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A performance guide to Jean-Yves Malmasson's Opus 6: Trois poèmes de Charles Baudelaire and Opus 30: Les fleurs du désir

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A PERFORMANCE GUIDE TO JEAN-YVES MALMASSON’S
OPUS 6: TROIS POÈMES DE CHARLES BAUDELAIRE AND OPUS 30: LES FLEURS
DU DÉSIR

A Written Document

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in

The School of Music

by
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ABSTRACT

This document is a performance guide of Jean-Yves Malmasson’s Opus 6: Trois poèmes de Charles Baudelaire for medium voice and piano and Opus 30: Les fleurs du désir, a chamber cantata for soprano, violin, cello and piano.

Chapter 1 discusses the life and solo vocal works of Jean-Yves Malmasson. It contains biographical information as well as a discussion of Malmasson’s general compositional approach, his influences and his treatment of text, an analysis of the text that the composer wrote for Opus 30. Charles Baudelaire and selections from his volume of poems, Les fleurs du mal, is the focus of Chapter 2. Biographical and general information are included. Chapter 3 discusses Opus 6: Trois poèmes de Charles Baudelaire and Opus 30: Les fleurs du désir, beginning with the text of each song with English translation, followed by an overview of each song, detailing basic characteristics (vocal line, range, tessitura, metric organization, key scheme, rhythm, accompaniment and level of difficulty). Musical examples are included in order to highlight some of the more interesting characteristics of each song.

Following the conclusion and bibliography, appendices provide a complete listing of Malmasson’s vocal works, the complete texts of Opus 6 and Opus 30 with translations and a phonetic transcription, email interviews, and a letter of permission from the publisher, Musik-Fabrik.
INTRODUCTION

Jean-Yves Malmasson is mostly an orchestral composer, but his nuanced compositional style translates effectively into small-scale forms such as *mélodie* and vocal chamber music. Opus 6: *Trois poèmes de Charles Baudelaire* and Opus 30: *Les fleurs du désir* are two of the seven vocal works that exemplify his deep understanding of the essence of poetry and skillful atmospheric settings of them. The definitive aspects of *mélodie* can be broadly described as a musical setting of French prose or poetry that is understated in order to convey emotion more effectively. Malmasson adheres to the definitive aspects of *mélodie* and conveys his compositional style through his harmonic language.

French *mélodie* is a genre of vocal music with a longstanding tradition in France. The word *mélodie*, as defined by the dictionary of the Académie Française, refers to a type of song.¹ Most scholars generally agree that this designation began with Berlioz’s setting of *Irish Melodies*.² Its presence in the musical output of French composers is substantial and its evolution is directly related not only to new compositional techniques but also to cultural, social, and artistic movements.


The rich history and development of this genre and it continues to the present.

The *mélodie* reflects the French aesthetic: “A revealing guide to a certain French conception of music is given by an observation made by Debussy: ‘Music should humbly seek to give pleasure’.” There is an inherent beauty in *mélodie* despite the subject matter of the text. The text is clearly represented in the music; the essence of the text is in every single nuance. “Debussy goes on to write that ‘clarity of expression, precision and concentration of form are qualities peculiar to the French genius’.”

Within vocal performance circles, *mélodie* is always described as having a certain “elation of restraint” that is exclusive to *mélodie*. “The composer Henry Barraud writes: ‘A French musician knows that one does not reach poetical achievement, the one aim of all aesthetic creation, merely through verbalism and self-exhibition. Other quicker, surer roads are to be found, and there is nothing like the unexpressed, to make the inexpressible understood.’” *Mélodie* suggests the emotions, creates the mood and is never blatant about what it means to say but this does not mean that the intent is unclear. “It is possible that the art of the greatest French composers is an art of suggestion...This is not to say that lyricism or even passion is absent in French music;

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4 Ibid., 33.

5 Ibid., 32.
but just as severity of spirit controls the sensuousness of sound, so emotions and feelings are refined, purified and controlled by reason.”

Jean-Yves Malmasson was born September 23, 1963 in Saint-Cloud (a suburb of Paris) but grew up in Boulogne-Billancourt. He currently resides in Orsay, part of the Essone department of Île-de-France. It is part of the southwestern suburbs of Paris, less than 13 miles from the Paris city center. He has been the musical director of the wind orchestra of the city of Puteaux since 1988 and conducts Orchestre Philharmonique des Yvelines et de l'Ouest francilien and the Orchestre Symphonique de Villebon-sur-Yvette since 2004 and 2007 respectively. Malmasson continues to compose today and is currently collaborating with French writer and filmmaker Laurent Bouëxière on an opera buffa that will premiere June 2014.

The goal of this document is to offer a performance guide of Jean-Yves Malmasson’s Opus 6: Trois poèmes de Charles Baudelaire for medium voice and piano and Opus 30: Les fleurs du désir a chamber cantata for soprano, violin, cello and piano. Opus 6 was inspired by his “youthful love” of an amateur mezzo-soprano who will remain unnamed in this document at the composer’s request. Opus 30 was inspired by the birth of his children: Odile, Sabine, and Renaud. The texts for the three sections of Opus 30 were originally written by Malmasson as birth announcements, describing each child’s personality.

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6 Ibid., 32.
Chapter 1 discusses the life and solo vocal works of Jean-Yves Malmasson. It contains biographical information as well as a discussion of Malmasson’s general compositional approach, his influences, his harmonic style and treatment of text. Finally, there is an analysis of the text that the composer wrote for Opus 30.

Charles Baudelaire and selections from his infamous volume of poems Les Fleurs du mal will be the focus of Chapter 2. Biographical information is included, along with general information about Les Fleurs du mal and a detailed analysis of the poems Malmasson set to music: Hymne, Tristesses de la lune and Recueillement.

Chapter 3 will discuss Opus 6 Trois poèmes de Charles Baudelaire and Opus 30 Les fleurs du désir, beginning with the text of each song with English translation, followed by an overview of each song, detailing basic characteristics (vocal line, range, tessitura, metric organization, key scheme, rhythm, accompaniment and level of difficulty). A discussion with musical examples is intended to highlight some of more interesting characteristics of each song and will offer insights on interpretation and management of performance issues.

Following the conclusion and bibliography, appendices are provided with a complete listing of Malmasson’s vocal works, all of the text in Opus 6 and Opus 30 with translations and a phonetic transcription, email interviews and a letter of permission from the publisher, Musik-Fabrik.
Jean-Yves Malmasson was born September 23, 1963 in Saint-Cloud (a suburb of Paris) but grew up in Boulogne-Billancourt. Malmasson’s passion for music began at an early age. His parents, Anne-Claire and Michel, did not play any instruments but enjoyed classical music. Malmasson was always surrounded by it through recordings, radio, or live performance. His father was particularly fond of Romantic orchestral works (Berlioz, Wagner, Strauss) and his mother preferred chamber music. According to Anne-Claire, his passion for classical music began in the womb, when she attended a performance of Berlioz’s Requiem with Charles Münch conducting the orchestra at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris. Even though his parents inspired a passion for classical music in him, his musical preferences were only partly influenced by them. Along with his uncle, Malmasson has a passion for early 20th-century music, specifically the works of Debussy, Ravel, Stravinsky, Bartok, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, and Honegger. As a toddler, Malmasson repeatedly asked to listen to a recording of

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7 Jean-Yves Malmasson, interview by the author, March 6, 2013.

8 Ibid.
Manuel de Falla’s “The three-cornered hat”.9 Malmasson’s first attempts at composition include a piece for piano dated 1974.10

Malmasson exhibited a keen interest in classical music quite early in his life, which resulted in musical instruction early on in his life, when he was six years old. From 1969 to 1988, he studied piano, organ, ondes Martenot11, harmony and counterpoint, solfège and analysis, and composition at the Conservatoire National de Région, Boulogne-Billancourt with Geneviève Ibanez, André Isoir, Françoise Deslogères, Pierre Grouvel, Aline Holstein, and Alain Louvrier respectively.12 Alain Louvrier, the director of the school assigned the Conservatory Orchestra to play some of Malmasson’s early compositions. Malmasson continues to be very grateful to him for his encouragement.13 He attended the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris from 1988 to 1990. His last year there, he won First Prize in Instrumentation and

9 Jean-Yves Malmasson, interview by the author, March 6, 2013.

10 Ibid.


13 Ibid.
Orchestration. He continued his studies in composition with Serge Nigg and Jacques Charpentier and studied conducting with Jean-Claude Hartemann and Jean-Sébastien Béreau.\textsuperscript{14} Although his principal instrument is the piano, he does not play it often and uses it more as a tool for composition.

He has served as the director of the City of Puteaux wind orchestra since 1988 and since 2004 conducts the Orchestre Philharmonique des Yvelines et de l’Ouest francilien in Versailles, France. His latest work, 4\textsuperscript{th} Symphony, Opus 47 Quatre soleils verts, was performed in England and then in France in May 2012.

Malmasson has composed 49 Opuses and does not limit himself to one specific genre, even though he has had a longtime affinity for orchestral music. He has composed vocal works as well as instrumental chamber works. When he was younger, he wanted to compose huge pieces for sizeable orchestras, but he has “…become more reasonable with time.”\textsuperscript{15} Malmasson remains an active composer and is collaborating with French writer and filmmaker Laurent Bouëxière on an opera buffa that will premiere June 2014.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{15} Jean-Yves Malmasson, interview by the author, January 2, 2013.
Compositional Style

Malmasson has always been fascinated with orchestral music. As mentioned before, he has been influenced by early 20th-century music but he is especially passionate about Mahler and Shostakovich’s symphonies. Malmasson is also a conductor and is deeply influenced by Maestro Claudio Abbado; he has dedicated one of his symphonies to him in order to express his admiration. Malmasson’s interests also lie in astronomy, entomology, and bio-diversity, which serve as compositional inspirations. When asked about his general compositional approach, he believes he is too immersed in the actual work to have an objective point of view. “The inspiration can come from different things: an emotion, an interval, a rhythm, a little motive of 3 or 4 notes, a tone, a poem, or an interpreter.” His sensitivity to tone colors and instrumental tone qualities also provides an important parameter for his inspiration.

Regarding Malmasson’s harmonic style, he is principally a tonal composer but does not allow himself to be limited by such a label. His ultimate goal is poetic expression, and he employs whatever compositional methods or techniques are at his

16 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
disposal, including modality, polytonality, and chromaticism in Malmasson’s music. Much like some of his early 20th-century predecessors, specifically Debussy, Malmasson utilizes chords for color and not function but is “...quite sensitive to attractions between notes in such a tonal and polytonal language.” His sensitivity to these colors gives him a wide palette to choose from in order to create atmosphere in his music.

Malmasson’s music is permeated with motives and thematic material that represent different aspects of the poetry. He recycles them throughout his pieces and uses them interchangeably in the vocal line and accompaniment. The role motives and thematic material play in both Opus 6 and Opus 30 will be examined in detail in Chapter 3.

Malmasson embraces the tradition of the later mélodie composers whose text settings remain true to the cadence and flow of the French language. This technique is specifically important in Opus 6, where each song begins with an exposed, recitative-like melody. Even at the highest points of emotional expression, Malmasson never

20 Referring to Debussy: His songs”... contain many of the elements of his characteristic style, including chains of parallel chords enriched with clusters of 7ths and 9ths and harmonic relationships that defied traditional practice and created new worlds of sound and sensation. Thus, unhampered by considerations of previous tonal procedures such as sequences and harmonic rhythm, Debussy’s melodies move with a freedom that catches the subtlety of the text in a new way.” - François Lesure and Roy Howat. "Debussy, Claude." Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press, accessed November 6, 2013, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/07353.

21 Jean-Yves Malmasson, interview by the author, April 25, 2013.
strays from his goal to enshrine the natural flow of the French language within the rhythmic accuracy of his musical setting.

**Solo Vocal Works**

As previously mentioned, Malmasson is primarily an orchestral composer but dabbles in other forms. Out of the forty-nine compositions in his cannon, seven are vocal works including Opus 6 and Opus 30.

His first vocal work, which is discussed in depth in this document, is Opus 6 *Trois poèmes de Charles Baudelaire*, written in 1984. The original version was premiered at Saint-Merri’s Church in Paris in 1992. He orchestrated this original version in 1999. In 2001, Malmasson rearranged this work for medium voice, piano and cello, and it was later debuted in the Auditorium Francis Poulenc on November 30, 2004 by Cécile Côte (soprano), Béatrice Noël (cello), and Stefana Fodoreanu (piano).

His next vocal work is Opus 17 *Trois poèmes de Paul Éluard* (1996), written for baritone and quintet (clarinet, horn, violin, cello, and piano), and it has never been performed. Next in his ouvre is Opus 30 *Les fleurs du désir*, composed in 2001. A chamber cantata for soprano and trio (violin, cello, and piano), this work is a highly

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23 Ibid.
personal work to the composer, who wrote the text as well as the music, as will be
discussed in depth in this document.

Opus 46 *Une chanson douce* (2010) was composed for and dedicated to
Emmanuelle Piget, a mezzo-soprano. Malmasson used the melody of this song for his
next work, Opus 47 *Quatre soleils verts- quatrième symphonie* (Four Green Suns- Fourth
Symphony). This work was commissioned by the city of Villebon-sur-Yvette in Essone,
France for the twinning with the town of Whitnash in Warkwickshire, England. This
symphony is a poem for mezzo-soprano, mixed choir, and orchestra with text written in
collaboration between the composer and Ms. Piget and was performed in both cities in
2012. This work is also dedicated to Emmanuelle Piget.

**Poetic analysis of Opus 30: Les fleurs du désir**

Malmasson’s Opus 30 *Les fleurs du désir*, a cantata for violin, cello, piano, and
soprano, was composed in 2001, revised in 2005 (after the birth of his son Renaud) and
was dedicated to his wife and their children: Odile, Sabine and Renaud. The premiere
performance of this cantata was intended for Malmasson’s brother, a cellist, who at the
time belonged to a piano, violin, and cello trio. The group disbanded before the piece
could be performed.25

24 Jean-Yves Malmasson, “Catalogue of Works,” Jean-Yves Malmasson,

The Flowers of Desire

Ah! Fruit of the secular miracle, I am gold, I am light
At the dawn of Being I reveal to the world my eyes, my voice
and my name, Odile.

Flower of desire, hope of flesh, Sun of life singing the dawn I appear to your days
Daughter of Spring I’m its rite
I’m called Sabine.

In the shadow of the Vercors Mountains Bead of sun and earth
I came to life, I came in the flesh To the world and to time I open my senses
My name is Renaud. Ah!

The title of the piece, Les fleurs du désir (The Flowers of Desire), poetically reflects the passion between the parents that created these children and also describes each child as a flower, a delicate, living being that in time blooms into its own beauty. The texts were originally written as birth announcements and sent to family and friends upon the birth of each child. Each announcement is written from the child’s point of
They describe themselves solemnly and metaphorically through language that seems to intellectually surpass their age. One of the melodies in the cantata that is found in the final movement was derived from a tune that his wife would sing to Odile when she was 2 to 3 years old. Malmasson develops this melody through the movement, which culminates into a joyous ending celebrating his children.

One at a time the children describe themselves with unique characteristics and proclaims their name at the end of each stanza. Each child’s knowledge of their own name reflects the connection between parent and child; they are attuned to each other. Each child also uses aspects of nature to describe itself; Each is one with the Earth and with the universe.

The eldest, Odile, describes herself as a miracle, a light, and gold. All of these nouns are reminiscent of the feelings usually expressed by first-time parents. This child they have created is a miracle of life that brings a light into their lives. Their new child shines in their eyes and is the most precious person in their lives.

Sabine, the middle child, describes herself as the flower of desire and the daughter and rite of spring. As mentioned before, the flower of desire is the result of the passion between the parents. She calls herself the daughter of spring because she was born in the spring of 1998. She also refers to herself as the “rite of Spring” which brings to mind a famous work by one of Malmasson’s influences: Igor Stravinsky’s ballet The

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26 Jean-Yves Malmasson, interview by the author, April 25, 2013.
Rite of Spring. In this ballet, Stravinsky describes “…the mystery and great surge of the creative power of Spring.”27 This is perhaps the same creative power that brought Sabine into being.

