

Belgian Vocal Repertoire

First part

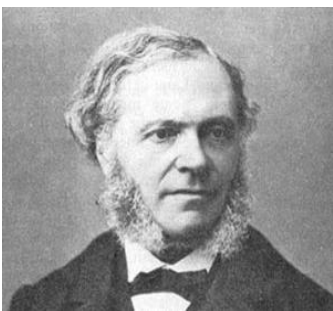
Since Belgium's independence from the Netherlands in 1830, vocal music has played an important role in the country's cultural life. Belgium's original art song repertoire, whose style can be seen as linking German lied and French *mélodie*, rarely appears on concert programs. The following overview aims to revisit Belgium's neglected nineteenth century art song heritage of over a thousand songs. Along the way, it provides some historical and cultural information about Belgium, as well as musical examples and practical information for performers. The essay consists of two parts. The first part discusses the works of a few prominent composers of the early generation born before 1840. The second part looks at composers of the second generation born between 1840 and 1870.

Composers of the First Generation

César Franck (1822-1890) • Adolphe Samuel (1824-1898) • Eduard Lassen (1830-1904)
Peter Benoit (1834-1901) • Jean-Théodore Radoux (1835-1911)

When César Franck and Adolphe Samuel were born, Belgium was under Dutch rule and did not yet exist as a sovereign country. It only became an independent country in 1830, shortly before Franck entered the Royal Conservatory of Liège. Belgium's ethnic mixture and its linguistic problems were present from its very beginnings. Today's

Belgium (12,566 square miles)¹ lies at the cultural crossing where Flemish-speaking and French-speaking traditions mix with those of a German-speaking minority. Belgians (about 10,839,905 people)² speak one or more of the three official languages: Flemish, French, and German. Nineteenth-century Belgium was smaller and did not yet encompass the Eastern German-speaking community. Its official language was French. The Flemish language was discarded as the language of the peasants and the poor, which, unsurprisingly, triggered a strong Flemish national movement against this unjust situation.



In 1835, a few years after Belgium became an independent nation, César Franck's ambitious father organized a series of concerts for his pianist son before moving with his family to Paris. Once there, César Franck (1822-1890) commenced harmony and counterpoint studies in Paris with Anton Reicha, the teacher of Berlioz, Liszt, and Gounod. Even though he visited his homeland on several occasions, Franck would never move back to Belgium.³ He embarked on a tour through Belgium as a virtuoso player in 1843. It is around that time that he composed his first songs:

¹US Department of State (August 30, 2010); <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2874.htm> (accessed July 22, 2012).

²A Statistical Overview of the Belgian Population, Portal Belgium.be (January 1, 2010);

http://www.belgium.be/en/about_belgium/country/Population/ (accessed July 22, 2012).

³John Trevitt and Joël-Marie Fauquet, "Franck, César." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*,

<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/10121> (accessed December 26, 2011).

“Souvenance” (Remembrance – F.-R. Chateaubriand), “L’émir de Bengador” (The Emir of Bengador - J. Méry), “Le sylphe”, for voice and violoncello (The Sylph - A. Dumas père) and “Robin Gray” (J.-P. de Florian). His poets of predilection were the French Romantic poets, esp. Hugo, Chateaubriand and Musset. In the late 1840s he set “L’ange et l’enfant” (The Angel and the Child - J. Reboul), “Aimer” (To Love - Méry), “Ninon” (A. de Musset), “S’ il est un charmant gazon” (If I Knew a Meadow Fair - Hugo) and “Roses et papillons” (Roses and Butterflies - Hugo). His early songs show influences from the French *romance*, as well as Beethoven and Schubert, as seen in the prelude of “Robin Gray” (Musical example 1). Though his prosody is at times awkward, Franck’s songs nevertheless reveal a sense of drama.

Musical example 1: “Robin Gray”, mm. 1-24

The musical score for "Robin Gray" (mm. 1-24) is presented in three systems. The first system shows the piano introduction, marked "Andantino" and "PIANO". The piano part features chords in the right hand and a simple bass line in the left hand. Dynamics include *mf*, *pp*, and *mp*. Pedal markings are present. The second system continues the piano introduction. The third system introduces the vocal line, marked "douce". The lyrics are: "Quando les moutons sont dans la bergerie, Quand le sommeil aux lu...". The vocal line is followed by piano accompaniment with dynamics *poco cresc.* and *dim.*

Franck's later and better known songs are from the 1870s and 1880s and clearly exhibit Wagner's harmonic influence. Some songs from that period are "Lied" (L. Paté), "Le vase brisé" (The Broken Vase - Sully-Prudhomme), "Nocturne" (L. de Fourcaud), "Les cloches du soir" (The Evening Bells - M. Desbordes-Valmore), "La procession" with orchestra or piano (The Procession - A. Brizeux), and his *Six duos pour soprano et alto*, which is especially suitable as beginners' chamber music repertoire (Musical example 2).

Musical example 2: "Aux petits enfants" (To Infants), mm. 1-6

The musical score for "Aux petits enfants" (To Infants), measures 1-6, is presented for Soprano, Alto, and Piano. The tempo is marked "Allegretto quasi Andantino" and the dynamic is "dolce". The lyrics are: "En.fants d'un jour, ô nou.veaux-nés, Pe.ti.tes bou.ches, pe.tits nez,". The score shows the vocal lines for Soprano and Alto, and the piano accompaniment. The piano part features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, both in 6/8 time.

During the same period, two other Belgian composers tried to gain fame in Paris: Jean-Théodore Radoux, who made Paris his home for five years between 1855 and 1860, and Peter Benoit, who probably spent most of the years 1860 to 1862 in the French capital. By a strange coincidence both composers set their first songs around the year 1854.

Jean-Théodore Radoux (1835-1911) was a French-speaking composer and bassoon player who was born in Liège.⁴ He lived in Paris for a short period and became the director of the Royal Conservatory of Liège in 1872. Radoux's first songs clearly demonstrate the influence of the French *romance*. They are strophic, have a slow harmonic motion and a restricted vocal range, as seen from Musical example 3. Musical example 3: "Fais dodo: Berceuse orientale" (Sleep: Oriental Lullaby), mm. 1-9

Andantino. (♩ = 60) *PPP* (avec tendresse et modération)

CANTO. *Andantino.* dors, dors mon en -fant, dors mon en -fant.
Schlaf, Schlaf, mein Kind die -ne, mein Kind die -ne.

PIANO. *PPP* *dolce* *plus possible.*

- faut, et sois bien sa - ge, La nuit des - cend sur les cô - teaux;
Wie ge - schweht im Glü - se Die Nacht sie - ströht zu uns her - ab

Radoux mostly set the texts of French Romantic poets like Hugo, de Musset, and Gautier. Some of his songs, e.g. "Le spectre de la rose" (The Specter of the Rose – Théophile Gautier), "Extase" (Extasy - Victor Hugo), or "Adieux à Suzon" (Farewell to Suzon – A. de Musset), are published by Recital Publications, Texas.

