

Dawn Upshaw – Forgotten Songs (Dawn Upshaw Sings Debussy) [1997]

Written by bluesever

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1. *Pantomime* ("Pierrot qui n'a rien d'un Clitandre"), L. 31
2. *En sourdine* ("Calmes dans le demi-jour"), L. 28 (first version)
3. *Mandoline* ("Les donneurs de sérénades"), L. 29
4. *Clair de lune* ("Votre âme est un paysage choisi"), L. 32
5. *Fantoches* ("Scaramouche et Pulcinella"), L. 21
6. *Coquetterie posthume* ("Quand je mourrai, qu'on me mette"), L. 39
7. *Romance* ("Silence ineffable de l'heure"), L. 43
8. *Musique* ("La lune se levait, pure, mais plus glacée"), L. 44
9. *Paysage sentimental* ("Le ciel d'hiver si doux, si triste, si dormant"), L. 45
10. *Romance* ("Voici que le printemps, ce fil léger d'avril"), L. 52
11. *La Romance d'Ariel* ("Au long ds ces montagnes douces"), L. 54
12. *Regret* ("Devant le ciel d'été, tiède et calme"), L. 55
13. *Ariettes oubliées* (6), L. 60 No.1: *C'est l'extase langoureuse*
14. *Ariettes oubliées* (6), L. 60 No.2: *il pleure dans mon coeur*
15. *Ariettes oubliées* (6), L. 60 No.3: *L'ombre des arbres*
16. *Ariettes oubliées* (6), L. 60 No.4: *Chevaux de bois*
17. *Ariettes oubliées* (6), L. 60 No.5: *Green*
18. *Ariettes oubliées* (6), L. 60 No.6: *Spleen*
19. *Poèmes* (5) de Baudelaire, L. 64 No.1: *le Balcon*
20. *Poèmes* (5) de Baudelaire, L. 64 No.2: *Harmonie du soir*
21. *Poèmes* (5) de Baudelaire, L. 64 No.3: *le Jet d'eau*
22. *Poèmes* (5) de Baudelaire, L. 64 No.4: *Recueillement*
23. *Poèmes* (5) de Baudelaire, L. 64 No.5: *la Mort des amants*

Dawn Upshaw - soprano

James Levine – piano

Full marks to Dawn Upshaw for reviving these forgotten songs. It is this beautiful recording,

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featuring Upshaw in her prime, which inspired me to reopen my long-forgotten scores of the Debussy mélodies, which I'd studied decades ago and only ever heard performed on disc by a past generation of singers such as Suzanne Danco and Maggie Teyte, whose recordings can now sound somewhat one-dimensional and appear stylistically dated. This recording, in a warm and spacious acoustic, not only gives the songs new colour but makes them seem much more contemporary. The digital sound does full justice to the lovely harmonic treatments of the piano parts, excellently played here.

There are now several recordings by contemporary French vocalists, but they tend to be rather characterless and mundane, as if French song is all in a day's work for them (which it probably is!). The notes and diction may be more perfectly rendered by the French interpreters, but for me, their versions are nowhere near as expressive as Upshaw's. In this recording, the warmth of her personality and, more importantly, her love of this music, shine through and bring out the sheer beauty of these songs. ---C. Orde, amazon.com

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