In the final verse, Renaud, the youngest child and only boy describes himself coming to be “In the shadow of the Vercors Mountains…”. This geographical reference, the Vercors Mountains, which are found in the southeast region of France, indicates Renaud’s conception in the summer of 2004. It is there that he opens his senses and takes on life.

The overall tone of the text and the piece is solemn and otherworldly until the introduction of the mother’s melody in the finale where the tone becomes joyous and bubbly. The instrumentation complements the tone of the text through several techniques, themes, and instrumental pairings that will be further explored in Chapter 3.

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CHAPTER 2
CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

Biographical Information

Charles Pierre Baudelaire, who lived in a tumultuous time in French history, was born in Paris, France, on April 9, 1821, only 6 years after the fall of the First French Empire (1804-1815) of Napoleon, and during the Bourbon Restoration (1815-1830). Baudelaire’s family was practicing Catholics and two months after his birth, he was baptized young Charles at Saint-Sulpice Roman Catholic Church. Catholicism and its doctrines are influential in his life and are major themes in his writing.

His father, François Baudelaire was 34 years older than his mother, Caroline. He received his Master of Arts in 1781 from La Sorbonne and soon after began to study theology at the same university. In 1782, he took his minor orders and a year later, he was ordained into priesthood but resigned in 1784 because he preferred to be a teacher. Throughout his theological course, François also studied painting and had an appreciation for art. “Despite the difference in their ages, however, Baudelaire’s father

28 Ibid., 3.

29 Much like other medieval universities, La Sorbonne was affiliated with the church and those who desired to be ordained could do so.

left at least one deep and permanent impression on his child’s mind: the love of art.”\(^{31}\)

Baudelaire indicates in a brief description of his life “...his nature had been marked by a ‘permanent taste, since childhood, for all images and all forms of representation in the plastic arts.’”\(^{32}\)

François Baudelaire died in 1827, when young Charles was six years old.\(^{33}\) A little over a year after his father’s death, Caroline married the young and ambitious Lieutenant Colonel Jacques Aupick. The period between his father’s death and his mother’s remarriage was a time in young Baudelaire’s life where he felt that he had his mother all to himself and he was the sole focus of her affections. Her remarriage was a crucial moment in Baudelaire’s development. Biographers believe having to share his mother’s affections was so traumatic for him that it explains his excessive behavior later in life.\(^{34}\) It could have also seemed like a cruel betrayal to young Charles.\(^{35}\) Her

\(^{31}\) Ibid., 9-10.

\(^{32}\) Ibid., 10.

\(^{33}\) Ibid., 8.

\(^{34}\) Ibid., 11.

remarriage also coincides with his move from Paris to Lyon, the latter which Baudelaire despised.\textsuperscript{36}

In November of 1831, Aupick was stationed in Lyon to help put down worker’s riots that were part of the First Canut Revolt.\textsuperscript{37} Caroline and Charles moved with him and Charles entered the Royal College of Lyon. Young Charles was quite unhappy in Lyon and felt as if he were in exile, so far from the city that was most familiar to him, Paris.\textsuperscript{38} Baudelaire even wrote to his half-brother Alphonse (François’ son from his previous marriage) describing the school in Lyon and its students as grotesque: “I am horribly unhappy with the school, which is dirty, badly run, disorderly, and where the students are nasty and dirty like all those from Lyon.”\textsuperscript{39} Baudelaire throughout his life remembered Lyon with scorn and ire.\textsuperscript{40}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{36} “Chronology of the Life of Charles Baudelaire,” Piranesia,\url{http://www.piranesia.net/baudelaire/chronologie.html} (accessed April 17, 2013).
\item \textsuperscript{37} Silk workers in Lyon revolted making this the first well-defined uprising of the Industrial revolution in France.
\item \textsuperscript{39} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 24.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
In the beginning of 1836 Aupick returned to Paris and Baudelaire was admitted to the Lycée Louis-le-Grand.\(^{41}\) The curriculum both in Paris and Lyon was mostly classical, and it was there that he cultivated a deep knowledge of Latin that in turn facilitated his understanding of and sensitivity to the French language.\(^{42}\) In Paris, however, he began “…his reading of Romantic literature, encountering, most notably the prose and poetry of Victor Hugo and Saint-Beuve’s novel, \textit{Volupté}.\(^{43}\) A lot of the themes in his poetry that will be discussed later in the chapter contradict Romantic views of nature and beauty.

Two years later, Baudelaire was caught with a note in class from another student. He was immediately ordered to hand it over but Baudelaire chose to swallow it instead. When told that his actions caused suspicion of him and his classmate, he broke out into laughter described by his headmaster as “…sniggers too impertinent to be tolerated.”\(^{44}\)

\[\text{References}\]

\(^{41}\) Equivalent to an American Preparatory School.


He was later enrolled as an external student at the Collège Saint-Louis and passed his exams in August of 1839 despite his disciplinary problems and lack of motivation.\(^{45}\)

Shortly after he passed his exams, his mother and stepfather expressed their wish for him to become a diplomat. In response he stated his desire to become a writer, which was ill received. Promising to continue his education, he studied law in Paris while living the Bohemian life and running up debts in the Latin Quarter for a while, where he most likely contracted syphilis and gonorrhea after he began to frequent prostitutes.\(^{46}\) These diseases contributed to his health complications later on in life.\(^{47}\) He successfully obtained his law degree in 1839 but did not want to practice law or diplomacy, despite his stepfather's wishes.\(^{48}\)

June 9\(^{th}\) of 1841, his stepfather arranged for Baudelaire to travel on his own to Calcutta, India from Bordeaux, France in order to take him out of his environment and

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possibly dissuade him from becoming a writer.\textsuperscript{49} His ship was damaged during a storm and he went no further than Mauritas Island, east of Madagascar.\textsuperscript{50} He stayed there September 1\textsuperscript{st} through the 19\textsuperscript{th} with Monsieur Gustave-Adolphe Autard de Bragard and his young Creole wife, Emmelina de Bragard who was known for her beauty.\textsuperscript{51} He spent his days in their house or on their estate where “…he talked literature to his heart’s content. It was a delight to him after weeks of isolation.”\textsuperscript{52} Baudelaire developed a schoolboy crush on Emmelina, who was only three years older than he.\textsuperscript{53} He reached Réunion Island but refused to continue his voyage to India instead returning to France.

While in Réunion Island he wrote to Monsieur de Bragard:

> “You asked me, in Mauritius, for some verses for your wife, and I have not forgotten you. As it is decent, right and proper that verses which are addressed to a lady by a young man should pass through her husband’s hands before they


\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
reach her, I am sending them to you, so that you don’t show them to her unless you choose.
...It is unlikely that I shall return to Mauritius, unless the ship on which I am leaving for Bordeaux goes there in search of passengers...And so I shall await you in France.”

Enclosed in the letter was a version of the sonnet “À une dame Créole” which was inspired by Emmelina. Sixteen years later, she died at sea on her way to France, which coincidently was the same week that Les Fleurs du mal was published.54

“À une dame Créole” was included in that publication and within the first three lines he mentions “…aromas, warmth, and indolence, three tropical themes which were often to recur in the poetry of Baudelaire. Already, too, he was haunted by exotic women.”55

Even though he never made it to India, “…the experience was to make Baudelaire a superb maritime poet; and he kept, from his Oriental odyssey, a vision which would never leave his eyes.”56

Baudelaire remembered the sea to be calm and sunlit and the impressions of his voyage opened up a whole new palette of imagery and thematic material. The “…themes or images suggested by the voyage were to fill ten times the space of all the memories of his first twenty years.”57

54 Ibid.
56 Ibid., 69.
57 Ibid.
À une Dame créole

Au pays parfumé que le soleil caresse,
J'ai connu, sous un dais d'arbres tout empourprés
Et de palmiers d'où pleut sur les yeux la paresse,
Une dame créole aux charmes ignorés.

Son teint est pâle et chaud; la brune enchantress
A dans le cou des airs noblement maniérés;
Grande et svelte en marchant comme une chasseresse,
Son sourire est tranquille et ses yeux assurés.

Si vous alliez, Madame, au vrai pays de gloire,
Sur les bords de la Seine ou de la verte Loire,
Belle digne d'orner les antiques manoirs,
Vous feriez, à l'abri des ombreuses retraites
Germer mille sonnets dans le coeur des poètes,
Que vos grands yeux rendraient plus soumis que vos noirs.

To a Creole Lady

In the perfumed country which the sun caresses,
I knew, under a canopy of crimson trees
And palms from which indolence rains into your eyes,
A Creole lady whose charms were unknown.

Her complexion is pale and warm; the dark enchantress
Affects a noble air with the movements of her neck.
Tall and slender, she walks like a huntress;
Her smile is calm and her eye confident.

If you went, Madame, to the true land of glory,
On the banks of the Seine or along the green Loire,
Beauty fit to ornament those ancient manors,
You'd make, in the shelter of those shady retreats,
A thousand sonnets grow in the hearts of poets,
Whom your large eyes would make more subject than your slaves.58

This voyage enriched his sensibility and made him one of the first French poets to
dabble in exoticism; his work would have not been the same without it.\textsuperscript{59} Even though
his stepfather’s intent with this voyage was to distract Baudelaire from his dreams of
becoming a writer, the voyage did the exact opposite: it opened up a world of images
and he “…returned with his imagination on fire, and more determined than ever to
persevere in the career which he had chosen.”\textsuperscript{60}

 Shortly after his return to Paris in 1842, he had begun to write some of the poems
of \textit{Les fleurs du mal} and had begun his on again/off again affair with the exotic Jeanne
Duval, a Mulatto actress/prostitute that his mother dubbed “The Black Venus”.\textsuperscript{61} She
was not accepted by his family, which caused him to attempt suicide.\textsuperscript{62} He suffered
because of her but along with his mother, she was one of the women that he loved most
in his life and who “…inspired some of his most beautiful and despairing poems.”\textsuperscript{63}


\textsuperscript{60} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid.
When he turned 21, April 9, 1842, Baudelaire inherited 100,000 francs that his father left him from his estate.⁶⁴ He moved to the Hôtel Pimodan on Île Saint-Louis in Central Paris and began to spend his inheritance frivolously furnishing his new apartment with expensive artwork and furniture.⁶⁵ This area was saturated with artists and writers and it was there that he met Apollonie Sabatier, also known as La Présidente. This was her sobriquet “…because she presided over weekly dinners that gathered writers like Gautier, Flaubert and Banville…and the sculptor Ernest Christophe, whose statues would later inspire two of Baudelaire’s poems.” ⁶⁶ Sabatier being a liberated woman of the world captured Baudelaire’s imagination. She “…responded cordially to his admiration, but found that his attraction to her was more abstract than physical. She then became a warm and faithful friend to him…”⁶⁷ She also served as an inspiration for his poems.

Two years after receiving his inheritance, Baudelaire had already spent half of it. Worried about his spending habits, his mother obtained a court order “…subjecting his

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⁶⁵ Ibid.

remaining assets to the control of a court-appointed legal guardian, Narcisse-Désiré Ancelle.”68 Baudelaire received a monthly stipend but had so much debt that he would spend the rest of his life fleeing from creditors and begging for cash advances from his mother. Due to his financial situation, Baudelaire attempted to commit suicide in 1845. He and his mother would reconcile but he remained estranged from his stepfather.69

In the late 1840’s Baudelaire began to translate Edgar Allen Poe’s work and in him found a kindred spirit. During this time he also met the actress Marie Daubrun who also became his mistress for some time. “They lived together at two separate periods, then she left him for Théodore de Banville, a longtime friend of Baudelaire.”70 She also inspired some of his most beautiful and most jealous poetry. The years passed and Baudelaire’s translations of Edgar Allen Poe’s work were published in two volumes. His own work, the much controversial Les Fleurs du mal also had several published editions that will be discussed in detail in the following section.

In 1842, as his health declined and his debts became unbearable, Baudelaire travelled to Belgium in order to give a series lectures but due to his stage fright and a

69 Ibid.
lack of audience, they did not go well. 71 In March 1866, while visiting a church in Namur, Belgium, he fell. A few days later, he suffered a massive stroke that paralyzed him and after a year of aphasia, he received his last rites of the Catholic Church. 72 In the summer of 1866, he was taken to a rest home in Paris and he died August 31, 1867. He was buried in the Montparnasse Cemetery two days later.

Charles Baudelaire’s contribution to 19th century literature is immeasurable. He is credited as the Father of Symbolism with his publication *Les Fleurs du mal*.

*Les Fleurs du mal*

*Les Fleurs du mal*, Baudelaire’s most famous is work, is a collection of short poems and sonnets 73 whose title can mean “Flowers of Evil” and “Flowers of Suffering”. 74 The


duality of title hints at one of several major themes of this work: the duality of the divided, modern man.  

June 22, 1857 was the date of publication of the first version of *Les Fleurs du mal*. Several authors and critics received personalized copies including English writers De Quincey, Browning, and Tennyson and French writer Théophile Gautier. Baudelaire received several harsh reviews but none was more critical than Gustave Bourdin’s review in *Le Figaro* on July 5, 1857.

“[…] Never have such brilliant qualities been so madly wasted. There are times when one has doubts: most of the time, it is the monotonous and premeditated repetition of the same words, the same thoughts. [...] This book is a hospital open to all of the dementia of the spirit, all of the putridity of the heart; it would be one thing if it was meant to cure them, but they are incurable. [...] one might understand if the imagination of a twenty-year-old poet had let itself be dragged down to such subjects, but nothing can justify a man of more than thirty for having published a book that gives publicity to similar monstrosities.”

What Bourdin fails to recognize is that *Les Fleurs du mal* is “…essentially a young man’s book; though published when Baudelaire was in his mid-thirties, in 1857, the poems it contained had in fact largely been written, at least in first draft, when he was

75 Ibid.


in his early twenties, during the period of 1841-6.” The “monstrosities” that Bourdin refers to are the themes of lesbianism and profound immorality found in some of the poems in this first edition.

On July 7, 1857, after rumors of a court case against Les Fleurs du mal circulated Paris, “…the Attorney-General received a letter about the book from the Minister of the Interior. The Director of the Sûreté publique informed that the author of Les Fleurs du mal had committed an offence against public morals.” That same day, Baudelaire and his publishers, Poulet-Malassis and Debroise, were charged with offending public morals.

After these charges were brought against him, Baudelaire feared the seizure of Les Fleurs du mal and the consequences of the charges would be. He was full of anxiety at this time for the aforementioned but also for the grief that all of this negative press was causing his mother, Caroline. She wrote to him expressing her anxiety and desolation, but Baudelaire responded in early July 1857 reassuring that everything would work itself out. In this same letter, Baudelaire “…with unusual passion, an assurance which he did not often express, he himself set down his creed, assessed Les Fleurs du mal, and defiantly affirmed his status:

80 Ibid., 238.
You know that I have always considered that literature and the arts pursue an aim independent of morality. Beauty of conception and style is enough for me. But this book, whose title: *Fleurs du mal*— says everything, is clad, as you will see, in a cold and sinister beauty. It was created with rage and patience. Besides, the proof of its positive worth is in all the ill that they speak of it. The book enrages people. Moreover, since I was terrified myself of the horror that I should inspire, I cut out a third from the proofs. They deny me everything, the spirit of invention and even knowledge of the French language. I don’t care a rap about all these imbeciles, and I know that this book, with its virtues and its faults, will make its way in the memory of the lettered public, beside the best poems of V. Hugo, Th. Gautier and even Byron.”81

Despite the criticisms, Baudelaire, in the core of his being knew that what he wrote was revolutionary in the world of literature. He knew the gift that he possessed was being overshadowed by the shock value of the language and themes of some of the poems in *Les Fleurs du mal*. He was hoping for the best outcome, or at least the outcome of Gustave Flaubert, who was also charged with obscenity for his novel *Madame Bovary* and was acquitted February 7, 1857.

