

# Le charme

Armand Silvestre  
(1837-1901)

Ernest Chausson  
(1855-1899)

Composed 1879. Op. 2, No. 2. Publisher: Hamelle. Armand Silvestre's poem appears in *Chansons des heures*. The poem is titled "Pour une voix," and is found in the section of poems titled *Vers pour être chanté*. Fauré set "Le plus doux chemin" from this volume. Silvestre was a well-known poet and novelist of the day. His poetry is extricably bound up with the history of French song; Fauré and Massenet used his verses extensively. Silvestre poems were also set by Bizet, Delibes, Duparc, Lalo, and Roussel. "Le charme" is one of the very earliest of Chausson's songs. It has all the simplicity and attractive qualities of a salon song. At the time he composed it, Chausson was studying with Jules Massenet, and had just begun attending the classes of César Franck. Perhaps Massenet's fondness for Silvestre's poetry prompted Chausson's choice of text for this song. It was to be Chausson's only setting of the poet.

## Le charme

Quand ton sourire me surprit,  
Je sentis frémir tout mon être,  
Mais ce qui domptais mon esprit  
Je ne pus d'abord le connaître.

Quand ton regard tomba sur moi,  
Je sentis mon âme se fondre,  
Mais ce que serait cet émoi,  
Je ne pus d'abord en répondre.

Ce qui me vainquit à jamais,  
Ce fut un plus douloureux charme,  
Et je n'ai su que je t'aimais,  
Qu'en voyant ta première larme.

## The Charm

When your smile surprised me  
I felt all my being tremble  
But what had subdued my spirit  
At first I could not know.

When your gaze fell upon me  
I felt my soul melt,  
But what this emotion might be,  
At first I could not understand.

What vanquished me forever  
Was a much sadder charm,  
And I did not know that I loved you  
Until I saw your first tear.

**Moderato con moto**  
*p*

Quand ton sou - ri - re me sur - prit, Je sen - tis fré - mir tout mon

*un peu plus lent* *en retenant*

é - tre, Mais ce qui dom - ptais mon es - prit

*un peu plus lent* *en retenant*

*mf*

*rit.* *Tempo I* *p*

Je ne pus d'a-bord le con - naî - tre. Quand ton re-gard tom -

*rit.* *p*

ba sur moi, Je sen - tis mon â - me se fon - dre,

*un peu plus lent* *p* *en retenant*

Mais ce que se - rait cet é - moi, Je ne pus d'a-bord en ré -

*un peu plus lent* *p* *en retenant*

Tempo I

*rit.* *mf*

pon - dre. Ce qui me vain - quit à ja - mais, Ce

*rit.* *mf*

*rit.* *a tempo*

fut un plus dou - lou - reux char - me,

*rit.* *a tempo* *f*

Et je n'ai su que je t'ai - mais, Qu'en voy -

*a* *vwa*

*rit.*

yant ta pre - miè - re lar - me.

*rit.*

*mje*