divided by mountain chains, which separate the cities, contributing to each area's unique style of folk music. There is also great diversity in the folk music because of the invasion of peoples and culture from neighboring countries into the various cities in Spain. These people brought with them their own ideas and traditions in music. Each culture within Spain infused Spanish folk song with its own unique style. Since the Middle Ages, there has also been a close relationship between folk music and art music.

The characteristics of Spanish folk music are unique. Changes in mood during the melody are very common. There are frequent fluctuations between the major and minor key in defined sections of the song. Using minor for the stanza and major for the refrain is the most common. Ornaments and grace notes are included in what sounds like a spontaneous manner to the listener. Mixing two or more meters is quite typical. Irregularity is inherent to the melody, but it is usually caused by lengthening or shortening notes within the performance. A two-stanza form is the basis for most folk songs. Spanish poetic meter is based on the number of syllables in the text. Pairing of the unaccented syllables in the text with accented notes is common.

One category of Spanish folk music is the "Limited Range Song," in which melodies are built on 2-4 notes only. These notes are written in rising and falling figures and jagged in the outline. It often depends on one short repeated figure or two figures in alternation. Typically these figures are rhythmically free. *La mi sola Laureola* is based on this type of song. *La mi sola Laureola* is a *Solmization Villancico*, a type of Spanish song that correspond the words of the text to the solfege syllables of the musical scale.

Another category is the “Syllabic, Regularly Measured Song.” These songs had a regular phrase length and a flowing melody lending itself to harmonic treatment. The tune *Del cabello mas sutil* is based on an example of this type of song. It has Italian-like phrases and is in the form of a concert arrangement of the original folk tune. The final song, *Al amor*, is a version of a 17<sup>th</sup> century melody by Cristobal de Castillejo.

The *Canciones clásicas españolas* are frequently performed on the concert stage, but Obradors’ name is curiously missing from all musical reference books in the English language. In addition to his accomplishments as a composer, Obradors was the conductor of the Liceo and Radio Barcelona Orchestras and the Philharmonic Orchestra of Gran Canaria. While his songs are the most famous of his output, he also composed zarzuelas and symphonic works including *Reply to the Farandole of Bizet*.

## IV

Maurice Delage was a student of Maurice Ravel and a devout follower. He learned to play the piano and cello by ear. He saw Debussy's opera *Pelleas et Melisande* at age 23, and was so influenced that at that moment, he decided to become a composer.<sup>11</sup> He later met with Ravel and showed off his knowledge of the opera by playing the interludes of *Pelleas et Melisande*. Delage played so well that Ravel invited him to study with him. Debussy's music also inspired a strong interest in the Orient and other exotic themes.

Exoticism is defined as the evocation of a place, people or social milieu that is or perceived to be profoundly different from accepted local norms in its attitudes, customs, and morals.<sup>12</sup> The music of this genre is reinforced by musical features typical of or considered appropriate to the people or group of the place being depicted. Improved methods of transportation, communication and increased colonization during the 19<sup>th</sup> century allowed musicians and audiences to become more familiar with different cultures. People from other cultures also performed in Western theaters and world's fairs. By the 1870's, European composers vacationed, or sometimes settled in the Middle East and North Africa. The most famous exotic locales became Southern Spain and an area in the Middle East stretching from Morocco to Persia, and later East Asia. This resulted in the rise in popularity of Spanish Bolero, Bohemian Polka, Hungarian Csardas, syncopated and African influenced rhythms of Louisiana, and the Caribbean, and the florid droning Middle Eastern accompaniment of melodic lines.

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<sup>12</sup> Stanley Sadie, ed. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Second Edition*. "Delage, Maurice." P. 145-146. New York: MacMillan Publishers Limited, 2001.

Delage was born into a privileged family that owned shoe polish factories in India and Japan. He traveled to India with his parents in 1912. While in India he sought to find the Western equivalent of the sounds he was hearing. He told Stravinsky that he was “trying to find those Hindu sounds that send chills up my spine.”<sup>13</sup> The recordings of Indian music he collected during his visit served as the models for the music. *Quatre Poèmes Hindous* was composed in India, and they are thought of as a travel diary. The text is characterized by the use of Orientalism. Lahore, Benares, and Jeypur were inspired by his visits.