Unfortunately, Baudelaire and his publishers were found guilty of offending public morals. Baudelaire was fined 300 francs, which was later reduced to 50 francs, and his publishers, Poulet-Malassis and Debrouxe 100 francs each82. Six poems from *Les Fleurs du mal* were censored and banned83.


In 1861, a second edition of *Les Fleurs du mal* was published without the banned six poems of the 1857 edition but with an additional 35 new poems and a new section named “Tableaux parisiens” and the poem *Au Lecteur*. In 1866, while in Belgium, Baudelaire and his publisher compiled a book of small poems and more importantly, the six banned poems in the 1857 version of *Les Fleurs du mal* and published them as *Les Épaves*. Baudelaire passed away shortly after and in 1868, a posthumous, third edition of *Les Fleurs du mal* was organized by his publisher and fellow poets with an introduction by Théophile Gautier. This edition included 151 poems. It was not until May 31, 1949 that the condemnation of *Les Fleurs du mal* was formally annulled in French court.

**Major themes of Les Fleurs du mal**

*Les Fleurs du mal* is a complicated, multi-layered and labyrinthine work, much like its author. There is so much to be said about the overall structure and placement of the poems as well as the themes and structures of the individual poems. A full treatment of *Les Fleurs du mal* is outside the scope of this paper and has been accomplished by Baudelaire specialists, F.W. Leaky, Rosemary Lloyd, and Johanna Richardson. For the purpose of this performer’s guide, I will focus on the thematic and

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83 The poems *Le Reniement de Saint-Pierre, Abel et Caïn* and *Les Litanies de Satan* were banned because in them “…the immorality of the soul and the dearest beliefs of Christianity are considered as nothing…” and *Femmes damnées, Les Métamorphoses du Vampire* and *Les Bijoux* were banned because they expressed “…the most revolting lewdness.”- Joanna Richardson, *Baudelaire*, 1st US Edition ed. (New York: St Martins Pr, 1994), 238.
structural analysis of the poems Malmasson set to music: *Hymne, Tristesses de la lune,* and *Receuillement.*

“Personally, I think that the unique and supreme delight lies in the certainty of doing evil—and men and women know from birth that all pleasure lies in evil”\(^8^4\).

In order to fully understand this work one must take into consideration Baudelaire’s early life. His Catholic upbringing saturated his work at its very root. The title of the collection, *Les Fleurs du mal* can be interpreted as “…the flowers of sin, of repentance, of remorse, and penitence”. \(^8^5\) Baudelaire believed that “…original sin pervades man’s world”\(^8^6\) and acts as the catalyst of the depravity of the soul.

The first poem in the collection *Au Lecteur* (To the Reader), in which the poet directly addresses his readers, describes the state of a man’s soul on this Earth as the result of Satan, who “pulls the strings”\(^8^7\). At its outset “…the collection is dominated by

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the poet’s Catholic sense of original sin”\textsuperscript{88} and the tortured spiritual state\textsuperscript{89} of a poet that is so aware of his soul’s plight. Baudelaire’s struggles with evil do not represent an affinity with Satan, but in his poetry “...(he) represents himself as trapped and cries out in a despair that suggests his awareness of sin as a burden”\textsuperscript{90}

In this same poem the poet describes ennui\textsuperscript{91} as far worse than Satan himself. In the early 19\textsuperscript{th} century, young adults experienced something referred to as “mal du siècle” which was described as disillusionment and melancholy.\textsuperscript{92} “The person who experiences ennui, as opposed to mal du siècle, (which in Baudelaire’s terms becomes ennui\textsuperscript{93}) is mercilessly self-aware and troubled by original sin and a divided self”\textsuperscript{94}. This struggle with sin, ennui, and Satan invites the reader into this collection by “...portraying regretful yet irresistible corruption” while forcing the reader into

\textsuperscript{88} Kathryn Oliver Mills, “Charles Baudelaire,” The Poetry Foundation, \url{http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/charles-baudelaire} (accessed June 18, 2013)

\textsuperscript{89} Laurence M. Porter, ed., Approaches to Teaching Baudelaire’s Flowers of Evil (New York: Modern Language Assn of Amer, 2000), 1.

\textsuperscript{90} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{91} a feeling of weariness and dissatisfaction

\textsuperscript{92} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{93} Kathryn Oliver Mills, “Charles Baudelaire,” The Poetry Foundation, \url{http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/charles-baudelaire} (accessed June 18, 2013)

\textsuperscript{94} Ibid.
complicity in its conclusion: “—Hypocrite lecteur, --mon semblable, -- mon frère!”

(Hypocritical reader, my mirror-image, my brother!) ⁹⁵ which suggests that the reader and poet are sinners alike but unlike the reader, the poet is aware of this state of being which inspires him to share it with his audience.

One can say that Baudelaire, through this collection of poems wishes to “…impart to the reader an awareness of tension between the physical real and spiritually ideal, of a hopeless but ever-renewed aspiration toward the infinite from an existence mired in sin on Earth.” ⁹⁶ For Baudelaire, human struggle begins with the flesh, but it mostly takes place in the metaphysical realm. ⁹⁷ Amidst this human struggle with original sin, man is guided by a love for beauty, “…but he fears it and he hates it, when it asserts itself as carnal and criminal.” ⁹⁸ Beauty and love, for Baudelaire, although pleasurable, are two specific examples of man’s capacity for original sin. ⁹⁹

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⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.


Romantics of the first half of the nineteenth century had a very Platonist view of Beauty.

They believed in a “...triad of major ideas, at the center of which the Ideal of the Beautiful shines with unrivaled brightness, determines the efforts of artists to provide an image for that Idea and to stimulate in the soul the feelings originating from Heaven which Beauty awakens.”\(^{100}\) They saw Nature as the “sign or mirror of the divine”\(^{101}\) and believed that these ideal forms reveal themselves in the world, visibly or invisibly and are linked together in analogies that humans are meant to discover and in the process of discovery they see the world beyond just the physical and in its heavenly realities.\(^{102}\)

Baudelaire did not agree in these Platonist sentiments of ideal Beauty and the role of Nature. He found Beauty to be a relative idea as opposed to the absolute concept that Platonists presented. His ideas of Nature and Beauty were “...born out of opposition to the Platonist or idealist system”\(^{103}\) which caused him to develop an original aesthetic relative to the ideas, temperaments and feelings of the artist, in this case, Baudelaire.


\(^{101}\) Ibid.

\(^{102}\) Ibid.

Beauty then, according to Baudelaire is not Platonist; “the beautiful forms are not those arousing the intuition of eternal realities, but really those bearing moral significance—sadness, melancholy, bitter disappointment, joy, passion for living, etc.”

Baudelaire did not revere Nature as the romantics did and held contempt for the “senseless and undirected impulses of Nature”. He felt that “…everything beautiful is beautiful by calculation...(the) natural state of man on the physical level is unattractive and on the spiritual level is a state of original sin.” For Baudelaire, in order to really see beauty, one must also see the ugly; one must see the two sides of the coin. The calculation of beauty is found in the artificial and not in the natural.

Baudelaire had distaste for love. For the Romantics, love was a mutual exchange, but Baudelaire refused to believe in that mutuality. In his Journaux intimes,

104 Ibid., 11-12.


109 Ibid., 49.
“He likened love to torture or to a surgical operation. One of the partners, he
maintained, must be either torturer or surgeon, and the other victim or patient.”\(^{110}\) He
also saw love as “…a crime in which man had need of an accomplice. All love was
prostitution, and sexual love was patently a sin.”\(^{111}\) His preoccupations with his
Catholic beliefs drove Baudelaire from the thought of physical love: “It is this horror of
solitude, the need to lose one’s self in the external flesh, that man nobly calls the need to
love.”\(^{112}\) In this quote, penned by Baudelaire in his Journaux intimes, we see a
disassociation between emotional love and physical love. All that exists is a physical
need (which leads to sin) that is masked by the “the need to love”.

To Baudelaire, “Woman is natural, that is to say, abominable”\(^{113}\) meaning that he
associated women with nature. He revered them as his muses but also recognized them
as instruments that led him to temptations of the flesh, sensual love. Women to
Baudelaire embodied both the elevation toward God and the gradual descent toward
Satan. \(^{114}\) Women were “…both his muse, providing ephemeral perfection, and a curse,

\(^{110}\) Ibid.

\(^{111}\) Ibid., 50.


\(^{113}\) Ibid.

\(^{114}\) Ibid.
condemning him to unrequited love and early death.”115 Even though sensual and “beautiful” images of women are pervasive in his poems, there is some sense of misogyny: woman’s association with nature completely opposed his attempt to capture the poetry of the artificial, modern world.

*Modérnité*, or Modernity is defined by Baudelaire in his essay “The Painter of Modern Life” as “…the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable.”116 In his lifetime, he witnessed the modernization of Paris: “All around him, Paris was changing as the constitutional monarchy followed by the Second Empire presided over an unprecedented and lengthy period of commercial and industrial growth.”117 The physical Paris changed from romantic greenery to a city skyline and Second Empire transformed “…the very face of the city, inventing the form of make-over we now call urban renewal.”118 At the time

115 Ibid.


(during the 1850’s) it was called “…Haussmannisation\textsuperscript{119}, after the Prefect broadly responsible for sweeping away higgledy-piggledy old city, with its maze of narrow, winding streets, and replacing them with the patter of broad boulevards, large open squares and long vistas we associate with Paris today.”\textsuperscript{120}

This modernization of the world around him at such a rapid pace left Baudelaire suspended in time and seeing two worlds: longing for the Paris of the past and unable to assimilate to the Paris of the future.

“He sees, in other words, both worlds simultaneously—the Paris before Haussmann, and the Paris during and after its redevelopment; France before the revolution of 1848, and France in the increasingly triumphant capitalist culture that followed…”\textsuperscript{121} What results from this double vision, so to speak, is an aesthetic born out of an “…inability to integrate the dying world and the burgeoning one—he sees, to repeat, both at once.”\textsuperscript{122} Modernity, then, arises as an awareness that a crucial change has occurred but it is accompanied by the “…disabused knowledge that, this ‘shock of the new’ notwithstanding, nothing essential has altered.”\textsuperscript{123}

\textsuperscript{119} Georges-Eugène Haussmann was the civic planner commissioned by Napoelon III to begin the modernization of Paris in the 1860s.

\textsuperscript{120} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{122} Ibid.
Haussmann’s new boulevards were some of few places where people of varying social classes would cross each other and catch sight of one another. “The mutual eyeing that went on furnished Baudelaire with another metaphor for urban experience that became one of his key motifs: sight.”¹²⁴ In response, to the new sights, smells and sounds around him, the Baudelarian concepts of synaesthesia and urban solitude were born. Synaesthesia is the horizontal correspondence¹²⁵ (from object to person as opposed to vertical correspondence found in Platonist ideas) of a mixture of simultaneous reports from several senses.¹²⁶ The result of this synaesthesia permeates Baudelaire’s poetry and in turn draws the reader into a complete sensory experience.

Baudelaire also treated the Romantic theme of solitude in this new, modern setting. “He imagines solitude not as a state of nature but as it happens in cities, presenting it in counterpoint to city crowds.”¹²⁷ This urban solitude—“the anonymity of


¹²⁴ Ibid., 103.


the crowd—is close to the definitional heart of the word ‘alienation’, precisely because in it the element of familiarity, both actual and potential is lacking.”

Baudelaire was not interested in making readers feel comfortable with the strangeness of this new city experience because to him, it was deeply troubling. Urban encounters to Baudelaire were fleeting intersections of individuals that were temporary and mystifying in a single glance.

**Analysis of Hymne, Tristesses de la lune, and Receuillement**

It is important to note briefly the innovations in themes, structure and treatment of subject matter in Baudelaire’s poetry. In these three poems alone, Baudelaire reinvents existing poetic compositional structures, creates vivid images of urban Parisian life, the indolence of a deity of nature and subtly weaves the sacred and profane in his “worship” of beauty. Needless to say, these poems are full of Baudelaire’s ideas, sense of morals and genius to create an intricate fabric of words.

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129 Ibid., 103.

130 Ibid., 105.
Hymne (Baudelaire)  
À la très chère, à la très belle
Qui remplit mon coeur de clarté,
À l’ange, À l'idole immortelle,
Salut en l’immortalité!

Hymne (Malmasson)  
À la très chère, à la très belle
Qui remplit mon coeur de clarté,
À l’ange, À l'idole immortelle,
Salut en l’immortalité!

Hymn (Baudelaire)  
To the dearest, fairest woman
Who sets my heart ablaze with light,
To the angel, the immortal idol,
Greetings in immortality!

Elle se répand dans ma vie
Comme un air imprégné de sel,
Et dans mon âme inassouvie
Verse le goût de l’éternel.

Sachet toujours frais qui parfume
L’atmosphère d’un cher réduit,
Encensoir oublié qui fume
En secret à travers la nuit,

Comment, amour incorruptible,
T’exprimer avec vérité?
Grain de musc qui gis, invisible,
Au fond de mon éternité!

À la très bonne, à la très belle
Qui fait ma joie et ma santé,

Mr. Malmasson decided to change the verb faire, employed in Baudelaire’s poem in the first person singular conjugation, which means “to do or to make” for the
Hymne, a poem of amorous tribute, published in Belgium in 1866 in the collection Les Épaves eulogizes the beloved’s effective moral influence. Structurally, the first and last quatrains alternate between decasyllable (10-syllable) and octosyllable (8-syllable) lines that alternate in rhyme. The decasyllable lines are broken into syntactical groups of 5-5 syllables marked by a syntactical caesura (comma). These quatrains exalt the beloved woman to the point of idolization; the poet worships her and her morality. Each quatrain ends with “À l’ange, à l'idole immortelle, Salut en l'immortalité!” (To the angel, the immortal idol, Greetings in immortality!)

The three quatrains in the middle of the poem alternate between 9-syllable lines and 8-syllable lines which is quite uncommon. This slight alteration to the structure of the line can be seen as a manifestation of the taboo interweaving of sacred and profane images in these quatrains.

verb savoir, employed by Malmasson in the first person singular, which mean “to know”.

In the first of these quatrains, Baudelaire uses highly suggestive verbs that describe an entering of one being into another such as: permeates, impregnates, and pours. These words are all used in the context of how the beloved, idolized woman, has made her way into the poet’s life.

The following quatrain describes smells and places associated with the beloved. The first line, “Sachet, ever fresh, that perfumes” describes her as an object of fragrance, always renewed and who perfumes “The atmosphere of a dear nook,” in line two. The dear nook can be interpreted as the beloved’s genitalia, which Baudelaire references again in lines three and four “Forgotten censer smoldering secretly through the night”. His reference to the beloved’s genitalia as a censer, an object used to burn incense in a religious ceremony, deliberately interweaves the holiness of the beloved with the profane sexual desires of the poet in his description of her. As stated earlier in this Chapter, Baudelaire revered women as his muses but also recognized them as instruments that led him to temptations of the flesh.

In the final quatrain of this group, the poet, in adoration, rhetorically asks: “Everlasting love, how can I describe you truthfully?” which is followed by his last description of the beloved using the sense of smell, “Grain of musk that lies unseen in the depths of my eternity”. This last metaphor visually and in an olfactory manner describes the power of penetration that the beloved has had on the poet. Malmasson decides changes the verb faire, meaning to do or to make for the verb savoir, meaning to
know. This subtle change of the verb further implicates how profoundly this woman has penetrated the poet’s being.

Tristesses de la lune

Ce soir, la lune rêve avec plus de paresse;
Ainsi qu’une beauté, sur de nombreux coussins,
Qui d’une main distraite et légère caresse
Avant de s’endormir le contour de ses seins,

Sur le dos satiné des molles avalanches,
Mourante, elle se livre aux longues pâmoisons,
Et promène ses yeux sur les visions blanches
Qui montent dans l’azur comme des floraisons.

Quand parfois sur ce globe, en sa langueur oisive,
Elle laisse filer une larme furtive,
Un poète pieux, ennemi du sommeil,
Dans le creux de sa main prend cette larme pâle,
Aux reflets irisés comme un fragment d’opale,
Et la met dans son coeur loin des yeux du soleil.

