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Preface

The earliest of the “Cinq Mélodies populaires grecques”, “Quel galant” (no. 2) and “Chanson des cueilleuses de lentisques” (no. 4), were written in 1904 together with three other songs, the manuscripts of which are unfortunately lost. They were performed in connection with a lecture on “The songs of the oppressed peoples” (Greeks and Armenians in Turkey), given by the musicologist Pierre Aubry at the “École des Hautes Études Sociales” in Paris. Aubry wished to enhance his lecture with authentic music, and Maurice Ravel was asked on short notice by a mutual friend, the music critic Michel-Dimitri Calvocoressi, to write the accompaniments to a group of five Greek folk tunes, chosen from two collections: Hubert Pernot’s *Mélodies populaires grecques de l’île de Chio* (Greek popular songs from the isle of Chios), and a collection by Pericles Matsas, published in Constantinople in 1883. Ravel finished the settings in just 36 hours!

“La chanson de la mariée” (in the orchestral version correctly retitled by Ravel as “Le reveil de la mariée”), “Là-bas, vers l’ église” and “Tout gai” (nos. 1, 2 and 5), were commissioned by M.- D. Calvocoressi and written in 1905-6. With these new settings added to those written in 1904, Ravel completed the final version of his “Cinq Mélodies populaires grecques”. They were among his first compositions published by *A. Durand et fils*. With his fine musical acumen, Ravel succeeds in capturing the essence of the melodies. With masterful economy and ravishing sonority, his accompaniments attain a perfect symbiosis with the original melodies; they enliven their character without the slightest stylistic disruption. Later on Ravel arranged the 1st and the 5th for orchestra, while nos. 2–4 were arranged for orchestra by his pupil Manuel Rosenthal.

It is not only in the intimate and mystical “Là-bas, vers l’ église”, with its broken chords, that the piano seems to replace a guitar. The compositional flow – broken chords, arpeggios, rhythmical pulsation – evokes throughout associations with a plucked instrument. Not only for this reason, but also due to the differentiated colour spectrum and the magical timbre of the guitar, which comes so close to the essence of this music, did I feel justified in making these highly expressive songs accessible to guitarists. I was also encouraged by the knowledge that already during Ravel’s lifetime the songs had been performed with harp accompaniment.

This edition is based to a large extent on the piano version, although in some passages Ravel’s and Rosenthal’s orchestral accompaniments have been used. Reports that some of the songs were performed with the additional participation of a tambourine encouraged me to include percussion effects in several places.

Eugenia Kanthou

Cinq Mélodies populaires grecques

I.

Le réveil de la mariée Εύπνησε πετροπέδικα!

French words by M.-D. Calvocoressi

Maurice Ravel (1877)

Arr: Eugen

Modéré

Ré - veil - le - toi
Εύ - πνη - σε

toi, per - drix mi - gnon - ne,
πε - τρο - πέδ - δι - κα,

toi, ré - veil - le -
πε, ξύ - πνη - σε

toi pe
πε -

Ouvre au ma - tin tes
τί - να - ξε τα φτε -

les, ouvre au ma - tin tes
σου, τί - να - ξε τα φτε -

VII VIII IX VIII VIII

II.
Là-bas, vers l'église
Κάτω στον Άγιο Σίδερο

French words by M.-D. Calvocoressi

Maurice Ravel

Arr: Eugenia Kanth

Andante

XII
 ⑤=G
 ⑥=D
 8
pp ⑤
 l.v.

5
 bas, vers l'é - gli - se, Vers l'é
 τω στον Ά, κά - ο, γέ-
 ρο, στον

9
 glise, *f*
 Ά - l'é - gli-se Ay-io Co-stan-ndi - no se
 στον Ά - γιο Κων-στα-ντί - νο μα-

3
 at ré - u - nis, ras-sem-blés en nombre in - fi - ni, du
 -εύ - γου - νται, μα-ζεύ-γου-νται, σω - ριά-ζου - νται, του

VI
 III
 I
 III