Composers used devices and extra-musical features to create exotic themes and expand their own musical styles. These features included modes and unusual harmonies such as the pentatonic scale, florid melodic lines, or bare textures such as un-harmonized unisons or octaves, parallel 4ths and 5ths, drones (pedal) or static harmonies. They also incorporated distinct repeated rhythmic or melodic patterns derived from dances of the native country, native musical instruments or performing techniques like pizzicato, double stops, or vocal portamento.

Delage employed the sounds of India in the truest form possible. These sounds include the cello’s scordatura tuning, ornaments, and glissandi, very similar in timbre, pitch continuum, and microtonal shadings to the Imdad Khan recording from which he transcribed passages.<sup>14</sup> He also wrote open and closed mouth singing, which was influenced by the vocal techniques of Coimbatore Thaiyi. Sinuous wordless vocal melismas, which would be truly authentic to India if they also had quarter-tones, are also

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<sup>14</sup> Richard Stokes and Graham Johnson. *The French Song Companion*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

present in this composition. It is unique in its Ravelian instrumentation using flutes, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, harp, piano, and string quartet, and the wailing pizzicato cello.

Delage wrote small song cycles with instrumental accompaniment. Of these, *Quatre Poèmes Hindous* and *Sept hai-kais* are played regularly. He only released a small portion of his total output. Vuillermoz called him the “Henri Duparc of his generation” and Stravinsky called him an artist of the first order.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Stanley Sadie, ed. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Second Edition*. “Delage, Maurice.” P. 145-146. New York: MacMillan Publishers Limited, 2001.



Ricky Ian Gordon is gifted in many areas of composition. He has produced music in several genres including opera, concert, dance, theatre, and film. He is considered to be “one of the leading young composers of songs,” according to *The New York Times*.<sup>16</sup>

His style is rooted in American traditions and vernacular. His style has been described as “bubbling and cascading like a mountain brook after a spring rain, evoking images of a boy skipping ecstatically through fields and woods on a crisp April morning.”<sup>17</sup> His music has a bursting effervescence infusing songs that blithely blur the lines between art song and the high-end Broadway music of Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim.

Gordon’s older sister introduced him to poetry at an early age, reading to him every night before bed. Clarity and ease of flow in his settings, never allowing a word to be lost, exemplify this love and appreciation for the written word. He has a naturally optimistic outlook and looks for the silver lining in all of his texts. “He turns despair into sadness and softens bitter into wry.”<sup>18</sup>

*Wild Swans* is from a song cycle entitled *Through Mortal Waters*. After hearing the soprano Elizabeth Futral, he was impressed with her “brook-like” sparkle and he re-wrote the cycle for her, changing the tessitura and temperament to fit Futral’s voice and personality. The text comes from the poetry of Edna St. Vincent Millay, a favorite of Gordon’s. He was inspired to write *Wild Swans* after hearing a recording of Millay

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<sup>16</sup> G. Schirmer, ed. *Finding Home. The Songs of Ricky Ian Gordon*. Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 2003.

<sup>17</sup> G. Schirmer, ed. *Finding Home. The Songs of Ricky Ian Gordon*. Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 2003.

<sup>18</sup> G. Schirmer, ed. *Finding Home. The Songs of Ricky Ian Gordon*. Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 2003.

reading her own work. The cadence of her voice demonstrated the ideal prosody for the piece.

*Once I Was* was intended to be an homage to Handel, but the song morphed into a song about growing up, change, and the healing power of music. This song was later incorporated into the show “Sweet Song,” serving as both the opening and closing number.

*The Red Dress* was composed for Rosemary Loar, a singing actress with a stunning red dress who wanted a song set to Dorothy Parker’s poem. She commissioned Gordon to write a song for her to sing while wearing her red dress. Gordon has since set many other Dorothy Parker poems to song.

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## TRANSLATIONS

Vado, ma dove?

Vado ma dove? O Dei!  
Se de'tormenti suoi,  
Se de'sospiri miei non sente il ciel pieta.  
Tu che mi parli al core,  
Guida I miei passi amore;  
Tu quell ritegno or togli  
Che dubitar mi fa.

I go, but where?

I go, but where? Oh gods!  
If heaven feels no pity for  
his anguish and my longing.  
You who speaks to my heart,  
guide my steps love;  
take away the restraint  
that makes me feel doubts.