Another composer who set songs starting from 1854 was Peter Benoit



⁴William Waterhouse, "Radoux, Jean-Théodore." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/22807> (accessed January 21, 2012).

(1834-1901). Benoit was a very influential figure of the Flemish national movement in music and

surely one of the most important Belgian vocal composers of the nineteenth century. It is often said that Liszt called him “the Rubens of music.”⁵ His art can only be understood in the context of the Flemish national movement.

Let us recall that in Belgium’s early years the Flemish language was considered the language of the common people while the French language reigned in all public domains: education, state affairs, business, and at court. Even wealthy Flemish citizens would mostly prefer the “noble” French language over the “low” Flemish language. This situation triggered a national Flemish movement that started immediately after Belgium’s independence. The Flemish intellectuals used to motto “De taal is gansch het volk” (“the tongue is wholly the people”) in order to awaken the consciousness of their people about their own identity.⁶ Benoit entered the Royal Conservatory in Brussels in 1851. After winning the Belgian Prix de Rome with his cantata *La Mort d'Abel* in 1857 he departed for Germany, where he visited Leipzig, Dresden, Berlin, Prague and Munich. He became the conductor of the Théâtre des Bouffes Parisiens in 1862. One year later, he returned to Belgium, settled in Antwerp, became involved with writers belonging to the Flemish literary movement, and founded the Flemish Music School, which later

⁵Prosper Verheyden, “Peter Benoit and the Modern Flemish School,” *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association, Taylor & Francis, Ltd.*, 41st Session (1914 - 1915): 24.

⁶Prosper Verheyden, “Peter Benoit and the Modern Flemish School,” *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association, Taylor & Francis, Ltd.*, 41st Session (1914-1915): 18.

became the Royal Flemish Conservatory in 1898. This institution was the first to provide musical education in Flemish. Antwerp became the center of the Flemish national movement in music, with Benoit as its father figure.⁷

Peter Benoit was chiefly a vocal composer. His oratorios and cantatas are of great value and his higher goal was to raise the quality of Belgian music by composing great music for the Flemish people.⁸ The New Grove article on Benoit classifies his work into nineteenth-century Romanticism, with influences coming from Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Liszt, Berlioz, Meyerbeer, and, later in his life, Wagner.⁹ Benoit constantly searched for Flemish national traits by collecting folk music, and composed more than 50 French and Flemish songs. Among his songs are patriotic Flemish songs as “Mijn Moederspraak” (My Mother Tongue - Klaus Groth) from 1889; songs in the Flemish folk-style as *Drie Liedekens*, op. 39 (Three Little Songs) from around 1865; *romances* and early *mélodies*, i.e. *Guirlandes lyriques: six mélodies* (Lyrical Garlands) from 1854, “Le sylphe (Romance)” (The Sylph - Hermance Wantzel) or *Trois Mélodies*, op. 10. Benoit also composed two song sets between the years 1869 and 1872: *De liefde in het leven* (Love in Life) and *Liefdedrama* (Love’s Drama).

⁷Jan Dewilde, “Peter Benoit,” *Studiecentrum voor Vlaamse Muziek*: <http://www.svm.be/content/benoit-peter?display=biography&language=nl> (accessed January 19, 2012).

⁸H. P. Morgan-Browne, “Peter Benoit né Pierre Benoit,” *Music & Letters, Oxford University Press* 10, no. 1 (January 1929): 81.

⁹Marie-Thérèse Buysens, “Benoit, Peter.” *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/02716> (accessed July 18, 2012).

Benoit's earliest songs were set to French poetry. The first group of songs, published in 1854 by Schott in Brussels, was *Guirlande lyrique: 6 mélodies* (Lyrical Garland) to words by Clément Michaëls.¹⁰ This was followed a year later by *Douze pensées naïve: album de jeunesse*. (Twelve Naive Thoughts: Collection of Youth). These songs were clearly French-influenced and were labeled either *romance* or *mélodie*. One can compare them to Gounod's *mélodies* of the same time period, though there is also evidence of Schubert's influence.¹¹ Benoit probably came to Flemish poetry through his friend, the romantic writer and Flemish poet Emmanuel Hiel (1834-1899). Benoit's first published Flemish songs, *Drie Liedekens* op.39 (1865), were set on contemporary poetry by Hiel.¹² *De liefde in het leven* (Love in Life), a volume of Hiel's poetry from 1870, would inspire Benoit to write many more songs. In total, Benoit set seventy seven of Hiel's texts in songs, oratorios, and cantatas. Some of Benoit's best songs from this period include "Pachter Jan" (Farmer Jan - Hiel), "Denderliedeken" (Little Song of the Dender - J. Diels) from 1869, "Myn môedersprak" (My Mother Tongue - Klaus Groth) from 1889, and two sets of songs for baritone composed between 1869 and 1872. *Pachter Jan* (Farmer Jan), the third song of *Drie Liedekens* op. 39, is especially fascinating because of its imitation of Flemish folk songs, its rhythm and excellent prosody (Musical example 4).

¹⁰Charles Van den Borren, *Peter Benoit* (Bruxelles: Collection Nationale, 1942), 80.

¹¹Charles Van den Borren, *Peter Benoit* (Bruxelles: Collection Nationale, 1942), 80.

¹²Prosper Verheyden, "Peter Benoit and the Modern Flemish School," *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, Taylor & Francis, Ltd., 41st Session (1914 - 1915): 23.

Musical example 4: “Pachter Jan” *Drie Liedekens* op. 39, no. 3 (Farmer Jan), mm. 1-10

The image shows a musical score for the song "Pachter Jan" by Peter Benoit. The score is in 2/4 time, marked "Allegretto ben marcato". It features a vocal line for a bass-baritone and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are in Dutch: "Ech, ter Jon de goe, de vent is in't dorplek wel be- kent, ner- gens zet hy zy- ne vae- ten, of hy hoert zich vriendlyk groe- ten". The piano part is marked "PIANO" and includes dynamic markings like "f".

The duo Werner van Mechelen (bass-baritone) and Jozef de Beenhouwer (piano) collected, reconstructed, and recorded songs from *De liefde in het leven* (Love in Life) and *Liefdedrama* (Love’s Drama) in 2002.¹³ In this recording they rearranged the songs - which Benoit composed to Hiel’s poetry from the collection *De liefde in het leven* - in an unusual manner. Below there is the complete list of songs composed on Hiel’s *Love in Life* poems and recorded by van Mechelen and de Beenhouwer¹⁴.

