



Jules Massenet recital

2012 centenary:

The year 2012 is the centenary of the famous French composer Jules Massenet passing (1842/1912). Sylvia Cazeneuve takes this opportunity to perform a recital exclusively based on Jules Massenet's work.

Jules Massenet wrote a great repertoire that includes 25 operas and hundreds of songs and other works.

To celebrate the centenary of Jules Massenet's passing, Sylvia Cazeneuve honours the famous French composer by performing a fully Massenet-dedicated concert (songs, oratorios, operas ...)

Sylvia Cazeneuve and Jules Massenet :

Sylvia Cazeneuve is enthusiastic about the work of Jules Massenet and is honored to present a recital in 2012 exclusively dedicated to this composer. First, Sylvia likes French repertory and ensure awareness of the works that can be forgotten. Secondly, Sylvia Cazeneuve is a passionate performer who likes to express love and human passion. This is what Jules Massenet wanted his performers. But also because Sylvia Cazeneuve has the voice of the dramatic soprano and Massenet was looking for this voice for his characters. That is why Gabriel Bacquier said: « *s'il avait la chance de t'entendre, Massenet composerait pour toi...* » (if he had the chance to hear you, Massenet composed for you ...)

Jules Massenet, composer of Women :

Louis Schneider referred to him as : « *le musicien de la femme et de l'amour. L'amour, il l'a chanté sous toutes ses formes : mystique ou charnel, idéaliste ou romantique.* » (the musician of women and love. He sang Love in all its forms: carnal or mystical, idealistic or romantic.) in his book « *Massenet. L'Homme - Le Musicien* » (Paris, L. Carteret, 1908)

Most of Jules Massenet's operas are named after a woman. So are his oratorios. Indeed, although he was shy, Jules Massenet was in love with love and with women. He couldn't get round expressing human feelings and passions constantly. That could explain why his writing style was generous and *appassionata*. It was also enhanced by the use of the so-called « *soprano de sentiment* » (in English « soprano of feeling »), a dark voice typically French - as he stated himself in his opera librettos. This « *soprano de sentiment* » resembles the « *soprano falcon* » and is a key element of the musical aesthetic of Massenet. It was only natural for to honour Jules Massenet this year; especially since Sylvia Cazeneuve, being a dramatic soprano, is gifted with this peculiar and typically French voice that Massenet sought to express his feelings.



The recital's repertory :

Sylvia Cazeneuve has extensively analyzed the works of Jules Massenet for offer an eclectic repertoire with famous and overlooked works including French songs, oratorios, opera arias. This recital lasts 1h30 with an entr'acte and contains a few piano interludes. Each piece of work is introduced to the audience, along with a few anecdotes about the composer's life.

French songs :

The most notorious French songs are present in this program as the famous 'Elégie' and 'Nuit d'Espagne' on poems by Louis Gallet. These are not the only French song of this recital (« *Oh, si les fleurs avaient des yeux* », « *Un adieu* », « *Ce que disent les cloches* »...). Each with its colors, sound essences and individuality that makes each of them musical and poetic pages that carry the listener from world to world.

Oratorios :

Although secular, Jules Massenet has composed many religious works, including several oratorios. In Massenet's oratorio stands portraits of women with a sacred passion, sometimes to the limit of passion profane. Like 'Marie-Magdeleine'. His love for Jesus is immeasurable, passionate and almost carnal. (« *O mes soeurs, je veux fuir loin des bruits de la Terre* »...). To his characters, he does not take away human passions close to his heart, as in « *Dernier sommeil de la Vierge* » in the oratorio 'La Vierge' where the Virgin Mary goes from pain to ecstasy.

Operas :

The most beautiful arias of Massenet's operas are for women. Massenet think that only a woman's voice can convey the emotion of passion, transcribe the human tragedy but also evoke love. Whether happy or upset. So that even the Prince Charmant (Prince Charming) in Cendrillon is performed by a woman (« *Allez, laissez moi seul* ») ! The Massenet's women are beautiful, courageous, free, and they claim their right to love whom they want (Sita - Le Roi de Lahore « *J'ai fui la chambre nuptiale* »), they do not shrink from the sacrifice (Chimène - Le Cid « *Pleurez mes yeux* »), not even face of death (Ariane « *C'était si beau* »).