

Cantique de Jean Racine

Text by *Jean Racine* (1639-1699), after a medieval Latin hymn
Set by *Gabriel Fauré* (1845-1924), op. 11, Motet [SATB]

Verbe — égal — au Très-Haut,
[vɛr. be.ga. lo trɛ.o]
Word, equal to-the Most-High/Almighty,
(*Word of God the most high,*)

Notre — unique — espérance,
[no. try.ni. kɛs.pe.rɑ̃.sə]
our only hope,

Jour — éternel — de la terre — et — des — cieux,
[ʒu. re.tɛr.nɛl də la tɛ. re de sjø]
Day eternal of the earth and of-the heavens;
(*eternal day of heaven and earth;*)

de la paisible nuit nous rompons le silence,
[də la pe.zi.blə nɥi nu rɔ̃.pɔ̃ lə si.lɑ̃.sə]
of the peaceful night we break the silence,
(*we break the silence of this peaceful night,*)

Divin Sauveur, jette sur nous les — yeux!
[di.vɛ̃ so.vœr ʒɛ.tɛ syr nu lœ̃.ɛ zjø]
Divine Savior, cast upon us your eyes!
(*Divine Savior, cast your eyes upon us!*)

Répands sur nous le feu de ta grâce puissante,
[re.pɑ̃ syr nu lə fœ də ta gra.sə pwi.sɑ̃.tɛ]
Spread upon us the fire of your mercy powerful,
(*Fill us with the fire of your great mercy,*)

que tout l'enfer fuie au son de ta voix.
[kə tu lɑ̃.fɛr fɥi o sɔ̃ də ta vwa]
for all hell flees at-the sound of your voice.

Dissipe le sommeil d'une — âme languissante
[di.si.pə lə so.mɛʃ dy. nɑ̃.mə lɑ̃.gi.sɑ̃.tɛ]
Dispel the sleep of-a soul listless
(*Dispel from the listless soul the slumber*)

qui la conduit là l'oubli de tes lois!
[ki la kɔ̃.dɥi la lu.bli də tɛ lwa]
that it leads to the-forgetfulness of your laws!
(*that causes us to forget your laws!*)

Ô Christ, sois favorable à ce peuple fidèle
 [o krist swa fa.vɔ.ra. bla sə pœ.plə fi.dɛ.lə]
 Oh Christ, be favorable the this faithful people
(Oh Christ, look with favor upon your faithful people)

pour te bénir maintenant rassemblée.
 [pur tə be.nir mɛ̃.tə.nɑ̃ ra.sɑ̃.ble]
 in-order to bless-(you) now gather-together
(who have gathered together to bless you.)

Reçois les chants qu'il offre à ta gloire immortelle,
 [rə.swa lɛ ʃɑ̃ ki. lɔ.frə a¹ ta glwa. ʁim.mɔr.tɛ.lə]
 Receive the songs that-they offer to your glory immortal,
(Receive the songs that are offered to your immortal glory.)

et de tes dons qu'il retourne comblé!
 [e də te dɔ̃ kil rə.tur.nə kɔ̃.ble]
 And with your gifts that-they return filled.
(and may they return filled with your gifts.)

(Literal translation and IPA transcription © 2008 by Bard Suverkrop—IPA Source, LLC)

¹ The basses sing *qu'il offre à* [ki. lɔ. fra].

Part two: A list of French sounds with some of the more common French spellings.

Adapted and expanded from *Le Petit Robert* CD-Rom.

English		Equivalent	
Vowels		Consonants	
[i]	il, épi, lyre	[p]	père, soupe
[e]	blé, aller, chez, et, j'ai, tes	[t]	terre, vite
[ɛ]	lait, merci, fête, Noël, forêts, hiver, Seigneur soleil, hotel, bouquet	[k]	cou, qui, sac, képi
[a]	ami, patti,	[b]	bon, robe
[ɑ]	pas, pâte	[d]	dans, aide
[ɔ]	fort, donner, sol	[g]	gar, bague, gui
[o]	mot, dôme, eau, saule	[f]	feu, neuf, photo
[u]	genou, roue	[s]	sale, celui, ça, dessous, tasse
[ø]	peu, deux, creuse	[ʃ]	chat, tache schéma
* [œ]	peur, meuble, ceuille (shwa)	[v]	vous, rêve
* [ɛ̃]	brin, plein, bain nasal "eh" (bet) [ɛ]	[z]	zéro, maison, rose
* [ɑ̃]	sans, vent nasalized "ah" (father) [ɑ]	[ʒ]	je, gilet, geôle
* [õ]	ton, ombre, bonté nasalized "o" (pole) [o]	[l]	lent, sol
* [œ̃]	lundi, brun, parfum	[r]	rue, venir
		[m]	mot, flamme
	Semi-vowels	[n]	nous, tonne, animal
[j]	yeux, paille, pied, panier	[ɲ]	agneau, vigne
[w]	oui, fouet, joua, joie		
[y]	huile, lui		
			no liaison or elision allowed

- * No English equivalent
- * * Nasalized [œ] coeur

mixed vowels		German Equivalent	
1 st position	[ɛ̃]	{i} + {u} = {y}	ü = Für [fʏr]
2 nd "	[ɑ̃]	{e} + {o} = {ø}	ö = Fröhlich [frøʁlɪç]
3 rd "	[õ]	{ɛ} + {o} = {œ}	ö = Göttlich [gœtʁɪç]
4 th "	[œ̃]		

Alouette, gentille

[alvɛtə ʒɑ̃tiʒ]

]

Alouette, sweet

je te plumerai la tête, et la bouche.

[ʒə tɛ plymɛʁe la tɛt e la buʃ]

]

I will pluck your head and mouth.

Cantique de Jean Racine (Op. 11) is a work for mixed chorus and piano or organ by Gabriel Fauré. Written by the nineteen year old composer in 1864-5, the piece won Fauré the first prize when he graduated from the École Niedermeyer and was first performed the following year on August 4, 1866, with accompaniment of strings and organ. It was first published around 1875 or 1876 (Schoen, Paris, as part of the series *Echo des Maîtrises*) and appeared in a version for orchestra (possibly by the composer) in 1906. The accompaniment has also been arranged for strings and harp by John Rutter.

The text, "Verbe égal au Très-Haut", is a paraphrase by Jean Racine (*Hymnes traduites du Bréviaire romain*, 1688) of the pseudo-ambrosian hymn for Tuesday matins, *Consors paterni luminis*.

Jean Racine (French pronunciation: [ʒɑ̃ ʁa'sin]), baptismal name **Jean-Baptiste Racine** (22 December 1639 – 21 April 1699), was a French dramatist, one of the "Big Three" of 17th century France (along with Molière and Corneille), and one of the most important literary figures in the Western tradition. Racine was primarily a tragedian, producing such 'examples of neoclassical perfection'[1] as *Phèdre*,[2] *Andromaque*,[3] and *Athalie*,[4] although he did write one comedy, *Les Plaideurs*,[5] and a muted tragedy,[6] *Esther*, for the young.

Racine's plays displayed his mastery of the dodecasyllabic alexandrine; his verse is renowned for elegance, purity, speed, and fury,[7][8] and for what Robert Lowell described as a 'diamond-edge',[9] and the 'glory of its hard, electric rage'.[10] Racine's works are widely considered to be untranslatable,[11][12][13][14] although many eminent poets have attempted to do so,[15][16] including Lowell, Ted Hughes, and Derek Mahon into English, and Schiller into German. Racine's dramaturgy is marked by his psychological insight, the prevailing passion of his characters, and the nakedness of both the plot and stage. (Wikipedia)