¹³Benoit, *In Flander’s Fields Vol. 26, Peter Benoit (1834-1901)*, Werner van Mechelen, bass-baritone, Jozef de Beenhouwer, piano. Phaedra recording (2001).

¹⁴Benoit, *In Flander’s Fields Vol. 26, Peter Benoit (1834-1901)*, Werner van Mechelen, bass-baritone, Jozef de Beenhouwer, piano. Phaedra recording (2001): 9 “Traditional Benoit scholarship holds that *Benoit’s song cycle with pianoforte accompaniment “Love in Life” (1870)* consists of a mere eight titles: “My heart is Touched”, “If a Ray of Sun Sparkles”, “The Rose may Smell Generously”, “A Walk”, “I Dreamed”, “Woman’s Pure Love”, “Mother”, and “The Lion Roaring in the Desert”. But the year before in 1869, he had already set a number of Hiel poems to music. [...] The additional [reconstructed] material made it possible to give more coherence to Benoit’s song cycle *Love in Life*.”

Mijn hart is vol verlangen (My Heart is Full of Longing) - 1869

Mijn hart is zoo bewogen (My heart is Touched) - 1870

Vonkelt er een straal der zonne (If a Ray of Sun Sparkles) - 1870

Heeft het roosje milde geuren (The Rose May Smell Generously) -1870

O, kom mijn liefste (Oh Come, My Love) - 1872

De wandeling (A Walk) - 1870

Zij is uit aarde niet geschapen (She was not Made from Earth) – (year unknown)

De zoete lente (Sweet Spring) - 1869

Ik droomde! (I Dreamed) - 1870

Troost (Comfort) - 1869

Zuivere liefde van de vrouw (Woman's Pure Love) - 1870

Droom van lust en lijden (Dream of Joy and Suffering) - (year unknown)

De moeder (Mother) - 1870

De leeuw in de woestijne brult (The Lion Roaring in the Desert) - 1870

Gebroken hart verlangt de rust (A Broken Heart Wants Peace) - 1869

The first song of the set, “Mijn hart is vol verlangen” (My Heart is Full of Longing), has a gentle romantic ring to it and is full of delicacy. This strophic song, with its nice lyrical melodic line and an arpeggiated piano accompaniment, is simple, elegant, and dream-like. A similar atmosphere is radiated by other songs in the first part of the set, e.g. in “Heeft het roosje milde geuren” (The Rose May Smell Generously) (Musical example 5). The chordal piano introduction to the second song “Mijn hart is zoo bewogen” (My

Heart is Touched) has a Schubertian flair to it (Musical example 6). There is no doubt that Benoit found inspiration for these romantic songs in the works of the German masters. In addition, Morgan-Browne points out the resemblance between Benoit’s songs and the early Franck songs.¹⁵

Musical example 5: “Heeft het roosje milde geuren” (The Rose May Smell Generously), mm. 1-9

Tijdmeter. ♩ = 66. Liefkozend.

ZANG Heeft het roos - je mil - de geu - ren,

KLAVIER *pp* *p zeer gehouden*

het heeft ook rein - heids - von - ken, zoo glim - men

lief - jes lip - pea van rein - heid als de roos.

Musical example 6: “Mijn hart is zoo bewogen” (My heart is Touched), mm. 1-6

¹⁵H. P. Morgan-Browne, “Peter Benoit né Pierre Benoit,” *Music & Letters, Oxford University Press* 10, no. 1 (January 1929): 80.

The image shows a musical score for a song. It consists of two systems of music. The first system is for the vocal part (ZANG) and piano accompaniment (PIANO). The vocal part is in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a time signature of 3/4. The tempo is marked 'Allegretto'. The piano part is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. The tempo is marked 'Droomend'. The lyrics are in Dutch. The second system continues the vocal and piano parts. The tempo markings 'poco rit.', 'a tempo', and 'poco rit.' are used throughout. The lyrics continue in Dutch.

ZANG *Allegretto*
 Mijn hart is zoo be-
 No heb ik on-der-
 O licht der lief-like

PIANO *Droomend*
poco rit.
a tempo
ten.

wo gen, Als't loof der bian.ke_a - bee - len,
 on - den, Wan - neer die schel - men pin - ken,
 oo - go, Wien zeult ge niet ver - o - vren?

poco rit. *a tempo* *poco rit.*

In Benoit's settings of Hiel's *De liefde in het leven* (Love in Life) we find a narrative. The protagonist is happily in love with a wonderful girl that seems to reciprocate his love: at least up until "De zoete lente." Afterwards, the music loses some of its lyricism and becomes more declamatory, operatic, and dramatic. The song "Ik droomde" (I Dreamed) seems to serve as an emotional and stylistic transition to a different point of view about love. Doubt and dissonances sneak in. Was love only a dream (Musical example 7)?

Musical example 7: "Ik droomde" (I Dreamed), mm. 1-14

Matiq (Moderato) Innig (intimamente)

p met uitdrukking (Energico con espressione) *f* *pp*

Ik droom
de rê - vais! Je -

(*ragando e legato*)
drommend en gebroden

rê - vais! de Vurig (con fuoco)

Vrolijk maar niet te snel (Allegramente ma non troppo presto)

t'was Len - te de groe - zen de wei - de De moe - der der bloe - me - kens
A - vril de - se - sen - teurs Em - bau - mailta prai - e.

The song “Troost” (Comfort) does not confirm the protagonist’s fears. The comforting words of the beloved stopped his cries and he shall cry no more, *‘k zal nimmer weenen*. After “Troost” (Comfort), the three songs show marital bliss and the happiness of a child birth (Woman’s Pure Love, Dream of Joy and Suffering, and Mother). It is not before the song “De leeuw in de woestijne brult” (The Lion Roaring in the Desert) that jealousy and despair come into play before the protagonist finds peace in renouncing his love in the last song “Gebroken hart verlangt de rust” (A Broken Heart Wants Peace) (Musical example 8).

Musical example 8: “Gebroken hart verlangt de rust” (A Broken Heart Wants Peace),

mm. 46-59

een beetje langzaam
ik mag dus wel be - gra - ven de wra - ge smart, de wra - ge smart,
p
zeer bewogen
't ge - voe - - - len. 'k Heb u zoo - lang ge - wacht,
mf
zeer bewogen
segue
ff teruggehouden
'k heb u zoo lang ge - wacht, ach!
mf
ff
ppp

Liefdedrama (Love's Drama) for Baritone was conceived by Benoit as an actual song cycle. Published in 1872 and premiered in 1874, it is divided into two parts. The first part is made up of five songs after Shakespeare translated by Emmanuel Hiel, and the second part is a postlude, *Naspel: Aan zee - Fatum: Wat de vrouw in't mannehart vernielt* (Postlude: At the Seaside - Fatum: What a Woman Destroys in a Man's Heart) which includes a piano interlude. Both scholars de Beenhouwer and Van den Borren call the cycle the pinnacle of Benoit's oeuvre.¹⁶ Originally composed with piano accompaniment, the second part was later orchestrated by Benoit for strings, two horns, harmonium, and an obbligato piano part. The songs that comprise the cycle *Liefdedrama* are as follows:

¹⁶Benoit, *In Flander's Fields Vol. 26, Peter Benoit (1834-1901)*, Werner van Mechelen, bass-baritone, Jozef de Beenhouwer, piano. Phaedra recording (2001): 9; Charles Van den Borren, *Peter Benoit* (Bruxelles: Collection Nationale, 1942), 81.