Auf dem Strom

Nimm die letzten Abschiedsküsse  
Und die wehenden, die Grüsse  
Die ich noch ans Ufer sende  
Eh dein Fuss sich scheidend wende  
Schon wird von des Stromes Wogen  
Rasch der Nachen fortgezogen,  
Doch den tränendunklen Blick  
Zieh die Sehnsucht stets zurück

By the River

Take these final farewell kisses  
and the wafted farewell greetings  
which I send back to the shore  
before your foot turns to depart!  
See, the current of the river  
swiftly bears the boat away  
but my gaze clouded over with tears  
is ever drawn back by longing.

Und so trägt mich denn die Welle  
Fort mit unerflehter Schnelle  
Ach, schon ist die Flur verschwunden,  
Wo ich selig sie gefunden  
Ewig hin ihr Wonnetage!  
Hoffnungsleer verhallt die Klage  
Um das schöne Heimatland,  
Wo ich ihre Liebe fand

And thus the waves bear me away  
onward with unwelcome speed  
The meadow has already vanished  
where once I found her and was happy  
Gone forever, days of bliss!  
Hopeless now sounds my lament  
all about my fairest homeland,  
where I found her love

Sieh, wie flieht der Strand vorüber  
Und wie drängt es mich hinüber,  
Zieht mit unnennbaren Banden,  
An der Hütte dort zu landen  
In der Laube dort zu weilen  
Doch des Stromes Wellen eilen  
Weiter ohne Rast und Ruh,  
Führen mich dem Weltmeer zu

See, the shore flies swiftly by  
and unfathomable ties  
pull me over to that shore  
to land by that cottage  
to linger in that arbor  
but the river hurries on.  
onward without rest or peace  
leading me towards the ocean

Ach vor jener dunklen Wüste,  
Fern von jeder heitern Küste,

Faced by this dark wilderness  
far from any cheerful shore

Wo kein Eiland zu erschauen  
O wie fasst mich zitternd Grauen  
dread  
Wehmutstränen sanft zu bringen,  
Kann kein Lied vom Ufer dringen  
Nur der Sturm weht kalt daher  
Durch das graugehobne Meer

Kann des Auges sehndend Schweiten  
Keine Ufer mehr ergreifen  
Nun, so blick ich zu den Sternen  
Dort in jenen heil'gen Fernen!  
Ach, bei ihrem milden, Scheine  
Nannt' ich sie zuerst die Meine  
Dort vielleicht, o tröstend Glück!  
Dort begeg'n ich ihrem Blick.

Del cabello mas sutil

Del cabello mas sutil  
Que tienes en tu trenzado  
He de hacer una cadena  
Para traerte a mi lado  
Una alcarraza en tu casa  
Chiquilla, quisiera ser,  
Para besarte en la boca,  
Cuando fueras a beber.  
Ah!

La mi sola, Laureola  
Text by Juan Ponce 16<sup>th</sup> c.

La mi sola, Laureola  
Yo el cautivo Leriano  
Aunque mucho estoy ufano  
Herido de aquella mano  
Que en el mundo es una sola  
La mi sola, Laureola

Al amor  
Text by Cristobal de Castillejo 17<sup>th</sup> c.

Dame, amor, besos sin cuento  
Asido de mis cabellos

Where no island can be seen  
Oh how I am seized with trembling

No song from the shore can reach me  
to bring tears of gentle sadness  
only icy winds are raging  
across the gray and angry sea

If my wistful eyes roam and  
no sign of any shore can see  
I shall look towards the stars  
Up there in their sacred vastness  
It was by their gentle glow  
that I first called her mine  
Perhaps up there-consoling thought!  
I shall meet her gaze again.

Of the hair most delicate

Of the hair most delicate  
that you have in your braids,  
I have to make a chain  
to bring you to my side.  
A jug in your house,  
darling, I would like to be  
to kiss you on the mouth  
when you went to drink

My only Laureola

My only Laureola  
I the captive Leriano  
although much I am proud  
wounded by that hand  
that in the world is unique.  
My only Laureola

To Love

Give me, love, kisses without count  
seizing my hair

Y mil y ciento tras ellos  
Y tras ellos mil y ciento  
Y despues....  
De muchos millares, tres!  
Y porque nadie lo sienta  
Desbaratemos la cuenta  
Y...contemos al reves.

and one thousand one hundred after  
and after them eleven hundred more  
And after...  
Of many thousands, three!  
and so that nobody knows it,  
let's forget the count  
And...count backwards.