Sadness of the Moon

Tonight the moon dreams with more indolence,
Like a lovely woman on a bed of cushions
Who fondles with a light and listless hand
The contour of her breasts before falling asleep;

On the satiny back of the billowing clouds,
Languishing, she lets herself fall into long swoons
And casts her eyes over the white phantoms
That rise in the azure like blossoming flowers.

When, in her lazy listlessness,
She sometimes sheds a furtive tear upon this globe,
A pious poet, enemy of sleep,
In the hollow of his hand catches this pale tear,
With the iridescent reflections of opal,
And hides it in his heart afar from the sun’s eyes.

\[134\] Inactivity resulting from a dislike of work (laziness)
Tristesses de la lune, which was published in the first edition of Les Fleurs du mal in 1857, is considered an early nature poem of Baudelaire\textsuperscript{136}. This conventional hymn to a deity of Nature\textsuperscript{137} is found in the grouping spleen et idéal of his collection. In the translation provided, the name of the poem is translated in the singular form: Sadness of the moon, but Baudelaire names the poem Tristesses de la lune or Sadnesses of the moon incinuating that the moon carries multiple reasons for her sadness, adding more layers to the poem.

The first two quatrains of the poem contain alexandrine (12-syllable) lines with an alternating rhyme scheme describing the melancholy mood of the moon. Baudelaire compares the moon to a woman who allows herself to fall asleep in her listlessness. The two following tercets also contain alexandrine lines but their rhyme scheme is slightly varied: the last lines of each tercet rhyme with each other while the first two lines rhyme with each other.


\textsuperscript{137} Ibid.
Figure 1: Tercet rhyme-scheme in *Tristesses de la lune*

In the two tercets, the actions of the “pious poet” are described and the idea that the poet can read the signs of Nature and its deities is reiterated.

The way that Baudelaire uses descriptive words and the metaphor of a woman to create this scene in Nature is evidence of his “…narrative and dramatic gifts.”

In this extended portrait of the moon, Baudelaire creates a natural scene incidentally. Throughout the poem, Baudelaire’s gift of imagery is displayed through his description of nature. The bright moon gazing at the starry night sky that surrounds her is described as “…And casts her (moon) eyes over the white phantoms that rise in the

azure like blossoming flowers”. The stars gradually become visible as the night descends on the earth.

Baudelaire momentarily returns to the Platonist idea of the poet being able to decode nature. The poet in “Tristesses de la lune” is the sole person that can see her sadness and catches the physical manifestation of this sadness.

**Recueillement**

Sois sage, ô ma Douleur, et tiens-toi plus tranquille.
Tu réclamais le Soir; il descend; le voici:
Une atmosphère obscure enveloppe la ville,
Aux uns portant la paix, aux autres le souci.

Pendant que des mortels la multitude vile,
Sous le fouet du Plaisir, ce bourreau sans merci,
Va cueillir des remords dans la fête servile,
Ma Douleur, donne-moi la main; viens par ici,
Loin d’eux. Vois se pencher les défuntes Années,
Sur les balcons du ciel, en robes surannées;
Le soleil moribond s’endormir sous une arche,
Et, comme un long linceul traînant à l’Orient,
Entends, ma chère, entends la douce Nuit qui marche.

**Meditation**

Be quiet and more discreet, O my Grief. You cried out for the Evening; even now it falls:
A gloomy atmosphere envelops the city, Bringing peace to some, anxiety to others.

While the vulgar herd of mortals, under the scourge Of Pleasure, that merciless torturer, Goes to gather remorse in the servile festival, My Grief, give me your hand; come this way Far from them. See the dead years in old-fashioned gowns Lean over the balconies of heaven; Smiling Regret rise from the depths of the waters; The dying Sun fall asleep beneath an arch, and Listen, darling, to the soft footfalls of the Night That trails off to the East like a long winding-sheet.
*Receuillement*, a sonnet describing the emerging urban Parisian life, was added posthumously to the grouping *Tableaux Parisiens* in the 1868 edition of *Les Fleurs du mal*. This poem captures the idea of *modernité* and the “…insidious ramifications of Parisian vice and criminality.”¹³⁹ The description of Nature in this poem is found in a more general way, focusing on its elemental aspects.

One of the more striking features of this poem is the use of allegorical personification. This scene in the tercets of this poem is evoked for some “…ulterior imaginative motive.”¹⁴⁰ The vantage point of the poet as he watches the people in the city with his “companion”, Suffering, recalls the Baudelarian theme of urban solitude; alienation in the crowd. The result is a “…wholly successful blend of such stylized figures as the poet’s faithful companion, Suffering; Evening, and its scourge of Pleasure lashing the febrile¹⁴¹ dwellers in the city; the bygone Years, smiling Regret, the dying Sun, gentle Night drawing its shroud audibly on, all combining to bring the sonnet to its calm, elegiac conclusion.”¹⁴²


¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 36.

Structurally, this poem calls on the Renaissance form of a sonnet. The French sonnet, a variant of the Petrarchan sonnet\textsuperscript{143}, which varies slightly in the rhyme scheme of the sestet, served as the structural model for this poem. Baudelaire does not follow the rigid exactness of this form but instead sweeps aside “…altogether the traditional separation of octave and sestet in favour of a division postponed until after the beginning of the sestet.” He “…does not merely ‘overlap’ from his second quatrains to his first tercets, but ‘runs on’, metrically and syntactically, from the one to the other the pause between the two stanzas is thus dramatically reduced, and the quiet final episode in which the poet, with his imagined ‘companion’, turns away from the hectic, pleasure-greedy city depicted in lines 5-7, is strategically delayed until after the (irregularly early) caesura in the ninth line.”\textsuperscript{144}

The placement of this poem at the end of Malmasson’s grouping creates a dramatic and climactic ending. Through this short grouping, Malmasson mapped out an exploration of Baudelarian themes from the more superficial to the more complex.

\textsuperscript{142} Ibid., 75.

\textsuperscript{143} A sonnet form associated with the poet Petrarch, having an octave rhyming a b b a a b b a and a sestet rhyming either c d e c d e or c d c d c d. Also called: Italian sonnet. Collins English Dictionary. London: Collins, 2000. s.v. "Petrarchan sonnet," http://literati.credoreference.com/content/entry/hcengdict/petrarchan_sonnet/0 (accessed July 12, 2013.)

He reflects these themes in the music itself, which heightens the poignancy of the poems. Chapter 3 will discuss Malmasson’s treatment of each text and how he creates the atmosphere of the poem with piano accompaniment.
CHAPTER 3
OPUS 6: TROIS POEMES DE CHARLES BAUDELAIRE AND OPUS 30:
LES FLEURS DU DESIR

Discussion of the Poems and Songs, with Performance Suggestions

As was discussed earlier, Trois poèmes de Charles Baudelaire is a song cycle for medium voice and piano written for an amateur mezzo-soprano. The first poem was chosen with her in mind and the second and third poem were poems that the composer admired. Les fleurs du désir was written for the composer’s three children: Odile, Sabine and Renaud as birth announcements. Malmasson wrote the text as well.

Opus 6: Trois poèmes de Charles Baudelaire

Malmasson’s musical treatment of this 19th century text is most successful. He captures the paradoxical aspects of the text through his use of the accompaniment to establish the overall atmosphere of the poetry and to reflect the internal feelings of the poet. He also forms a vocal line that emphasizes the emotional nuances of the text through musical text painting. His melodies range from chant-like recitative to highly melodic, sustained lines, all of which reflect accordingly what is said by the poet. Malmasson creates motives in the music which represent moods and other aspects of the poetry. These motives are established and developed throughout each song of the piece and contribute greatly to the atmosphere Malmasson establishes in each individual song.
Malmasson understands the depth of meaning in the text and is able to extract and translate the essence of each poem into his musical language, which is well suited for the expression of symbolism and the art of suggestion. As stated in Chapter 1, Malmasson, like Debussy, utilizes chords for color and not function, which gives him a wide palette to choose from in order to create the appropriate atmosphere. Nothing is ever completely obvious and focus on color and mood captures the poetry’s suggestiveness.

Malmasson sets Baudelaire’s poetry just as he wrote it, except in *Hymne*, where he changes one verb.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hymne (Baudelaire)</th>
<th>Hymne (Malmasson)</th>
<th>Hymn (Baudelaire)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>À la très chère, à la très belle</td>
<td>À la très chère, à la très belle</td>
<td>To the dearest, fairest woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qui remplit mon coeur de clarté,</td>
<td>Qui remplit mon coeur de clarté,</td>
<td>Who sets my heart ablaze with light,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>À l'ange, À l'idole immortelle,</td>
<td>À l'ange, À l'idole immortelle,</td>
<td>To the angel, the immortal idol,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salut en l'immortalité!</td>
<td>Salut en l'immortalité!</td>
<td>Greetings in immortality!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elle se répand dans ma vie</td>
<td>Elle se répand dans ma vie</td>
<td>She permeates my life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comme un air imprégné de sel,</td>
<td>Comme un air imprégné de sel,</td>
<td>Like air impregnated with salt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Et dans mon âme inassouvie</td>
<td>Et dans mon âme inassouvie</td>
<td>And into my unsated soul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verse le goût de l'éternel.</td>
<td>Verse le goût de l'éternel.</td>
<td>Pours the taste for the eternal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sachet toujours frais qui parfume</td>
<td>Sachet toujours frais qui parfume</td>
<td>Sachet, ever fresh, that perfumes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L'atmosphère d'un cher réduit,</td>
<td>L'atmosphère d'un cher réduit,</td>
<td>The atmosphere of a dear nook,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encensoir oublié qui fume</td>
<td>Encensoir oublié qui fume</td>
<td>Forgotten censer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
En secret à travers la nuit,
Comment, amour incorruptible,
T’exprimer avec vérité?
Grain de musc qui gis, invisible,
Au fond de mon éternité!
À la très bonne, à la très belle
Qui fait ma joie et ma santé,
À l’ange, à l’idole immortelle,
Salut en l’immortalité

En secret à travers la nuit,
Comment, amour incorruptible,
T’exprimer avec vérité?
Grain de musc qui gis, invisible,
Au fond de mon éternité!
À la très bonne, à la très belle
Qui sait ma joie et ma santé,
À l’ange, à l’idole immortelle,
Salut en l’immortalité.

1st song “Hymne”

Basic Characteristics

- Vocal line: predominantly speech-like throughout the entire song; contains more melodic sections at points of high emotion.
- Range: D₄–F₅
- Tessitura: middle voice
- Metric organization: simple duple meter (4/4)
- Key Scheme: G minor
- Rhythm: assez allant (sufficiently relaxed tempo) quarter note equals 96
- Accompaniment: sparse and chordal. It becomes thicker at high points of emotion.

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145 Mr. Malmasson decided to change the verb faire, employed in Baudelaire’s poem in the first person singular conjugation, which means “to do or to make” for the verb savoir, employed by Malmasson in the first person singular, which mean “to know”.

- Level of Difficulty: This piece is moderately difficult and would present challenges for beginning singer. It is better suited for a more advanced singer that can manage the sustained vocal line and the delivery of an authentic flow of the French language. Because of the exposed nature of the melody, the difficulty lies in the precise delivery of text.

Song Overview

One of the most prominent themes in Baudelaire’s poetry is the woman and her body. In *Hymne*, Baudelaire exalts and immortalizes the woman referring to her as the most beautiful idol and an angel. Baudelair deliberately names this poem *Hymne* as it fits the definition; it is a song of praise to God (in this case a woman). He is lifting this ideal woman to an exalted state high above his own. Throughout this entire song, Malmasson’s musical language creates an atmosphere of purity and nobility in praise of this ideal woman. At the same time, Baudelaire suggests an underlying but strong tone of sensuality throughout the poem. As mentioned in Chapter 2, *Les Fleurs du mal* is full of duality and paradoxical images and this poem constantly intermingling the sacred with the profane.

Malmasson begins the song with a sparse, unison three octave G chord and recitative-like section where the singer is unaccompanied until the last note of the section with the same three-octave G. This chord, which seems to represents the purity and unobtainability of this woman, establishes an atmosphere of worship and reverence. Malmasson scores it with a fermata. The singer should let those notes ring
before intoning the simple, chant-like recitative that follows. This allows the depth of reverence to come through in the performance. The chant-like recitative should be sung with a hushed intensity reflecting the reverence and passion of the poet. Malmasson’s choice of a unison, perfect octave recalls its use as a cadence in early music. Such an exposed beginning is reminiscent of medieval chant in the Catholic Church. (Example 3.1)

Example 3.1 Chant-like recitative in “Hymne” mm. 1-3
Example 3.1 continued

The accompaniment continues a chromatic descent to a G minor chord and the vocal line becomes slightly more melodic but still evoking a sense of exultation. The accompanist plays a role in text painting the heavenly qualities of the woman through an upward, chordal motion to a bright C major chord punctuating the singer’s phrase “verse le gout de l’éternel” (pours the taste of the eternal). The singer should honor the upward motion in the vocal line, which allows the accompaniment to emerge from that upward momentum, as a metaphor for an ascent to the heavenly, eternal realms. (Example 3.2)

Immediately after this ascension, the composer suggests paradoxical sensuality through the reverent atmosphere with the use of an eighth note-to-half note figure embedded in the texture. This figure falls on the second half of any given measure. The pianist should gently emphasize the rhythm, bringing out the profane sensuality in its first appearance in the song. (Example 3.3)
Example 3.2 Upward motion to C Major chord in “Hymne” mm.14-16

Example 3.3 Sensual pulse in “Hymne” mm.18-20

Shortly after, the rhythm returns with a slight variation: the half note becomes a dotted quarter note with an eighth note to complete the two beats. Again, the sensual pulse is embedded within the texture punctuating the singer’s “Encensoir oublié qui fume en secret a travers la nuit” (Forgotten censer smoldering secretly through the night). The text refers to a censer, an object used to burn incense traditionally used in religious
ceremonies. Baudelaire utilizes this religious object to refer to a woman’s sexual anatomy. Just like Baudelaire’s text, Malmasson subtly intertwines the religious and sensual. The pianist should bring out the rhythm further in the variation; the texture thickens to reflect the poet’s further exploration of the sensuality of the exalted woman. (Example 3.4a)

In the following measure, the composer foreshadows the vocal line in the accompaniment by including the first three notes of the melody that emerges in the piano accompaniment at the climax of the song and the text “Comment, amour incorruptible, T’exprimer avec vérité?” (Everlasting love, how can I describe you truthfully?). This foreshadowing, which I interpret as the internal thoughts of the poet, indicate that through all of the sensual feelings the poet has for this woman, he ultimately has no words to describe the magnificent creature she is. In the midst of the decrescendo of the previous line, the pianist should emphasize this figure. (Example 3.4b)

The vocal line, at its most highly melodic and grandiose, is marked forte in the exclamatory line: “Comment, amour incorruptible, T’exprimer avec vérité?” (Everlasting love, how can I describe you truthfully?). It is accompanied by thick chords that alternate in grace note arpeggiation. The singer should allow the sound to pour out in sensual adoration, maintaining a legato line but still emphasizing the quarter note triplet figure in measure 32.
Example 3.4a Text painting paradoxical images in “Hymne” mm. 24-28

Example 3.4b Foreshadowing melody in “Hymne” mm. 27-28
The sensual pulse is a pervading presence which continues to be developed through the song. In this example, it is found in the bass line beginning at measure 30. (Example 3.5)

Immediately after the peak of the song, after the intermingling of the sacred and profane, the sensual pulse ends, signaling that the poet has climaxed out of sensual and emotional satisfaction. Immediately after this climax, the poet says “Au fond de mon éternité!” (In the depths of my eternity!), expressing the depths to which this pleasure resides in him. The singer should continue the legato through this line and in her mind still continue to savor the pleasure just experienced in the peak of the song. To punctuate this sensual moment, Malmasson utilizes the accompaniment to create a faster, upwardly chordal motion with quarter notes that symbolize ascension into a religious and carnal heaven, la petite morte. (Example 3.6)

After this section, there is a small interlude of expansive block chords that maintains a religious atmosphere by imitating church bells. Each of the chords falls on the strong beats of the measures (beat 1 and 3) thus creating a sense of two bells chiming on opposite beats. This section serves as an interlude which represents a return to a more reverent disposition from the poet.