Langs waar komt het lustbegin? (Tell me Where is Fancy Bred)

Cymbeline: Hoor! de leeuwerk zingt (Hark! Hark the Lark at Heaven's Gate Sings)

Trekt de lippen vol venijn (Take, o Take those Lips Away)

Kom alhier, dood! (Come away, Come away, Death)

O meisjes, zucht niet (Sigh no More, Ladies)

Naspel: Aan zee (Postlude: At the Seaside)

Gij zijt mijne reine kersouwe (You are My Pure Daisy)

De joelende orkanen (Raging Hurricanes)

Interludio: Psychologische overgang (Intermission: Psychological Transition) - piano

De droefheid kwam (Sadness Came)

Ik heb niets meer van U (I Have Nothing Left of You)

The *Liefdedrama's* songs are linked together by pre- and postludes and recurrent motives.

The last five songs on poems by Eugene van Oye (1840-1926) show a profound melancholy. Deception sneaks into a deeply loving heart until there is nothing else left but death. These five last songs are unique in their sharp dissonances, surprising harmonies, and bold rhythms. The five first songs after Shakespeare have been republished by Metropolis (Antwerp) in 2006. The new edition includes background information and an English translation.

Musical example 9: "Gij zijt mijne reine kersouwe" (You are my Pure Daisy), mm. 25-

Ik voel, een reus, me rij-zen! O
 Mon cœur roy - al se âres - se! Mon -
 Wie fühl' ich mich er - ho - ben, ge -

ber - gen, be-nijdt u - wen vorst! O he - me - len, zoent in ver -
 - ta - gnes, voi-ci vo-tre roi! O cieux, cé - lé - bres Val - lé -
 tra - gen von Lis - bes - lust! Küsst, Him - mel, mir voll Ent -

voe - ring Mijn ko - nink-lij-ke borst!
 - gres - se De man ar - den - te foil!
 zü - eken Die kö - nig - li - che Brust!

mijn ko - nink-lij-ke borst!
 de mon ar - den - te foil!
 die kö - nig - li - che Brust!

Adolphe Samuel (1824-1898) was a Jewish-born composer and musical critic. He first studied painting in Liège and later piano, organ, harmony and composition at the Royal Conservatory in Brussels. Samuel was a cosmopolite and well-regarded by contemporary composers, such as Berlioz and Wagner. He continued his studies with Mendelssohn in Leipzig, Meyerbeer in Berlin, and Ferdinand Hiller in Dresden thanks to a Prix de Rome stipend. In 1853 he met Berlioz in London and they became friends. His creation of the *Concerts populaires de musique classique* in Brussels in 1865 was a great

addition to the cultural life of the French capital. In some sense he was Belgium's Anton Rubinstein. In 1871 he became director of the Ghent Conservatory. His compositions spanned symphonies, cantatas, chamber music and songs. Two interesting details of his biography are that his wife, Bertha Emanuel, was a singer and that he played the piano at Pauline García's debut concert in Brussels. Towards the end of his life he mainly found inspiration in religious subjects and in 1895 the Jewish composer was baptized a Christian.¹⁷ Unfortunately, much of his music remains unpublished or is out of print at the moment. Some of his songs can be downloaded free of charge from the Belgian Art Song Database.¹⁸

Samuel's text choice was mainly German romantic poetry (Goethe, Heine, Uhland, and Wunderhorn). The texts were often translated into French. For the most part, they are varied strophic songs and the German prosody is often better than the French one. Especially charming are the *Huit Lieder allemands* op. 54 (Eight German Songs). Among them are the Heine settings of "Ich hab im Traum geweinet" (I Sobbed in my Dreams) (Musical example 10) and "Alte Geschichte" (Old Story) (Musical example 11). "Ich hab im Traum geweinet" was set in a soothing, gentle 9/8 meter and the descending

¹⁷Anne-Marie Riessauw, "Samuel, Adolphe." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*,

<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/24477> (accessed December 26, 2011).

Karolien Selhorsthttp, "Samuel, Adolphe." *Studiecentrum voor Vlaamse Muziek* vzw <http://svm.be/content/samuel-adolphe> (visited December 26, 2011).

¹⁸www.belgianartsong.webs.com

vocal line beautifully pictures the rolling of tears on the cheek. “Alte Geschichte’s” rhythm resembles a folk dance and the simplicity of the vocal line with some modal inflections lends the song a slightly archaic atmosphere.

Musical example 10: „Ich hab im Traum geweinet“ aus *Huit Lieder allemands*, op. 54, nr. 7, mm. 1-20

Andante con moto.

Andante con moto.

p

Ich hab' im Traum ge - wei - net: Mir
 Mes pleurs cou - laient en ré - so -
 Ik moest al droo - mend wee - nen: Ik

riten. *mf a tempo*

träum in du lä - gest im Grab. Ich wach - te auf, und die
 Tu re pose dans la nuit du tom - beau. Je m'é - veillai: mais, sans
 droom de go laagt in het graf. 'Kont waak - te plots: en de

col canto *a tempo*

ppp *cresc.*

Musical example 11: Alte Geschichte aus “Huit Lieder allemands,” op. 54, nr. 8, bar 1-

Andante moderato. *simplice*

Andante moderato.

p

Rin
 Il
 Een

Jung - ling liebt ein Mäd - chen, die hat ei - nen An - dern er - wählt; Der
 aime a - ne jeu - ne fil - le Dont le cœur pour un autre a par - té. Cet
 jong - hag mint een meid - je, die hem ee - nen an - dren ver - koos; Maar

An - dre liebt ei - ne An - dre, und hat sich mit die - ser ver - mählt.
 au - tre, un regard qui pé - til - le. Lu dé - ja dans l'hy - men en - ga - gé.
 'an - dre mint ee - ne an - dre, En is dus met de - ze ge - trouwd.

riten.

riten.



