

La Chanson de l'Amour Fol



Inspired by Jacques Brel's "La Chanson Des Vieux Amants"

Duet for Piano & Oboe by René Damen

(for Aaron Emerson, Oboe)

I. Chambre Sans Berceau

II. Éclats Des Vieilles Tempêtes

III. Je t'aime Encore, Tu Sais, Je t'aime



First ever public performance: Saturday, November 16, 2019, 8:00 p.m.
Corthell Concert Hall, USM School of Music in Gorham

La Chanson de l'Amour Fol

René Damen (b. 1948)

Josie DiPhilippo, Piano
Aaron Emerson, Oboe

I. Chambre Sans Berceau (*Room without crib*)

The relationship between two lovers is challenged and tested, over time causing anguish and friction, when their marriage remains childless. Blame and guilt slowly begin driving a wedge between them, while they are attempting to hang on to their committed love.

II. Éclats Des Vieilles Tempêtes (*Shards of old storms*)

After twenty years the echos of raging old storms are still audible and shards of broken dreams still visible in the corners of that room. But every now and then, when the taste for fighting is lost, a clear and hopeful tune can be heard ringing throughout the house.

III. Je t'aime Encore, Tu Sais, Je t'aime (*I love you still, you know, I love you*)

Despite lifelong resentment, neglect and infidelities, at the end of the day the love unmistakably survived. Though un-passionate and non-exuberant, as a given it persists, pure and simple, as on the beat of a slow, never-ending three-step dance between two kindred souls.

Intrigued by the Flemish / French singer Jacques Brel ever since I was 15, by his personality, his raw and driven performance style and the lyrics to his *chansons*, one stands out for me in particular: *La Chanson Des Vieux Amants*. It kept me spellbound for decades, as I attempted over time to decipher the meaning behind its gripping lyrics.

For this duet, specifically written for the gifted oboist Aaron Emerson, I borrowed three significant quotes from the song as my inspiration for, and the interpretation of the subject matter as I finally came to see it. The quotes serve as the titles of the movements.

Enjoy!

René Damen

www.renedamen.com