

Lydia

Charles-Marie-René Leconte de Lisle
(1818-1894)

Bass + Alto

Gabriel Fauré
(1845-1924)

Original key: F major. Composed c.1870. Op. 4, no. 2. Published by G. Hartmann, 1871; Choudens, 1877; Hamelle, 1887, first collection, no. 8. Dedicated to Mme. Marie Trélat. First performance, Société nationale de musique, May 18, 1872, Marie Trélat, mezzo-soprano. This is Fauré's first setting of Leconte de Lisle, the leader of the Parnassian poets. The Parnassians stressed restraint, objectivity, and precise description in their poetry. De Lisle's poem in Hellenic style is elegant and beautifully balanced. Fauré mirrored its simplicity and antique mood by using the Lydian mode and simple vocal phrases with graceful curving lines. Fauré altered the poem slightly, probably to improve the vocal flow. "Chanter sur tes lèvres en fleur" was changed to "Chanter sur ta lèvre en fleur." In the first verse, Fauré omits the bracketed words in his setting: "Et sur ton col frais et si blanc / [Que le lait,] route étincelant." He gives the omitted words to the piano, which melodically initiates the phrase, removing the comparison of "white and "milk." The song became personally significant when Fauré used its first measures as a recurring symbolic motif* in his song cycle *La bonne chanson* (1892-94).

*"Lydia" presumably referred to Emma Bardac, with whom Fauré was having an affair at the time he composed *La bonne chanson*.

Lydia

Lydia, sur tes roses joues,
Et sur ton col frais et si blanc,
[Qui le lait,] roule étincelant
L'or fluide que tu dénoues.

Le jour qui luit est le meilleur;
Oublions l'éternelle tombe.
Laisse tes baisers, tes baisers de colombe
Chanter sur ta lèvre en fleur.

Un lys caché répand sans cesse
Une odeur divine en ton sein:
Les délices, comme un essaim
Sortent de toi, jeune Déesse!

Je t'aime meurs, ô mes amours,
Mon âme en baisers m'est ravie!
O Lydia, rends-moi la vie,
Que je puisse mourir toujours!

Lydia

Lydia, onto your rosy cheeks
And onto your neck, so fresh and white
There rolls down, gleaming
The flowing gold that you loosen.

The day that is dawning is the best;
Let us forget the eternal tomb.
Let your kisses, your dove-like kisses
Sing on your blossoming lips.

A hidden lily ceaselessly spreads
A divine scent in your bosom.
Delights, like swarming bees,
Emanate from you, young goddess!

I love you and die, oh my love,
My soul is ravished in kisses
O Lydia, give me back my life,
That I may die, die forever!

Bass + Alto

Andante BEGIN

Ly - di - a, sur tes ros - es jou - es,

sempre dolce

Andante

5

Et sur ton col frais et si* blanc, roule é -

8

tin - ce - lant L'or flu - i - de que tu dé - nou - es.

11

Le jour qui luit est le meilleur; Ou - bli - ons l'é - ter - nel - le

14

tom - be. Lais - se tes bai - sers, tes bai - sers de co - lom - be

*"plus" in the original poem

Chan - ter sur ta lèvre*en fleur, sur ta lèvre en fleur. **END**

rall. *a tempo*

rall. *a tempo*

Red.

Un lys ca - ché ré - pand sans ces - se

p

pp sempre

Une o - deur di - vine en ton sein: Les dé - li - ces, comme

un es - saim, Sor - tent de toi, jeu - ne Dé - es - se!

*"tes lèvres" in the original poem