Madras: Une belle  
text by Bhartrhari, a 7th c. poet

Madras: A beautiful woman

Une belle à la taille svelte  
se promène sous les arbres de la foret  
en se reposant de temps en temps.  
Ayant revelé de la main  
les trois voiles d'or  
qui lui couvre les seins,  
elle revoie à la lune  
les rayons dont elle était baignée

A beautiful woman, with a slim waist  
walks beneath the forest trees  
halting to rest from time to time.  
Lifting with her hand  
the three golden veils  
that cover her breasts,  
she reflects back to the moon  
the rays in which she was bathed.

Lahore: Un sapin isole  
text by Heinrich Heine (1797-1856)

Lahore: A lonely fir tree

Un sapin isolé se dresse sur une  
montagne  
Aride du Nord. Il sommeille.  
La glace et la neige l'environne  
D'un manteau blanc.

A lonely fir tree stands on a  
mountain's  
barren Northern heights. It drowns.  
Ice and snow envelop it  
In a white blanket.

Il rêve d'un palmier qui là-bas  
Dans 'Orient lointain se désolé,  
Solitaire et taciturne,  
Sur la pente de son rocher brulant

It dreams of a palm tree which grieves  
Far away in the distant East,  
Solitary and silent  
On a blazing rock wall.

Benares: Naissance de Bouddha  
Anonymous

Benares: The birth of Buddha

En ce temps-là fut annoncé  
la venue de Bouddha sur la terre  
Il se fit dans le ciel un grand bruit de nuages.

It was then that the coming of Buddha  
was announced on earth.  
The sky filled with a great clamor of  
clouds.

Les Dieux, agitant leurs éventails et leurs  
vêtements,  
répandirent d'innombrables fleurs.  
merveilleuses.

The Gods, flourishing their fans and  
robes,  
scattered innumerable marvellous  
flowers

Des parfums mystérieux et doux se croiseront  
comme des lianes dans le souffle tiède de  
cette nuit de printemps  
La perle divine de la pleine lune  
s'arrêta sur le palais de marbre,  
gardé par vingt mille éléphants,  
pareils à des collines grises de la couleur  
de nuages.

Jeypur: Si vous pensez à elle  
text by Bhartrhari, a 7th c. poet

Si vous pensez à elle,  
vous éprouvez un douloureux torment.  
Si vous la voyez,  
votre esprit se trouble.  
Si vous la touchez,  
Vous perdez la raison.  
Comment peut-on l'appeler bien-aimée?

Mysterious and sweet scents intermingled  
like creepers in the warm breath of  
that spring night  
The sacred pearl of the full moon  
hung above the marble palace  
guarded by twenty thousand elephants  
like grey hills the color  
Of clouds.

Jaipur: If you think of her

If you think of her,  
you feel an aching torment.  
If you see her,  
you grow distracted.  
If you touch her,  
You lose your reason.  
How can you call her beloved?

Wild Swans

Text by Edna St. Vincent Millay

I looked in my heart while the wild swans went over;  
And what did I see I had not seen before?  
Only a question less or a question more;  
Nothing to match the flight of wild birds flying.  
Tiresome heart, forever living and dying!  
House without air!  
I leave you and lock your door!  
Wild swans, come over the town, come over the town again,  
Trailing your legs and crying!  
Wild swans come over the town again,  
Trailing your legs and crying!

The Red Dress

Text by Dorothy Parker

I always saw, I always said, if I were grown and free,  
I'd buy a gown of reddest red, as fine as you could see  
To wear out walking sleek and slow upon a summer's day  
And there'd be one to see me so and flip the world away.  
And he would be a gallant one with stars behind his eyes,  
And hair like metal in the sun and lips too warm for lies.  
I always saw us gay and good, high honored in the town;  
Now I am grown to womanhood, I have the silly gown.

Once I Was  
Text by Ricky Ian Gordon

Ah! Ah! Ah!

Once I was, there were ribbons in my hair

There were leaves of streaming gold everywhere

If a boy said hello I would hide trembling so, trembling so

Now I barely know what the meaning of “no” is

Ah! Ah! Ah!

Now I am, past an audience I stare

What is gold is how the lights touch my hair

All the boys turn to men

All the leaves change again

Still I answer “yes” though I know what will happen

Ah! Ah! Ah!

As these phases come and go

Music tells me what I need to know

Ah! Ah! Ah!