Eduard Lassen (1830-1904) was the most prolific art song composer of this early generation. Similarly to Adolphe Samuel, his main musical influences came from Germany. Born in Copenhagen, Denmark, he studied piano and composition at the Brussels Conservatory and won the Belgian Prix de Rome in 1851, which enabled him to visit Rome and to tour Germany, where he met Louis Spohr and Franz Liszt. In 1855 he returned to Brussels for a very short time. Three years later, he was offered the position of music director at Weimar and succeeded Liszt as a court music director. He would stay in this position until his retirement in 1895.¹⁹

Lassen's approximately 220 songs, mostly for court use, were composed between 1860 and 1903. They are remarkably well-suited for beginning students thanks to their simple, elegant, conjunct and square melodic lines and smooth and lovely piano accompaniments reflecting the poem's mood. Among his songs we find folk songs (*Aus des Knaben Wunderhorn* and *Germanengesang*), duos and two song cycles composed in 1884 and 1885 (*Getrennte Liebe* op. 80 and *Aus der Frühlingszeit* op. 82). Most of his songs are on German poetry, incl. authors like von Fallersleben, Heine, Geibel, Goethe, Rückert, Eichendorff, while others are on French words by Wilder or Hugo. Widely published during his lifetime in Germany, England, France, Belgium and the USA one

¹⁹Gaynor G. Jones, "Lassen, Eduard." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*,

<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/16059> (accessed December 26, 2011).

can purchase some of Lassen’s songs today from Recital Publications and Nabu Public Domain Reprints. Musical example 12 shows his setting of the famous Goethe poem I think of Thee, “Nähe des Geliebten”, from *Sechs Lieder für eine Singstimme mit Begleitung des Pianoforte*, op. 62 (published in 1878).

Musical example 12: „Nähe des Geliebten,“ from *Sechs Lieder für eine Singstimme mit Begleitung des Pianoforte*, op. 62, mm. 1-6

The image shows a musical score for the song "Nähe des Geliebten" by Ed. Lassen. The score is in G major and 3/4 time, marked "Slowly and heartfelt." It consists of three systems of music. The first system shows the beginning of the piece with the voice part starting on a whole note G4 and the piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Ich den - ke dein, wenn wir der / I think of thee, when from the". The second system continues the melody and accompaniment with lyrics: "See - at Schimmer von Meer - es strahlt. Ich / See re - flect - ed of the sea is seen... I". The third system concludes the piece with lyrics: "den - ke dein, wenn sich des Meer - es Flimmer in Quell - len / think of thee, when in the break - ings of the waves in fountains". The score includes dynamic markings like *p* and *f*, and performance instructions like "Larghetto, rit." and "Cresc.".

Song composition in Belgium started thus at around 1850. On one hand, they are in the line of the French *romance*.²⁰ On the other hand, early Belgian song composers also found their models in the works of German song masters. Dual style features, German

²⁰Charles Van den Borren, *Geschiedenis van de Muziek in de Nederlanden. Deel II* (Antwerpen: De Nederlandsche Boekhandel, 1951), 306-327.

and French, can therefore be found in early Belgian song. This comes as no surprise, given the geographical proximity of Belgium to the neighboring Germany and France and the dual ethnicity of the Belgian people themselves.

Belgium possesses a rich hidden trove of art songs set in French, German, and Flemish. As discussed in the first part of the essay, the first steps towards a Belgian art song style were made in Paris during the 1850s. The initially simple strophic songs of the beginnings developed into more complex pieces through the art of Peter Benoit. Once launched, the style's popularity grew rapidly and composers, both Flemish and Walloon, integrated late romantic musical idioms into their vocabulary, thus opening the door to early impressionism and symbolism and creating beautiful vocal miniatures.

Composers of the Second Generation

Gustave Huberti (1843-1910) • Edward Keurvels (1853-1917) • Edgard Tinel (1854-1912) • Leon Du Bois (1859-1935) • Guillaume Lekeu (1870-1894)

The second part of the nineteenth century was a period of budding nationalism in Europe. The Flemish writers and musicians followed the movement to defend the use of their mother tongue. Long battles were fought until, at the end of the century, the Flemish language was eventually introduced in law, administration, and education. Vocal music was used by the Flemish national movement as a means of propaganda. Flemish choral cantatas with big choruses, soloists and orchestra, inspired by the works of Benoit, were performed regularly at public gatherings. Songs in general and folk songs in particular played a special role in reaching and educating Flemish people about the beauty of their

language and culture. Easy, strophic, and folk-like Flemish songs were composed for home use. They were often published in periodicals or by two cultural foundations that were created to promote Flemish culture: The *Willemsfonds* (1851) and the Roman-Catholic *Dauidsfonds*, which branched off the more liberal *Willemsfonds* in 1874. Hundreds of songs were published by the two foundations that promoted the *Vlaamsche lied* (Flemish song). Many of these songs are of little musical interest, but next to the less sophisticated songs, the foundations also published highly qualitative songs. Song composers of the second generation were either linked to the Flemish movement and the two foundations, or to the countess Louisa Mercy-Argenteau (1837-1890), an important patroness living in Wallonia. She counted among her friends Liszt, Cui, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Borodin, encouraged many young Belgian composers, and organized concerts to promote new music.²¹

Gustave Huberti, Edward Keurvels, and Edgard Tinel were masters of the *Vlaamsche lied* (Flemish Song) and will be discussed first. Together their output adds up to nearly 200 songs. Two lesser important song composers of the Flemish movement, *Hendrick Waelput* (1845-1885) and *Jan Blockx* (1851-1912), will not be discussed in this essay.

Gustave Huberti (1843-1910) was one of those younger composers that followed the trends set by Peter Benoit and the Flemish national movement. He composed oratorios, big choral works, symphonies, piano works, and about 50 songs, many of which were

²¹Marie Cornaz, “Louisa de Mercy-Argenteau, une comtesse musicienne,” *Les princes de Chimay et la musique* (Bruxelles: Dexia-La Renaissance du Livre, 2002).

composed for his friend, the baritone Emiel Blauwaert (1845-1891).²² Huberti was fluent in both French and Flemish and held positions as director of the music academy at Mons in 1874, inspector of music in the Antwerp municipality, teacher of harmony at the Brussels Conservatory, music critic for periodicals, and finally director of the Music School of Sint-Joost-ten-Node.

Among his songs one finds Flemish works, German lieder, as well as French pieces. The latter ones follow the trends of the new French school set by Duparc, Chausson, and Faure:²³ e.g. “Sonnet” (Ronsard), “Le monde est méchant” (The World is Mean - T. Gauthier) and “Mal ensevelie” (Buried Evil - Sully Prudhomme) from *Six mélodies pour chant et piano*, op. 33 (Six Melodies for Voice and Piano) and “La captive” (The Captive - Hugo) from *Six romances & deux morceaux* (Six Romances and Two Pieces) (Musical example 1).

