

# The poets of Paris

Marisa Martins

*mezzosoprano*

Mac McClure

*piano*

Fauré Debussy Poulenc

## INTRODUCTION

French mélodie is a landscape where poetry, color, and emotion converge. This recital traces a path through that sound world by bringing together three essential voices: Gabriel Fauré, Claude Debussy, and Francis Poulenc. Though each possesses a distinct musical language, all share a deeply French sensibility: clarity, refinement, suggestion, and the intimate union between word and music.

Fauré opens the program with luminous elegance. His melodies unfold like calm rivers, revealing contained emotions, always wrapped in a delicacy that illuminates even sorrow.

Debussy then leads us into a universe of atmosphere: symbolist landscapes, images vibrating between dream and reality, shadows softened by light. His music does not describe; it hints, envelops, and invites contemplation.

Finally, Poulenc offers a portrait of the modern human soul: ironic, tender, nostalgic, playful, and at times devastating. His songs bring together humor, innocence, everyday poetry, and a lyricism as direct as it is fragile.

Together, these works form a tapestry of memory, desire, dream, and contemplation—an invitation to listen closely and to wander through the rich colors of French song.



## Duet Martins -McClure

The Martins-McClure Duo is formed by the Argentine-Spanish mezzo-soprano and the American-Spanish pianist Mac McClure. For more than twenty years they lived and worked in Catalonia, becoming part of Catalonia's musical life as soon as they arrived in Barcelona. For several years now, Mac McClure has been based in Bogotá, where since 2010 he has served as Associate Professor at the Conservatorio de Música de la Universidad Nacional. This has led the duo to expand their activities frequently throughout Latin America, always presenting Spanish music in general and Catalan music in particular, as well as the French repertoire they studied in depth with Dalton Baldwin.

Together or individually, they have worked directly with composers Xavier Montsalvatge, Xavier Turull, Carlota Garriga, Moisès Bertran, Ricardo Llorca, Ernest Borràs, Miquel Ortega, Xavier Benguerel, and many others. Montsalvatge himself asked them to record his songs. They worked on the complete works for voice and piano by Federico Mompou with his widow, the pianist Carmen Bravo, and on Spanish repertoire in general on numerous occasions with Alicia de Larrocha. They have recorded several CDs entirely devoted to the songs of Montsalvatge, Mompou, Isaac Albéniz, Borràs, Carlota Garriga, and Xavier Turull.

They have performed throughout Spain, as well as in France, United States, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Argentina, United Kingdom, and Australia, always with great success with audiences and praise from the international press. The duo's repertoire is very broad; in addition to Catalan and Spanish composers, they have specialized in French music (Poulenc, Debussy, Fauré, and Ravel). If you want a slightly more promotional or academic tone (program notes vs. biography), I can tweak the wording to match.

**Francis Poulenc — *\*Les chemins de l'amour\** (1940)**

Written for Jean Anouilh's play *\*Léocadia\**, this nostalgic waltz became one of Poulenc's most beloved songs. It evokes the luminous beginning of love and its inevitable passing.

**Gabriel Fauré — Mélodies**

*\*Après un rêve\**

One of Fauré's most famous songs: a longing to remain inside a dream of passion and freedom.

*\*Au bord de l'eau\**

A meditation on quiet companionship, with piano lines flowing like a calm river.

*\*Mandoline\**

Light, sparkling, and inspired by Verlaine's vivid imagery.

*\*Les Berceaux\**

A deeply moving lullaby about separation and the fate of sailors leaving home.

*\*Chanson d'amour\**

Brief, radiant, playful affection.

*\*Notre amour\**

A joyful celebration of love, growing in intensity with each stanza.

*\*Tristesse\**

A gentle, contemplative portrayal of quiet sorrow.

*\*Le Papillon et la fleur\**

A youthful miniature about the impossible love between a butterfly and a flower.

**Francis Poulenc — \*Métamorphoses\* (1943)**

\*Reine des mouettes\*

*A dreamlike portrait of the “queen of the seagulls.”*

\*C'est ainsi que tu es\*

*An intimate, tender song dedicated to a beloved figure.*

\*Paganini\*

*A humorous homage to virtuosity.*

**Claude Debussy** — *\*Beau soir\** (1891)

A serene sunset scene reminding us to savor the fleeting beauty of life.

**Gabriel Fauré** — *\*En sourdine\** (1880)

Soft harmonies and a muted, intimate atmosphere give this song its veiled character.