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147 Meaning, “the little death” is a French euphemism for an orgasm or post-orgasm state of being.
Example 3.5 Climax of “Hymne” with arpeggiated chords and sensual pulse mm. 29-33

Example 3.6 Upward chordal motion in “Hymne” mm. 42-43
The pianist should emphasize the different beats and adhere to the ties scored on the dotted half notes allowing the notes to really ring, as a bell would. (Example 3.7)

Example 3.7 Chords imitating church bells in “Hymne” mm.44-48

The final section of the song is almost the same as the speech-like beginning but with slight alterations: it is accompanied with block chords and the ending is mostly in G major. After the vocal line ends, there is a small postlude similar to the chromatic descent at the beginning of the song but it is fleshed out with consonant chords underneath the chromatic descent. There is an arpeggiation of a D major seventh chord with an added 9th that goes into a G major chord where the piece ends. The singer should treat this return of the chant-like recitative with reverence, just as the beginning, but still feeling the afterglow of the recent climax, mixing, once again, the sacred and profane.
Performance suggestions

The singer should play very close attention to the written rhythm of the text in the music. Malmasson is a native French speaker and has set the language in a way that it falls with the appropriate syllabic emphasis. This piece was written for a native French speaker as well and the composer had this in mind when setting the text. Considering this, the singer must have an in depth understanding of French phonology, particularly rules of syllabification and rhythm. The final schwa in this song should never be stressed. There are instances in the song where Malmasson has set them, but as eighth notes (Example 3.1). It is his wish that they “…are never to be accentuated”. 148

The beginning of the song is chant-like and even though it says libre in the music, it is important to keep the rhythm precise in order not to skew the rhythm of the text or to interrupt the steadiness of the beat. Malmasson has clear dynamic markings that progressively become louder as they approach the peak of the song and return to a piano for the last section. The singer should begin piano and grow from there, staying true to the composer’s markings. At the climax of the song where the vocal line is most legato, it is important to maintain as smooth a line as possible to contrast the chant-like sections of the piece.

The difficulty of this piece lies in the delivery of text and the exposed nature of the music. I suggest that the singer first learn the text by speaking it ignoring the

148 Jean-Yves Malmasson, interview by the author, March 6, 2013.
rhythm of the song and later add the music to it in order to keep the integrity of the flow of the French language intact.

2nd song “Tristesses de la lune”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tristesses de la lune</th>
<th>Sadness of the Moon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ce soir, la lune rêve avec plus de paresse;</td>
<td>Tonight the moon dreams with more indolence¹⁴⁹,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ainsi qu’une beauté, sur de nombreux coussins,</td>
<td>Like a lovely woman on a bed of cushions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qui d’une main distraite et légère caresse</td>
<td>Who fondles with a light and listless hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avant de s’endormir le contour de ses seins,</td>
<td>The contour of her breasts before falling asleep;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Sur le dos satinié des molles avalanches, | On the satiny back of the billowing clouds, |
| Mourante, elle se livre aux longues pâmoisons, | Languishing, she lets herself fall into long swoons |
| Et promène ses yeux sur les visions blanches | And casts her eyes over the white phantoms |
| Qui montent dans l’azur comme des floraisons. | That rise in the azure like blossoming flowers. |

| Quand parfois sur ce globe, en sa langueur oisive, | When, in her lazy listlessness, |
| Elle laisse filer une larme furtive, | She sometimes sheds a furtive tear upon this globe, |
| Un poète pieux, ennemi du sommeil, | A pious poet, enemy of sleep, |

| Dans le creux de sa main prend cette larme pâle, | In the hollow of his hand catches this pale tear, |
| Aux reflets irisés comme un fragment d’opale, | With the iridescent reflections of opal, |
| Et la met dans son cœur loin des yeux du soleil. | And hides it in his heart afar from the sun’s eyes.¹⁵⁰ |

¹⁴⁹ Inactivity resulting from a dislike of work (laziness)
Basic Characteristics

- Vocal line: predominantly speech-like throughout the entire song; chromatic sections.
- Range: D₄-E₅
- Tessitura: middle voice
- Metric organization: simple duple meter (4/4)
- Key Scheme: E minor
- Rhythm: lent (slowly) quarter note equals 58
- Accompaniment: fairly sparse texture; chordal and chromatic
- Level of Difficulty: This piece is moderately difficult and would present challenges for beginning singer. It is better suited for a more advanced singer that can manage the sustained vocal line and the delivery of an authentic flow of the French language. Just as in Hymne, the melody is exposed, and so the difficulty lies in the precise delivery of the text. The singer must also possess a more advanced interpretative ability, as the text is subtle and suggestive.

Song Overview

*Tristesses de la lune* is a highly metaphorical and multi-layered poem. Again, Baudelaire relates the woman, his main source of symbolism to nature (the moon). The speaker tells the story of the sad and indolent moon and the ‘pious’ poet that hides her tears from the sun. By utilizing the imagery of a woman caressing her own body in her idleness, Baudelaire also evokes an undertone of sensuality.

This song begins with a seven-measure theme that seems to represent the sadness the moon. I have named this the ‘sadness of the moon’ theme. An E minor pedal chord supports the theme. The poet paints the image of the melancholy and isolated moon resting in the billowing clouds, in her own light. The singer should allow herself to be inspired by the image painted by the pianist in order to find the
appropriate coloring in her voice. Malmasson has captured the twinkling and melancholy in the descending theme.  (Example 3.8)

Example 3.8 ‘Sadness of the moon’ theme in “Tristesses de la lune” mm. 1-7

Just as the previous song, there is a recitative-like section marked *libre* that sets the song into motion. The climax of the beginning melody is found on *et légère caresse* (and light caress) referring to the metaphorical woman lightly caressing her breast. This is an example of Malmasson’s subtle but effective text painting in the melody. The singer should emphasize the legato at the climax of the beginning melody, vocally symbolizing the light caress.  (Example 3.9)
Example 3.9 Climax of beginning melody in “Tristesses de la lune” mm.14-16

The following section contains a lot chromatic movement in the vocal line and accompaniment, which makes them both tonally unstable. When taking the text into consideration, “Sur le dos satiné des molles avalanches, Mourante, elle se livre aux longues pâmoisons…” (On the satiny back of the billowing clouds, Languishing, she lets herself fall into long swoons…) this constant tonal instability paints the billowing of the clouds and the moon’s long swoons into the musical landscape. The singer should embrace the atmosphere the poet describes being sure to maintain a legato of tonal color in order to perpetuate the imagery. The singer should also be precise with the chromaticism but not overly accentuated so as to disturb the image of billowing clouds created by the ebb and flow of the melody. (Example 3.10)
Example 3.10 Text painting through chromaticism in *Tristesses de la lune* mm. 18-22

Immediately following this section, the composer abruptly interrupts the chromaticism, making the music more tonally stable and closer to the original tonality when the vocal line says “*Et promène ses yeux sur les visions blanches*” (*Qui montent dans l’azur comme des floraisons.*”) (And casts her eyes over the white phantoms that rise in the azure like blossoming flowers.) When the moon casts her eyes on white images (stars) that rise in the azure (blue sky), she (the moon) is home. The
composer brings us there (home) by gradually decreasing the chromaticism in the phrase and ending the phrase on a C Major chord. The singer should maintain the ebb and flow and legato of the vocal line throughout this section but should also observe the decrescendo on measure 26. This should seem like a gradual ascension into the nothingness and weightlessness of space, which is what the poet is describing.

(Example 3.11)

Example 3.11 Text painting through tonal stability in “Tristesses de la lune” mm. 23-27

Following this section, Malmasson abruptly returns to stacked, thick minor chords. These minor chords flesh out the first three measures of the moon theme that
has been transposed down a tritone and the ascending minor third in the original theme is now a descending minor third. These fast-changing musical moods depict the melancholy nature of the moon. The use of the original theme coupled with the tritone transposition and thick chordal texture reaffirms the sadness in the music. The pianist should gently emphasize the transformed theme in the high voice of the chords to remind the listeners of the correlation to the opening theme. (Example 3.12)

Example 3.12 Use of part of the “moon theme” in “Tristesses de la lune” mm. 1-3, 28-30
The following measure contains chordal movement from E minor to A minor.

This measure serves as a transition into the next section where the A minor chord becomes a pedal chord while the first three measures of the “moon theme” reappears in the higher octaves of the piano this time beginning on B₄ and the ascending minor third of the original ‘sadness of the moon’ theme is restored. Above this theme, the vocal line, in a chant-like melody follows the theme. The restating of the ‘sadness of the moon’ theme gives way to the text, “Quand parfois sur ce globe, en sa langueur oisive, Elle laisse filer…” (When, in her lazy listlessness, she sometimes sheds a tear …) telling of her laziness and sadness. At this point, the poet is about to reveal a “physical” manifestation of the moon’s sadness: a tear, which he catches. The singer should visualize the ascension of the melody as the action of the poet reaching up to catch the tear. Also, the clear, pristine nature of the moonlight must be represented with utmost clarity of tone. (Example 3.13)

The A minor pedal chord continues into the next section where the ‘sadness of the moon’ theme ceases and the chant-like vocal line slowly descends through stepwise motion over a series of minor 7th chords. In this section, both the vocal line and the accompaniment are making a clear trajectory to the note E₃. In the vocal line, downward motion creates momentum to the goal of E₃ and the final 7th chord on F# (a leading tone) naturally wants to resolve to a three octave E chord. The text during
Example 3.13 Use of part of the moon theme in “Tristesses de la lune” mm. 31-34

this moment in the music describes the moon shedding a tear that is caught by “…A pious poet, enemy of sleep”. It is in this moment that the moon is ‘home’ in the evening where she experiences her sadness and the one person that is attuned enough with nature to recognize this and be one with her is none other than, the poet. The singer should visualize the descending line as the poet bringing the tear closer to himself and in that descending motion, the voice can become slightly richer, signifying a difference between the moon and the poet. The vocal richness should continue into the following section. (Example 3.14)
Example 3.14 Downward motion in the vocal line in “Tristesses de la lune” mm. 35-38

The three octave E chord pedal continues in the chant-like vocal line while in each continuing measure, the sparse accompaniment maintains a parsimonious sense of motion. Again, Malmasson creates an atmosphere of religious worship with chant-like vocal line and sparse chordal texture as if the poet were in reverent prayer. The vocal line begins to ascend when the poem describes the poet hiding the moon’s tears in his
heart, away from the eyes of the sun. The accompaniment, still chordal, describes the sunrise by becoming grander and thicker in texture completing the ascension of the vocal line on an E major chord. Vocally, the singer should match the warm color of sunrise and observe the *decrescendo* and *morendo*, which describes it. (Example 3.15)

Example 3.15 Text painting the sunrise in “*Tristesses de la lune*” mm. 43-45

Malmasson continues E major until the end of the piece. (Example 3.16)

Example 3.16 Text painting the sunrise in “*Tristesses de la lune*” mm. 46-50
Performance suggestions

Again, the singer should play very close attention to the written rhythm of the text in the music. Malmasson, unlike many of his predecessors, composes a vocal line which rhythmically supports the natural stresses in the text. This piece was written for a native French speaker as well and the composer had this in mind when setting the text. Considering this, the singer must have an in depth understanding of French phonology, particularly rules of syllabification and rhythm. The final schwa in this song should never be stressed. There are instances in the song where Malmasson has set them but as eighth notes. (Example 3.1) It is his wish that they “...are never to be accentuated”. ¹⁵¹

The composer has indicated clear dynamic markings that should be observed appropriately. This song is gentle and mostly mezzo piano to pianissimo. It is also important for the singer not to lose intensity of sound or appropriate coloration of the voice to achieve this. There should be a clear distinction in vocal color for the decrescendo regarding the moon (Example 3.11) and the sun (Example 3.15). When singing of the moon, the color must be pristine and icy, to represent the night and the clarity of the moon. When singing of the sun, warmth in the voice would represent the brightness and incandescence of the sun.

¹⁵¹ Jean-Yves Malmasson, interview by the author, March 6, 2013.
3rd song “Receuillement”

Recueillement
Sois sage, ô ma Douleur, et tiens-toi plus tranquille.
Tu réclamas le Soir; il descend; le voici:
Une atmosphère obscure enveloppe la ville,
Aux uns portant la paix, aux autres le souci.

Meditation
Be quiet and more discreet, O my Grief.
You cried out for the Evening; even now it falls:
A gloomy atmosphere envelops the city,
Bringing peace to some, anxiety to others.

Pendant que des mortels la multitude vile,
Sous le fouet du Plaisir, ce bourreau sans merci,
Va cueillir des remords dans la fête servile,

While the vulgar herd of mortals, under the scourge
Of Pleasure, that merciless torturer,
Goes to gather remorse in the servile festival,

Ma Douleur, donne-moi la main; viens par ici,

My Grief, give me your hand; come this way

Loin d’eux. Vois se pencher les défuntes Années,
Sur les balcons du ciel, en robes surannées;
Le soleil moribond s’endormir sous une arche,
Et, comme un long linceul traînant à l’Orient,

Far from them. See the dead years in old-fashioned gowns
Lean over the balconies of heaven;
Smiling Regret rise from the depths of the waters;
The dying Sun fall asleep beneath an arch, and
Listen, darling, to the soft footfalls of the Night
That trails off to the East like a long winding-sheet.

Entends, ma chère, entends la douce Nuit qui marche.

Basic Characteristics
- Vocal line: more melodic than songs 1 and 2 and chromatic throughout the entire song
- Range: D♯₄-F₅
- Tessitura: middle voice
- Metric organization: simple duple meter (4/4)
- Key Scheme: A minor
• Rhythm: *modéré* (moderately) quarter note equals 80
• Accompaniment: Thick chordal texture with and a sixteenth note and eighth note motive throughout the entire piece
• Level of Difficulty: This piece is moderately difficult and would present challenges for beginning singer. It is better suited for a more advanced singer that can manage the sustained vocal line and the delivery of an authentic flow of the French language. Because of the exposed nature of the melody, the difficulty lies in precision of the delivery of text. The theme of the poem would be better suited for singer with more advanced interpretational skills.

**Song Overview**

This poem exemplifies Baudelaire’s preoccupation with *modernité*\(^{152}\). In his lifetime, during the long 19\(^{th}\) century, he witnessed the physical and cultural modernization of Paris. As a poet, he felt it was his duty to capture the transitory feeling longing for the former Paris and not being able to assimilate the present changes of the Paris around him.

Due to the theme of this poem and Malmasson’s subsequent setting, *Recueillement* is vastly different from the first two songs in this cycle. It begins with a rhythmic motive consisting of a sixteenth note followed by an eighth note that is tied to a half note or quarter note depending on the beat on which the motive lies. The sixteenth note is always a half step above the eighth note that remains on the same pitch into the tied note. This motive represents the relentlessness of modernité that Baudelaire

\(^{152}\) As defined before by Baudelaire in “The Painter of Modern Life” it is “…the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable.”
experienced. I shall call this the “modernité motive”, because it seems to describe the relentless foreboding. (Example 3.17)

Example 3.17 modernité motive in “Recueillement” mm.1-2

The recitative-like vocal line in this song resembles more of a recitativo accompagnato as opposed to a recitativo secco. This means that the recitative is more structured and accompanied throughout. The poem begins with the speaker addressing Pain as a character within the poem. When the singer sings “…o ma Douleur,…”, the words are set on many of the same notes that will be echoed in the accompaniment. I have labeled this as the “Douleur motive”. The singer should subtly emphasize “…o ma Douleur,…” by singing into the chromaticism as if experiencing that pain. (Example 3.18)
Example 3.18 “Douleur motive” in “Recueillement” mm.1-4

On the very last note of this vocal line, the accompaniment begins with a measure of expansive chords on the first and thirds beats of the measure; the chord on the third beat sits higher. This is followed by the “Douleur motive” that resolves to the top note of the first chord of the measure the follows. This measure is just like the first measure described except with the added resolution. The two-measure cycle structured around the “Douleur motive” is restated and each time it grows in intensity with the increasing thickness of the chords. Malmasson extracts Pain from the singer’s melody and weaves it into the accompaniment to represent its persistent torture of the speaker.