Musical example 1: “La captive” (The Captive), mm. 1-7

²²Jan Dewilde, “Gustave huberti.” *Studiecentrum voor Vlaamse Muziek*: <http://www.svm.be/content/huberti-gustave?display=biography> (visited January 21 2012); Patrick Peire and Sylvester Beelaert, “Huberti, Gustave.” *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/13472> (accessed January 21, 2012); Lucien Solvay. *Notice sur Gustave Huberti*. (Brussels: 1919).

²³Charles Van den Borren, *Geschiedenis van de Muziek in de Neederlande*, Deel II (Antwerpen: De Nederlandsche Boekhandel, 1951): 310.

The image shows a page of a musical score. At the top, it is labeled 'CHANT.' and 'PIANO.'. The tempo is 'Andantino' and the mood is 'melancolico.'. The vocal line is in treble clef with a common time signature. The piano accompaniment is in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The lyrics are: 'Si je n'étais cap- ti- ve, j'aimé-rais ce pa- ys, et cet- te mer plain-'. The score includes performance instructions like 'Legato.' and 'Ped.' (pedal).

These French songs show Huberti's sense for miniatures and good prosody. Huberti's Flemish orchestral song cycle on Emmanuel Hiel's poem *De stervende moeder* (The Dying Mother) is his main Flemish work. The cycle includes as individual songs "De stervende moeder" (The Dying Mother), "O moeder" (O Mother), "Slapen gaan" (Go to Sleep), and "Op staan" (To Rise).

Among Huberti's lieder one should pay particular attention to the *Wanderlieder* (Travel Songs), on poetry by Uhland, which were published by the Schott Brothers in Brussels around 1865 in a collection of songs entitled *17 Mélodies pour chant avec accompagnement de piano* (Seventeen Songs for Voice with Piano Accompaniment).

The nine *Wanderlieder* (Songs of Travel) for baritone exhibit harmonic complexity and key relationships between songs. Their vocal writing is operatic, while the piano accompaniment is orchestral in its conception. These songs could be sung on a sophisticated recital by an advanced baritone singer, if combined with the Ueland settings by Conradin Kreutzer or Johannes Brahms, for example. The complete list of

Huberti's Songs of Travel (Uhland) is given below.²⁴

Lebewohl (Farewell)

Scheiden und Meiden (Parting and Separation)

In der Ferne (Afield)

Morgenlied (Morning Song)

Nachtreise (Night Travel)

Winterreise (Winter Travel)

Einkehr (Stop at an Inn)

Heimkehr (The Journey Home)

In "Scheiden und Meiden" (Parting and Separation) Huberti provides us with a different interpretation of Ueland's texts than Brahms' simple strophic settings. Brahms' Ueland songs were completed in 1858 and published in 1862 in his op. 19, three years before Huberti's cycle. Musical example 2 and 3 show the different settings.

Musical example 2: Huberti: "Scheiden und Meiden" (Parting and Separation), mm. 1-4

AGUARD.

Sans toi j'i - rai done vi - vre.
So soll ich aus dich mei - den,
Ik moet u dus ver - la - ten.

Musical example 3: Brahms: „Scheiden und Meiden“ (Parting and Separation), mm. 1-5

²⁴Johann Ludwig Uhland (1787-1862): German romantic poet. His poems *Wanderlieder* (1815) include a ninth poem "In der Ferne" (Far Away) not set by Huberti. Among the many composers which set the poems, the Songs of Travel were set by the German composer Conradin Kreutzer (1780-1849) in 1817 and Nr. 2, 3 and 9 were set by Brahms in the 1850s.

Nicht zu langsam und mit starkem Ausdruck. Op. 19 N^o 2.

So soll ich dich nun mei - den, du, mei - nes
 Lieb - chen, heißt das mei - den, wenn man sich

22. *poco.*
col Ped.

Huberti's final twenty bars of "Nachtreise" (Night Travel) (Musical example 4) give us a nice example of both his operatic vocal writing and his orchestral piano accompaniment, portraying a storm.

Musical example 4: "Nachtreise" (Night Travel), mm. 95-114

mor - te! J'ai mon man-ten pour me cou-vrir, et
 tra - - - - - gen. Je reit' in' fin-atre Lead' des-ous, les
 dra - - - - - gen. Ik rijd de dou-kre des - ven dors, in

lais - se mon che - val cou-rir où mon des-tin m'en - por - te.
 Ma - ter - strom, en' of - ten Slein, Dou' Ma - ter' un - ge - schik - - gen.
 win - ter - storm op 'ten - ge speer, den oan - tel om - go - sla - - gen.

cresc.
dimin.
dim.
per-
tra-
do-
to-

Edward Keurvels (1853-1917), another member of the Flemish national movement, was mainly active as conductor and co-founded the *Nederlandsch Lyrisch Tooneel* (Dutch Lyrical Theatre) in 1893. He studied and worked at the Royal Flemish Conservatory and

established the Peter Benoit-Foundation in 1902. His songs radiate a special charm, possibly due to his valuable knowledge of the human voice that he gained as a choirboy in the Antwerp Saint-George’s church. His melodic lines are sweeping, long, lyrical and sustained. Most songs are composed for high voice, contain melismas and word paintings, and his prosody is impeccable (Musical example 5).

Musical example 5: “Ware ik...” (If I were... Floris van Westervoort), mm. 17-20

En flad - - - der.de ik hier, En
 Et vol - ti - geant par... ci, Et
 Ich wieg - - - te mich hier, Ich

Originally, he used Dutch and Flemish poetry for his songs. As was common practice in Belgium, they were published with German and French singing translations. As the century advances, Keurvel’s song output becomes increasingly complex. The piano accompaniment is more orchestral, through-composed and multi-sectional forms predominate, meter and key signature changes happen frequently, and the text is completely integrated into the music. Often, quiet and introverted passages alternated with fiery and passionate eruptions. The finale of “De zee ruischt in de verte” (The Sea Rustles in the Vastness) illustrates this complexity well (Musical example 6).²⁵

Musical example 6: “De zee ruischt in de verte” (The Sea Rustles in the Vastness - van Oye)

²⁵Songs can be downloaded for free at www.belgianartsong.webs.com.