**Claude Debussy** — *\*En sourdine\** (1904)

An impressionistic interpretation of the same poem, full of blurred colors and quiet sensuality.

**Francis Poulenc** — *\*La courte paille\** (1960)

*\*Le Sommeil\** — a tender lullaby.

*\*Quelle Aventure!\** — childlike delight and surprise.

*\*La Reine de cœur\** — an ironic character sketch.

*\*Ba, Be, Bi, Bo, Bu\** — playful vocal gymnastics.

*\*Les Anges musiciens\** — nostalgia painted in angelic tones.

*\*Le Carafon\** — a whimsical fairytale.

*\*Lune d'avril\** — a gentle, poetic ending.

## **Claude Debussy — \*Chansons de Bilitis\* (1897–98)**

\**La flûte de Pan*\* — the awakening of desire.

\**La chevelure*\* — a sensual dreamlike vision.

\**Le tombeau des Naïades*\* — a wintry landscape marking the end of love.

## **Francis Poulenc — \*Banalités\* (1940)**

\**Chanson d'Orkenise*\* — rhythmic and spirited.

\**Hôtel*\* — an elegant hymn to laziness.

\**Fagnes de Wallonie*\* — a stark, rugged landscape.

*\*Voyage à Paris\** — joyful celebration of the city.

*\*Sanglots\** — the emotional heart of the cycle, profound and deeply human.

**Claude Debussy** — *\*Trois poèmes de Stéphane Mallarmé\** (1913)

*\*Soupir\** — ethereal and suspended.

*\*Placet futile\** — witty and refined.

*\*Éventail\** — delicate and light as the flutter of a fan.

# Marisa Martins



The Spanish-Argentinean mezzo soprano began her studies in Buenos Aires where she was born, and continued in the Superior Conservatory in Barcelona. The core of her repertoire lies in Monteverdi (Ottavia, Proserpina, Minerva), Mozart (Dorabella, Annio, Zerlina, Idamante, Tamiri) and Rossini (Zaida, Doralice, Roggiero), roles that she has sung in Liceu theatre in Barcelona, La Zarzuela and Teatro Real in Madrid, Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels, Rossini Opera

Festival in pesaro.

Mozart Festival in La Coruña, and the Salzburger Festspiele, among others.

Especially interested in the relationship between voice and movement, she has worked in productions that combine music and modern dance in the theatres of Basel and Lucerna, Hebbel-Theater in Berlin, The Opera of Cologne, Brooklyn Academy of Music of New York, Early Music Festival in Innsbruck and for The Fischhouse in San Francisco.

As a recitalist she feels a predilection for the French and Spanish repertory and has given world premieres by Montsalvatge, Frederic Mompou, Enric Palomar, David Padrós, Josep M. Quadreny and Jordi Rossinyol.

Among her recordings are the “Madrigali guerrieri ed amorosi” by Monteverdi for Harmonia Mundi under the direction of René Jacobs; for Lauda Música “El gran Burlador” (Diapason d’or: “Grandes Voix Humaines. Henry Jacqueton”); “Frederic Mompou” – Warner Music- with the Real Filharmonía de Galicia orchestra and, for Columna Música, “Frederic Mompou –Combat del somni-”, “Requiem” by Xavier Benguerel (Cd Compact 2007 award), “Montsalvatge Integral de canto (Vol I)” and the Grammy nominee opera “El gato con botas” with the orchestra of the Liceu Theatre (2004).

# Mac McClure



He is internationally recognized for his passionate interpretations of the Spanish and Latin American repertoire. Composer Xavier Montsalvatge stated:

“Mac knows my music better than I do, and his interpretations of Isaac Albéniz, Enrique Granados, and Frederic Mompou are marked by deeply felt authenticity.” Critic Dan Stevens of the British magazine International Record Review wrote: “McClure is a powerful communicator; he draws listeners into the magical world he creates.”

Born in Florida (USA), he holds a degree in Philology from the University of North Carolina. He began his musical studies with Consuelo Colomer, and continued with Michael Zenge and Phyllis Rappeport. In 1984 he moved to Barcelona to study with Carlota Garriga at the prestigious Academia Marshall, an institution founded in 1901 by Enrique Granados. From 1991 onward, he worked with Alicia de Larrocha on the Spanish and classical repertoire. His extensive CD catalogue (more than 40 titles) is available on digital platforms such as iTunes, Amazon, and Spotify.

Since 2010 he has served as Associate Professor at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia. In 2011 he was appointed Director of the Conservatorio Nacional de Colombia, a position he held until July 2015.