(Example 3.19)
Example 3.19 Use of “Douleur motive” in the accompaniment in “Recueillement” mm. 9-15

Immediately following the two-measure cycle, the accompaniment reduces in thickness but returns to the same chord that began two-measure cycle. This supports the vocalist’s entrance describing, “Une atmosphère obscure enveloppe la ville, Aux uns portant la paix, aux autres le souci.” (A gloomy atmosphere envelops the city, Bringing peace to some, anxiety to others). A fragment of the “Douleur motive” is found when the singer says, “la ville”; it is found in its entirety when the singer says: “aux autres le souci.” Malmasson permeates the accompaniment of this section with this “Douleur motive” which continues to represent agony he feels in this new Parisian atmosphere he witnesses. The relentlessness of the first and third beats of the measure with low and high sounding thick chords alternating with an A₁ pedal suggests a dirge or a funeral march. (Example 3.20) The singer should feel a sense of agony when describing the atmosphere. When singing, “Aux uns portant la paix, aux autres le souci.” (Bringing peace
to some, anxiety to others), the singer should make sure to differentiate between the first half of the phrase and the second half. The speaker knows no peace in this place, but is all too familiar with the anxiety it brings.

Example 3.20 Dirge-like accompaniment and fragments of the “Douler motive” in “Recueillement” mm.17-21

Malmasson demonstrates his orchestral background by employing the uncommon device of scoring the accompaniment of the following 21 measures in four staves. Three of the staves are in treble clef and one in bass clef. He does this to score the
modernité motive on beat three of every other measure. (Example 3.21) It is important to note that this gives the feeling that pervasive modernité is all around the speaker, closing in and gradually making the atmosphere more tense. Malmasson marks this feeling in the vocal line with the direction poco a poco cresc. This must be strictly observed, otherwise the effect is lost.

Example 3.21 Unusual scoring in “Recueillement” mm. 22-26

The accompaniment continues its steady funeral march as the vocal line slowly intensifies, rising ever higher in pitch to express the speaker’s repulsion while he and Pain observe the Parisians around them Malmasson is setting Baudelaire’s text descriptive of the old Paris in its death throes with a relentless funeral march,
persistently building to its climax. At the climax of the poetry, “Ma Douleur, donne-moi la main; viens par ici…” (My Grief, give me your hand; come this way) the voice is at its apex in the melody and the piercing modernité motive at its highest octaves scream the speaker’s agonized grief. (Example 3.22) The fff should be observed and gradually created without losing vocal quality. The singer could emphasize the beginning consonants of the words “Ma Douleur…” (which is rarely employed in French lyric diction) for dramatic effect.

Example 3.22 Climax of poetry and melody in “Recueillement” mm. 34-35

The following stanza in the poetry completes the sentence “Ma Douleur, donne-moi la main; viens par ici…” (My Grief, give me your hand; come this way) saying “Loin
d'eux.” (Far from them) The composer weaves the overall musical line by setting these three words on A₄ to G#₄ (Example 3.23) which is then taken over by the accompaniment in a descending line to an E₅. Beneath the descending line, the persistent funeral march continues. During this transition, the scoring of the music also returns to the traditional two staves for the piano accompaniment. Malmasson marks “Loin d’eux” (Far from them) with a decrescendo which paints the action of moving away in the vocal line. The singer should observe this and allow the voice to disappear to nothingness for dramatic effect. (Example 3.24)

Example 3.23 A₄ to G#₄ in “Recueillement” mm. 38-41

Example 3.24 Descending line from voice accompaniment in “Recueillement” mm. 43-46
This transitional material leads to a section of the song with an entirely different character describing passing years visible in the Parisian’s attire and smiling Regret (capitalized in the poem due to allegorical personification) surfacing from the waters of heaven. The composer slightly lightens the accompaniment’s texture with arch-like melismas representing the years that have passed by, which I have named the “Years passing motive”. The vocal line also becomes lighter with a slightly higher tessitura than previously and dynamic markings progressing from \textit{mf} to \textit{p}. (Example 3.25)
Malmasson employs tone painting describing the old Paris dying and becoming modern by lessening the span of the melismas as the vocal line descends while the singer expresses: “Le soleil moribond s’endormir sous une arche” (The dying Sun fall asleep beneath an arch). This tone painting supports a sense of Paris becoming gradually lackluster as the singer describes: “Et, comme un long linceul traînant à l’Orient…” (At like a long winding-sheet that trails off to the East...) by pairing down the accompaniment to just single chords on beat one and allowing the vocal line to ascend until it concludes on a sustained whole note tied to a half note that has a fermata over it. The singer should add to the dying of the Sun by coloring the voice to describe bleakness. (Example 3.26)

The final section of the song is captivating in its silence and reappearance of the accompaniment. At first, the section is unaccompanied and the composer sets the first part of the phrase at a pianissimo marked libre to punctuate the singer’s phrase: “Entends,
ma chère, entends la douce Nuit qui marche.” (Listen, my darling to the soft footfalls of Night.) The accompaniment returns right as the singer says “marche” (marches) with the dirge-like accompaniment resembling a funeral march that also returns to the four stave scoring. The unaccompanied section really begs for those capable of hearing to listen, just as the text is instructing. Before the singer can finish the text, the funeral march returns representing the relentlessness of the impeding Night that is a metaphor for death of a familiar Paris and of the things that once were. (Example 3.27)

Example 3.27 Recitative ending of “Recueillement” mm. 67-69
Performance suggestions

As mentioned before, the singer should play very close attention to the written rhythm of the text in the music. Out of the three songs in this cycle, this is the most elaborate and most familiar in structure and texture to recognized mélodie. It is important to pay very close attention to the dynamic markings throughout the piece to create the emotional climax of the song accordingly. One should also pay close attention to the different moods of the text reflected in the music and create suitable colors with the voice to bring the intent of the text and the composer across.

It is important to be rhythmically accurate at the beginning of the song and clearly sing “O ma Douleur” as it will be a theme in the song that will return in the piano accompaniment. At the very end, “Entends ma chère, entends la douce Nuit qui marche” even though it is marked libre, it is important to maintain the rhythmic structure that is written. Singers should pace themselves in this song and allow the gradual intensification of the emotions and description of the changes in Paris. Otherwise, it is possible to climax too soon, which would ruin the overall effect of the song.

Opus 30: Les fleurs du désir- Basic Characteristics

- Vocal line: Mostly angular with over octave leaps and sustained lines
- Range: originally-C₄-C#₆, modified- C₄-Ab₆
- Tessitura: medium high to high voice, mostly lying in (Eb₅-C#₆) in the original key, (Eb₅-G₅) in the transposed.
- Metric organization: shifts between common meters (3/4, 4/4,2/4) and sometimes in 5/4
• Key Scheme: a minor
• Rhythm: Several tempo markings ranging from *Adagio molto* quarter note equals 40 to *Allegro giocoso* quarter note equals 132.
• Accompaniment: Varies through the entire piece from thick support from piano and strings to a cappella.
• Level of Difficulty: This piece is highly difficult and would present challenges for an undergraduate singer. It is better suited for an advanced singer that can manage the angular, sustained vocal lines and the demanding tessitura. This piece also requires strong musicianship.

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Les fleurs du désir

Ah! Fruit du miracle séculaire
Je suis or, je suis lumière
A l’aurore de l’Etre
Je révèle au monde
Mes yeux, ma voix
Et mon nom,
Odile.

Fleur de désir, espoir de chair
Soleil de vie chantant l’aube
J’apparais à vos jours
Fille du Printemps
Je suis son sacre
Je m’appelle Sabine

A l’ombre des monts du Vercors
Grain de soleil et de terre
J’ai pris vie, j’ai pris corps
Au monde et au temps j’ouvre mes sens
Mon nom est Renaud
Ah!

The Flowers of Desire

Ah! Fruit of the secular miracle,
I am gold, I am light
At the dawn of Being
I reveal to the world
my eyes, my voice
and my name,
Odile.

Flower of desire, hope of flesh,
Sun of life singing the dawn
I appear to your days
Daughter of Spring
I’m its rite
I’m called Sabine.

In the shadow of the Vercors Mountains
Bead of sun and earth
I came to life, I came in the flesh
To the world and to time I open my senses
My name is Renaud.
Ah!
Opus 30 Overview

*Les fleurs du désir* is a cantata celebrating the creation of each of the composer’s children. As mentioned before, the text for this cantata was originally written as birth announcements and sent to family and friends upon the birth of each child. Each announcement is written from the child’s point of view.\(^{153}\)

Malmasson begins the piece with an ascending cello solo marked *espressivo* that evokes an air of otherworldly mystery. (Example 3.28)

![Example 3.28 Cello solo in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 1-7](image)

The violin contributes to the atmosphere by introducing natural harmonics. There is a scored F♯₅ but the diamond note on the B₅ is just an indication for finger placement on an open string that will be played simultaneously. When strings play harmonics, the overtones of that string are heard in a flutelike, fragile sound that adds to the mystery of the opening of this piece. (Example 3.29)

\(^{153}\) Jean-Yves Malmasson, interview by the author, April 25, 2013.
Example 3.29 Violin playing natural harmonics in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 10-11

The piano finally joins the violin and cello playing thick, block chords in a *Poco più mosso* until a sixteenth note figure is introduced as the violin and cello sustain notes high in their registers. This sixteenth note figure is the first sense of ‘movement’ so to speak in the piece. This ‘movement’ seems to represent the formation of the first child in her mother’s womb. (Example 3.30)

Example 3.30 ‘Movement’ figure in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 27
This figure continues as the strings foreshadow the upcoming vocal line in high register. This foreshadowed melody reoccurs thematically throughout the piece in all of the instruments. (Example 3.31)

Example 3.31 Foreshadowing theme in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 29-32

The foreshadowed melody appears in the vocal line on measure 50 with the rest of the instruments sustaining whole notes; the strings play natural harmonics. Malmasson
marks the vocal line *lontano*, meaning far away but also marks *depuis les coulisses*, which is an indication that the singer should be offstage. Again, Malmasson layers the otherworldly atmosphere by physically placing the singer far away, in another place. Even though his decision for this was most likely for aural effect, the visual effect is striking and effective. The singer, who represents the child, sings without words on ‘Ah’, as if it does not know how to speak just yet. Malmasson introduces into the melody a series of tritones, that immediately resolve to a Perfect fourth. Tritones are also thematically important in piece and reoccur throughout. They seem to represent the children prior to their birth and they “shed” the interval when they’re born. (Example 3.32)

Shortly after the offstage singing, the violin and cello echo the same melody while the piano echoes the dotted rhythm on the opposite beats with thick, chordal texture. (Example 3.33)

Malmasson maintains the mysterious atmosphere by beginning the following section, marked *Andante sostenuto*, and with an eighth note piano figure over a C minor chord in the left hand that is missing the third, creating a “hollow” atmosphere. The eighth note figure is a series of Major 7th intervals, which becomes a theme throughout the piece. (Example 3.34)
Example 3.32 Offstage, tritone vocal line in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 50-57
Example 3.33 Rhythmic and melodic echo of vocal line in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 64-68

Example 3.34 Major 7th motivic piano figure in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 71
This section is the beginning of the first child’s introduction. Malmasson captures the otherworldly text with a piano introduction, which begins with a Major 7\textsuperscript{th} interval (which is interrupted with a B\textsubscript{4} in long, sustained lines. After the first child begins to introduce itself (accompanied by the Major 7\textsuperscript{th} piano motive), the violin and cello enter pianississimo and muted on sustained whole or half notes. (Example 3.35)

Example 3.35 Major 7\textsuperscript{th} in vocal line and muted entrance of strings in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 73-78
The section continues in this manner with all instruments involved. Towards the end of the introduction, where the child says: “Et mon nom” (And my name), the words are set in the intervals of the *Douleur* motive of *Receuillement*, which was previously discussed in Example 3.18. This is mostly likely a coincidence considering the vast differences in the subject matter of each piece. (Example 3.36)

Example 3.36 *Douleur* motive in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 91-93

As the section unhurriedly comes to a close and the eighth note figure in the piano stretches out to quarter note triplet figures (m. 93, Example 36), all instruments observe the silence and the child reveals her name, *a cappella*, “Odile”, beginning with a
descending P5 and concluding with a descending tritone representing her entrance into this world (Example 3.37). This proclamation concludes the section.

Example 3.37 A cappella revelation of first name in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 94-96

Malmasson ties the entire piece together by the use of motivic material. In the *Animando* section beginning on measure 100, he utilizes the Major 7th piano motive discussed in Example 3.34, transposed and lengthened. It is first found in the cello and then echoed by the violin as the piano accompaniment plays a sextuplet figure. The use of this motive over the motion of the piano figure suggests the “creation” of the next child. (Example 3.38)

Malmasson slightly changes the sextuplet figure into a “mirrored” figure, which represents the earthly and otherworldly collaborating in the creation of second child. (Example 3.39)
Example 3.38 Use of the Major 7th motive in *Animando* section in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 100-101

Example 3.39 Use of mirrored figure in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 112-113

Malmasson also reintroduces the opening, offstage “Ah” theme (discussed in Example 3.32) in the strings (transposed and lengthened in note value) as the piano continues its mirrored hands figure. Employing a combination of the “Ah theme” and the mirrored
figure, Malmasson builds momentum for the ‘creation’ of the second child. (Example 3.40)

Example 3.40 “Ah theme” in the strings in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 116-119

In this ‘creation’ section of the second child, Malmasson begins to combine both the Major 7th piano figure and “Ah” theme in the strings. He applies this technique in the *Presto* section after the repeat in measure 167. The red box denotes the Major 7th piano figure and the blue box denotes the “Ah” theme. (Example 3.41)

Example 3.41 “Ah” theme and Major 7th figure in the strings in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 167-174

Malmasson winds down the “creation” momentum and returns to a more ethereal atmosphere through the use of sustained block chords, (without the third) which he
used in the opening section of the first child. (Example 3.34) Upbowed glissando harmonics in the strings in an octave higher transposition, complement the desired effect. (Example 3.42)

Example 3.42 Harmonics in the strings in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 213-217

Toward the final parts of this rather lengthy “creation” section, Malmasson changes the harmonics in the strings with eighth note tritone intervals over the piano, which continues its sustained, block chords (without the 3rd) once again evoking the “hollow” atmosphere (Example 3.33), which seems to represent the mystery of birth.

In order to maintain the otherworldly atmosphere of the miracle of birth, Malmasson continues to weave the creation and announcements of the children with motivic material. (Example 3.43)

Malmasson continues to bring back previous thematic material in the strings, with the violin playing the Major 7ths of the piano figure (Example 3.44) and he continues the tritones from the offstage “Ah theme” and this time their original rhythm (eighth note-dotted quarter note) found in Example 3.32. (Example 3.45)
He concludes the section with a return of the harmonics in the strings and block chords in the piano. (Example 3.46) The weaving and sharing of thematic material relates the ‘creation’ of each child as well as relating the children to each other. The use of the harmonics, which finalize the section, leaves the audience with a last touch of the ethereal nature of the child.
Example 3.45 tritones from “Ah” theme in the strings in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 331-332

Example 3.46 Return of harmonics in the strings in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 349

The introduction of the second child begins at an *Adagio* and with all instruments involved from the outset, as opposed to tiered entrances with the first child. The Major 7th eighth note piano figure discussed in example 3.34 is transposed and made into a
triplet figure. The violin and cello, instead of sustaining muted whole notes, have a sixteenth note figure creating a 3 against 2 between the piano and strings. At the same time, the vocal line, just as before, is sustained but with more angular moments.