4

aandringen *ff*

zee, de zee lokt me uit de ver - te, de
 Meer, das Meer be - gräbt den Kun - mer, das
 mer, la mer au loin m'ap - pel le, la

toe - men *ff* *aandringen*

vertragen *mf* *tijdmaat* (♩ = 63)

zee! De zee lokt me uit de ver - te...
 Meer! Das Meer be - gräbt den Kun - mer...
 mer! La mer au loin m'ap - pel - le...

tijdmaat (♩ = 63)

veel vertragen (tot ♩ = 72) *p*

p *(weinig)* *pp* *(met gesmoorde stem)*

Ik wou, ik wa - re dood! Ik wou, ik
 Ich wollt' es wär' mein Grab! Ich wollt' es
 O Mort, dé - li - vre - moi! O Mort, dé -

wa - re dood!
 wär' mein Grab!
 li - vre - moi!

uitsterven

Edgard Tinel (1854-1912), the most prolific song composer of the second generation, was a real miniaturist. The New Grove Dictionary article on Tinel mentions that his art songs recall Schumann, Mendelssohn and Brahms, and that the ones on melancholic texts have a most moving sincerity expressed through unexpected modulations.²⁶ Tinel

²⁶Henri Vanhulst, "Tinel, Edgar." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*,

<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/27992> (accessed January 20,

was admitted to the Brussels Conservatory in 1863, where he studied under Gevaert. He started his career as a pianist. His first vocal compositions using lyrics in Dutch, French, and German were published in 1874 and in the following years his songs would be published regularly by Breitkopf & Härtel in Leipzig and distributed all over the world. He was a winner of the Belgian Prix de Rome and was heralded as Peter Benoit's successor in promoting the Flemish cause.²⁷ Tinel was appointed director of the School for Sacred Music in Mechelen in 1881 and studied religious and Gregorian music. He became professor of counterpoint and fugue at the Brussels Conservatory in 1896 and its director in 1908.²⁸

Tinel's song composition spans over his entire career and only a few selected songs can be introduced here. Most of his approximately 100 songs were composed before the turn of the century. His opus 1 was a set of four nocturnes for voice and piano on French texts by Aloïs van Weddingen, *Quatre nocturnes pour chant et piano* (Four Nocturnes for Voice and Piano). Charles van den Borren points out the charm of the last piece "Du jour meurent les bruits" (The Sounds of the Day Die) (Musical example 7).²⁹

Musical example 7: "Du jour meurent les bruits" (The Sounds of the Day Die), mm. 6-

2012).

²⁷"J. L. G." *Edgar Tinel. Essai bibliographique*, (Mechelen: s.a.).

²⁸Luc Leytens, "Edgard Tinel." *Studiecentrum voor Vlaamse Muziek*: <http://www.svm.be/content/tinel-edgar?display=biography&language=nl> (visited January 20, 2012)

²⁹Charles Van den Borren, *Geschiedenis van de Muziek in de Neederlande*, Deel II (Antwerpen: De Nederlandsche Boekhandel, 1951): 315.

Tinel's first Flemish songs were his op. 4, "Het lied van 't maagdelijn" (The Song of the Maid - van Ledeganck), "Visschersliedeken" (Fisher's Song - van Dautzenberg), and "Lamento" (van Wezelmael). These songs are folk-inspired, as were Benoit's first Flemish songs ten years earlier (Musical example 8).

Musical example 8: "Visschersliedeken" (Fisher's Song) op. 4, no. 2, mm. 1-5

French poetry by his future wife, Emma Coeckelbergh, inspired Tinel to a number of songs during the 1870s. In 1877, the Schott Brothers published some of Tinel's moving German songs (op. 10 and 11) on Nicolaus Lenau's poetry.³⁰ The poet's highly romantic imagery of nature, love, and salvation through death, fitted Tinel's sensibility very well.

³⁰Nikolaus Lenau (1802-1850): German Romantic poet.

These settings reveal his admiration for the music of Johannes Brahms (Musical example 9).

Schilflieder op.10 (Reed Songs)

Drüben geht die Sonnen scheiden - Trübe wird's (Yonder the Sun in Parting - It is Dimming)

Auf geheimen Waldespfade (On a Secret Forest Path)

Sonnenuntergang (Sunset)

Auf dem Teich (On a Pond)

Fünf Gesänge aus Lenau's "Lieder der Sehnsucht" op. 11 (Five Songs from Lenau's "Songs of Longing")

Nach Süden (Towards the South)

Bitte (Plea)

Das Mondlicht (Moonlight)

Winternacht (Winter Night)

Stumme Liebe (Silent Love)

Musical example 9: "Nach Süden" (To the South) op. 11, no. 1, mm. 70-93

wärts, nach des Don-ners fer-nen Schlä-gen, dort nach Sü-den
hard, fel-le don-ners moe-dig te-gen, ginds naar 'tZui-den

will mein Herz, nach des Don-ners fer-nen Schlä-gen, dort nach Sü-den
wil mijn hart, ginds naar 'tZui-den trekt de re-gen, ginds naar 'tZui-den

will mein Herz.
wil mijn hart.

S.F. 9178 (1)

Op. 12 is a song cycle on Hoffmann von Fallersleben's old Minnesongs, *Loverkens: een cyclus van 14 Oud-Vlaamsche minneliedereren* which has some solo piano pieces interspersed between the songs. It was praised by Charles van den Borren as a fresh, spontaneous, and charming masterpiece.³¹ Von Fallersleben's use of the Old Dutch language seems to have attracted Tinel. He used similar poems again in his Drinking Songs, op 13. *Grabgezangen* (Grave Songs) op. 22, on texts by Pol de Mol, is a deeply sad composition. These complex songs were published in 1889. They have multiple sections with changes in meter and mood. The vocal range is that of a medium voice and the operatic vocal line is supported by an elaborate piano accompaniment with detailed

³¹Van den Borren, Charles. *Geschiedenis van de Muziek in de Neederlande*, Deel II. Antwerpen: De Nederlandsche Boekhandel, 1951: 316.

pedal, dynamic, and articulatory markings (Musical example 10). The songs that comprise the cycle *Grabgezangen* (Grave Songs) op. 22 are as follows:

Grafbloeme (Grave Flowers) Ab major

Raven (Raven) C minor

Avond (Evening) F major

Begrafenis (Funeral) F minor

Schoonslapsterken (Beauty Sleep) C# minor

Dooden - Verloving (The Dead - Engagement) Gb major

Musical example 10: “Begrafenis” (Funeral) op. 22 no. 4, mm. 1-13

Adagio; funebre.

In ee-nen don-keren zo-mer-nacht hebt gij de rus-te ver-wor-ven.
In ei-ner dun-ke-len Som-mer-nacht hast ew'-ge Ruk' Du er-wor-ben.

Ik heb u zelf naar het graf gebracht! Mijn le-ven, ach! was ge-stor-ven.
Ich hab' Dich sel-ber zu Grab gebracht! Mein Le-ben, ach! war ge-stor-ben.

ven. In ee-nen don-keren zomernacht, lei ik u zel-ve ter rus-te.
ben. In ei-ner dun-ke-len Sommernacht gin-gest, mein Lieb, Du zu Rii-ste.