(Example 3.47)

Example 3.47 Modified introduction for second child in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 359-361

This introduction continues in this manner until the proclamation of the second child’s name. Just as with the first child, the section winds down but this time: the triplet figure in the piano returns to the eighth note figure and then to the stretched out to quarter
note triplet figure while the strings change to a triplet figure. In addition, piano and strings interchange their 3 against 2. (Example 3.48)

Example 3.48 Interchanging 3 against 2 in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 380-381

Identical to the previous revelation of the name, the second child, *Sabine*, reveals her name *A cappella*, beginning with a descending P₃ and concluding with a descending tritone. She has entered this world. (Example 3.49)
Example 3.49 Revelation of second child’s name in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 382-384

Unlike the first child, Malmasson ends this section with a small coda, which continues with strings and piano interchanging once again their 2 against 3 figures. (Example 3.50)

Example 3.50 Small coda after second child’s proclamation in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 385-387

Just after the small coda, the introduction of the third child commences. Malmasson maintains the triplet figure in the piano from the second child’s
introduction but slightly alters the strings: instead, the strings play the sixteenth note figure in *tremolo* this figure (marked *a punta d’arco*). The vocal line begins immediately with a sustained line containing angular moments, just as in the introduction for the second child. (Example 3.51)

Example 3.51 Similarities in the introductions of the second and third child in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 388-390

Just before the third child reveals his name, *Renaud*, the piano and strings interchange their 3 against 2, just as with the second child. The name, expressed by the vocalist, *a cappella*, begins with an ascending tritone (F#4-C5) and ends on the Major 7th (E5) of the beginning note (F#4); this is completely different from the first two children (who began
with a P₃ and ended with a tritone). The vocal line sustains the E₃ as the piano and strings play a small coda, just as after the third child’s revelation of his name. (Example 3.52)

Example 3.52 Proclamation of third child’s name in in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 411-414
Example 3.52 continued

Immediately following this proclamation, Malmasson scores the strings at a *Poco più mosso* in a tremolo a half step away from each other as the piano plays a 32nd note figure. In this section, he seems to capture the vibrancy and excitement of son. (Example 3.53)
Example 3.53 Excitement reflected in the strings and piano in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 416-417

He continues the section with a return of the “Ah theme” in the violin. The cello joins the violin in the “Ah theme” in the return of the tritones. The piano supports the strings through block chords consisting of fifths and octaves with no 3rd, recalling the “hollow”, mysterious sound in the beginning of the piece. This return to the “Ah theme” completes the introduction of the children. (Example 3.54)
Example 3.54 Return of the “Ah theme” in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 428-438

After the conclusion of the presentations of each child, Malmasson begins the last movement of the piece with the introduction of a new musical theme. This bright, joyous melody was inspired by a tune his wife would sing to the children. The cello holds a G₃, as the voice begins the melody on a G₄. The cello echoes the voice and they end the introduction in a lovely duet. I shall name this melody the “mother’s love theme”. (Example 3. 55)

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154 Jean-Yves Malmasson, interview by the author, April 25, 2013.
Example 3.55 Introduction of “mother’s love theme” in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 439-446
Immediately after, the instruments take hold of the melody; and this theme becomes the foundation of the final movement of the piece. The piano takes over the new melody and the strings play descending chromatic notes that seem to represent the children themselves laughing and playing. Malmasson marks this section *Allegro giocoso*.

(Example 3.56)
Malmasson introduces a second theme, which was developed from the “mother’s love theme”. In the joy of this piece, Malmasson demonstrates his considerable skill as an orchestrator, by using each instrument to depict the children at play. The piano initiates the fun with a 16th note figure to which the strings joyfully respond. The second theme, I will name the “playful theme”.

Example 3.56 Development of “mother’s love theme” in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 447-448
Example 3.57 “Playful theme” in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 457-460
Malmasson continues to show his sense of humor through the development of several themes in the final movement. He sets a 16th note motive in the strings on opposite beats giving the impression of the playful teasing of children. He also incorporates a slide up to a high E₆ (measure 476) in the violin part, inserting an air of unpredictability to his description of this children at play. (Example 3.58)

Example 3.58 Playfulness in the final movement of *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 473-476
Further into the movement, Malmasson utilizes themes in an interesting way: the cheerful “horseplay” of the instruments, which represents the horseplay of the children is momentarily interrupted by the “mother’s love theme”, as their mother would.

(Example 3.59) Shortly after, the piano takes over the “mother’s love theme” as the strings continue the “raucous behavior”. (Example 3.60)

Example 3.59 “Mother’s love theme” played by the violin in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 477-478

Example 3.60 “Mother’s love theme” played by the piano in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 479-480

The exchanges of fragments of the “Mother’s love theme” between the strings and piano continue through the development of the final movement (Example 3.61) until a bright, buoyant theme is introduced in the piano. This theme will return later in the movement. I shall call this theme the “laughter theme” as it seems like joyous laughter.

(Example 3.62)
Example 3.61 Exchange of “Mother’s love theme” between the piano and strings in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 481-484
Example 3.62 Introduction of the “joyful theme” in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 487-488

After the introduction of the “joyful theme”, Malmasson continues to reintroduce previous themes, emphasizing this joyous celebration. There is a return to the 16th note chase “horseplay” introduced in measure 473 (Example 3.58) between the violin and piano, as well as the “playful theme” along with the 16th note piano figure that was introduced in measure 457. (Example 3.57) The return of the chase between the violin and cello is slightly modified (Example 3.63) but the “playful theme” remains the same. (Example 3.64)
Example 3.63 Return of the 16th note “horseplay” in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 507-508

Through the playfulness of the instruments, the voice is reintroduced, exclaiming the “mother’s love theme”. It is drawn out through a lengthening of the original note values. In its original conception, the re-introduction of the “mother’s love theme” begins on a C#₅ and ends on a high C#₆. The vocal line joins the playful texture of the instruments until the instruments cease to play and the vocal line continues to sustain the high C#₆. This reintroduction of the vocal line with “mother’s love theme” is much like the interruption of the raucous “horseplay” with this same theme described in Example 3.59.
Example 3.64 Return of the “playful theme” in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 509-512

This time, however, the voice completely interrupts the “horseplay” of the instruments rather than a momentary pause. This makes the appearance of the voice more pronounced and dramatic. It also seems as if the mother is gently scolding the children.
The instruments continue to play for a few measures and the vocal line continues to interrupt until eventually it becomes part of the texture and takes part in the joyous atmosphere that has been established by the instruments throughout this movement. (Example 3.65a)

Per my request, Malmasson transposed the vocal line a 5th lower than the original melody in this particular section, which makes the piece more accessible to broader range of singers. (Example 3.65b)

Example 3.65a Original “mother’s love theme” in Les fleurs du désir mm. 519-534
Example 3.65a continued
Example 3.65a continued
Example 3.65b Transposed “mother’s love theme” in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 519-534
Example 3.65b continued
The voice continues within playful texture, singing modified fragments of the “mother’s love theme” until the end of the piece. (Example 3.66) Malmasson brings together several of the themes explored in this movement: the vocal line exclaims the “mother’s love theme” (boxed in red), the piano continues with the “joyful theme” (boxed in blue), and the strings play parts of the playful 16th note chase, which has come together, as if to represent the children running together (boxed in green). The melding of all of these themes brings this piece to close amidst a musical cacophony of vibrant, joyous energy. (Example 3.67)

Example 3.66 Modified “mother’s love theme” in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 537-544
Example 3.66 continued
Example 3.67 Return of several themes in *Les fleurs du désir* mm. 547-551
Performance Suggestions

Due to the high level of difficulty of this piece, and that it is mostly instrumental, it is important that the singer acquire graduate students or professional instrumentalists, who possess a higher skill level, to perform the piece. There should be ample time reserved for rehearsal, both individual and in subgroups. When approaching the music, the singer must keep in mind that the first major section of this piece (the introductions of the children) is built on tritones and major 7th intervals. Keeping this in mind will facilitate the pitch learning process and will assist in understanding how the vocal line fits in the texture. I highly suggest separate rehearsals of this movement: First with just the singer and pianist, so that the singer can truly hear the major 7ths against the melody; and, secondly, rehearsals between the strings, in order to tune together and to coordinate the interplay between them in sections of the final movement of the piece.

Unlike the Baudelaire songs, the nature of the long, sustained melodies in the vocal line (in the first movement) takes precedence over the text setting. It is important for the singer to be accurate to the rhythm of the French language, with little to no accentuation, not to interrupt the legato of the sustained vocal line. This would disrupt the otherworldly atmosphere that Malmasson so exquisitely scored in the introduction of the children. In the beginning of the final movement, where the “mother’s love theme” is introduced, there is no text and all must be sung on [a] until the end of the
piece. It is important to sing the melody and rhythm clearly and maintain a clear [a] vowel throughout; this theme is the basis of the entire movement. As the piece progresses and the vocal line returns, the singer should maintain the same clarity and adhere to the tempo established by the instrumentalists.
CONCLUSION

After intimately studying Malmasson’s Op. 6 *Trois poèmes de Charles Baudelaire* and Op. 30 *Les fleurs du désir*, I found that these pieces were crafted with the utmost care and consideration of a marriage between text and music. He possesses the exceptional ability to extract the essence of the text and translate it into music through skillful use of harmonic coloring, motives and thematic development. His melodies are accessible and lyrical which facilitate the performance of these pieces. He successfully communicates emotion and creates atmospheres in the intimacy of art song as well as displaying his consummate orchestration skills in the chamber cantata.

Malmasson’s deep understanding of the themes and layers of emotion contained in symbolist text of Op. 6 *Trois poèmes de Charles Baudelaire* is revealed. The In the time honored tradition of mélodie, his sparse setting of this piece speaks volumes through its subtlety. In the highly personal Op. 30 *Les fleurs du désir*, Malmasson celebrates the birth of his children and the joy they bring to his life. Through thematic development, he takes the piece from an otherworldly, mysterious air to the playful and joyful exuberance of the children. The incorporation of the melody sung to the children by their mother adds another personal layer. Through my study of these pieces, I was constantly amazed at richness in detail contained in both. And with each exploration,
even more subtly crafted nuances revealed themes. These discoveries attest to the masterful skills of the composer. I would encourage any singers and players with the appropriate technical skill to explore these pieces; it will be a rewarding challenge.


"Chronology of the Life of Charles Baudelaire."


_____. Email interview by the author. June 14, 2012.

_____. Email interview by the author. December 22, 2012.

_____. Email interview by the author. January 2, 2013.

_____. Email interview by the author. March 6, 2013.

_____. Email interview by the author. April 25, 2013.


APPENDIX A
A COMPLETE LIST OF VOCAL WORKS BY JEAN-YVES MALMASSON

(Three Poems by Charles Baudelaire)

*Hymne*
*Tristesses de la lune*
*Recueillement*

For medium voice/piano
Duration: 11 minutes
Premiered in 1992 in Saint-Merri’s Church. Paris, France

(Three Poems by Charles Baudelaire)

*Hymne*
*Tristesses de la lune*
*Recueillement*

Arranged for medium voice/cello/piano
Duration: 11 minutes
Premiered November 30, 2004 by Cécile Côte (soprano), Béatrice Noël (cello) and Stefana Fodoreanu (piano) in the Auditorium Francis Poulenc. Paris, France

Opus 17: *Trois poèmes de Paul Eluard* (1996)
(Three Poems by Paul Eluard)

*Le front aux vitres*
*Ma morte vivante*
*Les limites du malheur*

For baritone and quintet
(clarinet, horn, violin, cello and piano)
Duration: 15 minutes
(Three Poems by Charles Baudelaire)

*Hymne*
*Tristesses de la lune*
*Recueillement*

Orchestration for Opus 6  
For medium voice/orchestra  
(2.2.2/2.2.3.0/timp., vibra., G.C., hrp./str.)  
Duration: 11 minutes

(The Flowers of Desire)

Chamber cantata for soprano, violin, cello and piano  
Text: Jean-Yves Malmasson  
Duration: 18 minutes

**Opus 46: Une chanson douce (2010)**
(A Sweet Song)

For voice and piano  
Text: Jean-Yves Malmasson  
Duration: 6:30  
*For Emmanuelle, mezzo-soprano*

**Opus 47: Quatre soleils verts- Quatrième symphonie (2011)**
(Four Green Suns- Fourth Symphony)

Poem for mezzo-soprano, mixed choir and orchestra  
Text: Emmanuelle Piget and Jean-Yves Malmasson  
(2.1.2.2/2.2.3.1/timp./Mezzo-S solo-Ch. SATB/str.)  
Duration: 25 minutes  
*For Emmanuelle, mezzo-soprano*  
*Commissioned by the City of Villebon-sur-Yvette (Essone, France), for the twinning with the town of Whitnash (UK)*
APPENDIX B
TRANSLATION AND IPA TRANSCRIPTION OF OPUS 6: TROIS POÈMES DE CHARLES BAUDELAIRE AND OPUS 30: LES FLEURS DU DÉSIR

Opus 6: Trois poèmes de Charles Baudelaire

Hymne

À la très chère, à la très belle

[a la trɛ ʃerə a la trɛ bɛlə]

To the dearest, fairest woman

Qui remplit mon coeur de clarté,

[ki räpli mœ kœr dœ klarte]

Who sets my heart ablaze with light,

À l'ange, à l'idole immortelle,

[a lɑʒə a lidɔl imɔʁtɛlə]

To the angel, the immortal idol,

Salut en l'immortalité!

[saly ɑ limɔʁtalite]

Greetings in immorality!
Elle se répand dans ma vie

[elə sə repə də ma viə]

*She permeates my life*

Comme un air imprégné de sel,

[kɔmœn ɛr ɛpreɛ də sel]

*Like air impregnated with salt*

Et dans mon âme inassouvie

[e də mɔn am inasuvœ]

*And into my unsated soul*

Verse le goût de l'éternel.

[vɛʁsœ loœ gu dœ lɛtɛʁnl]

*Pours the taste for the eternal.*

Sachet toujours frais qui parfume

[saʃə tuʒər frə ki parfyə]

*Sachet, ever fresh, that perfumes*
L'atmosphère d'un cher réduit,

[latmostatfɛʁœ dœ ʃɛr ʁedɥi]

*The atmosphere of a dear nook*

Encensoir oublié qui fume

[œsœswar ubliœ ki ʃymœ]

*Forgotten censer smoldering*

En secret à travers la nuit,

[œ sœkrœ a travœʁ la nɥœ]

*Secretly through the night*

Comment, amour incorruptible,

[kɔmœ amœ ūkɔryptiblœ]

*Everlasting love, how can I*

T'exprimer avec vérité?

[tɛksprimer avœk verite]

*Describe you truthfully?*
Grain de musc qui gis, invisible,
[ grɛ dœ mysk ki zi ɛviziblœ ]
Grain of musk that lies unseen

Au fond de mon éternité!
[o fœ dœ mœn etœrnite ]
In the depths of my eternity!

À la très bonne, à la très belle
[a la trœ bonœ a la trœ belœ ]
To the dearest, fairest woman

Qui sait\textsuperscript{155} ma joie et ma santé,
[ ki se ma zwa e ma sœte ]
Who knows my health and my delight

À l'ange, à l'idole immortelle,
[a lœzœ a lidœ imœrtœlœ ]
To the angel, the immortal idol,

\textsuperscript{155} In Baudelaire’s poem this word is ‘fait’ [fe]
Salut en l'immortalité!

Greetings in immorality!

Tristesses de la lune

Ce soir, la lune rêve avec plus de paresse;

Tonight the moon dreams with more indolence,

Ainsi qu'une beauté, sur de nombreux coussins,

Like a lovely woman on a bed of cushions

Qui d'une main distraite et légère caresse

Who fondles with a light and listless hand

Avant de s'endormir le contour de ses seins,

The contour of her breasts before falling asleep;

[297x39]145
Sur le dos satiné des molles avalanches,
[syre lœ do satire de molə zavaləʃœ]
*On the satiny back of the billowing clouds,*

Mourante, elle se livre aux longues pâmoisons,
[murantœ ølœ sø livr œ lœɡœ pamwəʃœ]
*Languishing, she lets herself fall into long swoons*

Et promène ses yeux sur les visions blanches
[e promɛnœ se zjɔ syr ə vizjœ blœʃœ]
*And casts her eyes over the white phantoms*

Qui montent dans l'azur comme des floraisons.
[ki mœtœ də lazyr kəmœ de flœrəʃœ]
*That rise in the azure like blossoming flowers.*

Quand parfois sur ce globe, en sa langueur oisive,
[kã parfwa syr sø glœbœ ə sa lœɡœr wazivœ]
*When, in her lazy listlessness,*
Elle laisse filer une larme furtive,

[ɛlœ lɛsœ file ynœ larmœ fyrtivœ]

She sometimes sheds a furtive tear upon this globe,

Un poète pieux, ennemi du sommeil,

[œ poɛtə pijø εnəmi dy səmej]

A pious poet, enemy of sleep,

Dans le creux de sa main prend cette larme pâle,

[də lœ krø dœ sa mə prə sɛtœ larmœ palœ]

In the hollow of his hand catches this pale tear,

Aux reflets irisés comme un fragment d’opale,

[o rœflɛt irize kəm œ fragmə dəpalo]

With the iridescent reflections of opal,

Et la met dans son coeur loin des yeux du soleil.