Last, I would like to focus on a few songs composed by Tinel during the final twenty years of the nineteenth century: “La vase brisé” (The Broken Vase), op. 28 on a text by

Sully-Prudhomme and the songs on Heine poetry form his op. 38. The Broken Vase, also set by Franck in 1879, is a well-crafted song with a catchy four-note theme (Musical example 11). The Heine songs “Du bist wie eine Blume” (You are Like a Flower) (Musical example 12), “Am Kreuzweg wird begraben” (At the Crossroad He is Burried), and “Dein Angesicht so lieb und schön” (Your Face, So Beautiful and Dear) from op. 38 are only one page long and composed for high voice. They definitely should be included in any recital dedicated to songs on Heine poetry.

Musical example 11: “La vase brisé” (The Broken Vase) op. 28, no. 1, mm. 1-11

Edgar Tinel, Op. 28, 1

Chant. Singstimme. *Andantino.* *p mezzo voce*

Piano. *la melodia mare.* *p*

Le vase où meurt cet - te ver - veil - ne, d'un
 Im Blu-men - gla - se weckt die Ro - se, ein

coup dé - ven - tail fut fâ - lé; le coup dut lef - fleurir à
 tödt - li - cher Riss es durch - zieht, das Glas nur streift die Fil - cher

pei - ne, au - cun bruit ne l'a ré - vé - lé!
 lo - se, und kein Laut das Un - heil ver - rieth.

rit. a tempo *dim.* *mf*

Musical example 12: “Du bist wie eine Blume” (You are Like a Flower) op. 38, no. 4, mm. 9-17

Mir ist, als ob ich die Hän - de aufs Haupt dir le - gen sollt, — be - tend,
 't Is mij als of ik de han - den op 't hoofd u leg - gen moet, — bid - dend.

be - tend, dass Gott dich er - hal - te so rein, so rein und schön und hold.
 bid - dend dat God u be - wa - re zoo rein, zoo rein, zoo lief en zoet.

10312 Senza Pedale. *Rea.* * *Rea.* *

Huberti, Keurvels, and Tinel were late romantic composers well-embedded in the Flemish tradition of song composition established by Peter Benoit. All three composed multitudes of songs. This was not the case of our last two Belgian composers, whose output was sparse. Leon Du Bois and Guillaume Lekeu composed their songs before the turn of the century, in French. Stylistically, they were close to the new French school.

Leon du Bois (1859-1935) was born in Brussels and studied at the Brussels Conservatory. He won the Belgian Prix de Rome in 1885 with the cantata *Au bois des elfes* (In the Forest of the Elves) and worked mainly as a conductor. He was elected director of the Brussels Conservatory in 1912, where he stayed until his retirement in 1925. Du Bois composed only 13 songs, all of which in French. They show a mixture of Wagner's and the new French school's harmonic languages.³²

Among his subtle and colorful songs are the song cycle *Le reliquaire d'amour* (Love's

³²Henri Vanhulst, "Du Bois, Léon." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*,

<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/08229> (accessed August 13, 2012).

Reliquary Casket - Lucien Solvais) and “Soir religieux” (Religious Evening - Emile van Arenbergh). Both have impeccable prosody and fine mood settings. His songs are through-composed and their piano parts have some counterpoint with extended preludes, interludes and postludes. An example of his style can be seen in “Soir religieux”. It opens quietly with evening bells and an ascending Eb major scale theme in the piano, which is restated throughout the song with slight variations. The voice intonates the text *La vesprée a la paix mystique d’une eglise* (Vespers in a mystical peaceful church) on a long, sustained, ascending line that seems to float over sustained chords (Musical example 13). Van Arenbergh’s³³ colorful poetry combines powerful images of religious vespers and nature at sunset. The dense imagery of the poetry serves du Bois very well to build up his final climax on the text *fait au loin flamboyer une rosace d’or* (lightens up in the distance a golden rose window) The vocal line is underlined by piano tremolos and octaves in the right hand before it closes with a long piano postlude (Musical example 14). This very effective and colorful song is also available in an orchestra version.

Musical example 13: “Soir religieux” (Religious Evening) prelude, mm. 1 – 18

³³Émile Van Arenbergh (1854-1934) was a lawyer and poet. He was part of the movement *La Jeune Belgique* (The Young Belgium) and his form of predilection was the Parnassian sonnet: two stanzas of each four lines with a rhyme scheme *abba* followed by of stanzas of three lines with the rhyme scheme *aab* and *aba*.

CHANT **Modérément** (♩ = 63)

PIANO **Modérément** (♩ = 63)

pp *m.g.* *m.g.* *p* *pp*

La ves - pré e a la

paix mys - ti que d'une é - gli - se.

Musical example 14: *Soir religieux* (Religious Evening), finale

allargando

Fait au loin flam - boy - er

allargando

poco a poco crescendo



Guillaume Lekeu's (1870-1894) French songs are comparable to du Bois' compositions. Lekeu died at the age of 24 and left us 13 songs, of which only 8 are performable. He studied with César Franck and Vincent d'Indy in Paris and admired the music of Beethoven and Wagner. Lekeu's music is very rich and personal

and so are his songs, which are full of sensitivity and rich harmonies. Here is a list of his published songs.³⁴

La fenêtre de la maison paternelle and Les pavots, 1887, texts by Lamartine

L'ombre plus dense and Quelque antique et lente danse, 1889, texts by Lekeu

Chanson de mai, 1891

Trois poèmes: Sur une tombe, Ronde, and Nocturne, 1892

Among Lekeu's eight published songs, his "Trois poèmes" (consisting of "Sur une tombe" (Upon a Tomb), "Ronde" and "Nocturne") are the most accomplished and interesting pieces. Set to his own texts, these beautiful post-romantic pieces demonstrate all of Lekeu's major features and point towards impressionism and symbolism. The "Nocturne" was also arranged for voice and string quartet. The three songs show fluidity, musicality in the choice of words, and use the colorful adjectives that evoke moods, so favored by the French symbolists. Lekeu's first song, "Sur une tombe", creates a feeling of longing and beauty in the very first bars of the piano prelude. The second song, "Ronde", has a rondo form reflecting the title. The most pianistic song is the last one, "Nocturne". It has two extensive and passionate piano interludes with dramatic sequences, harmonic shifts and twists. Its vocal lines are long and lyrical, and all this is complemented by a text rich in imagery (Musical example 15).

Musical example 15: "Nocturne", mm. 1-6

³⁴Barbara Mergelsberg, "Forgotten Art Songs: 'Trois Poèmes' of Guillaume Lekeu." *Voice Prints, Journal of the New York Singing Teachers' Association*. New York: (November-December 2011): 4-5.

CHANT *dolciss.*
Des près lointains — d'azur

PIANO
pp
ppp
2 Ped. *ppp*

sombre où fleu - ris - sent les é - toi - les, des -