[e la mét də sœ kœr lwɛ dɛ zjo dy sœlej]

And hides it in his heart afar from the sun’s eyes.
Recueillement

Sois sage, ô ma Douleur, et tiens-toi plus tranquille.

[swa sagə o ma dulœr e tjê twa ply trâkilœ]

Be quiet and more discreet, O my Grief.

Tu réclamais le Soir; il descend; le voici:

[ty reklame lœ swar il desâ lœ vwasi]

You cried out for the Evening; even now it falls:

Une atmosphère obscure enveloppe la ville,

[yn atmosfɛr opsdry ɣvoelœ la vilœ]

A gloomy atmosphere envelops the city,

Aux uns portant la paix, aux autres le souci.

[o_žœ pɔrtâ la pe o_zotrœ lœsusi]

Bringing peace to some, anxiety to others.

Pendant que des mortels la multitude vile,

[pâdâ kœ dœ mortœ lœ myltitydœ vilœ]

While the vulgar herd of mortals, under the scourge

Sous le fouet du Plaisir, ce bourreau sans merci,
Of Pleasure, that merciless torturer,

Va cueillir des remords dans la fête servile,

Goes to gather remorse in the servile festival,

Ma Douleur, donne-moi la main; viens par ici,

My Grief, give me your hand; come this way

Far from them. See the dead years in old-fashioned gowns

Lean over the balconies of heaven;

Smiling Regret rise from the depths of the waters;
Le soleil moribond s'endormir sous une arche,

[loê solej moribô sâdormir su zyn arfœ]

The dying Sun fall asleep beneath an arch, and

Et, comme un long linceul traînant à l'Orient,

[e komâ o lô lësœl trœnã a loriã]

Listen, darling, to the soft footfalls of the Night

Entends, ma chère, entends la douce Nuit qui marche.

[ãtã ma ʃœrœ ãtã la dusœ nœ ki marʃœ]

That trails off to the East like a long winding-sheet.

Opus 30: Les fleurs du désir

Ah!

[a]

Ah!

Fruit du miracle séculaire

[frœi dy miraœœ secylœœ]

Fruit of the secular miracle

Je suis or, je suis lumière

[zœ suizœr jœ sui lymœœ]

I am gold, I am light
A l’aurore de l’Etre
[a lorœœ dœ ɛtrœœ]
*At the dawn of Being*

Je révèle au monde
[ʒœ revelœ mœœ]
*I reveal to the world*

Mes yeux, ma voix
[mœ zœœ ma vwa]
*My eyes, my voice*

Et mon nom,
[et mœœ nœœ]
*And my name,*

**Odile.**
[odilœœ]
*Odile.*

Fleur de désir, espoir de chair
[floœœ dœœ desir œsœœ œœ œœ ʃœœ]
*Flower of desire, hope of flesh,*

Soleil de vie chantant l’aube
[ʃœœ jœœ œœ ʃœœ ʃœœ ʃœœ lœœœœ]
*Sun of life singing the dawn*
J'apparais à vos jours
I appear to your days

Fille du Printemps
Daughter of Spring

Je suis son sacre
I'm its rite

Je m'appelle Sabine.
My name is Sabine.

A l'ombre des monts du Vercors
In the shadow of the Vercors Mountains

Grain de soleil et de terre
Bead of sun and earth

J'ai pris vie, j'ai pris corps
I came to life, I came in the flesh

Au monde et au temps j'ouvre mes sens
To the world and to time, I open my senses
Mon nom est Renaud
[mõ nɔ ɛ ʁœnɔ]

My name is Renaud

Ah!
[a]

Ah!
APPENDIX C
TRANSCRIPTS OF EMAIL INTERVIEWS WITH JEAN-YVES MALMASSON

June 14, 2012

What was your inspiration for Opus 30: Les fleurs du désir and who wrote the text?

They were written for the birth of each of my children (Odile 1994, Sabine in 1998 and Renaud in 2005). I would also like to tell you an important aspect of the work. The little tune in the last section of the work (appears in m. 439-446), which then becomes the principal theme in the last movement “Allegro giocos”, is a little song that my wife had invented and that she used to sing to my eldest daughter, Odile, when she was 2 or 3 years old.

December 22, 2012

What is your full name, date and place of birth? Where did you grow up?

My name is Jean-Yves Malmasson. I was born September 23, 1963 in Saint-Cloud (near Paris). I lived my entire childhood in Boulogne-Billancourt, a city which is very close to Paris.

When/how would you say your interest in music and composition began?

Well, I would like to say from an early age. My mother told me I heard a performance of Berlioz’s Requiem, Charles Münch conducting, in the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris in the womb. smiles. On a more serious note, she also told me that when I was 2 or 3, I demanded to listen to the LP of de Falla’s “Three-cornered hat” all of the time. My parents did not play any instruments, but they always provided a lot of music at home (radio and/or LPs) and I loved that. I first attempted composing when I was 10 or 11 years old. I still have a manuscript of a tiny piano piece dated 1974.

Where did you study music and for how long? Do you play any instruments and if so, which are they? Which do you consider your primary instrument?

I studied at the music school of Boulogne-Billancourt from 1969-1988: solfège, piano, ondes Martenot, organ, analysis, harmony and counterpoint, composition. From 1987-1990, I studied at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris where I
received 1st prize in instrumentation and orchestration. My professors at the conservatoire were Serge Nigg and Jacques Charpentier. My primary instrument is the piano but I must confess that I am not at all a good pianist and I do not play it very often. I primarily use it as a compositional tool. The last couple of years, however, I regularly accompany my girlfriend who is a talented amateur mezzo-soprano.

Who were your professors and how did they influence your development as a composer and conductor?

My principal professors in Boulogne were Aline Hostein (solfege), Claude Bonneton and Geneviève Ibanez (piano), Françoise Deslogères (ondes Martenot), André Isoir (organ), Pierre Grouvel (harmony and counterpoint) and Alain Louvrier (analysis and composition). My conducting teachers were Jean-Claude Hartemann and Jean-Sébastien Béreau.

They all gave me a solid foundation for my artistic endeavors. Alain Louvrier allowed for my first compositional works to be played at the Conservatory of Boulogne. He encouraged me throughout the process and I am still very grateful to him.

Which composers or performers would you say have the most influence on you and your work?

First of all, I must say that I have always been fascinated by orchestral music. I am particularly passionate about Mahler and Shostakovich, but I think I’m also influenced by Sibelius, Britten, Schnittke, Bruckner, Honegger and of course, Ravel and Debussy. There is also a person that has deeply influenced my life in both the musical and “real” world. It is maestro Claudio Abbado. I composed a huge symphony to express my admiration.

What effect would you ideally like to see your compositions have on your audience?

Emotion.

In your opinion, to what extent should a performer’s interpretation play when approaching your compositions?

I am always glad when performers take ownership of the score and find their own “things” and I love to discuss those things with them. The only limit, of course, is respect of the text.

January 2, 2013
What is your compositional process? How do you begin and where do you find your inspiration? Is the process different for each genre (symphonies, vocal works, etc)?

It’s always very difficult for me to answer to this question. When I compose, my entire mind is concentrated to the work. I feel I do not have enough perspective to analyze the process. Often, one idea comes from one another; they can mix or be developed or anything else. I am very sensitive to the tones of instruments, too, and this is quite an important parameter in my inspiration.

The inspiration can come from different things: an emotion, an interval, a rhythm, a little motto of 3 or 4 notes, a tone, a poem, an interpret... For example, when I wrote my last symphony in 2011 (Quatre Soleils Verts, for mezzo soprano, choir and orchestra), I did it for my girlfriend, who is a talented singer. The work is dedicated to her and she wrote one of the two poems that are used in the vocal part of the work. I don’t think the process is different for each genre. Saint-Saëns said that composition was 10% inspiration and 90% transpiration. I think he was right.

Approximately how many works have you composed? Are you still composing now?

I have composed about 50 Opus. I’m still composing now, I am currently working on an Opera Buffa in collaboration with a very good friend of mine who is a talented writer. The work is planned to be performed in June 2014.

What is your favorite genre to compose? Has it changed through the years?

I compose in different genres. I confess a long-time affinity for orchestral music. It has changed a little through the years indeed. When I was younger, I wanted to compose quite huge works for huge orchestras. I became more reasonable with the time… smiles

Questions about Opus 6: Trois poèmes de Charles Baudelaire

What was your inspiration for this composition?

I wanted to compose those melodies, as a gift, for a friend who was an amateur mezzo-soprano.

How did you choose the poems? Are they special to you?
I've admired Baudelaire for a long time and as he is my favourite poet, I choose 3 of his poems.

In my paper, I plan on discussing that these Baudelaire poems have been set by other composers in the 19th century and you're treatment of the music and text is completely different that the "traditional" 19th century treatments but equally effective in conveying the essence of the text. What is your opinion on that statement?

When I composed these melodies, I did not know that other composers had set those poems to music. Fortunately, otherwise I would never have dared to do it after them...

Questions about Opus 30: Les fleurs du désir (2001)

What was your inspiration for this composition?

This work is dedicated to my wife, the mother of my children. I offered it to her.

Why did you choose to write your own text?

It came naturally. The poems were written for the born announcements of each of my three children.

What was the inspiration for the text?

The birth of my children.

March 6, 2013

Biographical Questions

What are your parent's names and where are they from?

My parents called Anne-Marie and Michel Malmasson. My mother was born in Paris and my father in Vanves, just close to Paris. There are of Burgundian and Normandy origins from my mother’s side, and Lorraine origins from my father’s side.
Do you have any early memories of music being played in your home that you would like to tell? Did their preference of certain composers influence your preferences?

My parents did not play any instrument but they always listened to a lot of music. There were many records at home and we listened a lot the radio. My father is particularly fond of Symphonic Romantic music (Berlioz, Wagner, Strauss...) and my mother listened to chamber music. I think they could have influenced my preferences but I know I have made my own taste and influenced them too. I shared, with one of my uncles, who lived close to us, a passion for all early 20th-century music: Debussy, Ravel, Stravinsky, Bartok, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Honegger...

When did you begin taking music lessons?

In 1969, at the age of 6.

What were your musical aspirations when you were a child?

Well, I think I wanted quite early to be a composer and a conductor.

Do your children play any instruments? If so, what do each of them play? Do they have an interest in music like you did as a child?

My first daughter, who is 18, played the clarinet but she does not anymore, unfortunately; my second (almost 15) plays the flute, but is not as passionate as I was at the same age. My son (aged 8) just started this year to play the piccolo. He asked for this particular instrument...

You’ve composed several pieces for the Ondes Martenot. When did you become interested in this instrument?

When I was a student in Boulogne-Billancourt Music School, in the early 80’. There was a class for this instrument and I decided to play it. Now I don’t play anymore but I am still fond of this fascinating instrument.
Questions regarding Op. 6 Trois poèmes de Charles Baudelaire

What is the name of the person these songs were written for?

Well, I hope you will forgive me if I do not tell you... I prefer not. I can just say that it was a “love of youth”. :-)

Did she perform the songs in the premiere?

No.

Were the poems chosen with the person they were written for in mind?

For the 1st one (Hymne), yes. For the 2 others, no. I just wanted to write something on Baudelaire words.

From the recording of Receuillement, I noticed that the singer dropped some of the final schwa ‘e’. How do you prefer them to be sung? Do you want a more conversational French sound or do you want the schwa to be heard?

I’m generally open to all type of interpretation, if it does not corrupt the text and the music. Anyway, the final ”e” in French in any case is to never be accentuated.

April 25, 2013

General Questions:

What is the name of the librettist you’re collaborating with for the opera buffa you’re composing?

His name is Laurent Bouëxière. He is a French writer, photographer and screenwriter.

How would you describe your harmonic style?

Modal, polytonal. Mostly chromatic.
When composing, would you say that you use chords and extended chords more for color than for function?

I think rather for color, first. But I’m quite sensitive to attractions between notes in such a tonal and poly-tonal language.

What role do motives and thematic material play in your music?

I use often only one or two themes or motives in one work or one movement, which are the basis of the entire work. I use them as counterpoint, continuous variations and so on.

Questions regarding Opus 30: *Les fleurs du désir*

Please tell me about your compositional process for this piece.

I wanted to tell my emotions when my children were young. I started with this little melody in the last movement and I wanted to write a large chamber work. I knew from the beginning that I wanted to include the songs for every child. First, I had only 2 daughters and I added the 3rd one when my little boy was born in 2005.

What do the different sections represent? (The beginning with the offstage singing, the faster sections, the adagio sections with singing and introduction of the theme on ah by the singer that is echoed by the cellist)

This is not descriptive or programmatic music, just a chamber work. Only this little "children’s song” at the beginning of the last movement has really a lot of significance, because this is a melody that my wife invented and sang to our children.

When did you write the poetry for the piece? Was it written before you began to compose the piece?

Yes, the poems were written before the piece. It was the texts I wrote for the announcement postcards we sent to all the family for each of the births of my three children.
Who is the speaker in the poetry? Is each child describing itself?

Exactly: each child describing itself.

I recall that you told me that one of the melodies is something their mother would sing to them: Where in the music does this melody first appear and how do you continue to use it throughout the piece?

This is the little children’s song just before the beginning of the finale (bar 411). This movement, which is full of joy, is entirely based on that theme.

Why did you choose this instrumentation?

My brother cellist was the member of a trio (Piano-Violin-Cello), so I thought it should be easy to perform it. But finally, the trio disappeared and the work could not be performed.
APPENDIX D
PHOTOGRAPHS OF JEAN-YVES MALMASSON AND HIS CHILDREN

Jean- Yves Malmasson

Photo credit: Dominique Dubarry Loison
Sabine Malmasson

Renaud Malmasson
APPENDIX E
LETTER OF PERMISSION FROM MUSIK FABRIK

Ms. Inino,

We are happy to grant you permission to use musical examples; Please send us a copy of the finished document (a .pdf is fine) for our records.

Best wishes,

Paul Wehage
for Musik Fabrik

On Thu, Mar 7, 2013 at 11:26 PM, Zuly Inirio <zinirl@tigers.lsu.edu> wrote:
Mr. Wehage,

Hello. I hope this email finds you well. My name is Zuly Inirio, and I am writing my dissertation on Jean Yves Malmasson’s Opus 6 *Trois poèmes de Charles Baudelaire* and Opus 30 *Les fleurs du désir*. I would like to ask you for copyright permission to include various musical examples from each of these. Thank you for your time and consideration regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Zuly Inirio
DMA Candidate, ABD
Louisiana State University
zinirl@tigers.lsu.edu
305-342-1142

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VITA

Zuly Inirio is a native of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. She received her Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance at New World School of the Arts in Miami, FL under Linda Considine. Zuly earned her Master’s of Music in Vocal Performance at Louisiana State University, where she studied with Robert Grayson and was the recipient of a tuition waiver. She continued to work on her Doctorate of Musical Arts under Patricia O’Neill also receiving a tuition waiver. Recent performances include Wellgunde, Ortlinde and Zweite Norn in a reduced version of Wagner’s Ring arranged by Michael Borowitz for Opéra Louisiane, and the role of Mrs. Grose in Britten’s The Turn of the Screw with LSU Opera. While studying at Louisiana State University, Zuly also coached with Dennis Jesse and Dr. Loraine Sims.